BRAIN BAG UPDATE
Other communities joining the Brain Bag effort

MAKE PLAY SMART
Building learning into playtime

BRAIN BUILDERS
How you can build your baby’s brain with art and science
The unwavering spirit, hardworking character, and confidence that we all can succeed is what makes our community so great. Pen Air is proud to be a strong local community partner in an area where we all live, work, and play together. Learn more about us at penair.org/AboutUs.
We care for kids the way Bubba plays golf.
With all heart.

Our specialized doctors and care teams provide world-class heart, bone, joint, ear, nose and throat care, and more. From an ER designed just for kids, to the region’s most advanced NICU, we’re here for families like yours — the tiniest babies, growing teenagers and everyone in between.
Rewriting Pensacola’s Story
WITH OUR CHILDREN AT THE CENTER

In Pensacola, our strength comes from our commitment to each other — especially to our children.

For a community to succeed, its children must be able to thrive.

It’s more than a sweet sentiment. It is a premise supported by researchers in economics, health and education through studies and pilot projects that have been conducted across the country over many decades.

In building a vibrant community, outside help or investment is great, but communities have to author their own success story.

A town’s success story is a quilt — every square of a quilt holds a story, and everyone has a piece to sew into its fabric. When you stitch those squares together, you make a whole that is stronger and more beautiful than any one piece is on its own.

The work that Studer Community Institute does is a part of that quilt.

We’ve read the long-term economic analysis from the University of Chicago showing that investments in high quality early education experiences for children under 5 save $7 to $14 in social service spending when that child is an adult.

We’ve seen the long-term health research showing that adverse childhood experiences — growing up without feeling loved, worrying about where food, clean clothes or a safe place to sleep would come from, witnessing domestic abuse, exposure to drugs and alcohol, being a victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse — affect the development of a child’s brain and weigh upon a person’s physical and emotional health long into adulthood.

We’ve reviewed the long-term research that shows that children who grow up in language-rich environments in their first four years of life — households rich in songs, talk, play and love — are more likely to be ready for school and are on a better track to succeed in school and life.

We’ve met experts in healthcare and education who tell us every day that the brain of a child is moldable, plastic, always under construction. And it is up to the adults in a child’s world to use the best construction materials possible to give that child a fair chance at a good start.

Everything we do — from in-hospital education to direct outreach with parents at the most risk of needing more support — is centered on giving parents the knowledge of how important they are in the construction of their child’s brain.

And then giving them tools to make the most of that time.

This magazine highlights some of those efforts. It also highlights the work that our partners in the community are doing every day toward the same end. It’s their piece of the quilt.

In 2018, 45 percent of Escambia County children were “kindergarten ready” based on Florida Department of Education data.

While the test used to determine readiness has changed over time, what has remained clear is that between 1,000 and 1,400 of the students who show up to school each year do not have the foundational skills they need to be ready to learn.

The work going on in our community — done by SCI and many other partners — is rewriting that story. Every day. One family, one parent, one chapter at a time.

We will make our community’s quilt beautiful, vibrant and rich. Because the success of our town — and our children — depends on it.

Shannon Nickinson
STUDER COMMUNITY INSTITUTE

To improve the quality of life by building a vibrant community.

The Studer Community Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

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At Gulf Power we are working together with the communities we serve to make Northwest Florida an even better place to raise a family and do business.
WELCOME LETTER

PENSACOLA DASHBOARD

BRAIN BAG UPDATE
Other communities joining the Brain Bag effort.

BOSTON BASICS
How The Basics help children get a head start in school and close the achievement gap.

SIBLING BRAIN BUILDERS
Pilot project uses older siblings to help prepare their younger siblings for school.

PARENT OUTREACH UPDATE & EXPANSION
Reaching parents with helpful ways to engage children and build babies’ brains.

LENA START
Using technology to build stronger and healthier brains in babies.

MAKE PLAY SMART
Building learning into playtime.

ACHIEVE ESCAMBIA
A lesson for all from C.A. Weis Community School.

HEALTHY START COALITION
Healthy Start resources aim for better outcomes for our children.

BRAIN BUILDERS
How you can build your baby’s brain with art and science.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO RESEARCH
How Pensacola moms will help change the world.

IS YOUR CHILD READY?
A kindergarten readiness quiz.
The message is spreading.

As the Brain Bag project continues to educate local parents about the important role that parent talk and interaction plays in healthy early brain development, the project’s concept is gaining traction in other communities.

Studer Community Institute has partnered with two hospital systems — one in Cincinnati and one in Laurinburg, N.C., — to help them bring the Brain Bag concept to their communities.

The regional footprint of the project is growing, too.

Beginning in 2020, these early literacy gift bags will be handed out to mothers at Santa Rosa Medical Center in Milton, thanks to publisher Sandi Kemp and the sponsorship of The Navarre Press’ Newspapers In Education program.

Adding these mothers to the roughly 5,000 women who deliver babies at Escambia County’s three birthing hospitals will mean that nearly 5,350 families each year will get a gift that we hope will start them on a lifelong journey of learning.

“My wife just mentioned to someone that new babies, in fact, now DO come with instructions!” said Pensacola dad Jay Brown, whose daughter, Lucy, was born in August 2019 at Sacred Heart Hospital. “The Brain Bag was such a nice thing to receive. I’m looking forward to reading ‘P is for Pelican’ when Lucy is a tad older, too.

“Thankfully my wife, a former librarian, is already a big believer in reading to kids and the value of vocabulary, but I think your organization has great a mission and is doing wonderful things to that point.”

They are given free of charge to every parent whose child is born in Baptist, Sacred Heart and West Florida hospitals, because every parent will benefit from the message that talk and interaction is a key ingredient to healthy early brain development and ultimately school readiness.

The Bags are given with a lesson in the hospital reviewing what’s inside and sharing with parents key points about why parent talk is so critical to a child’s development — and ultimately school readiness. Those key points include:

- **85 percent of your baby’s brain is built by age 3.** The best thing you can do to help your baby’s brain grow is easy — **Talk!**
- **Your words are food for your baby’s brain.** The more words a child hears in
the first three years of life, the stronger the connections in his brain will be. Experts call it plasticity — it means that your baby’s brain will learn more, more easily in these years than at any other time in his life.

- Your baby’s school readiness starts today. How strong the foundation of your child’s brain development is, how many connections you help his brain build by talking with him, will influence how ready and able to learn he will be for the rest of his life.

The Brain Bag survey also asks moms two questions: On a scale of 1-10, rate your knowledge of how parent talk influences early brain development before the Brain Bag, and then rate it after. Here is how the responses breakdown by hospital for fall of 2019:

- **West Florida:** 6.7 to 9.6
- **Baptist:** 8.2 to 9.7
- **Sacred Heart:** 7.9 to 9.7
- **Overall cumulative:** 7.6 to 9.7

**North Carolina, Ohio building on program**

TriHealth is Cincinnati’s largest provider of maternity and general pediatric services. That positions them well to lead the Early Learning City effort in Cincinnati, said Emily Harmeling, project manager for primary care and pediatrics.

She said that they began educating patients on early learning concepts and distributing Brain Bags in August 2019.

“In the first year, we will provide education and Brain Bags to an estimated 10,000 families post-delivery at three hospitals, representing 36% of the deliveries in the Cincinnati market,” she said.

TriHealth Pediatric and Family Medicine providers are also incorporating Early Learning City communication in their touchpoints during patients’ first years of life. In year one, the project will provide Brain Bags to an estimated 6,000 families with children up to 18 months old in 14 pediatric practices and 19 family medicine practices across the city, Harmeling said.

Pam Coyle-Toerner, executive director at TriHealth, says her team is “thrilled to lead Cincinnati in becoming an Early Learning City, and we are grateful for the guidance of our partners at Studer Community Institute. During our visit to Pensacola, SCI’s early learning efforts were evident throughout the city, and the impact was undeniable,” Coyle-Toerner said. “Cincinnati’s kindergarten readiness rates are comparable to those in Pensacola, and like SCI, we know we can do better for the children in our community.”
WHAT IS A BRAIN BAG?
Each year, 5,000 women give birth in the three birthing hospitals in Escambia County. Each of those women now leave the hospital with an important tool to help them give their child a good start in life — a Brain Bag.

Brain Bags are early literacy gift bags given to mothers before they leave the hospital. They include:

→ A storybook, “P is For Pelican, the ABCs of Pensacola,” which uses landmarks in our community to build letter awareness and encourage family reading.
→ Baby Steps, a baby book that can be personalized to help parents track early brain development milestones in the first three years of life.
→ A toy.
→ Community resource information from partners to help support parents. It includes library locations, screen time guidelines, healthy lifestyle advice for the first year of life and more.

They also include a video lesson, produced by SCI, to help reinforce the important message that talking, reading, singing and playing with children from the very first days of life is critical for early brain development.

The Brain Bags are stored, assembled and delivered by Arc Gateway’s Pollak Industries, which offers life- and work-skills training for adults with developmental disabilities.

Starting in September 2019, Scotland Health System in Laurinburg, N.C., joined the project, using the bags and a video lesson to reach and teach parents.

“Within Scotland County and North Carolina in general, our average readiness for children entering kindergarten is below the national average, and we are very excited to be able to contribute the needed tools and education to new parents about the importance of the early development of a child’s brain,” said Lisa Hunt, director of community health.

In Scotland County, the kindergarten readiness rate is 47 percent, compared to the state rate of 50 percent.

In the first month since the project launched there, Michelle Herberg, director of women’s services, said the staff has embraced it — and patients are responding. Scotland has about 725 births a year.

“Patients have loved it and they love getting their first book from us,” Herberg said. “It’s part of the patient education process now, so the staff is used to giving them out. The video has worked very well into the workflow.”

The next step, Herberg said, is to coordinate with partners in the community, including the health department, to reinforce the message that early parent interaction is a vital force in a child’s healthy development — and school readiness.

Arc Gateway’s Pollack Industries stores, assembles and ships the bags to Scotland Health, an extension of the work Arc already does with the local Brain Bag project.

“Our staff is looking forward to being able to say they helped make a difference in every child who is born within our Women’s Center,” Herberg said.
Pensacola is going with The Basics. The Basics are five fun, simple and powerful ways that every family can give every child a good and healthy start in life.

Studer Community Institute is joining with Boston Basics to ensure that parents and caregivers in Pensacola are fully supported to use these principles in everyday life: Maximize Love, Minimize Stress; Talk, Sing and Point; Group and Compare; Explore through Movement and Play; and Read and Discuss Stories.

These evidence-based parenting and caregiving principles are designed for children between birth and age 3, the critical first 1,000 days of life in which 80 percent of the brain develops.

SCI’s partnership with Boston Basics developed in August, when Harvard professor Dr. Ron Ferguson visited Pensacola to talk about education and the achievement gap.

Dr. Ferguson, director of the Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University, is the lead creator of the Boston Basics. For most of his work in education, Ferguson focused on educational achievement starting in kindergarten. But when he saw that gaps based on socioeconomic status and race were already wide by the time children turn 2 years old, he decided to expand his focus.

Ferguson translated his educational background and research into five free and easy ways adults can help their babies learn, develop and grow.
Hence came the Boston Basics, and Ferguson is on a mission to introduce it to as many people, parents and organizations across the country. Shannon Nickinson, SCI director of early learning, sees The Basics as a perfect complement to the work SCI already is doing in early childhood education in the Pensacola community.

“The Basics is an educational tool we can use to spread the word about how important the first three years are for children,” Nickinson said. “Bringing The Basics here is another big step in making Pensacola America’s first early learning city.”

Ferguson believes that the more people who get involved in The Basics Initiative, the more ideas there are for spreading the five principles across a larger portion of this region and the nation.

Since its start in 2015, The Boston Basics campaign has partnered with hospitals, community health centers, childcare providers, libraries and early learning centers across the city. Ferguson’s hope is that they help close the achievement gap that already begins to show by the time a child starts kindergarten.

The Basics also is being used in states across the U.S., including Massachusetts, South Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky at no cost to families or participants.

“Things that we need to do with infants and toddlers are not things that cost a lot of money,” Ferguson says. “It’s really about interacting with them and being responsive to their needs.”

And the goal always has been saturation, not simply targeting interventions in low-income communities or communities of color.

The effort isn’t about fixing bad parenting strategies among the disadvantaged; it’s about sharing information that is useful for everyone, because everyone can learn something from it.

Like Boston Basics, Pensacola Basics will saturate the community with tips, tools and activities to disseminate to parents and caregivers to help build healthy babies and brains.

Parents can access The Basics through engaging booklets, videos and text messages. From giving hugs and kisses to expressing excitement and encouragement, The Basics are truly simple, fun and effective at helping to build children’s brains.

Ferguson also hopes multiple exposures to The Basics will encourage parents to adopt them. If they hear about The Basics in the hospital, then during doctor visits, then in church, and also at the museum, the constant reminders may help achieve behavior change and improve outcomes.

“These are people that parents already know and trust,” Dr. Ferguson said. “We’re just having new conversations through old relationships.”

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**THE FIVE FREE, FUN AND SIMPLE PRINCIPLES OF THE BASICS ARE:**

1. Maximize love, manage stress. Babies pick up on stress, which means moms and dads have to take care of themselves, too. It’s also not possible to over-love or be too affectionate with young children. Research shows feeling safe can have a lasting influence on development.

2. Talk, sing and point. “When you point at something, that helps the baby to start to associate words with objects,” Ferguson explains. Some babies will point before they can even talk.

3. Count, group and compare. This one is about numeracy. Babies love numbers and counting, and there’s research to show they’re actually born with math ability. Ferguson says caregivers can introduce their children to math vocabulary by using sentences that compare things: “Oh, look! Grandpa is tall, but grandma is short,” or, “There are two oranges, but only three apples.”

4. Explore through movement and play. “The idea is to have parents be aware that their children are learning when they play,” Ferguson says.

5. Read and discuss stories. It’s never too early to start reading aloud — even with babies. Hearing words increases vocabulary and relating objects to sounds starts to create connections in the brain.

The Basics also put a big emphasis on discussing stories: If there’s a cat in the story and a cat in your home, point that out. That’s a piece lots of parents miss when just reading aloud.
SCI’s Sibling Brain Builders work to use the bonds between siblings as a way to build emotional and cognitive connections in children

BY Reggie Dogan
STUDER COMMUNITY INSTITUTE

Building babies’ brains is at the forefront of Studer Community Institute’s mission to improve the quality of life for everyone in the Pensacola area.

While parents are the key to helping babies get the best start in life, siblings can play important roles, too. If parents are a child’s first teacher, then siblings could well be their best teacher.

What siblings learn from each other growing up has significant influence on social and emotional development as adults.

SCI believes the sibling relationship is a natural place for younger children to learn, develop and grow.

Through two pilot projects called Sibling Brain Builders, SCI is bringing older sisters and brothers into the cause of helping get their younger siblings prepared and ready for school.

At Bellview Middle School, teacher Dee Wright is working with SCI to provide selected middle schoolers with books, tips and tools to take home and use with their younger siblings ages 0 to 5.

“It was easy to get involved and excited about this project because I understand the impact that siblings can have on each other,” said Wright. “Sibling Brain Builders help the older child as well as the younger one because both are learning new things and gaining new skills.”

Leading by example is a good way for one sibling to shine and for the others to emulate good behavior. When one sibling reads to another, the child reading aloud gets lots of oral practice, especially when reading fluently and with expression. Being fluent readers helps with reading speed and comprehension of the story.

Jenna Myers, 12, is a Bellview seventh grader with a month-old brother.

Jenna recalled her kindergarten teacher piqued her interest in reading, but she wished she had an older sibling who shared reading time with her. She’s excited about and eager to be a part of Sibling Brain Builders.

“It is a good idea to make sure they are prepared for kindergarten,” Jenna said. “When I first heard about it, I said, ‘Hey, that’s something I can do to help my baby brother.’”

Another sibling project is piloted with the media specialists and administrators at Lincoln Park, Montclair, O.J. Semmes and C.A. Weis elementary schools to encourage...
students in third to fifth grades to read at home with their younger siblings.

In both projects, the older students will get credit at school for the work they do at home — and incentives to keep it up. The younger children will get more time reading with someone who loves them.

It’s been shown that siblings can encourage academic success. This is due, in part, to what is referred to as the “sibling spillover effect.” An older brother or sister can act as a positive role model when they help their younger siblings read with them, help them with their homework or give them academic advice.

Older siblings also can be instrumental in the early childhood brain development of younger siblings. Every child grows at his or her own pace, but research shows that a child’s early years are the most important time for development.

Escambia County’s 2018 kindergarten readiness rate is 46 percent, which means that more than half of the nearly 3,000 kindergartners show up for school unprepared.

Kindergarten readiness is among the most important measures of a child’s academic progress. Children who are behind in kindergarten are more likely to be behind in third-grade reading, and they rarely catch up throughout their school careers.

Children need someone in their homes to be their reading and learning role models with daily practice in order to navigate successfully through beginning literacy skills.

Most programs are aimed at assisting parents to develop better guidance strategies and learning opportunities but have not directly targeted siblings.

The Sibling Brain Builders is designed to encourage the sibling bonding and family connections through reading, sharing and learning.

The ultimate goal is to prepare more children for kindergarten and fulfill the mission of Studer Community Institute to improve the quality of life for everyone in this community.

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Our Members
Never Stop Serving, and We’re Proud to Serve Them

For those who go above and beyond, we thank you. We’re committed to our members, our employees and the communities we serve.

navyfederal.org

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NFCU 12535 (10-19)
Building Good Money Habits

Teaching your child about money can be simple. Turning your day-to-day activities into learning experiences is a great way to start. Whether it’s trips to the store, credit union, or even the zoo, you can use these as perfect opportunities for talking with your child about how you use money every day. Teaching these skills will help provide a foundation for a successful financial future.

1 Encourage your child to wait for things.
Learning how to wait, your child is less likely to give in to impulse buying or quick wins, and instead they see the value in waiting for even better results down the line.

2 Give them a piggybank.
A piggy bank simply gives your child a place to store coins. Your child knows exactly where to put their money, and knows that after a certain time, they can use it to spend, save, or give. Once their piggy bank fills up, you can bring them to the credit union to deposit their money into a savings account.

3 Count everything.
Understanding money starts with basic counting. After all, we can’t know how much money we have if we don’t know how to count and measure it.

4 Introduce them to different coins.
By the preschool age, most kids can sort the different coins and understand how much each one is worth. They may not be able to add them all up together just yet, but they’re not too young to learn their differences, both in appearance and worth.

5 Explain how you earn money.
Work can be a great opportunity to share how we do things to earn money. Your child learns that we offer value, time, and knowledge in exchange for money. Be creative when explaining your job to your child’s level, framing it in ways they can understand.
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westfloridahospital.com
Throughout Pensacola, especially downtown, construction projects are going on almost everywhere. Old buildings are being renovated, and new buildings are redefining the landscape and skyline.

But the biggest construction project happening in Pensacola isn’t with brick and mortar. The biggest construction project right now is building babies’ brains.

And we at Studer Community Institute are excited to be on the ground floor of this building project. We know that if we can build a brain, we can build a life and a community.

Research shows that investment in early education provides significant benefits to children, families and society. It increases economic growth and promotes greater opportunity over time.

Studer Community Institute has created several initiatives to benefit young children and hopefully improve the quality of life for everyone in this community. One of them is the Parent Outreach Program.

In a partnership with the Pensacola Area Housing Commission, SCI has reached out to parents of children 0 to 3 years old. Each week, SCI staff offers parents tips, training and strategies in early learning initiatives for their young children at Moreno and Attucks courts.

Nearly 300 families with children under 4 out of a total of 1,000 families reside in properties managed by Area Housing. These children, when they age up to elementary school, primarily attend C.A. Weis, Global Learning Academy, Warrington and O.J. Semmes elementary schools. These neighborhood schools are traditionally among the lowest graded elementary schools in Escambia County School District, according to state standardized test scores (Florida Standards Assessment).

The program in 2018 expanded to include Oakwood Terrace (formerly Truman Arms). To extend its reach to other parts of the community, SCI staff is training volunteers and coordinators to implement parent outreach in worship and community centers, or places where parents and children regularly meet.

The goal is to reach parents with helpful ways to engage their children and build babies’ brains, and in the long run, build better lives and a better community.

The one hour, once-a-week programs use educational information from the University of Chicago Thirty Million Word Initiative and LENA Start, emphasizing the key component of the three T’s: Tune in, Talk more and Take turns. Most parents have the ability to talk, interact and engage with their children in daily encounters and activities. This simple but crucial task is at the heart of Thirty Million Words strategies. We are using and building on those important principles in our parent programs in Pensacola.

SCI staff also prepares curricula, using a variety of early education resources, videos and research materials to offer parents information to improve their lives as well.

It will be at least three years before parents and the community can see the benefits and measure the results of these kinds of programs.

But every day that parents talk more, read more, interact more with their babies is another chance to build a baby’s brain.

SCI PARENT OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS SINCE JULY 2017

- 225 mothers, fathers, grandparents and caregivers have been served at one of the locations.
- 675 children estimated to benefit from the classes (150 families with an average of 3 children per family).
- 80 parents earned certificate of completion awards (for attending at least 16 weeks in parent outreach).
- 45 parents found gainful employment since joining the parent outreach program.
- 4 parents have enrolled in Pensacola State College.
- 6 parents have enrolled in GED classes.

PARENT OUTREACH Program provides parents tips and tools to help build better brains, better lives and better communities

BY Reggie Dogan
STUDER COMMUNITY INSTITUTE
And one thing we can measure now is the importance and impact of the programs.

At the end of the year, we gave parents and Area Housing directors and managers surveys to measure and rate the success — or failure — of the program.

Participants gave the parent outreach a 9.5 out of 10 rating; rated the program’s value overall at 9.5 out of 10; and gave the program a net promoter score of 95 percent. Net promoter score measures someone’s likelihood to not only positively review an event or experience, but also measures how likely they are to recommend that experience or service to a friend.

The management team rated the programs even better — a 10 out of 10 across the board, with a net promoter score of 100 percent.

One manager said, when asked if the program met expectations: “They went above and beyond what I expected. I was very excited to see how the tenants showed interest in the program. This is a first for our tenants.”

A parent said in a testimonial: “This experience has changed my whole outlook on how a child learns. Using what I’ve learned, my daughter now is saying more words and speaking more to where I understand what she is saying.”

The Parent Outreach Program is one of several initiatives created and designed to offer educational and informative lessons and activities to engage and involve parents.

Building babies’ brains and preparing children for kindergarten is at the crux of SCI’s mission.

Nearly 85 percent of the brain is fully developed by age 3. That’s why the first 1,000 days of a child’s life — the time between birth and age 3 — are critical to the physical development of the brain.

So, why should that matter to you, whether you have a baby or not? It reminds us of the old Fram Auto parts commercial that said, “You can pay me now or you can pay me later.”

And if we pay later, the costs come with fewer jobs, lower wages, higher crime and more teenage pregnancies. Instead of building businesses, we’ll need more jail cells. Instead of better jobs, we’ll have more welfare.

We all have the responsibility to ensure that every child has the chance to become a productive member of our community. That each child can prepare for a future filled with hope and possibilities, instead of a life of broken promises and shattered dreams.

For parents facing economic difficulties, it can be especially challenging to provide their children the necessities of life. But one thing any parent can provide is the power of the spoken word. Word power is brain power.

Words are food to a baby’s brain. The more words a child hears in the first three years of life, the stronger the connections in the brain will be.

At SCI, we’re laying the foundation to make Pensacola America’s First Early Learning City, one program, one parent, one child at a time.
LENA START
Parent-centered program increases communication between parent and child to build stronger and healthier brains in babies

BY Reggie Dogan
STUDER COMMUNITY INSTITUTE

Music is an important part of early childhood education. It plays a role in setting the tone for learning, developing skills and concepts, helping children make transitions and building a sense of commonality and community.

Songs and rhymes have a positive impact on a child’s language and literacy development.

And what’s the most important reason to sing and rhyme with a child? It gives them a love of language. This love of language, of books, of singing and rhyming will form a solid foundation that will help children value learning.

Another parent-centered program offered by Studer Community Institute is LENA Start. Increasing adult words and conversational turns is the driving force behind the LENA Start curriculum, designed to increase communication between parent and child to help build stronger and healthier brains in babies.

One of LENA Start’s weekly sessions highlights the benefits of singing songs and saying rhymes with babies.

Using songs, rhymes and fingerplays is a great way to increase words and turns.

“Fingerplays” are songs using small gestures with your hands. They are perfect for getting kids’ attention, especially young babies.

The LENA Research Foundation, creator of LENA Start, is dedicated to increasing talk in the first three years of a child’s life when a child’s brain develops to 85 percent of its adult size.

During this critical window, children from low-income families may hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

Research shows that the more words children hear in the first three years of life builds the brain structure that will be needed later to support reading and thinking skills. Those early language skills can also lead to continued academic success later in life.

LENA Start 10-week session covers an array of topics and activities that offer new ways to increase brain-building talk.

Slides and videos showing techniques, along with take-home materials and a new book each week, are engaging parts of the curriculum that aid in helping parents gain new skills and techniques to talk more with their babies.

LENA stands for Language Environment Analysis. The LENA system measures the way parents and their young children converse.

A digital recorder, or “talk pedometer,” that tucks into a vest worn by babies and toddlers (up to 32 months) records a full day’s worth of conversation.

That data is used to generate a report to that provides information on the number of words that the child was exposed to as well as the turn taking interactions, the back and forth that occurred in the child’s language environment throughout the day.

Songs and rhymes offer a fun and engaging way for parents to increase their communication with their babies and toddlers.

The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out. Up came the sun and dried up all the rain. And the itsy bitsy spider went up the spout again.

Music is an important part of early childhood education. It plays a role in setting the tone for learning, developing skills and concepts, helping children make transitions and building a sense of commonality and community.

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The LENA Research Foundation, creator of LENA Start, is dedicated to increasing talk in the first three years of a child’s life when a child’s brain develops to 85 percent of its adult size.

During this critical window, children from low-income families may hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

Research shows that the more words children hear in the first three years of life builds the brain structure that will be needed later to support reading and thinking skills. Those early language skills can also lead to continued academic success later in life.

LENA Start 10-week session covers an array of topics and activities that offer new ways to increase brain-building talk.

Slides and videos showing techniques, along with take-home materials and a new book each week, are engaging parts of the curriculum that aid in helping parents gain new skills and techniques to talk more with their babies.

LENA stands for Language Environment Analysis. The LENA system measures the way parents and their young children converse.

A digital recorder, or “talk pedometer,” that tucks into a vest worn by babies and toddlers (up to 32 months) records a full day’s worth of conversation.

That data is used to generate a report to that provides information on the number of words that the child was exposed to as well as the turn taking interactions, the back and forth that occurred in the child’s language environment throughout the day.

Songs and rhymes offer a fun and engaging way for parents to increase their communication with their babies and toddlers.
Many of us grew up singing “Itsy Bitsy Spider.” Using songs and rhymes and pictures is a great way to help your child develop their language and communication skills. It’s never too early or too late to start signing and rhyming with your child.

Not only is it fun but it is also a great way to get to know each other. Children's communication skills develop at different rates but there are many things parents can do to help their child develop.

Encouraging children to sing along and take parts of songs or rhymes are key to building conversational turns.

It is important to take some time every day to sing and rhyme with your child. Make up silly little songs and rhymes as you go along. Use active songs and rhymes during playtime. At bedtime, try a lullaby.

Have fun playing with language. Talk, sing and read with your child. The benefits will stick with them forever.

→ 64 participating families, with a 69 percent graduation rate.
→ 52 of 64 families returned surveys.
→ 5 out of 5 on usefulness of what you learned, LENA reports, (parent guide got a 4.8).
→ 5 out of 5 on likely to recommend.
→ All reported the data was valuable, that they would use the techniques moving forward, talking tips easy to apply to real life.

→ All families increased adult words by 17 percentile points, turns by 13. Low talk families (who started with words and turns under 50th percentile), gained 41 percentile points in words and 20 percentile points in turns.

→ Children whose parents participated in program gained 1.7 months of developmental skills every month. All children gained 16 percentile points; low talk family children gained 17 percentile points.

→ Parents in the program increased reading minutes by 1.5 times in course of the program, up to 24 minutes per day on average.

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Play is a healthy part of childhood and important to learning. When it comes to early education, play and learning are not separate activities for young children — they go hand-in-hand.

Studer Community Institute supports the play and learning concept through the design and installation of Make Play Smart Early Learning decals that support early learning and kindergarten readiness skills in public spaces and play areas.

In 2019, SCI’s partnership with the City of Pensacola’s Parks and Recreation department grew to include these decals in some of the park projects the city is undertaking. The decals were a key feature of the revitalized playground area at Morris Court Park on Lloyd Street in Pensacola. Residents and community leaders joined the City of Pensacola Parks and Recreation to showcase the new playground equipment and the SCI early learning decals installed to incorporate learning and play.

These colorful, fun decals reinforce concepts that will be important for children when they start school. They also will encourage families to play and interact together. That interaction and connection is critical to how strong a child’s brain grows.

The decals were part of an improvement project that saw a new basketball court, a walking path, new lighting, landscaping and improved parking at the park.

Beyond stimulating young minds to be receptive to learning, play is a necessary component of brain development for children.

The decals are wonderful projects for civic and community groups, but individuals can sponsor them, too. A set of three decals costs $2,000 to sponsor; to learn more, email snickinson@studeri.org.

Escambia County parks, too, have been part of the project. Cantonment Rotary Club was among the first groups to commit to the decal project, sponsoring nine decals in Carver Park, a neighborhood park on Webb Street in Cantonment.

Pensacola resident Ella Manziek sponsored a set of decals at Henry Wyer Park on the corner of Belmont and Reus streets. Susan Davis, Pensacola Lighthouse and Museum, Episcopal Day School, the Pensacola Realtors Association and the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition also have sponsored decal sets.

Make Play Smart Early Learning decals are among several SCI projects that aim to improve kindergarten readiness in the community by teaching parents how language and interaction build a child’s brain during the first three years of life.

Early brain development is critical to the foundation of a child’s readiness for school, ultimately putting that child on a path to success in school and life.

That is so important in places like Escambia County, where state education data in 2018 showed a kindergarten readiness rate of 45 percent.

Research shows play-based learning enhances children’s academic and developmental learning outcomes. It can also help prepare children for success in school and in life by teaching them relevant skills.

Children are naturally motivated to play. A play-based program builds on this motivation, using play as a context for learning. In this context, renovated and reinforced at Morris Court playground, children can explore, experiment, discover and solve problems in imaginative and playful ways. 🧠
Our Mission:

- To be the area’s leading contractor for concrete rehabilitation, waterproofing and building reconstruction services.
- To maintain our leadership edge by providing excellence in products and services and by anticipating the future needs of our clients.
- To be fiscally responsible in the management of our company.
Each dollar invested wisely in a young child can save more than $7 on police, prosecution and prison costs a decade or more later. Nobody likes to think about an infant becoming a statistic.

But the fact is, unequal opportunity starts before a child is born, with poorer health care and nutrition options, and accelerates quickly in the years before kindergarten. Important new research coming out of The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia is finding that a family’s household income correlates with differences in brain volume and grey matter among infants as young as 5 weeks old.

An easy solution does not exist to ensuring all children have the best start in life. If poverty affects brain development, and 85 percent of brain growth occurs by age 3, then it makes sense to start with Escambia County’s stubbornly high and inequitably distributed child poverty rate, which affects nearly half of black children and 15 percent of white children, according to Florida Kids Count’s 2019 data report.

The problem with tackling child poverty head-on, though, is it’s just too big. Drill down, to a handful of root causes that might perpetuate child poverty, and that we might be able to solve for, and it’s too small.

For example, even if all at-risk children receive developmental screenings at every pediatric visit and enroll in high-quality preschool, two focus areas of Achieve Escambia, too often they return to homes and neighborhoods and systems suffering from such high levels of chronic stress that the positive impacts of such interventions quickly disintegrate.

Instead of going too big or settling on something too small, a different solution is emerging from the work of our Kindergarten Readiness Collective Action Network. This network is a cross-sector group of parents, providers, teachers, businesses, law enforcement and child advocates who have been learning how to power out of poverty together since 2016.

What are we learning? First, we need to tackle the kindergarten readiness disparity in Escambia County with a sense of hope that we can change a child’s trajectory, but only if we accept two things: ZIP code is not destiny. Brain is not destiny.

To achieve our community’s bold goal of 75 percent of children ready for school by 2025, up from 45 percent today, it will take hard work across all sectors and silos that touch a child’s life. It will require tackling several pieces of the puzzle at once, in a coordinated way. It will take empowering parents as mechanisms for change in their child’s upbringing and their community’s future. And it will mean building bridges to reach struggling families where they are, resources to support their good intentions and tools to address their needs, from employment training to affordable housing and food insecurity.

The good news is we don’t have to look far for examples of how this could work. Over the past few years, C.A. Weis Community Partnership School has become Escambia County’s incubator for

**The story of Weis Community School**

**CAN BE THE STORY OF OUR COMMUNITY**

BY Kimberly Krupa

ACHIEVE ESCAMBIA

The story of Weis Community School can be the story of our community.
excellence in early childhood innovation. An alliance of 25-year partners — Children’s Home Society of Florida, Community Health of Northwest Florida and University of West Florida — mean that C.A. Weis students have full-time access to on-site health care, dental, counseling, mentoring and afterschool enrichment.

Achieve Escambia became involved in early learning at C.A. Weis after looking at data showing that Weis’s integrated approach to serving the whole child was inspiring huge gains in student learning. In 2017, Weis advanced two grade levels, from an F to a C, an improvement they continue to maintain despite increasing child poverty in the 32505 and 32501 neighborhoods bordering Pace Boulevard and West Cervantes Street.

Even more stunning were the results from Weis’s 3-year-old preschool program. Children enrolled in 3-year-old preschool at Weis in 2016 outperformed their peers one year later on oral language, phonological awareness, math and print knowledge, four measures assessed in Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK). Looking at this data, the Achieve Escambia Leadership Council made a $130,000 annual commitment to funding the 3-year-old program as a case study for what’s possible, not just in one classroom and one school, but across Escambia County.

In 2018, 100 percent of Weis students from the first 3-year-old program were “ready for kindergarten,” compared to just 40 percent of their peers.

Clearly, when the playing field of opportunities is sufficiently leveled, transformation is possible.

C.A. Weis and the community that supports it have intentionally and imaginatively implemented a strategy that has put them on a path from low-performing to high-performing, from unsafe to safe, from isolated to engaged, from dismal to joyful. Along the way, the school has become a center of community life with a pediatric clinic, outdoor play space and new Imagination Station early learning center.

How can you be part of this transformation? Ask your child care provider, after-school program, or civic club how they’re working collectively with other groups in the community to improve early childhood. Volunteer at a school, help your local church give back to its neighborhood school, or become a mentor at proven, evidence-based programs like Every Child a Reader Escambia (ECARE), our county’s signature early literacy initiative.

It doesn’t take a lot from any single individual. But it does take a little from each of us to reach a future where every generation achieves its full potential.

Kimberly Krupa is executive director of Achieve Escambia. She can be reached at director@achieveescambia.org.
Every mom needs a helping hand sometimes — and for more than 25 years, Healthy Start has been that helper.

For Kristine, help came when she was pregnant with her first son, Clyde. Kristine was unsure what to expect and nervous to start this journey. She got involved in Healthy Start after her OB/GYN asked if she was interested in the opportunity.

Clyde’s birth was a stressful time; he was born very premature and was on oxygen for a time.

“My Care Coordination nurse, Susan, was there throughout the whole process to provide courage and support to my new family,” Kristine says. “Healthy Start offered so much for my family. The videos included in the program were my favorite and allowed me to make reachable goals. I was able to grow closer to my family, which was my goal. “These classes also gave us a place to make friends since we had been so used to being homebound trying to get my son healthy.”

Helping moms like Kristine is what Florida Healthy Start has been doing since it was founded in 1991, with the goals of reducing infant mortality, reducing the number of low birth weight babies, and improving health and developmental outcomes for all Florida’s babies.

The Healthy Start Coalition relies on local community input to plan, implement and evaluate a comprehensive system of care for pregnant women and children, up to age 3, who might be at risk for a poor pregnancy or birth outcomes.

That means creating a customized care plan for moms to address their needs with the goal of keeping mom and baby healthy. And that can look different for each mom. We offer a wide variety of programs, services and events. Two key pieces of our work are:

**Connect (Coordinated Intake and Referral):** This coordinated intake and referral process ensures the best fit for families and streamlines access to services. At the same time, it improves program enrollment and retention rates, reduces duplication of efforts and builds a broader early childhood system of care in Florida.

Connect helps pregnant women, caregivers and families with young children by providing a one-stop entry point for needed services, such as education and support in childbirth, newborn care, parenting, child development, food and nutrition, mental health and financial self-sufficiency.

**Safe Sleep Initiative:** The Escambia County Healthy Start Coalition Cribs for Kids Safe Sleep Initiative educates the community about the importance of providing a safe sleep environment to reduce the risk of injury or death for infants and children.

In addition, we provide free Graco Pack ’n Play® cribs and a Safe Sleep Survival Kit to Escambia County’s most vulnerable infants and children, thanks in large part to donations from generous community members and business partners. In 2017...
and 2018, we were able to provide more than 250 cribs to infants in need of a safe sleep environment.

Healthy Start aims to meet moms who need our services where they are. We met Caitlin when our Century Healthy Start office first opened. She was pregnant with her third child and worked at a local fast food restaurant. She struggled with transportation to work and getting to her prenatal appointments in Pensacola.

Caitlin participated in our Centering Pregnancy program working with Dr. Julie DeCesare to receive prenatal coaching within walking distance of her apartment.

Caitlin delivered baby Avery and needed assistance with a stroller. Healthy Start was able to provide a stroller in addition to the educational resources she received during and after her pregnancy. Caitlin credits Healthy Start with increasing her self-confidence.

“I would love to thank you for everything you have done for me and my children. Healthy Start has made me a better mother for my children,” Caitlin says.

Caitlin says she now feels that she is someone her children can look up to and be proud to call their mother. Since Avery’s birth, Caitlin has changed jobs and is now working as a paraprofessional in an assisted living facility.

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Let’s create together!

→ Create an “art gallery” in your home.
   Having a designated area to display your child’s work will bring positivity.

→ Pick a book relating to art.
   Have your child draw a picture of something from the book.

→ Grab a sheet of paper and trace you and your child’s hands and feet.
   Afterward, color or paint the images.

→ Count it out!
   Gather supplies to create a new project. Encourage your child to count out objects as you gather them.

→ Create lacing cards!
   Punch holes in a piece of paper and encourage your child to lace through the holes.

→ Start a window garden!
   Explain to your child about planting.

→ Create a chart for your window garden.
   Measure how tall or wide the plants grow over time.

→ Paint a picture!
   Experiment with the outcome of mixing colors.

→ Read aloud.
   Instead of a traditional story, read an activity book. Afterward, create the activity of your child’s choice.

→ Bake cookies with your child and measure the ingredients.
   Then cut the cookies into different shapes!

A toddler’s curiosity grows by the day, and art and creative play are great outlets for that curiosity. For example: Place different art supplies in front of your child. With little instruction, see what finished product they come up with. Allow your child to be creative. Incorporate art projects into learning sessions.
BRAIN BUILDERS with SCIENCE!

Science is relative to a child’s life at every age. Science helps children understand the world around them. The change from day to night, the change of the seasons, how rain helps plants grow, why things fall to the ground when you drop them are all ways your child can see science in everyday life to develop essential life skills such as communication and organization.

Let’s explore together!

→ **Take it outside!**
  Use colorful chalk and trace shadows on the sidewalk.

→ **Read aloud.**
  Read a book related to science. Encourage your child to draw a picture related to the story.

→ **Make a telescope out of an empty paper towel tube.**
  As a bonus, paint the tube!

→ **Read aloud.**
  Read a book related to seasons. Make, draw, or paint a picture of the season that your child chose.

→ **Music time!**
  Tap a beat on different objects to produce a different sound. Encourage your child to repeat the beat.

→ **Count it out!**
  Create an animal from paint and cotton balls. Count your animal family!

→ **Roleplay that it is snowing.**
  Create snow with toilet tissue or cotton balls.

→ **Read:**
  Encourage your child to pick a book. From the cover, conclude the theme of the book.

→ **ABC!**
  Match each letter of the alphabet with an item from outside.

Encourage your child to be curious about the world around them. For example: What happens when you mix paint with water? Use a dropper to squeeze paint into a bowl of water. Explain what is happening. Asking your child questions about the world will increase their curiosity.
SCI, UNIVERSITY of Chicago Partnership Brought New Tools to Boost Brain Development IQ in New Parents

BY Shannon Nickinson
STUDER COMMUNITY INSTITUTE

Pensacola moms have spent more than a year on the cutting edge of research about how best to reach and teach new parents about infant brain development.

Pensacola was the first community to implement on a large scale the Newborn Intervention of the TMW Center for Early Learning and Public Health at the University of Chicago.

The Newborn Intervention is a video delivered during the universal newborn hearing screening every child undergoes before leaving the hospital. The video aims to measure what a new mom knows about her child’s early brain development, and then increase her knowledge of the power that language has to build an infant’s brain.

The video first was tested with nearly 600 families in two Chicago-area hospitals. Pensacola mothers served as a continuing pilot of the project. Their feedback will contribute to fine-tuning the messaging for research that is proving to be effective at increasing what parents know about brain development — and the role it plays in school readiness.

Kristin Leffel is the research director of operations and strategic operations at the TMW Center for Early Learning and Public Health. She is part of the team that has been working in partnership with SCI. Leffel said that the TMW team presented a poster at the Society for Research in Child Development conference in Baltimore in March 2019 about the Pensacola project.

The findings are based on preliminary analysis of the 994 moms who were part of the group, including 657 women in Escambia County, Florida. The others are from Chicago-area hospitals.

In TMW Newborn, moms are presented a survey on an iPad. It asks them questions about how babies’ brains develop and how they learn and process language. Moms are then shown a video that highlights some key teaching points about how parent talk and interaction influence a child’s brain development.

Then moms are asked the same questions again to try to see what they learned from the video.

The video is in four versions: a short version (about 7 minutes); a long version (about 14 minutes); a short version with questions that pop up to interrupt the video (parents must answer for the video to continue playing); and a long version with the interstitial questions.

The findings so far:

→ Moms from both education level groups increased their knowledge about brain and language development.
The video with interstitial questions helped moms with a lower educational attainment level learn more than the video without questions. The interstitial questions had no impact on the learning gains made by moms with a four-year degree or higher.

No significant difference in knowledge gains between the long and short versions of the videos.

It also shows, the study authors say, that such an intervention can be made part of routine postpartum care by healthcare professionals — and it will be successful.

“We still have more to learn and explore in the data, particularly to try to get a better understanding of who the people are who opt out of the video, and what kind of selection bias that introduces,” Leffel said. “We’re digging into that data more right now. We’re also looking into when in the intervention workflow people drop out to better understand how we need to support the implementation.”

In 2018, Baptist, Sacred Heart and West Florida hospitals began their participation in the University of Chicago’s video research project. The project was completed in October 2019. The participation rate for the pilot study in Chicago was at 25 percent.

Our participation rates were:

- **West Florida**: 60 percent.
- **Baptist**: 82 percent.
- **Sacred Heart**: 48 percent.

About the moms who participated:

- 64% were between 18-30; 33% were 31-40.
- 69% had less than a bachelor’s degree; 31% had a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- 55% earned 200% of the federal poverty level or less; 45% earned more than that.

With the research period closed, the team in Chicago is considering the next steps for sharing their tool more widely.

“We’re starting to explore how it might look for TMW-Newborn to be implemented in standard care, rather than in the context of a research study,” she said.
### Pensacola Metro Dashboard

**What gets measured, gets improved**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single-parent households</th>
<th>Source: American Community Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County 2017</td>
<td>12.5% of births 467 babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County 2018</td>
<td>10.7% of births 209 babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida 2018</td>
<td>10.2% of births 221,508 babies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children living in single-parent families often face more economic and social hurdles than their peers from two-parent families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College graduates</th>
<th>Source: Pew Research Center, American Community Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>27.2% in 2017 Up 2.4% from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>27.1% in 2017 Up 0.3% from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>28.5% in 2017 Up 0.7% from 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research shows that communities with higher percentages of college-educated residents have higher wages overall. Pew Research Center study shows people with a college degree earned about $17,500 more a year than those with just a high school diploma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rent-burdened households</th>
<th>Source: American Community Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>47.6% in 2017 Down 3.4% from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>42% in 2017 Down 3.2% from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>52.8% in 2017 Down 4.6% from 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rule of thumb for affordability is that housing should cost no more than 30% of your monthly income. This point tracks the percentage of people who spend more than that on rent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preterm births</th>
<th>Source: American Community Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County 2017</td>
<td>39% of families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County 2018</td>
<td>27% of families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida 2017</td>
<td>38% of families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preterm birth rate tracks the percent of babies born before 37 weeks gestation. Children born earlier than 37 weeks can be at risk for health and developmental issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VPK participation</th>
<th>Source: Florida Department of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>58% 2018-19 Up 1.66% from 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>60% 2018-19 Down 1.93% from 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>75% 2018-19 Down 0.9% from 2017-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 2005, all Florida 4-year-olds have been eligible to attend voluntary prekindergarten for free. In Escambia County, during 2018-2019 school year, an estimated 1,977 children who were eligible for the state program were not enrolled in it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free &amp; reduced-price lunch</th>
<th>Source: Florida Department of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>74.9% 2018-19 Up 10% from 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>44.9% 2018-19 Down .4% from 2017-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>66% 2018-19 Up 5.1% from 2017-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This helps measure poverty in a community. Children living in households at or below 185% of the poverty level are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals at their schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High school graduation rate</th>
<th>Source: Florida Department of Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>81% in 2018 Up 1.2% from 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>89% in 2018 Up 2.7% from 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>86% in 2018 Up 3.9% from 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This tracks the percentage of students who finished high school in four years. Escambia’s graduation rate has climbed steadily from a rate of 58% in 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median income</th>
<th>Source: U.S. Census Bureau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>$47,361 in 2017 Up 0.02 from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>$62,731 in 2017 Up 0.03 from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>$50,883 in 2017 Up 0.04 from 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median income is the very middle of the income scale — half of earners make more than that, half make less than that. It is one measure of the average person’s purchasing power and economic well-being.
The Studer Community Institute is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Cost of child care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage of Parent's Monthly Income</th>
<th>Cost Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County 2016</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>Unchanged from previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County 2016</td>
<td>39.5% of a parent's monthly income</td>
<td>Unchanged from previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida 2016</td>
<td>56% of a parent's monthly income</td>
<td>Unchanged from previous year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This tracks average child care costs (for infant and preschoolers) as a percentage of median income for single-parent families. The expense of childcare can impact other financial choices a family is able to make. SOURCE: US Census Bureau / American Community Survey

Crime rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Crime Rate per 100,000 Population</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County 2018</td>
<td>3,566.4</td>
<td>Down 6% from 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County 2018</td>
<td>1,177.3</td>
<td>Down 6.8% from 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida 2018</td>
<td>2,721.4</td>
<td>Down 25.3% from 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This measures the number of crimes reported per 100,000 citizens, including both violent crimes and property crimes. The crime rate has been declining in Escambia County for the last five years. SOURCE: Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Middle class households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Middle Class Household Percentage</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>68.7% in 2017</td>
<td>Up 4.1% from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>61.5% in 2017</td>
<td>Down 5.7% from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>61.7% in 2017</td>
<td>Down 1.3% from 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of households considered middle class in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties has remained relatively flat from 1990, as has the state rate. The income range for “middle class” is roughly between $20,000 and $99,000 in annual income. SOURCE: US Census Bureau

Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>309,924 in 2017</td>
<td>Up 4% from 2010 to 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>166,778 in 2017</td>
<td>Up 9.7% from 2010 to 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>20,278,450 in 2017</td>
<td>Up 7.6% from 2010 to 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data shows that after steeply increasing every decade between 1970 and 2000, the population stagnated. Between 2010 and 2017, population growth has come to our area, though Santa Rosa far outpaces Escambia’s growth rate. SOURCE: American Community Survey

Kindergarten readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Kindergarten Readiness</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County 2018-19</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Unchanged from previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County 2018-19</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Unchanged from previous year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Down 0.9% previous year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the percentage of 5-year-olds found kindergarten-ready when evaluated in the first month of the school year. Children who are not ready for kindergarten may never catch up. This also puts extra stress on teachers and takes time away from other children. Florida has tracked readiness since 2004, but changed how scoring is reported in 2010-2011, and again in 2015-16, resulting in a two-year gap in reporting. Another test was chosen for the 2017-2018 school year, making historical comparison difficult. SOURCE: Florida Department of Education, Office of Early Learning

Labor force participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Labor Force Participation</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>61% in 2017</td>
<td>Unchanged from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>59% in 2017</td>
<td>Up 0.7% from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>59% in 2017</td>
<td>Unchanged from 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The unemployment rate is often reported as a measure of joblessness, but it leaves out people who quit looking for work. Labor force participation shows how many people who are eligible to work are doing so. It has hovered around the same rate in Escambia County since 2010. SOURCE: US Census Bureau

Overweight and obesity rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Overweight and Obesity Rate</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>64.3% in 2017</td>
<td>Unchanged from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>70% in 2017</td>
<td>Unchanged from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>63.2% in 2017</td>
<td>Unchanged from 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two out of three people in the Pensacola metro area are either overweight or obese, meaning they have a body mass index of 25 or higher. Obesity-related health problems diminish worker productivity and add cost to the health care system. SOURCE: Florida Department of Health

Median workforce age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Median Workforce Age</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>37 in 2017</td>
<td>Unchanged from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa County</td>
<td>39.5 in 2017</td>
<td>Unchanged from 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>41.8 in 2017</td>
<td>Up 0.2% from 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One measure of a healthy, vibrant community is the median age of the workforce. A younger workforce can be an indicator that young professionals are staying in their community — or being drawn to it from elsewhere — seeking a good quality of life. As this number rises, it can indicate an aging population that is may not be attracting and retaining young talent. SOURCE: American Community Survey
Kindergarten may seem like a long way off, but it’s never too early to start preparing your baby for school. From now until your child’s first day of kindergarten, family members and caregivers are a child’s best resource for building a strong foundation for school.

**CAN YOUR CHILD**

**PRINT THEIR NAME**

__________________________

__________________________

**COPY THESE LETTERS**

V H T C A

**READ AND WRITE THESE NUMBERS**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

**YOU ARE YOUR CHILD’S BEST TEACHER**

As your child nears age 5 and you both start thinking about the first day of kindergarten, this guide can be a checkup to help you see if he’s ready to make the grade for school.
CAN YOUR CHILD ...

NAME THESE COLORS?

DRAW THESE SHAPES?

COUNT THE LIGHT BULBS?

TELL YOU WHICH IS THE SMALLEST CIRCLE?

NAME THESE SHAPES?
CAN YOUR CHILD

IDENTIFY OPPOSITES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>big</th>
<th>little</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hot</td>
<td>cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>front</td>
<td>back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>left</td>
<td>right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>sad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

READ COMMON WORDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the</th>
<th>my</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of</td>
<td>is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to</td>
<td>are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>does</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOLLOW BASIC RULES

☐ Sharing and taking turns.
☐ Respecting people’s property.
☐ Cleaning up after themselves.

☐ Listen for 10 minutes without interrupting.

☐ Dress himself or herself without help, except for snaps, buttons and zippers.

☐ Identify the front cover, back cover and title page of a book.

FOLLOW THREE DIRECTIONS GIVEN AT THE SAME TIME

☐ Hang up your backpack.
☐ Put your lunch bag on the shelf.
☐ Sit on the rug for circle time.

MARK THE ONES YOUR CHILD KNOWS

☐ First name
☐ Age
☐ Name the street or address of where they live
☐ City they live in
☐ Last name
☐ Boy or girl
☐ Telephone number
A GRAND EXPERIENCE

Upscale shopping, sophisticated dining and South Walton’s very best events and entertainment await.

grandboulevard.com
Baptist is building a new main hospital at the intersection of Brent Lane and I-110 in Pensacola. We plan to open in summer 2023. This new facility will keep us close to our current main hospital location and will offer greater access, enhanced technology and a concentration of related services, making it easier and more convenient to deliver better care to those we serve.

More good news—Baptist will maintain a significant presence at our E Street Pensacola location. We look forward to working with community partners to ensure that the new version of this campus is designed to best serve local needs.