



The Giving Common

An Initiative of the Boston Foundation

www.thegivingcommon.org

Strategies for Children, Inc.



General Information

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Boston, MA 02110
(617) 330-7380

Website

www.strategiesforchildren.org

Organization Contact

Titus DosRemedios tdosremedios@strategiesforchildren.org

Year of Incorporation

2001

Statements & Search Criteria

Mission Statement

Strategies for Children, Inc. (SFC) works to ensure that Massachusetts invests the resources needed for all children, from birth to age five, to access high-quality early education programs that prepare them for success in school and life.

Background Statement

Our mission: Strategies for Children (SFC) works to ensure that Massachusetts invests the resources needed for all children, from birth to age five, to access high-quality early education programs that prepare them for success in school and life.

Our vision is that by the year 2020, Massachusetts will stand out as a leader among states for its effective implementation of early learning systems that prepare its youngest citizens for success in school.

A unique approach:

SFC leverages its core strengths in policy development and monitoring, constituency building and partnerships, research, advocacy, communications/outreach, and practice at both the local and state levels to achieve its goals.

SFC is a catalyst for critical resource allocation, helping state policymakers and communities make smart choices to ensure that investments in early learning achieve high-leverage impact and lasting outcomes.

Over the past 16 years we focused our efforts on creating and driving, in partnership with others, a policy agenda to ensure that all children get the foundation they need for success. Our chief accomplishments include passage of landmark legislation (An Act Relative to Early Education and Care, 2008; An Act Relative to Third Grade Reading Proficiency, 2012) as well as the increased state investment in and preservation of high-quality early education (\$68 million for Universal Pre-K grants since 2006; \$31 million for Early Childhood Educator Scholarships since 2006), all of which has positioned Massachusetts to successfully secure competitive federal grants (\$15 million Preschool Expansion Grant, 2014; \$50 million Early Learning Challenge grant, 2011).

We are proud of what we have accomplished, and keenly aware of the work that remains.

To achieve our mission and vision, we:

- Develop and monitor policy for impact,
- Strengthen community delivery systems,
- Build sustained awareness and support through earned media, social media, and intentional communication, and
- Inform and advance the national movement for high-quality early education.

Our bottom line results:

An increased number of Massachusetts children (birth-5) who are enrolled in high quality early learning programs and who enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Impact Statement

Strategies for Children has led efforts that resulted in:

- Five consecutive years of post-recession state budget increases for early education and care, \$70 million since fiscal year 2013.
- Massachusetts awarded \$15 million federal Preschool Expansion Grant in December 2014, serving 850 4-year-olds annually in five cities. State-funded preschool planning grants supported 15 communities' strategic plans in FY16 and FY17.
- Historic \$38.5 million investment in the early education and care workforce in 2017.
- Enactment of An Act Relative to Third Grade Reading Proficiency in 2012.
- Enactment of An Act Relative to Early Education and Care in 2008, creating universal pre-Kindergarten in statute and outlining the responsibilities of the Board, Department, and Commissioner of Early Education and Care.

We are keenly aware of the challenges that remain to help Massachusetts achieve universal access to high-quality early education. Our current goals include:

Passage of state legislation, An Act Ensuring High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education (H.2874, S.240). SFC's estimated cost to expand preschool in 13 high-needs communities is \$129 million, and would serve 10,086 preschool-age children not currently enrolled in any program.

Sustain and build upon recent early education investments in the state budget, including investments in the early education and care workforce.

Provide direct support to eight to ten high-needs communities in Massachusetts, with a focus on Gateway Cities, to improve their birth-to-five early education systems.

Publicize lessons learned from our local work in a "Community Readiness Playbook."

Continue providing updated research and data products, including Fast Facts for all 351 cities and towns, charts and infographics on third grade reading proficiency, full-day kindergarten maps and charts, and research briefs on other critical topics in early education and care.

Needs Statement

SFC's most pressing needs are:

- General operating support for our proven constituency building/research/awareness/mobilization strategies to leverage significant public investments in high-quality early education and care;
- Support to sustain and grow our Community Readiness initiative, partnerships to empower local communities as they advance their early learning systems.
- Support to cover communications expenses, including our Eye on Early Education blog, social media, website, and e-advocacy constituent engagement tool;
- Board development and new champions from business and other sectors who recognize that the future of our commonwealth is dependent upon our collective ability to provide children a strong foundation of learning in the earliest years of life.

CEO/Executive Director Statement

Strategies for Children is evolving to fill a new role in the birth-third grade continuum. Policymakers and community leaders are increasingly interested in prioritizing young children's growth and development, school readiness, and early academic success. The question we now face is – how do we get there?

Building upon our expertise in advocacy, awareness-raising, and coalition building, SFC is bridging the worlds of policy and practice, and helping to ensure public and private resources are allocated effectively to impact outcomes for children. This means helping to inform the early learning strategies of local leaders and teams, and connecting communities to state policy opportunities and to one another, all while advocating for increased public investment to expand high-quality pre-k. If we hope to close the achievement gap (evident between groups of children as young as 18 months), the commonwealth must invest in high-quality early learning supports and programs for all children, beginning at birth. Having spent a career in K-12 education and leadership roles, I know that schools can't do it alone, nor should they be expected to.

As a political issue, early education is more prominent in this year's Massachusetts gubernatorial race than in any previous state election. This presents a huge opportunity to achieve our vision. I look forward to working with you, our partners, to turn these opportunities into meaningful outcomes for children.

Board Chair Statement

Paul O'Brien, president of The O'Brien Group, a technology investment and consulting firm, chairs the board of Strategies for Children. He also serves as president of Pan-Asia Development, an investment firm pursuing opportunities in Asia. Mr. O'Brien was a co-founder of Telecom Holding, LLC, a private equity fund investing in communications companies. He is the former CEO and chairman of the board of New England Telephone, after having served as executive vice president of New York Telephone. Mr. O'Brien currently sits on a variety of boards of both private and public companies and is a former director of the Bank of Boston and is an Advisory Board member of Sovereign Bank. Mr. O'Brien received a B.S. in electrical engineering from Manhattan College and an M.B.A. from New York University.

Here is his statement:

My involvement in SFC is grounded in a sense that if you are lucky enough to get an education, you have an obligation to give something back. My mother was a teacher. Both my sisters were teachers. One of them still is. So it was a natural evolution for me to become an advocate. From a business perspective, investing in early education is the most cost-effective use of resources.

There are many examples of businesses having jobs they can't fill because people don't have the skill set. The only way you get the skill set is through education and experience. You need an educated populace. It is incumbent on us to build an infrastructure for young children. It's like seed capital. Numerous researchers, including the Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman, say investing in young children is not only the right thing to do, it's also the smart thing to do.

Even though Massachusetts is one of the more successful states, there's still a long way to go. Nearly two-fifths of third graders read below grade level. There is still a lot of child poverty. We have not allocated the resources needed to ensure that all children have access to high-quality early education.

I am proud to have been associated with SFC since its inception. The key to a successful organization is to have people who think out of the box. SFC has that. It's why we've been such a successful catalyst for laying the foundation for a statewide system of high-quality early education.

It's why the reading proficiency campaign is generating such strong response and holds such great promise.

Supporting this mission and this highly successful organization remains a challenge, as several of our major funders have ceased funding early education. SFC seeks new resources to develop additional capacity to drive the movement to give young children the strong start that will benefit us all.

Service Categories

Preschools

Government and Public Administration

Community Coalitions

Geographic Areas Served

SFC's work is focused on the 442,592 children birth-age 5 living in Massachusetts. Our state policy and advocacy work is focused primarily at the State House and state government agencies. Locally, we have contacts in every region of the state, and with a focus on small and mid-sized Gateway Cities. Nationally, we provide consulting and advisory services to advocacy, philanthropic and civic organizations working in other states and at the federal level.

Please review online profile for full list of selected areas served.

Programs

Early Education for All Campaign

Description	The pioneering Early Education for All Campaign is a statewide coalition of leaders from diverse sectors – business, education, early childhood, labor, health care, philanthropy, religion – that works with parents, grassroots leaders and policymakers to ensure that Massachusetts children have access to high-quality early education. Its successes include creation of the nation’s first Department of Early Education and Care and establishment of the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship.
Budget	600000
Category	Education, General/Other
Population Served	Children and Youth (0 - 19 years), ,
Program Short Term Success	Increased investment in high-quality early education in the FY14 state budget.
Program Long term Success	Unanimous passage and enactment of An Act Relative to Early Education and Care in 2008, which formally establishes UPK in state law.
Program Success Monitored By	We have developed a robust internal evaluation/tracking system that allows us to monitor both our policy outcomes and the strategies and tactics we use to achieve them.
Examples of Program Success	Public early education investments totalling \$281 million

Community Readiness initiative

Description	<p>Strategies for Children serves as a thought partner to local communities across the state working to improve their early learning systems. Local leaders are increasingly interested in supporting young children and families during their earliest years, and are creating plans for preschool expansion, kindergarten readiness, early literacy, and more. But most communities need outside help to bring their plans to life. Through local partnerships, our goal is to see improved outcomes and effective coordination. We help align local efforts with state policy and established research.</p> <p>Community readiness means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">§ Collaborative local leadership;§ Coordinated local initiatives;§ Integrated service delivery across the "mixed-provider system" of public schools and community-based early education and care programs;§ Diverse stakeholder participation, and;§ Broad public awareness.
Budget	150000
Category	Community Development, General/Other
Population Served	Infants to Preschool (under age 5), Families, At-Risk Populations
Program Short Term Success	.
Program Long term Success	.
Program Success Monitored By	.
Examples of Program Success	.

Program Comments

CEO Comments

SFC is at a very exciting juncture as we sustain and grow our state policy and advocacy work, complimented by our local community partnerships. Our biggest challenge continues to be securing the financial resources required to sustain our work on behalf of children and families in the commonwealth.

In recent years, many of our longstanding philanthropic partners focused on funding early education and policy have ceased funding one or both. This is part of a national trend. Fortunately we have managed our expenses well enough to build up a significant operating reserve. Our board has authorized tapping into that reserve to help cover operating deficits.

We seek new funders who believe in our mission for young children and families, and are interested in advances at the state and local levels. Our local work involves community organizing, capacity building, civic engagement, storytelling, and advocacy. We aim to empower local communities, primarily small cities with limited resources, growing needs, and historically underserved populations, to solve complex system-building challenges on their own, and welcome support from funders interested in this work.

Management

CEO/Executive Director

Executive Director

Mr. Chris Martes

Term Start

July 2014

Email

cmartes@strategiesforchildren.org

Experience

As president and chief executive officer, Christopher Martes is responsible for the overall strategic leadership and management of Strategies for Children, an independent nonprofit organization that works to ensure that children in Massachusetts have access to high-quality early education, enter elementary school ready to succeed, and become proficient readers by the end of third grade. Chris has served on SFC's board since 2012. A former director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Chris has decades of experience in many K-12 leadership roles. After starting his career in the classroom, he served as both principal and superintendent in a number of Massachusetts communities including Framingham, Newton, Foxborough, and Medfield. In the 2013-2014 school year, he served as interim superintendent for Wrentham Public Schools. In 2008, Chris was honored as the Massachusetts School Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators. He has served as adjunct faculty at Cambridge College and University of New Hampshire, engaged in education consulting on the topics of administrator training and strategic planning, and presented at numerous conferences, seminars, and workshops. Chris holds multiple degrees in education, including a Ph.D. in Curriculum, Instruction, and School Administration from Boston College, a Master of Education in School Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, both from Bridgewater State University.

Former CEOs

Name**Term**

Margaret Blood

July 2001 - Sept 2012

Ms. Carolyn Lyons

Sept 2012 - June 2014

Senior Staff

Amy O'Leary**Title**

Campaign Director, Early Education for All

Experience/Biography

Staff Information

Full Time Staff

3

Part Time Staff

1

Volunteers

389

Contractors

3

Retention Rate

100%

Staff Demographics - Ethnicity

African American/Black	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	1
Caucasian	3
Hispanic/Latino	0
Native American/American Indian	0
Other	0 0

Staff Demographics - Gender

Male	2
Female	2
Unspecified	0

Formal Evaluations

CEO Formal Evaluation	Yes
CEO/Executive Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually
Senior Management Formal Evaluation	Yes
Senior Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually
NonManagement Formal Evaluation	Yes
Non Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually

Plans & Policies

Organization has a Fundraising Plan?	Under Development
Organization has a Strategic Plan?	Yes
Years Strategic Plan Considers	5
Date Strategic Plan Adopted	May 2015
Management Succession Plan?	Under Development
Organization Policy and Procedures	Yes
Nondiscrimination Policy	Yes
Whistleblower Policy	Yes
Document Destruction Policy	Yes
Directors and Officers Insurance Policy	Yes
Is your organization licensed by the Government?	No
Registration	No
Permit?	No

Awards

Awards

<u>Award/Recognition</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Year</u>
Excellence in Advocacy Award	Massachusetts Nonprofit Network	2014

Board & Governance

Board Chair

Board Chair	Mr. Paul O'Brien
Company Affiliation	The O'Brien Group Inc.
Term	July 2001 to 0
Email	pobrien@obriengrp.com

Board Members

Name	Affiliation	Status
Mara Aspinall	Ventana Medical Systems	Voting
Margaret Blood	Strategies for Children Inc.	Voting
Ms. Jill Dixon	Taly Foundation	Voting
Ms. Wendy Fox	Blackbaud, Inc.	Voting
Ms. Valerie Gumes	Retired	Voting
Paul O'Brien	The O'Brien Group Inc.	Voting
Kitt Sawitsky	Goulston & Storrs Counsellors at Law	Voting

Board Demographics - Ethnicity

African American/Black	1
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0
Caucasian	6
Hispanic/Latino	0
Native American/American Indian	0
Other	0 0

Board Demographics - Gender

Male	2
Female	5
Unspecified	0

Board Information

Number of Full Board Meetings Annually	3
Board Meeting Attendance %	83%
Written Board Selection Criteria?	No
Written Conflict of Interest Policy?	Yes
Percentage Making Monetary Contributions	75%

Percentage Making In-Kind Contributions	13%
Constituency Includes Client Representation	Yes

Comments

CEO Comments

As SFC continues to sustain and grow its state and local work in the early education space, we are simultaneously undergoing a review of current resources at both the staff and board levels. Attracting board members who are eager to be innovative and understand the importance of aligning state level policies with ground level educational practices is a high priority over the next few years. We seek board members with the following backgrounds/skill sets: 1) campaign marketing; 2) fundraising; 3) K12 leadership experience; 4) business leadership and networks; 5) venture philanthropy; 6) public policy; 7) children's health/pediatrics.

Impact

Goals

Our mission: Strategies for Children (SFC) works to ensure that Massachusetts invests the resources needed for all children, from birth to age five, to access high-quality early education programs that prepare them for success in school and life.

Our vision is that by the year 2020, Massachusetts will stand out as a leader among states for its effective implementation of early learning systems that prepare its youngest citizens for success in school.

Our bottom line results: An increased number of Massachusetts children (birth-5) who are enrolled in high quality early learning programs and who enter kindergarten ready to learn.

We actively monitor progress towards this goal, through data on preschool enrollment and quality, and community readiness factors such as local initiatives and capacities. We track public investment in high-quality early education through the state budget. Along with partners in the early education field, our advocacy has led to five consecutive years of post-recession state budget increases for early education and care, \$70 million since fiscal year 2013, but overall spending still lags behind pre-recession levels. Massachusetts must spend more, and wisely, to achieve true impact in the B-5 space, and an early learning foundation as strong as our nationally recognized K-12 system.

Strategies

To achieve our vision, we...

- Develop and monitor policy for impact
In partnership with practitioners and policymakers, we advance and monitor research-based public policies, with an emphasis on state policy, budget, and legislation. We advocate for smart, effective, and accountable investment of public and private funds, and serve as a resource on early education to elected officials and candidates for office.
- Build sustained awareness and support through intentional media/outreach
Our earned media work has resulted in more than 150 positive editorials and has positioned us as a resource for the press. Our Eye on Early Education blog is one of few early education blogs with a significant national presence. We stimulate conversation on Twitter and Facebook to build a grassroots movement for children.
- Strengthen community delivery systems
We serve as thought partners to local communities across the state, working to improve their early learning delivery systems in order to achieve improved outcomes and effective local coordination. We help align local efforts with state policy and established research.
- Inform and advance the national movement
We help to lead and participate in multiple networks to advance policies at the federal level, learn best practices from other states, and bring new knowledge and resources to Massachusetts. In partnership with the Massachusetts Congressional delegation, we advocate for increased federal early education funding. We are frequently asked to provide technical assistance and consulting services to advocacy and philanthropic groups in other states.

Capabilities

[Excerpts from five-year strategic framework created with Harvard's Community Action Partners in 2015:]

Since its founding more than a decade ago, Strategies for Children has been a leader in policy and advocacy, focused on serving the needs of young children in the Commonwealth and sometimes beyond. Bringing significant economic, developmental, and policy research to the fore, SFC has been an effective voice for expanding educational opportunities for young children overall, and particularly for children of low-income families.

Over the years that SFC has been advocating for universal access to high quality early education, it has been a force for forward progress. SFC has been a leader in advancing state policy and establishing an early education department. Helped by new developments in brain research, SFC has furthered the understanding of policymakers and the general public regarding the importance of early education.

UNIQUE COMPETENCIES

SFC is a catalyst for critical resource allocation, helping state policymakers and communities make smart choices to ensure that investments in early learning achieve high-leverage impact and lasting outcomes.

SFC possesses unique attributes that will enable it to serve the Commonwealth effectively:

- Expertise and relationships that span Massachusetts' early learning and K-12 educational systems;
- Credibility both at the community level and in the state policy arena;
- An ability to capitalize on the critical intersection between policy and practice;
- Strategic partnerships locally and nationally which provide access to knowledge of best practices.

Indicators

Success looks like 10,000 additional preschool-age children across Massachusetts enrolled in high-quality early education and entering kindergarten ready to succeed.

Legislative success will be achieved if the Legislature passes comprehensive preschool expansion legislation, with sufficient funding attached to begin a phase in beyond the initial five PEG communities. Funding for preschool expansion would be determined annually by the Legislature, though we will advocate for stable and consistent funding streams to allow for local planning. If preschool expansion legislation passes, we estimate that communities would be ready to spend, at a minimum, \$129 million in new state funding to enroll 10,086 preschool-age children not currently enrolled in any program. This is our estimate for the unmet demand for preschool in 13 communities that created innovative preschool plans in FY16. Most of these communities are ready to implement funds well, with ongoing guidance from EEC staff and other technical assistance providers.

The funding amount could start out much lower, i.e. \$10 million per year increased over five years. Or it could expand to be much larger, as high as \$500 million to achieve near-universal preschool enrollment statewide. Given the fiscal realities of the Massachusetts state budget, a “slow and steady” approach is more likely to occur than a big, bold overnight expansion.

We have not yet calculated cost savings that would accrue to the state as a result of high-quality preschool, but leading economists have found high returns on investing in high-quality early education, as high as 13% per child annually, particularly for children from low-income families. One economist, using findings that show pre-K leads to a reduced need for costly special education services, estimates that a targeted pre-K program would pay for itself by the time the first cohort of children were in 6th – 10th grade, depending on the cost of special education in a given state.

SFC’s bottom line goal links preschool enrollment with kindergarten readiness. Therefore, our vision of educational success is one in which year after year a greater number and percentage of children enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Kindergarten readiness would lead to greater success in early elementary grades, third grade proficiency, lower rates of special education and retention throughout K-12, greater high school completion rates, and post-secondary attendance and graduation, leading to greater economic opportunity. Increased Kindergarten readiness likely has additional effects on health, social, family and community outcomes. We will keep a close eye on the research base in this area in the years ahead - as more evidence emerges we will communicate the findings, update our strategy, and expand our partnerships.

Beneath this primary organizational goal, SFC has many sub-goals. We measure all of our activity and progress to understand reach, impact, effectiveness, and make continuous adjustments as needed. Below are some examples of SFC’s tactical success measures. These are tracked with internal spreadsheets which we update, review, and share as a team.

- State budget tracker – Budget amounts for all relevant EEC and education line items, by fiscal year.
- Legislation tracker – A workplan for all SFC-led activity related to passage of An Act Ensuring High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education (H.2874, S.240)
- Community trackers – We have developed side by side comparison charts to help analyze and compare local preschool expansion plans, community readiness factors, and numbers of children enrolled in high-quality preschool (in development).

- Communications trackers – For press coverage and social media. Our Luminate Online email and advocacy tool has built-in analytics which we also analyze with help from Luminate support staff.

Progress

From FY09-FY17, Massachusetts went into recession and then recovery. The Department of Early Education and Care's budget fell from \$570 million in FY09 to \$488 in FY13, then slowly recovered up to \$553 in FY17. Throughout this period, SFC and our Early Education for All campaign advocated for preserving, protecting, and investing in high-quality early education. Though our efforts, and those of many other allies, coalitions, and legislative champions, we have been largely successful in protecting early education from the harmful effects of the recession. But despite \$70 million in state budget increases for early education since FY13, we are not yet back to pre-recession spending levels.

As there were in 2009, there are still in post-recession 2017 significant new investments needed to grow the B-5 sector. Our challenge now in a slow growth, post-recession economy, is to keep making the case to policymakers that early education is a wise investment, and engaging them and others as champions in this cause. Despite the lack of substantial state revenue growth, Massachusetts needs to continue to prioritize this issue. Smart investments in the early years will pay for themselves over time as children succeed in school and life to a greater degree than they would have without any early childhood program supports.

Financials

Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year Start	July 01, 2017
Fiscal Year End	June 30, 2018
Projected Revenue	\$575,000.00
Projected Expenses	\$547,471.00
Endowment?	No
Credit Line?	No
Reserve Fund?	Yes
Months Reserve Fund Covers	0

Detailed Financials

Revenue and Expenses

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Total Revenue	\$911,809	\$502,923	\$490,980
Total Expenses	\$694,517	\$697,462	\$782,929

Revenue Sources

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Foundation and Corporation Contributions	--	--	--
Government Contributions	\$0	\$0	\$0
Federal	--	--	--
State	--	--	--
Local	--	--	--
Unspecified	\$0	--	--
Individual Contributions	\$786,471	\$453,072	\$450,460
Indirect Public Support	\$0	--	--
Earned Revenue	\$125,334	\$49,845	\$39,882
Investment Income, Net of Losses	\$4	--	\$638
Membership Dues	\$0	--	--
Special Events	\$0	--	--
Revenue In-Kind	--	--	--
Other	\$0	--	--

Expense Allocation

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Program Expense	\$598,248	\$576,214	\$590,831
Administration Expense	\$82,241	\$87,866	\$87,052
Fundraising Expense	\$14,028	\$33,382	\$105,046
Payments to Affiliates	--	--	--
Total Revenue/Total Expenses	1.31	0.72	0.63
Program Expense/Total Expenses	86%	83%	75%
Fundraising Expense/Contributed Revenue	2%	7%	23%

Assets and Liabilities

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Total Assets	\$388,216	\$176,053	\$376,839
Current Assets	\$388,216	\$176,053	\$376,606
Long-Term Liabilities	\$0	\$0	\$0
Current Liabilities	\$21,293	\$26,422	\$32,669
Total Net Assets	\$366,923	\$149,631	\$344,170

Short Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Current Ratio: Current Assets/Current Liabilities	18.23	6.66	11.53

Long Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Long-Term Liabilities/Total Assets	0%	0%	0%

Top Funding Sources

Fiscal Year	2016	2015	2014
Top Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Second Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Third Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--

Capital Campaign

Currently in a Capital Campaign?

No

Comments

Foundation Staff Comments

Financial summary data in charts and graphs above are per the organization's IRS Form 990s. Contributions from foundations and corporations are listed under individuals when the breakout was not available.