



Eight Building Blocks for Early Childhood in Bexar County

The following eight Building Blocks constitute a comprehensive continuum that addresses early childhood needs of children birth to eight years old, and those of their families in Bexar County. These building blocks are intended to serve as the foundation for an early childhood blueprint for our county.

1. Elements of an Aligned System for Young Children

A collaboration of early childhood education professionals, child development advocates, health professionals, community members, parents, and civic leaders will guide the development of strategic actions of a plan that will focus on the elements of an aligned system for young children, including formal partnerships and collaboration; access to high quality early education, health, and family support programs; access to transportation; parent engagement and family supports; programs to facilitate smooth transition to school; communication; data-sharing; and leveraging funding.

2. Partnerships and Collaboration

ReadyKidSA will work collaboratively with the City of San Antonio, school districts, early childhood community and other community partners (a) to maximize the utilization of available child development resources, (b) to support quality improvements in early learning/child care, and (c) to promote the delivery of integrated services for children and their families.

3. Data Collection – Measures of Success

Successful collaborations must build an information system (1) to set goals for childhood outcomes and to measure the results, (2) to support continuous improvement through data collection and evaluation, (3) to promote increased understanding and engagement of caregivers/family in their role of the child's developmental success, (4) to increase access to data and data sharing capabilities, and (5) to align with other local, state and national initiatives.

4. Health Plan Strategies for Early Childhood and Families

The young child's physical health (including nutrition & obesity prevention), social and emotional health (including mental health), and developmental screening and monitoring are critically important. The well-being of children is dependent on those who care for them, and the most important measures that can be taken to improve health support are those that enhance the capacity of caregivers and caretakers to nurture and care for them.

5. Child Welfare, Safety and Child Abuse Prevention

The health safety of children is crucial to their well-being and school success. ReadyKidSA will work with caregivers, social service agencies, schools, prevention programs and justice systems to create safe environments for children and families to thrive. Safety education and advocacy for reporting concerns of abuse and neglect are central to keeping children healthy and injury-free. Child abuse and neglect prevention and outreach programs will be central to children being ready and prepared for school both physically and emotionally.

6. Access to High-Quality Early Education Experiences in a Variety of Settings

Quality early childhood experiences are fundamental to the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of every child. Affordable, dependable, quality early childhood care and education are an integral part of family life in the 21st century. This includes high-quality bilingual, culturally appropriate family support services for English Language Learners, appropriate services for children with special needs, access to books and libraries, culturally specific early learning/child care, and support for Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) the Texas plan. Additionally, a focus on high quality experiences should work to improve the retention, preparation, wage consideration and professional development and quality of the early learning workforce.

7. Neighborhood-Based Parent Engagement and Family Supports

This has been identified as one of the common elements of effective early learning systems alignment: Parent engagement and family supports to ensure that caregivers are empowered to be their child's first teacher and most important advocate, to understand children's behavior and milestones, and to connect families with the diverse supports that they need for a safe, healthy and economically secure household.

8. Transition from 0 to 8 Years Old and Beyond

Effective transition from birth to 8 years old is a critical pathway in a young child's development. This includes fostering continuous communication among the family, the school, and early childhood providers during this transition, helping families understand school registration processes, attendance requirements and policies, helping families feel comfortable and welcome in the new school environment, and sharing pre-school experience information at the right time with the family and the child's kindergarten teacher. Additionally, we will extend the transition pathway until that student reaches college and career readiness, ensuring that there are family supports in place.