

Elgin Partnership for Early Learning Celebrating 10 years **ANNUAL REPORT** **2022-2023**



Children Who Start Ahead, Stay Ahead.

Championing All Children and Families in the First 2,000 Days of Life

Research indicates that the first five years of a child's life serve as a predictor for their future.

Ten years ago, Elgin Partnership for Early Learning was established as a community-driven collaboration aimed at promoting positive early childhood outcomes. This initiative was formed by stakeholders who recognized a community-wide necessity for embracing a holistic and cooperative strategy to tackle the factors that impact a child's success in both school and life.



What parents are saying about EPEL:

EPEL is important because it promotes my infant to have opportunities to learn and grow in an environment where socialization, school preparation and learning is encouraged. My favorite thing about EPEL would be the support it proves all children along with families and communities with all the resources they provide. My infant loves playgroup and we couldn't be more thankful to have EPEL as part of our routine. – Mom Veronica & baby Bella



Whenever my child goes to the playgroup, he learns something new and also has a lot of fun. I feel proud when other moms ask me how I did it to make my child so sociable, kind and smart. I answer that it's thanks to the EPEL playgroups. – Dulce, mom of Javier

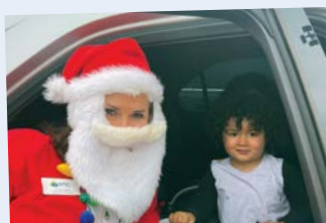


What partners are saying...

Partnering with EPEL has been such a wonderful experience. It has opened connections within the community and their support is fantastic! By partnering with EPEL, the library has additional opportunities to meet the patrons and families in their own neighborhoods. – Lisa Fabris, Children's Services Assistant Manager, Poplar Creek Public Library



EPEL is a dedicated partner that exemplifies the commitment to enhance the welfare of our children and their families. They advocate for equitable access to early learning programs and empower parents to be their children's best first teacher. EPEL works diligently to connect families to resources through the Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS) ensuring that existing needs are comprehensively addressed, underlining their holistic approach to impact the community. – Lorena Nunez, Early Childhood Programs Supervisor, AOK Network Coordinator, Kane County Health Department



Letter from the Executive Director



Friends of EPEL and community,

In EPEL's 21-22 annual report, I addressed the significance of the *Power of People and Partnership*, and outlined the Collaborative's future growth trajectory. There was a lot of moving and shaking in 22-23 and I am excited to share collaborative growth.

- EPEL employed a full-time bilingual Community and Family Engagement Coordinator
- Contracted 12 Family Specialists to enhance our presence and impact in neighborhoods
- Successfully obtained our 501(c)(3) non-profit status
- Revamped the EPEL website to better cater to the needs of families
- Developed a tailored monthly newsletter designed specifically for families and early care educators
- Presented at a National Conference *Overcoming Obstacles, Leveraging Opportunities* focusing on our communities' early childhood slot gap analysis and actions to reduce the gap
- Established a no-cost indoor family engagement *Play, Learn, Grow & Thrive* playgroup, for children aged *birth to five*, offering families valuable connections and opportunities
- Expanded our *Learning On the Go* program by incorporating an additional two neighborhoods, bringing the total to nine weekly visits
- Engaged in 337 community and family initiatives, either by providing or participating
- Increased Awareness and Access to 17,286 children and families

As you review the report, you will notice partners joining forces to support the critical *first 2,000 days of a child's life*, the abundance of happy faces, active engagement of families, efforts of collaborative action, nurturing of readiness, growth of friendships, and the development of trust.

Join EPEL in 23-24 to be a 2,000 Day Champion for a child.

Together We Can,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amber Peters".

Amber Peters

Executive Director,
Elgin Partnership for Early Learning

“Kids in high-quality early learning programs are 25% more likely to graduate from high school, 4 times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree, and earn up to 25% more in wages as an adult.” – Dr. James Heckman



10-Years and Growing

Raising awareness of the significance of early learning and enhancing accessibility to link families with local resources and high-quality early learning opportunities.

2013

- Elgin Partnership for Early Learning charter is ratified



Establishing an information hub (one stop shop) for early childhood to facilitate family connections with all relevant partners supporting the first 2,000 days of a child's life.

2014

- EPEL appointed first Collaboration Director: Casey Amayun



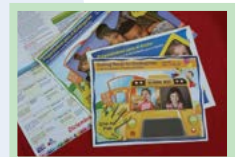
2015

- Awarded the Race to the Top Innovation Zone grant to raise awareness, increase enrollment of high needs children in high quality early learning programs
- Created 844-KID-INFO warm line and website
- Developed informational materials aimed at raising awareness and established the FIRST YEAR of three pop-up preschools to *Meet Families Where They Are* in Elgin Neighborhoods furthest from opportunities



2016

- Amber Peters became Executive Director
- Pop-up Preschools expanded to 4 Elgin neighborhoods
- EPEL assumed Getting Ready for Kindergarten Family Engagement Calendar
- Early Learning messaging with U-46 *Give Me Five* adopted



2016-2017

- EPEL assisted 29 childcare centers and 4 family care centers to achieve their Gold or Silver Circle of Quality recognition through ExceleRate Illinois, symbolizing a commitment to excellence. EPEL provided guidance and support throughout the process, ensuring that all children in the community have access to high-quality care.



2017

- EPEL established a collaborative partnership with the Northern Illinois Food Bank and local food pantries to serve families with wraparound services during food distributions to raise awareness and increase access for families. Community partners still continue that dedication at each mobile pantry serving thousands of families annually in Elgin with books, diapers, and resources.



Over the past 10 years, EPEL has planted seeds and cultivated relationships within the community, engaging with various stakeholders to foster a comprehensive approach towards:

Assisting social service partners dedicated to addressing fundamental needs such as food, housing, healthcare, and family support.

2019

- Second *Language in the Laundromat* launched in Blue Kangaroo Laundry, Elgin
- Bilingual Book Baskets distributed to businesses across 5 communities
- EPEL received \$70,000 First Book OMG Grant to distribute 20,000 books across 5 communities
- *Learning on the Go* program initiated and expanded to 4 sites in Elgin and 1 in Streamwood
- Early Learning Play signs installed at Festival Park, funded by Kane County Fit for Kids grant
- EPEL developed *While You Wait* initiative—bilingual, educational flipbooks for parents and children to interact with as they wait to be seen in 50 Doctor's offices and community locations



2022

- Designed the first community-wide WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood education and development
- *Learning on the Go* expanded to 5 Elgin sites and 3 Streamwood/Hanover Park sites
- EPEL designed and launched first indoor *Play, Learn, Grow and Thrive* playgroup at Zion Lutheran Church
- EPEL received grant and named one of 24 *Birth to Five* Illinois Communities
- Contracted 12 Neighborhood Ambassadors to increase awareness and access
- EPEL secured funding from the Seigle Foundation as part of their inaugural group of grant recipients
- 501(c)(3) non-profit status achieved



2018

- First *Language in the Laundromat* launched at JetXpress Laundry, Elgin



2020

- EPEL officially established as a corporation
- Named *Organization of the Year* by Elgin Hispanic Network
- EPEL received Community Planning Grant
- Covid Diaper Grant funding results in the distribution of 63,000 diapers and books to residents with young children.



2021

- EPEL underwent rebranding and unveiled new logo
- *Learning on the Go* expanded to 4 Elgin sites and 2 Streamwood/Hanover Park sites



2023

- First Community and Family Engagement Coordinator hired
- *Learning on the Go* expanded to 6 Elgin sites and 3 Streamwood/Hanover Park sites



2022-2023 Highlights



Expands Reach and Awareness in Community: EPEL engaged in the recruitment and training of 12 bilingual Family Neighborhood Ambassadors. Their responsibilities included door-to-door outreach, interacting with families at family and community engagement events in hard-to-reach communities. Their goal was to heighten awareness regarding the importance of early learning and access to early care and education programs and resources. EPEL reached over 17,000 children and families.

Connects Families through Play: EPEL launched free indoor *Play, Learn, Grow, and Thrive* community playgroups. These playgroups provided a space for families with children ages, birth to five to come together to build a sense of community and foster positive parent-child interactions. 59 playgroups serving 634 individuals.

Engages Families in Everyday Settings: Three *Language in the Laundromat* initiatives continue to be successful, allowing connections with families. This initiative has proven effective in connecting families to resources, enrolling children in programs, and offering readiness activities while they tend to their daily chores. 77 visits, 636 children benefiting.

Coordinates Family Engagement: *Learning On the Go* family engagement grew to 6 neighborhoods in Elgin and 3 in the Streamwood/Hanover Park community. Families were provided with educational materials and new books every week in their preferred language. Notably, we also offered tactile braille books for two children with visual impairments. These opportunities served as a platform for families to come together, connecting with local partners, attending storytime, enrolling in programs, and accessing mobile library services. 2,315 children and families participated. EPEL distributed 3,170 new books allowing them to build home libraries, 1,198 visits to mobile library services, 510 books checked out and 35 new library cards issued.

EPEL Provides Summer Internships: EPEL offered internship opportunities to two School District U-46 incoming seniors in collaboration with Alignment Collaborative for Education. Alexa Robelo and Siclali Camacho were valuable assets to our Family Engagement specialists, providing support in family engagement. EPEL is excited about prospects of expanding this internship program to further strengthen our pipeline of educators.

EPEL Convenes Stakeholders: EPEL engages diverse community partners through monthly collaborative committees and convenes the entire partnership three times a year. These meetings serve as a platform for partners to gain insights into the local early childhood landscape, discuss early childhood issues, and foster collaborative relationships aimed at strengthening the early childhood system.

EPEL Promotes Literacy: EPEL distributed 7,479 books as part of our community and family engagement efforts, bringing the total to 43,223 books distributed since 2018.

EPEL Raises Awareness and Increases Access through Partner Coordination: Our approach of reaching families during community events and local food pantries remains highly effective. While families attend to fulfill their basic needs, they receive a supportive network of care. Our community partners collaborate to provide access to opportunities, resources, and materials to enhance quality of life. EPEL helped facilitate at 29 food pantries, engaging 2,252 families and participating in 337 community engagement opportunities, impacting 9,413.

EPEL Celebrates Young Children and Families: EPEL coordinated the second annual *Week Of the Young Child*, with the goal of emphasizing the significance of community supporting early learning and benefits of early engagement. 21 community partners offered community and family engagement events to highlight the importance of 'Starting Ahead and Staying Ahead.' 1,448 children and families participated.

By the Numbers

Books Distributed:

7,479

Calendars Distributed:

11,000

Social Media Audience:

4,999

Community and Family
Engagement Events:

337

59 Play, Learn, Grow, Thrive
Playgroups Served:

634

Children/Families served:

17,286

72 Family Engagement
Learning On The Go Events
at 9 Neighborhood
Sites Served:

2,315

10 Neighborhood Preschool
Mobile Library Services
Pop-Ups Served:

224

21 Week Of The Young Child
Community and Family
Engagement Events Engaged:

1,448

77 Visits to *Learning
in the Laundromat*
Sites. Served:

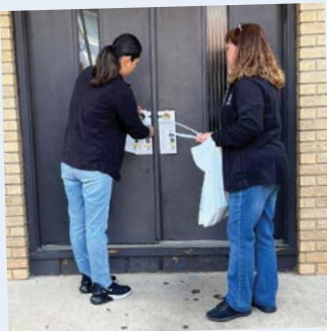
636

Community
Engagement:
29 Food Pantries
Connected with
2,252
Families

Neighborhood Door
Knocking: 12
Neighborhood
Ambassadors
Connected with

570

Families In 9
Neighborhoods



Elgin Partnership for Early Learning Mission & Vision

Elgin Partnership for Early Learning is a non-profit early childhood community collaboration that partners with organizations in the 11 communities within the 90 miles of School District U-46 boundaries. EPEL collaborates with community partners and families to raise awareness about the importance of early learning and increase access to early care and education programs. EPEL examines local data and listens to parent voices to drive decisions to build connected local systems that are easier for families to navigate.

OUR MISSION

EPEL is building a connected community dedicated to helping all young children thrive.

OUR VISION

Our children are happy, healthy, and ready for school and life.

OUR PURPOSE

Ensure a unified vision for young children is established and implemented throughout the community. Raise awareness and improve access for families to high-quality early care and learning experiences. Facilitate collaborative efforts for families with birth-to-five age children to impact readiness.

OUR GOALS

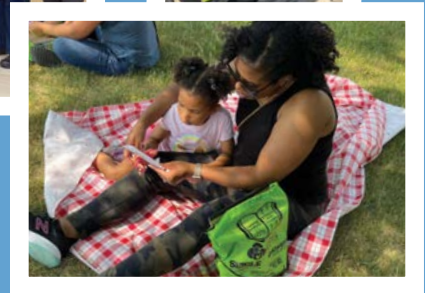
Expand awareness and access to early education information by extending reach in the community to increase enrollment and participation by meeting families where they are.

Establish a volunteer base to enhance opportunities for early learning in the community.

Facilitate 'Parent Cafes' in English and Spanish to engage parents in meaningful conversations about strengthening and supporting families.

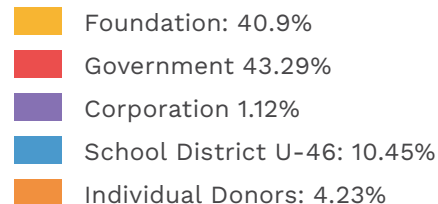
Support quality improvement and capacity building for professionals and organizations in the birth-to-five sector. Continually respond to community data, addressing strengths, gaps, and evolving needs. Continue community discussions to address the slot gap challenge, with the goal of increasing early childhood slots in Elgin, Hanover Park, and Streamwood.

Maintain ongoing discussions with organizations who serve high-need families to establish coordinated pipelines for identifying and enrolling children in early care and education programs.

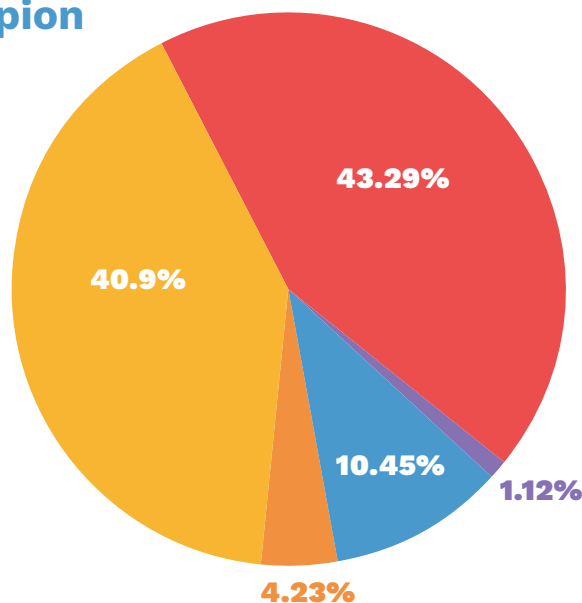


Financial Contributions Champion EPEL's Mission and Vision

CONTRIBUTION SOURCES



TOTAL REVENUE 2022-23:
\$325,364.23



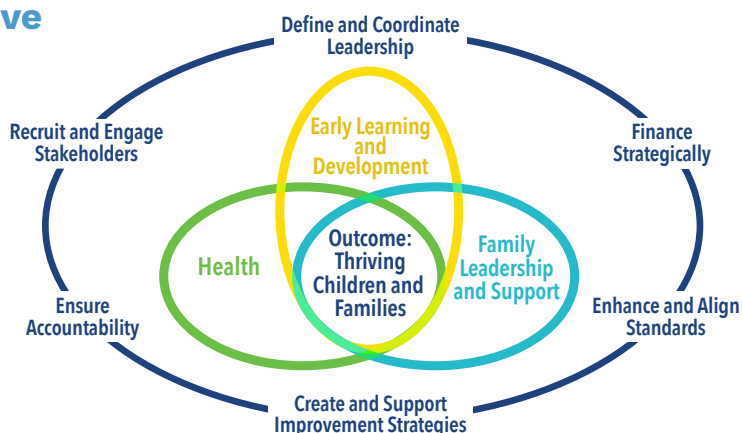
Please join us in EPEL's important work

We invite you to become part of EPEL's Early Childhood Community Collaboration and contribute to the critical mission of ensuring that every child enters school happy, healthy, and well-prepared.

Your involvement can help EPEL build a connected and culturally responsive community, increasing awareness and access by providing both financial and human resources to make a positive impact during the crucial first 2,000 days of life, from birth to kindergarten.

Your partnership is essential to the success of a comprehensive early childhood system

A cohesive community plan acts as the guiding framework for the creation of a well-coordinated, high-quality early childhood system that places the well-being of our youngest learners and their families at the forefront. By working together collaboratively, we can work to reduce the readiness gap in both education and life for our children.



Your generous donations will directly support:

- Community family ambassadors who link families and children with essential resources and services
- Keep new books and materials in children's hands to support cognitive development and literacy skills
- Expand early childhood initiatives in the community to enhance learning opportunities
- Collaborative work to coordinate and align the early childhood system to serve our most precious resources: Our Children

To make a tax-deductible donation and invest in the well-being of our community's young children and families, scan the QR code or visit our website: www.elginpartnership.org/donate.





2022-2023 EXECUTIVE Board Members

Jennifer Bueche

Gail Borden Library
Director of KidSpace

Pat Chamberlain

(Treasurer)
Chamberlain Educational
Consultants

Katie Cox

U-46 School District
Director of Early Learning

Joy D'Amico

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

Felicia Ellis

Parent Representative
Parents As Teachers U-46

Irma Figueroa

VNA HealthCare
Family Case Management

Michael Issacson

Kane County Health Department
Executive Director

Karina Nava

(Co-Board Chair)
City of Elgin
Assistant City Manager

Amber Peters

Elgin Partnership for Early
Learning
Executive Director

Dr. Jennifer Schening

Next Generation Pediatrics
Owner/Pediatrician

Fran Teti-Teal

Advocate Sherman Hospital
Director of Family Birthing
Center

Jaclyn Vasquez

JV Consulting

Kris Young

(Co-Board Chair)
YWCA Elgin
Director of Family Literacy

Lynne Bosley

Emeritus Board Member
Former President/CEO
United Way Elgin

Thank You to Our 2022-2023 Funders

As a small non-profit, EPEL relies on grants and donations to fund our programs and operational costs. Our efforts are made achievable through the gracious contributions of our key Funders:



Thank You to Our Partners

The Elgin Partnership for Early Learning Collaboration is made up of a broadly representative group of dedicated partners who acknowledge the importance of a community-wide impact of ensuring all children are equipped to succeed in school and life.

ABC Toon Town	Elgin Dental Associates	Kane County Health Department	Poplar Creek Public Library
Academy 4 Kids	Elgin Hispanic Network	Kane County Regional Office of Education	Precious Angels Child Care
Advocate Sherman Hospital	Elgin History Museum	Kelly Coombs Family Care Provider	Precious Tots Preschool Program
Alignment Collaborative for Education	Elgin Lions Club	Kids Above All Home Visiting	Primrose School of South Elgin
All Our Kids Network	Elgin Public Museum of Natural History & Anthropology	Kids First Pediatric Dentistry	Rivers Landing Apartments
Ascension Healthcare	Elgin Township	Kinder Care Main Lane Child Care Center	Rosa Rivera Family In-Home Care Provider
Associates and Peds	EMSA Elgin Math and Science Academy	Kinder Care South Street Child Care Center	Salvation Army Elgin
Aunt Martha's Home Visiting	Erikson Institute	Kinder Care Spring St Child Care Center	Sandy's Learning House Family Care Provider
Bartlett Park District Preschool	Everything Clean Laundromat	KinderCare Bowes Road Child Care Center	SCARCE (School & Community Assistance for Recycling & Education)
Bartlett Public Library	Explore Elgin Area	KinderCare Brewster Creek Child Care Center	Schick's Crossing Preschool
Best of Both World's Family Childcare	Familia Dental	Kiwanis Club of Elgin	School District U-46
Bethlehem Lutheran Church Development Center	Family Focus: Healthy Families	Kripa Montessori School	School District U-46 Illinois Park Preschool
Birth to Five Illinois	Family Services Association	Law Office of Steffen & Kelly, P.C.	School District U-46 Independence Learning Center
Bizzy Bee's Family Childcare	First United Methodist Church	The Learning Hills	Bartlett School District U-46 More at Four
Blue Kangaroo Coin Laundry	Fit4Mom	Learning Tree East Child Care Center	Second Baptist Church
Boys and Girls Club, Elgin	Food For Greater Elgin	Learning Tree West Child Care Center	Seigle Foundation
Boys and Girls Club, South Elgin	Friendship Corner Child Care	Lisette Boglio Family Care Provider	Side Street Studios Arts
Candy Care Family Care Provider	Gail Borden Public Library	Literacy Connection	South Elgin Parks & Recreation Preschool
Caravel Autism Health	Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois	Little Bear Academy	St. John the Evangelist School
Castles and Crayons Family Care Provider	Goddard School - Elgin	Little Blessings Home Daycare	St. John's Lutheran School
Centre Preschool	Good Shepherd Preschool	Little Royals Preschool at Larkin High School	St. Joseph's
Centro de Informacion	Grand Victoria Foundation	Maliha Siddiqui Family In-Home Care Provider	St. Mary Preschool
Chesterbook Academy	Greater Family Health	Margaret Frank Family In-Home Care Provider	St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Children of America Childcare	Greenbrook Montessori	Mini Maroon Preschool (Inside Elgin High School)	St. Thomas More Preschool
Christine Gomez Family Care Provider	Hamilton Wings	Mini Steps Child Care	Streamwood Park District
Christine Monaghan Family Care Provider	Hanover Park Preschool Program	My Recess Therapy	Streamwood Parks and Recreation Preschool
Church of the Brethren	Hanover Park Park District	Nancy Nevarez Family In-Home Care Provider	Summit Early Learning
City of Elgin	Harvest Christian Academy Preschool	Next Generation Pediatrics	Tawney Pauling
City of Elgin (Police Department)	Highland Christian Academy Preschool	Northern Illinois Food Bank	Taylor YMCA
COFI (Community Organizing Families)	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church	Northern Illinois University	Terri's Home Daycare
Community Crisis Center	Home Away from Home	Northwestern University	The Learning Experience
Corbella Clinic	Housing Authority of Elgin	Office of Representative Anna Moeller	Two Rivers Head Start
DayOnePact	iGrow-Illinois	Office of Senator Cristina Castro	United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
DCFS Department of Children and Family Services	Illinois Action for Children	One Hope United Elgin Child and Family Resource Center	VNA Family Case Management
Diane Brunzo Family In Home Care	Illinois Department of Human Services		Well Child Center
Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley	Illinois Governors Office of Early Childhood Development		WOTB (Women on the Brink)
Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce	Ivy Early Learning Academy		YMCA Head Start
Elgin Community College	Jackie Kirkpatrick Family In Home Care		YWCA Elgin
Elgin Community College Early Childhood Lab School	Jennifer's Preschool and Child Care		YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
	Jerri Hofman Center/Children's Home and Aid		Zion Lutheran Church
	JetXpress Laundry		

Children Who **Start Ahead,** **Stay Ahead.**



Invest in the
First 2,000
Days of a Child's
Life and be a
CHAMPION!

**Elgin Partnership
for Early Learning**

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