

WHAT IS EDUCARE?

Educare is a state-of-the-art, full-day, year-round school that serves at-risk children from birth to five years. Building on the program foundations of Early Head Start and Head Start, Educare promotes school readiness by implementing proven programming aimed

at preventing the achievement gap from taking root in the early years. Central to Educare's mission is family involvement that strengthens parents' abilities to serve as champions for their child's learning from infancy through their primary and secondary school educations. The Educare model draws on a unique blend of private and public dollars, including child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, and state funding streams.

Each Educare school in the growing, nationwide Bounce Learning Network also serves as a platform for broader change, inspiring high-quality programs throughout the community, more effective public policies within each state, and a comprehensive approach to the first five years of life and learning.





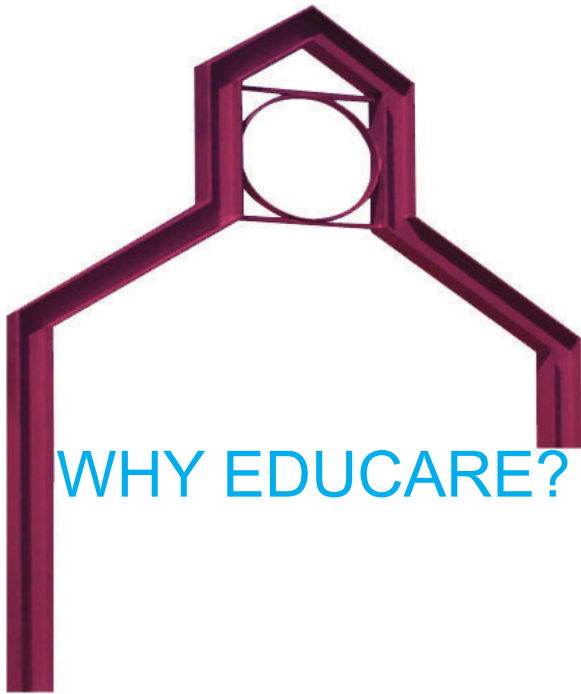
EDUCARE SHOWING RESULTS

Early returns are promising from the national, multi-site Implementation Study, our evaluation of the Educare schools conducted in partnership with the Frank Porter Graham Institute at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. Evaluation data consistently shows that Educare children

demonstrate improved vocabulary skills, improved literacy, and better school preparation on standardized tests commonly used to measure school readiness. Test scores for children who have benefited from the Educare model match national averages for all children, regardless of income level or other risk factors.

At our longest running schools in Chicago and Omaha, between half and almost all children entering kindergarten met preliteracy skill criteria for their age (depending on the skill). Because the solid majority of low-income, at-risk children enter kindergarten well below average on readiness measures, and behind their higher-income peers, these early results are encouraging. For vocabulary and pre-literacy skills, children in both Educare schools performed at or near average levels by the time they entered kindergarten. For the highly challenged population Educare serves, an average of “average” is phenomenal.



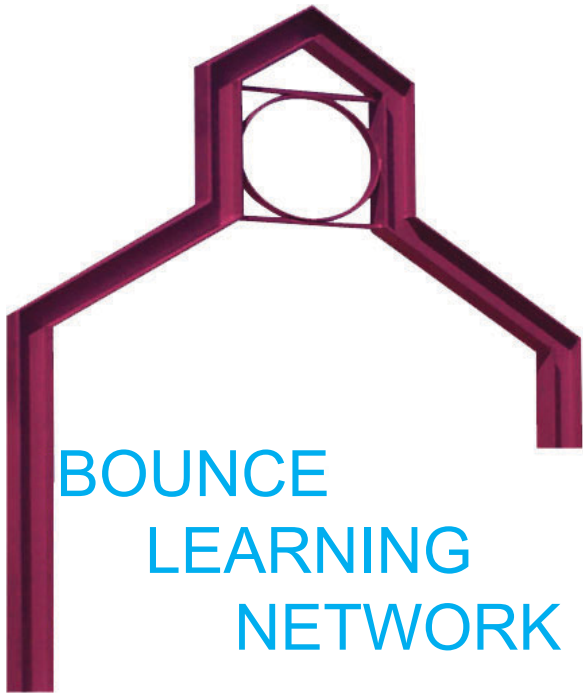


WHY EDUCARE?

Studies show that 1) the achievement gap for low-income children becomes apparent as early as age 18 months and 2) early language, vocabulary, and literacy skills, along with social-emotional development and school-readiness indicators, are powerful predictors for later success in school and life.

Yet despite this growing body of scientific evidence, our society's current investment in children's education and care is lowest during the critical early years when brain growth and development are occurring most rapidly. Comprehensive and effective learning programs for very young children and their low-income parents remain scarce—particularly for babies and toddlers.

The Educare model was developed to address these needs and to begin to narrow the achievement gap for children in poverty. Each Educare school combines available public funding from existing early childhood programs, including Early Head Start, Head Start, and state preschool and child care resources.



The Buffett Early Childhood Fund and the Ounce of Prevention Fund joined forces in 2000 to work with local public and private partners in communities across the country to establish Educare schools. These schools comprise the growing consortium known as the Bounce Learning Network.

Partners in the Bounce Learning Network are committed to building, developing, and implementing local Educare schools that give at-risk children from birth to age five a foundation for school success and achievement. Members of the Bounce Learning Network also work for change beyond the walls of the schoolroom by inspiring public policies and systems that support early childhood learning.

Additionally, the network of Educare Centers demonstrates “on the ground” how research and evidence-based practices work to prepare low-income children for school. Educare schools also serve as showrooms to reinforce the importance of combining public funding streams like federal Early Head Start and Head Start with state-supported child care and preschool dollars to create comprehensive, high-quality programs that benefit vulnerable children and their families.





A PARTNERSHIP to Create a Birth-to-Five Program

Each Educare school is a private-public partnership that builds on the best that existing programs like Early Head Start, Head Start, child care, and preschool have to offer in order to help disadvantaged children grow up safe, healthy, eager to learn, and better prepared for school.

The collaboration brings together:

A Philanthropic partner to lead the privately funded Educare capital campaign, engage other funders, hire a local evaluator, and share governance.

A Program partner, typically a Head Start/Early Head Start provider, to implement the core components of the Educare model and share governance.

A Public Schools partner to provide operating dollars, land and other support, and share governance.

Each partner shares governance of the Educare school and signs legally binding Educare contracts and agreements to solidify their work together. By forging this new approach, each Educare school can marshal the type of resources necessary to support the core features of the Educare model, including well-educated and well-trained teachers and family support workers, low child/staff ratios, small class sizes, and other quality improvements that science and evidence-based practices show can make a meaningful difference.

That said, local Educare partnerships also have unique characteristics because each reflects the communities in which they are located. These partnerships are also designed to be nimble so that they can evolve in response to local circumstances and to lessons learned from colleagues across the Bounce Learning Network of Educare Centers.

Educare partners work together to close the “Quality Gap” that exists between public funding currently available and the cost of providing the type of high- quality care and education needed to level the academic playing field.

Annual budgets at Educare schools range from \$2.6 to \$3.6 million, with variance by geographic region and the number of children and families served. Programs are supported by available funding streams that interlace to raise the quality of education and care for at-risk young children. Examples of funding streams available to Educare schools include:

- Federal Head Start/Early Head Start monies
- U.S. Department of Education – Title I and Even Start
- Child Care and Development Block Grant reimbursements
- State education dollars
- Local school district dollars
- Parent co-payments
- Private sector support



A PLACE to serve as a beacon of hope

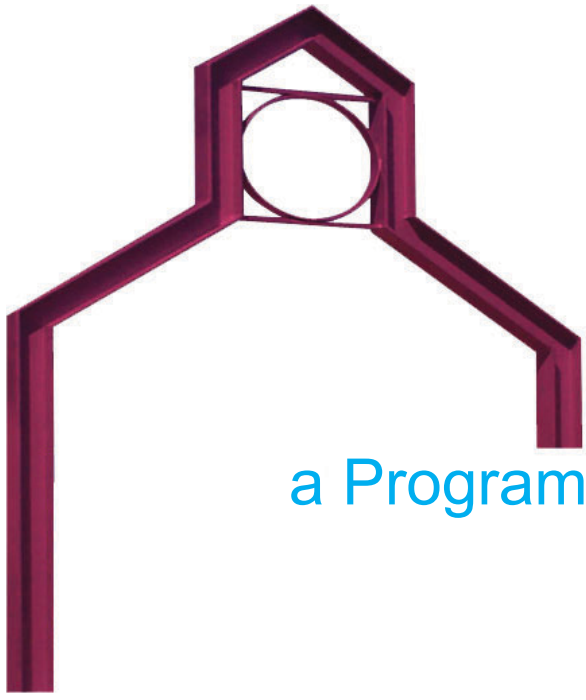
There is a critical shortage of quality early care and education programs for poor children. Each Educare facility wraps its high-quality programming into a professionally designed facility intended to rival the quality of corporate child care centers. This inspires families, policy makers, business leaders and others to see that children in poverty have value and that creating effective programming and resources for them is a worthy investment.

Educare schools are designed to reflect what young children need to grow up healthy: safe, roomy, sunny, cheerful and predictable spaces for learning, exploring, and playing. Each school is unique, recognizing the needs and demographics of the community it serves.

Construction costs typically range from \$8 - \$10 million with significant variation by region.

To help reinforce the idea that funding for public education should extend to birth, Educare schools are typically built in close proximity to public elementary schools. Thirty percent of space at Educare is allocated for infants and toddlers, to minimize the transitions that too often disrupt young lives, to create multiple indoor and outdoor play spaces, to allow for individualization and group time with children, and to provide adequate space for consultation with parents. Additionally, the architecture facilitates the caring, consistent attention that forms the basis for emotional growth and language and literacy development.

- * Educare of Chicago
- * Educare of Denver
- * Educare of Miami-Dade
- * Educare of Milwaukee
- * Educare of Oklahoma City
- * Educare of Omaha at Kellom
- * Educare of Omaha at Indian Hill
- * Educare of Seattle
- * Educare of Tulsa – Kendall-Whittier
- * Educare of Tulsa at Hawthorne
- * Educare of West DuPage



A PROGRAM to Prepare At-Risk Children for School

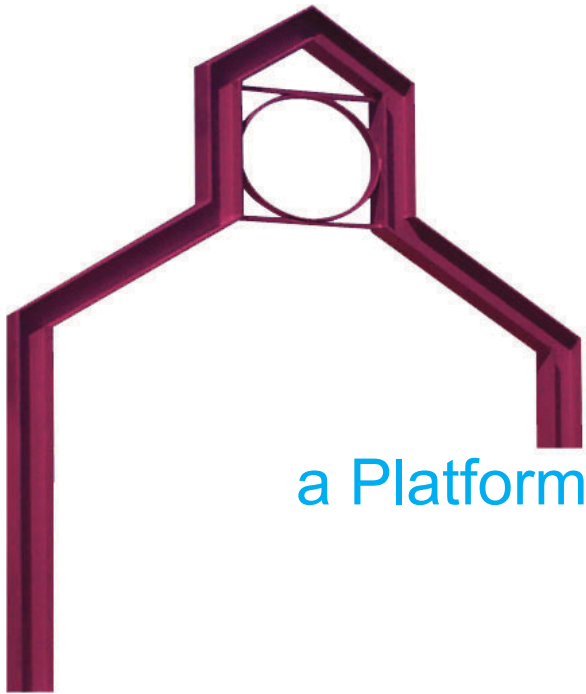
For a child to have a good experience in school they must first have the early language and literacy skills, as well as the social-emotional-behavioral skills, that lay the groundwork for academic success: self confidence, a sense of curiosity, impulse control, empathy, the ability to engage with other students and teachers, hopefulness, and the ability to prevent and resist social pressure and violence. We are not born with those abilities -- they must be developed through early experiences and loving, trusting relationships.

Children and families from low-income homes often face unique barriers in developing these foundations for success. Educare's program model is specifically designed to help at-risk children and their families

overcome such barriers so that children get what they need to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and do not start so far behind their more advantaged peers.

The Educare Model core features include:

1. Research-Based Practices and Strategies
2. Small Class Size and High Staff/Child Ratios
3. High Staff Qualifications and Intensive Professional Development
4. Focus on Language and Literacy
5. Emphasis on Social-Emotional Development to Promote School Readiness
6. Enhanced Focus on Problem-Solving and Numeracy
7. Continuity of Care to Help Children Develop Secure Relationships
8. On-Site Family Support Services to Engage Children and Parents
9. Reflective Supervision and Practice Throughout the Program
10. An Interdisciplinary and Effective Team Approach
11. Arts Used to Support Social-Emotional, Language and Literacy Development
12. Emphasis on Prenatal Services



A PLATFORM for Policy Change

While science tells us what we need to do to promote school readiness among children in poverty, public policies and funding priorities often lag behind. In states across the country, Educare schools are helping to strengthen public investments in high-quality, research-based programs.

Thus, each Educare school is a platform for long-term policy change, offering a tangible way to show policy makers and other opinion leaders the kind of early learning environment all children deserve and that we specifically must make available to children at risk for school failure. Educare shows compelling evidence of what can happen when you raise quality standards across birth-to-five programs and push for policy and systems changes to ensure that public dollars are targeted to strategies that offer the highest return on investment.

In several states across the country, Educare schools have played an important role in fueling policy change for young, at-risk children and in establishing new models for expanding access to quality programs:

Nebraska: Educare of Omaha helped advocacy and philanthropic leaders make the case for the State of Nebraska to increase dramatically its investments in early learning programs, including amending the State Constitution to declare that learning begins at birth. A new \$60 million public/private endowment is expanding quality birth-to-three services for young, at-risk children in Nebraska.

Illinois: Since opening in 2000, Educare of Chicago has served as a showroom for quality in Illinois, which in recent years has increased early childhood investments by over \$318 million and is progressing toward full funding of preschool services, including high-quality programs for at-risk infants and toddlers.

Oklahoma: Educare of Tulsa has demonstrated the importance of early childhood education for the state's youngest citizens and helped inspire a new \$25 million pilot program to promote the school readiness of at-risk children, from birth to three, across the state.

Kansas: The State of Kansas recently established an \$11 million early childhood block grant, with a set-aside for infants and toddlers. The Governor's strong support of this new investment and model was boosted by discussions with public and private sector leaders at Educare of Omaha in neighboring Nebraska.

The promise and early results of the Educare movement have sparked the development of two related policy initiatives – the Birth to Five Policy Alliance, working in states, and The First Five Years Fund, working at the federal level, to attract additional public investments in high-quality programs for very young, at-risk children that would benefit states and communities across the country.

Educare schools, the Birth to Five Policy Alliance and The First Five Years Fund benefit from the leadership and commitment of a growing group of funders, including the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, the George Kaiser Family Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the J.B. & M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation, the Irving Harris Foundation, and others.

