Collaboration for Early Childhood
Strong Start, Bright Future

ChapinHall at the University of Chicago
Policy research that benefits children, families, and their communities

REPORT TO THE IGA GOVERNING BOARD

ABSTRACT

The Collaboration for Early Childhood has a contract with the Village of Oak Park, Oak Park Elementary School District 97 and Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 to develop an integrated system of high quality early childhood programs and services to benefit all children birth to kindergarten age living in Oak Park and River Forest. Data collection and use of data to: better understand Oak Park's and River Forest's youngest children; monitor service delivery and usage; and measure impact is integral to the contract. During the first two years of the contract, the Collaboration is required to: develop a database, establish methods for collecting the data and establish baseline measures. The Collaboration is also required to establish ways to measure progress beginning in year three of the Contract for Services and establish an annual target for each measure in cooperation with the IGA Governing Board. This report details the work completed to develop the database, establish methods for collecting data and provides the initial measures for the eleven outcomes described in the Contract for Services. It also contains recommendations for refining the outcomes to be more in line with available data.

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Executive Summary

Project Background

The Collaboration for Early Childhood has a contractual agreement with the three governmental bodies providing the majority of the Collaboration's funding: the Village of Oak Park, Elementary School District 97, and High School District 200. The work of the Collaboration for Early Childhood was initially planned for by a team of local policy makers and subject matter experts in early childhood, which met over the course of 12 months in 2008. The final planning document, *Partnership for Human Development,* articulated eleven outcome measures to enable the Collaboration to report on progress. The Collaboration's contract with District 97, District 200 and the Village of Oak Park incorporates these measures and identifies key milestones for these reports during the initial five year funding period:

1. During the first two years, the Collaboration is responsible for building a "unified early childhood database" to better understand the characteristics and needs of the birth to five population of Oak Park and River Forest. The database is to be used to monitor progress on the development of an integrated system of high quality programs and services, and to ensure that the programs and strategies being implemented across the Oak Park and River Forest communities make a meaningful difference in children's development.
2. At the conclusion of Year Two, the Collaboration will establish a baseline measurement for each of the eleven outcome measures.
3. Starting at the end of the Year Three, and continuing at the end of Years Four and Five, the Collaboration will issue a report measuring progress from the initial baseline established at the end of Year Two and each subsequent year.

We issue this report two months prior to the end of Year Two, and address the first two of the Collaboration's milestones.

Milestone 1: Building the Unified Early Childhood Database

The unified early childhood database is the Collaboration's "mission control" for bringing together disparate sources of information about the early childhood population in our community, their participation in early childhood services, the quality of the staff who provide early childhood services, and the quality of the various types of early childhood centers that provide care.

After a competitive proposal and selection process, the Collaboration entered into a contract with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago – a nationally-recognized research institution with the technical expertise we need to bring together multiple data sources that do not easily match, and with the policy expertise to help us draw appropriate conclusions from the data.

Our full report includes a "data scorecard" that provides a detailed report on the Collaboration's progress toward this milestone. The amassing of the data into a central location is itself a complex technical endeavor, due to the need to connect data from children at a very young age (where limited individual data is collected) with data from District 97's kindergarten readiness assessment. Chapin Hall's expertise in this endeavor allows us to establish a rich database with the potential for significant longitudinal analysis to inform early childhood policy and practice in Oak Park and River Forest.

As the data scorecard shows, there were a number of challenges to be addressed during this initial database development period. Across our entire universe of data sources, the most significant challenges included:

- Only some of the data needed to address the eleven outcome measures is directly collected by the Collaboration, or by entities (such as District 97) with which the Collaboration has a direct data-sharing relationship. Other sources of data are controlled by state agencies such as the Illinois Department of Human Services, which had to be educated about the Collaboration's work before being willing to consider allowing the Collaboration to receive detailed state data for children and families residing in Oak Park and River Forest. The process of seeking and receiving this data-sharing permission with state leaders has been very slow, and has slowed down even further during the gubernatorial transition, but we are very optimistic about our data access in the near future.
- Some data provided by third parties turned out to be incomplete, or was not covering the exact population we requested. While this was a hindrance in being able to put together a complete unified database, the Collaboration was able to share observations and recommendations about data quality with the owners of the data. This scrutiny is an important factor in improving data quality over time.
- Some data is for programs that are just getting underway. Like any new programs, there are details to be worked out, and improvements to be identified. In some cases, program data can be inconsistent from year to year as enhancements are made.

Milestone 2: Setting Baseline for Outcome Measures

The unified early childhood database brings together three categories of data that allows us to establish a baseline on the eleven different outcome measures established in our contract. The outcome measures fall into three distinct categories:

- **Child Outcomes.** These outcome measures are designed to measure progress toward the goal that *all children begin kindergarten ready to learn.* These measures focus on early childhood program participation, service usage, and the impact of these programs and services on children's development at kindergarten entry.
- **Service Delivery Outcomes.** These outcome measures are designed to measure the extent to which children and families in our target population *receive the early childhood care and education and parenting education and support services they need*. These measures focus on participation in specific programs by families at risk.
- **System Outcomes**. These outcome measures were designed to assess whether the early childhood services in our community reflect our goal to *provide a high-quality, coordinated early childhood system.* These measures focus on our local options for child care and preschool, and their participation and progress in the Illinois Quality Rating System, ExceleRate.

In this summary, we share highlights of the early childhood population in Oak Park and River Forest, along with highlights of findings from each of the three outcome categories. In the full report, we present a detailed assessment of all eleven outcome measures.

Child Outcome Highlights:

- Sixty-nine of the 73 children who had received services through the Early Intervention program and were referred to District 97 received services as 3-5 year olds in 2013-14.

  - This tells us that there is a high level of continuity between services from 0-3 and services from 3-5, which are provided by two different entities. We look forward to seeing how many of the 4-year-olds in this group (in 2013-14) have IEPs when they are enrolled in kindergarten in 2014-15. We expect that there will be some drop-off in the number of children served as they move into kindergarten, as some children will no longer need services.

  - Because each new cohort of children has different needs, it is impossible to place a preference on higher percentages of children who receive EI services continuing to receive services as they progress through the system. However, we are focusing our efforts on ensuring all children who demonstrate a need for assessment are in fact accurately assessed.

- For Preschool for All children (PFA) who enrolled as kindergartners in D97 in 2013-14, 93 percent were rated as proficient or advanced on a selection of objectives determined by local experts as indicative of a child's developmental level across domains.

  - This data is based on assessment using the Teaching Strategies GOLD instrument. It is an observational assessment over time, not a sit-down snapshot of the student.

- Across all kindergartners in District 97 in 2013-2014, 79 percent demonstrated readiness using the Kindergarten Readiness Test (KRT). Students who were in the PFA/Head Start who attend District 97 kindergarten had the same percentage of demonstrated readiness.

  - We recognize that there are differences between the KRT, which is administered one time by a teacher who does not know the student, and administered during the summer prior to kindergarten and the GOLD assessment.
  - District 97 is also administering the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS), which is also an observational assessment, in the fall of the kindergarten year. The Illinois State Board of Education has not yet indicated when they will begin releasing this data to school districts for local analysis. When this data is available, we plan to compare GOLD, KRT, and KIDS.
  - The numbers of PFA/Head Start children progressing to kindergarten and being assessed are small. Therefore, differences in scores between the two assessment instruments can be highly influenced by a very small number of children. Therefore, it is important to watch this trend over time to see if it appears to be a consistent pattern.

Service Delivery Outcome Highlights:

- Twenty percent of 2013-2014 kindergartners in District 97 received free and reduced price lunch. Of this group, 34 percent of children reported that they had attended Preschool for All, Head Start, or a NAEYC-accredited preschool program.

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- Of this same group, we do not know the preschool history for 28 percent of the children.
- We also identified some discrepancies between the self-reported preschool history provided during kindergarten registration and information we have about their preschool enrollment from other sources.

- The Collaboration funds a home-visiting program at Parenthesis Family Center. During the program's initial 3-month period we were able to engage 27 families with infants and toddlers meeting risk criteria which includes income, age of the mother, physical and mental health status, employment, and education levels, and developmental concerns about the child.

  - Over a three-year period, we hope to have a minimum of 80 -90 families actively engaged in the program annually, in additional to the home visiting programs funded through other sources. .

- Nearly 60% of District 97 kindergarten students attended a center-based or school-based preschool in Oak Park or River Forest.

  - We will be examining other data and research about how families meet their children's early learning and child care needs. We recognize that many families will seek child care close to where the parents work, not necessarily within our community.
  - Other families are forced to make decisions based on affordability and the availability of full-day care. Many of the high quality programs provide only half-day services. Full day, full year is expensive, even with a child care subsidy and some families do the best they can by stringing together a variety of care settings for their children.

- About 10 percent of all 2013-2014 Kindergartners have IEPs and slightly over a quarter of them are low-income.

  - There are significant challenges with using this historical data to assess information about IEPs. The previous emphasis on data entry into the District 97's system was on compliance. We are collaborating with District 97 to shift this emphasis on using the data for policy analysis.
  - Because of the high threshold of delay required to be eligible for an IEP, some students may be in need of additional services, but are not qualifying. The number of children who need support may in fact be higher.

System Outcome Highlights:

- It is very challenging to get accurate information from the entire set of early childhood service providers.

  - The central organization responsible for collecting this data has not been able to provide us with a subset of the workforce that works in our community in a usable format or in a timely fashion. The Collaboration has routinely conducted its own survey of qualifications, but is not able to reach all providers.

- There are about 405 people working in Oak Park and River Forest who comprise the center-based early childhood workforce in our community. About half of the surveyed early childhood workforce (center directors, teachers, and teacher/assistants) in Oak Park and River Forest has exceeded the required minimum state educational requirements.

- Approximately three quarters of the early childhood workforce in Oak Park and River Forest have met (21%) or exceeded (53%) the state annual professional development requirement of 15 hours.

Measuring Progress: Looking Ahead to Year Three and Beyond

We have provided the first report on the status of data collection and baseline measures for all eleven outcome measures and we have made progress on each one. The processes of data collection and analysis shed bright light on how vulnerable children fall through the cracks of programs *and* data. Identifying these cracks, asking questions in order to understand why the cracks exist, and working to make critical connections in order to obtain the data are all part of the effort to improve program and service delivery. Future reports will describe progress with respect to each of these measures. However, as we work over the next few years, the progress targets cannot become our singular focus. We must also establish a culture of using data for program improvement and policy decisions.

It is vital to the success of the effort that we connect the programming of the Collaboration to the development of the targets. Some targets will focus more on the process or programming needed to make progress. Others may simply identify the progress expected on the target. The data collection and monitoring process should establish a high quality feedback loop whose purpose is to focus our efforts on serving children well – providing strong services, generating useful data and setting ambitious and realistic targets.

The Collaboration and the Measurement and Evaluation Committee propose to work during June to September to establish baseline targets and recommendations for the IGA Governing Board to consider at its September meeting. Some data from Year Two of the contract will be available for this work. Furthermore, we would like to identify a calendar for when different types of reports can be provided so that they will inform the work of the Collaboration and its many partners, including District 97, in a timely way. We propose the following process:

1. Review the baseline measures with the Collaboration Council at the May 29, 2015, Annual Meeting to receive input from Council members in the development of targets of 2015-2016.
2. Provide baseline measures and data concerns to appropriate Collaboration committees to receive guidance in the establishment of targets and related program development strategies.
3. Present recommendations to the IGA Governing Board at the September meeting.

Milestone 1: Building the Unified Early Childhood Database

The Collaboration for Early Childhood entered into a five-year contract with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago in November 2013 to build a unified early childhood database, and assist the collaboration with using the data to analyze the Collaboration's activities and draw appropriate policy conclusions. Tasks in this initial contract period have included:

- Operationalizing the Collaboration's eleven outcome measures. This effort included detailed discussion of each measure and determining what data existed that could be used to establish a baseline for each one.
- Negotiating data sharing agreements actually accessing the data for each data source needed. For most of the outcome measures, multiple data sources are required, sometimes from multiple agencies.
- Reconciling jurisdictional and other geographic boundary definitions within the community to determine the desired population of interest.
- Seeking community-level information from administrative and research data sources.
- Increasing primary data collection strategies and developing proxy measures from data available from school districts, human services agencies, and other program activities when direct measures are not available.

Database Development

Database development during the first two years of this project has been focused on five activities: 1) identifying the data that is needed; 2) accessing that data; 3) cleaning and documenting datasets; 4) combining multiple datasets; and 5) analysis of the data.

Identifying the data
We have completed this task and the data scorecard shows the array of datasets that we have identified and how they relate to each other.

Accessing the data
The first step in accessing the data that is not currently held by the Collaboration is making a formal request to the organization that holds the data. We have executed an agreement and Chapin Hall has received District 97 enrollment and special education data. Chapin Hall has requested to receive and use Early Intervention (EI), WIC, subsidized child care, SNAP and TANF data from the Illinois Department of Human Services for the Collaboration for Early Childhood contract. The EI data is highly sensitive and HIPAA-protected. It therefore requires a new agreement to be drafted by DHS lawyers. That has been held up by leadership changes due to the gubernatorial transition and other priorities. Although we could get permission for the other data before the EI permission, DHS has linked the permission of all of these. We are attempting to de-link the EI request from the other datasets.

We have begun the request for Medicaid data. However, that request is also being delayed by personnel changes and the fact that Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) is delayed in producing the data that we would need.

In some cases, Chapin Hall already has the required data and is requires written permission from the agency. The gubernatorial transition has slowed the process that was begun over a year ago.

Cleaning and documenting datasets
Chapin Hall has built a pilot data management website that will provide Collaboration staff information about the status of datasets and all of the contents of each dataset. Chapin Hall is currently putting in place the security required to provide access to external users. Once this is done, Collaboration staff will be provided access.

Combining multiple datasets
The fact that the needed data comes from multiple datasets requires that data on individual children be linked. For example, the Preschool for All and Head Start database (described below) must be linked to the District 97 data so that the data on children in kindergarten can be on the same record as their PFA data for analysis purposes. In some cases, there is a unique identifier that can be used for linking records. In other cases, when a unique identifier is not available, special purpose record-linkage software is used to determine which records in two different datasets belong to the same child. Names and birthdates are the primary pieces of data that are used to compare records to determine records that belong to the same child. For example, the District 97 data and the state DHS CCTS data do not contain the same unique ID. Therefore, these databases have to be linked using the record-linkage software.

Analyzing the data
The challenge of analyzing the data is primarily that for some groups of high-risk children, the numbers are quite small. Therefore, while the Collaboration can discuss these numbers, it is difficult to publish them because of the risk of disclosing the identities of these children in the community. We have attempted in this report to provide as much detail as possible to provide readers a sense of the data that is available and the challenges to be addressed.

Oak Park Collaboration for Early Childhood

Integrated Database Schema

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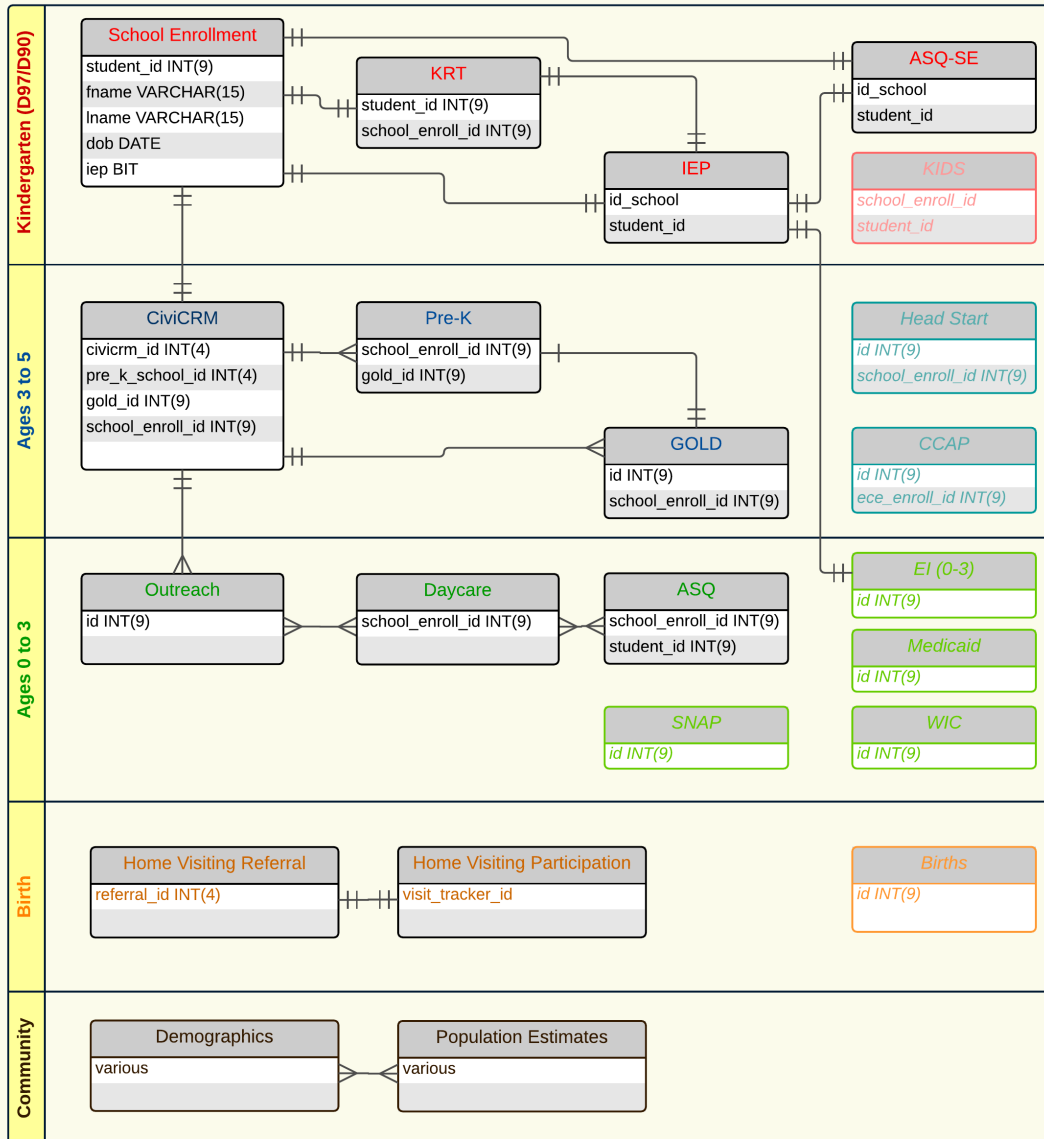
<u>Improvement in Primary Data Collection</u>

The Collaboration has worked over the past two years to improve primary data collection and to develop data collection strategies when administrative data from state agencies is not available due to limitations on available reports or the inadequacies of state data systems. The following describe the results of these efforts.

   a. Parenthesis Family Center
The Collaboration's contract with Parenthesis Family Center to provide intensive home visiting services to families with children birth to three and parent support and information to all families requires extensive data collection. Data recorded in the Visit Tracker database for families engaged in the intensive home visiting program, Parents as Teachers, provides demographic information about the children and their parents, services provided, screenings and assessments. The contract provides for information sharing between Parenthesis and the Collaboration and parent authorization so that this data can be transferred to the unified Early Childhood Database at Chapin Hall. This effort will allow for monitoring the children's development and progress as move through the early childhood years and enroll in District 97.

The Collaboration entered into a contract with Co-Knowledge in November 2014 to provide a database to collect information about families who participate in the lighter touch parent information and support programs through the contract with Parenthesis Family Center. This database collects information about parents who voluntarily share their names and contact information and the array of activities in which they participate. This information enables some monitoring of the number of families with children birth to five who are receiving important information about child development, support services and resources available in the community.

   b. Preschool for All and Head Start
The Collaboration contracted with Chapin Hall and Emphanos to improve security of the database used to collect information about children enrolled in the Preschool for All and Head Start programs. Time was spent by Collaboration staff, program staff and volunteers to review the data collection forms and improve them. The data entry forms were revised to correspond to these changes and each site was provided with its own space in the database so that staff could enter the data directly during the registration and screening process. In the past this was done on paper and the Collaboration entered the information into the database. All data from this database and form Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System is transferred to Chapin Hall for the unified Early Childhood database.

   c. Developmental Screening, Referral, Assessment and Service Receipt
A major strategy that the Collaboration is pursuing is to ensure that all children ages birth to five receive periodic developmental screenings with a valid and reliable tool, that children who may need further assessments receive them and that those who are deemed eligible to receive developmental services receive the services. Meaningful information on these activities has been difficult to obtain, especially for the birth to three year old children. The state Early Intervention System holds most of this information. To respond to this issue, the Collaboration launched a developmental screening pilot program in July 2014. The Collaboration has engaged 18 child care centers, preschools and family child care providers, one medical practice and one social service agency in the pilot project. Through interagency data sharing agreements and parent authorizations the Collaboration is able to collect data

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about the number of children screened, the results of the screenings, referrals for assessments and whether children are receiving the services they need. This is a substantial effort and improvement to the data collection effort

> d. *Professional information about teachers and directors*

For the past several years, the Collaboration collected information about the educational levels and professional development activities of the staff at the centers with which it works intensively. Other preschools and child care centers participated voluntarily. In January 2014, the Collaboration requested a report from the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) This agency maintains the registry for the state of Illinois' early childhood workforce. The data is difficult to summarize and fit into the measure we adopted. It also took almost an entire year to obtain. While the data from these two sources helps the Collaboration monitor the impact of its professional development work, it does not provide a comprehensive picture of the early childhood workforce in Oak Park and River Forest. In March 2015, the Collaboration launched an Early Childhood Workforce Survey to try to obtain a more complete picture of the educational levels and professional development activities of the early childhood workforce in Oak Park. The results of the survey will be used to report on progress in the next report to the IGA Governing Board.

Data Scorecard

We have prepared a "data scorecard" to provide an overview of the data for each of the eleven outcome measures. The following chart describes each outcome measure with respect to several categories:

- **Have Permission.** Just because the data exists doesn't mean we have permission to use it. This is especially true of data controlled by state agencies where we have to specifically ask permission to get the detailed data for Oak Park and River Forest.
- **Have Data**. Just because we have permission does not mean the entity has been cooperative in sharing the data with us in a timely fashion.
- **Accessibility.** The ease with which the data file extract can be obtained from the administrative agency. This includes the suitability of the form or medium for transferring the data, confidentiality constraints and cost.
- **Coherence.** The degree to which the administrative data are comparable with other data sources and consistent over time and across geographical areas. This includes evaluation of data concepts, classifications, questionnaire wording, data collection methodologies, reference period and the target population.
- **Accuracy.** The closeness of the administrative record data values to their (unknown) true values. This includes information on any known sources of errors in the administrative data such as missing records, missing values of individual data items, misinterpretation of questions, and keying, coding, and duplication errors.
- **Sufficient for Setting Baseline**. In some cases, the current data will not be sufficient for setting the baseline. We will seek additional data or manipulate available data in order to improve the measure so that the data is sufficient.

- **Prospects for Improvement**. In many cases, agencies that provide the data for this project are in the process of upgrading their information systems or making data available that previously was not available. We will take advantage of this for future measurement purposes.

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Oak Park Collaboration for Early Childhood
Data Scorecard for 11 Outcome Measures

	Measure	Source	Have Permission	Have Data	Accessibility	Coherence	Accuracy	Sufficient for Setting Baseline	Prospects for Improvement	Notes
Child Outcome #1	Pct. of children identified through screening as needing assessment or services that receive them	IDHS	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	IDHS data has been requested and should be high quality
Child Outcome #2	Pct. of kids in Oak Park / River Forest Preschool for All & Head Start demonstrating age-appropriate proficiency in GOLD	GOLD	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	🟢	GOLD is widely used and respected, but subjective
Child Outcome #3	Pct. of children entering kindergarten demonstrating age-appropriate proficiency in the kindergarten readiness test (KRT)	D97	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟢	KRT is widely used and comprehensive
Service Outcome #1	Kindergarteners receiving free/reduced lunch have attended a PFA/ HS/ NAEYC accredited program, or program in Excelerate GOLD Circle	D97	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	Preschool attendance is self-reported; new D97 enrollment forms should help
Service Outcome #2	Teen parents receiving up through All Kids Level 1 health insurance for kids under age 3 are referred to intensive parent education program	IDHFS Parenthesis	🔴	🔴	🔴	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	All Kids data has been requested; data on teen parent births is problematic
Service Outcome #3	Pct. of referred parents choosing to participate in the intensive parent education program	Parenthesis	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	🟢	Provided by Parenthesis
Service Outcome #4	Pct. of K & 1st grade students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) receiving services in early childhood (if in Oak Park / River Forest in early childhood)	D97	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	Data received from D97; requested from D90, CFC and IDHS but status is unclear
System Outcome #1	# of families with kids under 5 who are in the voluntary database and receive developmental information and an early childhood resource directory	Collab	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	The Collaboration tracks its outreach activities
System Outcome #2	Pct. of teachers and directors in Oak Park early childhood programs who exceed minimum state educational requirements for their role	INCCRRA & Collab	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	INCCRRA data is incomplete; Collaboration survey is self-reported but reaches many centers
System Outcome #3	Pct. of teachers and child care providers reporting more than the state-mandated 20 hours of continuing professional education each year	INCCRRA & Collab	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	INCCRRA data is incomplete; Collaboration survey is self-reported but reaches many centers
System Outcome #4	Pct. of preschools, child care centers, and homes engaged in the Illinois Quality Rating System (ExceleRate), and improve their scores each year	ExceleRate & Collab	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟢	Many centers do not participate in ExceleRate

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Milestone 2: Outcome Measures

Portrait of Children in Oak Park – Ages 0-5 in 2013-14

The table below shows the number of children ages 0-5 in Oak Park and River Forest, the percent that live in a household below the federal poverty level (FPL) and the combined population of the two cities.[1] The FPL for a family of four in 2013 is income of $23,550. Eight percent of all children, 0-5, in Oak Park and 1.7 percent in River Forest live below the FPL. What is noteworthy is that a over a quarter of African-American children and children of other races in Oak Park and Asian children in Oak Park and River Forest live below the federal poverty level. Also, 15 percent of Hispanic children in Oak Park live in a household below the FPL.

Children Ages 0-5 (2013)	Oak Park	Oak Park, % below FPL	River Forest	River Forest, % below FPL	Oak Park and River Forest combined
White	2738	1.5%	521	0%	3,259
Black/African-American	691	26%	117	0%	808
American Indian / Alaskan Native	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Asian	234	26.9%	38	31.6%	272
Hawaiian / Pacific	0	n/a	0	n/a	0
Other Race	106	26.4%	0	n/a	106
Two or more races	451	5.8%	43	0%	494
Children 0–5 Total	**4220**	**8%**	**719**	**1.7%**	**4,939**
Of which, Hispanic/Latino Children 0-5	300	15.3%	0	n/a	300

Sources: U.S.Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2009-2013 5-year estimates; tables B17020 A-I.

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[1] The federal poverty level (FPL) is the term used for the federal poverty threshold. See http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/15poverty.cfm#thresholds for more details.

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Relative to households with children under the age of six (0-5), the table below shows that Oak Park has 13.1 percent of all households with children of these ages, while River Forest has 11.8 percent.

Households with Children Ages 0-5 (2010)	Oak Park	Oak Park pct. households with children ages 0-5	River Forest	River Forest pct. households with children ages 0-5	Oak Park and River Forest combined
Households with Children Ages 0-5 (2010), and as Pct. of All Households	2,979	13.1	469	11.8	3,448
All Households (2010)	22,670		3,961		26,631

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census; table P20;

It is important to identify the number and percent of children at 130 and 185 percent of the FPL. These children are eligible for the free and reduced school lunch program, as well as other benefit programs, including Medicaid. The table below identifies the number and percent of children in Oak Park and River Forest at these ratios to the FPL. Roughly 1 out of 6 children 0-5 in Oak Park lived in a household where the income was below $44,000 in 2013.

Ratio of Income to FPL for Children Ages 0-5	Oak Park	As pct. of All Oak Park Children Ages 0-5	River Forest	As pct. of All River Forest Children Ages 0-5	Oak Park and River Forest Combined	As pct. of All Oak Park and River Forest Children Ages 0-5 Combined
Children Ages 0-5 below 130% of FPL	390	9.20%	21	2.90%	411	8.30%
Children Ages 0-5 below 185% of FPL	609	14.40%	21	2.90%	630	12.80%
Children Ages 0-5 below 400% of FPL	1337	31.70%	156	21.70%	1493	30.20%
All Children Ages 0-5	4220		719		4939	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, table B17024.

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Ratio of Income to FPL for Families with Related Children Ages 0-5	Oak Park	As pct. of All Oak Park Families with Related Children	River Forest	As pct. of All River Forest Families with Related Children	Oak Park and River Forest Combined	As pct. of All Oak Park and River Forest Families with Related Children, Combined
Families below 130% of FPL	268	10.40%	13	3.80%	281	9.60%
Families below 185% of FPL	354	13.70%	13	3.80%	367	12.50%
All Families with Related Children	2,587		343		2,930	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, table B17022.

Child Outcome 1: Children identified through screening as needing assessment or services receive them.

Initial Screening through Home Visiting, Child Care, Preschool, or Physician

Referral to CFC (0-3) or District 97 (3-5)

Receive Services
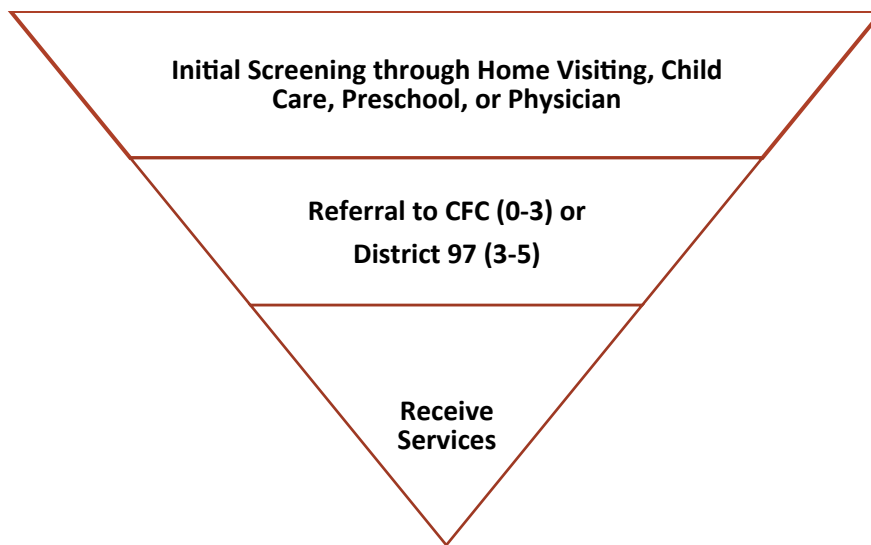
- Screenings are initial evaluations of various aspects of child development that provide a high-level indication of whether a child is progressing normally for his/her age. We screen for physical development – such as hearing and vision, gross and fine motor skills, – as well as social and emotional development, communication skills, and problem solving skills.
- If a screening shows that a child exhibits some delays or other issues, he/she is referred to either Child/Family Connections (for children 0-3), which has the contract to conduct assessments for the State of IL. If the child is ages 3-5, he/she is referred to the local elementary school district for assessment.
- Assessments are more detailed evaluations of each child's development. Some assessments will show that a child could benefit from services to address his/her developmental delays, while in other situations, the assessment may show that the child is still within the normal range for development, and does not need intervention services.
- We do not expect every screening to lead to a referral for assessment, nor do we expect every assessment to lead to recommendation for services. Our goal is to make sure that all children who have been identified through valid and reliable screenings as needing an assessment receive that assessment and are given the opportunity to receive services if they qualify – that there are no systematic barriers. Children who receive services for developmental delays when they are very young generally are more responsive to treatment and often need services for shorter periods.

What We Know

We do not have ideal data to help us understand the range of activities related to this outcome measure because some of the screening, subsequent assessment, and eventual service provision happens outside of the public realm. Some families choose to have screenings, assessments, and services all provided by

private parties, paid for either out-of-pocket or through private insurance. None of these providers are obligated to report their activities to any public entity.

Additionally, community level data related to screening, assessments and service provision is not available from the Illinois Early intervention Program for birth to three year olds.

Initial Screening

Meaningful screening requires a valid and reliable tool. The Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) are considered a set of quality screening tools that provide a high level of accuracy for identifying children who may be at-risk for delays across the full spectrum of development.

An ASQ screen is completed by parents and administered by a trained home visiting professional, child care provider, early childhood educator, developmental therapists, or by a physician. The providers refer children to the state early intervention program and school districts for additional assessments when their screening scores indicate that a deeper look into the child's development is needed.

The State Early Intervention program and school districts also screen children as part of their Child Find responsibilities. They will engage in deeper assessments of the children whose scores indicate they may have a developmental delay.

Screening data is not collected from the disparate providers making it a challenge to obtain meaningful community level information about the number of children screened and referred for additional assessments. Chapin Hall has been working to secure permission to receive data from Early Intervention and Medicaid about the number of children in Oak Park and River Forest who have received developmental screenings. While not complete information, Medicaid and Early intervention data will provide some information about the number of children screened. The initial data transfer from District 97 did not include information about the number of children screened as part of the Child Find process. We are working with staff to ensure that this data is included in future data transfers.

The Collaboration provided hearing and vision screening to three to four year old children enrolled in child care centers and preschools. The numbers reported do not include children who were screened by the school district as part of the Child Find process. The number also includes children who do not live in Oak Park and River Forest but attend preschool or receive child care in the villages.

- 1,206 children received hearing screenings
- 1,094 children received vision screenings

Referrals for Assessments to Early intervention (birth to three year olds 0-3) or District 97 (3-5 year olds)

- We do not have data from Early Intervention to know the total number of children who were referred for assessments.
- Seventy-three preschool age children enrolled in District 97 were referred by Early Intervention for transition assessment and meetings.
- Twenty four children not in the Early Intervention System were assessed by District 97 during 2013-2014.

- Twenty seven of the 37 children referred for assessments due to concerns identified through the Collaboration's vision screening received the assessment.
- Six of the 11 children were referred for assessments due to concerns identified though the hearing screening received the assessment.

Services for Children Birth to Three Years Old

- Chapin Hall has not been able to secure data sharing agreements with Early Intervention or Medicaid to provide information about the early intervention services children receive.
- We will not know about services paid for out of pocket or by private insurance.

Services for Children 3-5 Years Old

- One hundred thirty 3-5 year old children received special education services from District 97.
- Sixty-nine of the 73 children who had received services from through the Early Intervention program and were referred to District 97 received services as 3-5 year olds.
- Twelve of the 24 children assessed by District 97 during 2013-2014 received services from District 97.
- All 6 of the children who were assessed for hearing concerns required and received treatment.
- Twenty five of the children who were assessed for vision concerns received treatment. Two of the 27 had normal assessments.

Child Outcome 1: Baseline Discussion

Collecting data for this measure has been a challenge. The lack of access to meaningful community level data about the number of children screened and assessed for developmental delays, evaluated as needing services, and the number who received services has made it impossible to gather credible baseline data for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

To address the problem, the Collaboration is pursuing a number of data collection and programmatic responses:

1. Chapin Hall is working to secure data-sharing agreements with the Illinois Department of Human Services' Early Intervention program to use administrative data to determine the number of children who are screened, the number of children who are referred for assessments, and the number of children who receive services.
2. Chapin Hall is working to secure a similar agreement with the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services regarding Medicaid data to determine the number of Medicaid eligible children living in Oak Park and River Forest who have been screened, assessed to determine eligibility for services, and the number who receive services. While this will not provide information about the complete group of children birth to age three, it will provide information about the subset of the birth to three population eligible for Medicaid, whose poverty puts them at significant risk.
3. The Collaboration is working with District 97 to ensure that the data transfer for 2014-2015 includes information about the total number of children assessed.
4. The Collaboration launched a pilot program to do our own tracking, and ensure children are being screened and referred for additional assessments when indicated. The project also provides reliable data about the number of screenings conducted and a system to track referrals, as well as service eligibility based on assessment outcomes. The Collaboration entered into an agreement with District 97 to use its web-based Enterprise account to access the ASQ questionnaires, and trained and supported twenty early childhood service providers in the implementation of a developmental screening program at their sites: 18 child care centers, preschools and family child care homes, one social service agency and one medical practice. The data for the pilot will be included for the report on the 2014-2015 school year. The Collaboration will work to expand the number of providers participating in the program during 2015-2016.
5. We will measure our progress by showing that increasing percentages of children are screened, and receive needed assessments and services.

Child Outcome 2: Percent of children in Oak Park and River Forest Preschool for All (PFA) and Head Start who demonstrate age-appropriate proficiency in each domain of development in accordance with the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

- Proficiency is measured using the Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) Assessment System, which is administered by teachers 3 times a year in preschool classrooms. It is completed by observing the child, not by the child completing a traditional "test".
- Assessment is done in the fall, winter, and spring.
- The Collaboration has access to all TSG assessment data in the Preschool for All and Head Start classrooms through information sharing agreements with all programs.

What We Know

Teaching Strategies Gold evaluation, Spring 2013 (4-year-olds group) -- Preschool-for-All children enrolled in D97 Kindergarten ONLY	Number of Children	Percent
Below Expectations or Basic/Emerging skills	4	7%
Proficient or Advanced	55	93%
Total	59	100%

Proficiency on Teaching Strategies GOLD evaluation, Spring 2013 (4-year-olds group)	% Below Expectations or Basic/Emerging skills	% Proficient or Advanced
African-American	17%	83%
White	3%	97%
Other (could not be split out due to small number)	0%	100%

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Child Outcome 2: Baseline Discussion

- For Preschool for All children who enrolled as kindergartners in District 97 in 2013-14, 93 percent were rated as proficient or advanced on a selection of objectives determined by local experts as indicative of a child's developmental level across domains.
- There were difference by race, where 17 percent of African-American students were not assessed as being proficient or above, while only 3 percent of white children and 0 of all non-white, non-African-American children were assessed at below proficient.
- These measures provide us with a starting point. We will monitor the trend for the entire group in ensuing years and pay close attention to the disparity in scores, working with the programs to reduce the disparities.
- As we gather TSG scores for different cohorts of children over time, we will be able to relate each cohort scores to how they perform as a group as they move through the elementary system.

Child Outcome 3: Percent of Children entering kindergarten demonstrating age-appropriate proficiency in the kindergarten readiness assessment administered by District 97.

- District 97 administers the Kindergarten Readiness Test (KRT) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional to all incoming kindergarten students. The data from these tools provides us with "readiness" measures.
- The Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS), under development by the Illinois State Board of Education, is scheduled to be required of all Illinois school districts in school year 2016-2017. It was piloted by District 97 beginning in school year 2012-2013. Kindergarten teachers administer KIDs three times per year in the fall, winter and spring. The fall data will provide important information about children's development across all domains as a first indicator of who they are performing in school.
- We are also interested in how KIDS and KRT data compares to how these same children performed on their spring TSG assessments (for children who were enrolled in Preschool for All).

What We Know

D97 Kindergartners, School year 2013-2014		Number of children	Number Proficient in KRT	Pct. Proficient in KRT
All children, paid/free/reduced lunch (with KRT scores)	All children with KRT scores	467	371	79%
All children, paid/free/reduced lunch (with KRT scores	Children in PFA/Head Start with KRT scores	71	56	79%
Paid lunch (with KRT scores)	All children with KRT scores	400	331	83%
Paid lunch (with KRT scores)	Children in PFA/Head Start with KRT scores	53	44	83%
Free/Reduced Lunch (with KRT scores)	All children with KRT scores	67	40	60%
Free/Reduced Lunch (with KRT scores)	Children in PFA/Head Start with KRT scores	18	11	61%

Child Outcome 3: Baseline Discussion

- Across all kindergartners in D97 in 2013-2014 79 percent demonstrated readiness. Students who were in the PFA/Head Start who attend D97 kindergarten had the same readiness.
- Low-income kindergartners, as defined by the free/reduced lunch status, who had participated in PFA/Head Start had significantly poorer readiness, although there were only 18 of those students.
- We recognize that there are differences in scores KRT and GOLD scores reported for low-income children enrolled in the PFA and Head Start. The KRT is administered one time by a teacher who does not know the student, and administered during the summer prior to kindergarten. The GOLD Assessment is an observational assessment completed by the teacher over time.
- The numbers of PFA/Head Start children progressing to kindergarten and being assessed are small. Therefore, differences in scores between the two assessment instruments can be highly influenced by a very small number of children. Therefore, it is important to watch this trend over time to see if it appears to be a consistent pattern.
- District 97 is also administering the KIDS assessment in the fall of the kindergarten year, and is also an observational assessment. The Illinois State Board of Education has not yet indicated when they will begin releasing this data to school districts for local analysis. When this data is available, we plan to compare GOLD, KRT, and KIDS.

Service Delivery Outcome 1: Kindergarten students with Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) assistance have a history of participation in PFA/HS/NAEYC accredited program, or a program meeting the Illinois Quality Rating System (ExceleRate) GOLD Circle of Quality.

- Kindergarten students receiving FRPL is our proxy for family income, which is a significant risk factor for lower achievement.
- We will also include kindergarten students who are enrolled in Medicaid, since the criteria for qualification is similar.
- Preschool for All, Head Start, and NAEYC and the ExceleRate Illinois GOLD Circle of Quality all meet rigorous criteria to ensure teacher quality, alignment with Illinois Early Learning standards, strong curriculum, appropriate physical environments for young children, parental support and regular and positive teacher-parent interactions.

What We Know

District 97 Students in Kindergarten in 2013-2014	Receiving FRPL	Not Receiving FRPL	All kindergarten Students
Number of Students	109	452	561
Attended preschool in Oak Park or River Forest	43	286	330 (58.8% of Kindergarteners)
Did not provide information about preschool attendance	4	10	14
No preschool history	27	30	57
Attended Preschool for All in Oak Park	22	61	83 (15.1% of Kindergarteners)
Attended Head Start in Oak park	5	3	8 (1.4% of Kindergarteners)
Attended NAEYC accredited preschool in Oak Park River Forest	12	120	132 (23.5% of Kindergarteners)
Total of Children enrolled in PFA Head Start and NAEYC accredited preschool program	**39** **(35.8%)**	**184** **(40.7%)**	**223** **(39.7%)**

Service Delivery Outcome 1: Baseline Discussion

- Our baseline year tells us that about 36% of children receiving free and reduced price lunch attended a Preschool for All, Head Start or a NAEYC accredited program.
- 20 percent of 2013-2014 Kindergartners received free and reduced schools lunch.
- Nearly 60% of kindergarten students attended preschool in Oak Park or River Forest.
- 13% of 2013-2014 Kindergartners who attended preschool in OP or RF received free and reduced schools lunch.
- For 10 percent of 2013-2014 Kindergartners, we have no preschool history, this includes just under one-third of children receiving free and reduced price lunch.
- A quarter of at-risk Kindergartners (those receiving FRPL) did not attend any preschool program.
- We will be reviewing outreach strategies to make sure that we are reaching families and also review intake procedures to make sure that children who meet the risk criteria are not being turned away from the Head Start and Preschool programs.
- We have worked with District 97 to improve the kindergarten registration form to collect additional and more accurate information about children's early learning experiences to learn where children are enrolling in preschool.
- We will be examining other data and research about how families meet their children's early learning and child care needs. We recognize that many families will seek child care close to where the parents work, not necessarily within our community.
- Some families are forced to make decisions based on affordability and the availability of full-day care. Many of the high quality programs provide only half-day services and those that provide full-day, full-year programs are often too costly for lower income families even with the support of the Child Care assistance Program.
- We will be working closely with the Preschool for All and Head Start programs to make sure that we accurately record where children are going after they leave the programs in order to understand if and why children may not be matriculating into District 97.

Service Delivery Outcome 2: Teen parents and families receiving up through All Kids Level 1 health insurance for their child under age 3 receive referral to intensive parent education program.

- All Kids Level 1 Health Insurance is managed by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. In order to be eligible, families must meet income requirements based on their family size. The state has not yet granted permission to Chapin Hall to use administrative Medicaid data for this project.
- We do not have a good source of data for the number of teen parents, other than the number of student-parents at Oak Park River Forest High School.
- All families seeking services are referred to Parenthesis Family Center in Oak Park. Referrals come from a variety of sources, including schools, doctors, social service agencies.
- It is difficult to determine how many of the families referred meet the qualifications in the denominator. A number of referred families do not follow up on the referral and engage in the program. When this occurs, we often only have a first and last name and a cell phone number or email address. Referring agencies are reluctant to share income or health insurance status with Parenthesis when making a referral.
- Parenthesis did not maintain records of teens, and low income families referred to the home visiting programs that were funded outside of its contract with the Collaboration programs (Parenteen and Mothering on Our Own) who did not enroll in the home visiting program during 2013-2014.

What We Know

	Teen Parents	Non-Teen Parents
Number of families in Oak Park and River Forest receiving All Kids Level 1 (also includes families who qualify for All Kids Assist and All Kids Share, which are for lower income families)	NA	NA
Number of families referred to Parenthesis Family Center	NA	55

Service Delivery Outcome 2: Baseline Discussion

- During 2015-2016 we will continue to work to secure permission to receive and use Medicaid data from the state to help establish the number of children for the denominator of this measure.
- Parenthesis Family Center began to maintain records of children referred to their intensive home visiting program in 2015 to ensure we have an accurate count of the number of families referred for home visiting.
- Matching the referred families to the Medicaid data will continue to be a challenge due to the limited information referring agencies are willing to provide about the family – often only a first and last name and a phone number. Parenthesis Family Center often receives on a first name and telephone number.
- We expect to see increasing numbers of families referred during 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 as Parenthesis Family Center works to achieve a full case load of 80-100 families under its contract with the Collaboration.
- We may revise this indicator. Teen parents and families receiving subsidized health insurance are not the only families confronting risk and hardship -— mental and physical health status of all family members, parents serving in military, incarceration, mother's education, homelessness, family trauma or crisis, foster parents and so on all contribute to excessive stress in families that can negatively impact children's healthy development.

Service Delivery Outcome 3: Percent of referred parents who choose to participate in the intensive parent education program.

- Intensive parent education is offered by Parenthesis Family Center through the Parents as Teachers Program. This program offers in home parenting education, developmental screening, referrals and group connections meetings. Children's development and parent effectiveness are monitored for growth. Parenthesis Family Center enrolled its first families through its contract with the Collaboration in May 2014.
- Parenthesis tracks all of its home visiting services in VisitTracker, a software tool provided by the state to all providers following the Parents as Teachers model. In addition to the data generated through the Collaboration's contract with Parenthesis, an inter-agency data sharing agreement enables the Collaboration to analyze all of the data related to all of the home visiting programs.

What We Know

	2014
Number of families referred for home visiting to Parenthesis Family Center	55
Number of families who participated in home visiting	27
Percentage	49

Service Delivery Outcome 3: Baseline Discussion

- Given the relative recent investment of the federal and state government in home-visiting, this is an area in which we will learn a great deal more in future years.
- There are many factors that affect how many families who are referred to home visiting actually participate in home visiting, including trust, functional status, and parenting confidence. (Goyal et al., 2014.)
- Having half of referrals participate is on par with the performance of other jurisdictions, although there is information from relatively few other places.
- When we have richer information on families from other state data sources, we will be better able to differentiate who participates and the characteristics of those who do and do not.
- We have a good system in place for collecting better data on this topic in the future.

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Service Delivery Outcome 4: Percent of kindergarten and 1st grade students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) who have documentation of receiving services in early childhood (if they lived in Oak Park or River Forest during their early childhood years).

- For children from birth to age 3, families can be assessed by Child Family Connections (CFC), which is the gateway to publicly-funded services. CFC reports that it cannot provide data on Oak Park/River Forest residents, so we are attempting to understand who received publicly funded services during this age range by relying on Medicaid data.
- For children ages 3-5, school districts provide services. We have clear information about current K and 1st grade students in D97 to know whether or not they received services when they were ages 3-5. We also know the number of those children who had a history of involvement with the Early Intervention System.
- We are working with District 90 to receive the same service history information about their current K and 1st grade students.

What We Know

	Kindergarten	First Grade
Number of Students	561	641
Number (%) of students with IEPs	69 (12.2%)	83 (12.9%)
Number (%) of students with IEPs who received early childhood special education services from D97	35 (50.7%)	15 (18%)
Number (%) of students with IEPs who received services birth – 3.	19 (27%)	11 (13%)

Service Delivery Outcome 4: Baseline Discussion

- About 12 percent of all 2013-2014 Kindergartners have IEPs.
- A slightly higher percentage of 2013-2014 1st graders have IEPs.
- Half of the kindergartners who have IEPs received early childhood special education services from D97. A quarter of them received early intervention services before they were three.
- We will continue to work to obtain aggregated data from District 97 regarding the number of kindergarten and first grade students with IEPs and a history of involvement in Early Childhood Special Education and Early Intervention.
- As we learned about the data collection and capabilities of the databases District 97 uses it became clear that obtaining reliable longitudinal data bout children involved in Special Education is challenging. We will be working with District 97 during 2015-2016 to identify the best strategies for obtaining longitudinal information about the number of children receiving special education services.
- We are not trying to suppress the number of children with IEPs. We are hoping to follow the children who received IEPs or Early Intervention support early to determine if they do in fact have fewer IEPs as they progress through elementary school.
- We are working with District 97 to make sure we understand the level of services children are receiving, in order to assess the impact of early services.

System Level Outcome 1: Percent of families with children under 5 are included in the voluntary database and receive developmental information and an early childhood resource directory.

- We can establish an estimate for the number of families with children under kindergarten age using U.S. census data and updates.
- We are constrained in our ability to report on this outcome by the absence of a single way to track everyone who has received information from the Collaboration. There are far more distribution channels available to us now than were envisioned when these outcomes were developed in 2009. Therefore, we have approached measurement of this outcome by including as broad a group as possible in estimating our reach. For 2013-2014 we include:
  - ✓ Families served by Parenthesis in both their home visiting and "light touch" programs
  - ✓ Families who with children enrolled in Head Start and Preschool for All who agreed to share their information with the Collaboration.
  - ✓ People who connect with the Collaboration and Parenthesis on social media.
  - ✓ Email list developed through Collaboration staff outreach and inquiries to the Collaboration that are specific to the provision of information to families about child development and programs and resources.
  - ✓ The early childhood resource directory was originally a printed directory of the services available in our community. It is still printed and distributed widely, but also exists online, making it more challenging to quantify the full magnitude of the reach.
- The multiple distribution channels also make it very difficult to track duplication of families who receive information from multiple sources.

What We Know

	June 2014
Number of people in Oak Park and River Forest	63,159
Number of families with children under age 6 in Oak Park and River Forest	3,448
Number of families in Oak Park and River Forest who are part of the voluntary database and are receiving services through Collaboration programs and contracts. (Preschool for All and Head Start, Parenthesis work)	303
Number of people on the Collaboration's email distribution list for early childhood information	118
Number of families participating in the Parenting Resource Program through the contract with parenthesis Family Center and receiving childhood development information and information about programs and services	453
Number of people following Collaboration's Facebook page for parenting resources and information about early childhood	190
Number of people following Parenthesis Facebook page for parenting information and information about early childhood	680
Number of printed Resource Directories distributed	6,500

System Delivery Outcome 1: Baseline Discussion

We recommend updating the way in which our outreach is measured to reflect an ever-expanding set of distribution channels. We believe this measure should be broadened to show the extent to which the Collaboration's system development work is reaching more families. We will report on:

1. The number of families receiving services through Collaboration programs and contracts who agree to share their information with the Collaboration in order to monitor the impact of the Collaboration's efforts on children over time. These children will constitute the longitudinal database and the Collaboration will be able to report on their progress through the school district as their data is linked to the data provided by District 97.

2. The number of families with children between the ages of birth to five who received information about child development, resources and programs available in the Oak Park River Forest communities. These counts will be reported separately because we cannot know the extents to which families are counted more than one time.

In addition,

- 2013-2014 was the first year that the Collaboration ramped up programs and integration of efforts as a result of the contract with the Intergovernmental Agreement to purchase Early childhood Services.
- We expect the number of families who agree to share their information with the Collaboration to grow significantly for 2014-2015 and continue to grow over time as the work of creating an integrated system of programs and services ramps up significantly.
- Children participating in the Collaboration's developmental screening project will be counted in this measure beginning 2014-2015, the pilot year.

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System Level Outcome 2: Percent of teachers and directors in Oak Park early childhood programs who have above minimum state educational requirements for their role.

Teacher levels of educational attainment and training are closely associated with high quality programs. Teacher education is also associated with the responsive and innovative teaching that greatly benefits children and better prepares them for kindergarten entry. The Collaboration's goal is to increase the number of people working in the early childhood field who have extensive coursework and/or hold degrees in early childhood education or child development.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services establishes baseline requirements for educational backgrounds for early childhood professionals in order to receive and maintain a license to operate in an early childhood program. There are various levels of staff – program directors, assistant directors, teachers, and teacher aides/assistants.

Based on information from a survey it conducted in fall 2015, the Collaboration estimates that there are 425 people working in child care centers and preschools in Oak Park and River Forest.

- Obtaining data for this measure is challenging. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and referral Agencies (INCCRRA) hosts the early childhood workforce registry and is charged with collecting data for all early childhood professionals in licensed centers. The Collaboration submitted a request for information about the educational backgrounds and professional development activities of early childhood providers in Oak Park and River Forest from INCCRRA in January 2014 and received the information in December 2014 - almost one full year later. INCCRRA does not regularly clean the data for individuals who may be duplicated because they moved to another center or preschool. It also provided aggregated numbers across all staff levels; we cannot distinguish between the types of staff and different levels of education attained within each staff level.
- The Collaboration collected information about post-secondary educational attainment and coursework on paper and spreadsheets for calendar year 2013. Participation is voluntary, and does not capture the entirety of the early childhood workforce. Family child care providers are not included in either data set.

	Number	Above minimum requirements
Number (%) of directors in Oak Park and River Forest with above minimum state educational requirements	21	15 (71.4%)
Number (%) of teachers in Oak Park and River Forest with above minimum state educational requirements	105	54 (48.6%)
Number (%) of assistant teachers in Oak Park and River Forest with above minimum state educational requirements	63	27 (42.9%)
Number of assistant directors in Oak Park and River Forest with above minimum state educational requirements	12	8 (66.7%)
Number (%) of early childhood workforce in Oak Park and River Forest with above state minimum state education requirements	202	104 (51.5%)

System Level Outcome 2: Baseline Discussion

- Nearly three-quarters of directors surveyed met or exceeded the minimum educational requirements.
- About half of the teachers surveyed met or exceeded the minimum educational requirements.
- The limitations of the data described above make it very challenging to establish a meaningful baseline measure. To address the problem, the Collaboration piloted a new approach to data collection for the 2014-2015 fiscal year, conducting an online survey in March 2015. Staff at all Oak Park and River Forest child care centers and preschools, including those outside of the licensing requirements, were invited to participate in the survey. Licensed family child care providers were also invited to participate. Respondents were asked to provide identifying information so that we can track their professional growth and activity from one year to the next. The hope is that this data will be more complete and allow better monitoring of changes and trends in the professional development activities of the early childhood workforce in Oak Park and River Forest.
- In order to expand the data, the Collaboration will weigh whether working to obtain information from staff at Montessori schools and parochial schools yields results with significant additional information about the early childhood workforce.

The Collaboration's programmatic approach to improve baseline educational levels is to:
- Link early childhood professionals working in Oak Park and River Forest to Professional Development Advisors through the Illinois Gateways system.
- Provide early childhood professionals with guidance when warranted with applications and the financial aid processes.
- Encourage individuals working in similar child care centers to take the same courses so that they have a support group as they engage in college coursework.
- Encourage individuals to opt for college level coursework to obtain professional development credit as a way to advance their career and satisfy professional development training requirements.

System Level Outcome 3: Percent of teachers and child care providers reporting more than the state-mandated 15 documented hours of continuing professional education each year.

Like K-12 schools, highly trained early childhood professionals who are committed to professional growth are associated with providing high-quality early learning environments and programs. The Collaboration's goal is to increase the number of people working in the early childhood field who value ongoing, meaningful professional development and exceed the minimum requirement for professional development hours.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services establishes a baseline annual professional development requirement of 15 hours for every early childhood professionals at all levels – program directors, assistant directors, teachers, and teacher aides/assistants - in order to receive and maintain a license to operate.

Typical ways early childhood providers receiving continuing professional education include:

- Participating in an individual workshop or a workshop series sponsored by organizations such as the Collaboration or Illinois Action for Children.
- Attending conferences and symposia.
- Participating in workshops provided by local school districts or higher education institutions, including Concordia, Dominican, Districts 97 and 90 and Triton College.
- Taking classes for credit at higher education institutions toward a degree.
- Online training webinars.

What We Know

	Number	15 hours	20 or more hours
Directors in Oak Park and River Forest	21	3	13
Teachers in Oak Park and River Forest	105	16	62
Assistant teachers in Oak Park and River Forest	63	20	24
Assistant directors in Oak Park and River Forest	12	3	8
Number (%) of early childhood workforce in Oak Park and River Forest	202	42 (20.8%)	107 (53.0%)

System Level Outcome 3: Baseline Discussion

The discussion related to System Outcome 2 also pertains to this outcome. The data reported does not enable the Collaboration to establish a meaningful baseline measure due to the limitations of the two data sets described above. To address the problem, the Collaboration piloted a new approach to data collection for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

The Collaboration's programmatic approach to improve baseline educational levels is:
- Maintain status of the Collaboration as an entitled agency for the Gateways System in Illinois. This means that all of our trainings and workshops receive approval for registry credit.
- Align workshop offerings with requirements of the ExceleRate Quality Rating system so that early childhood professionals are sure that their professional development hours will help improve the quality score of their center or preschool.
- Provide some coaching after workshops are offered to help ensure that the learning is integrated into the practice of the early childhood professionals.
- Provide workshop series that build on topics rather than lots of one-time sessions. Ensure that enough workshop hours are offered so that early childhood professionals can acquire more than the minimum requirement for professional development hours.
- Encourage individuals to take the same courses so that they have a support group as they engage in college coursework.
- Encourage individuals to opt for college level coursework to obtain professional development credit as a way to advance their career and satisfy professional development training requirements.

System Level Outcome 4: Percent of preschools, child care centers, and homes are engaged in the Illinois Quality Rating System (ExceleRate) and improve their scores each year.

- ExceleRate was launched in July 2014 to standardize the expectations of quality for all Illinois early childhood programs from child care centers to preschool programs to state funded Preschool for All programs to the federally funded Head Start programs. Rather than numeric scores, ExceleRate is using quality circles of green, bronze, silver and gold. Providers can also earn awards of excellence for specific aspects of their programs such including children with special needs, infant and toddler services, family engagement and so on. A license to operate earns an automatic award of a Green Circle of Quality. Licensed centers, preschools and homes are required to be involved in the ExceleRate program. Unlicensed preschools and child care centers (16 total) – Montessoris, church-based programs, programs housed in public schools – can choose to participate but are not required to do so. Montessori programs and faith-based programs see themselves as separate from public and state systems. The Collaboration anticipates that most, if not all, will continue to choose not to participate in ExceleRate. It will make recommendations for next year about how to account for programs that are outside of state requirements and accountability efforts.

- During fiscal year 2013-2014, Illinois rated *licensed* preschools, child care centers and licensed family child care homes through the Illinois Quality Rating System. Half day-preschool programs were not allowed to participate in this program until July 2014, disqualifying six of the 26 licensed programs in Oak Park and River Forest.

- The Collaboration collects data through phone interviews, on-site visits and at trainings it provides from centers, preschools, and family child care homes about their involvement in the Illinois Quality Rating System. The data reported on this measure provides the baseline for the number of centers and family child care homes that had a Quality Rating through the state system.

- Of the 6 centers that had scores, three centers worked to improve their scores over the course of the year. The three centers and five child care family homes that had not participated in the Illinois Quality Rating System took the necessary first steps to participate in order to receive a score. Because Illinois was in the process of launching a revised system for quality rating, now named ExceleRate, in July 2014, none of these sites submitted an application for a score. They decided to wait until they fully understood how the new system would work. 2013-2014 marked the first year that any family child care home providers began to engage in the quality rating process.

What We Know

	June 2014
Number of preschools and child care centers	42
Number of licensed preschools and child care centers	26
Number (%) of preschools and child care centers involved in the Illinois Quality Rating System and have received a score.	6 (14%)
Number (%) of licensed preschools and child care centers involved in the Illinois Quality Rating System and have received a score. (Note: Licensed half-day programs were not eligible to participate in the system in 2013-2014.)	6 (23%)
Number (%) of preschools and child care centers involved in the Illinois Quality Rating system that improved their scores.	0
Number of licensed family child care homes	38
Number of licensed family child care homes that participated in the Illinois Quality Rating System.	0

System Delivery Outcome 4: Baseline Discussion

2013-2014 was a transitional year for the Illinois Quality Rating System as the new program was launched in July 2014. This transition stopped the participation of Oak Park and River Forest centers and preschools as they waited to learn what the new system would look like. However, this did not keep six centers and six family child care homes from preparing to engage once the new system was launched. The following is the Collaboration's approach to measuring progress during 2014-2015:

- The Collaboration has determined that it is more appropriate to focus on changes in the overall quality circle rating centers, preschools and family child care providers receive from year to year. This is a broader measure will not be as sensitive as reporting on incremental numeric changes in scores and will impact the rate at which scores look like they are improving. However, the Collaboration believes it will provide a more reliable indication of improvement. The many variables in play including different raters providing scores, changes in scoring emphasis or rubrics on as many as 15 different standards across four domains covering the environment, administrative processes, curriculum, faculty and staff training and educational background, parent engagement -- within one circle of quality -- all make incremental change a less reliable measure. Beginning with the report for 2014-2015, improvements in scores will only be reported for centers, preschools and family child care providers who have moved from one circle of quality to another.
- The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) is charged with collecting and maintaining data for ExceleRate. It has determined that it will not share information beyond the quality circle posted on their website for any program that has earned a score. We will use the information provided by INCCRRA in its reports as well as the information the Collaboration collects through the phone interviews, site visits and information gathered at our trainings to report on the level of engagement and progress in the ExceleRate Quality Rating System.
- The Collaboration will report on the number of child care centers, preschool and family child care providers engaged in the ExceleRate Quality Rating System, the number who have worked to improve their scores (submitted an application for a new score) and the number who have moved from one Circle of Quality to a higher Circle of Quality or vice versa. The Collaboration expects to see increasing numbers in all three areas for fiscal year 2014-2015.

Collaboration for Early Childhood Report to IGA Governing Board, May 6, 2015

Recommendations for Measuring Progress

Data collection and analysis are an integral part of the Collaboration's contract through the Intergovernmental Agreement with District 97, District 200 and the Village of Oak Park. The building of a unified database that links information about children across disparate data sources is the first step in making data useful for the purposes of connecting systems and services so that children and their families are well served. The scope of work around data collection and analysis that the Collaboration has undertaken is enabling the community as a whole to improve its data collection processes and service delivery for our very youngest and vulnerable children.

The processes of data collection and analysis shed bright light on how vulnerable children fall through the cracks of programs *and* data. Identifying the cracks, asking questions in order to understand why the cracks exist and working to make critical connections in order to obtain the data are all part of the effort to improve program and service delivery to better support our youngest children and their families. It is also part of our most important task, that of understanding whom the most vulnerable children are, where they are and what barriers they face to obtaining high quality early childhood services.

The Unified Early Childhood Database will enable us to design analyses and measure progress from year-to-year. Progress will be aimed at improving the infrastructure of programs and how they relate to each other. The data will help us understand where services are adequate, inadequate or underutilized and identify quality programs and their contributing factors. We will also be able to report on how the system of programs and services is impacting children. We will be able to report percentage changes as well as differences in absolute numbers. We will be able to adjust for other factors such as changes in the characteristics of children and providers. It's important to note that data becomes more valuable over time, longitudinal data provides the best picture about how children are faring in our community. However, there are limitations.

Data is only meaningful when understood in context. Progress has to be defined both in terms of in a context of multiple factors. For example:

- An increase or decrease in a particular indicator may not mean progress. It may mean that services are being provided to children who do not need them or that the eligibility pool for services is being cast too wide. However, if we design the analysis well, we will be able to adjust for some of the factors that may be biasing our results.
- The composition of children in Oak Park/River Forest changes over time and it may be the case that the targets change as a result of the compositional change and not as a result of the actual systemic changes being implemented. For example, if families with lower incomes moving into Oak Park increase, we can attempt to adjust our calculations to take this into account.
- The size of a particular group of interest poses challenges to measuring progress. While a particular outcome may change, how do we interpret a small change with a large group of children versus a smaller group? A change of 1 child in a group of 10 may mean a lot more that a change of 3 children in a group of 50, depending on the indicator.
- Finally, we are not measuring every possible factor that might affect a particular outcome measure. While we may be able to explain some increases or decreases, there will be simply some for which we do not have data. For example, we do not know a great deal about the families of children, which is clearly an important factor in children's lives. While we may be able to adjust for some characteristics of families, it will be hard to adjust comprehensively for the family characteristics that matter on a particular topic.

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We have provided the first report on the status of data collection and baseline measures for all eleven indicators and made progress on each one. In many ways, the first year and one-half has involved a data needs assessment and a community/program needs assessment. Future reports will describe progress on these measures. As we work over the next few years, the targets cannot become an end within themselves. It is vital to the success of the effort that we connect the programming of the Collaboration to the development of the targets. Some targets will focus more on the process or programming needed to make progress. Others may simply identify the movement of the target. The data collection and monitoring process should establish a high quality feedback loop whose purpose is to focus our efforts on serving children well – providing strong services, generating useful data and setting ambitious and realistic targets.

The Collaboration and the Measurement and Evaluation Committee propose to work during June to September to establish baseline targets and recommendations for the IGA Governing Board to consider at its September meeting. Some data from Year Two of the contract will be available for this work. Furthermore, we would like to identify a calendar for when different types of reports can be provided so that they will inform the work of the Collaboration and its many partners, including District 97, in a timely way.

We propose the following process:

1. Review the baseline measures with the Collaboration Council at the May 29, 2015 Annual Meeting to receive input from Council members in the development of targets of 2015-2016.
2. Provide baseline measures and data concerns to appropriate Collaboration Committees to receive guidance in the establishment of targets and related program development strategies.
3. Present recommendations to the IGA Governing Board at the September meeting.