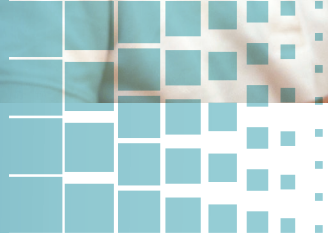




2017-2019

STRATEGIC PLAN



FIGHTFORCHILDREN.ORG

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WHO WE ARE

Every child, regardless of his or her circumstance in life, **deserves** an equal shot at a great education.

- Joseph E. Robert, Jr.
Founder, Fight For Children

Our story began almost three decades ago when our founder Joseph E. Robert, Jr. combined his entrepreneurial spirit and business expertise with a commitment to improve children's lives in Washington, DC. His bold, innovative leadership inspired the first Fight Night, which has since become DC's premier philanthropic event.

With funds from Fight Night, we have proudly served thousands of students across DC's most under-served communities, providing them with the resources they need to excel in school and in life.

Today, Fight For Children is focused on ensuring that every child in DC receives a quality early education. We do that by developing and implementing our own programs and partnering with other nonprofits to address the needs of DC's youngest students.

OUR VISION

Fight For Children's vision is to make early childhood education in Washington, DC the best in the country.

OUR MISSION

Fight For Children works to improve the quality of early childhood education so that all DC students are engaged, ready to learn, and on a path to future success.

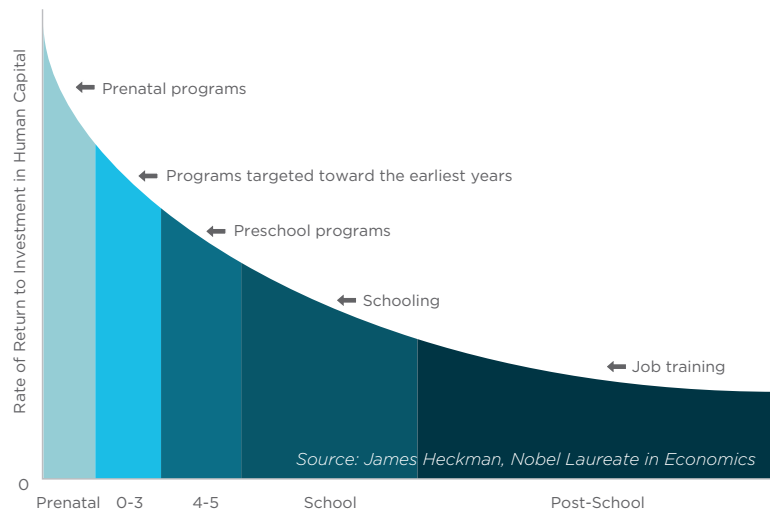
WHY FOCUS ON QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

TO CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS BEFORE THEY BEGIN

Despite years of concentrated school reform in DC, nearly 75% of third graders are still not achieving at grade level, with students of color and students from low-income families performing far worse than their white, higher-income peers. As a result, these under-performing students will most likely struggle to achieve in each successive year, further compounding student achievement gaps.


TO CREATE POSITIVE, LARGE-SCALE IMPACT


Investing in quality early childhood education generates a positive rate of return that is considerably higher than interventions later in a child's life. In fact, research indicates that every public dollar invested in high quality early care and education saves taxpayers up to seven dollars in future costs. Fight For Children's history and expertise lie with young students, which is where we have decided to commit ourselves along this spectrum.





TO IMPROVE LONG-TERM OUTCOMES


Without a high-quality early childhood education, a child from a low-income community is:

- 
MORE LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

- 
MORE LIKELY TO BECOME A TEENAGE PARENT

- 
MORE LIKELY TO BE PLACED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

- 
MORE LIKELY TO NEVER ATTEND COLLEGE

- 
MORE LIKELY TO BE ARRESTED FOR A VIOLENT CRIME¹

¹ <http://www.theounce.org/who-we-are/why-investments-in-early-childhood-work>

OUR APPROACH

Fight For Children believes that if children receive a quality early education, individualized supports to meet their unique needs, and commitment from their community, they will have the foundation necessary to succeed in third grade and beyond. This is Fight For Children's theory of change.

The first step in carrying out this work is to understand the needs of the communities we serve. From literacy interventions to mental health to special education, we acknowledge that there are many factors affecting children from low-income communities. Once we conduct research to identify what needs to be addressed, we combine proven interventions with promising new approaches that answer these needs in a holistic way.

Fight For Children recognizes that the education environment is complex, and that there is no quick fix or simple answer to helping all children become successful. For this reason, we believe we can have the greatest impact by focusing our resources on a limited number of schools and demonstrating the success of our work before replicating it.

Our work on the ground will be three-fold:

- address the need for high-quality leadership and instruction in early childhood classrooms
- target wrap-around support services to directly benefit children in those schools, and
- engage our communities and community leaders in support of quality early childhood education.



WHERE WE ARE TODAY

In 2012, we asked educators and school leaders in DC what they needed to improve the quality of early childhood classrooms. School leaders responded that they felt limited in their understanding of early childhood education and age-appropriate practices. Many school leaders did not have early childhood education backgrounds, and they did not feel comfortable providing instructional guidance to their prekindergarten teachers.

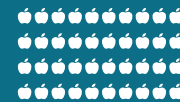
To address this need, we launched Joe's Champs in 2013. Joe's Champs pairs ongoing professional development with a mentor coaching model so that school leaders understand the philosophies behind early childhood education, such as brain development, appropriate curricula, and the impact of childhood trauma. At the same time, leaders and teachers are guided to implement what they learn in real-time at their schools.

We use CLASS® as one measure of quality in Joe's Champs. CLASS® is a nationally recognized assessment that measures the quality of teacher-student interactions in an early childhood classroom. The assessment has three domains: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. The first group of schools to complete Joe's Champs had higher average scores when compared to DC programs as a whole on all three domains. Additionally, our schools have a three-year growth rate of 28% on their instructional support scores, compared to 17% across DC. This accomplishment is especially impressive considering that the instructional support domain is the most difficult to improve nationwide.

From examples of progress like this, we know that our work is paying off. However, there is more work to be done.

JOE'S CHAMPS


To date, through Joe's Champs, Fight For Children's commitment to early childhood education has resulted in:



200
EDUCATORS

A bi-annual conference series featuring nationally recognized experts in the field and consistently attracting upwards of 200 educators

120
YEARS OF
EXPERIENCE

A network of expert mentors with more than 120 years of collective early childhood experience 

A network of 55 active partner educators receiving 80 hours of professional development and coaching per year

55
PARTNER
EDUCATORS

30
SCHOOLS

benefiting from Joe's Champs since its inception



13
SCHOOLS
currently enrolled in Joe's Champs

9

A team of nine full time staff dedicated to early childhood education

3
SCHOOLS
piloting a prekindergarten through third grade alignment program that includes embedded support services as the next step after Joe's Champs

KEY STRATEGIES, 2017-2019

To demonstrate meaningful impact over the next three years, Fight For Children will employ three key strategies, measure their individual and collective successes, and replicate the approaches that work. Those three key strategies are to:

- **Develop and implement unique programs in partner schools to improve instructional quality, for example:**

- Refine Joe's Champs in schools that are benefiting from the program
- Provide training and development to schools, early childhood education centers, and other nonprofits working with three- to eight-year-olds

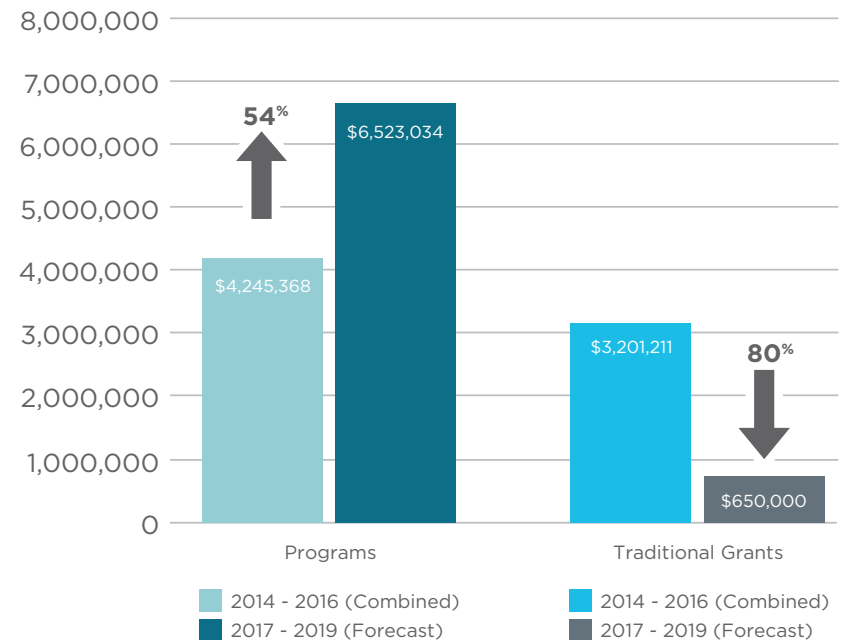
- **Address specific student needs to ensure future success, for example:**

- Provide targeted on-site interventions for students at their schools
- Respond to the need for quality summer learning experiences for three- to eight-year-olds

- **Build community commitment to quality early childhood education, for example:**

- Support a policy and regulatory environment that enhances program quality
- Create a platform to encourage and attract innovation in the field

To support these strategies, Fight For Children will reallocate its resources over the next three years by increasing investment in its own programs and decreasing investment in traditional grants.

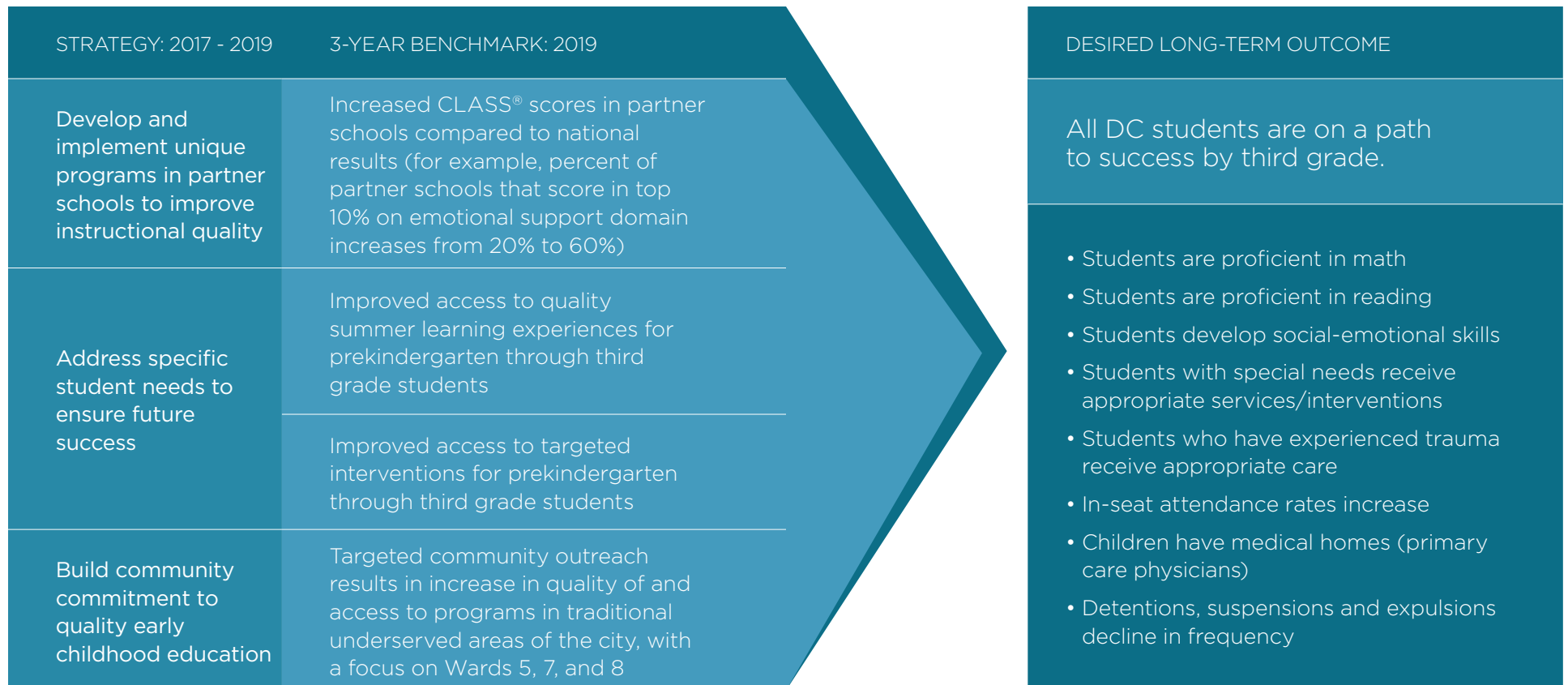


DESIRED OUTCOMES, 2017 – 2019

Our key strategies will ultimately improve third grade student outcomes in DC so that by 2019, students in Fight For Children’s partner schools will be on the path to success.

In order to ensure that we achieve this goal, we are developing an evaluation system that combines both short- and long-term metrics aligned to our three-part strategy. This system will allow us to evaluate

the success of our programs through a combination of qualitative and quantitative metrics that measure academic and behavioral student outcomes, such as the development of social and emotional skills, as well as math and reading proficiency. The chart below provides some examples of the metrics we currently use. As our strategies evolve, so too will the tools and metrics we use to assess them.



IN SUMMARY

At Fight For Children, we believe that in a constantly evolving educational, political, and social landscape, our strategies must also evolve to keep up with the needs of the children that we serve. What remains constant is our commitment to a comprehensive approach to make early childhood education in DC the best in the country, helping to ensure that all children in DC are on the path to success by third grade.

For more information about the work we do, our board, and our staff, please visit our website at www.fightforchildren.org.

JANUARY 2017

Among the clearest indications of why **early childhood education is so vital to leveling the playing field** is the extent to which it closes the school-readiness gap **so that all kids start school with the necessary skills to succeed.**

- Arne Duncan
Former U.S. Secretary of Education