Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative

ELNC

ANNUAL REPORT
2018-2019

Two-Generational Approach

Learn how we support our children by intentionally supporting the entire family

Impacting Children of our Neighborhoods

Recognizing the ICONs (individuals & organizations) who believe in our mission

The Numbers

A one-year financial analysis report

www.elncgr.org
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Table of Contents

Message from the Board President .................................................. 1
Message from the Founder/CEO ....................................................... 3
Who We Are .................................................................................. 5
Programs & Services ...................................................................... 6
Who We Serve ................................................................................ 7-8
ELNC Quick Facts .......................................................................... 10
Our Partners ................................................................................... 11
Self-Assessment Event - Reflections ................................................ 12
ELNC ICONS Gala ......................................................................... 13-14
Technical Assistance for Social Change ......................................... 15
Financial Report ............................................................................ 17-18
A MESSAGE FROM THE ELNC BOARD PRESIDENT

Using the Proven Two-Generational Model to Strengthen Communities.

The work of ELNC began out of a need to ensure all children, irrespective of their zip code and family situation, receive the education needed to be “kindergarten ready” by the time they enter the Grand Rapids Public School System. This work is so critical because Early Childhood Education (ECE) prepares children for a successful start in their educational journey and in life.... and when our children are successful, so are our communities. We knew there was a better way to get early education to every Grand Rapids child who needed it, and in partnership with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and several community-based organizations, we were determined to find that better way.

Fast forward to 2019 and the numbers speak for themselves.

This year, our collaborative has served a total of 439 children, up from 400 children last year and taking the total number of children served since the ELNC Collaborative started to over 2,200.

But, it’s not only the number of children that has us excited. These children are ready for kindergarten! 95% of 2017/2018 ELNC graduates tested ready for kindergarten on all dimensions. While we are very proud of these results, we also recognize that there are still too many Grand Rapids children who still need these services. Closing the gap in Grand Rapids remains our highest priority.

With these impressive results, other communities are taking note. ELNC’s results and innovative approach have attracted the attention of early education stakeholders outside of Grand Rapids who are asking how they can replicate the ELNC model in their communities.

In 2018, ELNC began supporting these communities in their efforts by sharing our proven approach and best practices. This support is enabling those communities to bring this approach to their children so that this successful model can benefit additional communities.

Creating awareness for the need to close the early education gap is key to solving this complex issue. This is why ELNC has stepped up to take a leadership role in advocating for our children at the local, state and national level and why advocacy was added to the ELNC mission:

“The Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative will create, provide and support targeted neighborhood collaborative partners with technical, developmental and educational resources and increase the accessibility of early childhood education for vulnerable children through advocacy.”

Our collaborative could not have accomplished what it has without the help of its loyal supporters. Thank you for being part of the ELNC mission and for helping us prepare our children and strengthen our communities.

Jackie Nickel
ELNC Board President
ELNC has provided a safe space for my children to receive quality early education. They have also provided me with opportunities to grow as a parent and an advocate for all children.”

- NIKITA GARCIA (ELNC PARENT)
The Two-Generational Approach

When the Early Learning Collaborative (ELNC) began its work in 2010, research showed only 2 out of 10 children entering kindergarten in the Grand Rapids Public School system were actually ready for kindergarten. These statistics were very alarming and needed to be addressed. Together, with the help of the W.K Kellogg Foundation, ELNC set out to work, to change the narrative.

Almost 10 years down the line, over 2,200 children in the Grand Rapids community have been given the much-needed education to get them ready for kindergarten.

The work we do at ELNC is data-driven. We make a conscious effort to review and evaluate outcomes and to ensure the ultimate goal, which is to serve the children and families of our community is being achieved. Time and data proved that the children we serve are well supported when the entire family feels supported. This data led to my creating the EPIC model (Empowering Parents Impacting Children).

The EPIC model (Empowering Parents Impacting Children) is built on a two-generational approach that focuses on parents through the help of a Family Coach. It was established based on the realization that children are well supported when we support the entire family. This intentional approach connects families with a Family Coach who helps to identify, and address barriers parents may experience in their day to day lives that hinder them from becoming positive change agents in their children’s lives.

Through this two-generational approach, children, together with their parents both become the main focus of our programs and services.

Parents are a very important part of the early childhood journey as they play a huge part in their children’s educational development.

As you will see when you review our financials, ELNC “walks the talk” and invests about $2,000 more per child than we receive from public funding.

Many of the families we serve have been impacted by generational poverty—meaning their parents, grandparents and great grandparents had become trapped within well-intentioned systems designed by leaders of the dominant culture who lacked understanding of the complex issues our families faced.

ELNC understood that to make a difference we had to do things differently! We also accepted the fact that doing more with our families in support of their individual dreams and desires for themselves required more time, energy and resources. As you read this report, pay close attention to our results and see for yourself what happens when families are provided with resources that enable them to become more self-sufficient and the drivers of their children's education.

Finally, thank you! We do not do this work in isolation; it takes a community. You play a role in our families’ success! I am looking forward to working with all of you in the coming year as we graduate another class of future leaders.

Dr. Nkechy Ezeh
ELNC Founder and CEO
ELNC has made such an impact on my life as well as in the lives of the families that we serve. Hiring teachers, coaches, and leaders to establish the vision that came from seeing the impact that early education invention has on children is not an easy task and it comes with a lot of responsibilities, sighs and occasional grunts. ELNC makes me strive daily to not only be a better teacher but a better person by looking past people’s differences and remembering that we are all in it together. I love ELNC the vision is solid, the mission is honest and the work is needed.

- SHANIKA GUYTON (ELNC TEACHER)
Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative (ELNC) is an initiative that is vested in changing the current reality of vulnerable children.

In order to create this change, ELNC has designed and is currently implementing an intentional Early Childhood Education service system aimed at providing, expanding and sustaining the capacity of high quality early care and education programs in the vulnerable neighborhoods of Grand Rapids.

Value Statement
ELNC is a trusted, place-based early learning collaborative that provides funding, innovative shared support services, and advocacy to partner organizations rooted in vulnerable communities. Through its successful dual-generational model, ELNC and its partners provide family support and high-quality early childhood educational services to at-risk families.

Mission Statement
"The Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative will create, provide and support targeted neighborhood collaborative partners with technical, developmental and educational resources and increase the accessibility of early childhood education for vulnerable children through advocacy."

Vision Statement
We envision a community where all children, regardless of the neighborhood in which they live, are able to thrive developmentally and educationally allowing them to fully embrace their potential and become self-sufficient adults.

Outcomes: Driven, results oriented - We must ensure our children develop and are educated, not by our good works, but by evidence of their increasing knowledge, skills and abilities.

Cultural Competence: Children develop and grow best in ways that are consistent with the cultural rhythms and patterns of their families.

Creativity and Innovation: Current efforts leave far too many children in under resourced neighborhoods lagging behind in development and education. We must find and use new and different objectives, strategies, and activities to help our children thrive.

Place-Based: We are committed to the belief that the best environment for the early education of children is rooted in what is local—the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art of a particular place—that is, in a child’s own “place” or immediate schoolyard, neighborhood, town or community.
OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Baby Scholars Programs
Children 0 - 3 Years Old

Baby Scholars is an educational program designed to give parents of children five months to five years the tools they need to help their babies grow smarter and to equip their children for kindergarten. The program focuses on helping parents become the best teachers they can be, so their children can succeed in school and in life.

Early Head Start Programs
Children 6 Weeks to 3 Years Old

Experts agree that the majority of a child's brain development takes place before the age of five. So, it is especially important that they are exposed to learning environments like our Early Head Start funded classrooms.

Preschool Programs
Children 3-4 Years Old

Designed to increase the accessibility of early scholastic resources for vulnerable children and provide quality education to children in our neighborhoods.

Empowering Parents Impacting Children (EPIC)

The core strategy of the model is to provide support, through the services of a Family Coach, to families as they identify and address barriers preventing them from meeting their basic needs and developing a Family Centered Social Capital building plan.

REAL Dads Program

Developed to directly address the barriers between our fathers and their children. We provide mentors, services, and solutions for many of the socio-economic issues our families face and help our fathers see the vital role they play in their child's development.

Preparing Racially-Diverse Educators Program (PREP)

There is a critical shortage of early childhood teachers of color and great demand in our community for educators who more accurately reflect their student population. ELNC has partnered with Aquinas College to launch the Preparing Racially-diverse Educators Program (PREP) for aspiring teachers of color.
WHO WE SERVE
by the numbers!

108 Early Head Start Students
120 3-Year-Old Pre-K Students
216 4-Year-Old Pre-K Students
190 Girl Students
50% African-American Students
254 Boy Students
8% Caucasian Students
33% Hispanic Students
7% Multi-Racial Students
539 Parents
1% Native American Students
1% Asian Students
### Average Income of Families Served

- $75,000+ : 3%
- $50,000 - $74,999 : 5%
- $40,000 - $49,999 : 7%
- $30,000 - $39,999 : 13%
- $25,000 - $29,999 : 9%
- $20,000 - $24,999 : 11%
- $15,000 - $19,999 : 8%
- $10,000 - $14,999 : 9%
- $5,000 - $9,999 : 10%
- Less Than $5,000 : 24%

### Families Making Progress Towards Social Capital Goals

- Support Systems : 68%
- Employment : 62%
- Education : 34%
- Well-Being : 70%
- Communication : 22%
- Advocacy : 52%

### 3-Year-Old Program: Meeting/Exceeding Widely Held Expectations

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<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<td>19%</td>
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<td>Physical</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<td>Language</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Education Level of Parent’s Served

- Less Than High School: 91
- Grade 9 or Less: 88
- GED: 45
- High-School Diploma: 180
- Training Certificate: 14
- College / Advanced Training: 26
- Associates Degree: 36
- Bachelors Degree: 39
- Masters Degree: 17
- Doctorate: 3

### 4-Year-Old Program: Meeting/Exceeding Widely Held Expectations

<table>
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<th>Category</th>
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<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Physical</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<td>Language</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REAL Dads is a space for father figures to come and express feelings that the public won’t listen to or judge you by. My biggest take away is listening to older fathers express things I’m going through shining a light on a situation that might take place but I am protected from because of the knowledge REAL Dads has discussed. It’s helped by giving me a safe place to come with my kids or without them. It takes me out of my comfort zone while creating another one. REAL Dads offers resources and connections that are very important to every male or father in the learning program.”

- DWANTE DAVIS (REAL DAD)
**QUICK FACTS**

**ENGAGE**
ELNC uses a two-generational approach and considers parental engagement/involvement and support to be an essential element of a successful preschool experience.

**IMPACT**
ELNC has 6 founding partners who have helped to establish 32 classrooms at 12 program sites. Currently, over 2200 children have been served in the Grand Rapids community.

**PPC**
ELNC has a Parent Policy Council (PPC) that helps parents act as advocates for their children.

**DADS**
ELNC has a fatherhood initiative called REAL Dads that was developed to address the barriers between fathers and their children.

**COMMUNITY**
ELNC launched a program called Technical Assistance for Social Change (TASC) to help bring our collaborative approach to other communities in need.

**PARTNERSHIPS**
ELNC partnered with Aquinas College to launch the Preparing Racially-Diverse Educators Program (PREP) for aspiring teachers of color.
OUR PARTNERS

These are trusted and empowered neighborhood associations that help bring ELNC programs to the children and parents of the neighborhoods they serve.

Collaborative Partners

Hispanic Center of West Michigan
1204 Grandville SW
www.hispanic-center.org

New Hope Baptist Church
130 Delaware SW
www.newhopegr.org

SECOM Resource Center
1545 Buchanan SW
www.secomministries.org

Steepletown Neighborhood Services
654 Davis NW
www.steepletown.org

The Other Way Ministries
837 Sibley NW
www.theotherway.org

United Methodist Community House
904 Sheldon SE
www.umchousegr.org

Service Partners

GRCC Early Childhood Learning Laboratory
210 Lyon NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Hands Connected Refugee Education Center
2530 Eastern Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Grand Rapids Early Discovery Center
515 Jefferson Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

YMCA @ Covenant House
50 Antoine SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Kingdom Care Learning Center
2415 Madison Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
ELNC Reflections

YEAR IN REVIEW

Reflections is our debut self-assessment event to highlight our program's accomplishment during the 2017-2018 program year.

ELNC is a data-driven organization that makes conscious efforts to review and evaluate program outcomes. We believe the entire community plays a very important role in the work that we do here at ELNC. Therefore, we invite all our community's stakeholders to come and review data on all our activities throughout the year. We want to know what we are doing well, what needs to be changed and what needs to be improved.
Impacting Children of Our Neighborhoods

Since 2018, ELNC hosted 2 annual Galas dubbed “Night of the ICONs” (Impacting Children of Our Neighborhoods). This is an initiative that was established to fulfill two very crucial objectives.

The EPIC model (Empowering Parents Impacting Children) is a two-generational approach that focuses on parents through the help of a Family Coach. It was established based on the realization that children are well supported when the entire family is supported. This intentional approach connects families with a Family Coach who helps to identify, and address barriers parents may experience in their day to day lives that hinder them from becoming positive change agents in their children’s lives.

The main goal of the ICONs gala is to raise enough funds to increase the number of Family Coaches to ensure all families are given the support they need. The second goal is to recognize the ICONs, individuals, and organizations who believed in the ELNC mission and did their best for our community.

MEET OUR 2019 ICONS AWARD RECIPIENTS!

Individual Advocate Award
Teresa Weatherall-Neal

Community Partner Award
WZZM-13 On Your Side

Family / Parent Award
Marleen Greenman

Child Educator Award
Veronika Ross

We made some progress raising funds from our 1st and 2nd Annual Galas, but there is more to be done. We will need your help and support!
Technical Assistance for Social Change

ELNC is a trusted, place-based early learning collaborative that provides funding, innovative shared support services, and advocacy to partner organizations rooted in vulnerable communities.

Through its successful dual generational approach, ELNC and its partners provide family support and high quality, culturally-competent, early childhood educational services to vulnerable families. Stakeholders throughout the Early Childhood (ECE) ecosystem (local providers, philanthropic funders, state agencies, etc.) who face a number of challenges in delivering quality services to vulnerable children and families are asking us how to take what was successfully implemented in Grand-Rapids, Michigan to their communities.

This model utilizes a Hub and Spoke delivery system of quality, early childhood education services that include place-based strategies for Teacher Training, Culturally Relevant Environments, Dual-generational Family Engagement, and Emerging Indigenous Leadership Development. We believe that people, provided with sufficient resources and tools needed, have the inherent capacity to solve their own problems and that social transformation is within the reach of all communities. That is why ELNC has created Technical Assistance for Social Change (TASC), as its consulting arm to work with key stakeholders (community groups, local providers, funders, state agencies, etc.) who desire to develop place-based solutions that eliminate barriers preventing vulnerable children from accessing quality, early learning opportunities.

TASC is a self-supported, Fee-For-Service component and will provide additional sustainable revenues to support ELNC Hub services and most importantly, our advocacy efforts.

Pedagogical Expertise: Dr. Nkechy Ekere-Ezeh, ELNC Founder / CEO
For More Information: (616) 589-4233
I am thrilled by the number of families that appreciates my work in helping them to help themselves. Many families have been very open in sharing with me their needs and we work together in connecting them to helpful resources.

All the parents are happy with our services and they do appreciate ELNC's parents' empowerment program.

- BONIFACE SENTURO (EPIC FAMILY COACH)
2018 FINANCE REPORT

It is safe to say that in 2012, when we opened our first classroom very few people would have predicted that within 7 years, ELNC would receive close to $7.7 Million dollars in annual funding. While that is incredible in itself, it is even more amazing that over 45% of our funding comes from Federal, State and Local Grants and Contracts especially when you consider that initially, 100% of our funding came from two major private foundations: W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) and the Doug and Maria DeVos Family Foundation (DMDVF). Fortunately for us, word has spread about our successful, innovative, dual-generational model as we have now received funding from close to 20 private foundations and over 250 individual donors.

In 2017, after receiving numerous requests from other communities for us to come and help them create their very own ELNC, we developed Technical Assistance for Social Change (TASC) as a Fee for Service consulting arm of ELNC. The fees earned through TASC support replication projects in other communities such as Battle Creek where ELNC-BC was established earlier this year.

While we understand how critical it is to keep our expenses in line and be good stewards of your money, we also know that if enough funds are not invested, you might as well not do anything at all! Consider this: Kent Intermediate School District (ISD) provides $6,720 per child to provide 4-year-old preschool. That might work in a neighborhood where the parents have access to resources and even though they are living paycheck to paycheck they are meeting their basic needs and have access to transportation. Imagine that there is no paycheck and no way to get your child to school! ELNC understands all too well that it takes much more than what we receive from the Kent ISD to provide the comprehensive family support that comes with our Empowering Parents Impacting Children (EPIC) component. In fact, it is about another $1,500 per child. We also invest about $500.00 per child in Professional Development for our teachers, as we know that quality teachers mean quality classrooms and an environment conducive for learning.

For too many years, early childhood education providers have had to use a band-aid approach when surgery was needed. We are not afraid to say that our direct program expenses are more than what the state says it should cost. They do and they work! We are also proud of the fact that our Administration and Fund-Raising Costs are less than 10% of total expenses when the national average is 20%.

Finally, thank you for all you have done to support vulnerable children – without you, we couldn’t do what we do!
2018 Financials

**2018 INCOME**
$7,691,645

- **46.6%** Foundations
- **45.1%** Public Funding
- **5.2%** Fee for Service
- **3.1%** Individuals & Businesses

2018 income includes $1,510,000 funding to be expensed in 2019.

**2018 EXPENSES**
$5,926,427

- **91%** Educational Resources for Vulnerable Children
- **7.3%** Administration
- **1.6%** Fundraising

**2012-2018 PUBLIC - PRIVATE FUNDING**

- Direct Public Funding & Contracts
- Direct Private Support
We love our dad! Some fathers from our Real Dads program visiting our classrooms to play for the children.

ELNC Board Member, Amriah, reading to children at one of ELNC classrooms.

ELNC Children rockin' scarves donated by ELNC friend.

CEO, Dr. Mackey, Ersh and Associate Director, Nambela Caste during our Self-assessed event.

Meet the ELNC Team. We are Preschool!

These are the REAL DADS of ELNC!

Graduation is the highlight of our school year!

ELNC families having a good time during our Curriculum Night Event.

Grandparents at ELA to support their little ones for Grandparents' Day celebration.

Our little front page model from the 2017-2018 Annual Report is all grown up!

ELNC Staff, Partners and Parents visit lawmakers at the State Capitol to advocate on behalf of the children.

Ladies at the Billing and Coding Dept. Spectrum Health with supplies they collected from the event they organized for ELNC.

#ThisISWhatELNClooksLIKE
GIVE A HELPING HAND.

The Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative is dedicated to doing everything that we can to prepare vulnerable children for kindergarten and life. Come join us on this journey by donating whatever you can so that we can do whatever it takes.

**Advocacy:** Your gift of advocacy provides increased community, state and national awareness of ELNC as an intermediary organization focused on institutional and cultural change within the ECE macro-systems improving the landscape of early learning opportunities.

**Education:** Your gift of education provides increased accessibility of high-quality early learning opportunities leading to children entering kindergarten ready to learn.

**Parent Engagement:** Your gift for parent teachers provides increase in parent/caregiver knowledge in Early Childhood Development needs and interactions, creating a pipeline for future leaders and teachers of color.

**Parent Teachers:** Your gift for parent teachers provides increase in parent/caregiver knowledge in Early Child Development needs and Interactions creating pipeline for future leaders and teachers of color.

**Where Most Needed:** Your gift will help us fund the immediate needs of ELNC’s most vulnerable families.

**WAYS TO GIVE**

**Online:** [www.elncgr/donation/](http://www.elncgr/donation/)

**Mail:** P. O Box 2956, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501

*Checks payable to: Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative*

**VOLUNTEER**

Here are just a few ways in which you can help us make a positive impact on local children as a volunteer.

- Classroom reader
- Donation drive
- Corporate/Business volunteer
- Classroom volunteer

*If you are interested in volunteering with ELNC, please visit [www.elncgr.org](http://www.elncgr.org) to complete / submit a volunteer interest form.*
Graduation is the highlight of our year.
The Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative will create and provide targeted neighborhood collaborative partners with technical, developmental and educational support in order to increase the accessibility of early educational resources for vulnerable children.

Instagram: @elncgr
Twitter: @elncgr
LinkedIn: Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative
Facebook: Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative