



Planning Process for Early Childhood Expansion *Phase 2*

The African American Youth Harvest Foundation (AAYHF), in partnership with Black Women In Business, recently received a 9-month planning grant from St. David's Foundation to explore how to best create messages and interventions to improve the rates of Kindergarten readiness among families within a targeted population (minority, low income, particularly African American families, boys of color, etc.), with an ultimate objective of:

1. Formalizing and promoting a “one-stop” wraparound support connection point for families with children ages 0-5 through AAYHF's Youth Resource Center, which would utilize, connect to and align with existing Early Childhood resources and systems created through the Success By 6 (SB6) / School Readiness Action Plan (SRAP).
2. Developing systems for data collection and sharing to support project evaluation and future analysis of outcomes related to early childhood and wraparound support efforts.

Based on 12 years of offering programs targeted to middle- and high-school aged youth who consistently and increasingly show signs of persistent childhood trauma and need for support, AAYHF's new “Cradle to Contributor” (C2C) strategy is to target and form relationships with families at the point of conception, in order to assist in stabilizing families early in a child's development and walk alongside families to ensure the proper conditions exist in every household to nurture the positive, on-time or accelerated development of children and youth who would otherwise experience a disproportionately high level of adverse environmental conditions that could negatively influence their personal outlook, approach to learning, and access to opportunities that can increase their chances of success in attaining ideal quality of life outcomes.

The current planning process will inform and infuse AAYHF's C2C strategy, as well as policy and practice for other child-focused agencies and coalitions, with tactical recommendations that align with the Harvard's Center on the Developing Child three principles to improving outcomes for children and families, which are to:

1. Support responsive relationships for children and adults;
2. Strengthen core life skills; and
3. Reduce sources of stress in the lives of children and families.

To begin the process (Phase 1), we interviewed numerous community leaders who play key roles in the Early Childhood sphere in Central Texas, so that we can ensure we are asking the right questions to community members, parents and Early Childhood providers when we gather their input (Phase 2). We are now entering into Phase 2, getting input from parents and caretakers of children ages 0 to 5, which will inform an implementation plan in which solutions will be proposed that will help catapult our collective efforts to increase kindergarten readiness among the target population.