

ABC Nonprofit Organization Proposal

Proposal Summary

ABC Nonprofit Organization is a community-based organization dedicated to providing disadvantaged children with an evidence-based, nurturing education environment where children learn, play, and thrive. ABC respectfully seeks operating support of \$25,000 from the Foundation Funder in support of our early childhood learning centers.

Childhood poverty can cause lasting changes in the brain unless quality intervention efforts begin early. ABC centers provide a high-quality early education, engaging classrooms, enriching experiences, and critical family services—a quality of care and education that children from low-income families rarely receive. Two-thirds of the children entering ABC test “at-risk” for developmental delays, but 90% complete ABC on par with or better than their peers across socio-economic groups. ABC strives to stop the cycle of poverty where it does the most harm—in early childhood.

Who We Are

For more than 125 years, ABC Nonprofit Organization has worked to ensure children from low-income families receive a quality education that cultivates the skills they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. ABC early learning centers are located in Springfield public housing, and serve 400 children and their families annually.

ABC children receive extended-day, year-round educational classes with evidence-based, age-appropriate curricula and enrichment programs. Classrooms are designed for active learning. Parental participation is encouraged. Our family services staff provides counseling, referral services, and workshops to continue needed support beyond the classroom. Enrichment activities are a unique feature of ABC and are key to developing a child’s cognitive, interpersonal, and strategic skills.

Because children from low-income families have interconnected needs, we focus on the whole child—as well as his or her family—to achieve lasting change.

What We Do

ABC early learning centers are located in some of Springfield’s most impoverished communities and are a lifeline for struggling families. Our centers operate twelve months a year, ten hours a day, unlike most Springfield Universal Prekindergarten classes which adhere to the traditional public school schedule. A nutritious hot breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack are served family style every day. Parents are encouraged to visit anytime. Each classroom has three teachers. In every class, there is at least one Spanish-speaking teacher to meet the needs of our early language learners.

ABC provides a quality early childhood education, engaging classrooms, enriching experiences, and vital family support services.

- ✓ Educational Excellence: ABC teachers use high-quality, research-based curricula, understand how children learn, and receive ongoing professional training. We conduct regular child

assessments, including Key Assessment Tool. Through the ABC early education model, 90% or more of ABC children meet or exceed Key Assessment Tool age-appropriate levels in academic and social-emotional development by the end of the program year.

- ✓ Engaging Classrooms: Classrooms are designed for creative play. Children learn new skills in “interest areas,” with areas for blocks, dramatic play, music and movement, a library area, and a sand and water area. Children engage in conversations, are read to, learn songs and rhymes, and are exposed to diverse activities that expand their vocabulary and foster compassion.
- ✓ Enriching Activities: Enrichment programs—a unique ABC feature—are key to developing cognitive and socio-emotional skills. Activities include chess, gardening, the visual and performing arts, horseback riding, soccer, yoga, tennis, and field trips. We seek out high-quality enrichment consultants who are knowledgeable about early childhood development and can coordinate with teachers to integrate enrichment activities into the curriculum.
- ✓ Family Services: Our licensed social workers are experts in early childhood and provide individualized assistance for children with special needs. To provide needed support beyond the classroom, ABC Family Services works with families to create support plans with parenting education, healthy cooking classes, financial planning, playgroups, childhood development workshops, parent-child reading, and arts and enrichment activities that foster positive parent-child relationships. We offer referral services, such as programs for substance abuse prevention, mental health, employment, and housing.

As Springfield expands universal prekindergarten, the need for ABC endures. Springfield relies heavily on community-based organizations to make wider access to preschool possible. About 60% of UPK classes are held at private and community-based organizations, while about 40% of classes are in public schools. Community-based organizations like ABC fill the service gap in social safety net programs.

The Community We Serve

ABC centers serve children ages two to four and are located in East Springfield, South Springfield, and Springfield Heights public housing. In East Springfield, 43% of children under the age of four live in poverty. In South Springfield it's 47%. In Springfield Heights, 53% of children under the age of four live in poverty.

In the first few years of life, children absorb knowledge at a remarkable rate. By age five, most children have built more than 90% of their brain connections—connections that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. By age three, a low-income child has heard 30 million fewer words than his or her higher-income peers.

- 40% of ABC children come from homes where English is not the primary language spoken
- 43% of ABC children and families identify as Hispanic
- 55% identify as Black or African American
- 74% of the families whose children attend ABC are working families, yet the average ABC family has an annual income of less than \$19,500

Without quality early intervention efforts, childhood poverty can cause lasting changes in the brain. Graduates from high-quality early education programs like ABC:

- Experience a 50% reduction in being classified as “special needs” in elementary school
- Show significantly higher high-school graduation rates
- Graduate from four-year colleges at rates four times higher than their peers
- Have higher lifetime earnings

When you invest in early childhood education, you have the greatest impact. Early education affects an individual’s economic advancement and affects society’s poverty, health, remedial education, and criminal justice system expenditures. Investing in early education returns up to \$17 for every \$1 invested.

Furthermore, early childcare affords parents the reliable care they need to obtain and maintain employment. Research indicates that parents who have access to childcare assistance have an increased likelihood of being employed and remaining employed for longer periods of time. Reliable, high-quality early education can lift up entire families.

Organization Structure

The ABC staff consists of 100 full-time employees, including senior staff, administrative staff, teachers, teacher’s aides, family workers, bookkeepers, cooks, and custodians; 35 seasonal and part-time substitute employees; and 100 volunteers providing their time and expertise.

Sister Organizations

ABC is one of a handful of multi-site community-based organizations focused on early childhood education. Other organizations have a wider focus as multi-service organizations. Examples include XYZ Organization and 123 Organization. However, ABC distinguishes itself through our commitment to providing excellent teacher training, critical family services, and unique enrichment programs.

Evaluation

ABC works to close the achievement gap in literacy, math, science, and social and emotional development—and prepare children for success in school and life.

A leading child assessment tool, Key Assessment Tool, blends ongoing observational assessments of development and learning with performance tasks predictive of school success in literacy and mathematics. In the past year, 91% of ABC children met or exceeded Key Assessment Tool age-appropriate levels in academic and social-emotional development by the end of the year—showing a growth of 35% over the course of the program year.

We expect the following outcomes by the end of the program year:

- 85% or higher child attendance across ABC early learning center sites
- 90% or more of ABC children meet or exceed age-appropriate expectations in all domains according to Key Assessment Tool assessments by the end of the program year
- 400 children ages two to four experience stimulating and enriching activities that foster language, math, and socio-emotional skills

Summary

As a matter of compassion, justice, and solid public policy, ABC Nonprofit Organization believes that every child deserves a high-quality education, an enriching environment, and the opportunity to fulfill his or her potential.

Although ABC receives government funding, that funding falls far short of meeting the needs for high-quality early childhood education. Even as programmatic costs have risen, reimbursements from the City of Springfield have remained virtually flat since 2012. Private support provides ABC children and families with excellent teachers, research-based curricula, family service programs, and enriching experiences.

We look forward to the opportunity to partner with you in this life-changing work.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule a site visit, please feel free to contact me at [phone] or by email at [email]. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]