



# Report on Our Progress: Building Oak Park's Early Childhood Community System

July 2013 - Fall 2017



# Reminder About Our Beginnings

- Initiated in 2002 -- impetus came from Oak Park Elementary School District 97
- Driving Issue → Ensuring that every Oak Park child has access to high-quality early care and learning experiences. Perceived that opportunity gaps in early childhood lead to very real disparities in what children bring to kindergarten.
- 2/3 of disparities in achievement are in place before children enter kindergarten. The persistence of these disparities show how difficult it is for schools to make the difference.
- The early childhood sector is deeply fragmented, of wide ranging quality and it is segregated based on ability to pay for services.



# Reminder About Our Beginnings

- Established in 2003 as a nonprofit organization, the Collaboration became a public/private partnership in which *all* of the local governmental agencies contribute financially and participate through staff and/or board involvement
- Now have more than 70 active partners:
  - Village, Elementary and High School Districts, Township, Park District, Library
  - Universities
  - Health Care Providers, Developmental Service Providers, Early Intervention
  - Child care centers, preschools, home child care providers
  - Donors and community members



# The Heckman Equation

There are lasting benefits from high-quality early childhood experiences for every child throughout their lifetimes, including:

- Increased educational productivity,
- Decreased involvement with police and the juvenile justice system,
- Fewer student discipline issues,
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol by middle schoolers and teens,
- Most recent analyses show returns on investments range from 7 to 13%.



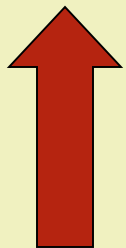
April 2013

## The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)

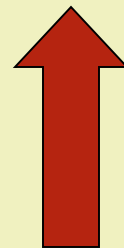
- After 10 years of making discrete strategic efforts to increase the capacity of early learning providers to increase quality and improve access to care, the Village, Elementary and High School Districts agreed on the vital importance of high-quality early childhood services to their missions and to the vision that Oak Park held as a diverse community committed to the success of every resident. ... “a stake in the ground issue.”
- Established a ground breaking Intergovernmental Agreement to purchase services from the Collaboration for Early Childhood to establish an integrated system of high-quality programs after more than a year of discussions. Pro bono legal opinion that provided the framework for the IGA was written by Darryl Davidson of Miller Canfield.



Children arrive at kindergarten safe, healthy,  
ready to succeed and eager to learn (IL ELC)



Every child has  
access to high-  
quality early care  
and education



All parents have  
the information  
and support they  
need in their role  
as a child's first and  
most important  
teacher



The most at-risk  
children and their  
families receive  
intensive services  
to ensure healthy  
development and  
school readiness



### Collaboration Council

- Sets strategic direction
- Approves board member nominations
- Approves annual budget

### Board of Directors

- Acts on all decisions (through consensus process)
- Adopts policies
- Supervises executive director

### Intergovernmental Oversight Board

- Reviews annual budget and audit
- Reviews program services and outcomes

### Early Detection Screenings

- Establish system to assure all children birth to five receive periodic developmental screening
- Conduct vision and hearing screenings at preschools
- Implement follow-up processes to ensure all children needing assessments and services receive them
- Maintain accurate, up-to-date inventory of services and disseminate to all providers and families

### Parent Information and Support

- Provide information about child development and services to every parent
- Offer every at-risk family intensive parent education/support
- Make available group support and periodic visits to all families
- Publish Early Childhood Resource Directory bi-annually

### Professional Development

- Provide training programs in best practice and career development advice to preschool and child care staff
- Coach centers on quality improvement and qualify them for state recognition and financial incentives
- Provide leadership coaching to center directors
- Develop loan/scholarship program for college credit and training programs
- Offer annual symposium on critical early childhood issues

### Public Preschool Coordination

- Coordinate outreach for, and referral to, all programs for at-risk children
- Lead curriculum planning, instructional improvement, and unified assessment by programs to ensure high quality
- Work with all early education providers to establish community expectations for incoming kindergarteners

### Voluntary Database

Includes all children birth to five to monitor program participation, service usage and program impact

Includes staff of early care and education programs to monitor staff qualifications, professional development activities and participation in Illinois State quality enhancement programs to monitor impact of programs



# Professional Development Strategy

Goal: Improve quality of early learning experiences by increasing the professional skills of the early childhood workforce in Oak Park and River Forest and forming a professional learning community.







# Professional Development Strategy

Annual Symposium began in 2003 – began with 140 attendees and grew to a signature event attended by almost 400, of which more than 78% are early learning professionals who live and/or teach in Oak Park or River Forest.

The Symposium workshops are accredited by all state oversight bodies including: Illinois State Board of Education, Early Intervention Services, and Illinois Gateways to Opportunity.





# Professional Development

Promote adoption of research-based curricula through workshop series, coaching in curriculum implementation and intentional inclusion of social emotional learning standards in activities.

Reach has grown from 6-8 centers per year to 130 - 140 staff members staff at 31 child care centers and 24 child care homes.





# Professional Development: After the IGA

Connect centers, preschools and family child care providers to state systems – leverage state supported advising and guidance to systems designed to increase quality.

Provide some individual support as centers and family child care providers engage in the state Quality Rating System, ExceleRate, and work to obtain credentials.



Preparing  
Children for  
Success





## Professional Development: New Initiatives in 2017

After more than a decade of effort, made contact with the 42 previously unknown, license-exempt providers in the Village (family, friend and neighbor care).

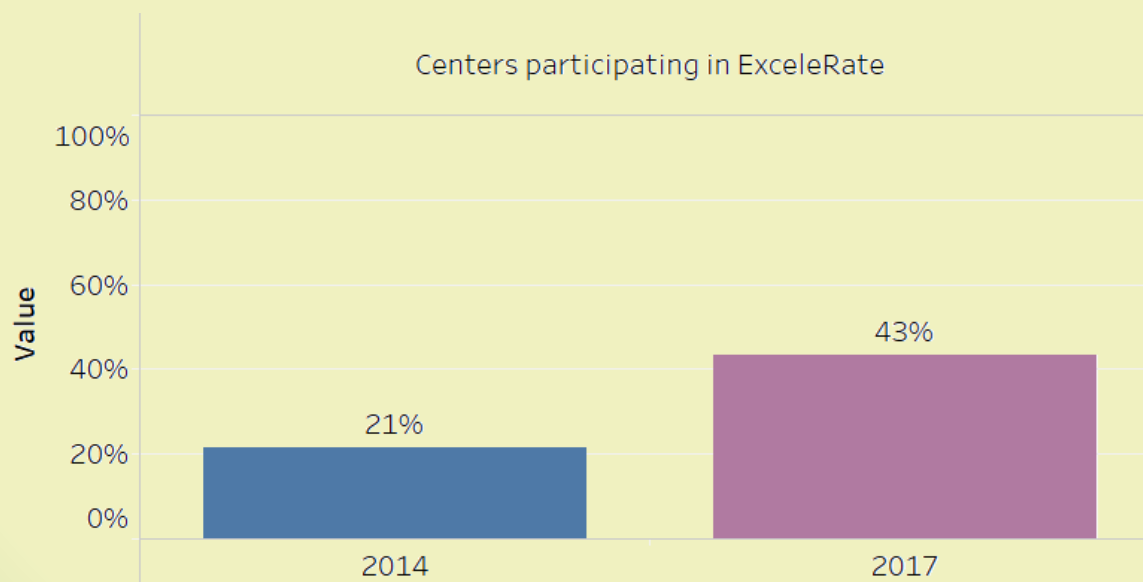
Met with these providers in the Oak Park Public Library computer lab to engage them in the State Quality Rating system and support their online coursework to meet training requirements through the Gateways system.

Helped 26 providers meet requirements for state child care payments.



# Professional Development Impact

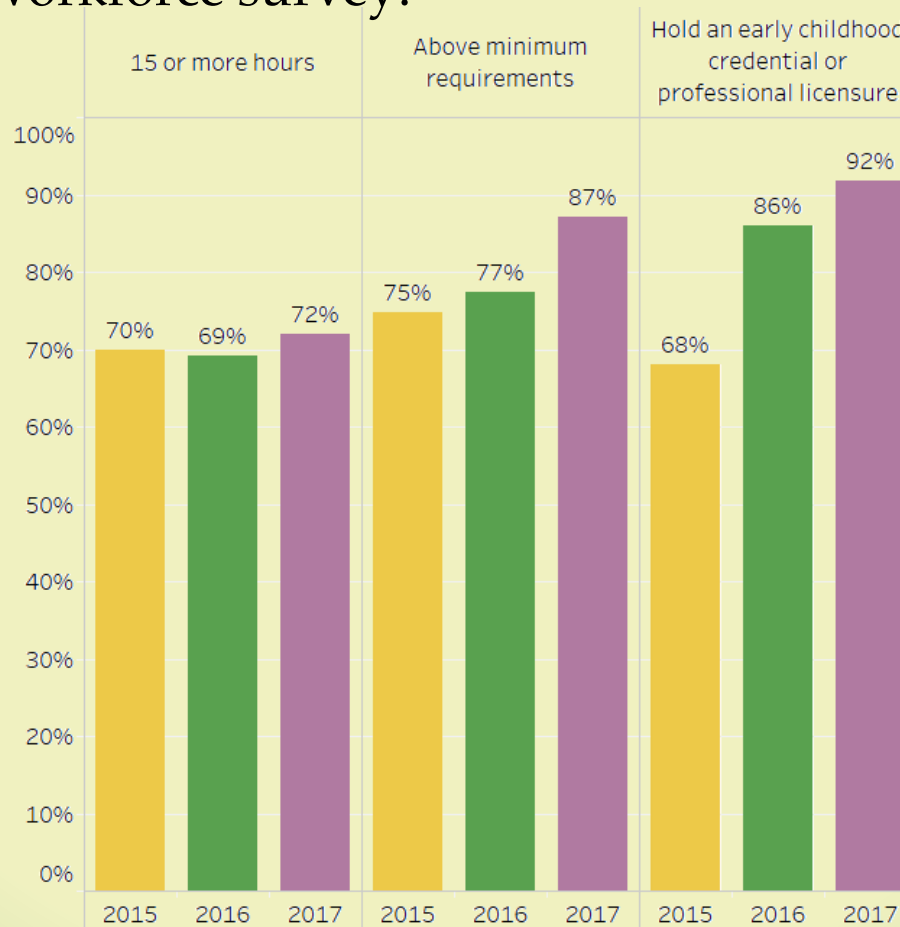
- The number of child care centers and preschools participating in the ExceleRate Quality Rating System doubled from 9 to 20.





# Professional Development Impact

Hours and credentials earned by early childhood professionals as reported on our workforce survey:





## Professional Development: Plan for Progress

- Continue to increase engagement of license-exempt providers.
- Consider ways to connect early learning programs in Oak Park to the Collaboration as an expectation for doing business.
- Continue training series, coaching and supporting engagement in ExceleRate and Gateways Credentialing programs.



# Developmental Screening Strategy

Goal: Ensure every child under kindergarten age receives at least 1 developmental screening per year and that children qualifying for services receive them.







# Developmental Screening Strategy

Formed a Physicians Network in 2008 to increase developmental screenings by pediatricians and family practice physicians during well child visits.

Continue to offer bi-annual meetings on key child development topics to foster connections and align efforts among medical practitioners, early learning providers and developmental therapists.





# Developmental Screening Strategy

Began hearing and vision screening after the Village determined that it could no longer support this activity in 2009.

Hearing and vision are foundational for literacy development and social skills. Little losses have major impact on very young children.

Now screen 1,400 children ages 3-5, who are not in kindergarten.

We work with the 34 participating sites to ensure that children receive any needed follow up services.





# Developmental Screening Program

January 2014 – Hired full time Developmental Screening Coordinator to develop and implement a developmental screening program with child care and early learning providers, using a web-based screening tool.

July 2014 – Launched screening program by providing training and a support program with 20 center-based providers and family child care providers.

FY2017 program now includes 30 sites:

- 17 child care centers and preschools

- 9 family child care providers

- 3 medical practices

- 1 social service agency



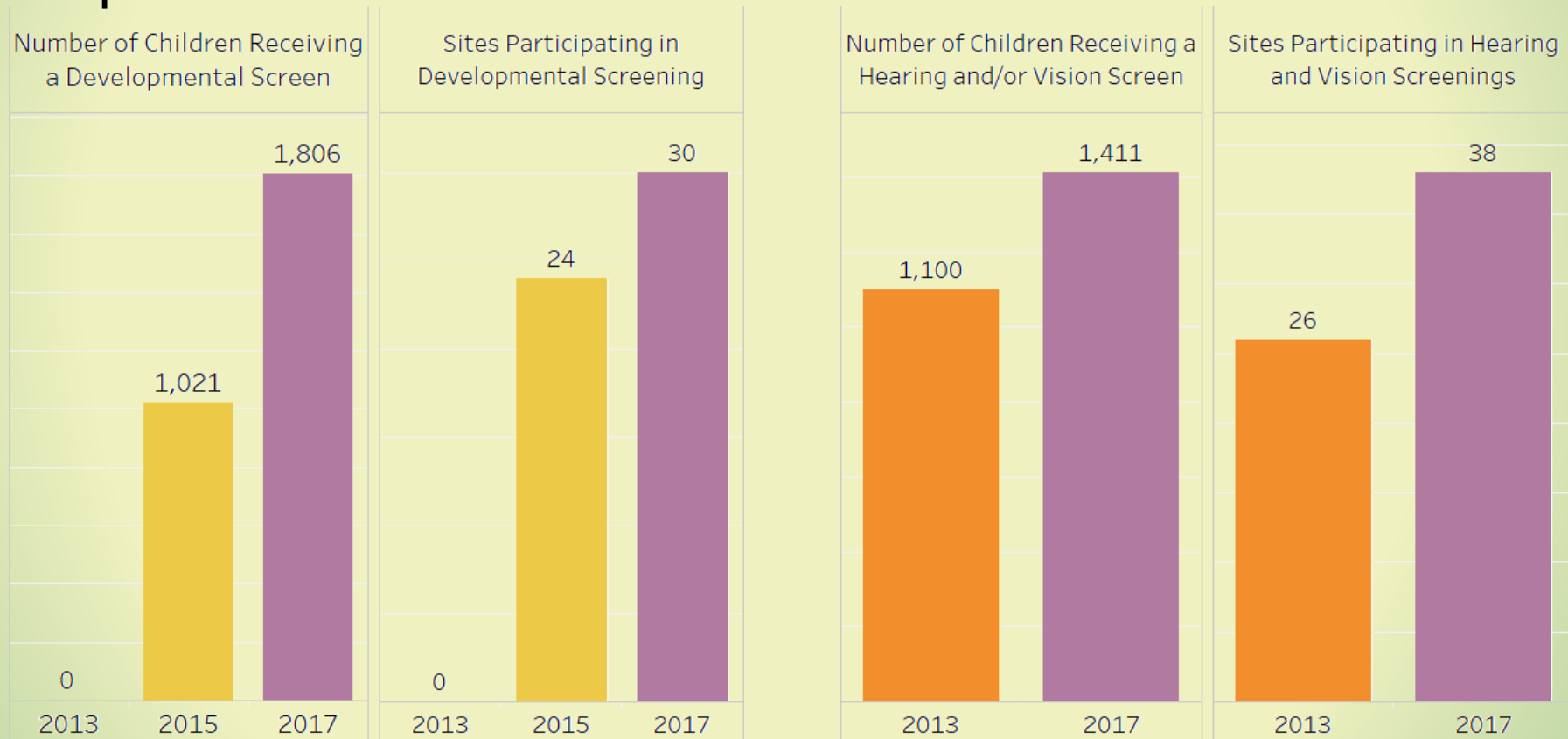
# Developmental Screening Program

Infrastructure for a Developmental Screening Program is well established.

- Usage agreement with District 97 to use online system.
- Developed required parental authorizations.
- Customized the database fields to help us monitor follow-up activities.
- Developed report to facilitate communication between adults involved in child's life: parent, child care or early learning provider, therapist, medical provider.



# Developmental Screening Program: Impact



In FY2017, 107 children were referred for additional assessments based on all of these screenings.



# Developmental Screening Program: Plan for Progress

Foster a robust parental demand for developmental screening as an important component of monitoring a child's health and development – like a vaccine.

Continue to expand number of early learning sites involved in the program.

Support providers to increase their skills at supporting children with delays in the programs.

Improve data collection around recording of follow up activities.



# Parent Information and Support Strategy

Goal: To ensure that parents have the information and support they need to feel confident in their role as their child's first and most important teacher.

Publish Early Childhood Resource Directory

- Became the “go to” resource for parents and social service providers.
- Distribute 10,000-12,000 every other year.

“Watch and Help Me Grow” published in 2012.





# Parent Information and Support Strategy

2013 – Contracted with one agency to expand home visiting programs to increase service from 30 to 110 families meeting risk criteria and also develop and offer continuum of supports to all families from online resources to workshops to parent coaching.

2015 – Changed approach of contracting with one agency to provide full compendium of services.

- Determined that a contract for home visiting services to increase intensive supports should be a separate contract.
- Issued a modified RFP to 2013 respondents and selected Easterseals, a child and disability services agency located on Madison Street in Oak Park since 1968.





# Parent Information and Support

Increased capacity to provide home visiting services through implementation of research-based, evidence-informed model program:

- Three agencies now offer the “Parents as Teachers” program: Easterseals, Hephzibah, and New Moms.
- Capacity has grown from 30 families to up to 150 families.
- Leverage resources from the Illinois Office of Early Childhood Development.
- Contracted with the Village of Oak Park to secure services to coordinate intake for three programs to simplify referral process. Program launched in Fall 2017.



# Parent Information and Support: After the IGA

Spring-Summer 2016: Redeveloped the “lighter support” program. Conducted a survey of 446 parents and 7 focus groups, plus a survey of 48 professionals from 39 service organizations and 15 interviews with 29 professionals.

Strategy development guided by 14 member committee representing local service providers and parents.

**Parenting Resource Program**  
Recommendation and Strategic Framework  
Fall 2016 Report



Collaboration for  
Early Childhood  
*Strong Start, Bright Future*



## Parent Information and Support: After the IGA

Primary Recommendation: Collaboration will coordinate and drive the shared vision and provide the structure for the Parent Resource Program.

January 2017: Hired Parent Resource Program Coordinator to work with partner agencies to implement the strategic framework.

Initial Focus: Develop collaborative strategies and program components to improve family access to information, resources, and programs.



# Parent Information and Support: Driving a Collective Response

Collaboration partner agencies are using the findings and recommendations in the report to develop and revise their programs.

- Oak Leyden is offering blended playgroups for children needing developmental supports and typically developing children, which was a major interest expressed by parents.
- Oak Park Public Library initiated a book group for new moms as a response to expressed parent need for social contact.



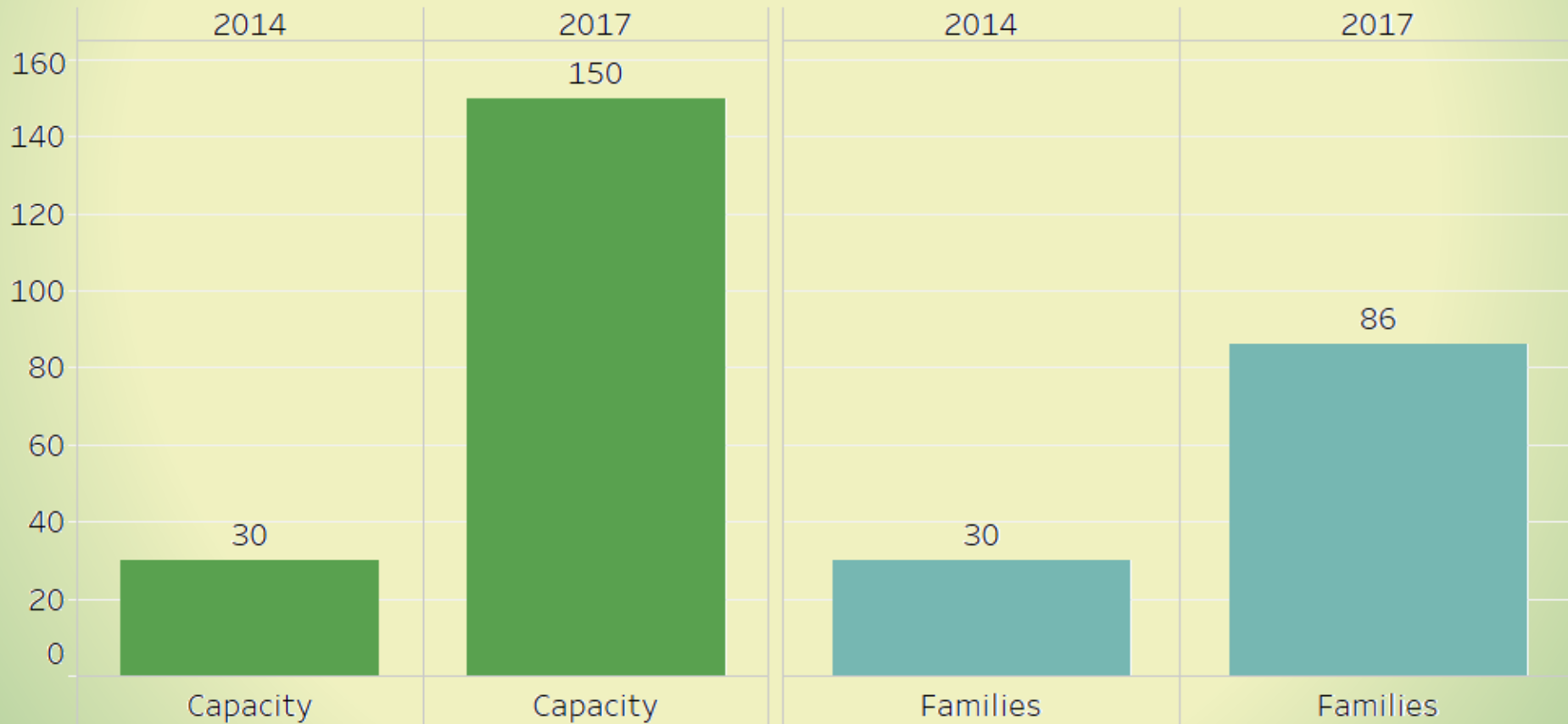
## Parent Information and Support: Driving a Collective Response

- “ Wonder Works Children’s Museum is incredibly proud to be a Council member and has found the work the Collaboration does to be invaluable. The data the Collaboration has collected, on many occasions, has been used in grant proposals...
- ...The results from the survey have allowed Wonder Works to better understand what parents are concerned about for their children and what support they need to feel successful in their parenting role. The overall role the Collaboration has in the community gives weight to the need for investing in early childhood education and at Wonder Works we share the same belief and can support our position with the remarkable work the Collaboration has done.”



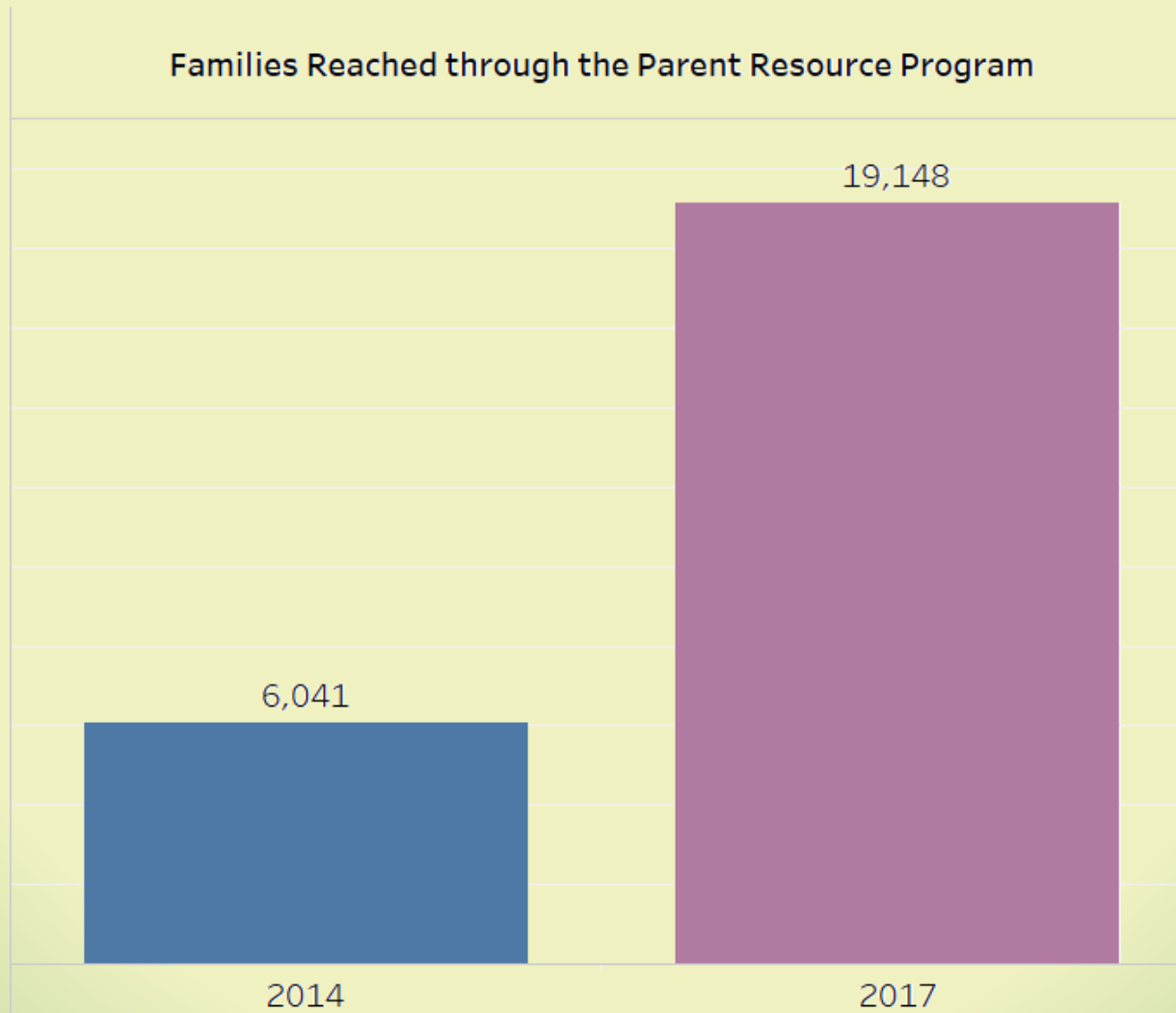
# Parent Information and Support: Impact

Increase in Capacity and Enrolled Families in Home Visiting





# Parent Information and Support: Impact





## Parent Information and Support: Plan for Progress

Nurture the Coordinated Intake process with the Village's new Public Health Nurse and three home visiting agencies.

Increase home visiting service levels through the Collaboration contract with Easterseals to serve up to 60 families, growing the total service level in the Village by at least 30 families.

Implement a Parent Engagement and Leadership Program with COFI (Community Organizing and Family Issues) to develop voice of parents who are not at any of our tables. Employ 4 participants as part-time ambassadors to help engage families in home visiting and public preschool families.





# Parent information and Support: Plan for Progress

Continue to work through partner agencies to fully implement Parent Resource Program Strategic Framework developed in 2016.





# Public Preschool Strategy

## Goals:

Ensure that all children meeting eligibility criteria attend a high- quality program.

Develop a professional community among the free preschool programs focused on high-quality through use of research-based curricula, developmentally appropriate instruction, and individualized support.



# Public Preschool Strategy

Promote coordinated intake among programs through uniform eligibility criteria and scoring system and use of the same developmental screening tool.

Foster adoption and effective use of *Creative Curriculum* and Teaching Strategies GOLD, a teacher observation assessment tool, through workshops and coaching.





# Public Preschool Strategy

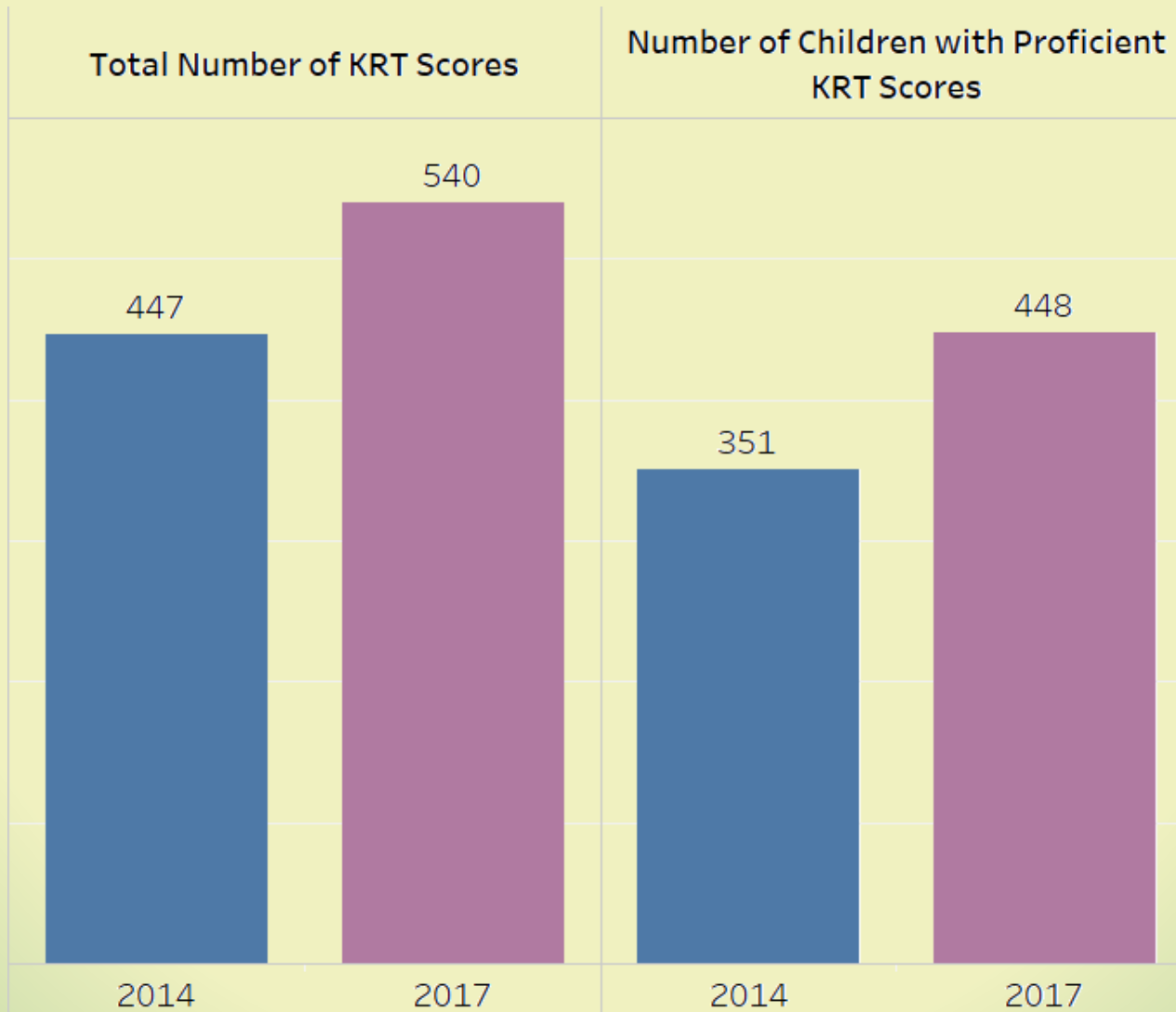
Trained directors at non-District 97 sites on the Charlotte Danielson Framework.

Worked with sites to develop parent workshop and information about the impact of attendance and tardiness on establishing positive family-school routines.



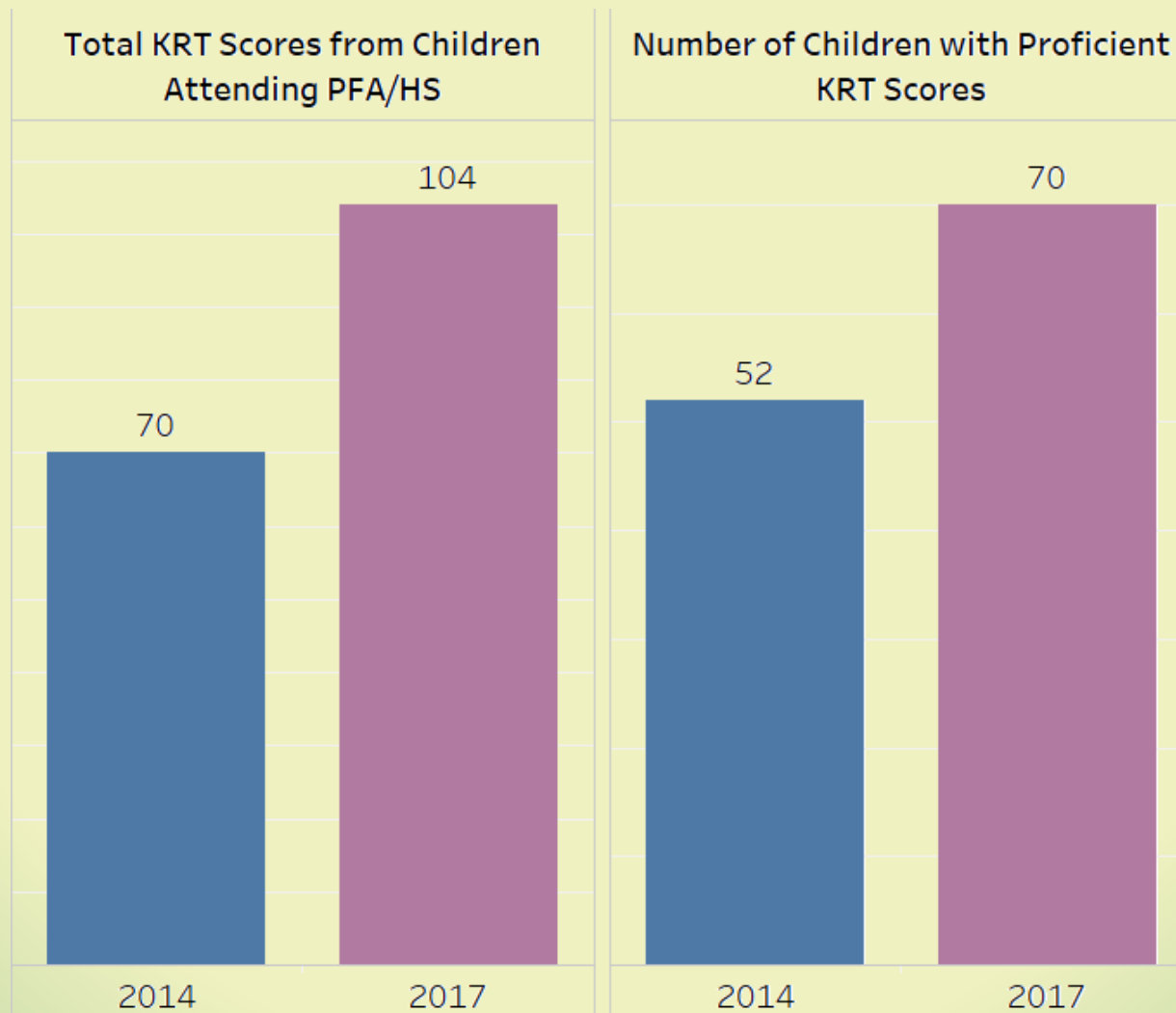


# Public Preschool Strategy: Impact





# Public Preschool Strategy: Impact





# Public Preschool Program: Next Steps

2017-2018 Pilot of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation funded partially through a grant from the Community Mental Health Board to non-D97 sites. Helps teachers address significant social emotional concerns with children.

Support proposal for renewed funding for the Preschool for All programs in District 97, The Day Nursery and ABC Toon Town.

Offer training series on early math instruction with Early Math Collaborative at Erikson Institute.

Partner with New Teacher's Center to pilot an equity training series for preschool teachers.

Work with COFI to provide parent leadership and engagement training and hire ambassadors in peer to peer outreach to engage low income families in the programs.



# Unified Early Childhood Database

## Goals:

To develop a database that draws together all data needed to enable monitoring of progress on 11 contractual indicators .

Ensure use of data by staff and committees to inform  
Collaboration work.





# Benchmarks for Success



- **Child Outcomes:**  
Every child arrives at kindergarten safe, healthy, ready to succeed and eager to learn
- **Service Delivery Outcomes:**  
Parents and children receive the early childhood care and education and parenting information and support services they need
- **System Outcomes:**  
Oak Park has a high-quality, coordinated early childhood system that aligns with K-12 districts and state programs and strategies



# Unified Early Childhood Database Strategy

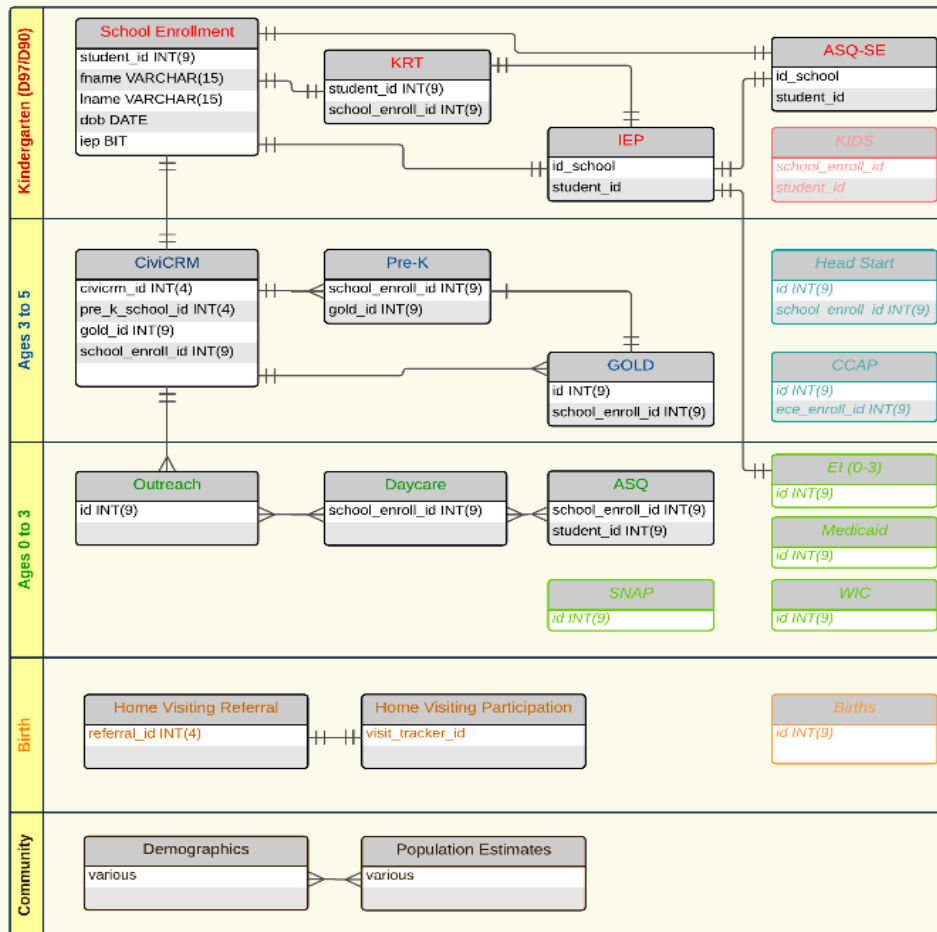
## Create the Unified Early Childhood Database

- ✓ Establish partnership – Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
- ✓ Determine how contractually-defined outcomes will be measured.
- ✓ Secure data sharing agreements from owners of various data sources.
- ✓ Integrate data sources to enable long-term study and analysis. Work began July 2014.



# Data Model

## Oak Park Collaboration for Early Childhood Integrated Database Schema





# Unified Early Childhood Database: Monitoring Data Collection

Measure	Source	Progress on Data Collection 2015	Progress on Data Collection 2017
<b>Child Outcome #1</b> Percent of children identified through screening as needing assessment or services that receive them.	IDHS		
<b>Child Outcome #2</b> Percent of children in Oak Park / River Forest Preschool for All & Head Start demonstrating age-appropriate proficiency in each domain of development according to the Illinois Early Learning Standards.	GOLD		
<b>Child Outcome #3</b> Percent of children entering kindergarten demonstrating age-appropriate proficiency in the Kindergarten Readiness Test (KRT).	D97		
<b>Service Delivery #1</b> Kindergarteners receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch have attended a PFA/HS/NAEYC accredited program, or program in ExceleRate GOLD Circle of Quality	D97		
<b>Service Delivery #2</b> Teen parents and families receiving up through All Kids Level 1 health insurance for kids under age 3 are referred to intensive parent education program.	IDHS and Home Visiting Agencies		
<b>Service Delivery #3</b> Percent of referred parents choosing to participate in the intensive parent education program.	Home Visiting Agencies		
<b>Service Delivery #4</b> Percent of K & 1st grade students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) receiving services in early childhood (if in Oak Park / River Forest in early childhood).	District 97 and District 90		
<b>System Level Outcome #1</b> Number of families with kids under 5 who are in the voluntary database.	Collaboration		
<b>System Level Outcome #2</b> Percent of teachers and directors in Oak Park early childhood programs who exceed minimum state educational requirements for their role.	INCCRRA and Collaboration		
<b>System Level Outcome #3</b> Percent of teachers and child care providers reporting more than the state-mandated 20 hours of continuing professional education each year.	INCCRRA and Collaboration		
<b>System Level Outcome #4</b> Percent of preschools, child care centers, and homes engaged in the Illinois Quality Rating System (ExceleRate), and improve their scores each year	ExceleRate and Collaboration		



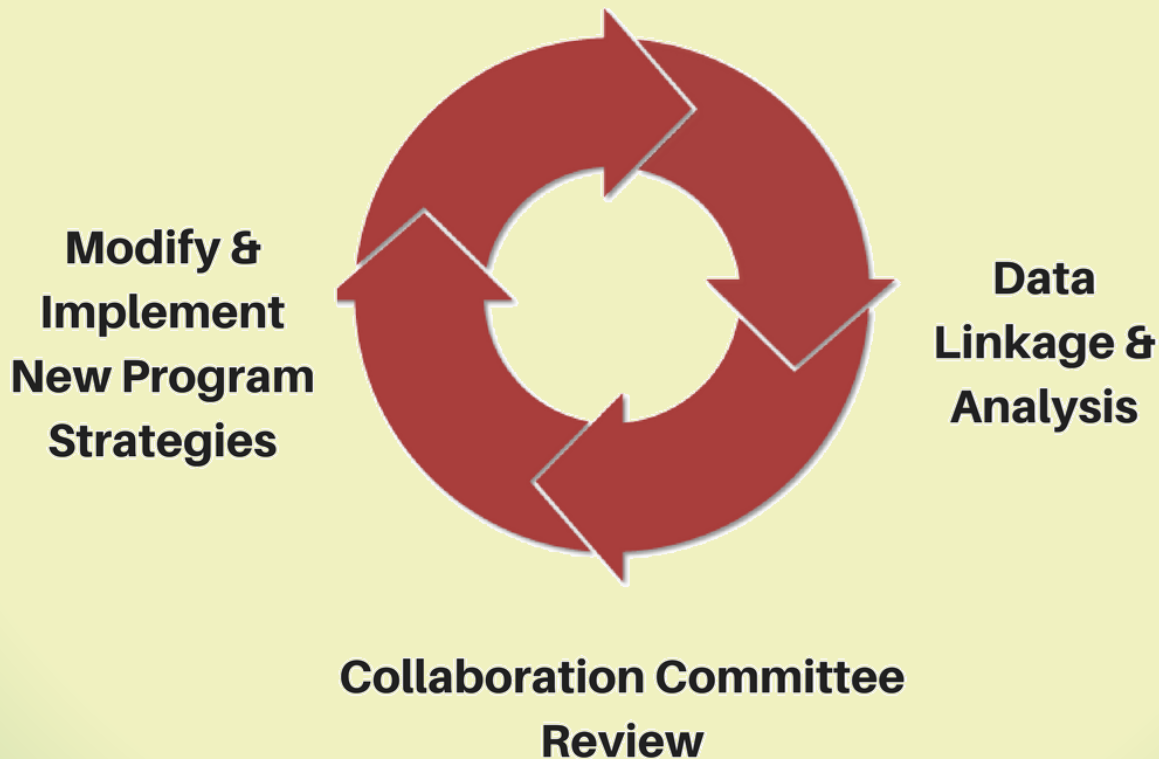
# Unified Early Childhood Database

- More linked data about children and services for longitudinal analyses in one location than any other community.
- Increasing number of partners participating in our efforts and contributing to outcomes and data collection.
- After 3 1/2 years, data sharing agreements between Chapin Hall and the Illinois Department of Human Services were secured.
- Data collection by the Collaboration staff and key partners continues to improve in accuracy and completeness.



# Unified Early Childhood Database Measurement Cycle

**Program Activities & Data Collection**





# Unified Early Childhood Database: Monitoring Progress on Measures

Measure	Source	Progress on Measure 2015	Progress on Measure 2017
<b>Child Outcome #1</b> Percent of children identified through screening as needing assessment or services that receive them.	IDHS		
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# Unified Early Childhood Database

- Our efforts to build the Unified Early Childhood database shed bright light on how vulnerable children fall through the cracks of programs *and* data.
- We are vigilant about using the data to inform our work and to help guide our efforts to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our youngest children.





# Early Development Instrument (EDI)

- We were selected to be one of two communities participating in a pilot project this year with Erikson Institute.
- The EDI will provide us with a population level picture of how well we are supporting our very youngest children.
- Part of the project involves a community scan of Oak Park's early childhood environment to identify areas that can affect a child's development before they enter kindergarten.



EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT

**Erikson Institute**



# Organizational Growth

Board development has included increasing board size and diversifying the board by professional background, gender, race and ethnicity. Governance, Finance and Development Committees meet regularly to guide and monitor board activities.

Individual donations have grown to targeted levels of \$80,000-\$90,000.

Grant seeking is robust.

Communications have increased through monthly newsletters, a vibrant and interactive website, and an active presence on five social media platforms.





# Leadership

The Collaboration and Oak Park serve as a model for other communities seeking to establish high-quality early childhood community systems. This past year we have consulted with Evanston, Naperville, and Skokie.

Staff members serve on eight state and regional committees and task forces that work to improve services and outcomes for young children, including the State Early Learning Council.

The Collaboration participates in local cross-sector efforts such as Success of All Youth and the Oak Park Homelessness Coalition to ensure that our youngest children are represented in every aspect of our community life.



# Conclusion

Our infrastructure is in place, we have the momentum to drive deeper changes to ensure that each one of our youngest residents has a strong start in life.

Oak Park is recognized for its intentional and innovative leadership in fostering a diverse community, committed to the success of all of its residents, for acting on the new knowledge about the vital importance of building an early childhood system of supports around our very youngest children.