

Early Childhood Development in the United States

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Global Early Childhood Development (ECD) Initiative takes a holistic, two-generation approach, strengthening the capacity of public systems and community actors to support the well-being of low-income parents/caregivers and their young children in the United States. By supporting children aged 0-3 with the nurturing care they need to be ready for school and resilient to meet challenges, this work contributes to their healthy development, as well as improved economic and health outcomes for their families and communities.

The overarching goal of the Global ECD Initiative in the United States is to improve access to ECD services and the developmental outcomes of all low-income young children (0-3 years) in the communities in which the Foundation works - beginning in Los Angeles County with a second location to be added in later 2021. Work within these specific locations will link to state and national advocacy and capacity-building. Specifically, the Hilton Foundation invests in: improving caregiving and parent/caregiver well-being (with focus on young parents/caregivers under 24 years); building capacity of local organizations; strengthening the global ECD field; and research and evaluation.

Ideal state

All low-income young children in the U.S. are developmentally on track and ready for school with the support of robust, interconnected mental and physical health, child welfare, and education and training systems. Those systems connect families to holistic supports for both parents and children. In addition, all adolescent parents are fulfilling their economic and educational promise and are physically and mentally well.

History and background

Our early childhood development work in the U.S. began in 2021 with the goal of improving the developmental outcomes of young children across the country, beginning in Los Angeles, with additional targeted investments at the national and state level. Through our early childhood development work in East and Southern Africa, the Foundation recognized the power of investing early in young children and their families, and the value of working across geographies to share learnings with

the global movement to mobilize greater support and financial resources.

Across the early childhood portfolio, the well-being of young children and young parents go hand in hand, as early childhood development is a two-generation issue. Parents' ability to promote healthy development and provide responsive caregiving depends on access to prenatal care, maternal education, family incomes, father involvement, and social supports.

In the U.S., low-income young parents disproportionately face adversities, and their children are at higher risk of poor development. For example, one in four low-income young children in the US lives with a young parent, and young parents struggle to juggle work, education and childcare meaning that it can be difficult to meet basic needs and to manage stress. This work aims to flip this intergenerational cycle to support the well-being of young families.

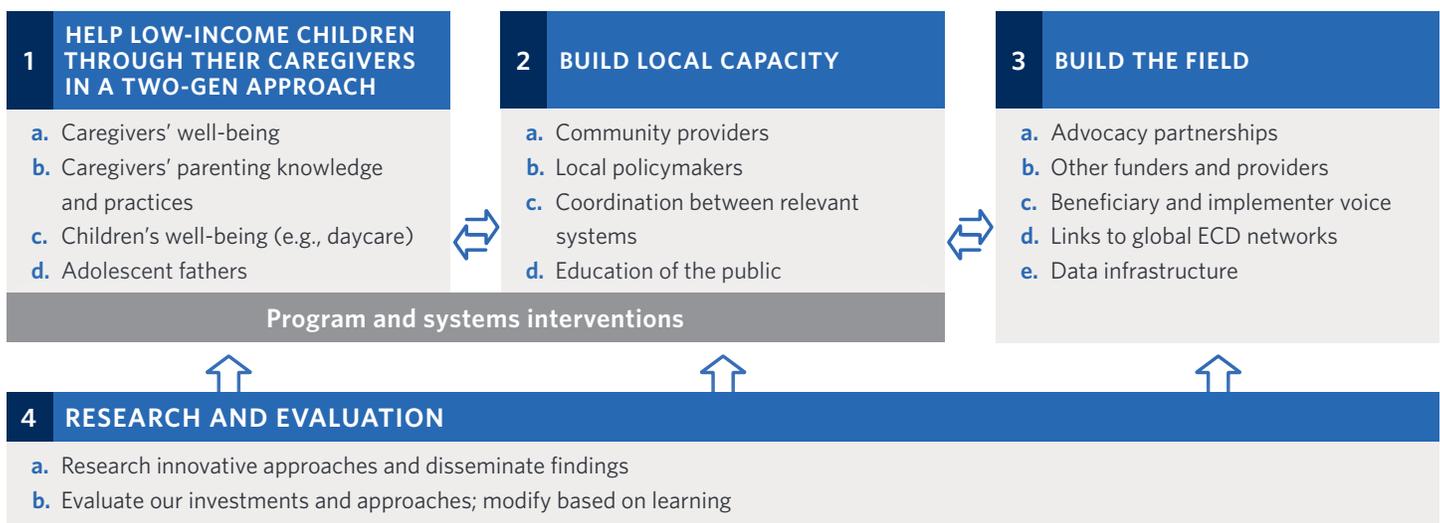
5-year goals

50% of low-income young children in the Foundation's focus communities have access to affordable, high-quality early childhood development services

80% of low-income young children in targeted programs the Foundation funds meet age-appropriate developmental milestones / standards

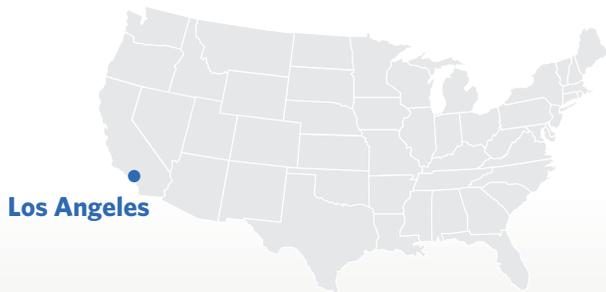
50% of young parents participating in Foundation-funded programs are meeting success metrics for caregiving capacity and well-being

Strategy architecture



WHERE WE WORK

- The Early Childhood Development in the US initiative will select one additional geography for Strategy25



EQUITY FOCUS

- Young parents and their young children
- People of color, especially Black, Latino, and Indigenous parents and children
- Low-income parents and their young children
- Greater investment in capacity of Black, Latino, and Indigenous-led groups

OTHER KEY METRICS

- \$50 billion in annual federal funding for early childhood development services
- \$30 million in additional annual funding in Los Angeles County for services that support caregivers to meet the developmental needs of their children

PROGRAM COSTS



**Strategy25
(2021-2025):**
Est. \$59,000,000

CHALLENGES



- Managing loss of income, food insecurity, housing instability, childcare, and other critical health and economic issues caused or worsened by COVID-19
- Ensuring that early childhood development remains a priority as state and local budgets face worse than expected COVID-19 shortfalls

OPPORTUNITIES



- The Global Scale for Early Development is a promising tool to measure child development outcomes consistently and globally. Promising testing is already underway in the U.S.
- There is a historic opportunity to better support low-income children and their families with a recognition that the racial and economic disparities laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic must be addressed, and with recently increased federal funding for early childhood development services, including COVID responsive childcare relief funding