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Ready Start Morehouse  
Blueprint  
[1/27/2021]

***It's easier and less expensive to provide access to quality early care and education right from the start. Doing so ensures that our youngest learners have brain building experiences that prepare them for school and lifelong success.*** -Amy Clancy, Director of Early Childhood Children's Coalition for Northeast Louisiana

## **Introduction**

Ready Start Morehouse is a community coalition comprised of publicly funded early care and education programs including childcare, Head Start and school system programs committed to creating and implementing a bold local vision for early childhood. We are driven by the unique needs of the community to improve access to quality early care and education for our communities' youngest learners. The future of Morehouse Parish is dependent on the success of its children. Together we have an opportunity to transform the future of our parish in one generation. As a community we have a shared responsibility to support the workforce of today while preparing the workforce of tomorrow.

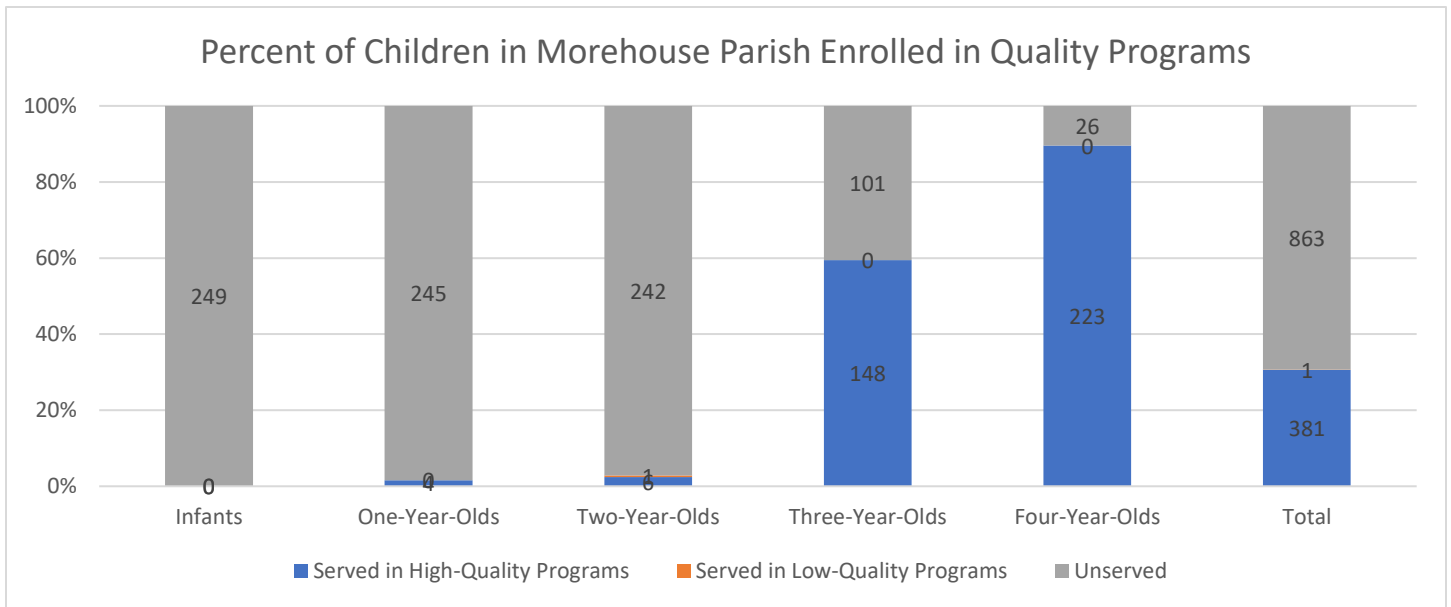
According to the Early Childhood Risk and Reach Winter 2016; 32% of children in Morehouse parish entering Kindergarten in in Fall 2015 scored *Intensive Intervention* on the DIBELS which is a pre-literacy assessment used to determine risk for literacy outcomes. Too many children in our community are arriving to school without the readiness skills they need to be successful. By increasing access to quality early care and education we can ensure that more children arrive to school ready to start.

Research on early brain development indicates that 90% of brain development occurs by age four. That means that if we are waiting to provide quality early care and education until age four when most children arrive to preschool, we have missed out on the most critical period of human development.

***In order for young children and their families to reach their greatest potential, they must have knowledge of and access to quality cross-sector resources. The community can make the biggest impact by working together to create an equitable system to address ALL needs of ALL children. Parents, educators, health care providers, and community resources should strive to create a shared vision and approach to work as an innovative, collaborative, and cohesive unit to elevate services for all children. These efforts combined with policy and funding movement will advance the needle toward improved outcomes for young children in Morehouse parish.***

*-Julie Emory, ECCS Director Children's Coalition for Northeast Louisiana*

Morehouse parish has critical gaps in access to quality early care and education for our communities' youngest learners. In 2019-2020 only 1% of Infant and Toddlers had access to quality early care and education programs. Investing in Infants and Toddlers is key to the success of our community today and tomorrow.



## Guiding Statements

**Vision:** Greater potential for our youngest learners. Or More Opportunities Reaching Early Learners

**Mission:** Provide access to quality early care and education for children and families by increasing program support and community engagement.

## Strategic Plan

**Goal 1: Improve quality of the early care and education opportunities for all early childhood programs in the network, all programs are proficient or higher on 2021-2022 performance profile.**

Strategies:

- Ready Start Coach for all programs (CLASS, Curriculum, GOLD)
- MMCI coaching for all Pre-K classrooms
- MMCI coaching for all I/T classrooms
- All ECE classrooms with Tier 1 Curricula Curriculum for all classrooms and sites
- CLASSroom Materials grants
- Professional development training (conscious discipline, TBRI, Frog Street)
- Explore possibilities annual bonuses for high performing teachers (high proficient/excellent)

Resources:

- Existing: Ready Start Coach certified MMCI PreK & I/T, Pre-K and I/T Train the Trainer. Applied to LDE for Classroom Resources and Materials grant for all ECE classrooms, Center Improvement Grant was provided to Type 3 childcare centers by Children’s Coalition via SRTC Child Care Grants program.
- Needed: Curricula for Little Angels, Explore possibilities (SRTC, funding from donors, businesses) for annual bonuses for high performing teachers (high proficient/excellent)

Performance Metrics: CLASS Scores/Performance Profiles – all programs proficient or higher on 2021-2022 performance profile

Progress Made: Six out of the seven sites in the network received a Performance Profile rating of Proficient or Higher for the 2019-2020 school year.

**Goal 2: Increase access to early care and education opportunities for Infants and Toddlers, Birth to age three enrollment has increased by 100 children by 2025.**

Strategies:

- Evaluate availability of current I/T slots by age and location with Monthly child count.
- Identify potential sites to add additional seats.
- Request PDG funding for B-3 seats.
- Explore EHS funding options if needed.
- Local Fundraising targeting businesses - SRTC funds raised in parish are invested into increasing access to seats for B-3.

Resources:

- Existing: Kids 1<sup>st</sup> Morehouse community partners have already laid the foundation for community education. Community partners are already knowledgeable of early child development. Additionally, Parents As Teachers, Early Steps and Morehouse Healthy Communities are on board and already working with families and the community. Within the network we currently have four childcare centers who serve B to 3 age group. Based on the available data from the 2018-2019 school year, the Prep Center has a High Proficient rating, ECEC certified teachers and utilizes the following Tier 1 curriculum: DIG for Pre-K 4, Frog Street Threes and Frog Street Infant and Toddler. Little Angels Daycare has a High Proficient rating, ECAC certified teachers and utilizes Frog Street Tier 1 curriculum across the center. Little Ones Daycare has a Proficient rating and ECAC certified teachers and utilizes Frog Street Tier 1 curriculum across the center. Our House Child Care Center has an Approaching Proficient rating and ECAC certified teachers and utilizes Frog Street Tier 1 curriculum across the center.
- Needed: Funding for B to 3 seats. The barrier to serving in-need Infants, Toddlers and Threes in Morehouse parish is not the availability of spots in childcare centers, but the funding for the spots that already exist. Little Ones and Little Angels both have open space to serve more children in their centers. At Little Angels two of the classrooms are empty because parents are unable afford to pay for care.

Performance Metrics: Increased B-3 enrollment by 100 children by 2025

Progress Made: For the 2020-2021 school year, Ready Start Morehouse was awarded a total of 20 PDG Birth to 3 seats to be placed at two sites that met the qualifications to be eligible for the seats. Those sites are Little Angel's and Little One's. As of January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 19 of the 20 PDG seats are filled.

**Goal 3: Increase referrals to Early Steps with follow up by 10% by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.**

Strategies:

- Conduct developmental screenings / ASQ's for Infants and Toddlers enrolled in Type III childcare centers and FCC Pilot Providers. Referral to Early Steps as needed based on screenings completed.
- Training on how to conduct ASQ's (Julie)
- Training on Early Steps referral process (Tracy Crump and/or Ceria Dunn)
- Training on Red Flags for developmental delays and how to refer out for intervention services.

Resources:

- Existing: Early Steps and Kidz 1<sup>st</sup> Morehouse, FCC Pilot providers
- Needed: Trainings as listed above.

Performance Metrics: Increase by 10% by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

Progress Made: In September 2020, Type 3 childcare centers received a set of the ASQ's master copy. The teachers were also provided with training on implementation of the ASQ's and the Early Steps Referral process. Of the reported 69 completed ASQ's, one child was referred to Early Steps.

***2 out of 3 children ages birth to five in Louisiana have both parents or their single parent in the workforce. Increased access to reliable, quality early care and education is necessary to ensure our economy thrives today & tomorrow. Louisiana Policy Institute for Children***