

2019 ANNUAL YEAR IN REVIEW

Preparing Children for a Bright Future

the Ounce™

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DEDICATED TO PROMISING FUTURES

Early childhood experiences are one of the most powerful predictors of a child's healthy development. Decades of research show that the first five years of life are a key time to develop linguistic, cognitive, social and emotional abilities – the essential skills that enable a child to learn and succeed.

And yet, each year, more than 1 million children in the U.S. enter kindergarten unprepared to learn and thrive, both in the classroom and beyond. Failing our children early in their lives puts them at a disadvantage for years to come – in school, and ultimately, in adult life.

For nearly 40 years, the Ounce of Prevention Fund has advocated for and provided high-quality care and education from birth to age 5 – a mission we continue to passionately pursue.

Our work continues to evolve along with the needs of the families and communities we serve. Over the course of this year, we have grown our reach by expanding access to high-quality programs and family support services, contributing groundbreaking research to the field, creating innovative professional development offerings, and securing strong policies and systems on the local, state and national levels.

Through our multidisciplinary approach of leveraging research, policy and practice together, we can deliver a greater impact. To truly transform early childhood education systems across the country, we must address systematic barriers through knowledge transfer, systems change and collective action.

In the coming year, the Ounce will continue to steward a robust effort to build a knowledge exchange that connects communities and experts who are focused on building strong early childhood systems and programs. This work is intended to influence collective learning and quality programs at-scale, so a tipping point of evidence ultimately drives increased investments in early childhood programs.

As we look forward to 2020 and beyond, we are committed to help communities nationwide prepare millions of children in poverty to enter kindergarten ready for success in school and life.

Thank you,



Diana Mendley Rauner
Ph.D., President



Curt R. Bailey
Chairman

The Ounce of Prevention Fund

gives children in poverty the best chance for success in school and in life by advocating for and providing the highest-quality care and education from birth to age 5.







IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Program & Practice Impact

More than 8,300 children

benefited from the programs we provide such as home visiting, doula services, Head Start, Educare Chicago and Family Connects Illinois.



9,000 early education professionals

engaged in our professional development solutions and trainings.



Facilitated peer learning and fostered innovation at

23 schools,
reaching nearly
3,800 children.

The Educare Learning Network reached
**nearly 2,000 parents
and professionals.**



Children Reached

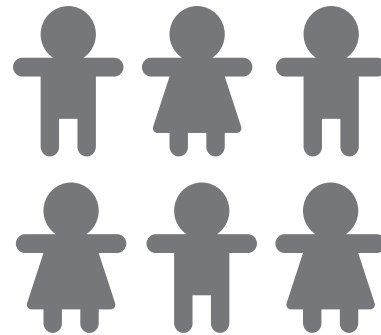


Partnered with state leaders in **Washington, Oregon and Tennessee** to improve pre-K programs and policies that impact the lives of

**more than
1.3 million children.**

Collectively reached
160,000 children

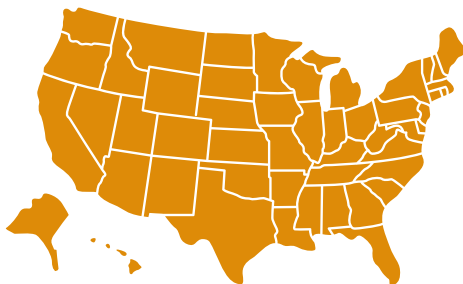
through our professional development solutions and trainings utilized in 18 states.



Policy Impact



Advocated successfully for the fiscal year
2020 Illinois budget to include a
\$100 million increase
for early childhood programming.



Partnered with early childhood leaders and advocates across **23 states and Washington D.C.**, impacting more than
**11 million children
ages birth to 5.**



SERVING CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Delivering quality prenatal-to-age-five services and programs to children and families, especially those living in underserved communities, continues to be the core of our work. In 2019, we worked to ensure that even more children and families have access to quality programs and resources, both in Illinois and across the country.

HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS & FAMILY SUPPORT

Family Connects Illinois (FC IL) offers all families in a participating hospital or community a home visit by a nurse shortly after birth. During the visit, a nurse evaluates the health of the mother and child and provides referrals to community resources as needed, including medical and mental health supports and affordable child care. FC IL strengthens existing systems of care by providing an entry point for families to services they may not otherwise receive. Since 2017, the Ounce has provided technical assistance and support to two active and highly utilized programs in Stephenson and Peoria counties.



Over 1,300 families

served by Family Connects Illinois in its first two years of implementation.

Illinois Birth-to-Three Institute (IBTI)

launched a pilot program providing doula and home visiting services to incarcerated pregnant women. This initiative supports a traditionally underserved population and provides mothers with parenting and lifestyle supports that can reduce recidivism rates. IBTI partners with the Home Visiting for Homeless Families initiative and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, which provides home visiting to young parents who are wards of the state.



**More than
400 courses**

were offered by Ounce Institute.

Ounce Institute (OI) provides professional development support through training, technical assistance and consultation to those working in home visiting and center-based early childhood prevention programs in Illinois. In 2019, OI partnered with the Education Development Center and the University of Washington's Cultivate Learning program to broaden the quality and reach of our programs and services.

“As a first-time parent, the Family Connects Illinois nurse gave me reassurance that I was doing all the right things for my newborn son. The nurse checked his weight and answered all my questions and concerns.”

– New parent and Family Connects Illinois program participant



LEARNING IN ACTION

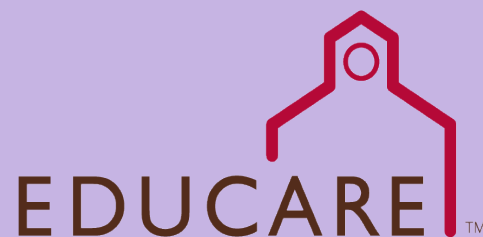
The **Educare Learning Network** is the nation's most diverse and effective network of early childhood schools. The Ounce opened the Network's first school, Educare Chicago, in 2000, which has since been the backbone for the Network. **The Network of 23 operational schools served 3,800 children during the 2018-2019 school year.**

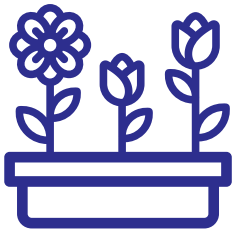
Educare Schools: In 2018, Educare Los Angeles at Long Beach, the Network's 23rd school, opened in its permanent space, serving nearly 200 children and their families. This year, the Network also broke ground on its newest school in Springfield, MA. Construction is expected to begin in fall 2020 at Tulsa Clinton, which will be the fourth Educare school in Tulsa, OK.

Parent Engagement: Parents are their children's first and best teachers, and they are a critical part of the proven Educare Model. With initiatives like the Parent Ambassador Program, the Network engages

parents in all aspects of their child's early learning experience. This year, staff and parents from five Educare schools convened to explore the expansion of the program and discuss strategies to empower parents as leaders and advocates in their families, schools and communities.

Professional Development: Over the past year, the Network has facilitated more than 40 trainings and convenings, reaching nearly 2,000 parents and professionals within the field of early learning.





GARDEN GOODNESS

Educare Chicago is home to a community garden filled with heads of green cabbage, bright red tomatoes, colorful pinwheels and handmade suncatchers. Run in partnership with Urban Growers, the garden provides a space where children and teachers learn to plant and care for a variety of herbs and vegetables. This year, the garden was expanded to include natural play spaces and work benches for exploration activities.

Parents can take home harvested vegetables to prepare healthy, home-cooked meals. Families can also participate in the Cooking Matters program, where they learn to make healthy dishes, from bean burgers to vegetable sandwiches. While fun and engaging, activities are intentional and based on research-supported family engagement practices. Educare Chicago cultivates positive, interactive relationships between program staff, children and parents – all essential elements of a nurturing and supportive learning environment for young children.



ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Our policy work is deeply rooted in Illinois, where we seek to shape the state's early childhood system through legislative, administrative and grassroots advocacy. The Illinois Policy Team works diligently to ensure that state funding and legislation and federal and state initiatives prioritize early childhood programs. Our National Policy Team builds on lessons learned in Illinois and other states to provide consultation to early childhood advocates, the Educare Learning Network and state and local systems' leaders. Our achievements result from deep partnerships with advocates and leaders across the country who are committed to expanding and improving early childhood education for all children.



DRIVING CHANGE IN ILLINOIS

Advocacy in 2019 resulted in an additional \$100 million investment in early childhood programs in the state's budget, including a \$12 million increase to the Department of Human Service's Early Intervention program. This increase accommodates a growing caseload, supports a long-overdue rate increase and expands eligibility. Our state advocates also successfully lobbied for \$100 million in facilities funding for school districts and child care centers.

California: First 5 Los Angeles and First 5 California partnered with the Ounce to host a childhood policy conference to discuss advancing early education reforms in the state. Recommended policy reforms were adopted by Governor Gavin Newsom in his FY2020 budget request, resulting in over \$2 billion dedicated to early childhood programs.

Louisiana: Our policy team partnered with advocates to help develop a case for support for increased early education funding. As a result, a bipartisan commission secured an increase of \$18.8 million for early education, the first increase in a decade.

Maine: After three years of advocacy by early childhood leaders and legislators, and with Ounce support, the state passed legislation and appropriated funding to establish a mental health consultation program for early childhood providers.

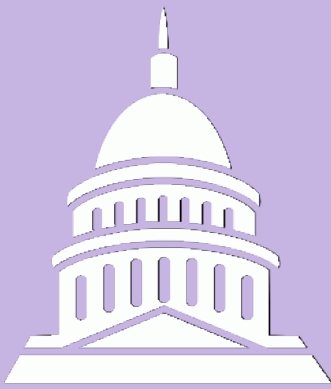
Oregon: With the Oregon Early Learning Division and the Children's Institute, the Ounce helped develop proposals that became part of a historic investment of \$2 billion during the 2019 legislative session. Twenty percent of the budget will now fund early childhood programs and services.



COLLABORATING WITH STATE PARTNERS

The **Partnership for Pre-K Improvement (PPI)** was launched in 2016 in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Alliance for Early Success and the University of Washington. The goal of PPI, a collaboration with three state partners (Washington, Oregon and Tennessee), is to strengthen quality and access to early education at both the state and local levels.

Using the Ounce's unique program, policy and research expertise, PPI provides pre-K leaders with the tools and resources they need to provide better early education opportunities for all children and families.



TRANSFORMATION AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

Through extensive policy, government relations and communications expertise, the First Five Years Fund (FFYF) works with federal policymakers to galvanize support for greater investment and policies that increase access to high-quality early learning and care. FFYF's advocacy in Washington D.C. has contributed to significant achievements.

At the beginning of the 116th Congress, FFYF developed a set of legislative priorities for Congress that included key areas through which lawmakers might advance early childhood programs and initiatives. Included in that agenda was a recommendation for members to double down in their support for existing programs like the Child Care & Development Block Grant, Head Start and Preschool Development Grants. FFYF also encouraged lawmakers to develop new and innovative solutions to the many child care challenges faced by American families.

To date, Republicans and Democrats alike have introduced nearly 140 bills that would strengthen and expand early learning opportunities.



Total	GOP	IND	DEM
81%	62%	81%	96%

Results from FFYF survey, conducted November 2018

Republicans, Independents and Democrats all support proposals that will help more families access high-quality early learning and care opportunities, including increased federal funding to states to create or build on their own programs that directly help low-income children: 54% strongly support; 81% support.



RESEARCH TO ADVANCE THE MISSION

A commitment to rigorous research and evaluation anchors all our work here at the Ounce. We share our findings and best practices with policymakers, practitioners and funders to provide them with the knowledge and tools to improve the quality of early childhood education.

ORIGINAL APPLIED RESEARCH

Access to Quality: With the help of a 2019 research grant by the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute for Education Sciences, we began exploring conditions that influence enrollment in pre-K programs in traditionally underserved communities in Chicago. Ounce staff met with key leaders from Chicago Public Schools and the Department of Family and Support Services and continues to collect data for analysis. Once complete, we will share our findings and recommendations with advocates and policymakers to inform more-equitable policies and improved access to quality pre-K in Chicago and beyond.

Educare Chicago Follow-Up Study: Starting in 2005, the Follow-Up Study has evaluated the school readiness of children who transition from Educare Chicago into Chicago Public Schools' kindergarten and elementary schools. The data confirm that over 80% of Educare Chicago graduates are ready for kindergarten and elementary school – socially, emotionally and academically. The first two classes have graduated from high school, and 100% of students are or will be attending college or a training program to pursue a wide range of majors, including engineering, pre-med and photography.

“Family engagement is about seeing families as an inextricable part of their child’s early childhood education and treating them as partners and experts in their child’s learning and well-being. Years of research show that engaging families goes far beyond raising test scores – it is about preparing children and families for success in life.”

– **Mallary I. Swartz, Director of Family Engagement Research at the Ounce**



ACHIEVE OnDemand®



LEAD LEARN EXCEL®



EARLY EDUCATION ESSENTIALS™



INNOVATIVE TOOLS & SOLUTIONS

The Ounce's suite of professional development solutions offers a powerful vision for quality improvement for early childhood education programs. Using a strong foundation for product development, we disseminate our trainings and tools to early childhood education professionals across the country. We continuously explore the next generation of ideas to enable us to scale our trainings and tools nationwide, ensure a strong innovation pipeline, and improve outcomes for future generations of young children in our country.

IACET Accreditation: This year, we are proud to announce that the Ounce was approved as an IACET Accredited Provider. The International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) is the premier standards-setting organization for continuing education. The IACET accreditation adds a level of validation to our training programs and provides early education professionals with learning experiences that demonstrate elevated expertise in the field.

SUPPORTING LEADERS & PROFESSIONALS

The Ounce has been at the forefront of focusing attention on early childhood leadership and organizational conditions to improve outcomes for young children. Home visiting professionals now have access to our self-paced, online training program, **Achieve OnDemand**. The learning experiences offered build upon existing core training in the home visiting field. This unique program incorporates real-life experiences and practical solutions that both newly hired and more-experienced home visiting professionals need to best serve families.

Our **Lead Learn Excel** fellowship helps early childhood education leaders develop skills to fuel the everyday learning and continuous improvement of teachers. To date, over 400 leaders have participated in the fellowship across the country. In program year 2018 – 2019, Lead Learn Excel provided training, coaching and peer learning opportunities to 244 participants in six cohorts in three states.

ELEVATING PROGRAM QUALITY

We know that quality programs are the key to successful outcomes for children and families. Our **Early Education Essentials** measurement system helps early education leaders assess program quality through surveys, reports, data use and improvement tools. In 2019, all schools in Illinois outside of Chicago had the opportunity to engage in the Early Education Essentials surveys – 1,191 schools participated. The Ounce is in the process of analyzing this data and will soon share key findings with policymakers and organizations across the country in the hopes of improving the early education system.

IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

With our **Educare Best Practices Training** modules, Educare schools and other early childhood organizations serve as professional development providers for their communities, allowing more teachers to learn how to implement high-quality instruction. The training spans four primary content areas, helping practitioners develop their knowledge and practice to meet quality standards in the early childhood education field.



More than 1,550 early education professionals

participated in Achieve OnDemand courses, reaching nearly **20,000 children.**





LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Improving access to and quality of early education for all children and families requires an ambitious, collaborative effort. It calls for alignment among communities, organizations and policymakers working together toward a common goal. Most importantly, communities across the country need better access to the knowledge and resources required to eliminate barriers keeping children from receiving the quality early learning opportunities they deserve.

By driving standardization and collective learning across the early childhood field, the Ounce aims to create a tipping point where evidence of quality programs accumulates to influence increased public investment in early childhood education.

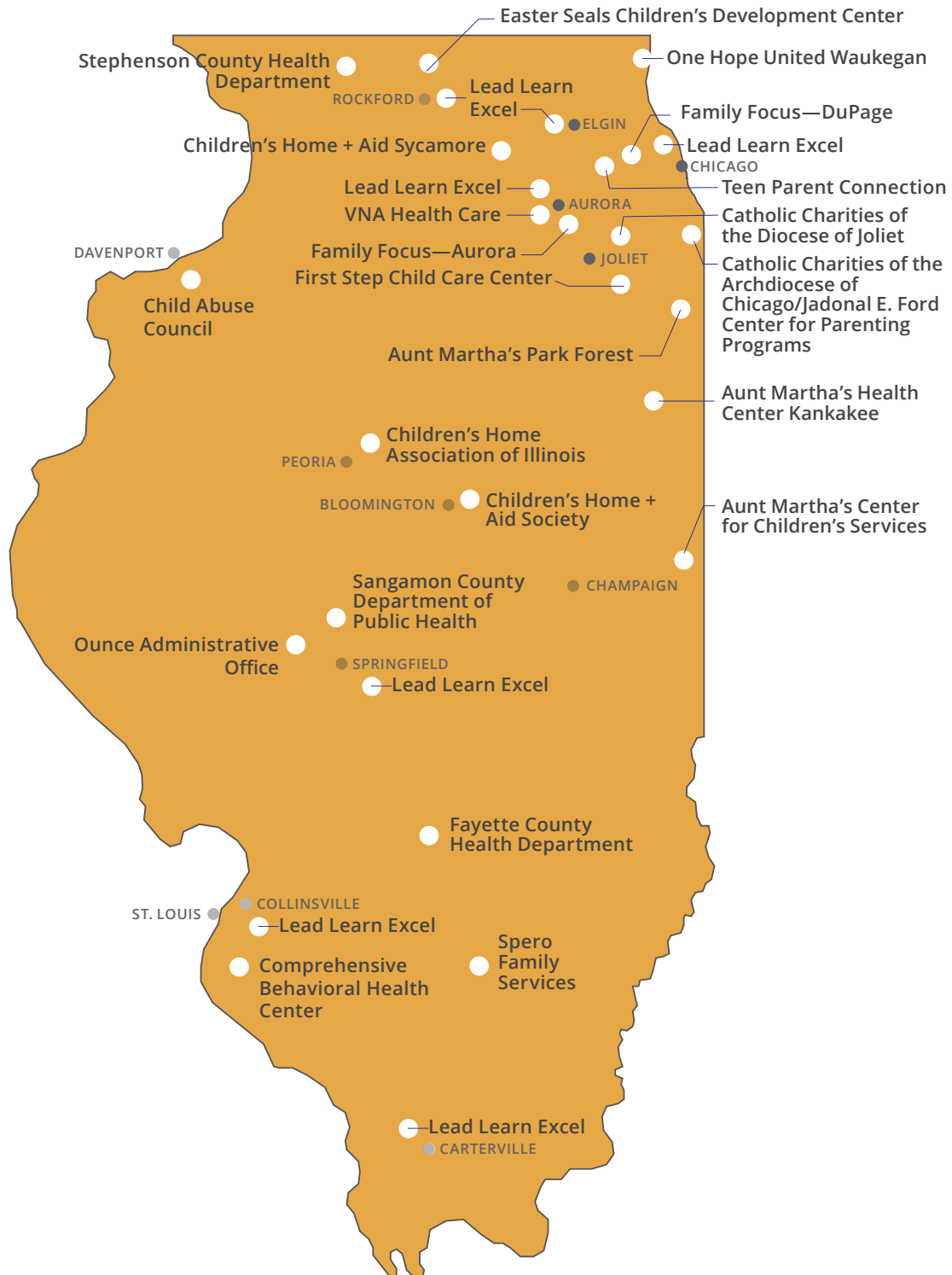
Drawing upon almost 40 years of work in early education, the Ounce is in a unique position to spearhead the development of a robust learning community and knowledge network. We hope to connect communities and experts focused on strengthening early childhood systems across the country by building a knowledge exchange (with an online platform and in-person initiatives).

Through dedicated knowledge transfer and by leading collective action, the Ounce will support efforts nationwide to build equitable, high-quality early childhood systems at-scale. Together, we must ensure that the millions of children in poverty enter kindergarten ready-to-learn, ultimately leading to success in school and life.



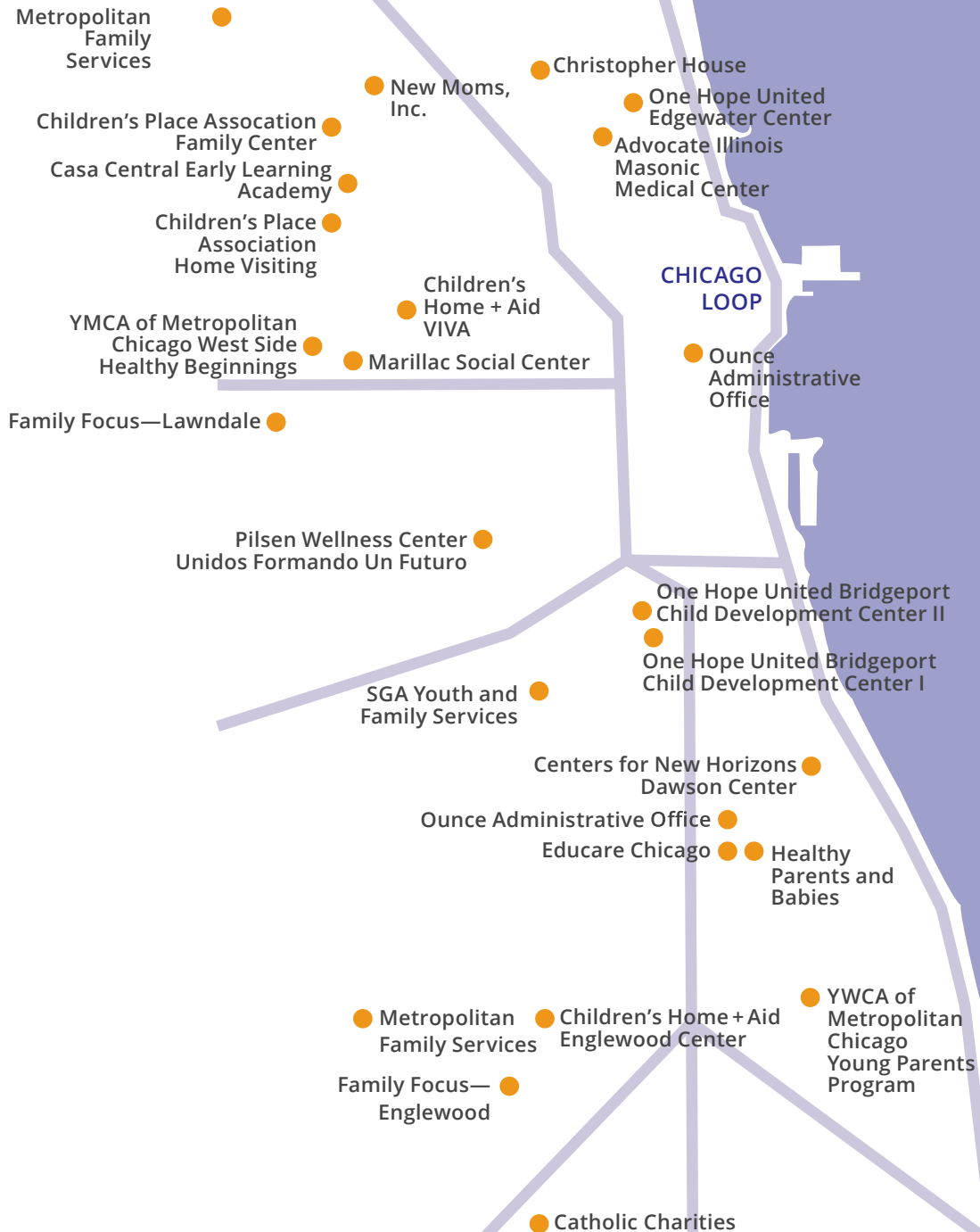
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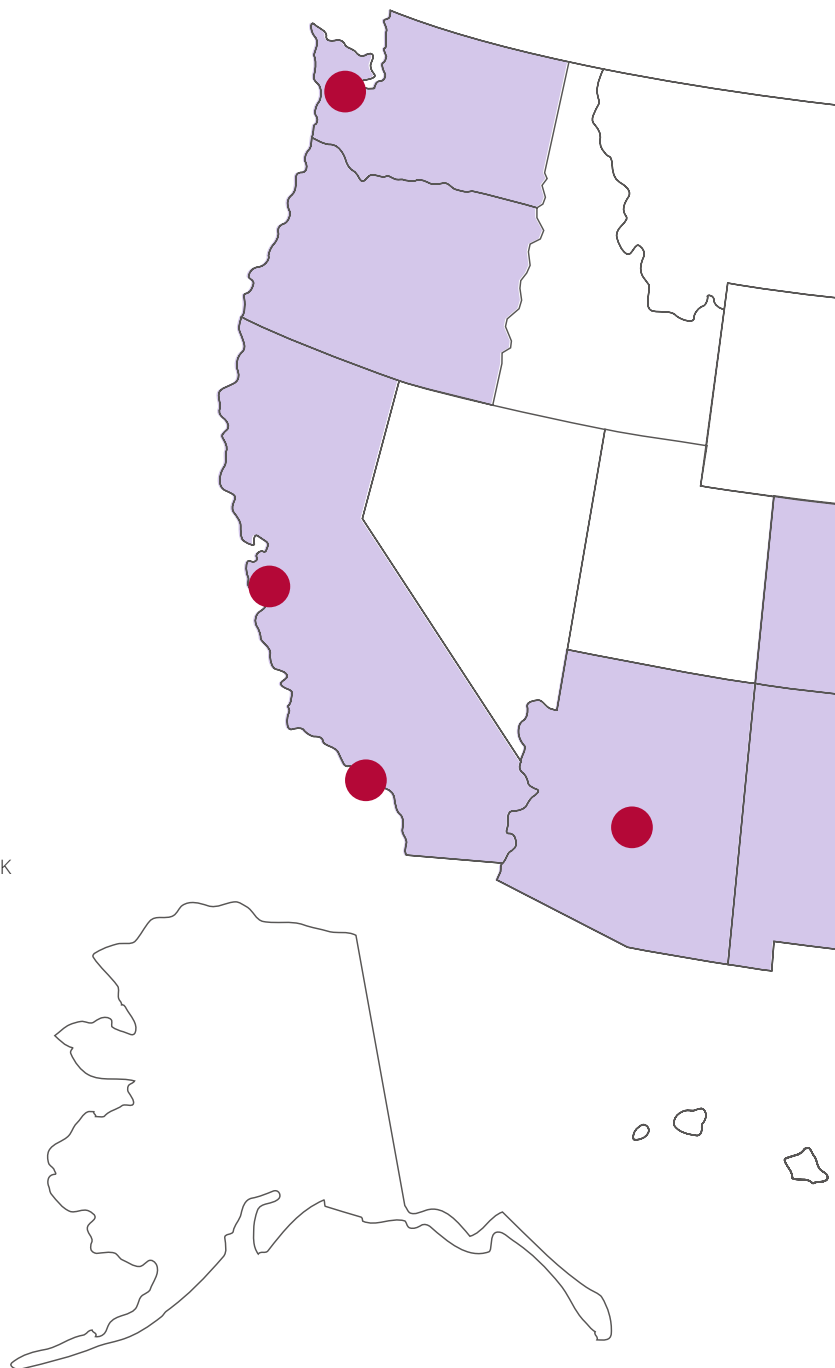
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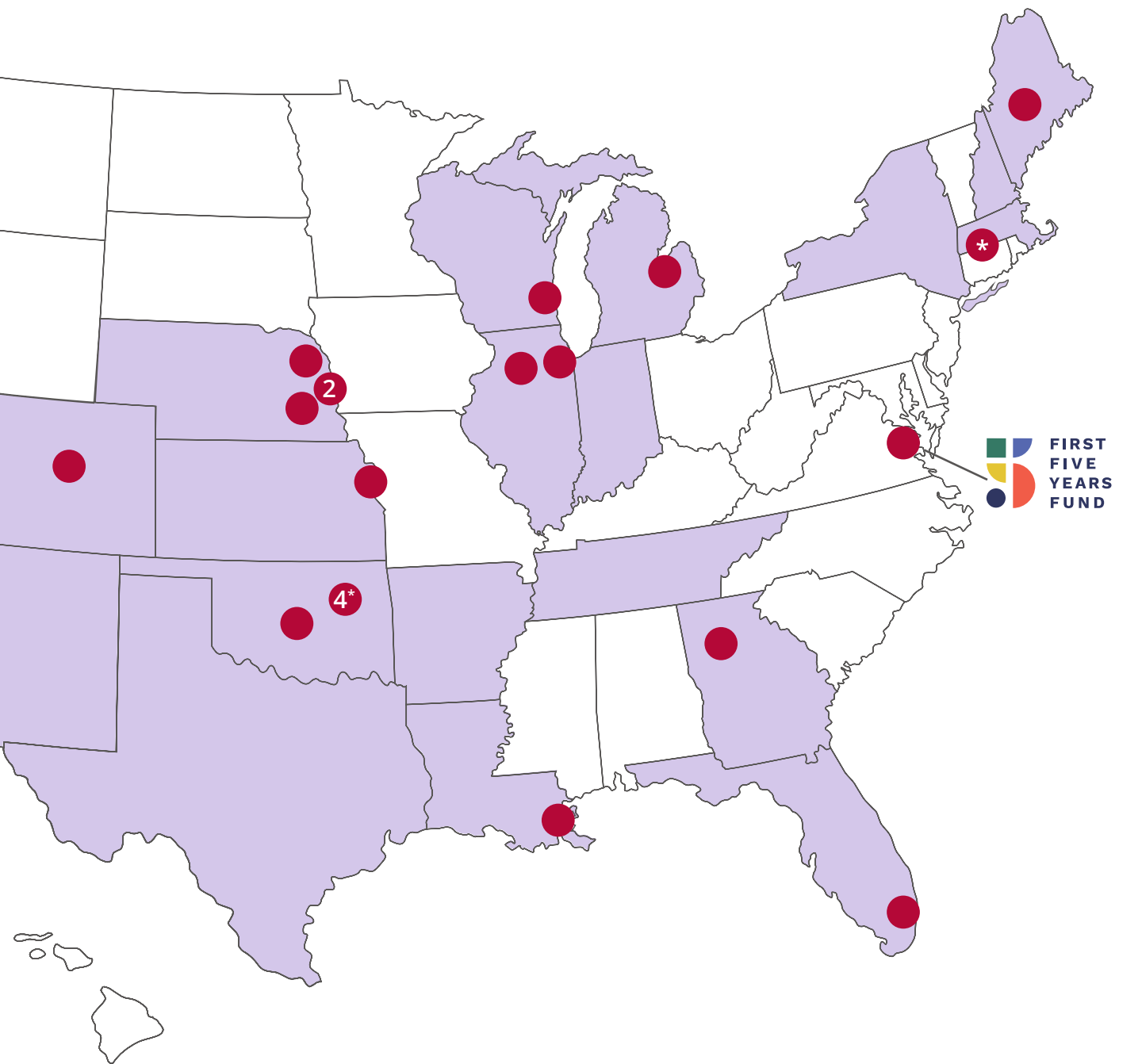


EDUCARE SCHOOLS

Atlanta, GA	Omaha at Indian Hill, NE
California at Silicon Valley (San Jose)	Omaha at Kellom, NE
Central Maine (Waterville)	Phoenix, AZ
Chicago, IL	Seattle, WA
Denver, CO	Springfield, MA*
Flint, MI	Tulsa at Clinton, OK*
Kansas City, KS	Tulsa at Hawthorne, OK
Lincoln, NE	Tulsa at Kendall-Whittier, OK
Los Angeles at Long Beach, LA	Tulsa at MacArthur, OK
Miami-Dade, FL	Washington, D.C.
Milwaukee, WI	West DuPage, IL
New Orleans, LA	Winnebago, NE
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*Under construction





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