



The Improving Teacher Quality Early Learning Projects School Districts & Community Organizations

FINDINGS

The Early Learning Projects demonstrate that partnerships and collaboration between essential facets of the community (public schools, early childhood education programs, community partners, families) contribute to improved learning experiences and significant gains in children's learning.

- Grow early learning components in community locations where none exist
- Increase outreach to organizations and families
- Expand educator networks within the community
- Strengthen administrator leadership in schools

Grow early learning components

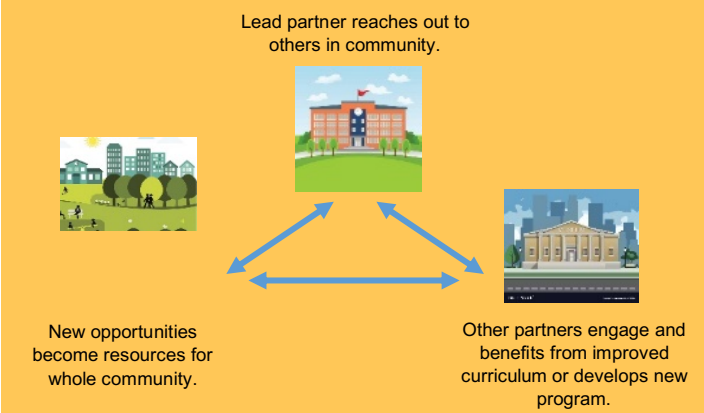
The expanded capacity of stakeholders to implement high-quality early learning components created new learning. The ITQ communitarian approach led to new collaborations and partnerships between early childhood educators in both community-based and public-school settings. Because of their participation, several public schools developed new cross-district professional development programs with neighboring districts, working with other early childhood education programs in the area, as well as with local museums and science institutions. These collaborative efforts further increased early learning components in other community entities, with the overarching goal of improving child learning outcomes.

Increase outreach

The ITQ program helped to foster purposeful and mutually beneficial relationships between community organizations, public schools, and early childhood education programs in the community. Early childhood educators were provided with high quality professional development from participating partners. In turn, community partners learned about important aspects of early childhood education, growing PD opportunities where none existed and increasing developmentally appropriate practices. Early childhood educators were supported to bring children on fieldtrips to visit partner organizations, museums or libraries thereby extending the learning opportunities into the broader community. Partner organizations offered free passes such that families could return with children and continue learning and engagement.

Understanding the community relationship

The ITQ program benefits all partners involved in the process, including: institutions of higher education, community partners, and the whole community.



Expand educator networks

Community-based early childhood educators are often not awarded the same professional development opportunities as those who work in public schools. During the ITQ program, early childhood educators from across the mixed-delivery system were offered equitable access to high-quality trainings. Shared trainings benefited the community as a whole particularly since children enroll in public kindergarten regardless of the location of their early childhood education program. Hearing about the positive effects of ITQ, teachers from primary grade levels sought out information and invitations to the same trainings, furthering the connection between educators and vertical alignment of the curriculum and expectations for children.

“Early childhood programs and public schools have to shake hands, have to talk to one another, and have to really intentionally share resources—that could be training as well as information that we can help both the children and the families and ultimately the community thrive.”



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

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TOOLS

- Include early childhood education organizations
- Build relationships among leaders
- Outreach to area museums and libraries

[Include early childhood education organizations](#)

Extend invitations and reach out to programs and organizations when planning professional development for the year. Make connections between school principals and community program or Head Start director, from director to principal or from superintendent to executive director and vice versa. Wherever the children in your community are having early learning experiences are the places to connect!

[Build relationships among leaders](#)

Relationships can help you to pool resources for professional development, coaching and mentoring. Work on agreements to share curriculum horizontally across programs and vertically between levels from preschool through grade 2.

[Outreach to area museums and libraries](#)

Share curriculum content with these community organizations, such as museums and libraries, who in turn can develop activities that will increase their profile. It further serves to engage families and expand integrated learning experiences across disciplines. When organizations come together in their curriculum supports for young children, the entire community benefits. The Build Initiative's [Community Systems Development Toolkit](#) can help support your connections between organizations.