

First 10

All Children Learn and Thrive



The first 10 years of a child's life are a critical developmental period that impacts all that follows. Opportunity and achievement gaps begin early for millions of children who live in families with low or below poverty-level incomes. Across the country EDC's First 10 initiative is supporting community partnerships in building on families' strengths, improving outcomes for thousands of children.

Community Partnerships Drive Change

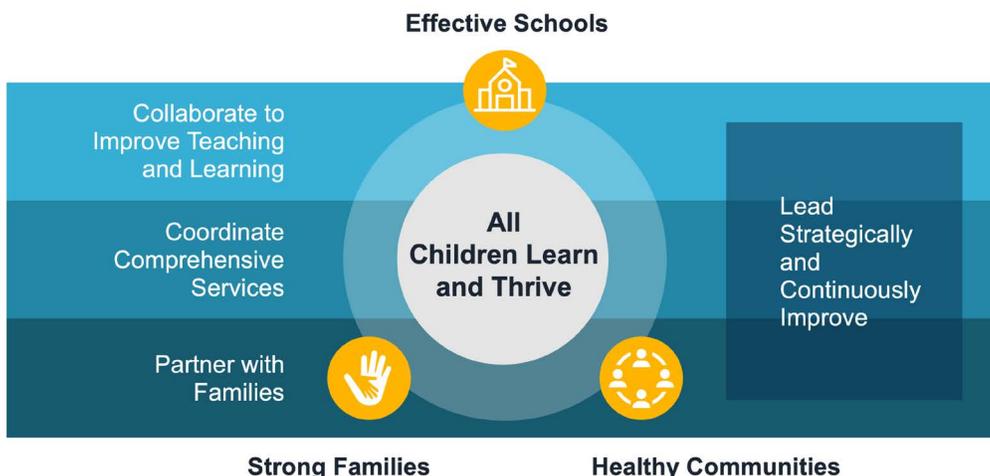
Inspired by innovative communities, **First 10** engages elementary schools, districts, early childhood programs, and community agencies in building systems of support for children and families. EDC helps these partnerships develop and carry out plans focused on the strategies shown in the First 10 theory of action below: **Collaborate to Improve Teaching and Learning, Coordinate Comprehensive Services, and Partner with Families.**

Typical **First 10** practices include providing play and learn groups linked to elementary schools, coordinating connections to health and social services, improving the quality of early childhood programs, coordinating the transition to kindergarten, conducting joint pre-K and kindergarten professional development, and improving early grades curriculum and instruction.

EDC's First 10 Supports and Activities Include:

- Assessing communities' assets and needs and providing individualized consultations
- Partnering with communities to design plans to apply and sustain the three strategies
- Building community capacity to **Lead Strategically and Continuously Improve.**
- Supporting a network of sites to facilitate peer learning
- Developing and sharing practical guidance to support communities in using the **First 10 approach**

In 2020, EDC and New America co-published the most recent First 10 report, **Building Systems In Tandem.**



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ROAD MAP TO CHANGE



Connect Early Years and Early Grades

When early childhood and K–12 educators collaborate, they can ensure high-quality learning for children. Yet this seldom happens. We have created two systems with different philosophies and practices for children of similar ages. **First 10** brings early childhood programs together with elementary schools to align curricula, work on how best to teach young children, and develop common approaches to supporting families. As a result, children’s learning proceeds smoothly, consistently, and successfully.

Deeply Engage Families

Research shows that families play a vital role in children’s success in school. Schools and communities must make two major shifts to support families in this role. The first shift is one of mindset: begin with respect for families, be responsive to their cultural traditions, invite them to participate as full partners in school affairs, and promote their development as leaders. The second shift is to create new structures to support families with comprehensive services. **First 10** communities are making both shifts.

Strengthen Communities

Harvard’s Opportunity Insights project researchers have demonstrated that the neighborhoods where children grow up have enormous impacts on their future social mobility. They conclude that, “The broader lesson of our analysis is that social mobility should be tackled at a local level by improving childhood environments.” As shown by **First 10** communities nationwide, the most powerful way to improve childhood environments is to implement comprehensive strategies across all of the elementary schools, early childhood programs, and health and social service agencies that serve children and families in the same community.

CONTACT US

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FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

- Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education
- Heising-Simons Foundation
- Lancaster County Community Action Partnership
- Maine Department of Education
- Pennsylvania Early Learning Resource Centers 9 and 10
- Rhode Island Department of Education

LEARN MORE

- ["Four Strategies for Getting the First 10 Years of a Child's Life Right"](#) Education Week
- [The First 10 Approach](#)
- ["A Purple Agenda for \(Early\) Education"](#) Education Week
- [All Children Learn and Thrive: Building First 10 Schools and Communities](#)

Education Development Center (EDC) is a global nonprofit that advances lasting solutions to improve education, promote health, and expand economic opportunity. Since 1958, we have been a leader in designing, implementing, and evaluating powerful and innovative programs in more than 80 countries around the world.



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