Thrive in 5 Boston Initiative

Center for Social Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston

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**Thrive in 5 Boston Initiative**
Center for Social Policy
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies

### Summary

**The Center for Social Policy (CSP)** is the external evaluator for **Thrive in 5 Boston**. As part of the initiative, **CSP** is helping to identify, implement, and evaluate community interventions designed to increase the readiness of Boston children for success in school at kindergarten age. **Thrive in 5** is transforming Boston into a city that values and proactively nurtures young children’s school readiness, and envisions a city where families, educators, providers, business leaders and communities come together with the knowledge, skills, and resources to prepare children for success in school and beyond.

### Results/Impacts

- Evaluation learnings are used by community partners to inform their practice
- UMass Boston team is a thought partner, providing real time feedback for immediate use
- 5-6 UMass Boston students are involved per semester, approx 100 hours per student—conducting interviews in multiple languages
- The evaluation team taps multiple university resources by including students and faculty from four departments and the **CSP**.

### Approaches and Methods

**Thrive in 5**’s approach is to identify and implement a set of school readiness measures, from birth through kindergarten, that account for the 5 nationally-recognized domains of school readiness: language development; cognition and general knowledge; approaches to learning; social and emotional development; and physical and motor development. “School ready” is currently measured by the DIBELS, a literacy assessment.

Focus of implementation and evaluation is on: 14 priority strategies; 5 neighborhoods; 2 critical aspects of school readiness (early language and literacy skills and healthy social-emotional and behavioral development).

### Boston Children Thrive: On-the-ground Pilot Communities

- **Family Nurturing Center of MA** (Allston/Brighton)
- **Boston Community Partnerships for Children** Neighborhood Cluster (East Boston)
- **United South End Settlements** (South End/Lower Roxbury)
- **Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative** (Roxbury/North Dorchester)
- **Dorchester House Multi-Service Center** (Fields Corner)

### UMass Boston Team

**Interdisciplinary team’s senior researchers:**
- **Donna Haig Friedman** & **Mary Coonan**, CSP
- **Alice Carter**, Department of Psychology
- **Anne Douglass**, Early Education and Care in Inclusive Settings
- **Oscar Gutierrez**, former Associate Dean, College of Management

### Resources & Funders

To learn more about **Thrive in 5** and read the Year 2 report, visit:  
[www.thrivein5boston.org](http://www.thrivein5boston.org)

We appreciate the generous support of the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** and **The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley**.

### Goals and Objectives

The goals of **Thrive in 5** are:
- **By 2014**, interim goal = 75% of Boston’s children entering kindergarten will be ready.
- **By 2018**, all of Boston’s children will be ready for school at kindergarten entry. Today, only 54% of Boston’s children are.

*This means shifting the paths of about 5,000 to 7,000 young children.*

The **CSP** is working to:
- Design and implement evaluation of five Boston Children Thrive pilot communities;
- Design an overall evaluation plan for the initiative’s current and planned work;
- Coordinate evaluation of individual strategies with each other and the initiative overall.