

Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative

Between birth and age five the brain develops at a faster rate than at any other time in life.

Children with high-quality early care and education have a better chance of succeeding before school, in school and later in life. In fact, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis has found that for every dollar invested in early care and education, a community can see up to a \$7 - \$16 dollar return on that investment. Prioritizing young children is one of the most solid economic development investments a community can make. Strong early childhood programs support working parents and help attract better workers. The bottom line is that all young children deserve a healthy start in life in order to grow into strong, productive adults.

PROGRAM >

In an effort to give children in greater Minnesota the best possible start to life, the Minnesota Initiative Foundations developed the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative.

Thanks to over \$9 million dollars invested by The McKnight Foundation, there are now 80 Early Childhood Coalitions operating in greater Minnesota. Fifteen of those are located here in central Minnesota.

Each coalition is a community-based team made up of parents, childcare providers, kindergarten teachers, school administrators, city officials, business owners and other community members. These teams developed a local vision and plan of action to support young children and their families.

PROCESS >

Selected communities receive an initial grant of \$10,000 along with leadership and planning training, technical assistance, and referrals to resources.

Through this program, communities will:

- Build a diverse coalition.
- Survey their community regarding perceptions and awareness around early childhood issues.
- Create and carry out projects and programs to help children birth to five-years-old.

Current coalitions have:

- Delivered over 40 trainings for childcare providers.
- Distributed thousands of books to promote literacy.
- Provided information to support parents of nearly 500 newborns.
- Recruited over 400 community members to become involved.

PARTICIPATE >

Selection to the program is a competitive process. The foundation selects only two communities per round. Contact the Children, Youth and Families team to receive more information about the process.

