



**Smart Beginnings Thomas Jefferson Area
Three Year Strategic Plan
FY17-FY19**

Introduction

Smart Beginnings-Thomas Jefferson Area (SBTJA) desires to make our region a place where children grow up healthy and arrive at school prepared to succeed. Using the Smart Beginnings Framework for Investment, we will effect systemic change to:

- reduce policy and programmatic barriers,
- align resources to promote and enroll at-risk children in high-quality early education,
- support child care providers who increase the access and selection of high-quality early child care,
- support programming aimed at healthy childhood development which results in children in high-quality preschool, children developmentally on target and receiving appropriate services for developmental delays, and increasing positive parent-child relationship behaviors.

In FY15, subsequent to advocacy meetings with local government officials, a *Smart Beginnings: Discourse on Pre-K in Charlottesville/Albemarle* summit was conducted with business land community leaders, school superintendents, local government officials, and early childhood experts. Post summit, SBTJA met government and school board leadership to propose a high-level working group (Early Education Task Force) to tackle significant barriers to access to pre-k in the Charlottesville-Albemarle community. In July 2015, local government leaders and school superintendents endorsed the Early Education Task Force (EETF), which includes SBTJA leadership and staff, with the charter and the vision that: “every child in Charlottesville-Albemarle living with risk factors that impact success in life will have access to a high-quality early education program. This clear vision is unclouded by concerns over funding and is endorsed by our City and County Executives, City and County School Superintendents, and the United Way Smart Beginnings Impact Team. Specifically, in the near term, we seek to address the need for at-risk four-year olds, realizing that the expansion of services to three-year olds, younger children and whole families makes a difference and serves as a longer-term aspirational goal. The current estimate of the gap between the number of City and County four-year olds eligible for access to high-quality pre-k programs and available space is 250-350.” The task force has developed a work plan focused on placing four year-old children in high-quality pre-k, and has identified the need to focus on provider quality and funding to successfully expand access to high-quality pre-k.

The EETF has received financial support from the VECF Innovative Collaboration Opportunity as well as the VPI Expansion Grant Opportunity. As a result, work has begun on fiscal mapping, exploring creative funding to expand public pre-k, and placing children in private pre-k as an extension of public pre-k. Additionally, in FY15 SBTJA was invited to meet with Albemarle leadership to re-consider our data sharing project which will measure the impact of early childhood programming on school readiness. With the signing of all partners, the project is underway.

This work, along with the potential for funding opportunities in the next six months, are amalgamating in our community in an unprecedented manner that could result in the most significant impact on school readiness and access to high-quality pre-k since the public pre-k programs were established. As

such, this strategic plan is designed to support these events take advantage of the developing community will and commitment for this historic opportunity to create system-level change.

FOCUS: Leadership and Capacity

Bringing private sector leadership to the public early childhood system can support the efficiency and efficacy of investments.

Through private sector leadership, Smart Beginnings Thomas Jefferson Area (SBTJA) will continue to discern and potentially address programmatic barriers to full access/enrollment in existing programs such as health insurance coverage, immunizations, VPI, Head Start, etc.

Critical to the development of a comprehensive local early childhood system was the establishment of the Early Education Task Force (EETF), supported by a group of Vision Keepers and Key Advocates. The Vision Keepers include: Albemarle County Executive, City Manager, Chamber President, United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area President, Chair of United Way School Readiness, Charlottesville Area Community Foundation President, VECF President, PVCC President, County School Superintendent, City School Superintendent, and Dean of the Curry School at UVA. The Key Advocates include City/County deputy executives, representatives from CACF, leadership and staff of SBTJA, City/County public pre-k directors, the regional VQ coordinator, business leaders, early childhood experts, and Teachstone.

Objective 1: *Develop, establish, and sustain a comprehensive local early childhood system with leadership that impacts policies, gains efficiencies, and ensures results for children and their families.*

Objective 2: *Harness leadership to identify and address policy and programmatic barriers to access to existing programs.*

Strategy: During the FY17-19 strategic planning period, SBTJA will further the investment of private/public leadership and continue to guide the EETF to create and sustain the infrastructure essential for ensuring initiative capacity; convene and facilitate diverse leadership with the power to influence systems' change; and address the core policy/programmatic barrier of VPI access.

FY17, FY18, FY19 Target: In addition to further foundational and relationship building with the EETF partners, SBTJA will ensure it has the appropriate leadership and capacity to undertake this plan's strategies and goals within the foci of the Smart Beginnings' investment framework.

FOCUS: Data Driven Decision Making

Data-driven decision making and effective metrics and measurement inform both need and efficacy of investments.

Over the past seven years, Smart Beginnings Thomas Jefferson Area (SBTJA) has promoted the use of data in the community as a means of decision making, program evaluation, and performance measurement with regard to early childhood and school readiness. During this time the local school

systems/governments began collecting data on their respective public pre-k programs, but remained unable to overcome barriers to a collaborative, retrospective data-sharing project including non-profit agencies. The possibility of a *prospective* collaborative data sharing project was re-introduced in FY15 and ultimately approved in January 2016.

Objective 3: Improve community will and capacity to measure, track, report, and use data to guide collaborative decision making.

Sub-objective 1: Link home visiting, pre-k data to public school records that can be followed through grade 12.

Goals

1. Overcome logistical and legal barriers to sharing data across providers and schools, and over time.
2. Tag and track individual children as they receive various early childhood services from birth through high school graduation.

Strategy: Complete orientation of participating programs, build data collection structures and logistics, start data collection, pilot data analysis, and compile lessons learned.

FY17 Targets (potentially some work late FY16):

- a. Train home visiting and preschool partners to collect parent/guardian consent for data collection and linkage to future public school records.
- b. Obtain parent/guardian consent (process to be ongoing).
- c. Finalize data to be collected from each partner.
- d. Build and securely store a collective database.
- e. Collect pilot data and match individual children across partner datasets.
- f. Analyze data (project data not anticipated to be sufficient for publication until year three, four or five).
- g. Review and interpret data; draw conclusions; note lessons learned and institute improvements for Year Two.
- h. Draft first year report within the constraints of "g" above.

Strategy: Apply lessons learned from Year One; identify and support individual partner program adjustments based on conclusions drawn from the data collected.

FY18 Targets:

- a. Meet with partners to understand Year One lessons learned and apply improvements to Year Two.
- b. Collect data and match individual children across partner datasets.
- c. Analyze data (project data is not anticipated to be sufficient for publication until year three, four or five).
- d. Review and interpret data; draw conclusions; note lessons learned and institute improvements for Year Three.
- e. Draft second year report.
- f. Support individual partner programs in making programmatic adjustments based on data.

Sub-objective 2: Measure impact of early childhood programs on school readiness with the goal of increasing the success of the early childhood system of supports.

Goals:

1. Use the data to draw conclusions about the impact of services and needed improvements to partners' programming, as well as system-level structures and policies.
2. Build collective expertise that can be leveraged for effective resource allocation that keeps children on the path to high school graduation.

Strategy: Apply lessons learned from Year Two; identify and support individual program partner and system-level adjustments based on conclusions drawn from the data collected.

FY19 Targets:

- a. Meet with partners to understand Year Two lessons learned and apply improvements to Year Three.
- b. Collect data and match individual children across partner datasets.
- c. Analyze data.
- d. Review and interpret data; draw conclusions; note lessons learned and improvements for the Year Four process.
- e. Draft third year report.
- f. Meet with partners to assess readiness to publish a version of the report.
- g. Support partner programs in making programmatic adjustments, as well as the system, in making system-level adjustments based on data.

Objective 4: Increase availability and access to developmental screenings by trained health, child care, or other practitioners prior to age 3 using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire including the social-emotional component (ASQ SE).

Goals:

1. Explore concept of expanding developmental screening beyond that undertaken by the local home-visiting programs for children under the age of 3, including by child care providers, health care agencies, and parents.
2. Explore the potential to develop a referral process for parents to discuss results with appropriate professionals.

Strategy: Explore opportunities to build screening capacity outside of the current home-visiting collaborative.

FY17 Targets:

- a. Convene partners to brainstorm logical extensions of screening activities, including training pediatricians, parents, other non-profit agencies, child care providers, etc.
- b. Identify potential referral resources for parents who have developmental concerns as a result of undertaking screenings at home.
- c. Review home-visiting pilot in pediatrician's office in FY16 for lessons learned, opportunities, etc.
- d. With partners, explore potential work plan to build local capacity.

FY18 Targets:

- a. Implement FY17 work plan elements to impact capacity.
- b. Develop outreach program for parents.
- c. Meet with region's interagency councils to determine need and capacity for developmental screening in Fluvanna, Nelson, Greene, Louisa and compile report.
- d. Convene rural partners to review and brainstorm a potential work plan.

FY19 Targets:

- a. Implement FY18 work plan elements to impact capacity in rural counties.
- b. Develop community and parent outreach program for rural counties.

FOCUS: High Quality Early Learning

SBTJA identifies children's access to high-quality early learning experiences as the primary strategy for advancing school readiness.

This work will be accomplished in concert with the EETF and vision keepers as well as our programmatic community partners.

Objective 5: Increase availability and access to quality early learning for children birth to age five.

Goals:

1. With the EETF, develop work plans to increase access to quality early learning, provider quality, and the funding/resources required to complete the work plan.

Strategy: Expand existing pre-k services and increase the number of children receiving high-quality pre-k to include all children with identified risk factors, including maximizing annual VPI allocation to Charlottesville/Albemarle.

FY 17 Targets:

- a. Promote expansion of classroom size where possible.
- b. Support addition of classrooms when possible.
- c. Expand on FY16 work to identify potential private pre-k partners willing to undertake City/County minimum requirements to accept VPI placements.
- d. Identify creative funding match for FY17 via recommendations from fiscal mapping/creative funding technical assistance provided to EETF in FY16.
- e. Coordinate enrollment efforts among City/County/Head Start.
- f. Consider shared application among City/County/Head Start.
- g. Maximize Head Start enrollment/funding for wrap-around care.
- h. Consider blending/braiding models identified in FY16.
- i. Continue to inform and support the work of the Child Care Quality Initiative.

FY18 Targets:

- a. Support addition of classrooms when possible.
- b. Promote creative funding match in City/County FY18 budgets.
- c. Further develop blending/braiding models considered for implementation in FY17.
- d. Promote further collaboration among City/County/Head Start.

- e. Continue to inform and support the work of the Child Care Quality Initiative.

FY19 Targets:

- a. Support addition of classrooms when possible.
- b. Promote creative funding match in City/County FY19 budgets.
- c. Review VPI utilization in rural counties.
- d. Review Head Start delivery in rural counties.
- e. Continue to inform and support the work of the Child Care Quality Initiative.

Strategy: SBTJA will promote the use of evidence-based/informed strategies, including Virginia Quality, for improving quality of early learning settings.

FY17 Targets:

With EETF and regional Virginia Quality Coordinator:

- a. Identify number of providers participating in Virginia Quality.
- b. Identify eligible providers not participating in Virginia Quality.
- c. Develop outreach plan for identified programs/providers.
- d. Develop CDA training access opportunity for teachers in conjunction with City/County/SBTJA Child Care Quality Initiative, identify potential funding resources in collaboration with EETF.
- e. Undertake further refinements to SBTJA/United Way-TJA Child Care Scholarship Program supportive of Virginia Quality and the EETF Quality Initiative.

FY 18 Targets:

- a. Identify and benchmark quality indicators.
- b. Track and report progress.
- c. Identify potential funding sources to continue provider support.

FY 19 Targets:

- a. Identify counties most receptive to expansion of local quality initiative.
- b. Undertake outreach in those counties to identify local will to undertake work plan.
- c. Identify, develop and leverage resources to meet the ongoing annual costs of offering high quality pre-k to all identified 4 year-olds.

Strategy: Identify, develop and leverage resources to meet the ongoing annual costs of offering high quality pre-k to all identified 4 year-olds.

FY17 Targets:

- a. Implement Charlottesville Area Community Foundation Strengthening Systems grant work plan, if received.
- b. Identify needed funding for EETF Quality Initiative and Teacher CDA Training in addition to CACF grant, if received.
- c. Identify additional resources to reach EETF goal of 25% reduction by year-end, if needed.

FY18 Targets:

- a. Identify needed funding for EETF Quality Initiative, including Teacher CDA program.
- b. Identify lessons learned that could be applied to rural counties.

- c. Explore needed funds to maximize access to high quality pre-k in rural counties.

FY19 Targets:

- a. Explore opportunities to promote early Head Start opportunities for SBTJA region.
- b. Explore potential to explore 3 year-old pre-k in Albemarle County.
- c. Explore potential for expanding 3 year-old pre-k in City of Charlottesville.

Strategy: Build community will and support through public awareness, public engagement and advocacy.

FY17 Targets:

- a. Following the FY15 *Smart Beginnings: Discourse on Pre-K in Charlottesville/Albemarle* summit and the planned FY16 Pre-k Training Symposium, undertake a public event to promote high-quality early education.
- b. Apply for Charlottesville Radio Group and Monticello Media Public Service Announcement funding to promote high-quality early education.
- c. Advocate for early education via engagement of newly appointed government and school board leaders and presentations/updates to Board of Supervisors, City Council and business leaders.
- d. Create one-page EETF annual report to publish and distribute widely.

FY18 Targets:

- a. Re-create State of School Readiness Charlottesville-Albemarle annual report utilizing data provided by fiscal mapping update, data sharing project, and VECF School Readiness Report Card.
- b. Advocate for early education via engagement of newly appointed government and school board leaders and presentations/updates to Board of Supervisors, City Council and business leaders.
- c. Plan and undertake a public event to promote high-quality early education.

FY19 Targets:

- a. Publish State of School Readiness Charlottesville-Albemarle annual report utilizing data provided by fiscal mapping updates, data sharing project, and VECF School Readiness Report Card.
- b. Advocate for early education via engagement of newly appointed government and school board leaders and presentations/updates to Board of Supervisors, City Council and business leaders.
- c. Plan and undertake a public event to promote high-quality early education.

FOCUS: Supported and Supportive Families

SBTJA believes in the importance of supporting and partnering with parents and families, since the home environment and relationship with parents have the most profound impact on children's healthy development.

The home environment and relationships with parents have the most profound impact on children's healthy development. Evidence-based and evidence-informed parent and family support programs such

as home visiting, parent education, and maternal/child health services have positive effects on the health and stability of families, especially those challenged with multiple risks.

Objective 6: *Increase availability and access to evidence-based or evidence-informed services for families challenged by multiple risk factors.*

Goals:

1. Identify need for access to services for families challenged by multiple risk factors.
2. Identify steps required to increase availability and access to reduce waiting lists.

Strategy: Convene local partners/programs that provide evidence-based or evidence-informed services for families challenged by multiple risk factors.

FY18 Targets:

- a. Convene meeting with local home-visiting agencies and other programmatic agencies to review local need and any existing action plans. Determine if basis for further review/planning is warranted by SBTJA and EETF.

FY19 Targets:

- a. If needed, develop action plan with partners.
- b. Map extent of reach of local programs in rural counties. Review current services with rural county interagency councils to determine needs and brainstorm potential solutions and action, if needed.

FOCUS: Mitigating Risk Early

SBTJA commits to supporting communities' capacity to identify children with unique and multiple risks early, and targeting efforts to ensure their needs are met.

Through discerning data analysis, communities can recognize high risk populations within their neighborhoods. Discerning need, barriers, outreach strategies, and most effective approaches to support are critical to ensuring the success of high-risk or uniquely positioned children and families. By FY19, it is anticipated that SBTJA's data sharing project may produce sufficient data to begin to identify the primary populations that may have unique and/or multiple risks.

Objective 7: *Based on communities' context and demographics, children/populations with multiple or unique risks are identified early and efforts/attention are concentrated to meet their needs through access to available services.*

Goals:

1. Use existing data to identify at-risk populations in order to remove barriers to school readiness.

Strategy: Determine if data analysis will identify high-risk populations that require intervention.

FY19 Targets:

- a. Utilize data sharing project analysis to identify specific high-risk populations for further work plan development.