

# The Road to America's First Early Learning City

## The HOW:

In working with many local and state resources and experts, as well as utilizing resources from the University of Chicago, a leader in early brain development, the steps have been identified that will help every child be ready for kindergarten.

1

## Healthcare

In addition to focusing on the health and wellness of mother and baby, steps are under way to focus on the importance of exposure to language from birth to age 3 — and stressing the power that parents have to impact early brain development.

2

## Resources

Resources are available in the community to help parents become good first teachers for their babies. Highlighting that work and helping parents access those resources are critical for our children's success.

3

## Architecture

Children learn from what they see around them. If that environment is colorful, filled with words and encourages them to explore using all of their senses, their brains will build strong connections and thrive.

Buildings, playgrounds, sidewalks, signs and public spaces can help with early brain development and make every space a learning space. Service clubs, governments, schools and churches all are players in building an Early Learning City.

4

## Education

Most people believe that education begins with kindergarten. But from preschools to the home environment, there is so much that parents and even siblings can do to help young children get a good start before they enter kindergarten.

5

## Business

Businesses have a role to play in early learning. By adding children's books to their waiting areas and creating early learning-friendly spaces to support employees who are parents, businesses that are not in "education" can become educational. They also can educate employees on how a baby's brain develops in the first 3 years.

6

## Community

An Early Learning City maximizes all of the resources in the community and points them toward a common purpose: helping all children have the best chance to be ready for school. Churches, civic groups, PTAs and more can have a role in supporting early learning.

7

## Media

The media — print, TV, radio and online — are important partners in spreading the message of the importance of early brain development, school readiness and in educating parents on the vital role they play.

**Build** a Brain

**Build** a Life

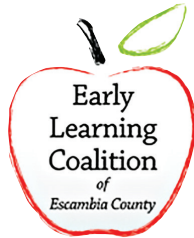
**Build** a Community

# Did you know?

## PROBLEM

Over 1000 children per year that would benefit from Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) are not signed up.

## RESOURCES



Escambia County has 85 Voluntary Prekindergarten schools. On average, children who attend VPK perform better in school. Florida offers Voluntary Prekindergarten free to every 4-year-old.

## QUESTION

How do we get more children enrolled in VPK?

## PROBLEM

Head Start is funded to provide services for only 935 children.

## RESOURCES



Head Start and Early Head Start support young children of low-income families by providing a range of developmental and educational services.

## QUESTION

How do we get more children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start?

## PROBLEM

Escambia County ranks 65th of 67 Florida counties in preterm births.

## RESOURCES



Escambia County  
**Healthy Start**  
COALITION

Escambia County Healthy Start Coalition aims to reduce infant deaths, decrease the number of low birth-weight babies and improve the health and development outcomes for babies in Escambia County. Premature birth can lead to long-term intellectual and developmental disabilities for babies.

## QUESTION

How do we get more mothers to receive early and regular prenatal care to improve the chances of a healthy baby?

## NEXT STEP

The goal of America's First Early Learning City is to find the answers.

VISIT [STUDERi.ORG](http://STUDERi.ORG)  
EMAIL [RDOGAN@Studerer.org](mailto:RDOGAN@Studerer.org)

