



Our Impact

*Increasing access
to high-quality,
early care and
education
in Jefferson Parish.*



Jefferson Ready Start Network

Who We Are

Jefferson Ready Start Network (JRSN) is charged by the Louisiana Department of Education with increasing access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) for children birth to age 5 in Jefferson Parish.

JRSN is led by a coalition of thought partners across diverse sectors, including ECE providers, educators, business leaders, health care professionals, and local government. Guided by local data and context, we develop intentional plans, secure and weave together resources, and implement creative solutions to address early education access and quality.

JRSN is housed within the Jefferson Community Foundation, which serves as our nonprofit, fundraising partner.

Funds raised locally are eligible for a dollar-for-dollar match from the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund.



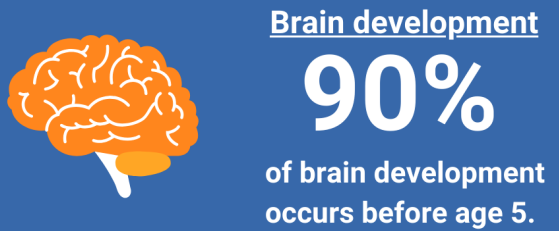
What does ECE look like in Jefferson Parish?

Jefferson Parish is home to **26,000 children birth to 5**. These infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are the future of our parish, and their experiences in the first 5 years of life will impact the citizens they become.

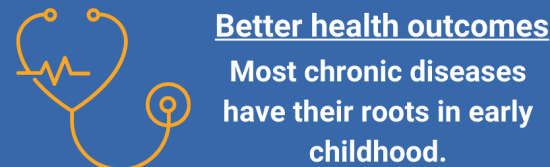
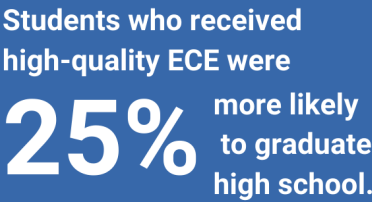
- **An estimated 11,000 children birth to age 5** are from economically disadvantaged families (300% of the federal poverty level and lower).
- **Only 4,200** of those children are enrolled in publicly funded seats.
- **Only 14.4%** of Jefferson Parish children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

The cost of early care and education (ECE) puts quality programs out of reach for many families. There is a critical need for affordable, quality ECE in Jefferson Parish.

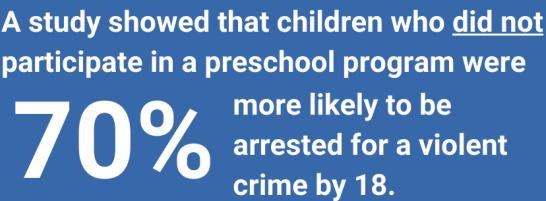
The value of high-quality ECE



Higher graduation rates



Lower involvement in crime



Mission

JRSN is creating a culture of high-quality, comprehensive early childhood services through engagement and partnerships with families, educators, and community members.

Vision

All children birth to age 5 in Jefferson Parish have access to quality early childhood experiences that will prepare them to succeed.

Investing in the Future of Jefferson Parish

Our workforce and economy feel the impact

Approximately 70% of children birth to 5 have both parents or their single parent employed full time. Despite this, working parents still struggle to afford ECE. These impacts are felt by parents and businesses alike.

When families cannot access reliable ECE programs, child care breakdowns:

- Cost Louisiana businesses \$762 million per year
- Result in \$1.3 billion loss annually for Louisiana’s economy

When we expand access to high-quality ECE programs, our investment yields:

- 13% return on every \$1 invested
- \$1.78 return to the local economy in purchased goods and services for every \$1 invested

The impact of local investment

JRSN leverages diverse funding sources to increase access to early care and education, and we created the Future Fund in partnership with the Jefferson Community Foundation to reinforce these efforts. Our network:

Raised over \$1.5 million since the creation of the Future Fund	Doubled local investments to \$3+ million through the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund	Provides support to 136 publicly funded early learning sites
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But the existing need is greater. Current local, state, and federal funding only provides 38% of eligible children birth to 5 with access to a publicly funded seat. We need a significant, dedicated, and sustainable local revenue source to amplify these efforts.

Doubling down on local investment

Funding dedicated to expanding ECE seats is eligible for a dollar-for-dollar match from the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund.

We have the opportunity to establish a sustainable funding source today that **DOUBLES** now and yields up to a 13% return on investment for years to come.



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Investing in the care and education of young children is the “most efficient use” of public resources.

— Nobel Laureate and Economist James Heckman

JRSN Future Fund

Louisiana’s future is tied to the success of its children – that’s why Jefferson Ready Start Network is taking the opportunity to transform that future in one generation.

Thanks to our valued partnership with the Jefferson Community Foundation, you can donate to Jefferson Ready Start Network to support early care and education in our parish. Every local dollar donated can be matched dollar for dollar by the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund. That means you can double your impact when you give through this exciting collaboration!



Visit JeffersonReadyStartNetwork.com/Giving to learn more.

Research & Programs

Landscape Analysis

Jefferson Ready Start Network partnered with Start Early to research and conduct an analysis of the early learning landscape in Jefferson Parish, including a review of ECE access and demand. The project included collection and analysis of existing public data regarding availability, quality, and accessibility of services.

JRSN & Service to Latino Families with Young Children

U.S. Census Bureau data from 2019 estimated that 14.9% (or 64,441) of Jefferson Parish residents identified as Hispanic and more than 36% (or 15,801) were enrolled in Jefferson Parish schools. Despite this population density, only about 905 Latino children under the age of 5 were enrolled in registered, certified, or licensed publicly funded early learning in Jefferson Parish as of February 2022.

JRSN partnered with Advancing Communities for Equity to conduct family focus groups; national, state, and local policy and resource research; and research of Jefferson Parish-based early childhood supports and Latino-serving organizations to better understand low participation by Latino families in early childhood educational services.

Two Generation Approach to Workforce Development & Early Education

The Two Generation program supports a diverse early education workforce in Jefferson Parish that is bilingual and culturally responsive to Latino children and families. The program was piloted in 2023 to address ECE workforce barriers, such as training in Spanish and free, high-quality early care and education for program participants' young children.

With the support of a coalition of Latino-serving organizations, JRSN recruited participants and connected them with early learning centers in our network, typically near their homes for transportation ease. Pilot program apprenticeships completed:

- 960 hours of on-the-job training
- 14+ training sessions
- 30+ hours of professional development delivered in Spanish
- 58+ hours of weekly and biweekly check-ins

Program Partners:



Early Educator Investment Collaborative

JRSN received funding from the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children to support early educator compensation in Jefferson Parish. Our approach to this work is rooted in understanding the current state of early educator compensation; researching the challenges that contribute to low wages in the field; and seeking sustainable funding as a long-term solution. As part of this work, JRSN:

- Created a Steering Committee of providers, nonprofit leaders, and individuals guiding early education policy to inform our strategy.
- Conducted focus groups and surveys with early childhood providers, teachers, and families.
- Researched early education wage structures and funding sources in other states.
- Researched state and local funding mechanisms to support sustainable funding for early care and education, including for educator compensation, in Jefferson Parish.
- Launched a Grassroots Initiative with a Grassroots Advisory Council comprised of 12 providers representing each parish council district to lead a community engagement campaign.
- Connected with other Louisiana Ready Start Networks to support collaborative solutions.



Jefferson Institute for Early Childhood Leadership

The early care and education sector is more than “babysitting.” It is an evolving industry with quality standards and metrics to track key child development milestones. The Jefferson Institute for Early Childhood Leadership continues efforts to elevate the early childhood profession in Jefferson Parish.

Through this program, participants delve into topics that identify their leadership strengths, engage in interactive learning activities, and fine-tune strategies for dealing with real-life challenges experienced by new directors.

The pilot program was made possible by a \$100,000 grant from the BlueCross and BlueShield of Louisiana Foundation.

Program Partners:



Advocacy and Partnerships



Advocacy

JRSN joins the Ready Louisiana Coalition at Early Ed Day at the Capitol annually. This day of advocacy gives JRSN the opportunity to meet with and present to legislators alongside our Ready Louisiana partners.

We also present to local councils, business organizations, and more to share the importance of ECE and grow our network of ECE champions.



JEFFERSON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



Jefferson Business Council



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Louisiana
FOUNDATION

United Way of
Southeast Louisiana

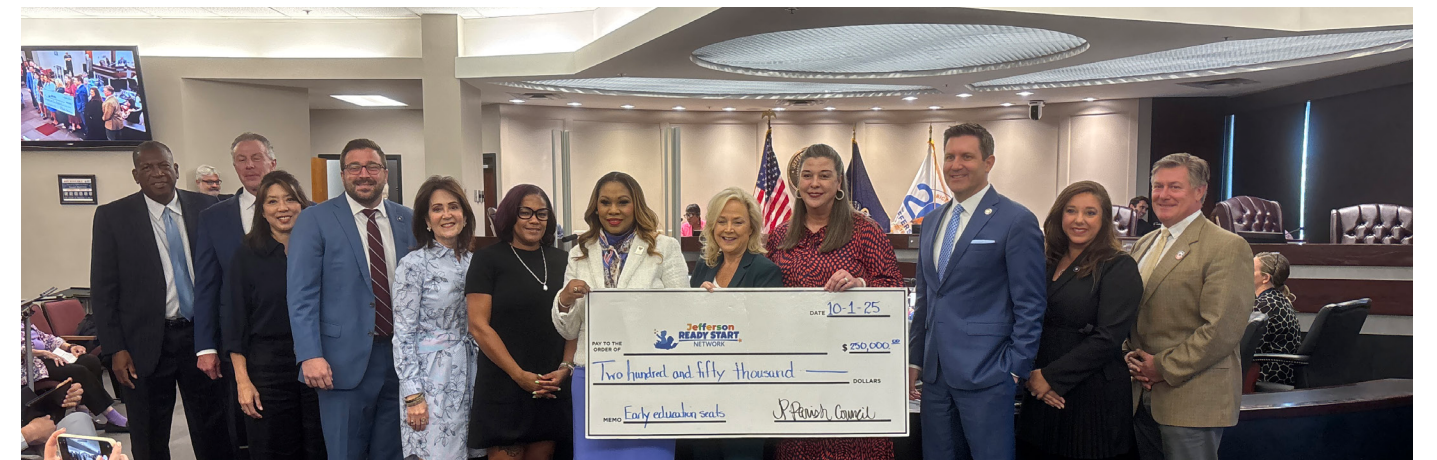


Our Supporters

Since the formation of Jefferson Ready Start Network, we've been met with great support from the community.

Our work would not be possible without the Jefferson Community Foundation.

We also thank the Jefferson Parish Council, Jefferson Business Council, the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, and the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Council for their continued support!



Site Visits

We partner with early learning centers to host local, state, and national stakeholders to provide a first-hand look at the great work being done at centers across the parish.



Testimonials

"Being in the program is making me a better parent because I am taking what I learn here back home to my family. I am learning a lot about child behavior and how we can interact with children to help with development."

-Jessica Riviera
Two Generation Program
Graduate



"Honestly, the program is extremely beneficial when it comes to finances, quality education, and safety. Financially, I would not have been able to afford a good learning center or quality education for my child without this program. I am a full-time employee, and I work 40 hours a week. I am very comfortable knowing that my child is in a safe learning environment while I am at work."

-DeriNique Richardson, Parent



"My grandchild Mia has attended a JRSN learning center since she was 2 months old. She learned to speak in sentences before she was even 2 years old. She's so advanced for her age thanks to the learning center."

-Lisa Taylor, Guardian

"I am a single mom, and I work full time. This program has helped me to have a work-life balance, put my child in an early learning center, and be at my job. I am a manager, so it is important that I show up every day at work. Financially, the program covers educational costs, and this allows me to spend more money on other necessities for my children."

-Brittany Cooper, Parent





About JRSN

Jefferson Ready Start Network works to increase access to high-quality early care and education for children birth to 5 years old in Jefferson Parish through engagement and partnerships with families, educators, and community members.



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