

# National League of Cities'

Supporting Elected Officials to  
Help Young Children Succeed



National League of Cities'  
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families



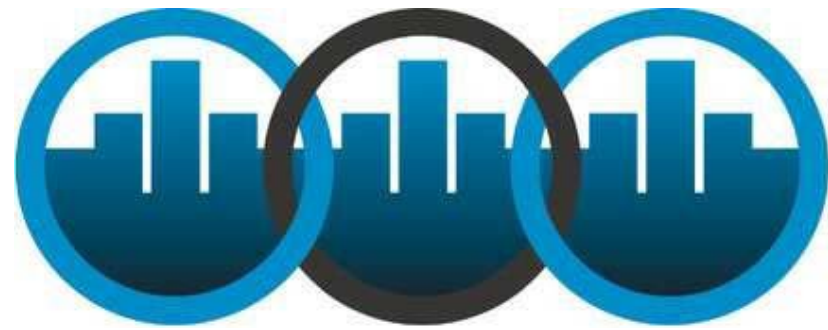
# Presentation Overview

- YEF Institute Background
- City Interest, Investment, and Action Steps
- What Cities are Doing to Help Children Succeed
- Lessons Learned
- YEF Institute Resources
- Contact Information



# National League of Cities

- Represents roughly 18,000 cities
  - Direct member cities – 1,600
  - 49 state municipal leagues
- Work with local elected officials from cities of all sizes and all parts of the country
- The Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute), is a special entity within the National League of Cities (NLC).
- NLC launched the YEF Institute in recognition of the roles that mayors, city councilmembers, and other local leaders can play in strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth.



# City Interest, Investment, and Roles for Elected Officials



National League of Cities'  
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families



# City Interest and Investment

**The YEF Institute believes that the success of a city is directly tied to the success of its youngest residents.**

- **Quality early experiences for young children can help:**
  - **Reduce crime**
  - **Improve school and employment success**
  - **Create stronger families**
- **YEF Institute activities assist municipal leaders in areas such as:**
  - **School readiness**
  - **Parent support**
  - **Child health and safety**
  - **Access to quality child care**
  - **Funding for local initiatives**



# Profile of a Thriving Community

- Healthy families
- Productive residents that are engaged and involved
- All children entering school ready to learn
- Strong Infrastructure to strengthen families
- Vibrant economy
- Partnership and collaborations between different sectors of the community



# Key Roles for Elected Officials

- Champion
- Convener
- Policymaker
- Financial supporter
- Negotiator
- Innovator
- Model Employer
- Messenger



# Promising City Efforts and Strategies



National League of Cities'  
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families





# Building an Infrastructure

- Create a City Department: Cities can designate or create an entire city department to tackle a wide range of human services and family support issues.
- Charge a City Council Committee with Oversight: A new city council committee can be charged with oversight over early care, youth, and family strengthening efforts.
- Create a Coordinating Council: Local officials can join together to create a broader structure that supports family strengthening by establishing a coordinating council.



# Launching Pre-K Initiatives

- **Boston's** Mayor Mike Menino pledged preschool education for all 4-year-olds by 2010 as a way to close the achievement gap.
- In **Denver**, Mayor John Hickenlooper pushed hard for a program that would raise the sales tax on a \$100 purchase by 12 cents in order fund preschool education for all the city's 4-year-olds.
- **First 5 San Francisco**, the city and county implemented a voter-approved universal pre-K program,



# Promoting Family Friendly Workplace Policies

## Bryan, Texas

- Determined that the city could best enhance existing efforts by promoting family-friendly workplace policies.
- Decided to pursue a conference that could help put issues of work/life balance on the radar screen.
- Spent significant time reaching out to appropriate partners.
- Served as the lead sponsor for the conference.



# Fostering Parent Engagement and Leadership

Enfield, Connecticut

- Launched the Enfield Key Initiatives to Early Education or KITE to support parents as their children's first teachers.
- Approached key stakeholders and held community meetings to ensure that the entire community was aware of early education efforts.
- Secured a grant to allow 15 parents to attend a Parent Leadership Academy, hosted by the Greater Hartford Leadership Institute.



# Providing Innovative Programs for Diverse Populations

Fort Worth, Texas

- Initiated a collaborative effort called Early Childhood Matters (ECM) public education campaign.
- Applied for a large federal grant application and was awarded an Early Learning Opportunities Act (ELOA) grant.
- Opened neighborhood literacy hubs called Early Childhood Resource Centers.
- Reached out to informal family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers to attend training sessions.



# Helping Families Make Ends Meet

- The Oskaloosa, Iowa city council passed an ordinance creating the Oskaloosa Housing Trust Fund to increase affordable housing and to improve home ownership.
- The Louisville Asset Building Coalition (LABC), a broad-based group of community stakeholders has hosted 15 free tax preparation sites and prepared over 3,100 returns.
- The City of Savannah has revamped its EITC initiative to greatly expand participation and initiate a focus on financial education and IDAs..



# Promoting Child Health

- The City of Austin Community Care Services Department operates nineteen Community Health Center (CHC) service delivery sites which provide comprehensive primary care and medical, dental, and behavioral health services.
- The Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA), within the District of Columbia's Department of Human Services provides pregnancy testing, prenatal care, and a free-standing homelike birth center.
- In Baltimore, Maryland the Maternal and Infant (M&I) Nursing Program provides home visiting and case management services to high-risk pregnant women and infants in the city.



# Promoting School Readiness

- The City of Burien reserved \$50,000 for a school readiness initiative. A new program educates, encourages and supports parents in their critical role as their child's first and most important teacher.
- The City of Boston and United Way of Massachusetts Bay announced a \$1 million city-wide, school readiness initiative. The partnership seeks to prevent the achievement gap before it surfaces.
- Parents of newborn babies born in Portsmouth, Virginia hospitals receive parenting information packets.





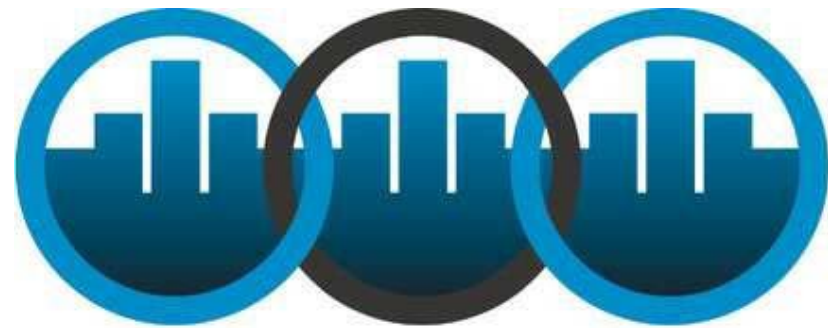
# Launching Mayor's Book Clubs

- Jacksonville, Florida Mayor John Peyton launched a Book Club in September 2004. All four-year old pre-kindergarten students receive a free backpack filled with several reading tools and a book.
- Charleston, South Carolina has incorporated a Mayor's book club into its *Countdown to Kindergarten Initiative*. The city partnered with Barnes & Noble, Trident United Way, a local radio station, and local television.



# Components of a Mayor's Book Club

- The mayor reading the “Book of the Month” on the local closed-cable station;
- Child friendly resources (i.e., a backpack);
- Book drives;
- School readiness guidelines;
- Special literacy events;
- City-wide contests; and
- A year-end event at City Hall that celebrates a year of reading.



# Lessons Learned



National League of Cities'  
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families



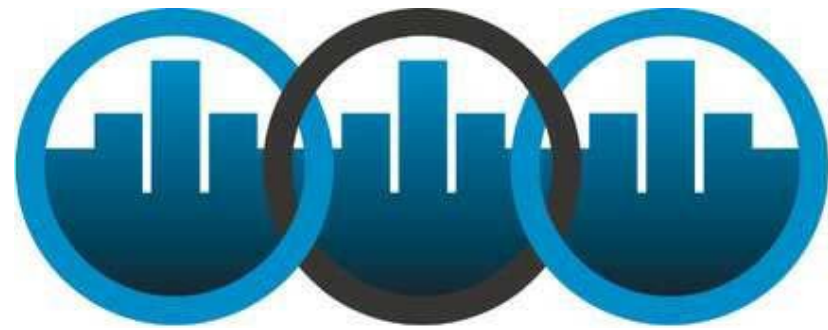
# Lessons Learned

- City officials can maximize current investments by connecting parents to existing resources.
- Successful parent support initiatives reach out to parents where they work, pray, shop, and play.
- Initiatives that are inclusive and culturally sensitive yield higher participation and greater impact.
- Parent leadership enriches a city's efforts to support families with young children.



# Lessons Learned

- Municipal leaders can mobilize community support for parents of young children.
- Community assessments highlight existing resources and uncover gaps and inefficiencies.
- Meaningful partnerships are based on a shared vision, trust, and reliability.
- Parents need clear, consistent messages about the importance of early childhood development and the roles they can play.



# YEF Institute Resources



National League of Cities'  
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families



# Strategies and Tools

- Through the YEF Institute, municipal officials and state municipal league staff have direct access to a broad array of strategies and tools that can help them strengthen families and enhance the well-being of children and youth.
  - Action Kits
  - Technical Assistance
  - National Summit on Your City's Families
  - Targeted research
  - YEF Institute's website ([www.nlc.org/iyef](http://www.nlc.org/iyef))
  - Audioconferences
  - Email Listservs (Early Care & Education Network)



# YEF Institute Action Kits

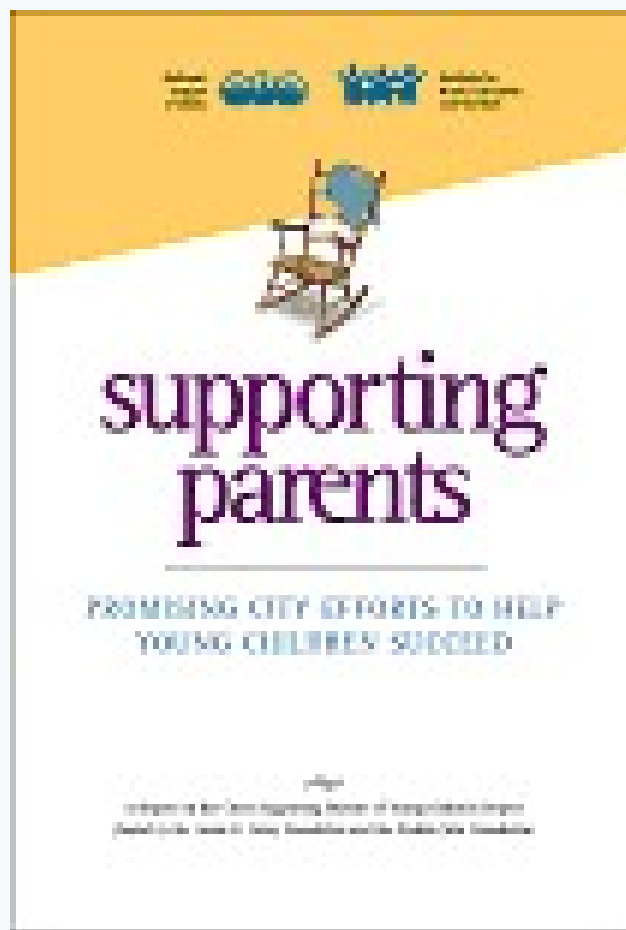
- Supporting Early Childhood Success
- Reengaging Disconnected Youth
- Improving Public Schools
- Expanding Afterschool Opportunities
- Promoting Youth Participation
- Helping Working Families
- Protecting Children and Youth







# Newest Publication

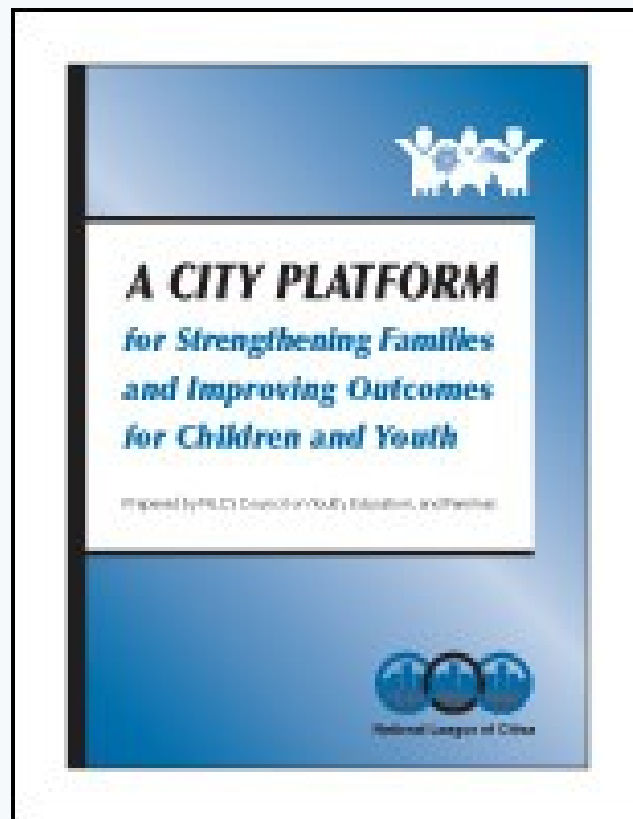




# NLC Family Strengthening Platform

**NLC's YEF Council has developed a two-part platform for city action that includes:**

- Essential "infrastructure," key functions and processes that play a crucial role in effective or sustained investments in children and families, and
- Calls for municipal leaders to take specific action steps in each of seven issue areas: early childhood development; youth development; education and afterschool; health and safety; youth in transition; family economic success; and neighborhoods and community.





# Contact Information

## **Tonja Rucker & Heidi Goldberg**

,

Early Childhood and Family Economic Success

Fax: 202/626-3043

Phone: 202/626-3004 and 3069

Email: [rucker@nlc.org](mailto:rucker@nlc.org) and [goldberg@nlc.org](mailto:goldberg@nlc.org)

---

National League of Cities'  
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families  
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20004-1763  
Web: [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)