

OUR APPROACH



EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Educare DC delivers comprehensive services to at-risk children, some as young as six weeks old, and their families to ensure the success of students and their families.

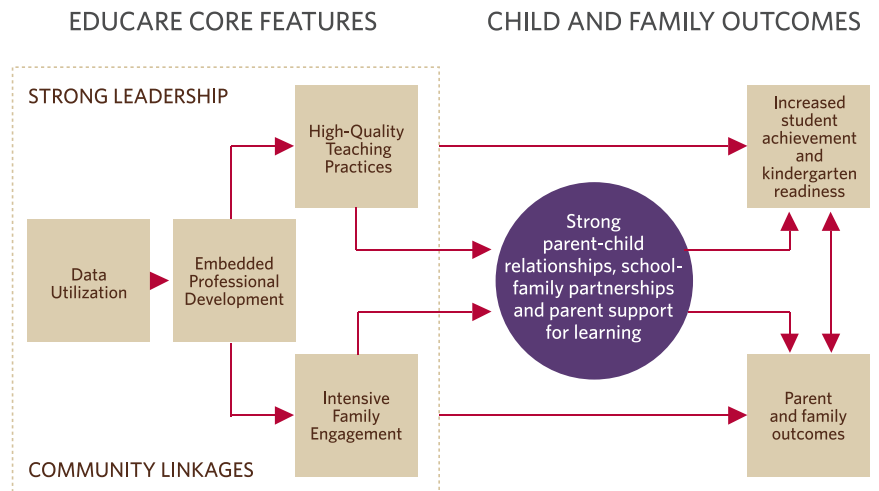
- Educare DC's school year is full day, year-round. Students receive a nutritious and well-balanced breakfast, lunch, and snack each day. Students in after care also receive supper.
- Our on-site health coordinator ensures that students receive immunizations as well as hearing, vision, and dental screenings.
- Our teachers and master teachers work closely with our mental health consultant and special education coordinator to address behavioral or developmental concerns, and we assist families with the referral process if additional screenings or services are required.
- We develop strong community partnerships, including with local fitness, arts, gardening, and health organizations, to deliver expertise and enrichment.
- Our family engagement team works with families to connect them with resources that will help them meet their housing, employment, health, or education needs.
- Educare DC's parents are elected annually to the school's parent policy committee. The committee meets monthly and approves the school budget, the program calendar, major curriculum changes, and staff hiring/firing decisions. Not only does the committee empower parents by giving them a voice in their children's education, but also by helping them to grow professionally.

"Now that science has firmly established that experiences in the earliest years of life form the foundation of learning, behavior, and health across the lifespan, the biggest challenge is in the specifics of creating the best possible experiences for the children and families who can benefit the most. By providing the highest quality early education for these children and their families in our community, Educare DC is at the absolute forefront of meeting this challenge."

— Lee Schorr, Educare DC Board Member

THE EDUCARE MODEL

The Educare model is based on research from early childhood development, education, social work, and other allied fields. Our approach comprises four core features: data utilization, embedded professional development, high-quality teaching practices, and intensive family engagement.



DATA UTILIZATION

- **Data-driven program improvement.** Educare DC's ongoing data collection enables us not only to track children's progress, but also to provide feedback to teachers and parents about what they can do to better support individual children — all in real time.
- **Evidence-based practices.** We explore the latest science about early childhood education and translate those theories to the 'real world' of our programs, and we rigorously evaluate our programs to collect information that will help us improve our model. This approach has an impact on our program and the way we teach our curriculum. It leads to positive growth in several areas, including formation of social attachments, social emotional development, language and literacy, and family engagement.



EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Well-qualified workforce.** Lead teachers have bachelor's degrees and assistant teachers have associate's degrees in early childhood education and related fields.
- **Reflective practice and supervision.** Master teachers have master's degrees in relevant fields and work with teachers in the classroom. Master teachers model instruction techniques and parallel teaching, and also provide formal and informal feedback.
- **Intensive staff development.** All staff receive professional development, both through on-site Educare trainings and off-site trainings with Educare partners, such as the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, United Planning Organization, and Brazelton Touchpoints. Staff engage in peer learning, lesson study, and reflective practice.



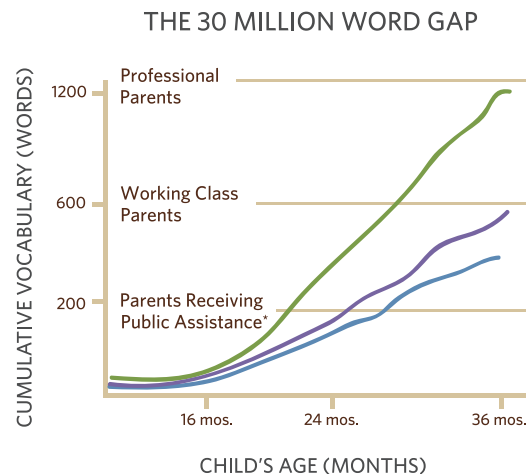
OUR APPROACH

Research-Based Strategy



AT EDUCARE DC

Continuous improvement through scientific research and staff training helps us meet the educational and developmental needs of our DC students. And those needs are very great. Ninety percent of the infants and toddlers who live in Wards 7 and 8 surrounding Educare DC live in poverty, compared to 33% nationally. Educare has the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the lives of children living in poverty. Eighty-five percent of a child's core brain structure forms by the time a child reaches three years of age; by providing infants and young children with high-quality education, we can help influence how their brains grow. The Hart Risley study found that, by age three, low-income children heard 30 million fewer words than their higher-income peers. Educare is working to eliminate that gap for the children it serves.



* Welfare Parents was the standard term used at the time of the Hart Risley study (1995)

"I left my visit with every confidence that all of your students will grow up with that insatiable lifelong love of learning because of the positive experiences they're having right here."

—Valerie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to President Obama, speaking at Educare DC



Educare DC has established a research program partnership with a local evaluation partner, Dr. Brenda Jones Harden of the University of Maryland. With the Educare DC program leadership team, Dr. Jones Harden created and began implementing a school-wide system of evaluation and data collection. The collected data enables us to document child outcomes, classroom quality, and aspects of parenting; this data then informs strong classroom practice, effective instruction, family engagement work, and professional development plans for staff.



Outside research also shows that high-quality early childhood programs can:

- Reduce or eliminate the achievement gap at kindergarten.
- Ensure strong literacy and math-learning outcomes by third grade.
- Promote positive life outcomes by reducing school dropout rates and delinquency, and increasing income in adulthood.



Empirical research by Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman has shown that every dollar invested in high-quality early learning for disadvantaged children provides a 7-10 percent return on investment, including results such as better education, improved social outcomes, and reduced remedial education spending.

The research and practices at Educare DC are helping to demonstrate and prove the specific, short- and long-term benefits of providing high-quality early education to children in poverty. Support for funding these efforts is growing. According to The First Five Years Fund, 89% of voters believe we should be doing more to make sure each child gets a strong start in life. Nearly three-quarters of voters, including 59% of Republicans, support greater investment in childhood education*.

* Source: National poll in 2015.



OUR APPROACH



Research-Based Strategy



Advocacy



Advocacy

OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Another important part of Educare DC's work is to serve as a strong advocacy voice and role model in the community. To that end, we are the early childhood anchor program within the DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative and an active member of the DC Head Start Association and other early childhood education groups. Educare DC frequently hosts public officials, policy makers, child advocates, and international early childhood experts who travel to Washington, DC. Visiting Educare DC allows changemakers to see firsthand what high-quality early learning looks like and then to create the sound policies and systems needed to support quality on a large scale. At a more local level, members of our leadership team and board have testified before the Education Committee of the DC City Council to emphasize the importance of quality in early childhood education and to advocate for broader infant-toddler funding.

"It is a rare public-policy initiative that promotes fairness and social justice and at the same time promotes productivity in the economy and in society at large. Investing in disadvantaged young children is such a policy."

— James Heckman, Nobel Laureate In Economics



PUBLIC POLICY AND PROGRAM INNOVATIONS

As a “showroom” of educational innovations for programs serving infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, Educare DC develops and implements best practices to improve outcomes for children at risk of school failure. These best practices include programs to enhance language and literacy, math, and problem-solving skills. Educare DC is working to build partnerships with other early childhood leaders to share program innovations and help to raise the quality of services for many more young children living in poverty in the District of Columbia.



RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Educare DC’s commitment to evidence-based practices underscores the need for longitudinal data to support continuous program improvement. This data will help Educare DC document the effectiveness of its high-quality program on children’s learning outcomes. It will also contribute to a body of knowledge that will strengthen the early childhood field and ongoing advocacy efforts.



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Advocacy



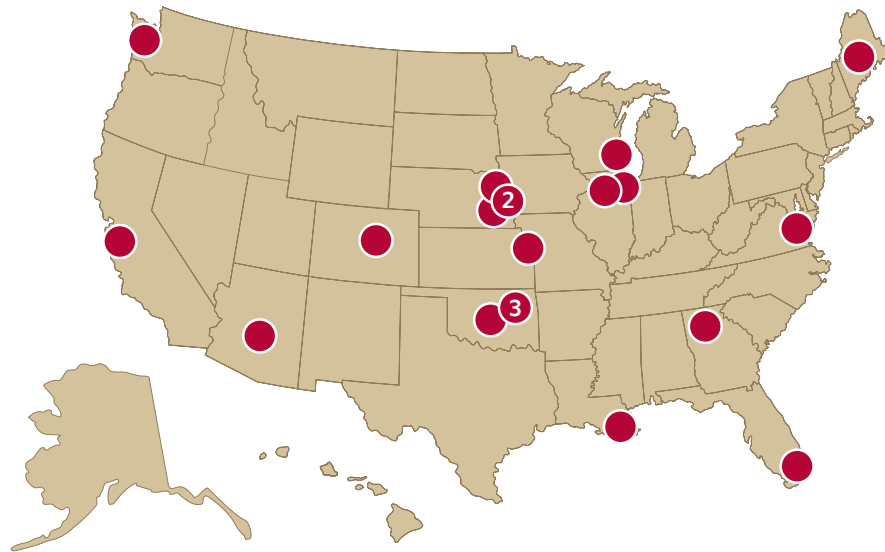
Nationwide Learning



PART OF THE EDUCARE LEARNING NETWORK

We are a key organization serving DC's youngest citizens. But we are not in this alone.

Arizona (Phoenix)
Atlanta
California at Silicon Valley
(San Jose)
Central Maine (Waterville)
Chicago
Denver
Kansas City, KS
Lincoln, NE
Miami-Dade
Milwaukee
New Orleans
Oklahoma City
Omaha at Indian Hill
Omaha at Kellom
Seattle
Tulsa at Hawthorne
Tulsa at Kendall-Whittier
Tulsa at MacArthur
Washington, DC
West DuPage, IL
Winnebago, NE



Educare DC is part of the Educare Learning Network, a nationwide network of 21 schools known for being one of the country's most effective early childhood programs. The network is designed to share expertise with educators, researchers, and policymakers so that they can strengthen their own communities.

"Public-private partnerships like Educare are the only way we're going to get there. ... It takes adults putting egos aside, putting historical differences aside, and saying, 'Let's figure out a better way to do it.' ... This, Educare, is a better way to do [early education] —and it's starting to become a real national model."

— Arne Duncan, then-Secretary, US Department Of Education, speaking at Educare Oklahoma City

NETWORK VALUE FOR EDUCARE DC

The Educare Network provides a forum in which Educare leadership staff can come together to share, problem-solve, and receive assistance, training, and support regarding program and policy development, implementation, and continuous quality improvement of the Educare model.

RESULTS

Research shows that when children leave Educare, they are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for kindergarten. Kindergartners who spend their early years at Educare arrive at elementary school ready to learn and on par with middle-income peers. Children, including dual-language learners, who enroll in Educare before age three have better language skills than their peers who enroll during their preschool years. Furthermore, students, on average, retain the skills they gained at Educare, as shown by three studies tracking students' progress into elementary school.

