Income, race and ZIP code—do they determine a child’s chance at success in school? For too many local families, the answer is yes. At United Way of King County, we stand up to this inequity through our ParentChild+ program.

We do this for the parents who work multiple jobs to keep their families afloat but can’t afford curriculum-based daycare or preschool. We do this for the families who flee war-torn countries and face a world of newness—including the education system their kids will join. We do this because children shouldn’t face an endless cycle of poverty because of the neighborhood they grow up in.

Kids behind in school from day 1 often means kids struggling to keep up throughout their academic years, which doesn’t bode well for their future. The ParentChild+ program zeroes in on the opportunity gap by supporting parents during the early, crucial years of children’s development. The program works with low-income, isolated families in their homes when the kids are 2 and 3 years old—because this window of cognitive growth cannot be missed.

**HOW IT WORKS**

Families are matched with trained coaches, known as home visitors, of the same language and cultural background.  

Home visitors meet with families in their homes two times a week.  

Home visitors bring a book or toy each week, model positive interaction, and teach parents how to work with and advocate for their children.  

Children leave the ParentChild+ program more prepared for kindergarten.

**ALL ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIPS**

Business leaders passionate about early learning and closing the opportunity gap brought the national ParentChild+ program to King County in 2006. Together, we built a sustainable program locally. Research and data from kids who had graduated from the ParentChild+ program soon confirmed its success so unquestionably that the program earned wider confidence as well as the public/government funding that followed.

**STATEWIDE: READY FOR KINDERGARTEN AND BEYOND**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENTCHILD+ PROGRAM GRADUATES</th>
<th>MET GRADE 3 MATH STANDARDS</th>
<th>MET GRADE 3 READING STANDARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARENTCHILD+ PROGRAM GRADUATES</strong></td>
<td><strong>MET GRADE 3 MATH STANDARDS</strong></td>
<td><strong>MET GRADE 3 READING STANDARDS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PEER COMPARISON GROUP</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
<td><strong>55%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>61%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“The ParentChild+ program supports whole families, and by increasing family engagement in early childhood development and learning, is a powerful strategy for mitigating racial inequity in our education systems.”

Beth McCaw  
President, Washington Women’s Foundation, and United Way Champions donor
Learning, Growing, Thriving

Supporting Kids and Families Through United Way’s ParentChild+ program

This program’s long success was reinforced in 2016, when the Metropolitan King County Council included it as part of the funding plan for the voter-approved Best Starts For Kids Initiative. Not only does this show public confidence in early learning strategies like the ParentChild+ program, but it also earmarks financial investments from King County to merge with additional funds currently being raised by United Way. The combination of public and private funding allows us to serve 1,300 families this year.

Supporting Kids by Leveraging Every Dollar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$500K</td>
<td>Families and Education Levy—City of Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500K</td>
<td>General Fund—City of Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3 Million</td>
<td>Best Starts For Kids Initiative—King County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2 Million</td>
<td>Private funds needed to match city and county funds—You + United Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6 Million</td>
<td>Total to continue closing the opportunity gap with the ParentChild+ program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We recently broadened the network of partners from nine to 17. This expansion is focused primarily in South King County and South Seattle, with modest expansion in East and North King County. New programs will focus on communities currently underserved including Iraqi, Congolese and West African immigrants and refugees and African American and Native American families.

Daniel: A Great Start for Lifelong Learning

Three years ago, when Daniel was a shy and frequently uncommunicative 2-year-old, Dora, a native Spanish speaker, enrolled him in United Way’s ParentChild+ program. A home visitor who shared Spanish as her native language was the big win.

“I would practice singing the songs that Daniel and I learned in the books,” says Dora. “Learning together was wonderful for our relationship.”

Dora also credits the program with promoting her son’s development, including increased listening, focusing on tasks and engagement with peers, skills he can take with him as he moves on to 1st grade and beyond.

“Our network of program partners:

- Atlantic Street Center
- Children’s Home Society of Washington
- Chinese Information and Service Center
- Congolese Integration Network
- Denise Louie Education Center
- El Centro de la Raza
- Encompass
- Horn of Africa Services
- InterCultural Children and Families Services
- Iraqi Community Center of WA
- Kindering
- Neighborhood House
- Southeast Youth and Family Services
- Southwest Youth and Family Services
- Voices of Tomorrow
- West African Community Council
- YWCA

“This is about giving all children in our community, particularly the most vulnerable, a chance to thrive, both today and tomorrow. We’re proud to partner with United Way to leverage voter-approved funds from King County and add years to the ParentChild+ program.”

Brooke and Josh Williams, United Way ParentChild+ program donors