A close-up photograph of a young child with dark skin and curly hair. The child is holding a magnifying glass over their right eye, which is focused on a small, light-colored, textured object held in their hands. The child is wearing a white collared shirt with a red and blue stripe at the neck. The background is dark and out of focus.

EDUCARE

A Catalyst for Change

When Educare of Chicago opened its doors in 2000 to 150 low-income infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, we could not have predicted just how much early investments in our school would help reshape public education in Illinois—and revolutionize the entire field of early education.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund has leveraged support from the private and public sectors to change the face of early childhood education, and Educare has sparked a movement with a resonating impact.

the **Ounce**

Educare's Impact



“Public-private partnerships like Educare are the only way we’re going to get there....Educare is a better way to do [early education], and it’s starting to become a real national model.”

—Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

Educare of Chicago emerged from a bold vision to start early to change the academic and life trajectories for hundreds of children and their families by delivering children into kindergarten prepared and ready to

learn. By intervening in the earliest possible weeks and months of a child’s life, Educare aims to prevent the academic achievement gap before it develops.

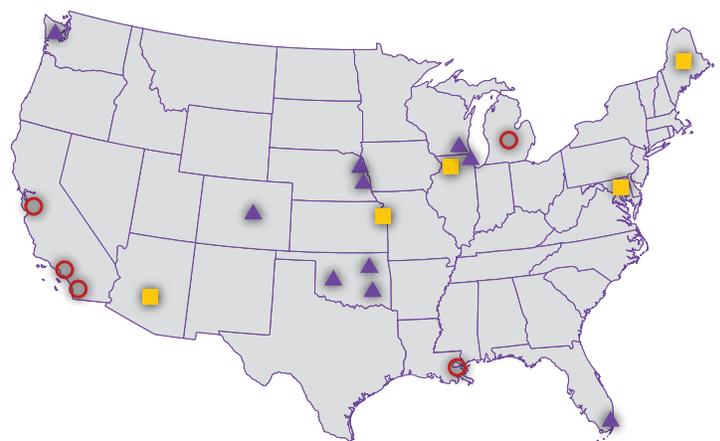
A decade after Educare of Chicago opened, the return on investments in the school is substantial. Children in Illinois and across the nation are showing improved school-readiness skills. Programs pioneered at Educare are changing practices in thousands of classrooms. Early education professionals are discovering and joining a steadily expanding community committed to shared learning. Research and evaluation efforts at Educare are yielding new insights for enhancing education experiences for vulnerable children. Exposure to the school is creating new champions in boardrooms, Capitols, and communities from coast to coast.

Radiating Quality

What started as one school in Chicago 10 years ago has migrated nationwide. By 2012, schools will be operating in at least 12 states and Washington, DC. The Bounce Network, founded by the Ounce and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, supports expansion of the Educare model and has created a nationwide community of learning that comprises educators, researchers, philanthropists, and policymakers committed to expanding access to high-quality early education.

What drives success at Educare are the high standards applied to all facets of our work. We implement only established, research-based best practices in the classroom. Teachers hold college degrees, and each teaching team commits to intense staff development

A coast-to-coast network*



- ▲ Operational**
CHICAGO
OMAHA (TWO)
MILWAUKEE
TULSA (TWO)
DENVER
MIAMI-DADE
OKLAHOMA CITY
SEATTLE
- Opening in 2010 and Soon to break ground**
KANSAS CITY
CENTRAL MAINE
ARIZONA (PHOENIX)
WEST DUPAGE, IL
WASHINGTON, DC
- Exploring Partnerships**
NEW ORLEANS
CALIFORNIA (THREE)
MICHIGAN

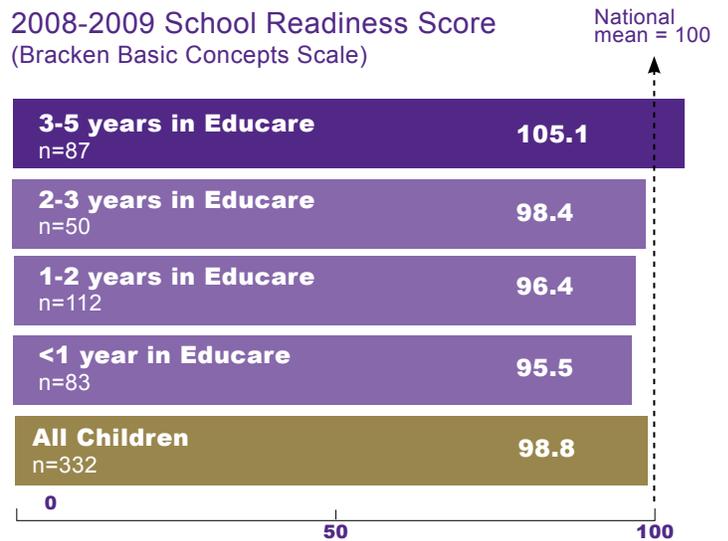
*As of May 2010

and evaluation of its practices. Class sizes are kept small. We minimize transitions for children and reinforce stable relationships essential for learning by practicing continuity of care: children stay with the same team of teachers from birth to age three, then move to a preschool classroom with a different team of teachers for ages three to five.

Our rigorous use of assessment has helped to create new standards for accountability and redefine high quality in early education. By measuring, evaluating, and implementing what works, Educare has established new blueprints for creating effective, high-quality learning environments.



Children who spend more years in Educare emerge better prepared for kindergarten



Six-Site 2009 Data - Adjusted Means. Source: Yazejian, N. & Bryant, D.M. (2009). Promising early returns: Educare implementation study data, March 2009. Chapel Hill: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. Note: This sample includes English-speaking children only.

Educare Innovations: Building School-Readiness Skills

Low-income children too frequently lag behind their peers in social skills, vocabulary development, and early math skills—strong predictors for later school success. For 10 years, Educare has developed innovative approaches to build language, social-emotional, math, and problem-solving skills, and to enhance parents’ abilities to advocate for their children’s learning—all skills critical to long-term school achievement.

Teachers and caregivers develop meaningful relationships with a child, learning his needs, skills, and interests so they can better foster the confidence, trust, persistence, independence, and curiosity that help him learn how to learn effectively.

Educare teachers are also highly trained in promoting early literacy. They build vocabulary skills, in part, by exposing children to rich and varied language, encouraging meaningful conversations and responses from children about objects or activities that capture a child’s interest, and by using storytelling to develop an interest in reading and language.

In addition, Educare teachers intentionally incorporate math and problem-solving concepts into daily classroom activities, and facilitate learning environments that promote flexible and sophisticated thinking.

Contributing New Research



Educare has partnered with leading research institutions to gather new, hard evidence supporting the value of birth-to-five early education programs. Collaborative projects with Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, the University of North Carolina, and others are yielding new information for the field.

The Educare of Chicago Follow-Up Study is providing data on the academic achievement and evolving needs of children and families who have transitioned out of Educare. The first cohort of

children in that study is completing fourth grade. Results from this study have led to new initiatives to improve program services at Educare. The Ounce is also planning a five-year randomized control study of the Educare model. By tracking the educational outcomes of children who were, or were not, enrolled in Educare as infants, we will be able to measure the impact of the program and better understand what elements are most effective at improving school readiness. The study is currently being piloted, and we have applied to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for funding to bring the study to scale at five Educare sites nationwide.



Educare of Chicago: Showing Dramatic Results

66%

Nearly two-thirds of Educare **parents are considered “accessible and involved”** by elementary school teachers.

50%

Half of Educare children **go on to attend charter, magnet, or high-performing** neighborhood schools.

18%

Educare children are **18% more likely to achieve A’s or B’s** in first-grade reading.*

15%

Educare children are **15% less likely to be placed in special education.***

1%

Less than 1% of Educare children are held back a grade.*

Children who repeat even one grade are 35% more likely to drop out of school.

*compared to classroom peers who did not attend Educare

Building Better Teachers

Building a community of learning—and practice—that extends beyond the walls of Educare is a key component of our strategy to radiate impact.

Educare serves as a training ground for thousands of early learning professionals who have visited one of our schools or been coached in the teaching methods and practices we have implemented over the past decade. Those early childhood professionals bring elements of our high-quality approach to the children they serve, helping to raise standards both in teaching and in education outcomes.



Educare Innovations: The Educare Family and Training Center



In the summer of 2010 in Chicago, the Ounce breaks ground on the **Educare Family and Training Center**, which will help us further expand training opportunities available to early childhood professionals so that even more children can benefit from high-quality early learning environments.

We are also launching the **Illinois Birth-to-Three Center-Based Training Institute**, which will support existing infant-toddler child-care providers in transitioning into early education providers.

Changing Policy

The promise and early results of Educare of Chicago have helped redefine how Illinois and other states use data, research, and outcomes to influence education policy and funding discussions. We currently consult with 15 states to offer guidance on establishing public support for high-quality early learning programs. For example:

Illinois: Educare of Chicago serves as a showroom for quality in Illinois, which in recent years has increased early childhood investments by over \$148 million and is now providing high-quality early learning opportunities to more than 140,000 at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Nebraska: Educare of Omaha helped advocacy and philanthropic leaders make the case for the state to dramatically increase its investments in early learning programs, including amending the state Constitution to declare that learning begins at birth.

Oklahoma: Educare of Tulsa helped inspire a new, \$25 million pilot program to promote the school readiness of at-risk children, from birth to three, across the state.

Kansas: The state established an \$11 million early childhood block grant, with a set-aside for infants and toddlers, informed by discussions with public and private-sector leaders from Educare of Omaha in neighboring Nebraska.

Maine: Even before Educare of Maine opened its doors, it helped to promote expansion of state prekindergarten programs, the redirection of funds to early education and prevention programs, and improvements to the state's child-care quality standards.

The Educare movement also inspired two related policy initiatives—the Birth to Five Policy Alliance, working in states, and The First Five Years Fund, working at the federal level—to attract additional public investments in high-quality programs for very young, at-risk children.



Redefining Education: Birth to College

It's not enough to help low-income children enter kindergarten prepared to learn. We have to ensure that children sustain—and even accelerate—gains made in early learning settings well into elementary school.



Our experiences at Educare of Chicago have underscored the importance of supporting children and families in their transition into elementary school and the ways that schools can facilitate seamless and continuous learning experiences. Educare of Chicago has begun to collaborate with educators and administrators to align early education and elementary school curricula, teaching practices, assessments, and standards from birth to age eight, and to enhance family support and classroom activities to ensure continued successful engagement through high school.

One such partnership is with the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute (UEI). Educare of Chicago graduates now have the opportunity to enroll in UEI charter schools, a pipeline that is giving us practical experience in the challenges and possibilities of creating integrated, effective supports for at-risk children's learning from birth through high school. Similar projects are being developed at Educare of Washington, DC, and Educare of New Orleans.

Educare Innovations: Engaging Parents in Birth-to-College Education

A child is more likely to thrive academically when parents are involved in her education. Educare offers professional, on-site family support to parents. Staff builds caring, trusting bonds with young parents who are often isolated or experiencing strained or unpredictable relationships with other adults and institutions in their lives.

Through family engagement, parents learn about their child's development, how to recognize—and pursue—quality education, and how to extend classroom lessons into the home. Parents also help shape policy at Educare, creating a model for their later involvement and advocacy in parent groups in elementary and high school.

And by helping families meet basic needs, aiding in job searches, and encouraging parents to achieve their own education dreams, Educare's parent-engagement focus increases the odds for sustaining gains that children make at the school.

Our new **Educare Family and Training Center** will help us advance program innovations for engaging and supporting parents so they can sustain the gains their children make. And we are initiating a doula service at Educare of Chicago that will make specially trained home visitors available to expectant mothers to help them begin creating strong attachments to their babies before they are born—and before they are enrolled at Educare.

Building Public-Private Partnerships

The Ounce of Prevention Fund was founded as a public-private partnership. Educare was established—and operates still—in accordance with this model. Early investments have helped leverage support for expanding the Ounce’s vision to redefine education among a diverse group of leading philanthropies in Illinois and across the country.

Educare has established a new paradigm for how to support early education initiatives. Our partners in the private sector enable us to initiate, assess, and refine innovative strategies that drive the gains we see among Educare children and families, and they help us advance programs and policies that extend high-quality early learning to all children.



Get Involved

We are extremely happy with our results to date, but the achievement gap persists. There is much more work to do.

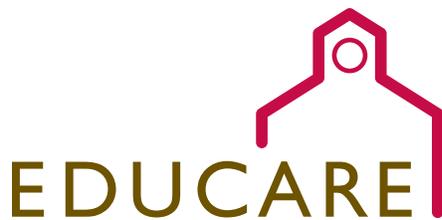
We believe we can close that gap, and we hope you do, too. To keep moving forward, we need the support of the private sector and an educated public that is motivated to participate in our effort.

The Ounce invites you to:

Tour Educare. Join us to see the work that is being done to change education outcomes for at-risk children.

Advocate for early childhood education by signing up to receive advocacy alerts and to participate in calls to action on early childhood policy initiatives. Visit advocacy.ounceofprevention.org to learn more.

Invest in the Ounce’s work and help young children get the start they need to succeed in school and in life. Private investment in Educare and the Ounce allows us to continue to make breakthroughs in the field of early education and push policy change, from the state and local levels all the way to the nation’s Capitol.



the **Ounce**

Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 West Monroe Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60603
312.922.3863
ounceofprevention.org