

the Ounce



2015 Annual Report

Celebrating Milestones

This fall marks a historic milestone for the Ounce of Prevention Fund: the 15th anniversary of Educare Chicago. From its roots in the Beethoven Project housed in the Robert Taylor Homes to the model of high-quality early childhood education that we know today, Educare Chicago has been pivotal to many of the advances the Ounce has made over the past 15 years.

Each year, 150 children from low-income families have access at the school to the high-quality early experiences that are the building blocks for success in school and in life. They play, learn, explore and investigate. They develop important social-emotional skills—confidence, curiosity, empathy, self-regulation. And most importantly, they learn that what they think, want and need matters.

It is not only children who gain at Educare Chicago. We all do. We partner with parents to build their own confidence as their child's staunchest ally and biggest champion. We learn from our leaders, teachers and staff what is working and what to improve. We explore new ideas and approaches. We develop, test, learn and refine. And we showcase the impact of high-quality early learning to influence public leaders.

The impact of Educare Chicago is not limited to the 150 children and their families served each year. The impact is felt in all that we do at the Ounce.



As we think about early learning progress over the life of Educare Chicago—the past 15 years—we’re amazed. There has been more national attention on early childhood education, more work in developing early learning practitioners, a renewed focus on the importance of quality and a growing understanding of education as a continuum that begins at birth. In just this year, we’ve made significant strides in helping unlock the potential of the 6 million young children living in poverty in this country.

This is mission-critical work, and we cannot do it alone. We are proud to partner with other advocates, experts and researchers; with local, state and federal governments; with community-based programs and national organizations; and with business leaders, parents, philanthropists and all champions for young children.

In the coming pages, join us as we celebrate Educare Chicago’s 15th anniversary and learn how it has been a catalyst for so much growth in early learning over the past 15 years. To those of you who have been with us since the beginning of the Educare journey and those who have joined the adventure along the way, we are grateful for your support and look forward to achieving many more milestones together.



Diana Mendley Rauner
President



Anne Lea Tuohy
Chairman of the Board

Fifteen Years of Progress

2000

Opens first Educare school, a national model for high-quality early childhood education that narrows the achievement gap, in Chicago.

2002

Begins to partner with advocacy organizations in other states to build their capacity to advance policies and increase investments in birth-to-five programs.



2010

Doubles the number of infants and toddlers served in the Ounce Early Head Start program through partnerships with community agencies.

2009

Successfully advocates in Illinois for an increase in the percentage of early childhood funding spent on infant-toddler programs.

Along with the First Five Years Fund and other organizations, successfully advocates for a new \$4 billion federal investment in early childhood education.

2011

Wins a federal \$3 million Investing in Innovation grant for early childhood professional development initiative.

2012

A randomized control evaluation of the Ounce doula-home visiting model receives funding through Illinois' application for a federal grant.

2013

In his State of the Union address, President Obama calls upon Congress to expand access to high-quality preschool for every child in America.





2003

Successfully advocates for a \$90 million expansion of early education funding in Illinois.

In partnership with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, establishes the Educare network of schools across the country. Educare schools are dramatically changing the life trajectories of thousands of children growing up in families facing the greatest obstacles to success—and changing the way America thinks about early education.



2007

Launches the First Five Years Fund to focus nationwide attention and resources on comprehensive, quality early care and learning programs for children from birth to age five.

2006

Successfully advocates for passage of Preschool for All legislation in Illinois.



2014

Along with the First Five Years Fund and other organizations, successfully advocates for new \$650 million federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant program.

2015

Launches Achieve OnDemand online home visiting professional development.

Launches Lead Learn Excel leadership development program.

21st Educare school opens in Silicon Valley.



President
expand
for every

Strong Leaders, Strong Programs, Better Outcomes

Imagine if all 3.8 million children entering kindergarten each year were prepared for what lies ahead. There is a proven way to make that happen: Give all children access to quality early childhood education.

We know that strong early learning programs begin with strong leaders; we've seen this at Educare Chicago and early learning programs throughout our Head Start grantee network. It's this simple truth that led us to explore what makes a strong leader. Funded by a federal Investing in Innovation grant, the Ounce worked with four early learning programs to understand the impact leaders can have and the levers they can use to improve child outcomes.

What did we learn? When leaders build organizations that support ongoing professional learning embedded in the day-to-day routine of their programs, they fuel more impactful teaching and learning in classrooms. And that, ultimately, leads to better child outcomes. In fact, we saw an increase of 67% in the number of classrooms providing high-impact teaching practices at the levels shown to improve outcomes for children.

Building on our success with the Investing in Innovation grant, the Ounce, with funding from Illinois' Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant and in partnership with the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University, implemented our new Lead Learn Excel program over the past year in Illinois. Lead Learn Excel is helping early learning leaders strengthen the quality of their programs, as measured by the state's quality recognition and improvement system, ExceleRate Illinois.



Lead Learn Excel was launched with an ambitious goal: Extend our work from four programs to support 250 programs throughout Illinois. Working with the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois' Department of Human Services, the Ounce recruited the first cohort that began the program this year.

The Lead Learn Excel program emphasizes three core concepts: leader excellence, professional learning excellence and instructional excellence.

Strong leaders drive strong outcomes. Research proves that instructional leadership and strong organizations are linked to improved teaching and child learning outcomes. We can have an exponential impact as each leader supports a team of teachers, who in turn each serve even more children.

I want to practice my new way of coaching immediately! Start a new way of asking probing questions, and develop creative and individual learning plans for teachers. The wealth of knowledge I've received from Lead Learn Excel has me excited about the rest of the school year and any challenge ahead.
-Oriana Wilson, Edwards Center for Young Learners

Pulling teachers out of the classroom for siloed training days is not effective professional development. Professional learning as a part of everyday practice fuels continuous improvement. When teachers are encouraged to develop and learn, it feeds collaboration and instructional improvement.

Instructional excellence happens when leaders and teachers partner to intentionally plan how best to improve learning outcomes for children. Strong leaders guide teachers to consider children's progress and to design learning opportunities that effectively promote each child's learning and development. This



leads to the kind of excellent classroom interactions and instruction that prepare children for kindergarten.

As we work intensively with local programs in this first phase of Lead Learn Excel, we will continue to develop shareable resources and tools to create the high-impact learning experiences that will ensure all 3.8 million children entering kindergarten are prepared.

Thank you to the generous donors who made this work possible:

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Extending Quality, Strengthening Communities

A strong early learning program can have a ripple effect in the community, creating jobs, contributing to the economy and, most importantly, helping to increase access to quality early experiences beyond the walls of the school itself. These early learning centers act as quality hubs in their communities, positively impacting more than just the children and families they directly serve.

In 2000, the Ounce opened Educare Chicago, and it became a model of high-quality early childhood education. It informed policy and drove improvements throughout Illinois' early learning system. Soon after, the Buffett Early Childhood Fund began developing the second and third Educare schools in Omaha, Nebraska and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. From there, the national Educare network—a partnership between the Ounce and Buffett Early Childhood Fund—was born and now includes 21 schools.

Now we are extending high-quality practices even further. The Ounce, with assistance from the Irving Harris Foundation and the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, supported Educare organizations across the country in applying for new federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants. These grants help Early Head Start programs extend quality into local child care programs, benefiting children from birth to age three. Thirteen Educare organizations were awarded grants, reaching an additional 2,200 children with high-quality early learning.

The Ounce was also instrumental in fueling high-quality access in Illinois by partnering with schools across the state to apply for these federal grants. The city of Chicago was awarded the largest grant in the nation to serve more than 1,100 additional children and tapped the Ounce for technical assistance in building these partnerships.



With eight delegates in our own Early Head Start and Head Start grantee network, the Ounce is a leader in helping programs meet and exceed Early Head Start standards. Because of this, the city sought Ounce support with the programs that posed the most potential challenges in meeting the grant's quality requirements: family child care homes. The Ounce was asked to provide training, guidance and practical tools to help these family child care homes—many of which had never been exposed to the level and depth of requirements like those of Early Head Start—meet the quality standards. The Ounce is working with several Chicago programs, including SGA Youth & Family Services, which was awarded funding to support 42 additional children across 11 family child care home programs.

In the case of SGA, the Ounce helped ensure it is organizationally equipped to take on the challenges of creating a network of family child care homes. We drew on our experience monitoring quality among our own grantees to help SGA create tracking systems to ensure its new partners are meeting Early Head Start standards.

What we are accomplishing with SGA and its partners is important work. SGA is embracing its new role, and the family child care homes are eager to learn and improve their early childhood practices.

—Candice Percansky, Ounce project director

The Ounce is also providing hands-on support to the family child care homes in SGA's new network. Many of the providers serve at least 12 children, ranging in age from birth to eight years. From how to set

up the space to the optimal ratio for infants and toddlers, the Ounce helped define what quality looks like for their youngest children and how to integrate that into a multi-age program. Most importantly, we trained the providers in delivering developmentally appropriate care that will help young children build the social-emotional skills that are the foundation of future learning.



Through Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships work, we are fine-tuning our knowledge of how to extend quality from a center out into the community. We continue to seek all opportunities like this to further radiate quality and reach every early learning program, ensuring all children are nurtured and inspired from birth.

*Thank you to the generous donors who made this work possible:
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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 five.



Enhancing the Educational Continuum

Educare Chicago and schools throughout the nationwide network of Educare schools continue to prove that quality early learning increases children's kindergarten readiness and gives them the skills and tools to be successful throughout their educational career. Yet research also shows that the gains made in early learning can be at risk when children enter the K-12 system.

An aligned approach to public education can close the achievement gap and sustain early education gains for our most vulnerable children. If schools provide children with consistently effective teaching and family support spanning the birth-to-college learning continuum, all children will benefit. But because of the complexity of the work, few school districts are implementing an aligned strategy effectively. We believe that there is a great deal of potential in an aligned approach and that if it is supported effectively, school districts can see positive gains. Birth-to-college alignment efforts launched at Educare Chicago came to fruition this year and fueled promising new activities and approaches.

In 2009, the Ounce and the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute (UEI) partnered to form the Birth-to-College Collaborative to provide families with access to seamless high-quality education from birth through secondary school. This year, we launched an online toolkit (www.theOunce.org/BTCToolkit) that captured learnings from this collaborative in a series of implementation guides and other resources that are designed to help schools and districts across the country undertake complex alignment work.

The Ounce and the UEI also held the inaugural Excellence in the Early Grades: District Leadership Summit in Chicago in late March. The summit highlighted innovative alignment models and district-level



policy and practice designed to achieve better student outcomes. After attending in-depth seminars and having opportunities to network with other committed local leaders, district education leaders—including superintendents, assistant superintendents and school board members—left with inspiring new ideas for approaching this critical work in their own districts.

This event was a huge success, bringing together more than 150 leaders from 18 states and 43 districts across the country. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting that what they learned will help improve their alignment strategies.

The Ounce built on this momentum with hands-on consulting with districts on their alignment strategies. One example was in North Chicago. The Ounce was instrumental in helping North Chicago Community Unit School District 187 build its capacity to expand early childhood services. The district was awarded a Preschool Expansion

I believe this Birth-to-College Collaborative Toolkit is a valuable resource for groups across our nation trying to build or strengthen their comprehensive system of support for children and families. At this time in our P-21 journey, we no longer have to convince schools and communities that we need to align; I get daily calls with requests on “how to do it.”
– Linda Sullivan Dudzic, special programs director for Bremerton School District, Washington

Grant to open the Green Bay Early Childhood Center to provide full-day preschool to 280 students. And with a grant from the Lake County

Community Foundation, the Ounce was able to initiate a community planning process and lay the foundation for an aligned early childhood community system to better serve North Chicago families.

Our work with the Early Learning Hub, Inc. in Marion and

Polk Counties, Oregon is another example of the impact an aligned strategy can have. The Ounce engaged with the Early Learning Hub to support its implementation of a \$4 million Kindergarten Partnership & Innovation Fund (KPI) grant. We provided support in educating school district leadership and key stakeholders on the importance of partnerships among elementary schools, early learning services, and families and the community. Recently, the legislature approved \$5 million in new funding for the grant and increased the role of early learning hubs in implementing new state initiatives.



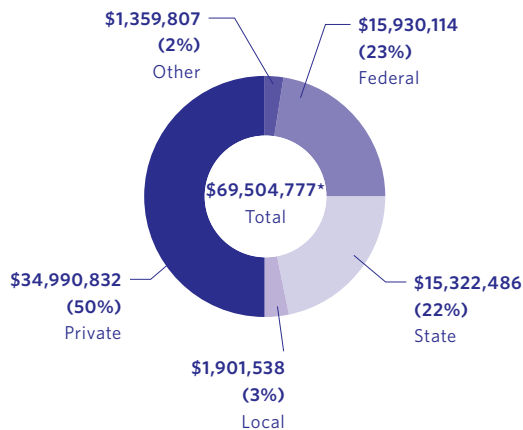
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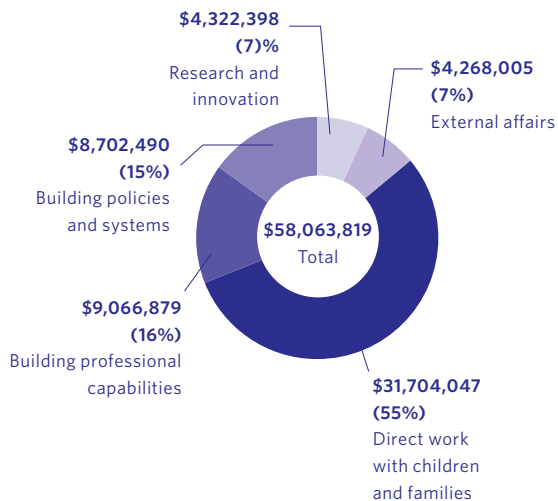
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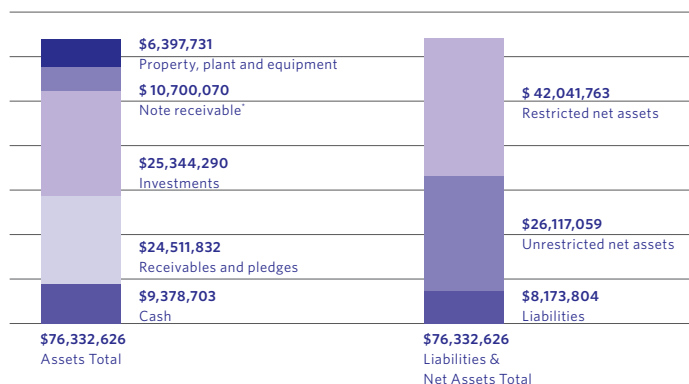
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*Per GAAP requirements, revenue includes restricted and multi-year pledges recognized in FY2015 and for which corresponding expenses will be incurred in subsequent years



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*New Markets Tax Credit transaction for Educare Washington, DC



Nurturing strong parent-child bonds across our Educare network, reaching
3,000
children and families daily



3,000+
program,
community and
opinion leaders
educated

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6M
children advocated for
nationally through the
First Five Years Fund

Advocacy
partners in
17 states
and Washington, DC

27,000
children and families
nationwide served by
center- and home-
based early learning
professionals developed
by the Ounce

Empowering parents
and reaching
4,000
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and doula programs
throughout Illinois



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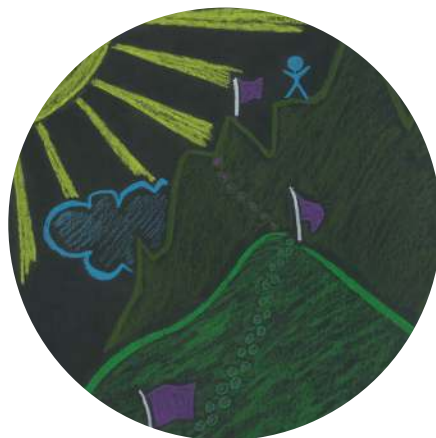
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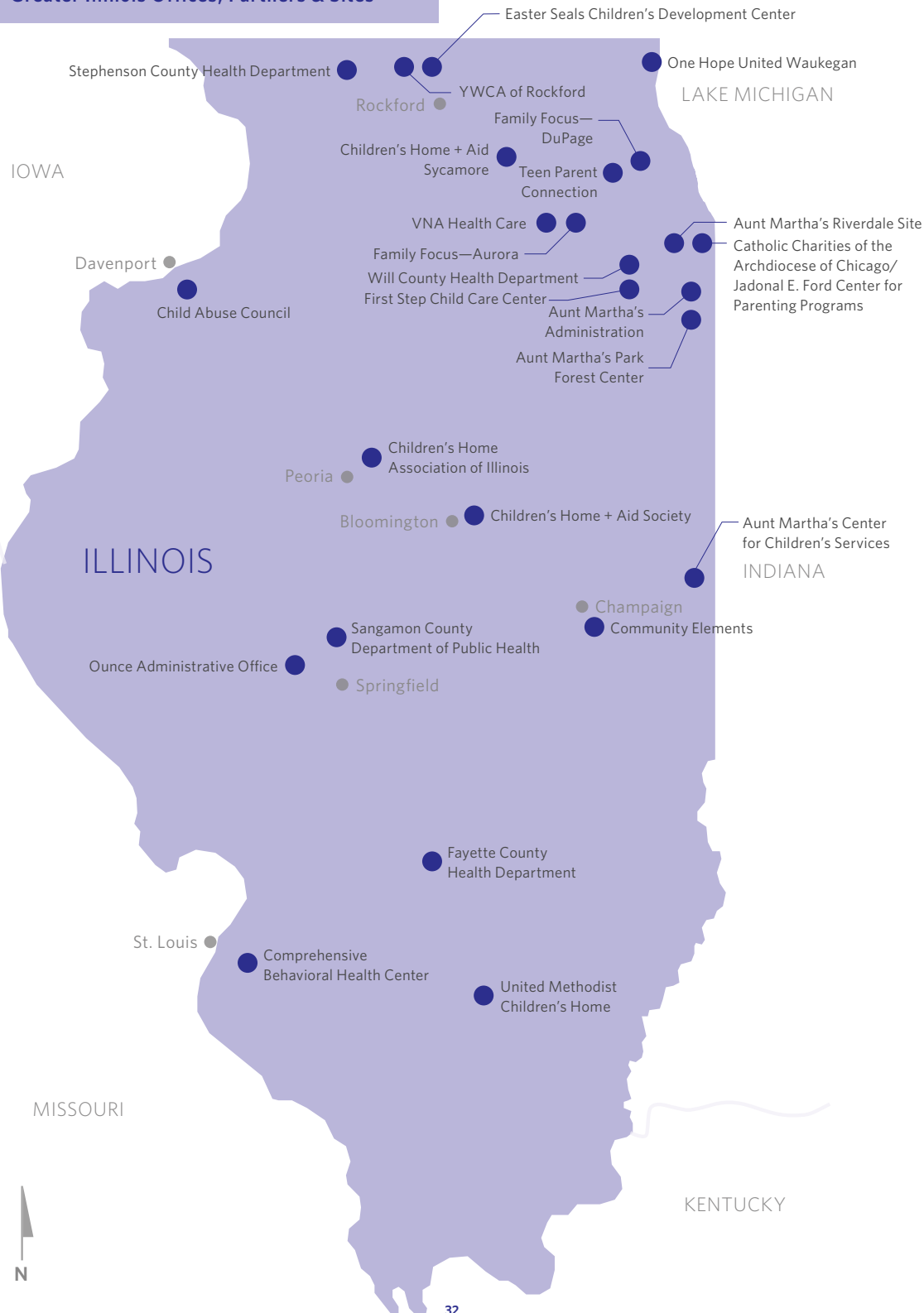
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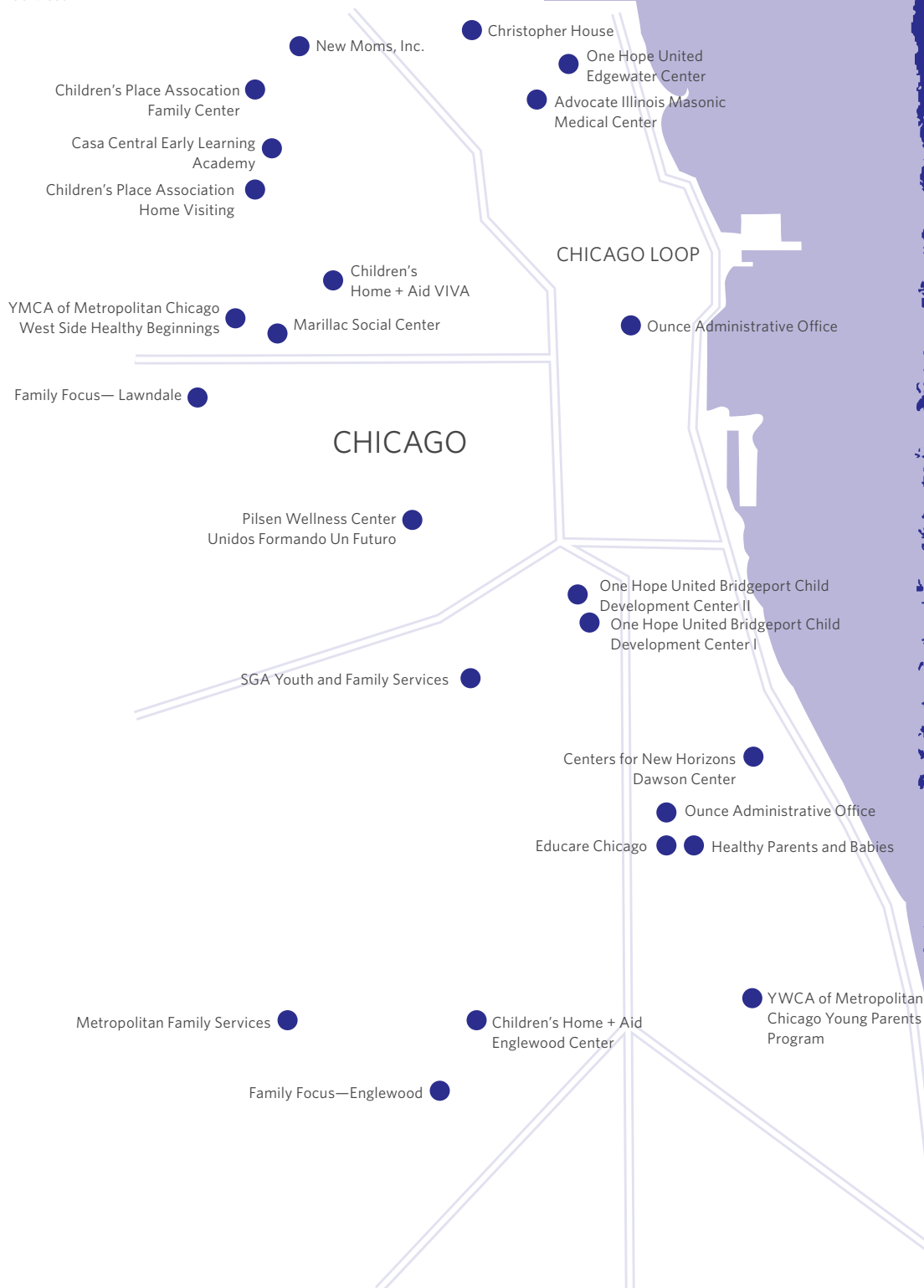


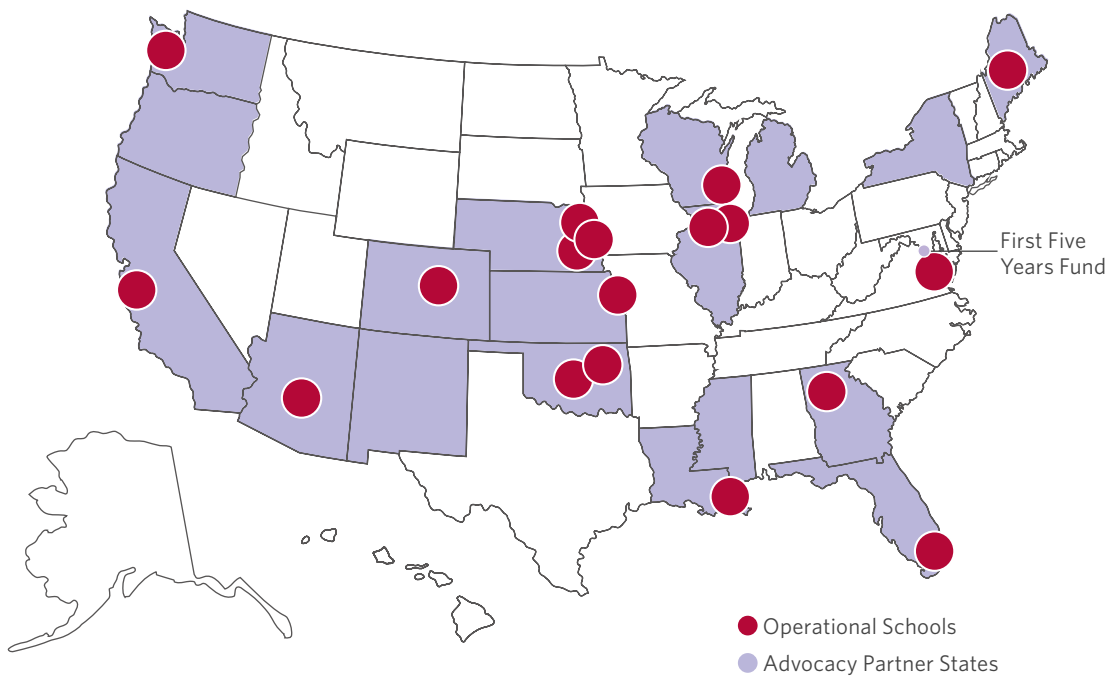
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