

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:

SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE A CULTURE OF ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS

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The Detroit Public Schools Foundation for Early Learners acknowledges the importance of high-quality educational experiences for prekindergarten children. Positive and enriching early childhood opportunities and relationships enhance brain development, which ultimately provides a foundation for students' optimal learning.¹³ Detroit Public Schools recognize the power of early childhood education for the district's youngest learners, and have crafted a mission to:

- **Create positive teacher-student relationship quality (TSRQ), marked by care, support, and high expectations**
- **Provide continuity of instruction from prekindergarten through third grade;**
- **Offer appropriate and high-quality instruction;**
- **Foster self-esteem and socialization;**
- **Strengthen home-school interaction; and**
- **Provide a safe and nurturing environment with the intent of improving student achievement and enhancing parental/community involvement.**

Community relationships play an integral part in the academic and social lives of our students. Detroit Public Schools embraces partnerships that seek to enhance, cultivate, and inspire school, home, and community partnerships. *PNC Grow Up Great*, founded by The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., is a \$350 million initiative demonstrating what can happen when a business invests significant, multi-year funding into achieving a vision that embraces a holistic approach to early childhood education. In Detroit, this unprecedented program has fostered a collaborative spirit, bringing Detroit Public Schools (DPS), parents and the community together in a celebration of the arts and sciences. Institutions such as the Cranbrook Institute of Science, the Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts, and the Detroit Parent Network are embracing the opportunity to engage underserved Detroit families with preschoolers in DPS, 84% of whom are African American.

Detroit Public Schools believes the investment and commitment of business and community stakeholders in the education of our children is critically important to our children's success. PNC is committed to the power of early childhood education and has invested dollars, community resources and volunteer efforts to empower our youngest learners, their parents, and pre-school educators through the arts and sciences. Indeed, across the country, PNC employees have contributed more than 410,000 volunteer hours engaging young children and their families.

CHILDREN BY RACE IN MICHIGAN AND U.S.¹⁴

RACE	AGES 0-3		AGE 4	
	PERCENTAGE (NUMBER) MICHIGAN	PERCENTAGE (NUMBER) U.S.	PERCENTAGE (NUMBER) MICHIGAN	PERCENTAGE (NUMBER) U.S.
WHITE	65.8% (221,149)	50.7% (5,697,535)	67.3% (78,264)	50.3% (2,078,550)
BLACK	16.7% (56,043)	13.4% (1,504,224)	15% (17,391)	13.6% (561,082)
ASIAN	2.9% (9,875)	4.6% (514,799)	3.2% (3,693)	4.5% (187,623)
LATINO	8.5% (28,381)	25.3% (2,846,767)	8.9% (10,301)	26% (1,074,227)
OTHER	6.1% (20,552)	6.0% (674,723)	5.8% (6,710)	5.7% (234,572)



BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 4 IN MICHIGAN HAVE SIMILAR PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

47% AND **45%**
OF WHITE CHILDREN OF BLACK CHILDREN

ATTENDED PRESCHOOL BETWEEN 2008 AND 2010. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL DATA, INDICATING THAT HALF OF BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN ATTENDED PRESCHOOL DURING THE SAME TIME PERIOD.¹⁵

GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM 2012-2013

*GSRP is Michigan's state-funded preschool program for 4 year-old children who experience factors that may place them at risk for lower educational attainment.*¹⁶

RACE	# OF CHILDREN IN GSRP	% OF CHILDREN IN GSRP
BLACK	6,067	24.7
WHITE	16,619	67.7

35% OF ALL BLACK 4-YEAR OLDS ARE BEING SERVED THROUGH GSRP, COMPARED TO 21.2% OF ALL WHITE 4-YEAR OLDS IN THE STATE.

BLACK CHILDREN MAKE UP 52% OF ALL CHILDREN BEING SERVED BY CCDBG IN MICHIGAN.

AMONG ALL CHILDREN BEING SERVED BY CCDBG IN MICHIGAN,

70% WERE IN NON CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE AND **29%** WERE IN CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE

NATIONALLY, THESE NUMBERS ARE NEARLY REVERSED, WITH 67% OF CHILDREN IN CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE AND 32% IN NON CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE.¹⁷



In support of the Foundation for Early Learners' mission statement, Detroit Public Schools, with funding support from PNC, is creating a foundation of success and fostering positive educational experiences for students by focusing on two research and evidence-based strategies:

- 1) High-quality professional development; and
- 2) Meaningful family engagement.

HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through this program, pre-kindergarten teachers have professional development opportunities that enhance their teaching instruction in the context of the learning environment and beyond. During the academic year, 28 teachers from 16 schools supported by PNC's grant to the Detroit Public Schools Foundation attend monthly workshops and/or coaching sessions. These sessions, which are explicitly aligned with the HighScope Framework for Teaching and Learning and supported by Key Developmental Indicators (KDIs), are focused on demonstrating how to effectively incorporate the arts and sciences into the early learning environment. During the coaching sessions, teachers read and reflect on current issues regarding the arts and sciences in support of minority students. This collaborative approach to teacher development allows for ongoing support and feedback as teachers share and model effective teaching practices and content integration. These workshops also provide teachers with hands-on experiences to explore materials, engage in conversations, and replicate learning environments in support of the intentional teaching of arts and sciences to young African American learners.

MEANINGFUL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family engagement is a significant variable in a student's academic and social success. Detroit Public Schools believes in the power of family engagement and community partnerships to help foster an appreciation of the arts and sciences. Ultimately, funding support through the *PNC Grow Up Great Initiative* creates a foundation where families and communities are working together to empower children. In this initiative, six specific types of involvement are given equal importance in the process of strengthening positive relationships among families, educational institutions and the community at large. These six forms of involvement are parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community.¹⁸ With support from a variety of partners, including The Detroit Parent Network, each form of involvement is integrated throughout the DPS pre-kindergartens through experiences such as workshops, newsletters, leadership development opportunities, Family Fun Days and field trips.

IN 2012, BLACK CHILDREN MADE UP

37% AND 29%

OF THE MICHIGAN HEAD
START POPULATION,

OF THE NATIONAL HEAD
START POPULATION.¹⁹

Field trips and Family Fun Days have remained a focus for this initiative, despite the fact that funding these events is a consistent challenge. Often, children from higher socio-economic backgrounds have more opportunities to engage with community institutions such as museums and theaters, providing them with different lenses through which they are able to observe and experience the arts and sciences. These kinds of activities also build significant prior knowledge that becomes critical in the later academic years for building capacity in a variety of academic and social areas. Finally, these field trips and Family Fun Days provide critical openings for relationship building with families. Indeed, the focus on volunteerism and community engagement provides parents with the opportunity to experience activities with their children and their children's teachers, where they are able to observe high-quality teaching and build relationships with educators outside of the typical learning environment, where they may or may not be comfortable themselves.

Each of the six elements of family engagement is designed to promote a two-way model where the work of involvement is shared by both the parents and the schools. For example, while The Detroit Parent Network offers workshops to parents on enhancing learning at home, the initiative also supports schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures and goals for their children.

We know that the relationships established in the context of the academic environment have a direct correlation with school success, particularly for African American children.²⁰ The opportunity to collaborate with the schools and the community has enhanced our preschool parents' vision and understanding of the rich resources available to enhance their children's growth and development across multiple domains. These meaningful relationships are helping to foster a love of learning, a culture of success, and an assurance that all children will be able to *Grow Up Great*.