



# Cultivating a Landscape for Learning



**RAISING READERS NASHVILLE**  
2023-2024 Objectives

## To our community –

Seven years ago, a group of us began a journey to ensure that Nashville's children have the skills they need to read, and therefore have a strong foundation upon which to reach their full potential. This work, called the *Blueprint for Early Childhood Success*, united our community around the urgent need to address this challenge and set the stage for a years-long community investment in our children, families, educators, and care providers.

Since then, we have put in lots of hard work – researching, talking to families and teachers, testing strategies, and learning from experts. We've also seen some hard times – the tornado of 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic forced us all to rethink how we approach education, work, and community. We've analyzed, problem-solved, debated, tested, evaluated, and reflected together, and we've experienced both hurdles and wins along the way.

Today, building on the work we've done together and learning from our challenges, we're excited to announce the next phase of this work. Raising Readers Nashville takes the best of what we've done so far and the knowledge we've gained from these challenges to continue the important journey of supporting children and families in their early education experiences. The commitments made by partners throughout the past year make it clear that this community cares deeply about its children and that this work continues to be of the highest priority.

We are proud of the strategies we're putting in place and the collaborative process we used to select them. We're excited about the relationships that are being strengthened amongst those who do this work every day, and we are doubling down on our commitment to Nashville's littlest learners. We look forward to what lies ahead, and we invite you to come along on our journey.



**Erica Mitchell**

*Executive Vice President and  
Chief Community Impact Officer,  
United Way of Greater Nashville*

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## 2022–2023 RAISING READERS NASHVILLE Steering Committee

- Angie Adams**, PENCIL
- Elizabeth Atack**, Nashville Public Library
- Dr. Adrienne Battle**, Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)
- Mason Bellamy**, Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)
- Christiane Buggs**, Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance
- Kimberly Carter Jordan**, Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)
- Kristen Davis**, Nurture the Next
- Katie Elam**, Governor’s Early Literacy Foundation
- Apri Gassaway**, United Way of Greater Nashville
- Linda Harrison**, Nashville Public Library
- Brianna Healy**, Boedecker Foundation
- Dean Hoskins**, Governor’s Early Literacy Foundation
- Melissa Jaggars**, Alignment Nashville
- Dustin Jones**, community member
- Richard Kennedy**, TN Commission for Children and Youth
- Tara Lentz**, Conexion Americas
- Lauren Lunsford**, Belmont University
- Rachael Milligan**, Lipscomb University, Ayers Institute for Learning & Innovation
- Erica Mitchell**, United Way of Greater Nashville
- Erin Merryman**, community member
- Patricia Nesbitt**, St. Luke’s Community House
- Precious Newbell**, Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- Megan Parker Peters**, Lipscomb University
- Jason Picanzo**, Metro Nashville Police Department
- Susan Porter**, Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)
- Melanie Shinbaum**, St. Luke’s Community House
- Melissa Spradlin**, Book’em
- Taylor Thurnau**, TN Voices
- Robert Wallace**, Mayor’s Office
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# Understanding the issues, history, and progress of Raising Readers Nashville

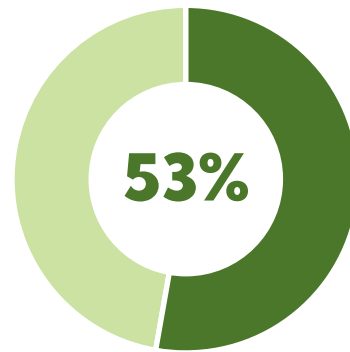
## Understanding the issue

A strong early care and education foundation from birth to third grade is the key to long-term academic achievement, workforce success, and economic prosperity. Research tells us that when children aren't proficient in reading by the third grade, they are less likely than their peers to achieve proficiency in the long term. From that point, they're four times more likely to drop out of high school and 60% less likely to pursue a post-secondary degree.<sup>1</sup>

As of 2021, approximately 78% of students in Nashville's public schools aren't reading at grade level by third grade. This percentage is slightly higher than statewide, where roughly 68% of students are testing below state standards. The achievement gaps between white students and their Black and Hispanic/Latino counterparts continue to remain stubbornly large.<sup>2</sup> Students who face challenging economic circumstances also exhibit lower reading achievement scores.<sup>3</sup> Low reading proficiency in third grade is an indication that our early learning foundation, beginning at birth, needs significant improvement.

## Addressing the importance of early childhood support

We know that in order to improve third grade reading scores, we must not only focus on high quality literacy curriculum and instruction within our public schools, but we must also develop a strong ecosystem for quality early learning. Nashville faces challenges in ensuring our youngest learners have access to quality early learning opportunities. In 2021, 21% of census tracts in



**Percentage of Nashville's children who had zero child care slots available to them**

Nashville (within which reside roughly 53% of Nashville's children) had zero child care slots available to them. Ensuring there are enough affordable, accessible, high quality child care slots for all children from birth to age 5 continues to challenge government, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders in our city.<sup>4</sup>

In 2016, a group of these leaders came together to highlight the importance of these issues and develop a plan of action to address them. This plan, the *Blueprint for Early Childhood Success*, outlined six pillars of recommendations for the community to advance. The *Blueprint* had an immense impact on the early child care and education community, activating interest, creating urgency, and



sparkling opportunities for investment in solutions to address these issues.

Over the next several years, this collective effort (adopting the name of the report that inspired its action) would see both successes and challenges. The *Blueprint* report provided a strong research foundation for collective action, and early investments were made in short-term projects to begin to understand what works and what doesn't. In late 2018, United Way of Greater Nashville (UWGN) was selected to take over the leadership of the work from the Nashville Public Education Foundation (who had spearheaded the research and development of the *Blueprint* report). In 2019, United Way began the work of building relationships and establishing a strong governance structure to guide this complex, far-reaching body of work.

## Pivoting to handle disruptions

On March 3, 2020, Nashville was hit by an EF-3 tornado, causing significant damage to homes, schools, and businesses in several neighborhoods. One week later, the world began to shut down in an effort to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Blueprint* leadership, like other leaders in the city, made the decision to pivot to crisis mode, focusing its energy on determining how to best support Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) and other providers in the move

to virtual learning and supporting children and families while schools and centers were closed. Over the next several months, the *Blueprint* would make several short- and long-term investments to support families, children, providers, and educators in mitigating the impacts of the pandemic on learning and instruction.

## Recovering and planning for the future

In 2021, as the world began adjusting to its "new normal," the *Blueprint* made several key investments



Powered by TQEE

and strategic decisions. Megan Godbey was hired as the *Blueprint*'s first full-time Director. Additionally, the *Blueprint* joined forces with the Bright Start TN initiative, a statewide

effort to address lagging third grade reading scores led by Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE). These two decisions enabled *Blueprint* partners to begin to make the shift from "putting out fires" in 2020 to engaging in real strategic efforts to move the *Blueprint* work forward post-pandemic.

<sup>1</sup> Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Early Warning Confirmed [gradelevelreading.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EarlyWarningConfirmed.pdf](https://gradelevelreading.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EarlyWarningConfirmed.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 2020-2021 3rd Grade TN Ready ELA Proficiency, Nashville-Davidson County, accessed from Tennessee Department of Education

<sup>3</sup> 2018-2019 K-3 MAP and FAST assessment scores, accessed from Metro Nashville Public Schools

<sup>4</sup> Blueprint for Early Childhood Success [www.raisingreadersnashville.org/s/RRN\\_BlueprintForEarlyChildhoodSuccess\\_report.pdf](https://www.raisingreadersnashville.org/s/RRN_BlueprintForEarlyChildhoodSuccess_report.pdf)

# Driving forward: a look at our recent processes and progress

Building on the *Blueprint's* strong foundation of partner commitment, community feedback, and research, we are continuing the collective work of advancing literacy justice for all children. This is a complex problem, operating in a complex environment, and we know that no one organization can solve it alone. To continue the important work of helping children build strong reading skills, we're moving forward in three key ways:

- 🌱 **Creating a healthy collective** by cultivating trust and relationships, establishing strong infrastructure, and developing strong identity and communication,
- 🌱 **Focusing on evidence-informed, data-driven, and community-led strategies**, while also fostering a strong culture of evaluation and learning to ensure the knowledge we gain through our action informs future efforts, and
- 🌱 **Driving change** by committing to taking risks where necessary, moving beyond planning to put strategies in place, and creating strong feedback and learning loops to inform future action.

When children have strong reading skills by third grade, they are positioned for greater academic and financial success – for life. That's why forming a solid learning

foundation in early childhood is one of the most crucial things we can do to help all children succeed. We know this is a community effort, and as such, we have focused on engaging new partners and re-engaging partners long committed to this work in our collective effort, now called Raising Readers Nashville.

Raising Readers Nashville is a community movement to advance literacy justice for all children. We collaborate with local, state, and national partners to ensure alignment and reduce duplication of work, implement best practices, and connect to a vast network of resources.

Our focus at the local level is to mobilize community partners to strengthen the early learning landscape and to support MNPS in their efforts to ensure children have the skills they need to read. Statewide, Raising Readers Nashville is a member of the Bright Start Tennessee Network, a statewide network of community partnerships dedicated to accelerating early learning outcomes and closing achievement and opportunity gaps for Tennessee children from birth to third grade.<sup>5</sup> Nationally, Raising Readers Nashville is a part of the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, the nation's foremost collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states, and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship.<sup>6</sup>

## Partnership Landscape



<sup>5</sup> Bright Start TN [tqee.org/bright-start](https://tqee.org/bright-start)

<sup>6</sup> Campaign for Grade Level Reading, Campaign Overview [gradelevelreading.net/about-us/campaign-overview](https://gradelevelreading.net/about-us/campaign-overview)

# Creating a Healthy Collective

Raising Readers Nashville uses a **Collective Impact framework**, which is composed of 5 key elements with a priority on actions that center equity.

7	Common agenda	Continuous communication	Shared measurement	Mutually reinforcing activities	Strong backbone
	A shared definition of the problem and shared vision for how to address it	Consistent communication focused on building transparency, trust, and strong relationships	Systems that track progress and outcomes in the same way to foster continuous learning and accountability	The integration of partners' different streams of work to maximize resources and efforts	An organization dedicated to aligning and coordinating the work of the group

The work of building and maintaining the health of a collective is a long-term process, one that takes attention, resources, and intention. We know that the earliest indicators of success for a collective effort such as Raising Readers Nashville is the establishment of these 5 conditions, and we're focused on investing in this infrastructure and holding ourselves accountable to their quality.

In our efforts over the past year to build a strong foundation for this work, we've focused our energy on three primary efforts:

## 1. Building a strong collaborative infrastructure

- Researched best practices for collaborative structures
- Established a Guiding Team, composed of Action Team co-chairs, to ensure continuous communication across strategies
- Established a leadership Roundtable, where institutional and city leaders can connect and support high-level strategy for Raising Readers Nashville
- Established Infrastructure Teams focused on supporting key elements across Action Teams and Raising Readers Nashville more broadly, including groups focused on Communications, Fundraising, Data and Evaluation, Community Engagement, and Policy

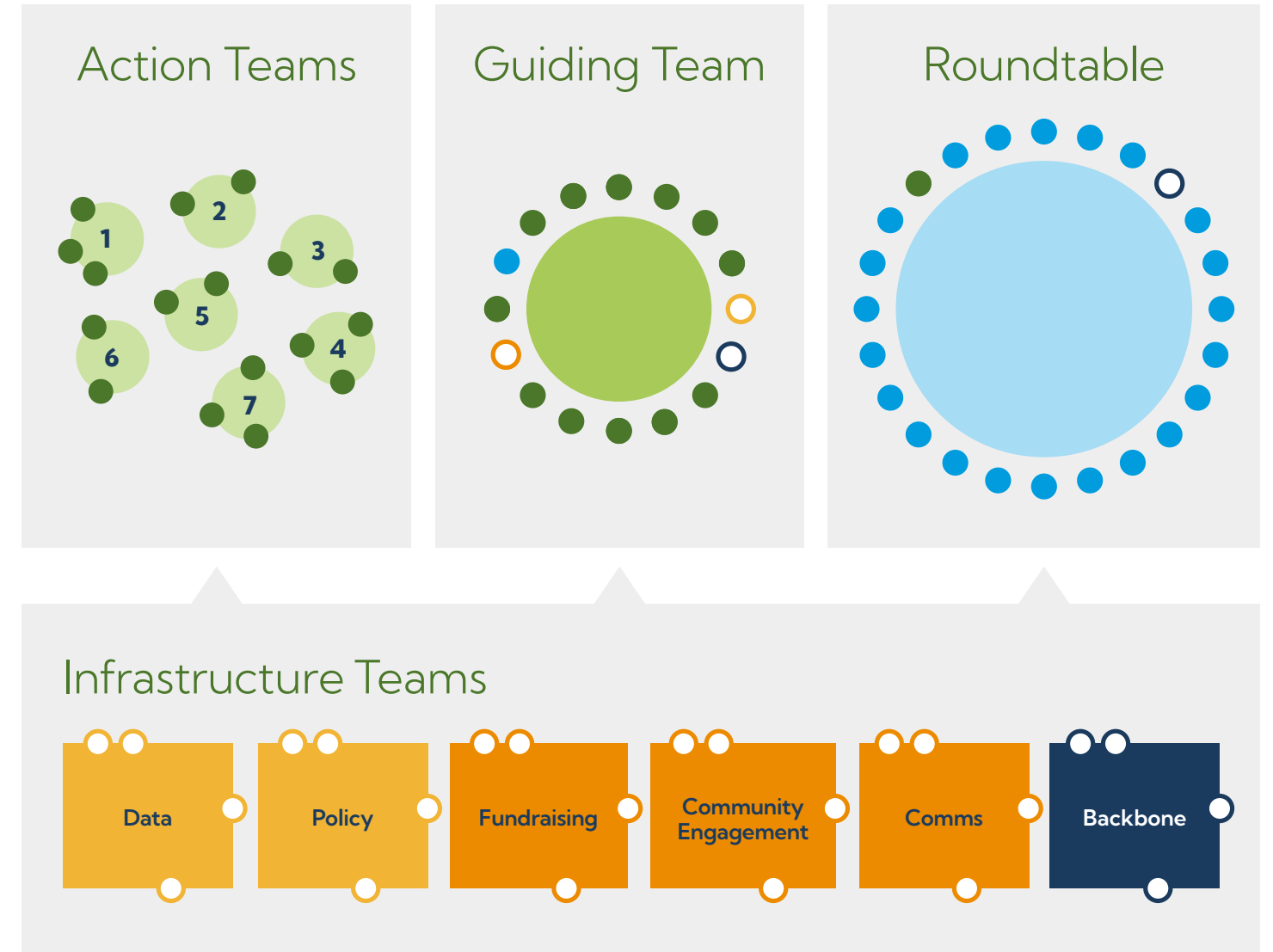
## 2. Fostering strong relationships and building trust

- Convened partners on a structured, regular basis where they shared their experiences and expertise, developed a shared vision for action, and co-created solutions that will address the identified challenges
- Focused on building transparency in the way Raising Readers Nashville operates, with clear lines of communication and encouragement of questions and feedback
- Developed a pilot to provide an honorarium to partners to acknowledge their commitment and investment of time

## 3. Clarifying and establishing the identity of Raising Readers Nashville

- Gathered a diverse group of community members that included nonprofit and philanthropic leaders, as well as parents and caregivers, to drive the process
- Engaged in meaningful messaging exercises to more deeply understand who we are as a group and how we need to communicate about our actions moving forward
- Underwent a thoughtful naming process that put greater focus on families and educators
- Developed materials and messaging guided by partner input to communicate our updated identity

# New Governance Structure



<sup>7</sup> Collective Impact Forum, What is Collective Impact [collectiveimpactforum.org/what-is-collective-impact](https://collectiveimpactforum.org/what-is-collective-impact)

# The evidence, data, and community insight informing our strategies

Raising Readers Nashville is committed to utilizing the most up-to-date information to drive our work, whether that information comes from academic literature, best practices from other efforts, or our own community members – parents and caregivers, families, and partners. We are not reinventing the wheel; instead we are committed to building on what has already been proven to work, and we make it a priority to involve families and caregivers to be a part of the solution.

To support this commitment to utilizing high-quality frameworks and best practices to guide our work, we referenced the framework developed by the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation as well as the framework from Bright Start TN, customized for the unique needs of Tennessee communities. Together, these frameworks are composed of three domains.

## 1. High-Quality Birth-Through-Age-Eight Learning Environments

High-quality child care, pre-kindergarten programs, and elementary schools help prepare children for school and life success. High quality programs are culturally competent, work to fully understand and adapt to the home cultures of the children in their care, use effective, developmentally-appropriate curricula to build their students' foundational learning skills, and take into account students' social-emotional development by maintaining positive discipline and healthy school climates.

## 2. Physical Health, Mental Health and Development on Track Beginning at Birth

Good physical and mental health help ensure children are successful learners from their earliest years, putting them on the pathway for grade level proficiency. Children who are often sick, have tooth pain, are dealing with chronic unmanaged or undiagnosed physical or mental health conditions, or who struggle with developmental delays and lack the supports they need often fall behind their peers in school. Good health in utero, good birth outcomes, developmental screenings, and access to health and mental health services as needed, are all crucial to laying a strong and healthy early learning foundation.

## 3. Supported and Supportive Families and Communities

Families play a critical role in building strong foundations for learning. Positive parent and child interactions, such as talking, playing, and reading together help children grow stronger emotionally, develop larger vocabularies, and learn more easily. Parents and caregivers often need support in order to be able to provide the care and opportunities their children need to thrive. Mental health and substance abuse services, nutrition supports, access to resources and opportunities otherwise unaffordable for their families, and services that build parents' skills and knowledge of child development are all examples of supports that can improve caregivers' capacity to effectively support children to thrive and achieve success in school.<sup>8,9</sup>

# 15 Measures of Success



**PATHWAYS  
BIRTH-THROUGH-AGE-EIGHT  
LITERACY DEVELOPMENT  
MILESTONES**

Language Skills on Track at 24, 36 and 48 Months → Developmentally Ready at Kindergarten Entry → Meeting Expected Growth in Reading (K-3) → Reading at Grade-Level by the End of Third Grade

All children with disabilities achieve expressive and receptive communication skills commensurate with their developmental ages.

<sup>8</sup> North Carolina Early Education Foundation, Measures of Success Framework [buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Measures-of-Success-Framework\\_FINAL.pdf](https://buildthefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Measures-of-Success-Framework_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Bright Start TN [tqee.org/bright-start](https://tqee.org/bright-start)

## Driving change through strong processes

Raising Readers Nashville recognizes the importance of consistent, sustained action to learn what works and what should be scaled and sustained. We also understand that when it comes to systems change and community collaboration, the process through which problems are identified and solutions are created is just as important as the strategies we undertake. To that end, our process intentionally included the following elements:



Best practices to support and accelerate long-term collaboration, such as activities and time invested explicitly to build relationships and trust among partners



Dedicated space and processes for reflecting, analyzing information, and learning, including exploring city-wide data through a custom-built internal Data Hub, featuring relevant research, previous reports, local data, and other information to inform action



Followed the the Bright Start TN process, in order to align with other Tennessee communities also doing this work



Best practices for facilitating collaboration and systems change, like those from the *Collective Impact Forum* and *Civic Lab*, among others

## Contributing to this process were ...

**84**  
organizations

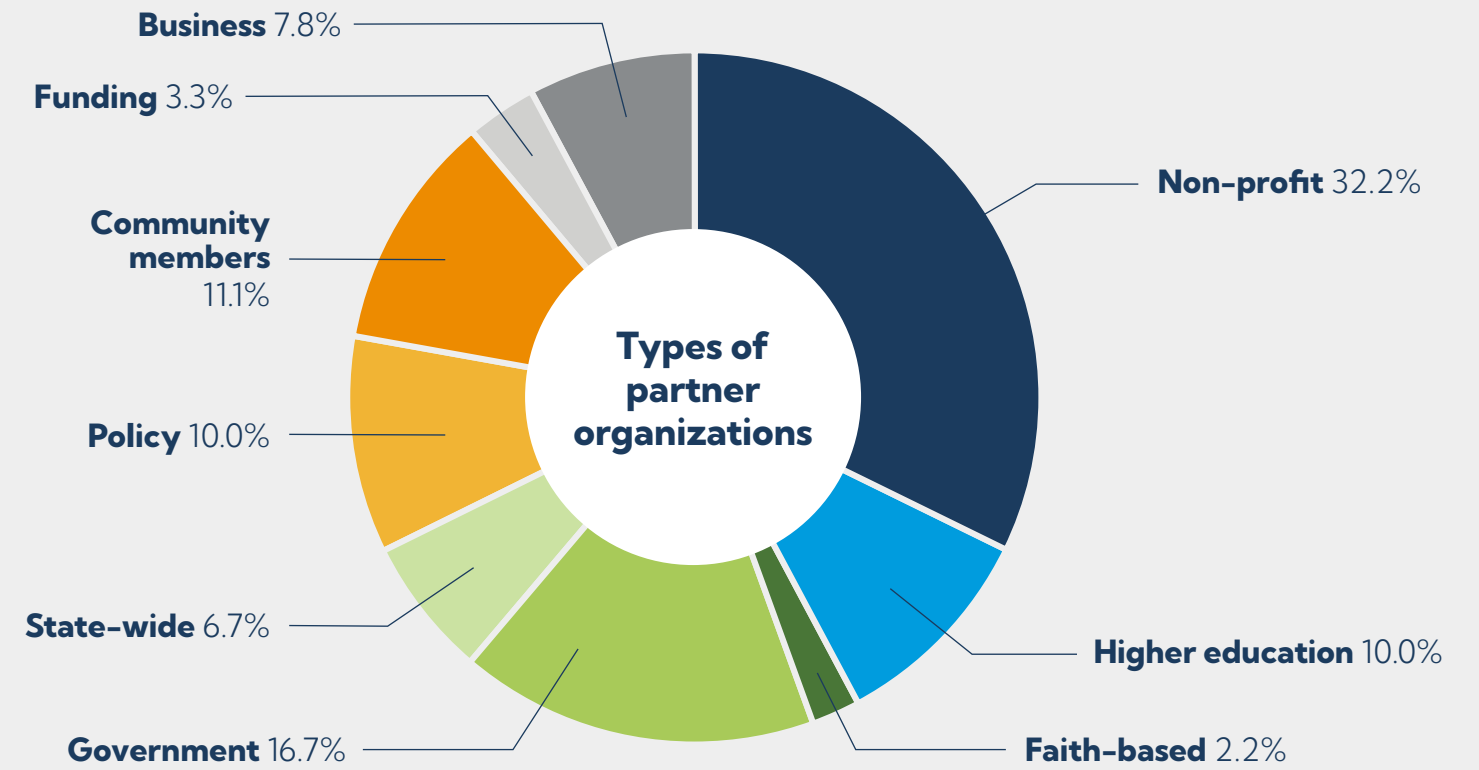
**114** hours invested in  
**46 partner convenings**

**191**  
individuals

**10**  
teams  
CONSISTING OF:



## Diverse perspectives driving informed strategies



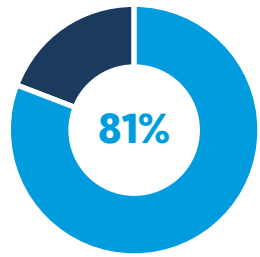
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
<b>Information gathering and review to inform strategy selection</b>	<b>Strategy identification and development</b>	<b>Action and launch planning</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated data collection and review based on 15 Measures of Success; built an internal-use online Data Hub</li> <li>Performed factor analysis to explore additional issues impacting the Measures of Success not identified through data review, as well as used <i>Waters of Systems Change</i> as a framework to explore factors/potential levers for change</li> <li>Held caregiver focus groups in three languages to inform strategy identification</li> <li>Performed a review of promising practices from TQEE clearinghouse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated Consensus Workshop and feasibility analysis to surface, analyze, and prioritize potential core strategies</li> <li>Performed a crosswalk of strategies with all working groups to avoid duplication/replication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated a series of structured sessions to develop implementation plans, utilizing a shared template and set of guidelines, with support from Backbone</li> <li>Completed identity work, selected new name, and began messaging work</li> <li>Selected measurements and timelines to plan for launch dates</li> </ul>



## Process results

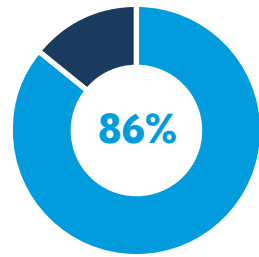
### Successful interactions towards a healthy Collective Impact model.

At the end of 2022, we polled partners to see how we had progressed in the five elements of a healthy CI.



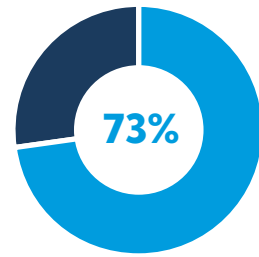
#### COMMON AGENDA

**81% of partners** surveyed have consensus/clarity on goals, strategies, and action steps



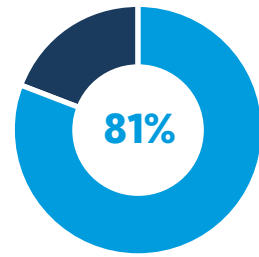
#### CONSTANT COMMUNICATION

**86% of partners** agree that structures/processes are in place to keep partners engaged/inspired/informed



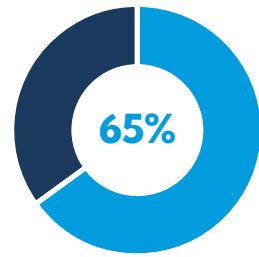
#### SHARED MEASUREMENT

**73% of partners** feel that they are provided with accurate and quality data



#### BACKBONE

**81% of partners** surveyed feel that the Backbone organization supports alignment



#### MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

**65% of partners** surveyed feel that partners are bought in/are using a collective plan of action

### Seven objectives for 2023–2024, with seven Action Teams driving implementation and tracking outcomes.

Our collaborative process culminated in a set of core objectives that will be the focus of Raising Readers Nashville's work over the next 18 months. Raising Readers Nashville's seven Action Teams have established multiple core strategies to accomplish each objective, defined metrics of success by which they will measure progress, outlined a clear implementation timeline, and are finalizing budgets to support their work. These Action

Teams, made up of 2 co-chairs and 10–15 implementation partners, will meet regularly with support from the Backbone to implement their strategies.

In developing and implementing these strategies, our goal is to do as much as we possibly can to address this complex challenge while still maintaining a strong and sustainable collaborative process. We know that the scope and scale of this work requires a long term commitment, and we believe that the strategies we plan to pursue are the best next steps for our community. The following pages detail these seven objectives and their core strategies, success metrics, and implementation timeline.

# 2023–2024 Objectives



# Access to Early Child Care

## Objective:

Increase access to quality early child care education programming.

## Core Strategy 1

Develop a platform to publish public-facing, user-friendly data and information to better understand the child care landscape in Davidson County (i.e., number of child care seats; child care deserts; wants/needs of parents; alignment of TDHS, TDOE, Find Child Care, and Childcare Nashville data; budget templates/projections, child care expansion process guide).

### Key Success Metric

- Publication of early care and education data that includes information regarding the state of child care in Davidson County, value of child care, links to resources, and other information to support those working to increase access to child care

## Core Strategy 2

Create a process guide that outlines steps to license new and existing spaces for child care, documenting policy or regulatory challenges/barriers and short- and long-term implications of such an undertaking.

### Key Success Metric

- Development and publication of child care expansion process guide

## Core Strategy 3

Expand access to child care by supporting providers to reimagine their existing space, maximizing square footage to serve more children.

### Key Success Metrics

- Number of licensed providers engaged in conversations
- Number of licensed providers that have reimaged use of space
- Number of additional seats created

## Timeline/Key Milestones



### PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

“We’re creating a clear picture of what exists and maximizing these resources. Driving efficiency today will help us in building future infrastructure.”

—Gina Tek, Child Development Specialist



# Aligned Transitions to Pre-k and Kindergarten

## Objective:

Support aligned transitions for children entering pre-k and kindergarten (both technical and non-technical supports).

## Core Strategy 1

Remove barriers to Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) pre-k enrollment, including increasing access to enrollment information and available supports for enrolling in pre-k.

### Key Success Metrics\*

- Reduce number of students on pre-k waitlist as a percentage of those being served
- Increase participation rate of families attending the pre-k & kindergarten Round-Ups each year
- Increase positive feedback on surveys from families who participate in Round-Ups
- Longitudinal enrollment trends in MNPS pre-k and kindergarten

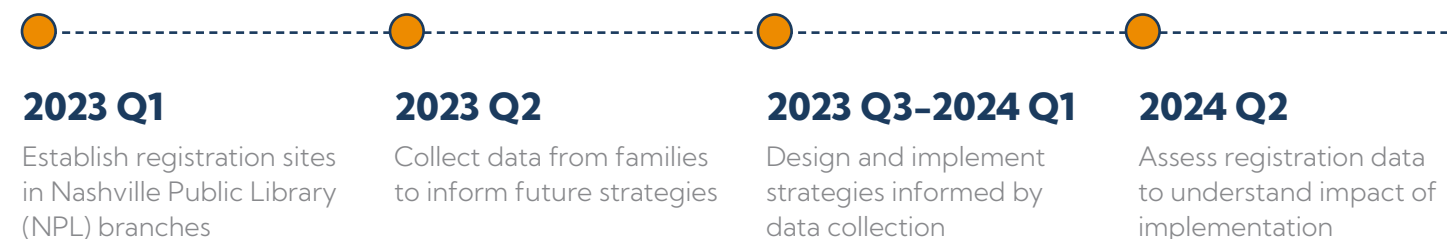
## Core Strategy 2

Streamline pre-k to kindergarten transition for all students wishing to attend MNPS kindergarten by partnering with community members to increase access to enrollment/school readiness resources.

### Key Success Metrics\*

- Increase capture rate from pre-k to kindergarten
- Increase participation rate of families attending K-Readiness Fair each year
- Increase participation rate of families attending the pre-k & kindergarten Round-Ups each year
- Increase positive feedback on surveys from families who participate in Round-Ups
- Longitudinal enrollment trends in MNPS pre-k and kindergarten

## Timeline/Key Milestones



### PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

“It’s exciting to be part of this collaboration happening between MNPS and other community partners. Everyone has a clear vision around our strategies.”

—Liz Attack, Nashville Public Library



## Core Strategy 2

Explore and map the current pipeline for early childhood educators to understand areas for intervention.

### Key Success Metric

- Publication of expanded report with recommendations for next steps to grow the number of early childhood educators

## Timeline/Key Milestones



# Gain and Retain Educators

### Objective:

Gain and retain educators to further strengthen the quality of early child care and education through systemic workforce investments.

## Core Strategy 1

Establish Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Quality of Life Fund to supplement the incomes of early childhood educators in Nashville.

### Key Success Metrics

- Number of dollars raised to support fund
- Number of educators served through fund
- Impact of ECE Fund on educator quality of life and other key indicators

### PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

“We know how critical early childhood education is to children developing the skills they need to eventually read at grade level. ECE teachers are important! As a community, we have to make teaching a financially-viable career choice if we want children to have skilled teachers.”

—Taylor Thurnau, TN Voices



# Nashville Area Early Childhood Training Collaborative (NAECTC)

## Objective:

Utilize evidence based approaches to train and support the early child care education workforce to strengthen the quality of early child care and education.

## Core Strategy 1

Establish the Nashville Area Early Childhood Training Collaborative to develop:

- ✔ Training directory and community of practice for early childhood professionals
- ✔ Marketing strategies for training directory
- ✔ Communities of practice for trainers
- ✔ Strategies to assist with Train TN and Department of Education navigation

### Key Success Metrics

- ✔ Impact of communities of practice
- ✔ Number of people accessing calendar and directory quarterly, monthly; signing up for trainings; completing trainings
- ✔ Educator perception of value of training experiences

## Core Strategy 2

Coordinate and organize available coaching and mentorship opportunities to support new and veteran early childhood educators.

### Key Success Metrics

- ✔ Impact of trainings and coaching support
- ✔ Number of educators completing coaching cycle
- ✔ Educator perception of value of training and coaching experiences

## Timeline/Key Milestones



### PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

“It’s encouraging to pursue this work despite the pandemic. I’m looking forward not only to finding innovative ways to provide educators with relevant resources, but also to continuing to build a collaborative community.”

—Precious Newbell, Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral Network



# Health Resources for Families

## Objective:

Increase awareness of health resources available to support families; with a focus on connecting families of children prenatal to 2 years old to screenings and early interventions.

## Core Strategy 1

Convene key early childhood service providers, with a focus on home visiting programs, key early childhood educators (preschool, Head Start, licensed/unlicensed child care providers), perinatal health providers, and trusted messengers, to identify gaps and address common needs across providers and target families that are disconnected or underserved.

### Key Success Metrics

- ✔ Number of convenings
- ✔ Number and type of stakeholders convened
- ✔ Buy-in from stakeholders to participate in the Health Hub

## Core Strategy 2

Design and build an Early Childhood Health Hub to share resources and supports with families and providers. Train service providers and families on Health Hub platform.

### Key Success Metrics

- ✔ Creation of Health Hub
- ✔ Number and type of resources/supports, users on Health Hub
- ✔ Positive feedback from families and early childhood service providers on the usability of the online platform

## Timeline/Key Milestones



### PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

“We tend to focus on grade-school when it comes to children’s reading skills, but this work actually starts before birth. This objective is about intervening at the earliest moment possible – think of that future impact!”

—Kylan Hadley, Metro Health Department, ACE Nashville



# Family Engagement

## Objective:

Design an intentional family engagement strategy for Raising Readers Nashville.

## Core Strategy 1

Conduct a landscape analysis to: identify barriers that hinder family engagement; understand existing institutions, groups, and communities working to support engagement of families who have children ages 0–8.

### Key Success Metrics

- Development and publication of landscape analysis
- Identification of strategies based on landscape analysis findings

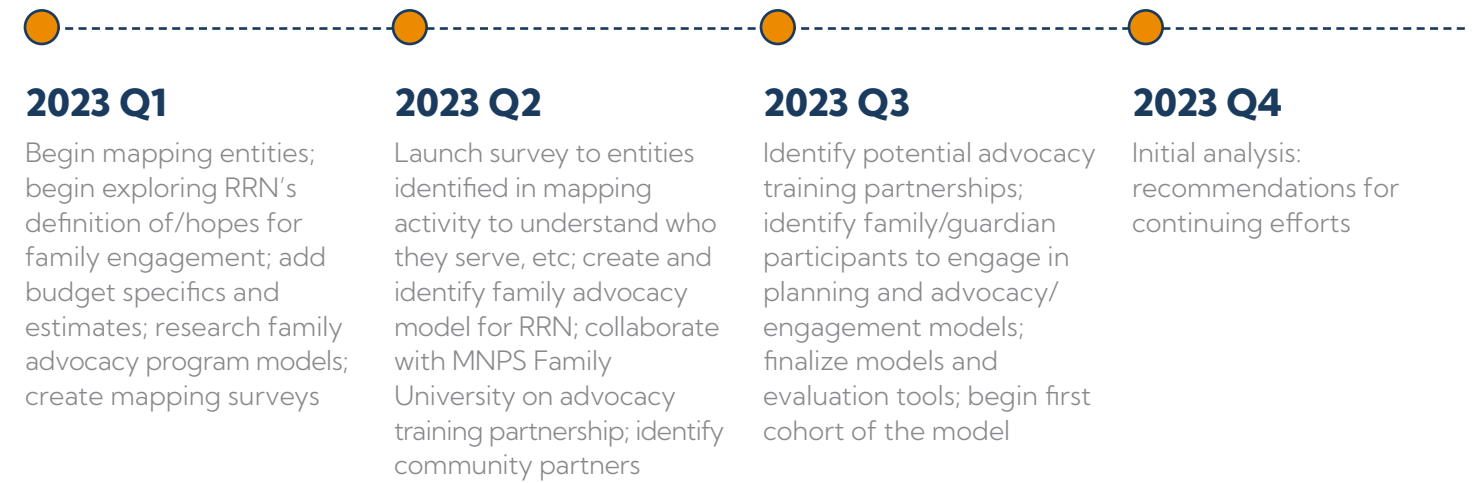
## Core Strategy 2

Define what family engagement looks like for Raising Readers Nashville (RRN) and identify next steps for engaging families in alignment with definition.

### Key Success Metrics

- Shared definition of *family engagement* for RRN
- Clear next steps set for engaging families in RRN in alignment with definition

## Timeline/Key Milestones



### PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

“Empowering the community to drive our objectives and strategies has been key. Maintaining this momentum in an equitable and accessible way is going to be critical to our decision-making as we continue this collaborative work.”

—Ashford Hughes, Metro Nashville Public Schools, My Brother’s Keeper Nashville



# Early Literacy Awareness and Book Access

## Objective:

Increase early literacy awareness, engagement, and book access.

### Core Strategy 1

Perform a gap analysis to understand accessibility of early literacy resources for families and early childhood professionals. Create strategies in response to gaps.

#### Key Success Metrics

- Synthesis of data collected from families and community organizations and publication/distribution of findings
- Development and distribution of toolkits
- Number of presentations to various stakeholders to promote toolkit
- Annual participant organization surveys about toolkit use

### Core Strategy 2

Coordinate and develop strategies to increase equitable book access for families in Davidson County.

#### Key Success Metrics

- Development of "current state" book distribution map
- Set annual targets to measure increase of book access

### Core Strategy 3

Launch a research-based messaging campaign on importance of literacy development for families and caregivers of young children birth to age 8. Align and coordinate messaging distribution across stakeholders and literacy partners.

#### Key Success Metrics

- Number of messaging campaign models reviewed from other communities
- Number of partners adopting shared messaging
- Development of success metric for public messaging campaign (e.g., number of users accessing messages through various platforms, etc.)

## Timeline/Key Milestones



#### PARTNER TESTIMONIAL

"When I moved to the U.S., having access to books was the most helpful resource to support my children's education."

—Parent participant in focus group



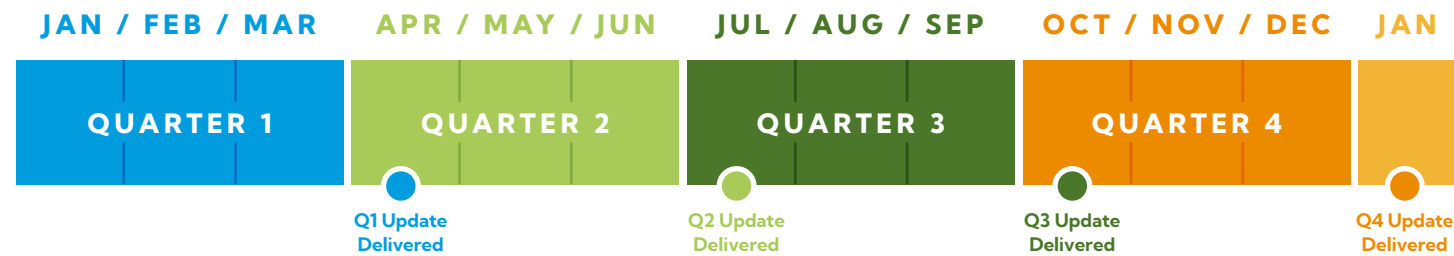
# Next Steps

Over the next 18 months, Raising Readers Nashville will advance these seven objectives through their core strategies, checking in with partners quarterly to understand what’s working, remove barriers, address challenges, and make pivots if necessary. This timeline allows partners to test strategies through the course of a school year and two summers. We intend to reconvene at the end of the 18 month timeline to plan the next phase of action. Between these quarterly touchpoints, Action Teams, Guiding Team, and the Roundtable will meet regularly to ensure the alignment of the work.

In addition to tracking progress on each of our seven

Action Team objectives, we will also be collecting data to understand how we are doing on each of those three core goals: creating a healthy collective, focusing on evidence-informed learning, and driving change. While we understand that we can’t expect to see immediate shifts in city-level metrics, we know that shifts in behaviors within the system (e.g., policies changed, resources being reallocated, strengthened relationships among partners) are indicative of longer-term success at the system level. We plan to celebrate short-term wins, learn from our failures and challenges, and look ahead to long-term change.

## Timeline of Data Delivery



# Engaging with Raising Readers Nashville

Helping children grow the learning skills they need to thrive is a community effort. Visit [raisingreadersnashville.org](http://raisingreadersnashville.org) and complete the contact form to get involved. You can be part of this community in one of two ways:



### Become an Action Partner

Action Partners are organizations and individual community members who contribute time, resources, and insight to the development and implementation of strategies.



### Become a Funding Partner

Funding Partners are organizations or individual community members who financially support the work of Raising Readers Nashville.



# Action Partners 2022-2023

**15th Avenue North Learning Academy**  
Penny Payne

all children excel  
**ACE Nashville**  
Kylan Hadley

**AIMHiTN**  
Association of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee  
**AIMHiTN**  
Kelli Celsor  
Kristin Williams

**ALIGNMENT NASHVILLE**  
**Alignment Nashville**  
Melissa Jaggars

**AWAKE Tennessee**  
Kelli Nowers

**Backfield in Motion**  
EDUCATE. ENGAGE. EMPOWER

**Backfield In Motion**  
Todd Campbell  
Thomas Chappelle

**BELMONT UNIVERSITY**  
**Belmont University**  
Lauren Lunsford

**BIRTH MANIFESTA**  
**Birth Manifesta**  
Tanzye Hill

**BOEDECKER FOUNDATION**  
**Boedecker Foundation**  
Brianna Healy



**Book'em**  
Melissa Spradlin



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE**  
**Boys and Girls Club of Middle Tennessee**  
Chandra McPherson

**Community members**  
Angie Deaton  
Susannah Fotopulos  
Tene Franklin  
Dustin Jones  
Judy Lewis  
Erin Merryman  
Freida Outlaw  
Chandra Sims  
Robert Taylor  
Gina Tek  
Kevin Warner



**The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee**  
Pat Lawson



**Conexion Americas**  
Tara Lentz  
Diana Perez  
Monica Trigos Padilla



**Discovery Center at Murfree Spring**  
Dale McCreedy



**Dollar General Literacy Foundation**  
Lindsey Bassler



**East Nashville Hope Exchange**  
Nikki Walker



**The Education Trust**  
Reginald Nash  
Meili Powell



**Fab Friz Education**  
Susan Frizsell



**The Family Center**  
Susan Galeas  
Laurie Hoffma  
Macy Halladay  
Robyn Price



**Governor's Early Literacy Foundation**  
Katie Elam  
Dean Hoskins  
Paige Shapiro



**Head Start**  
Henri Murphy



**Homeland Heart Birth & Wellness**  
Kristin Mejia



**Ingram Foundation**  
Emily Weiss



**Lipscomb University, Ayer's Institute for Learning & Innovation**  
Rachael Milligan



**Lipscomb University**  
Megan Parker Peters



**Love Before All, LLC**  
Annie Paraison



**Martha O'Bryan Center**  
Erica Couré



**The McNeilly Center for Children**  
Alyssa Dituro



**Meharry Medical College**  
Jared Elzey



**Metro Nashville Public Health Department**  
Angela Williams  
Raquel De La Huerqa



**Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, The Metropolitan Council**  
Joy Styles, District 32



**Metro Nashville Police Department**  
Jason Picanzo



**Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)**  
Dr. Adrienne Battle  
Mason Bellamy  
Dr. Brandy Buggs  
Kimberly Carter Jordan  
Ashford Hughes  
Susan Porter  
David Williams

**Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Advocacy Center**  
Sarah Cermak

**Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Curriculum & Instruction**  
Lindsey Kimery

**Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Early Learning**  
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Phyllis Phillips  
Fanita L. Gilmore Cameron

**Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Family Engagement**  
Kathryn Addison  
Shannon Key

**Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Office of Family and Community Partnerships**  
Yolanda Jackson

**Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Parent Advisory Committee**  
Bibi Hines

**Mom Works Too Inc.**  
Micah Johnson



**Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce**  
Shohreh Daraei  
Rena Hall



**Nashville Book Connection**  
Clare Clarke



**Nashville Classical Charter School**  
Charlie Friedman

**Nashville Mayor's Office**  
Robert Wallace



**Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE)**  
Dameion Cowans  
Issa Nkuyinka



**Nashville PROPEL**  
John Little



**Nashville Public Library**  
Elizabeth Atack  
Patricia Bashir  
Klem-Mari Cajigas  
Linda Harrison  
Marie Preptit



**Nurture the Next**  
Kristen Davis  
Cary Rayson



**Operation Andrew**  
Adam Buzard



**PENCIL**  
Angie Adams



**Raphah Institute, Early Embrace**  
SeTara DeThrow  
Chartrice Crowley



**Saint Mary Villa Child Development Center**  
Alyssa Garnett



**Salama Urban Ministries**  
Dawana Wade



**Save the Children Action Network (SCAN)**  
Katie Growden

**Schrader Lane church/ community member**  
Ruth Wharton



**Schrader Lane Childcare and Learning Academy**  
Monique Hodison



**SIVET EMPOWERMENT LLC.**  
**Sivet Empowerment LLC**  
Tevis Haynie



**Smiles Up Dentistry**  
Dr. Drake Dudley



**St. Luke's Community House**  
Katrina Henderson  
Annie McCutchen  
Patricia Nesbitt  
Melanie Shinbaum



**TACDL**  
**Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (TACDL)**  
Denise Costanza



**TennesseeCAN**  
Victor Evans

# Action Partners *continued*



**Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral Network**  
Precious Newbell



**Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth**  
Cory Bradfield  
Richard Kennedy  
Melissa McGee



**Tennessee Department of Children Services**  
Marjahna Curry



**Tennessee Department of Education**  
Jared Myracle



**Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, Regional Intervention Program (RIP)**  
Melissa Binkely  
Ashley Jasinski



**Tennessee Disability Coalition**  
Mary Kate Brown



**Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance**  
Christiane Buggs  
Renee Dillard



**Tennessee Justice Center**  
Signe Anderson  
Shana Watkins  
Kinika Young



**Tennessee Schools for the Deaf**  
**Tennessee Schools for the Deaf**  
Tracy Duncan



**Tennessee State University**  
Travonda Davenport



**Tennessee State University, TECTA**  
Belva Weathersby  
Dia Mimms



**TN Voices**  
Katherine Bell  
Rikki Harris  
Ellen Jones  
Taylor Thurnau



**United Way of Greater Nashville**  
**United Way of Greater Nashville**  
Apri Gassaway  
Elandriel Lewis  
Erica Mitchell



**Vanderbilt University**  
Caroline Christopher



**Vanderbilt University Medical Center**  
Dr. Joe Zickafoose

**Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Center for Child Health Policy**  
Sarah Loch  
Dr. Stephen Patrick



**Vanderbilt University, Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center**  
Dr. Cynthia Osborne  
Lisa Wiltshire



**YMCA**  
Jordan Waller  
Emma Broadfoot



**Youth Encouragement Services (YES)**  
Samantha Johnson  
Viva Price  
Kameron Spencer

**Consulting Partners:**



# Appendix & Sources

## Appendix

Raising Readers Nashville: Identity Process  
Parent Interviews report  
Report summary and Key takeaways

To access these assets, visit [raisingreadersnashville.org/resources](https://raisingreadersnashville.org/resources).

## Sources

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**Thank You**



A central graphic element consisting of the text "Thank You" in a bold, dark blue font, centered on a light green background. Below the text is a simple green leaf icon, flanked by two horizontal lines.



