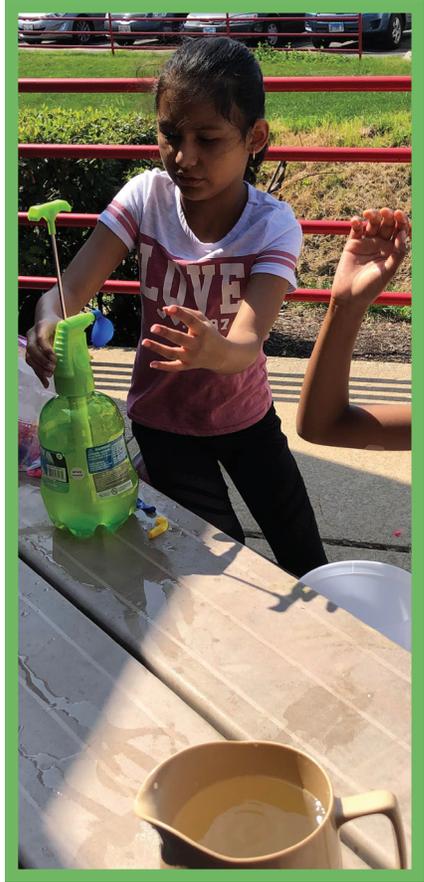
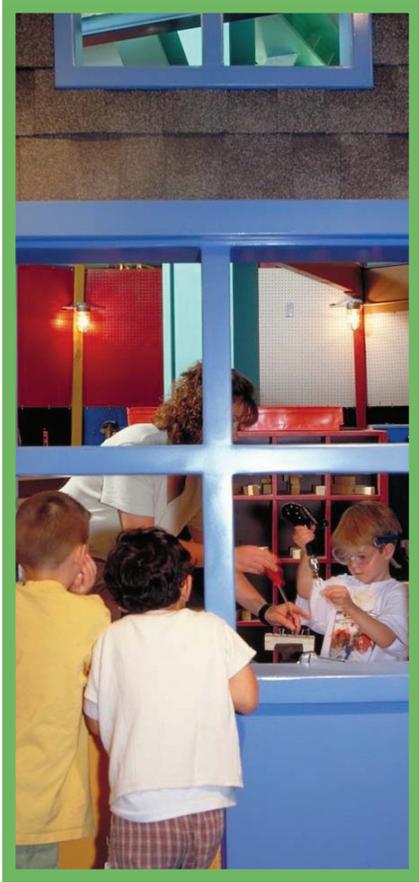




A DuPage Foundation Initiative



Bright & Early DuPage

Impact Report FY21

Vision

Every DuPage child will be ready to succeed in kindergarten.

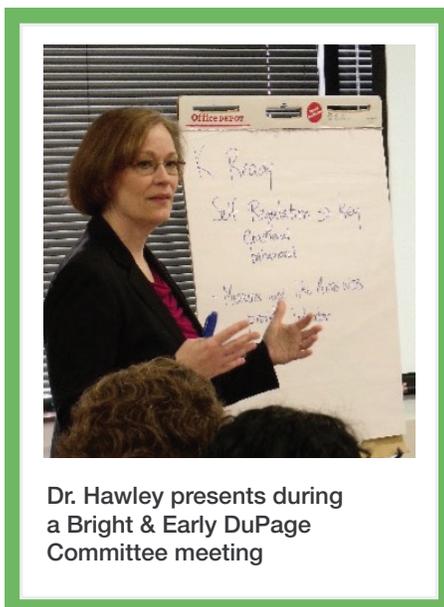
Mission

To build sustainable, coordinated, local early childhood systems that actively work to increase access to quality education and support for children and families with limited resources.

Bright & Early DuPage Initiative Sets Model for Illinois Early Childhood Investments

DuPage Foundation's Bright & Early DuPage initiative focuses on ensuring children from birth to age five in DuPage County receive the comprehensive support critical in preparing them for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Before DuPage Foundation's Bright & Early DuPage (B&ED) initiative was created, there was no road map to building successful publicly-funded early childhood programs for underserved children in DuPage County. Today, the success of the initiative has become a model for the state of Illinois thanks in part to **Theresa Hawley**, PhD, who helped create a comprehensive plan for B&ED and has since pushed for the same development at the state level.



In 2003, DuPage Foundation was invited to participate in Grand Victoria Foundation's (GVF) Communityworks initiative, a seven-year, \$12 million initiative designed to

1,699 publicly-funded preschool seats awarded
57% increase since 2018

1,083 home visiting slots
55% increase since 2018

878 special needs and early intervention referrals
52% increase since 2018

strengthen Illinois community foundations and build permanent endowments to benefit organizations working in three key areas: early childhood care and education, workforce development, and land use and protection.

At that time, Dr. Hawley was a trustee for the Gustafson Family Foundation (GFF), a private foundation focused on serving children, which has since become the largest donor-advised fund of DuPage Foundation. Through that role, she facilitated a \$1 million gift from GFF to take advantage of the GVF match and double their impact to support the Foundation's early childhood endowment.

With a strong endowment in place, the B&ED Committee was created to plan how to best use the annual income generated from the fund. Dr. Hawley had the experience of working to promote early childhood care and education in small communities. She saw success bloom from a greater ownership by local facilitators and encouraged the Committee to invest in local community collaborations.

DECC data from 2020

“With her familiarity of the early childhood landscape in DuPage and her expertise on how to best meet the needs of young children and families, Theresa led us on the right track to have the greatest impact with the dollars we had available,” said **Barb Szczepaniak**, vice president for programs. “We were truly lucky to have her knowledge of the systems that needed to be put in place and her assistance in building out the attainable goals of the initiative.”

“As one of the richest counties in the state, we were now dealing with the implications or the suburbanization of poverty,” said Dr. Hawley. “We believed in the power of actually getting folks to work together across all of our different agencies and school districts – and all the players in the community – knowing it was really the most important way to move this work forward.”



In 2012, Dr. Hawley became executive director for the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development to coordinate state efforts to support early learning in collaboration with state agencies and the Illinois Early Learning Council.

“The biggest success from Bright & Early DuPage is it has massively increased the amount of federal and state dollars coming into DuPage to be able to serve low-income kids with high-quality preschool or home visiting services,” said Dr. Hawley.

Dr. Hawley stepped away from the B&ED Committee this past year to focus on her role as the early childhood transformation director for NIU, a position created in partnership with the Governor’s office.

“Our pitch to the Governor was that we need to transform the way we are financing early care and education and we need to build a system that has the chance of creating a more equitable set of services for kids and families,” said Dr. Hawley. “It outrages me and it needs to outrage

everyone that, in one of the richest counties in the country, we find it acceptable somehow that low-income kids in our county are not allowed to go to preschool because we don’t have it for them.”

Dr. Hawley said the state is investing in the same kinds of things as B&ED, not as a replacement for the way that foundations and local entities are investing, but as a supplement to build up robustly across the state.

“Bright & Early DuPage is a model for what’s going on at the state level,” added Dr. Hawley. “The work that happened in DuPage shows the investment in these communities really did make a difference. It was a really important part of the argument for convincing the Governor and others in state leadership that this was an investment worth making. The example of what’s been possible in DuPage is something that inspires a lot of people.”

Since the launch of the B&ED initiative in 2013, the Foundation has seeded and supported six early childhood collaborations and the county-wide DuPage Early Childhood Collaborative (DECC) that serves as a hub for early childhood in DuPage. Through multiple matching challenges and fundraising opportunities, the B&ED endowment has grown to nearly \$7 million today.

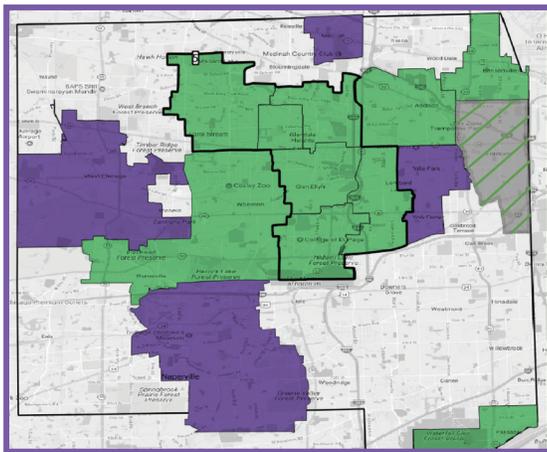
“When we launched this initiative focused on creating real system change, we weren’t sure what the community’s response would be or the specific impact we would have,” said Szczepaniak. “To see how much the early childhood landscape in DuPage has changed and knowing that the state is using our work as a model for early childhood is truly wonderful. Due to the collective vision of Bright & Early DuPage and the hard work of the local collaboratives supported through this initiative, many DuPage children have been put on a path to lifelong success.”

Seven Collaborative Networks

DuPage Early Childhood Collaboration (DECC)

DECC is the county-wide umbrella organization that works with the local collaboratives in DuPage County, six of which are funded by Bright & Early DuPage including:

- Addison Early Childhood Collaborative
- Bensenville Early Learning Supporters
- Birth to 5 Community Coalition (*Bloomington, Carol Stream and Hanover Park*)
- Glenbard Early Childhood Collaborative
- Wheaton/Warrenville Early Childhood Collaborative
- Willowbrook Corner Coalition



Legend

Bright & Early DuPage grantee

-  No
-  Yes
-  Bensenville Collaborative added in FY20

In FY21, the following grants were made to local collaboratives:

DuPage Early Childhood Collaboration (DECC) - county-wide collaboration	\$65,000
Addison Early Childhood Collaboration	\$50,000
Bensenville Early Learning Supporters	\$50,000
Glenbard Early Childhood Collaborative	\$50,000
Wheaton/Warrenville Early Childhood Collaboration	\$50,000
Willowbrook Corner Coalition	\$50,000
YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago for the Project HELP Breakfast	\$5,000

Bright & Early DuPage Committee Members

Chair, Joan Morrissey
 Vice Chair, Joyce Webb
 Sandra Biegel
 Cleo Burtis
 Erin Cetera
 Deborah du Vair
 Theresa Hawley

Janet Hodge
 Candace King
 Peter Noronha
 Marcia Tornatore
 Nathaniel Wasson
 Sally Winger





A DuPage Foundation Initiative

Bright & Early DuPage, an initiative of DuPage Foundation, is a unique program designed to leverage area resources to ensure that all DuPage children from birth to age five receive the comprehensive support critical in preparing them for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Community by community, B&ED is engaging and uniting local organizations and individuals to build awareness for and facilitate access to early childhood education and support services for DuPage children and their families. Each year, the B&ED initiative provides grant funding to local community organizations to help establish, build and maintain early childhood collaboratives. B&ED also serves as a voice for early learning and child-friendly policies at all levels of government.



“I can say without hesitation, that the Bright & Early DuPage initiative, through DuPage Foundation, was instrumental in promoting the need for early intervention for all students, especially in underserved communities. The initiative helped bring the idea of intervention, the need for community involvement, and the understanding of developmental milestones, beyond the school setting, in the preparation of our children to be kindergarten ready. The work of the Bright & Early DuPage initiative has had a huge effect on the Addison community in so many ways –all to better the chances for the students in Addison to be prepared for kindergarten and beyond.”

-Chuck Wartman, former assistant superintendent for administrative services,
Addison School District 4



For more information or to make a gift to the Bright & Early DuPage initiative, please contact:

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