



Department of
Teaching & Learning

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Birth to School

Duneland School Corporation

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Vision of Birth to School (B2S)

The Duneland School Corporation Birth-to-School program will empower caregivers with knowledge, resources, and opportunities for early childhood development.

Mission

The Duneland School Corporation Birth-to-School program will create outreach opportunities that will help children and their families build relationships, access information, foster school readiness, and increase awareness of available resources. The program will assist families in preparing their children to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Rationale

- Indiana is one of seven states that does not provide funding for preschool
- According to Cambridge, starting early is critical to addressing achievement gaps and improving outcomes for all children. (www.cambridgema.gov, 2015)
- Brain development is most rapid in the early years of life.
 - Did you know that approximately 90% of brain development occurs in the first five years of life, which lays the foundation for future study and success in university, career and life. (www.firstthingsfirst.org, 2019)
- Children who receive assistance in their early years achieve more success at school. As adults they have higher employment and earnings, better health, and lower levels of welfare dependence and crime rates than those who don't have these early opportunities.
- Per the Early Learning Advisory Committee Report, 62% of the 11,125 children under 6 in Porter County are in need of care; only 16% are enrolled in a known program. In Porter County, there are only 29 high-quality early childhood programs. (Puzzanchera, 2019)

Background and Research

Early childhood learning is pivotal in a child's academic success.

The lack of exposure to an educational environment can leave a student deficient in the necessary academic, social and emotional skills needed to be a successful lifelong learner.

More often than not, students from low-income families are entering kindergarten with minimal to no exposure to early-childhood learning opportunities.

Oftentimes, caregivers find themselves lacking the necessary resources and tools to support their child through his/her early years of learning. (Harvard, 2016)

Guiding Principles

- Create awareness that Duneland Elementary Schools will be a source of support and information for caregivers of children from the time they are born by providing opportunities to engage families in their home school.
- Ensure that programs, services, and support for children and families are relevant to and respectful of cultures.
- Improve kindergarten readiness and connect families to support services within the community.
- Establish a process to increase awareness about the importance of early learning experiences.
- Value caregivers as partners in care and learning.

Strategic Plan Connection

Student Achievement and Growth

Goal: Address needs and expectations for continuous improvement at the local, state, and federal levels.

Strategy 4: Research and develop Birth to School programming

** Action 1: Establish community partners (pre-schools, health care providers, universities, libraries, community foundation, United Way, chamber) throughout the district in which research-based, best practice strategies are shared*

** Action 2: Professional development for primary grade teachers to define school and literacy readiness levels and strategies*

** Action 3: Promote readiness and literacy skills with parents and pre-schools throughout the district*

** Action 4: Develop partnership with Parents as Teachers to implement Ready, Set, Kindergarten program at each school*

** Action 5: Implement research-based Kindergarten screening tool to identify executive function, academic skills and behaviors to support transition into the learning environment*

** Action 6: Expand upon United Way Kinder Camp program for at-risk students*

** Action 7: Develop early language, literacy and 'school belonging' programs for students and families*

DSC: BIRTH TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Zero to Five	Developmental Preschool	Ready, Set, Kindergarten	Kinder Camp
Learning opportunities for children and their caregivers in a Duneland elementary school	Partnership with Porter County Education Service Center	Collaboration with Parents As Teachers	Transition summer program for incoming kindergarten

Advantages

- The Birth-to-School Program will encourage family engagement, provide early access to education and schools for all children.
- This program will also allow DSC to expand its partnerships with the community such as Parents As Teachers, nonprofit organizations, area preschools, and local universities with early learning programs.
- By having the Birth-to-School Program housed in Duneland Schools, families will have the opportunity to become acclimated to the school setting which will also ease the transition into their academic path.

Community Engagement

- Build on the existing strengths, services and programs already in place in the community.
- Partner with Parents as Teachers of Porter County to provide Ready, Set, Kindergarten.
- Collaborate with Parents as Teachers liaison, area preschools and Duneland Kindergarten Teachers to identify families with children ages 0-5.
- Synergize with local universities and their early learning programs.
- Include community members on the Early Learning Advisory Team.

Considerations

With the addition of the Birth-to-School program within the Duneland School Corporation, hiring a program coordinator and a program liaison should be considered. The coordinator would research, create and facilitate the learning activities for caregivers and their families. The liaison would assist in all aspects of the program. (Both positions are non-benefitted)

- Hire a Birth-to-School Program Coordinator
- Hire Birth-to-School Program Liaison

Funding Source: Title I Grant

Timeline

2019-2020

- Formed Birth-to-School Action Team
- Fostered a relationship with Parents As Teachers of Porter County (PAT)
- Attended the Early Childhood Summit at Purdue Northwest
- Met with area preschool representatives to discuss the need in the Duneland area and to explain the purpose of our B2S initiative
- Reviewed early learning programs in other school corporations
- Recommended to reinstate the Parents As Teachers Ready Set Kindergarten program for the 2020-2021 school year

Timeline

2020-2021

- Implemented Ready, Set, Kindergarten at all five elementary schools (PAT Partnership: Enrollment: 71 families)
- Evaluated the need to hire a Birth-to-School Program Coordinator
- Created a Kindergarten resource page for families
- Participated in the Porter County Community Foundation Prenatal-3 Initiative “First Things First Porter County” Early Childhood Collaborative.
- Researched Head Start (based on F/R and disabilities)
- *Interview and select B2S Program Coordinator and Liaison*
- *Investigate the implementation of Development Preschool at DSC schools in collaboration with PCES*

Timeline

2021-2022

- Continue Ready, Set, Kindergarten at all five elementary buildings
- Develop and implement Birth-to-School Programming Opportunities at the three Title I K-4 buildings
- Analyze the need to expand Birth-to-School programming opportunities at the non-identified Title I schools
- Review data and information collected from PAT to determine the need to continue with Ready, Set, Kindergarten
- Create a Birth to School resource page for families.
- Implement Developmental Preschool at DSC schools in collaboration with PCES

Timeline

2022-2023

- Expand current Birth-to-School Programming Opportunities at three Title I K-4 buildings (Bailly, Liberty El, and Yost)
- If applicable and if funding is available, expand Birth-to-School programming opportunities at the non-identified Title I schools.

Birth-to-School Program

2020-2021 SY

Parents As Teachers (PAT): Ready, Set, Kdg

All five elementary schools

2021-2022 SY

Parents As Teachers (PAT): Ready, Set, Kdg

All five elementary schools

Zero to Five

Title I schools

*Developmental Preschool
(in partnership with PCES)*

One (or more) elementary school

2022-2023 SY

Parents As Teachers (PAT): Ready, Set, Kdg

All five elementary schools

Zero to Five

Title I schools

*Developmental Preschool
(in partnership with PCES)*

One (or more) elementary school

Expand Birth-to-School Opportunities

Add non-Title I schools

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The Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC): [2020 Interactive Dashboard](#) and [2020 Annual Report](#)