



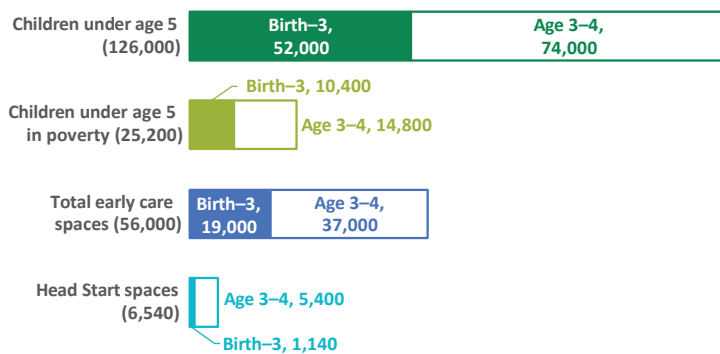
# Early Education Grant Fund: Grantee Overview

## Demand for local early care and education services greatly exceeds supply.<sup>1</sup>

High-quality early education programs can help prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond. Yet many of the 126,000 children under age 5 years in the Kansas City region do not have adequate access to these programs. Across the region, the 56,000 spaces in licensed home- and center-based care programs can serve

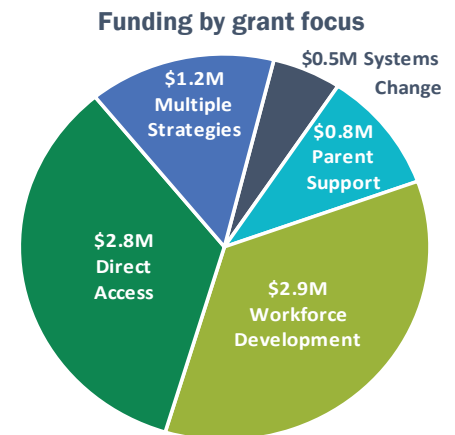
*less than half* of all children under age 5 years. Early care access for high-need communities is of particular concern. More than **1 in 5** children under age 5 years in the Kansas City region live in poverty and **1 in 3** are children of color. Head Start programs serve only about **one-third** of the region's approximately 25,000 low-income children under age five years, and Early Head Start programs reach less than **10%** of low-income infants and toddlers. Moreover, the quality of early education in the region is unknown because Missouri and Kansas do not use a Quality Rating and Improvement System or other approach to assess program effectiveness.

Child care availability in Kansas City region (approximate numbers)



## The diverse EEGF-funded organizations are addressing this gap via multiple pathways.

Representatives of 12 local foundations contribute to the Early Education Grant Fund (EEGF) with the goal of ensuring all Kansas City children have access to high-quality early education. From spring 2016 through spring 2017, the EEGF awarded more than \$8.2 million in grants. Twenty-six organizations in the Kansas City area received 29 grants, ranging from \$32,000 to \$500,000. Grantees used most of the funding to expand enrollment in early education and to improve the quality of care in programs.



- 11 grants focused on **workforce development**, strengthening the skills of early learning staff and hiring and training new staff.

The EEGF awarded eight more grants totaling \$1.4M in fall 2017. These grantees expect to reach about 10,000 students, about half of whom are low income and/or children of color.

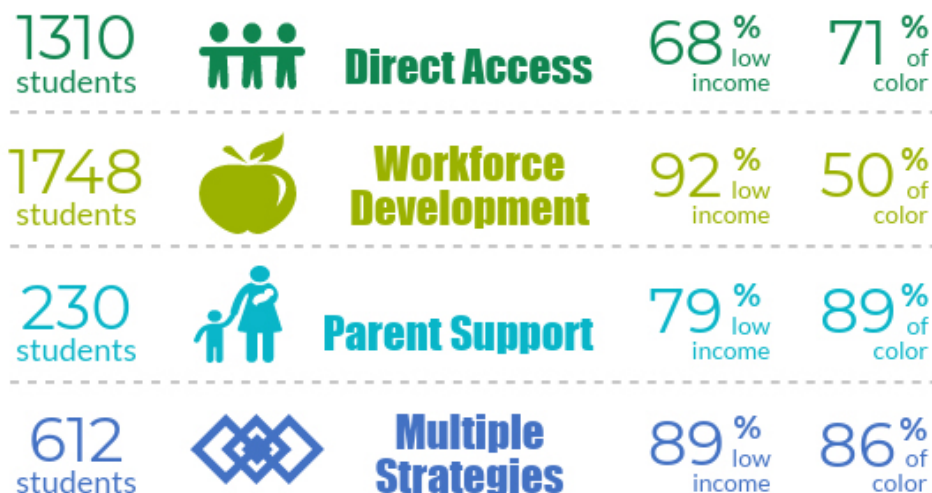
- 6 grants supported **direct access** to early education by expanding the number of preschool spaces or opening a new childcare program.
- 5 grants focused on **parent support** programs, such as parent leadership and home visiting services.
- 4 grants addressed **systems change** activities like policy advocacy.
- 3 grants focused on **multiple strategies** that support the organization's overall operations.

<sup>1</sup> Sources for the landscape data are as reported in "KC EEFC Strategic Planning" by Bellwether Education Partners (August 4, 2017), as follows: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2015); Missouri Comprehensive Data System (2016); Greater Kansas City Early Care and Education Landscape Summary Report (2017); Mid-America Head Start Community Assessment (2017-2018); Missouri Accreditation webpage (n.d.); Office of Head Start Grantee Snapshot (2015-16); Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2016-17); and the Kansas Department of Education (2016-17).

## EEGF-funded activities reached many low-income families and children of color.

Since 2016, grantees have leveraged EEGF grant funds to serve almost **4,000** children in the Kansas City region, most of whom reside in high-need communities. Many of these strategies have yielded improvements that will serve additional children over many years.

Characteristics of students benefited, by grant focus<sup>2</sup>



## Most grantees targeted increasing school readiness and improving classroom quality.

EEGF grantees used funds to improve classroom quality, increase school readiness, and expand access to early care and education services, as well as a range of other outcomes. By their most recent reporting period, all grantees reported progress toward their target outcomes.

- 19 grants targeted children's **readiness for kindergarten and later school success**, demonstrated by meeting targets on indicators of academic and social-emotional skills.
  - One grantee reported that 95% of its preschool children has age-appropriate developmental skills, and 94% of preschool children met standards for kindergarten readiness.
- 18 grants targeted **classroom quality** by adopting and implementing research-validated classroom quality measures, or by providing or expanding early childhood education workforce training.
  - Several grantees were able to hire early care teachers with Bachelor's or Master's degrees.
  - Another grantee reported that 20 out of 22 teachers exceeded the national average on a classroom quality assessment, and all 22 teachers showed improvement in at least one aspect of instructional quality.
- 8 grants targeted **increased enrollment** in early learning programs.
  - One grantee reported a 30% increase in program enrollment as a result of EEGF support.
- 17 grants targeted outcomes related to **changing policies** or program-level practices, addressing program **sustainability**, and improving **child and family well-being** through developmental screenings and **educating parents** on positive parent-child interactions.
  - Two grantees reported strengthening relationships with parents through assessing parents' needs, documenting family partnership agreements, and completing parent-teacher conferences.

## EEGF Grantee Highlights

### Expanding Access

- One grantee opened a new preschool center to provide low-income English learners children with quality bilingual instruction.
- This grantee aims to increase students' English achievement and the development of their literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional skills.

### Workforce Development

- One grantee collaborated with Teach For America to increase the number of high-quality preschool teachers in the region.
- This grant also provides for a mental health consultant who screens students for mental health intervention needs and works with teachers to alleviate stress and raise classroom quality.

### Systems Change

- An advocacy organization met with Kansas lawmakers to educate them about public investments in early education.