

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

County: Madison

Legal Name:

United Way of Madison County

Mailing Address:

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Anderson, IN 46012

Contact Name: Karen Hemberger

Contact Title: Vice President of Impact

(Single point of contact for communication)

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COUNTY INFORMATION

Co-Respondents (please list):

Alexandria Community School Corporation

Anderson Community School Corporation

Elwood Community School Corporation

Frankton-Lapel Community School

Corporation

South Madison Community School

Corporation

Madison County Education Coalition

Madison County CAPE

Huffer Childcare Resource and Referral

Estimated Number of Children to be Served
(county-wide):

300

600

Estimated Number of Eligible Providers
(county-wide):

Currently: 11

By July 1, 2015: 25

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that, to the best of my knowledge. The information contained in this statement is correct.

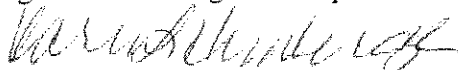
Designated Representative (Printed Name):

Karen Hemberger

Title:

Vice President of Impact

Signature of Designated Representative:



Date:

Additional Signatures (of co-respondents, if necessary):

Marilyn Fingers, Director

Madison County Education Coalition

Dagla J. Leonard, CAPE Director

Timothy Brown, Supt. ELSC

Alice A. Johnson, Supt. Alexandria CSC

Kiane Dickey, Director Huffer Child Care Resource-Referral

Bobby Stiles, Superintendent, Frankton-Lapel Schools

Joe Ruck, Superintendent, South Madison Community Schools

Larry Thompson, Superintendent, Anderson Community School Corporation

I. Executive Summary

Madison County, Indiana has a strong history of promoting early childhood education for its youngest and most vulnerable children. Thirteen years ago the Community Alliance to Promote Education (CAPE) was formed as a school-community collaboration involving many stakeholders who are committed to the goal that Madison County students will be proficient readers. CAPE is governed by the leadership from all five Madison County school corporations, Anderson University, Leadership Academy of Madison County, Madison County Community Foundation and United Way of Madison County.

When it began, CAPE programming was school based, targeting students in Kindergarten through third grade. It soon became aware that many Madison County children were entering school unprepared in literacy and language skills. In 2008 the Born Learning Connection was formed with CAPE and United Way of Madison County to provide multiple opportunities for families to prepare children from birth to age five for success in school and life.

In order to effectively determine where our children were in terms of literacy skills at Kindergarten entrance, all of the school systems in Madison County agreed to perform a common assessment on their students within the first 4 weeks of the start of school. After much research and discussion, the schools determined that the TERA 3 assessment would be used. The findings were dismal. In 2010, the first year all schools were using the assessment, 81% of the Kindergartners in Madison County public schools were scoring below the reading quotient of 100. As depressing as the data were, it gave the community a baseline from which to begin addressing the need for enhanced Kindergarten readiness, and specifically, literacy skills.

In 2012 United Way of Madison County began a new multi-year funding cycle in which programs of organizations that wish to receive funds must align with specific community goals. In the area of early childhood, the strategic investment specifications stated the following:

Vision: All children in Madison County enter school ready to learn

Action: Provide families with the resources and services necessary to prepare children for school, specifically families below 250% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPL)

Community Goal: Increase Madison County TERA scores by 20% by 2018

The goal was not established in a vacuum, but rather with the input of many key stakeholders in the community, including schools, childcare providers, hospitals, business leaders and other social service agencies that interact with families and young children.

Since 2010 the county has seen a positive trend in the TERA 3 scores. Each year the percentage of students scoring below the reading quotient of 100 has been decreasing. In 2013 the number was at its lowest: 70% below a 100 reading quotient.

Clearly we still have a long way to go in ensuring all of our children are prepared for Kindergarten when they enter school; however, the community is now focused and we are making progress toward our goal.

II. Community Engagement

- A. The number of organizations and individuals who support early learning in Madison County is large and growing. As mentioned previously, United Way of Madison County promotes and supports early learning in two ways: (1) The Born Learning Connection provides multiple opportunities for families and caregivers to prepare children from birth to age five for success in school and life. Some of these opportunities include a lending program for home daycare providers; a conference for childcare providers, in which staff may receive continuing education credits to maintain or increase their quality of care; and family literacy events in schools and in the community on a regular basis. (2) The Early Childhood Vision Council is comprised of a broad spectrum of community stakeholders and supporters who are experts in the area of early childhood development, educators from public and private schools, social service providers and business leaders. They review data, set goals and determine strategies for meeting those goals for the community in early childhood education.

The Madison County Community Foundation is the home of the Madison County Education Coalition. The Coalition has an early childhood subcommittee that is mostly focused on supporting Kindergarten Camps in all of the public schools. These summer camps are designed to give children who exhibit low Kindergarten readiness an introduction to the school they will attend and the routines or schedules they will follow in Kindergarten. Teachers and principals report the biggest gains they see are in the area of social skills. Additionally, the Coalition supports many Madison County programs and services, and is researching additional ways to build networks that will enhance the landscape of early childhood education in the community.

Honor Our Children is another group of various stakeholders that focuses on all aspects of child and youth development. One of the ad hoc committees of this coalition is currently wrestling with the issue of family engagement. Many of the members of this committee are social service providers who are struggling with ways to engage difficult to reach parents. The agencies involved in the committee are wide ranging, including childcare providers, hospitals, health department, and children's advocacy groups.

- B. Early learning in Madison County is supported financially through a variety of sources. While Madison County was hit hard by the decline of the automotive manufacturing industry, there are still local funders who are investing substantially in early childhood. United Way of Madison County provides a total of \$119,000 in grants annually to providers of services to children ages birth through five. The two local hospitals, Community and St. Vincent, contribute

\$30,000 for Kindergarten Camp for four to five year olds plus miscellaneous funding to other early learning services. The South Madison Community Foundation supports the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which delivers a free book monthly to all registered children ages 0-5 in the southern portion of Madison County. Finally, a local family foundation provides the funding necessary to support an additional preschool class at one of our public elementary schools.

All of the above funding is in addition to the Title I funds our public school districts invest in their pre-K programs, which equals approximately \$850,000. These dollars are used in all but one school system to provide pre-kindergarten in the county. Those funds are used for teacher and paraprofessional salaries, curriculum, equipment, instructional materials and professional development—essentially for the general education part of the preschool. Special Education funding is utilized for teachers' salaries for the special education portion of pre-kindergarten.

III. Family Engagement

- A. There are several family engagement services available to families with young children in Madison County. Healthy Families provides services to our most at risk families in order to prevent abuse and neglect and to foster healthy development of the children and the family. The Madison County public libraries provide a multitude of literacy programs to families both in their facilities and out in the community at various organizations and schools. Born Learning Connection works in schools and in the community providing activities for families that promote early literacy skill building. The Children's Bureau works with foster care families and birth families to promote engagement in early learning. All of the existing family engagement programs work with early learning programs to coordinate and align their services. In fact, many of the services provided are offered at early learning sites at the request of the preschool and private early learning program providers. In addition to the community wide efforts listed above, each public school pre-kindergarten program holds family engagement activities on a regular basis. Many of these are focused on early literacy, however, there are also art shows, music programs, and, one school provides a health clinic and some social services on-site to try to assist and engage families who are struggling to make ends meet.
- B. All family engagement services listed in the prior section are committed to engaging as many families as possible in their children's early education. Many of the family engagement providers are involved with the various coalitions mentioned earlier and are already providing these services to the current pre-kindergarten sites and other childcare facilities. For example, the Born Learning Connection currently provides family engagement activities at several schools and in organizations throughout the county on a regular basis to model a researched based method of reading to children that promotes comprehension and retention and to demonstrate activities families can do with small children

to promote fine and gross motor skills. As the number of eligible providers begins to grow, these services will be offered to them in order to assist them in engaging the families of their students in meaningful ways that promote early learning.

- C. Currently each pre-kindergarten provider utilizes their own method of identifying children for their program. For public schools, some of the tactics used are flyers in utility bills, large ads in the newspaper, using the call service to reach siblings of current students, and reaching out to churches, community centers, food pantries, and other places where eligible children and their families visit. Other avenues that we are planning to utilize in order to identify and enroll children in pre-kindergarten are to use pediatrician offices, the local Women Infant and Children (WIC) office, and utilizing social media more effectively. We know that word of mouth and face to face interactions are the most successful, so most outreach efforts will focus on going to where families are located in order to ensure we are enrolling as many eligible children as possible.

IV. Provider Capacity

- A. There are currently thirteen providers in Madison County that are eligible to participate in the Pre-kindergarten Pilot Program. Of the thirteen, two are accredited private schools; two providers are licensed childcare centers on level 4 on Paths to Quality; eight are licensed homes three of which are level four on Paths to Quality and five are level three on Paths to Quality; and one is a registered ministry that is on level 3 on Paths to Quality. These providers currently are able to serve approximately 150 eligible children. By July 1, 2015, we anticipate the number of providers who are eligible to participate in the Pre-K Pilot program will increase to 25. As a result, we estimate our capacity to serve eligible four year olds in total to be 450, or 300 additional eligible children.
- B. There are several strategies we will employ in order to increase provider capacity in Madison county to ensure there are enough seats for the children supported by the Pilot Program. First, all schools that currently provide a pre-kindergarten program are committed to achieving a minimum level 3 rating on Paths to Quality. They have already contacted Huffer Childcare Resource and Referral to begin the process. Head Start is also committed to achieving a minimum level 3 on Paths to Quality and is currently at level 2.

Next, we will work with our Childcare Resource and Referral agency to determine whether there are other providers in our county that currently do not qualify but have indicated an interest in increasing their quality or taking other measures that will make them eligible. Once we determine which, if any, are interested, we will begin working with them to help them meet requirements to be able to accept children into their program. United Way of Madison County and Huffer Childcare Resource and Referral share a staff

person who is tasked with identifying and assisting childcare providers who are willing and able to increase their quality. This staff person works with providers and encourages them as they become licensed and move into Paths to Quality. Should we become one of the pilot counties, this position will be critical in helping increase capacity.

Madison County elementary schools survey parents of incoming Kindergarten students to determine where their children have been prior to entering their school. As a result, schools know which preschool programs in their area are preparing children adequately for school. These school principals have made a commitment to contact the programs to ask that they consider meeting the requirements to become eligible for the Pilot Program. If they agree, we will work with them in every way possible to help them achieve a minimum level 3 on Paths to Quality. In fact, some of these providers have been invited to the meeting between our public schools and Childcare Resource and Referral to learn about Paths to Quality. If they wish to take the steps necessary to be an eligible provider, we will have our staff begin working with them immediately.

Finally, because of the flexibility of this Pilot Program we are able to design a variety of pre-k options to increase our current capacity. Due to space and teacher limitations, some providers may be able to develop a half-day program and serve twice as many students while not negatively impacting the integrity of the program.

V. Financial Match

- A. Discussions have been taking place among various constituents regarding the ability to raise funds to assist with the required match for the Pilot Program. While we have no commitments at this time, there are those who feel we could potentially raise between \$100,000 to \$150,000. We will continue to convene and solicit support with existing and new donors who are able to contribute to a cash match for the 2015 pre-k pilot as a way of jumpstarting and demonstrating pre-k in Indiana until sustainable public funds are secured for full statewide implementation.

As noted above, the local support of early learning in our community is substantial. Madison County has had a long history of investing in early childhood education, especially in areas in which there is great need. Given our current capacity and the resources already committed to early learning Madison County is demonstrating readiness to participate in the Pilot Program.

- B. Madison County CAPE was formed thirteen years ago through a grant from the Lilly Endowment with the goal of improving early literacy skills of young children. Because of the success of the work that was begun through that grant, CAPE is still thriving in our community and is largely responsible for the collaborative spirit among educators, community organizations, businesses, and families. Due to the positive outcomes in improving literacy in our community, CAPE has been able to secure additional resources to continue well past the

original grant period. In fact, in order to ensure that the family engagement strategies would continue, United Way of Madison County agreed to bring the Born Learning Connection under its auspices in 2008.

If we achieve demonstrable success, we expect to be able to sustain pre-k programs in our community in the same manner. There is already a considerable investment in early childhood education in our community, and the Pilot Program will only enhance and strengthen the work being done to prepare our children for success in school and in life.

VI. County Readiness and Program Implementation

- A. Madison County would certainly be ready to implement the Pilot Program by July 1, 2015. Many of our preschool programs have waiting lists already, and we will only continue to increase the numbers of children to be served by reaching out to eligible families in proactive ways in a more unified manner. By working with our social service providers who see many of the families we are trying to reach, we believe we will be able to have more success than trying to reach families through traditional lines of communication.

Many schools, both public and private, currently offer preschool for children in our county. All of the public schools that have a pre-k program plan to begin the Paths to Quality process this summer and plan to be at level 3 by the time the program is implemented. Additionally, Head Start is already on Paths to Quality and is planning to be at level 3 by implementation as well. We already know of a few level 2 providers who are planning to continue improving their programs and reaching level 3 within the time frame.

Several providers mentioned above have family engagement strategies in place. To supplement those strategies, Born Learning Connection works with schools and other providers to engage families in their children's learning providing literacy activities. The public libraries in Madison County have several family engagement events that they provide both at their site and out in the community. Because of the strong networks that have been developed in the community, there will be many opportunities to strengthen and expand family engagement in a targeted way, for our pre-k providers.
