

2021-2022

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## VISION

Every child in Denver enters kindergarten ready to reach their full potential.

## Equity Statement

Every child deserves equitable access to quality early childhood education and the opportunity to benefit from its promise: a strong foundation for a successful future. Denver Preschool Program commits to bold action to help eliminate differences in educational outcomes as a result of systemic racism, generational poverty and discrimination through our role in early childhood education.



## STRATEGIC GOALS

### Families

Reach and engage families of young children to better serve them and, through innovation and partnership, promote the benefits of and increase access to quality early learning opportunities.

### Children

Increase the number of Denver's young children participating in preschool.

### Preschool Programs

Improve and measure the quality of early childhood education programs in Denver.

### Preschool Teachers

Strengthen Denver's early childhood education workforce by supporting preschool professionals to ensure they are well-qualified, effective, compensated and valued.

### DPP Board and Staff

Strengthen DPP's internal operations and governance to steward our mission and financial resources, improve the delivery of services, lead in the early childhood space, and sustain operations.

### Policy/Strategy Leaders

Respond to community needs and champion, advocate, and partner to advance early childhood education policies and strategies that help our youngest learners succeed.

## MISSION

Denver Preschool Program helps Denver fulfill its commitment to its youngest learners. We champion, fund and increase access to quality preschool across our community.

## VALUES

### Access for All,

where every young learner in Denver has access to the benefits of quality early childhood education.

### Informed Choice,

where parents and caregivers are well informed about early childhood education options and can make the best choice for their child.

### Leadership in Action,

where DPP champions early childhood education, ensuring the community realizes the benefits of its investment in young children.

### Intentional Inclusivity,

where DPP reduces and overcomes barriers to ensure equitable opportunity for all children to participate in early childhood education.

### High Quality,

where pursuing excellence in all aspects of DPP's work increases positive outcomes for Denver's children.

# Strategic Goals

Through 2022, Denver Preschool Program will focus on six strategic priorities carried forward from our 2017-2021 plan. Each priority is accompanied by a vision of success.

**1 Increase the number of Denver's young children participating in preschool.**

#### **VISION OF SUCCESS:**

- DPP will continue to ensure Denver's 4-year-olds are attending preschool while broadening our reach to include 3-year-olds through tuition credits and other mechanisms that prioritize our under-resourced families.
- DPP will hold ourselves accountable to increase access to early childhood education for Black, Indigenous, and people of color in an intentional way, focusing on serving under-resourced neighborhoods of our community.

**2 Improve and measure the quality of early childhood education programs in Denver.**

#### **VISION OF SUCCESS:**

- DPP will assist early childhood education providers in retaining and improving their quality rating as they emerge and recover from the pandemic.
- DPP will focus specific attention on providers that serve our highest-need and under-resourced children in achieving quality gains.
- DPP will help families choose quality early childhood education options.
- DPP will continuously assess methods of measuring and increasing quality and contribute to the field of improving quality measurement standards.
- Through evaluative efforts, DPP will continue to explore what drives quality in programs and what indicators of quality predict positive outcomes for participating children.

**3 Respond to community needs and champion, advocate, and partner to advance early childhood education policies and strategies that help our youngest learners succeed.**

#### **VISION OF SUCCESS:**

- DPP will partner with local and state governments to accelerate, enhance and effectively deploy expanded supports to providers.
- DPP will provide leadership and share our successful model to inform other communities across the country and the new Department of Early Childhood in Colorado.
- In addition to sharing our knowledge, we will proactively seek out how the Colorado Universal Preschool Program will supplement and enhance DPP and the preschool services to the children in Denver.
- This exchange and sharing of knowledge benefit our local early childhood education providers and our young learners, by creating a strong ecosystem and value for early childhood education.

**4 Strengthen Denver's early childhood education workforce by supporting preschool professionals to ensure they are well-qualified, effective, compensated and valued.**

**VISION OF SUCCESS:**

- DPP will contribute to improvements for the ECE workforce by working with others in the field to support tangible improvements and systems-level impact.
- DPP will leverage its financial resources to model and innovate ways of directly supporting Denver's early childhood educators, directors and administrators.
- DPP will provide equitable access to all workforce development opportunities.
- DPP will share its workforce learnings to inform universal preschool in Colorado.

**5 Reach and engage families of young children to better serve them and, through innovation and partnership, promote the benefits of and increase access to quality early learning opportunities.**

**VISION OF SUCCESS:**

- DPP will create an effective approach to family engagement, inclusive of our under-resourced families and our BIPOC families, to ensure we are responsive to their ideas and needs.
- DPP will continue to be in constant communication with providers and families to assess the changing needs in the community, implementing an action-oriented and informed decision-making process.
- DPP, in collaboration with others, will ensure more children arrive at kindergarten having engaged in positive early learning experiences.
- DPP will continue the creation of pilot programs to actively provide solutions to the health, social justice and economic pandemic that impacted children, families and providers.

**6 Strengthen DPP's internal operations and governance to steward our mission and financial resources, improve the delivery of services, lead in the early childhood space, and sustain operations.**

**VISION OF SUCCESS:**

- DPP will contribute to the recovery of Denver's early childhood education system, social justice system and the economy post-pandemic, with equity at the forefront.
- DPP will define our role within the rapidly changing early childhood education landscape.
- DPP will be prepared for reauthorization.
- DPP will ensure the ability and support to achieve the goals and vision of this strategic plan through sufficient capacity, skills, and engagement of staff and board.

# DPP's Equity Commitments

In support of our equity statement, and in service of the creation of a more equitable early childhood landscape and a more just world, we commit to awareness, access, advocacy and action:

## 1) Grow our knowledge and awareness of inequities and their root cause

- Continually grow our awareness and understanding of inequities that historically and continue to exist in ECE.

## 2) Drive access, choice and quality in early childhood education

- Reduce barriers to early childhood education access, choice and quality.
- Invest resources and implement policies that promote the well-being and positive experiences of Black, Indigenous and children of color and families in early childhood education experiences.
- Support high-quality preschool programs that build on each child's unique individual and family strengths, cultural background, language(s), abilities, and experiences.

## 3) Advocate for systems-level policy changes that address harm.

- Recognize our role as part of a larger ecosystem that we are capable of influencing and act upon our obligation to remedy harm by that system.
- Promote policies within and outside of DPP that eliminate differences in educational outcomes as a result of who children are, where they live, and what resources their families have.

## 4) Take bold action.

- Start with DPP and center who we are and what we do in equity and inclusivity.
- Take action through our leadership, programs, and services to reduce the harm caused by poverty, racism and discrimination.
- Lead by example and support our providers and partners on their equity journeys with the tools and resources they need to be successful.
- Advance social justice for our youngest children to achieve equal treatment and experience equal rights by reducing implicit bias, exploring context, and helping children see themselves in their teachers and their classroom communities.

# Cross-Cutting Strategies for Achieving Goals

To achieve each of DPP's strategic goals, the following strategies across each goal are needed:

**Equity:** Promote and operationalize equity in action.

**Communications:** Increase clarity and awareness of DPP, utilize new methods to share the benefits of preschool and, report on the impacts, and promote best practices.

**Partnership:** Strengthen existing and establish new partnerships, including programmatic and financial, that help us deliver on our promise.

**Assessment:** Continue to improve, utilize and enhance our sharing findings from both near and long-term assessment of DPP's process and outcomes.

**Engagement:** Grow our authentic engagement of families and providers to better understand and respond to their needs, while continuing to engage leaders and partners in early childhood education leadership.

**Innovation:** Expand on our feedback, creativity and iteration to, explore the frontier of how we best meet our mission and deliver programming.