



## Mayor Lovely Warren's 3 to 3 Initiative

Based on recommendations from the Early Learning Council

## PROGRESS REPORT

December 2015

**TO: Rochester City Council  
Early Learning Council**

*When I took office in 2014, my first act was to convene an Early Learning Council, tasked with issuing a set of recommendations on how we, as city government, could improve the educational outcomes of the youngest (birth to 3-years old) children in Rochester. They completed their work in September, and from that my 3- to - 3 Initiative began.*

*I want to update you on the progress that we made as we work to give every child in the city of Rochester the opportunity to develop the academic and social skills necessary to succeed in school and life.*

*Here are a few things we have done:*

- *In our libraries and R-Centers we developed new programs and expanded existing ones, with the goal of increasing literacy rates among our children.*
- *We secured over \$500,000 in grant and corporate funds to expand educational opportunities.*
- *We are engaging parents through our literacy initiatives.*
- *We formed local and national partnerships to expand our reach and advocate more effectively for the children that we serve.*



**Lovely A. Warren**  
Mayor, City of Rochester

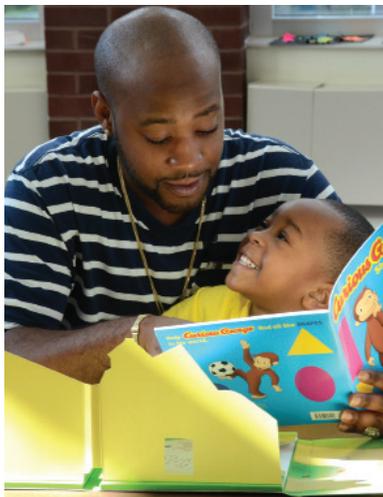


## 1 Early Learning Council Recommendation One

*There was strong consensus among Council members and stakeholders who gave testimony that the City of Rochester's priority should be funding programming gaps before and after Pre-K. STATUS: COMPLETE*

The following are several programs operated by the Library during the summer months and throughout the year with the goal of creating a culture of literacy and increasing literacy skills of soon-to-be readers up to teenagers.

- A. Raising a Reader:** The program operates from October through May and is funded by the Friends and Foundation of the Rochester Public Library and the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation. The program is geared towards families with children from birth to 3-years old. A total of 128 families participated in the previous cycle of Raising a Reader. Currently 200 families are participating.
- B. Library Summer Reading Program:** This program was developed and is operated out of our various branch libraries during the summer. This summer close to 2,000 students participated. Students committed to read at least 20 minutes a day every day during the summer months. Each week they turned in their reading log, received a prize and were entered into a raffle for a larger prize.
- C. Literacy Aides:** Since 2013, the Rochester Public Library (RPL) has partnered with RCSD to support the library summer reading program through the employment of Literacy Aides and through directed summer learning classes. In 2015, 30 RCSD students were hired as summer Literacy Aides to help city children maintain and improve their literacy skills over the summer.
- D. Learning Labs:** Teachers from EnCompass: Resources to Learning provided instruction at six branch locations in 2015: Arnett, Wheatley, Lyell, Maplewood, Lincoln and Sully. The Learning Labs operated two hours per day, four days per week with two certified teachers on site.
- E. Rochester Reads:** This project began as Rochester Families Read, which was started in October 2014 with a press conference at the Ryan R-Center, followed by a Halloween Party and book giveaway of several Curious George titles. 400 books were given away at the event.
- F. Book Distribution:** The RPL Literacy Coordinator has established a free book distribution network throughout the city. This network has grown exponentially in the last year to include more than 100 distribution sites throughout the city, with an average of 25,000 books distributed monthly. This program has had tremendous impact in terms of getting books into the hands of city residents,



## Department of Recreation and Youth Services (DRYS):

In our R-Centers we also have programs to stem the summer learning loss and provide year- round enrichment activities.

- A. **ArtSmart Summer Camp - Cobbs Hill Park:** An opportunity for camp goers to explore and develop their interest and skills, painting, dancing, music and theatre. The camp also provided group games in and outdoor activities. Field trips to Rochester attractions were also included as part of the program.
- B. **Creative Arts Workshop - Edgerton R-Center:** An art infused program where children learn how to view the world in new ways. Local artists and staff lead the children in daily activities exploring dance, theater, creative writing, music and crafts.
- C. **STEM Explosion - Carter Street R-Center:** Children explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) subjects with hands-on activities. The program ignites and expands children’s interest in science and technology.
- D. **Earth Explorers Expeditions - Humboldt Street:** Children discover nature right here in Rochester. They explore the various parks and natural areas to learn about nature, urban gardening, nutrition and recycling.
- E. **R-Academy:** R-Centers offer fun, engaging, exciting and free after school programs that provide homework help, group games, reading programs, sports, arts & crafts and a wide variety of enrichment activities.
- F. **Summer Learning Camp:** Building on the success of the RPL, and with generous support from RCSD, Recreation implemented Summer Learning Labs at five R-Centers four days a week. Teachers from EnCompass: Resources to Learning and youth literacy aides supported participants as they completed inquiry-based literacy projects exploring the explored the concept of “Every Hero has a Story.”
- G. **Drop Every Thing and Read (D.E.A.R.):** During the summer lunch hour, in addition to enjoying a free and nutritious lunch, R-Centers youth members also “drop everything and read” for 30 minutes every day.



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## 2 Early Learning Council Recommendation Two

*In addition to advocating for adequate funding, we believe the Mayor can play an important role in addressing the resource disparity between public and private Pre-K providers. STATUS: COMPLETE*

I worked with the County Executive and the Rochester Community Coalition of the Rochester Business Alliance to advocate for a change in the state funding formula and an increase in the childcare subsidies for low-income working families in Monroe County.

- The state restored some of the childcare subsidies, but there is still a long waiting list of low-income families in need of affordable childcare.
- Rochester was awarded \$12 million to implement a 3-year-old Pre-K program.
- The Rochester City School District and community based organizations were having difficulty finding adequate space to house the 3-year-old program.
- We worked with the City School District to link community-based organizations and private landlords together with the goal of finding facilities for the program. Classes will start in January.

**3-Year-Old Screening Project:** The City along with the Greater Rochester Health Foundation, United Way of Greater Rochester and the Rochester Area Community Foundation provided funding to screen 3-year-olds in the city in an effort to identify any developmental delays and intervene when appropriate. The City provided \$50,000 of the \$267,000 first year budget.

The initiative, called **GROW Rochester**, is a collaborative of early childhood agencies created to conduct comprehensive health and developmental screenings of 3-year-old children in Rochester. The screenings will initially cover the following areas: Vision, hearing, language, speech, social, emotional, dental and general health. The aim of this initiative is to develop a system where child-serving professionals conduct screenings, provide referrals to the appropriate health system, monitor and measure associated outcomes. The effort will improve the readiness level of 3-year-olds as they start school.

### 3 Early Learning Council Recommendation Three

*The ELC firmly believes that public confidence is vital to sustaining a vibrant and fully-funded Pre-K program and that City Hall can and should play an important role ensuring the public's trust. STATUS: COMPLETE*

In an effort to sustain a vibrant and fully funded Pre-K program, I have taken a leadership role on the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative and with ROC the Future to represent the interests of our children, parents and childcare providers. I also advocated and represented our children's interest nationally. For the past two years, I've served on various committees and participated in forums at the National League of Cities working to influence federal policy on early childhood education. Last month I was asked to co-chair the National League of Cities Council on Youth, Education and Families. This will allow me to be a more effective advocate for early childhood education for Rochester and children nationwide.

**AmeriCorps Grant:** Secured \$432,000 to fund 32 AmeriCorps members. Four members will work with the Rochester Public Library carrying out Raising a Reader's mission engaging caregivers in a routine of book sharing with their children in an effort to foster healthy brain development, healthy relationships, a love of reading and literacy skills critical for school success. Four more members will work with the Rochester Public Library providing early childhood development curriculum, will serve 200 families to increase school readiness and participation.

### 4 Early Learning Council Recommendation Four

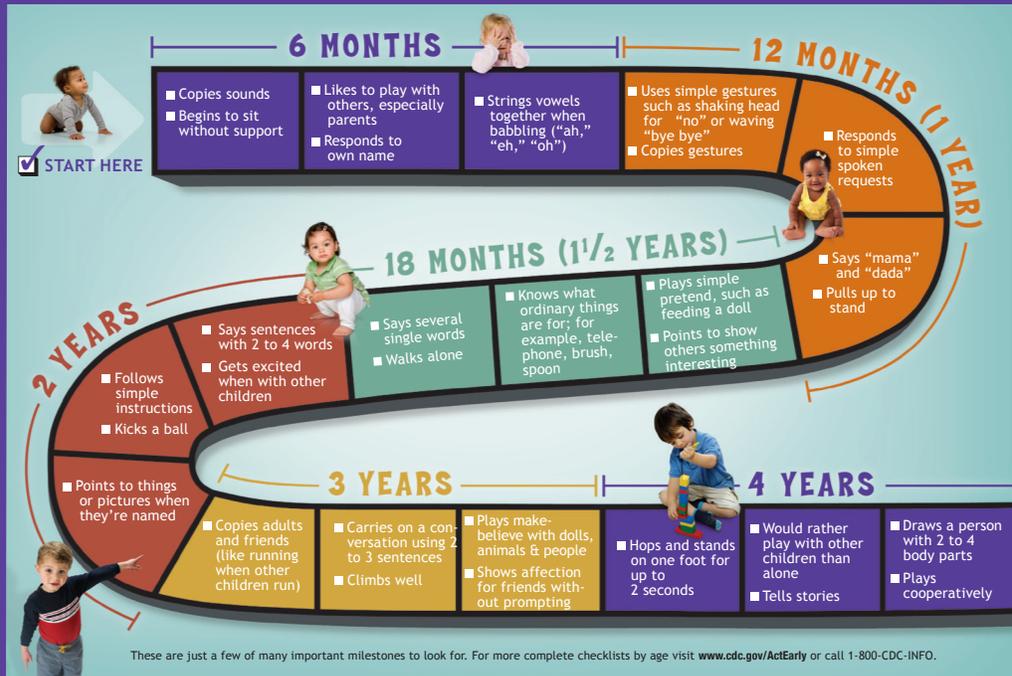
*The Mayor should lead a shift away from traditional parent involvement toward authentic parent empowerment and leadership, similar to Head Start's parent involvement program and aligned with the City's work on the National League of Cities Educational Alignment project.*

**STATUS: COMPLETE**

- A. 5 Key Things:** Developed and distributed the "5 Key Things" brochure which is included in every new birth certificate that is mailed out to families in Monroe County. To date, more than 10,000 copies have been distributed to families with new babies. The brochure, in Spanish and English, provides parents with 5 things that they can do to help their child succeed in school.
- B. Books Before Birth:** Part of the Mayor's Early Literacy Program to encourage soon-to-be parents to start reading to their child even before the child is born. Soon-to-be parents will receive a board book and a "5 Reasons to Read to Baby Before Birth" bookmark that highlights the importance of reading to children.
- C. Book After Birth:** A board book is given to the family when the baby is born along with a bookmark "10 Reasons to Read to Children." The program reinforces the importance of reading to children early and often.
- D. Early Reading Conference:** Conference sponsored by the City along with Action for a Better Community Head Start, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, MVP Health Care and the Rochester City School District for families with young children. The conference addresses the educational challenge of low reading levels of city students and will offer practical strategies to foster early reading.
- E. Rochester Families Read - Halloween Bash:** Last Halloween we distributed 400 Curious George Books to children at the Thomas P. Ryan R-Center Halloween Party.

# Your Child's Early Development is a Journey

Check off the milestones your child has reached and share your child's progress with the doctor at every visit.



**F. Developmental Milestones Check List:** Working with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) we have adapted and co-branded the Milestones Check List for Babies and Young Children, Birth to Age 5. The check list is an easy guide that parents can use to track their child's development. It will be given to expectant and new moms during their pre-natal, post natal and wellness check up visits.

**G. We have Early Learning Spaces** at all ten branch libraries.

**H. Story Time with Style:** A partnership with local salons and barbershops to encourage children to read while they are waiting. The program is designed to increase recreational reading by offering children books in local beauty salons and barbershops.

## Over the past year we have:

- Secured additional grant and corporate funding to pilot new literacy programs.
- Formed partnerships locally and nationally to advance our early childhood learning agenda.
- Expanded literacy, enrichment and summer programs in our libraries and R-Centers.
- Become a more effective advocate for Rochester's children.

## But we have more work to do in order to create a culture of literacy and raise student outcomes. Over the next few months we will:

- Continue our discussions with the Children's Scholarship Fund in New York City, and with the Bison Fund in Buffalo, to help us create a similar fund in Rochester.
- Continue to advocate for the passage of the Education Investment Tax Credit which would provide incentives to donate to the scholarship fund.
- Continue our discussions with Neighbor Works about expanding the housing credit program and tuition savings program to teachers in Community Based Organizations and to Charter Schools.



For more information call 311.  
Outside the city call (585) 428-5990.  
[www.cityofrochester.gov](http://www.cityofrochester.gov)