



Bright & Early DuPage 2024 Grant Guidelines



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.

Why Invest in Early Childhood?

Investing in early childhood development of disadvantaged children will produce great returns to individuals and society in better education, health, economic and social outcomes -- not only saving tax-payers money but increasing our nation's economic productivity. James Heckman, Nobel Prize Winner

Research has shown that children who participate in quality early learning experiences during the first five years of life are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten, which ultimately puts them on the path for lifelong success. This is especially true for children who are considered at risk due to issues such as developmental delays, low income, lack of English skills, or their parent's lack of education.

Background

Bright & Early DuPage was launched in 2012 as an initiative of DuPage Foundation. In the past 12 years, the Foundation has provided seed funding and ongoing support for a county-wide early childhood collaboration and seven community-based early childhood collaborations. In a 2021 report conducted in DuPage County, key informants made a direct connection between early childhood system success and the presence of early childhood collaborations, especially related to reaching families in need.

The Opportunities

It takes a "village" to prepare children for kindergarten and to launch them on the road to lifelong success, which is why the Foundation is investing financial resources to help local communities establish and build a coordinated approach toward this goal.

DuPage Foundation supports collaborative efforts focused on creating systemic change in addressing early childhood needs as they relate to preparing children for kindergarten. The ultimate goals of the Bright & Early DuPage initiative are that more kids are ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten and that there are fewer disparities in kindergarten readiness by race, ethnicity and income.

Supporting children during their first five years of life is critical to prepare them to succeed and thrive when they arrive at kindergarten. There are many ways to support young children and their families, but the Foundation is most interested in supporting the development of new collaborations and efforts specifically focused on building system capacity (increasing placement of young children in high quality early childhood programs), outreach, and parent engagement.

New Collaboration Development (Maximum Request - \$50,000)

Entities interested in applying for this funding should contact Vice President for Programs Barb Szczepaniak at 630-598-5280 prior to applying. Consultative support is available to assist in the establishment of a new collaboration.

Through this opportunity, communities can apply for seed funding to help establish collaborative initiatives focused on addressing early childhood needs. Prior to applying, the local school district(s) and two or more community organizations should be actively engaged in developing a coordinated approach. Collaborations that provide evidence of achieving their goals during the first year of funding may apply for a multi-year grant for an additional four years.

Every community is unique and each collaboration will have its own set of needs and interests as it relates to early childhood. While newly formed collaborations have much to do to establish ongoing operations and develop relationships, it is expected that some effort is focused on system capacity building, parent outreach, and parent engagement. See the attached Bright & Early DuPage Impact Framework for possible outcomes of these efforts and indicators to measure the impact.

A community can be defined as a municipality, school district, or any other collection of one or more of each which are in close proximity and working together. Engaging multiple community partners is very important to the success of each collaborative effort. Collaborations are encouraged to engage local parents who represent the population they are specifically trying to serve. In addition to local community stakeholders, there are many agencies providing county-wide early childhood programs and services. It is suggested that these agencies are also included in the planning.

System Capacity Building (Maximum Request - \$20,000)*

Through this opportunity, existing early childhood collaborations can apply for funding to support relationship building that leads to collaborative planning and community partner engagement. The purpose of these activities is to:

- increase the number of high quality public/private early childhood seats
- increase the number of home visiting slots
- improve the quality of public/private early childhood programs
- prepare to take advantage of new funding opportunities
- ensure public/private programs are filled to capacity
- improve the use of data to guide decision-making and collaborative efforts



See the attached Bright & Early DuPage Impact Framework for possible outcomes of these efforts and indicators to measure the impact.

Parent Engagement (Maximum Request - \$30,000)*

Through this opportunity, existing early childhood collaborations can apply for funding to support programs or projects specifically focused on:

- empowering parents and caregivers with increased child development knowledge that enhances family relationships and early learning environments.
- active engagement with children and their families in order to ensure their needs are identified and met. While there are many ways to actively engage with children and families, a priority is to conduct outreach that is focused on increasing the number of children who receive developmental screenings.

See the attached Bright & Early DuPage Impact Framework for possible outcomes of these efforts and indicators to measure the impact.

*Applicants may apply for specific programs/projects in both the categories of system capacity and parent engagement. However, applicants that apply for funding in both categories must have a very specific strategy identified for each category.

Eligibility

Applications for funding will be accepted from newly formed or established early childhood collaborations in DuPage County.

One qualifying agency should be identified as the lead agency for the collaboration and will be responsible for submitting the application and monitoring the grant. A qualifying agency may be a school district or a not-for-profit organization that serves young children and families and is a public charity classified as exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

For the purpose of the Bright & Early DuPage initiative, the Foundation does not award grants to:

- Organizations located outside of DuPage County
- Individuals
- Religious activities (secular activities provided by religious organizations may be eligible for grant funds)
- Endowments
- Disease-specific organizations
- Private foundations and private operating foundations
- Hospitals, including supporting foundations

Grant Application Due Date

Applications must be submitted for the Bright & Early DuPage Grant Program by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 7, 2024. Applications submitted after the specified deadline will not be accepted.

Online Grant Application Process

Proposals must be submitted via the [online grant application](#) process.

Application Review Process

The DuPage Foundation's Bright & Early DuPage Committee consists of community volunteers, Foundation Trustees and the vice president for programs.

- Committee will evaluate all applications received.
- Committee will recommend selected community projects to the full Board of Trustees for approval.
- Applicants will be notified in July regarding the status of their applications.

Application Questions

If you have questions about the application process or have an impactful idea that exceeds the maximum request allowed in the priority categories, please contact Barb Szczepaniak, vice president for programs, at 630.598.5280 for further discussion.

For further details about Bright & Early DuPage, visit our website at dupagefoundation.org/BrightAndEarly.

Bright & Early DuPage Impact Framework

Category	Goal	Outcomes	Indicators/Metric
System Capacity Building	Increase capacity in high quality programs to meet the varied needs of children and their families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of early childhood programs is increasing toward the goal of meeting the needs of the service area. • Quality of public early childhood programs is increasing toward the highest quality rating in Illinois' ExceleRate program. • Communities are increasingly prepared to take advantage of capacity building opportunities. • Public programs are filled to capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # increase of children served by public programs (Early Head Start, Head Start, Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion, Early Intervention, home visiting) • # increase of publicly funded preschool seats • # increase of home visiting slots • # of collaboration activities to prepare for capacity building and any funding opportunities • # increase of CCAP seats in private centers • # of public programs that improve ExceleRate quality ratings • # of public programs with an ExceleRate gold quality rating • Ratio of enrollment to capacity of public programs • # of advocacy/promotional activities to sectors to education on the need to increase capacity • # of successes from capacity building and advocacy/expansion work • # of partners engaged in capacity building activities

<p>Parent Engagement</p>	<p>Empower parents and caregivers with increased child development knowledge that enhances family relationships and early learning environments and create a system of active engagement with children and their families in order to ensure their needs are identified and met.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/caregivers have increased their knowledge of child development and how to support their children’s growth. • Parents/caregivers are able to effectively navigate the early learning programs and support services as needed in partnership with program staff. • Parents/caregivers have confidence to advocate for their children. • Families of at-risk or special needs children are equipped to provide and advocate for additional supports for children. • Children with special needs are identified and referred to appropriate programs. • At-risk families and children are identified and referred to appropriate programs. • Children and families are recruited into early learning programs. • Families are informed of programs that could be appropriate for their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of activities and programs provided for parents/caregivers • # of parents/caregivers attending or participating in each activity and program • # of activities and resources provided to parents/caregivers on the early childhood system • # of activities and resources provided to parents/caregivers to increase their confidence in their ability to advocate for their children • # of supplemental activities and resources provided to parents/caregivers of at-risk and/or special needs children that address their unique needs • # of children screened for special needs and early intervention • # of special needs and early intervention referrals • # of recruitment activities to identify and engage at-risk families • # of kindergarten children who had been enrolled in an early childhood program • # of information resources provided to community/families
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Kindergarten Readiness	<p>Every child enters kindergarten through the early childhood system with the tools and skills necessary to succeed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children exiting the early learning programs have demonstrated an increase in social and emotional skills for kindergarten. • Children exiting early learning programs demonstrate increased literacy and language skills for kindergarten. • Children exiting early learning programs demonstrate increased mathematical skills adequate for kindergarten. • At-risk children exit the early learning programs just as prepared for kindergarten as non-at-risk children. • Special needs children exit early learning programs with individualized transition plans upon entering kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % increase in social/emotional score (KIDS) • % increase in literacy/language score (KIDS) • % increase in mathematical score (KIDS) • % decrease in the gap in skills in all three domains between free/reduced lunch and full price scores (KIDS) • #/% of children who have IEPs have been supported and connected with appropriate school support staff
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