Elected officials understand the need for local governments to work in new ways across sectors in both policymaking and service delivery to build a community that fully supports healthy early development and learning. By aligning services and supports, improving communication among stakeholders, and fostering greater collaboration, city leaders can prevent duplication of services and increase program quality. Children and their families interact on a daily basis with different systems and supports that often do not pursue a common strategy or successfully coordinate their efforts. A child may be enrolled in Head Start, have a sibling attending a local public elementary school, and have a mother receiving assistance through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and all three of those programs may have different requirements and no exchange of information among them, despite serving the same family. In an aligned, equitable early care and education system, all children and families have what they need to ensure all children reach their potential.

14 Technical Assistance Cities

- Cleveland, Ohio
- Denver, Colorado
- Dubuque, Iowa
- Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- Louisville, Kentucky
- Madison, Wisconsin
- Nashville, Tennessee
- New Haven, Connecticut
- Oakland, California
- Orlando, Florida
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Phoenix, Arizona
- Tempe, Arizona

Promoting an Alignment Framework to Build an Early Learning Nation

Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers increasingly believe that a more seamless pipeline that addresses a range of academic, behavioral, health, wellbeing, and family issues can serve young children and their families more efficiently and effectively.

Promoting an Alignment Framework to Build an Early Learning Nation is part of a national effort to increase the likelihood that all children will achieve educational success by the end of third grade. This 2-year project, generously supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, builds upon prior work by the National League of Cities (NLC)'s Institute for Youth, Education, and Families to more effectively align early childhood policies and programs for young children, birth to age 8, and is designed to lay the groundwork for a broader campaign that will engage cities across the nation in early learning efforts.
NLC’s framework for Educational Alignment for Young Children (EAYC) provides a basis for bringing multi-sector groups together to align efforts, programs, services, and policies to support young children and families and ensure all children reach their potential. As part of the initiative, NLC recently, with the input of cities, revised NLC’s original EAYC framework to reflect a new understanding of what it takes for cities to align their early childhood system, birth to age 8 to create an equitable system. The resulting framework, An Alignment Framework for an Equitable Early Care and Education System, identifies eight key elements necessary for cities to align their early care and education systems, birth to age 8.

**Early Childhood Network**

In addition, NLC launched the Early Childhood Network (EC Network). The EC Network provides additional ways to connect cities and enhance the peer learning environment. There are three components of the EC Network. A quarterly webinar series and an online connected community bring together all of the cities that are currently part of NLC’s early childhood projects. The online community allows EC Network cities to share resources, ideas, ask questions and post discussions. The third component of the EC Network is a technical assistance award to 14 cities. The city teams will determine the specific issues each plans to address and the strategies, including policy changes, that will effectively drive local progress, while focusing on the key elements of the revised framework.

The peer learning environment, supported by the EC Network, creates the opportunity for cities to learn from each other through the sharing of best practices. Cities will then bring those practices and systems changes to their own communities to help ensure that various departments across a city are on the same page regarding early childhood policies and initiatives. This project leverages current investments from other national funders, including the Bezos Family Foundation and the Foundation for Child Development, that support a larger NLC Early Childhood Success portfolio.

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**About the National League of Cities**

The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

**About the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families**

NLC’s Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. NLC launched the YEF Institute in 2000 in recognition of the unique and influential roles that mayors, city councilmembers and other local leaders play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.

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**To Learn More**

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