

Action for Early Learning

Education Begins at Birth!

Make sure your child is ready for success!



Presenters: Maria Walker, Sherilynn Kimble, Dr. Adena Klem



Goals of the Session



Participants will learn...

- A successful model for improving equitable access to high quality childcare
- How the model utilizes a combined place-based and systems approach to creating community change

Participants will take away...

- Lessons learned and applications to own work

AFEL Beginnings

Creating Circles of Support for Children and Families in West Philadelphia




ECE Needs Assessment & Landscape Analysis



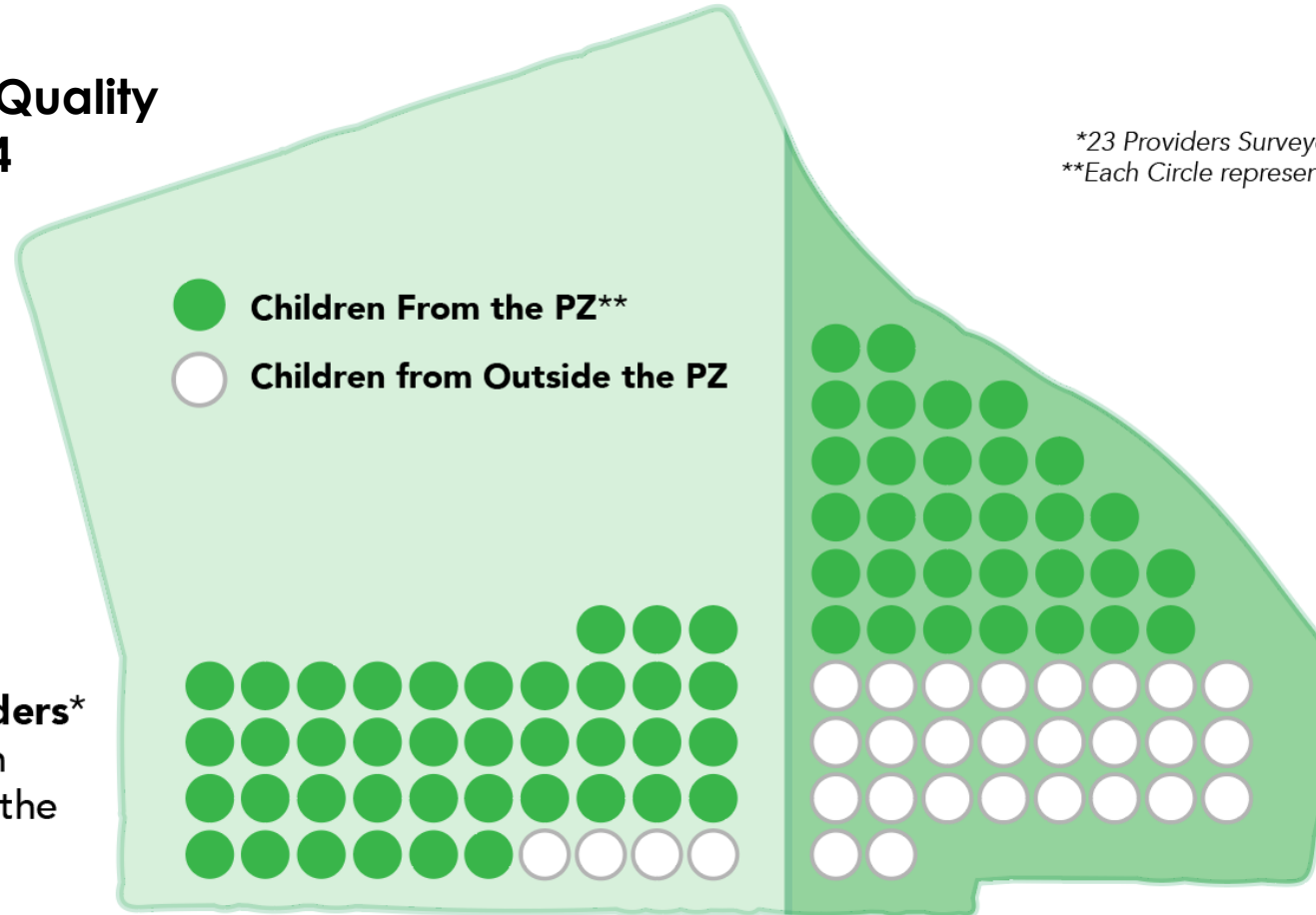
Quality Based on:
PA STARS Provider Quality
Rating: STARS 1 to 4

*23 Providers Surveyed

**Each Circle represents 20 children (1006 total)



65%
Low Quality Providers*
but **90%** of children
attending are from the
neighborhood



35%
High Quality Providers
but **only 54%** of children
attending are from the
neighborhood

What is Action For Early Learning (AFEL)?



MISSION: AFEL is a **Drexel University**-led collaboration of agencies working to ensure **Equitable Access** to **Quality** Early Childhood Education with the following goals:

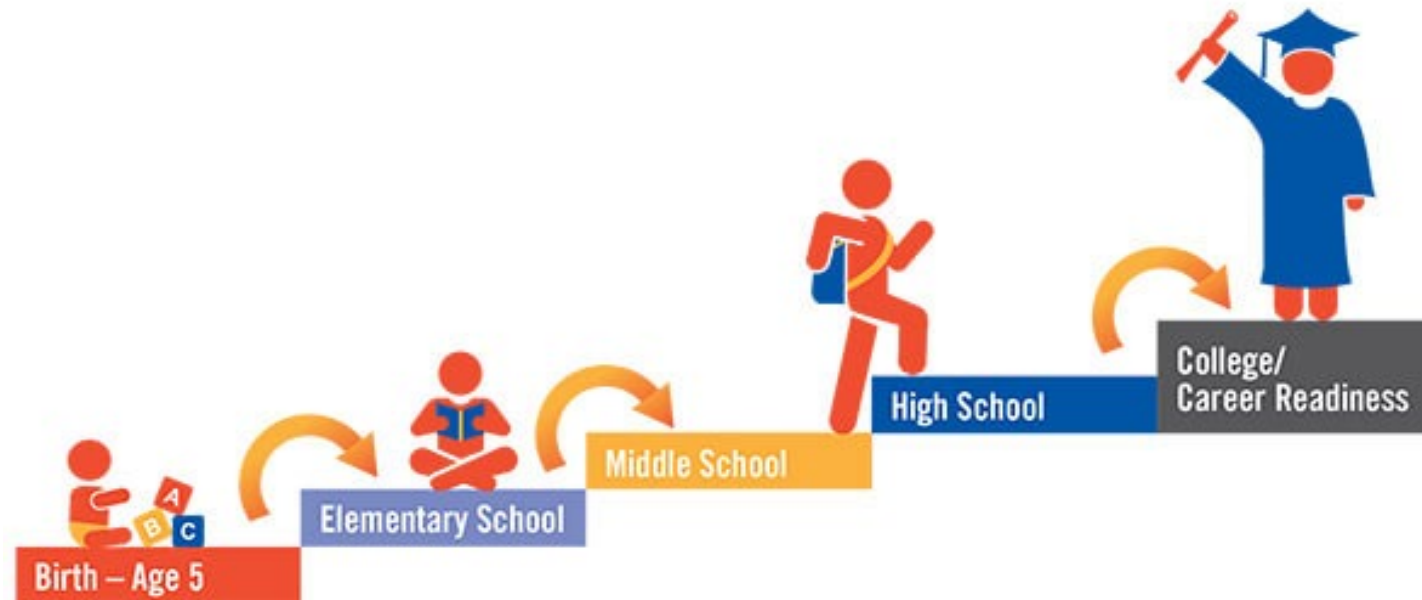


Long Term Goals:

1. Kindergarten Readiness
2. Reading at Grade Level by the end of Third Grade

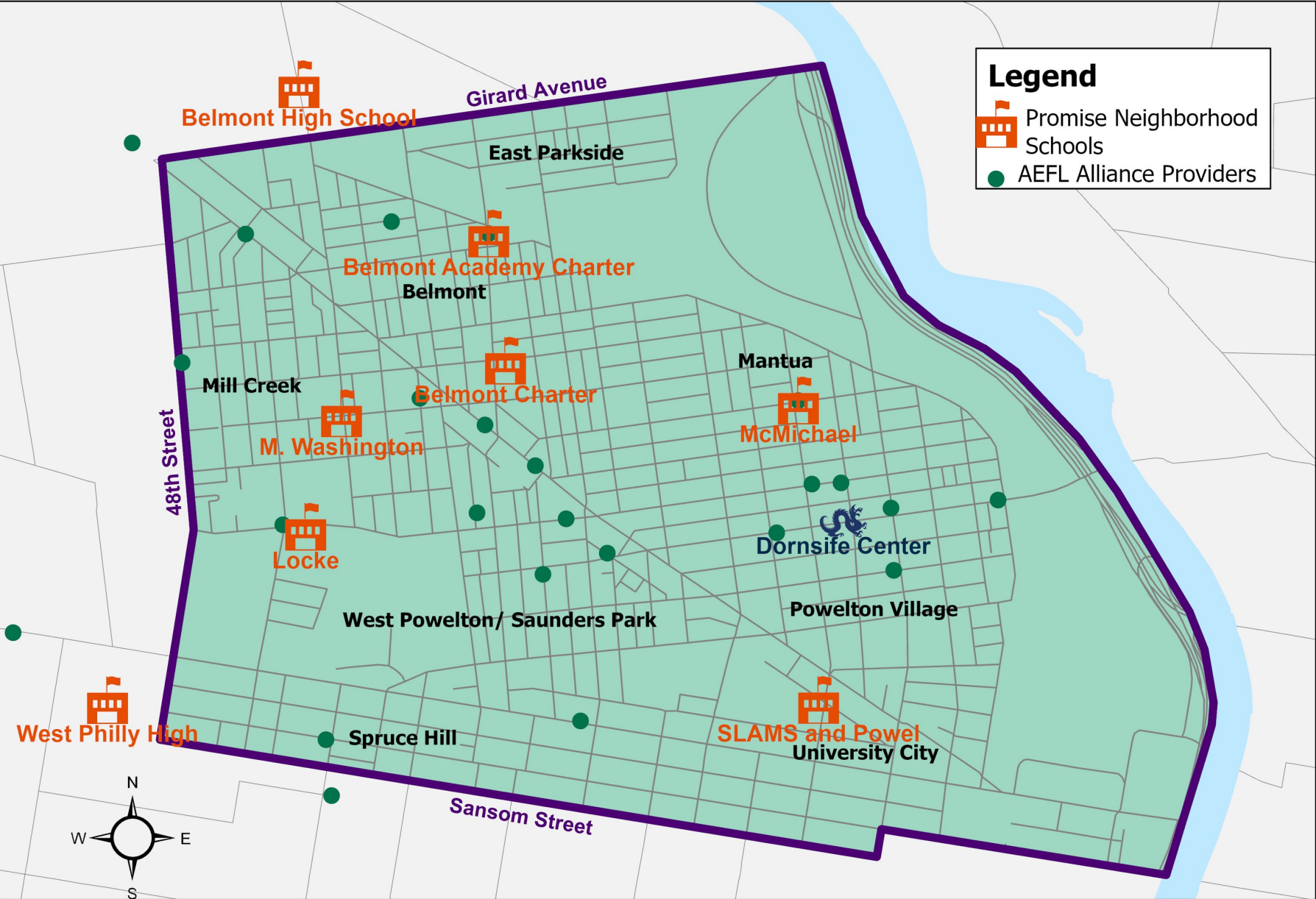
...So that our children can be successful in school and beyond

Drexel University's Cradle to Career Pathway



**Supporting Children and Families
for long-term educational and economic success**

West Philly Promise Neighborhood



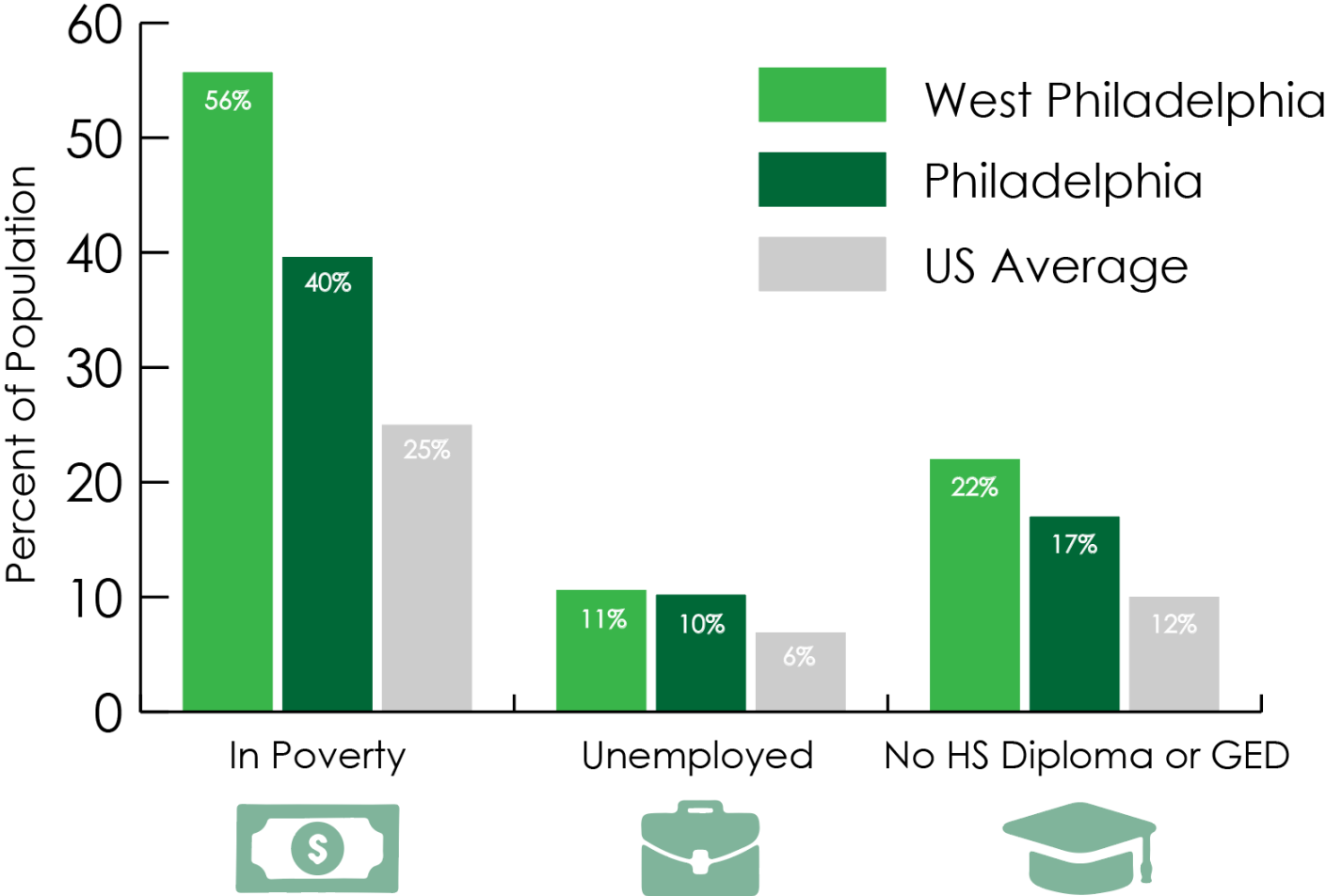
Total Population	29,480
Number of Children under 5	~2,000
Percent of Families Living in Poverty	56% (Phila. avg: 26%)

Number of Schools	9
Number of AFEL Alliance Childcare Providers	26 out of 40
Number of Children in Alliance sites	~1,000



**WEST PHILLY
PROMISE
NEIGHBORHOOD**

West Philadelphia Promise Neighborhood: Opportunity & Need



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

How AFEL Supports Equitable Access to Quality Childcare

STRATEGY

Improve the
Quality of ECE
Providers

Increase Awareness
of and Access to
Quality ECE

PROGRAM



Alliance of Childcare
Providers



AFEL Outreach
& Awareness

GOALS

Kindergarten
Readiness

Reading on
Grade Level
By End of Third
Grade



Action For Early Learning
Our Community. Our Neighborhood. Our Kids.

Why Quality ECE is Important



Alliance of Childcare Providers



Program Goal: Improve Quality of ECE Providers

Managed by AFEL Program Partner First Up

Benefits of the Alliance:

- Monthly Meetings: Networking & Collaboration
- Professional Development: Coaching & Trainings
- Technical Assistance
- Education and Credentialing
- Leadership Support



Alliance of Childcare Providers

Improve Quality of ECE Providers



The AFEL Alliance:

Works with family, group, & center-based childcare programs committed to continuous quality improvement

Since 2014,
West Philly
Alliance
outcomes:

69%



of Alliance providers have improved their quality rating (i.e., moved up STARS level)

57%



of Alliance providers are at a high-quality rating (STAR 3/4), up from 35% in 2014

77%



Alliance children in high quality care (up 35%)

45



Teachers Received CDA Certification

115



115 free Pre-K slots awarded to 7 Alliance sites through PHL-PreK

Alliance Provider Success Story: Xavier's Family Childcare

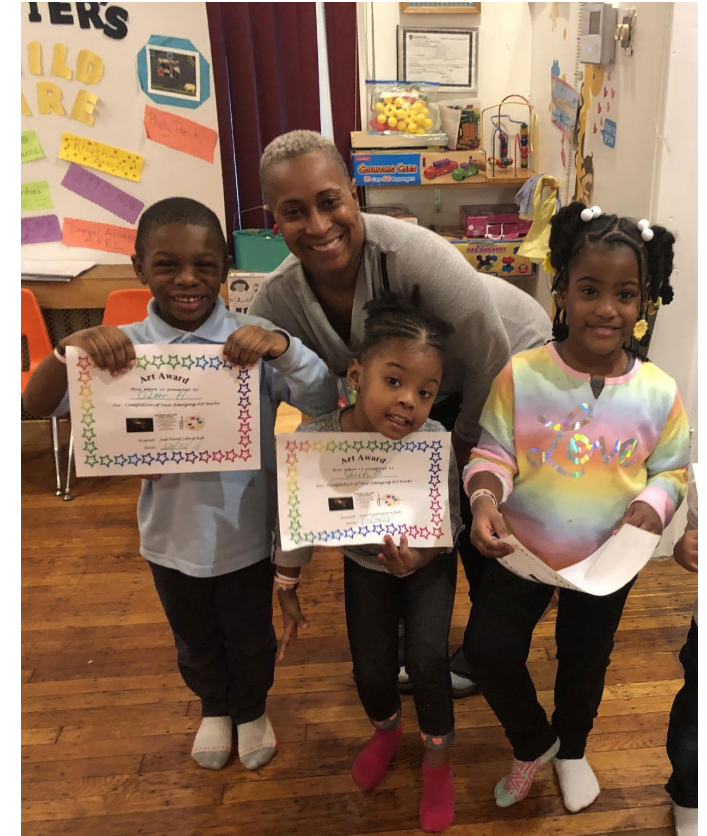


Accomplishments from 2014-2019 include:

- Moved from STAR 2 to STAR 4
- Moved from Family Care Provider (6 slots) to Group Home Provider (12 slots)
- Participates in PHL-Pre-K
- Staff member achieved CDA through AFEL free CDA Program
- Pilot site for multiple AFEL programs
- Opened during COVID to support essential workers

"I am proud to be a part of the Alliance. The opportunities that it has brought for my childcare facility is bridging the gap between Drexel University, the community, families, and early childhood educators."

-Janelle Golden



AFEL Virtual Classroom



A positive, inter-active 45-Minute Virtual Classroom to make sure children are ...

Laughing, Learning and Playing!



Since May 2020:

- 38 Virtual Classroom Sessions
- 2,800 total attendance
- Average of 51 students/session
- Average of 24 ECE educators per/session

The AFEL Sesame Project: A Partnership with Sesame Street in Communities (SSIC)

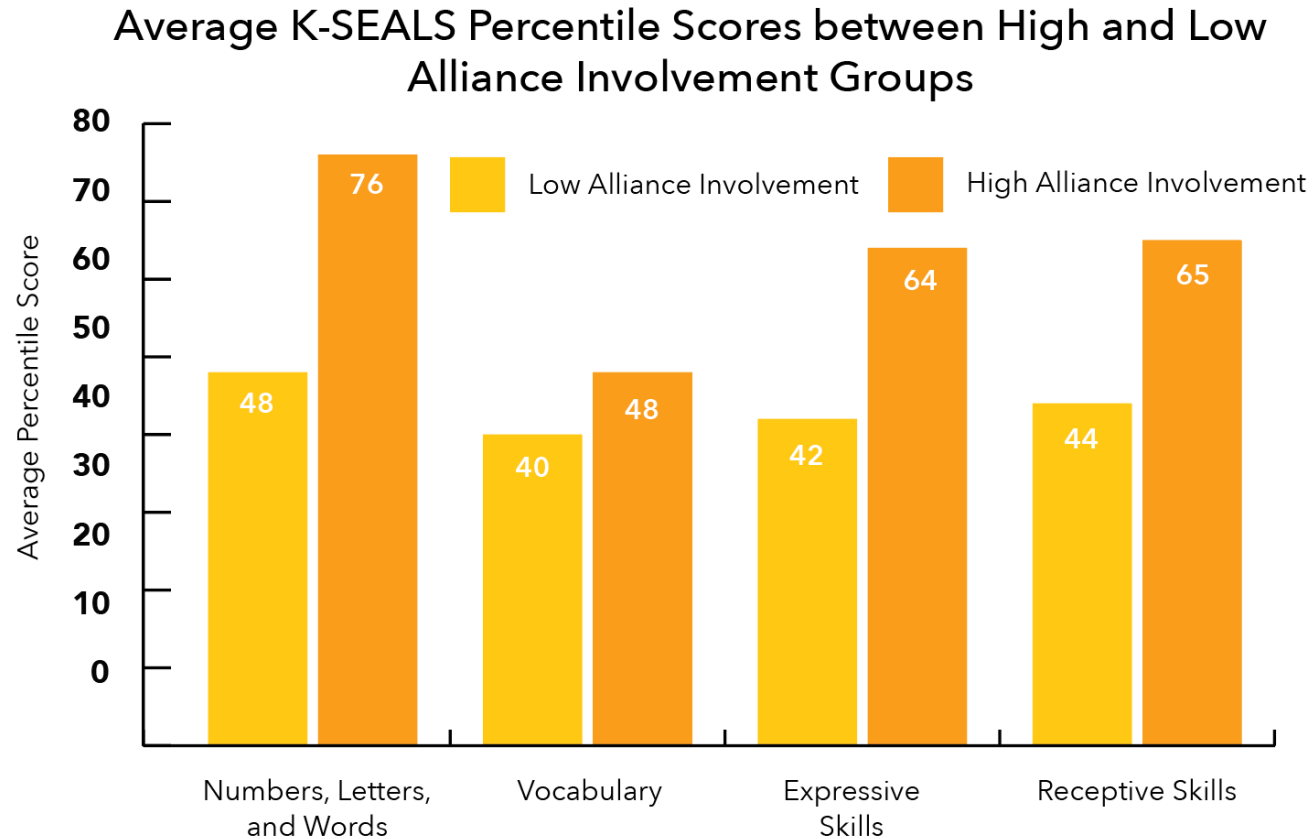
Help Children Become Stronger, Kinder, Smarter

- Trained a cohort of 15 Abby Ambassadors
- Supports social-emotional learning for Kindergarten readiness
- Educators and families have access to SSIC resources

Sign up: SSIC.ORG



Kindergarten Readiness: High vs Low Alliance Involvement



K-SEALS: Kaufman Survey of Early Academic & Language Skills

Note: Percentile scores range from 0 to 99. Children in the Alliance scored across this full range.

Children from more **highly involved** Alliance childcare providers had **higher Kindergarten** readiness performance than children from less-involved Alliance providers

Family Ambassador Program



Goal: Increase Accessibility to Quality ECE Through Community Outreach and Awareness

The AFEL Family Ambassador Program:

Parents, grandparents, and caregivers from the community trained to offer peer-to-peer mentorship around quality childcare and school readiness

Outreach Strategies include:

- AFEL Book Depot
- Grandparents Coffee Talk
- Growing Great Readers
- Kindergarten Registration Support

Since 2014, Outreach outcomes include:

23



Family Ambassadors Obtained
Employment Post-AFEL

45,000



Books Distributed
by Ambassadors

500+



Family Resource Bags
Distributed

5,000+



Residents Reached

AFEL Family Ambassador Workshops



Empower Parents and Caregivers with knowledge of:

- The importance of quality childcare to children's future
- How to access quality childcare
- How to identify quality early childhood education

AFEL Family Ambassador FREE Workshops:

8 workshops, topics include:

- Early Development
- Best Practices in Childhood Development
- Early Literacy
- ECE Advocacy
- Importance of Kindergarten Readiness



Family Ambassador Success Story: Rachel Honore, AFEL Family Ambassador



***“The seeds of an awesome tomorrow
will be planted by us!”***
- Rachel Honore

Accomplishments:

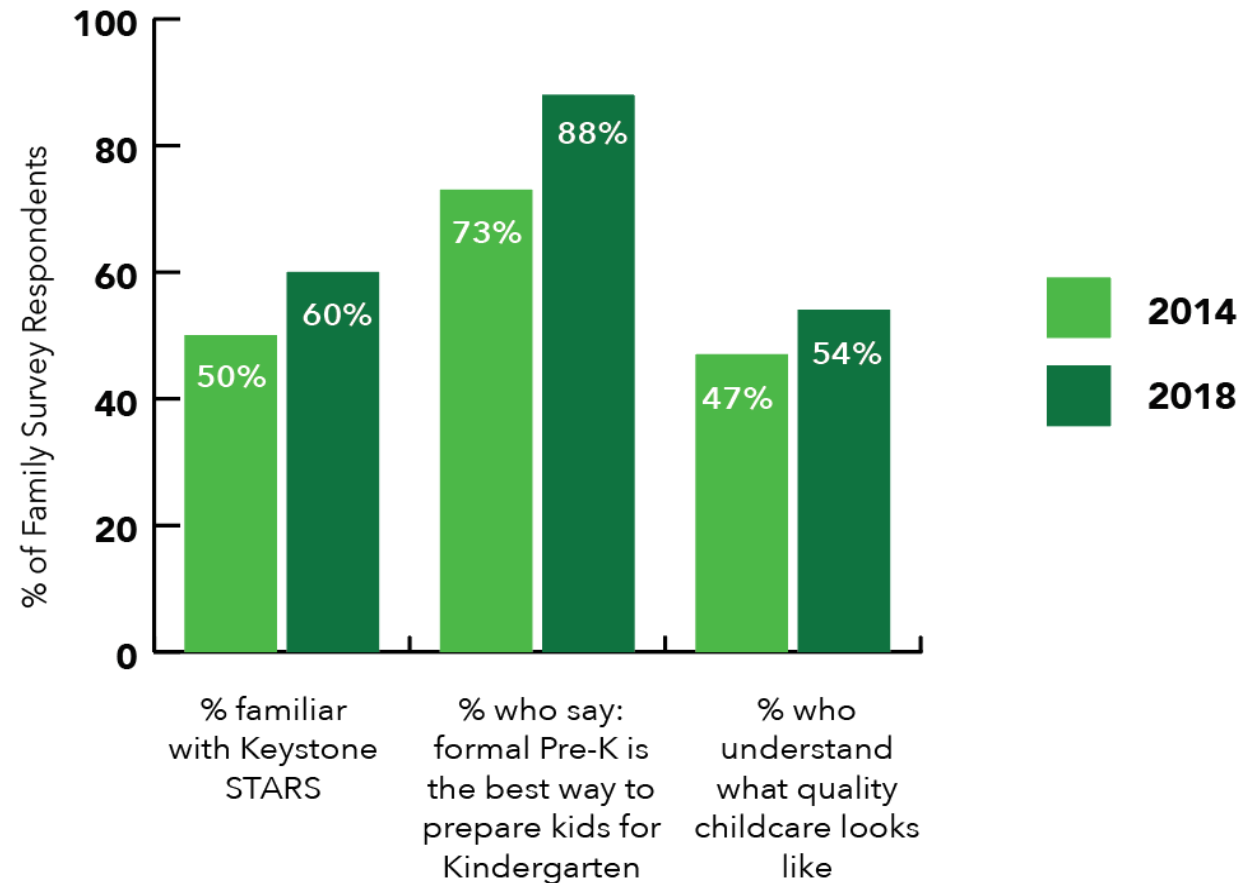
- Special needs son referred for early intervention services
- Son currently mainstreamed in public school
- Created the Book Depot Program
- Participated in citywide Advisory Councils
- Started her own non-profit Literacy & More



Building Awareness through Outreach



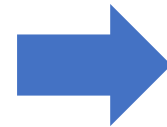
Results of Annual AFEL Family Survey



Growing Connections



More than 70 organizations have partnered with AFEL



78% of those partnerships continue to the present day

With Drexel as Anchor Institution, Key Program Partners include:



Summer Kindergarten Bridge Program



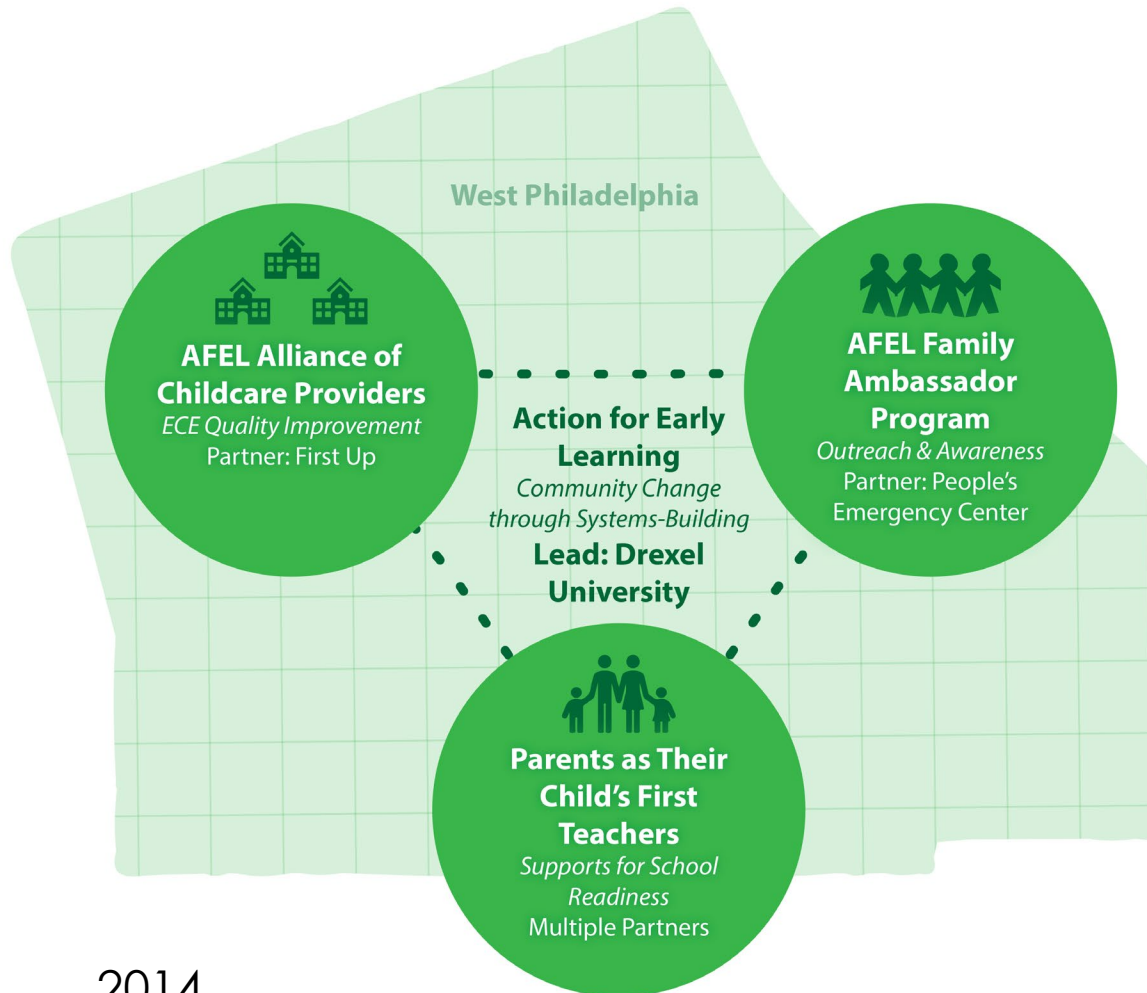
FREE five-week summer school readiness program for rising Kindergarten students to support their transition to school.

Kindergarten Bridge Program benefits:

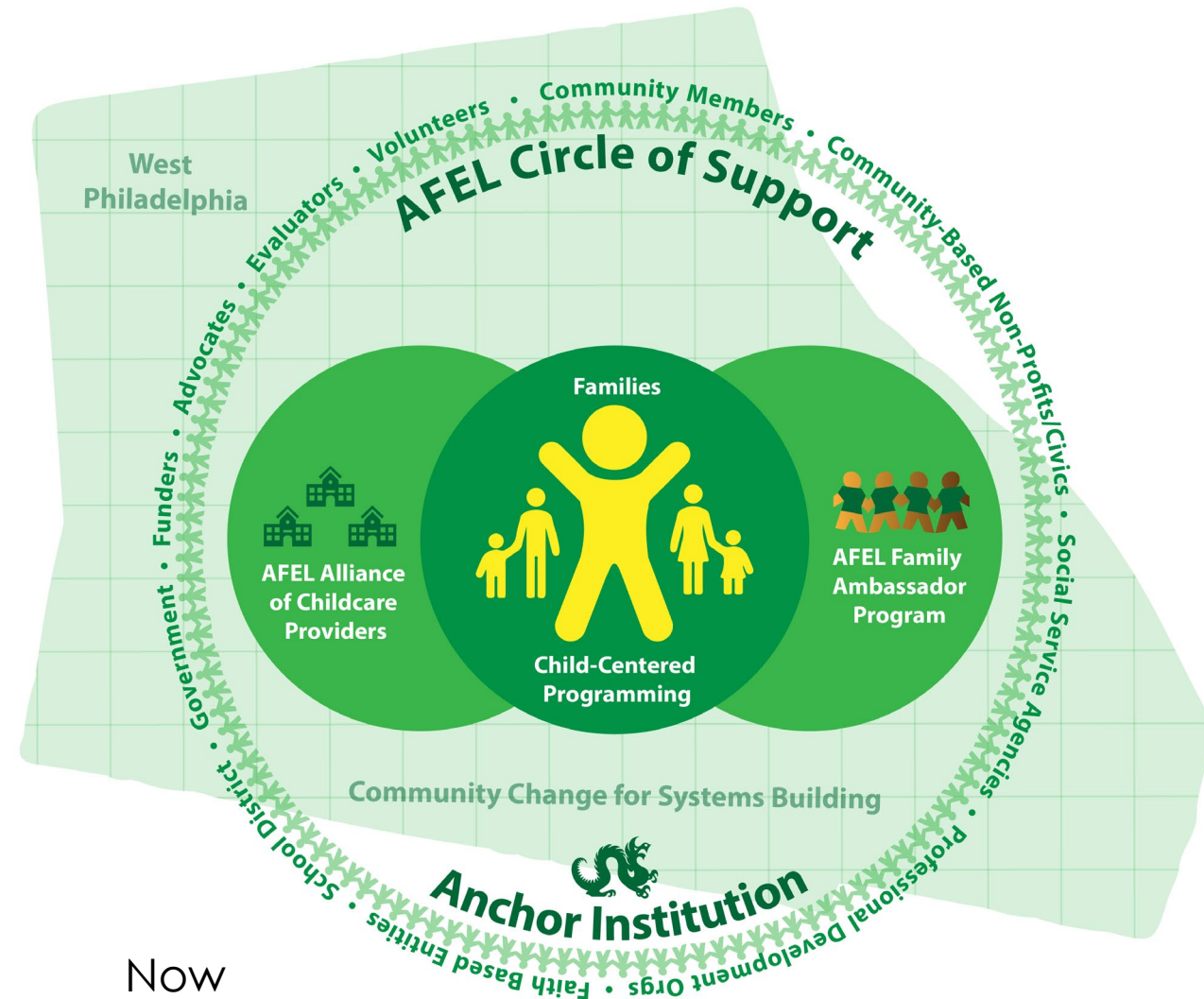
1. **Children:** Preparing children for Kindergarten
2. **Families:** Connecting parents/caregivers to school engagement opportunities
3. **Future Teachers:** Strengthening the pathway for college student-teachers into Philadelphia public schools and Pre-K Classrooms
4. **Schools:** Supporting Kindergarten registration



AFEL: Evolution of the Model



2014



Now

Activity: AFEL Lessons Learned



Creating a successful community change initiative requires...

1. Placing the ***child at the center*** of the early learning eco-system
2. Building strong relationships through ***trust***
3. Creating community ***partnerships***, not just engagement
4. Combine a ***place-based*** and ***systems-approach*** to support long-term success
5. ***Flexibility*** within a defined model
6. Building a ***collaborative leadership*** team with accountability
7. Acknowledging the challenge of moving ***community-wide outcomes***
8. An ***anchor institution*** to serve as connector, convenor and facilitator

Breakout Room Activity



Instructions:

Review Lessons Learned:

1. Choose ONE that resonates with your work (or your funded work) and share why with your group
2. Choose ONE that is new to you and describe how it could be applied to your work (or your funded work) to share with your group

Roles in your group:

- Timekeeper
- Notekeeper
- Someone to report out

Group Share Out

AFEL Expansion: Supporting More Children's Success in School and Beyond



AFEL North: The Need



North Philadelphia Demographics	
Neighborhoods	Fairhill/Hartranft, Franklinville, Harrowgate, Hunting Park, Upper and West Kensington
Total population	119,780
Number of children under 5	10,770
Percent of residents without a HS diploma	77.8% (Philadelphia average of 35%)
Percent of families living in poverty	69.7% of families live below 200% of the poverty line (39.6% of families citywide)
Percent children living at poverty level	57.9% (35.6% citywide)
Unemployment rate	20% (Philadelphia rate of 10.2%)
Childcare Providers	73% out of 52 sites are low quality

AFEL North Partner: St. Christopher's Hospital for Children



Primary & Outpatient Care:

- Center for Children/Youth with Special Healthcare Needs
- Center for the Urban Child
- Behavioral Health
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational and Physical Therapy



Specialty Care:

- Adolescent Medicine
- Child Protection Program
- Developmental Pediatrics
- Neonatal Intensive Care
- Pediatric Burn Center
- Audiology
- Dental Medicine
- Digestive Health
- Ear, Nose, and Throat
- Endocrinology and Diabetes
- Heart Care
- Kidney Care
- Lung Care
- Neurology
- Sleep Center
- Infectious Disease



AFEL North Philadelphia Needs Assessment



Anchor Institution: St. Christopher's Hospital for Children

Conducted North Philadelphia ECE Landscape Analysis and Needs Assessment

- 300 Surveys and 2 Focus groups with North Philly families
- 2 Virtual Information Sessions and 15 interviews with childcare providers
- 20 listening sessions with community and social service organizations



AFEL Next Steps



1. Implement AFEL North Plan
2. Sustain AFEL West as Training Hub



AFEL Circle of Support



AFEL Circle of Support:
The child is at the center
of the ECE Eco-System

Open Discussion



- What is one thing you heard about the AFEL model that you would like to learn more about?

Contact us:

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- *Sherilynn Kimble* - sherilynnkimble@gmail.com
- *Dr. Adena Klem* - adenamklem@gmail.com

Contact Us

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AFEL MAIN PRINCIPLES

AND COMMUNITY CHANGE INITIATIVE BEST PRACTICES



West Philadelphia
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- Be place-based
- Prioritize **building trust / relationships** throughout the community
- Place the **child as the central priority** of the work

- Infuse **knowledge-building** of Kindergarten readiness throughout the whole AFEL model
- Integrate **trauma-informed** vocabulary, practices, and a resilience-based lens for all programming

- Promote **collaboration** at all levels of work
- **Include family** and community partnerships to acknowledge the value added from the wisdom, experience, and diversity of partners
- Ensure that goals and desired outcomes are paired with **flexibility** in the face of changing priorities and community needs

- Use **research and evaluation** to inform programming
- Build stakeholder capacity to **understand and use data**, and facilitate data-driven decision-making
- Recognize the **balance** between conducting research and data collection, while **prioritizing the comfort and culture of our partners and the community**

END