

# Invest in Kids—2018-2021 Strategic Plan

## Changing Lives through Proven Results

“Invest in Kids... represents no viewpoint other than a demand for excellence. It identifies the best, most relevant, most quantitatively valid ideas and gives them a big boost in Colorado, sometimes big enough to make them visible on the national stage... They are the critical middlemen to the growth and maturation of an effective charitable sector.” – Ken Stern, *With Charity for all*

### I. Introduction

Working in partnership with local communities, Invest in Kids’ identifies, introduces, implements and ensures the success of research-based, proven programs to ensure all children have the opportunities, environment, and support to succeed.

What makes Invest in Kids different is our unique approach to finding, delivering and measuring the effectiveness of the programs we provide:

- First, we identify programs with proven track records or methodologies for success.
- Second, we introduce these programs to communities to see where and how they can net the greatest impact.
- Third, we implement the programs through agency partners, in collaboration with community leaders and other key constituents.
- Lastly, we ensure each program’s ongoing success through strict adherence to guidelines, and measurement of results.

### II. The Organization

Beyond the program’s effectiveness, we clearly understand the importance of high-quality implementation with fidelity to the proven program model. Invest in Kids’ intermediary service delivery approach has received the following national recognition for its efforts:

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Science to Service Award in the category of Mental Health Promotion (One of only 11 organizations nationally): <https://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/press-announcements/201109211115>
- Social Impact Exchange’s S&I 100 Index of the top nonprofits nationally showing readiness to scale: <http://www.socialimpactexchange.org/organization/invest-kids>
- The University of Pennsylvania’s Center for High-Impact Philanthropy’s “Invest in a Strong Start for Children: A Toolkit for Donors”, which recognized Invest in Kids’ value-added implementation approach as essential to getting the very best outcomes for kids: <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/our-analysis/opportunities-to-achieve-impact/early-childhood-toolkit/strategies-for-donors/weave-a-web-of-support-for-kids-and-their-families/nurse-family-partnership/>
- Invest in Kids was featured by "Exploring Innovation in Community Development", an initiative of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis to investigate the connection between soft skill

development in early childhood settings and later workforce development issues. Invest in Kids participated as a case study of a wide-scale implementation of programs with proven evidence to make an impact in this area of children's lives.

### III. Strategic Vision

Invest in Kids seeks to broaden its impact while staying true to its mission. Invest in Kids will enhance its status as a non-profit leader in implementing research-based programs directed at improving outcomes for low-income young children and their families. Invest in Kids will achieve these results by focusing on the following six strategies:

#### A. Grow Delivery and Impact of The Incredible Years

A November 2015 publication in the American Journal of Public Health found statistically significant associations between measured social-emotional skills in kindergarten and young adult outcomes. This includes the fact that a single point increase in social competence as a kindergartner translated to a 54% increased likelihood of graduating from high school and 46% greater chance of having a stable, full-time job at age 25.

Colorado has the largest domestic implementation of The Incredible Years (IY). IY has consistently achieved statistically significant outcomes for participants across the state. Consequently, the program has broad-based support from diverse communities and is poised for additional growth. The Colorado Department of Human Services was successful in seeking funding to expand the program in FY18-19 through their Office of Early Childhood. Given this commitment of public funding, Invest in Kids has a tremendous opportunity to ensure the successful implementation of the program and sustain that growth long-term and is therefore focused on:

- Increasing Invest in Kids' internal staff capacity to successfully provide high quality support for the expansion of IY
- Educating key decision makers about the importance of funding for the Two-Generation approach to social and emotional development of young children and ensuring state dollars allocated for IY are efficiently and effectively utilized
- Engaging in conversations with communities who have an established need for services and cultivating and stewarding key relationships necessary to increase awareness of the availability of IY
- Working with districts and organizations to build local IY teams to maintain high quality program delivery and grow the quantity of children and families receiving the IY program improvement
- Effectively utilizing robust implementation and outcome data to guide continuous quality for Invest in Kids' staff and the supports they provide to local agencies delivering the program

#### B. Deepen Impact of Nurse-Family Partnership

Invest in Kids has demonstrated unparalleled success in the implementation of the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) in Colorado. It is the largest dissemination of the program in the world and consistently demonstrates unprecedented results. The Colorado program is known for adhering to all the research-based Model Elements and participating in ongoing research with the program developer to ensure the services remain entirely responsive to what we are learning in the field. Nurses delivering

the program in Colorado visit nearly 4,000 low-income women per year which is nearing 50% of the eligible mothers. Here is how we will continue to deepen our impact of the NFP implementation:

1. Continue advocating for funding through the Nurse Home Visitor Act by educating state law makers and staff about the value of this critical Two-Generation home visiting program
2. Maintain community support and the great strength that has been a key asset to the programs delivered by 22 agencies covering all of Colorado's 64 counties
3. Prioritize the issues that our comprehensive data and years of experience confirm are critical needs of this program, including:
  - Increasing the "Eligible Clients Referred to Clients Enrolled Rate" which is currently 30%
  - Prioritizing issues that affect Nurse Recruitment and Retention; including addressing workforce issues of nursing pay, diversity in the nursing workforce, and nursing education - this in turn combats client attrition as the nurse/client relationship is the key to continued client engagement
  - Remaining committed to increasing nursing knowledge and skill to ensure nurses are prepared to meet the demands of diverse client issues

#### C. Build on Current Status as a Non-Profit Leader in Implementing Evidenced-Based Programs

For 20 years, it has been the mission of Invest in Kids to improve the health and well-being of low-income children and families throughout Colorado. Our programs have over 30 years of Randomized Controlled Trials, the gold standard of research, and we replicate these programs in the real world. Invest in Kids works with local community providers to address all of the challenges we identify when taking a proven program outside of an academic setting.

Invest in Kids works with local community providers to uncover and address all of the challenges inherent in what we see when moving a proven program to the field. Invest in Kids can demonstrably see a return on investment by focusing on implementation support, evaluation of its programs, and describing the results they achieve. Invest in Kids is on the forefront of implementation science and has demonstrated consistent success in transitioning programs from research to practice and in ensuring our programs are successful with families of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Moving forward, Invest in Kids shall:

- Seize appropriate opportunities to further develop its role as a leader in implementation science through engaging in external consultation with burgeoning programs in the research space, and through presenting on its implementation work at conferences
- Dispassionately evaluate mission-aligned, evidence-based programs, with a track record of success in diverse communities, to determine whether they merit additional examination as a potential third program for Invest in Kids to support in Colorado

#### D. Develop Resources to Fuel the Organization

Invest in Kids has steadily increased the diversification of funding to allow for impact and growth. The organization went from a single funder to a wide array of funding sources including many Colorado foundations, government contracts, and broad-based public support. Recently, Invest in Kids has restructured its development team, created a development plan and has formed a new volunteer committee focused on resource generation. Moving forward, the organization will grow revenue by

pursuing funds from a broad array of sources including government, foundation, individual and corporate. Specific resource plans are to:

- Maintain an operating reserve that equals or exceeds six months of operating expenses
- Focus on stewarding individual donors while working to broaden and diversify the donor base
- Increase unrestricted funding to allow for advancing our mission, responsiveness to unexpected opportunities, and the maintenance of core functions that may not be fully covered by restricted funding
- Partner with Board of Directors and Development Committee to achieve the goals and objectives of the annual Fund Development Plan
- Prioritize the marketing and communications needs of the organization to effectively share out successes, challenges and opportunities

#### E. Enhance Organizational Governance

Invest in Kids has benefitted from a passionate, loyal Board of Directors and a dedicated, hard-working staff. Accordingly, the organization has experienced infrequent turnover of both. However, as the organization continues to prosper, additional steps need to be taken to ensure organizational sustainability. Invest in Kids recently updated its by-laws, conducted additional governance activities, and launched an Equity Initiative. Building upon these efforts, moving forward the organization will:

- Develop a more robust nominating process for recruiting and vetting potential board members
- Continue to build and broaden the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative
- Recruit and engage additional volunteers for the Finance and Development Committees as well as provide other additional opportunities for people to participate in the organization

#### F. Build greater Organizational Infrastructure and deepen focus on Finance and Operations

Invest in Kids has always maintained thorough financial documents and met all financial and operational reporting requirements. Having started operations with funding from one major grant, over time the organization has grown to encompass a very diverse funding base requiring strategic thought and sophistication. Moving forward with leadership in this area, Invest in Kids shall:

- Improve the focus on all aspects of financial analysis offering the staff, Board of Directors, Finance and Development Committees insight into the organization's financial performance to ensure decisions are based on accurate data with appropriate context
- Engage staff directors in a comprehensive annual budget planning process with ongoing accountability that ensures budget priorities are aligned with the organization's values
- Focus on human capital and staff appreciation with a thoughtful and proactive performance review process
- Partner with Board of Directors and Finance Committee to achieve infrastructure and organizational capacity goals and objectives