

YEAR IN REVIEW

2022-23



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A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends of Educare,

As I reflect on the 2022-2023 school year, I am honored to be in collaboration with such a tremendous cohort of passionate partners. Together, we are the Educare Network, a powerful collaborative of early childhood champions and changemakers.

Our work this past year advanced essential priorities and strategies within the Network’s [core strategic pillars](#) of “Exemplify, Innovate, and Amplify.” We continued to elevate and expand access to quality early learning and care, partner with caregivers and families to advance policy change, build the early childhood workforce, and share Educare’s innovative practices and learnings with colleagues in the field.

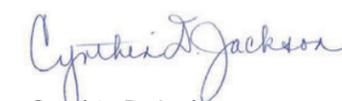
As we celebrate twenty years of collective learning and exponential growth, our Network is primed to have a greater, broader, bolder impact on the field of early childhood education. We will advance progress while sharing solutions to the critical challenges facing the field, including the workforce crisis and ongoing impacts of racial injustice.

Today, we continue to lift family voices, amplify the work of Educare schools and empower avenues for advocacy and activism. We are driving towards equitable access to quality educational experiences for every family in every community.

Thank you so much for your support for this Network, for children and families, and for the communities in which Educare is thriving.

Onward!

With gratitude and joy,



Cynthia D. Jackson
Executive Director of the Educare Network



ABOUT THE EDUCARE NETWORK

We are a national network of early childhood champions, comprised of comprehensive early care and education programs partnering with historically disinvested urban, suburban, rural and tribal communities to transform the lives of thousands of young children nationwide.

MISSION To advance quality early learning through partnership and innovation around practice, policy and research so every child can thrive.

VISION To ensure every family has equitable access to quality early care and education in their community, promoting positive family outcomes for generations to come.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING (DEIB)

Educare is committed to cultivating an anti-bias, anti-racist Network that amplifies families' cultural wealth, uplifts marginalized communities and leverages innovative best practices to advance early learning and care for all.

To ensure equitable opportunities and create an environment where everyone can thrive, we will address the root causes of inequities and exemplify Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging through a culturally relevant lens to dismantle unjust systems.

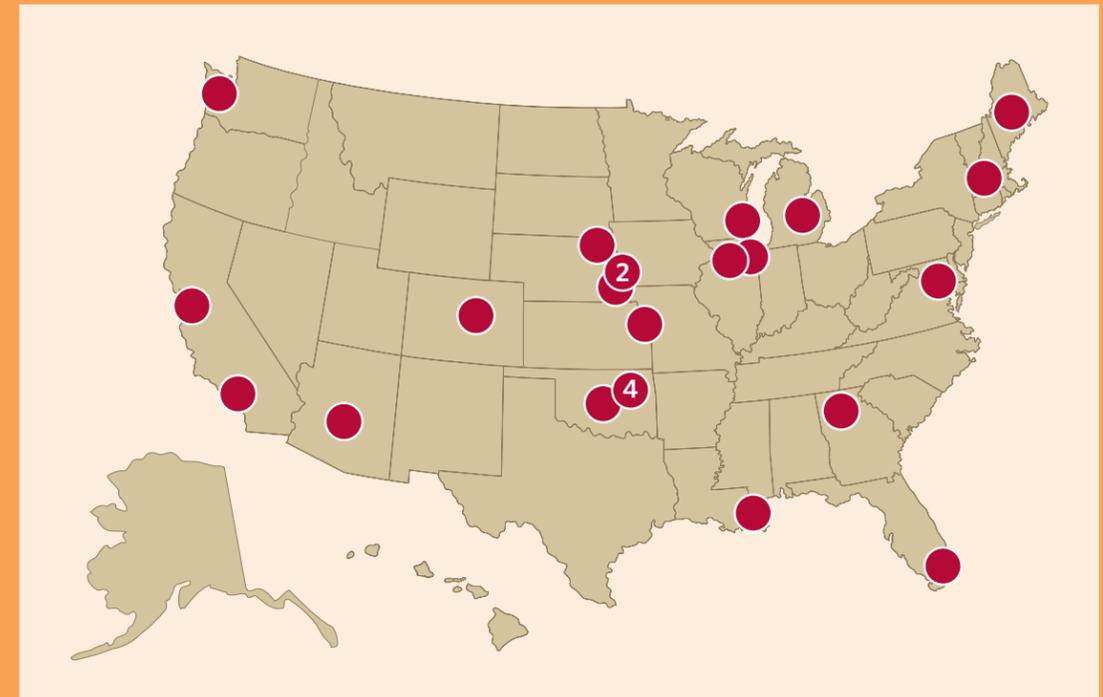
OUR REACH

The Educare Network is **25 schools strong** and growing, located in 15 states, the District of Columbia and on tribal land.

In addition to Educare schools, our Network also includes partnerships with major universities and research institutions in every community served, as well as professional development training providers in key states.

Last year, the Educare Network:

- Directly reached more than **4,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers**, plus **2,700 parents and caregivers**
- Reached an additional **16,000 children** through partner organizations across the country



- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Arizona (<i>Phoenix</i>) | Oklahoma City, OK |
| Atlanta, GA | Omaha at Indian Hill, NE |
| California at Silicon Vally (<i>San Jose</i>) | Omaha at Kellom, NE |
| Central Maine (<i>Waterville</i>) | Seattle, WA |
| Chicago, IL | Springfield, MA |
| Denver, CO | Tulsa at Hawthorne, OK |
| Flint, MI | Tulsa at Kendall-Whittier, OK |
| Kansas City, KS | Tulsa at MacArthur, OK |
| Lincoln, NE | Tulsa at Celia Clinton, OK |
| Los Angeles at Long Beach, CA | Washington, DC |
| Miami, FL | West DuPage, IL |
| Milwaukee, WI | Winnebago, NE |
| New Orleans, LA | |



ADVANCING EQUITY IN THE EARLY YEARS THROUGH RESEARCH, DATA AND PARTNERSHIP

Building More Equitable Systems, Communities and Programs

In 2023, we released our [Educare Research Agenda on Advancing Racial Equity](#), which guides our collective inquiry to interrogate policies and systems, shaping our contributions to the national conversation around how to best support young children and families in the earliest years of life, resulting in transformative learnings for the field and advancing greater equity in access and opportunities.

Created through a participatory process that included Network leaders and staff, evaluators, parent leaders, funders and other external early childhood experts, advocates and partners, **this agenda strives to understand racial equity through inquiry to better understand, engage and support children, families and early childhood leaders and staff of color.** Research will center their voices, amplify strengths and lead to actionable information for practice, program and policy change.



GOALS

1

Elevate innovative research questions, methodologies and practices with broad implications for practice programs, policy, children and families.

2

Guide continuous quality improvement and provide both learning and celebratory opportunities.

3

Impact the early childhood education field by informing practitioners, policymakers, funders, researchers and advocates about Educare's efforts and findings that show promise for improving access, program quality and outcomes of children, families and the early childhood education workforce.

Additional Research and Practice Partnership (RPP) Efforts

Leveraging an RPP approach, Educare researchers further conducted research and amplified findings and data on a wide range of topics, including, but not limited to: factors affecting children's attendance, [the well-being of Hispanic children during the pandemic](#), the prevalence and experience of families encountering homelessness and housing insecurity, teacher turnover and retention rates, strategies for enhancing and elevating family voices in early childhood, Educare staff's and families' experiences of discrimination and racial-ethnic socialization beliefs and practices, equity efforts in Educare schools and dosage and toddler outcomes.

The Educare National Coordinating Office (NCO) and the Network's Black-majority schools also continued collaborating with the [Equity Research Action Coalition](#) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute on the African-centered Racial Equity Justice Project to develop an African-centered, culturally responsive practice guide to improve early learning and child outcomes (including professional learning modules and materials). In addition, through a variety of projects and activities, we partnered with researchers and subject matter experts at institutions and organizations beyond the Network, such as: Attendance Works; Fathers, Families and Healthy Communities; the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement; and the National Center for Families Learning.

WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY?

We define racial equity as both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, we achieve racial equity when a person is no more or less likely to experience society's benefits or burdens because of the color of their skin. As a process, we apply racial equity when those most impacted by institutional and structural inequities are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the policies and practices that impact their lives. **Achieving equity requires valuing all individuals and populations equally, recognizing and rectifying historical injustices, working to address root causes of inequities — not just their manifestation, and demanding we pay attention to overall social outcomes.** Engaging in culturally responsive and racially equitable research and evaluation is a key part of this process, and our research activities are rounded in — and continually guided by — these values, principles and objectives.

ELEVATING PARENT AND PROVIDER VOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

At Educare, we are acutely aware of the need for greater investments in strong early childhood systems and know firsthand the true value of high-quality early care and education in the lives of young children and families.

Throughout the year, we partnered with families and providers on policy and advocacy efforts, endeavoring to ensure our work is centered on and reflective of the experiences, voices and contributions of families of young children and those who care for them. We successfully advocated for **34 policy wins**, or changes in legislation, and **\$1.13 billion of new early childhood funding** at state and federal levels.

Parent and Family Leadership

Alongside Educare Seattle, Educare Central Maine, Start Early and other national partners, we co-hosted the [National Parent Ambassador Institute in Washington, D.C.](#), bringing together nearly 100 parent leaders and staff from 18 Educare schools and beyond. Participants spent four days improving advocacy skills and engaging in impactful training to harness their collective power and conducted 33 Congressional office visits to share their experiences and advocate for priorities reflected in the Educare Five Public Policy Agenda.



Momentum around family leadership and advocacy was further generated by parent participation in the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health — the first conference of its kind in 50 years — and engagement in national early childhood convenings and advocacy opportunities, in collaboration with partner organizations.



Expanding National Impact, Building Local Capacity

At the Network level and at Educare schools across the country, we expanded connections to a growing cadre of national policy and advocacy partners, with new opportunities to influence change and leverage our lived experience as parents and providers on a range of policy issues to ensure early childhood education is an integral part of the national conversation and funding decisions.

“Empowerment and opportunity increase confidence, which motivates parents to build out programs and educate others. This will create lifelong change that will trickle down to our communities for years to come.”

Parent Ambassador Institute Participant



We are history makers and game changers in our own right. We are strong alone and even stronger together.

Parent Ambassador Institute Participant

As a Network, together we contributed our voices and:

- **Signed onto 21 letters** from external partners advocating for early childhood investments and essential programs and services, including child nutrition, the Child Tax Credit, developmentally appropriate practice, support for immigrant families and more.
- **Submitted 4 federal comments** on stabilizing the early childhood workforce, strengthening child nutrition programs and more.
- **Made 5 legislative endorsements** for policies benefiting Educare children, families and communities.
- **Published 2 Network statements** in response to rulings and legislative passages around the Inflation Reduction Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Collective Action for A Brighter Tomorrow

To help ensure an equitable future where children, families and communities can thrive, the Educare Network and our partners engage in policy and advocacy at the local, state and national levels. Last year, we continued to advance the priorities of our [Educare Five Public Policy Agenda](#).





AMPLIFYING BEST PRACTICES AND KEY LEARNINGS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD

Last year, the Network continued to transform our programming, responding in real time to local challenges, convening and connecting with school leaders and staff, and offering communities of practice and other peer learning opportunities.

The Educare NCO provided a diverse array of high-quality training, consultation, online convenings, professional development and learning events to all 25 operating Educare schools, connecting school leaders, family engagement staff, mentor teachers, teachers, teaching assistants and school fundraising and communications staff nationwide. Ultimately, these experiences and networking opportunities engaged **282 professionals**, providing **4,330 hours of support** across all areas of work.

We highlighted stories and issues facing the field through the lens of **Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP)** grantees and partner sites, and provided **Peer Learning Collaboratives (PLCs)** as a new professional development offering to increase inclusion and peer-to-peer learning and collaboration across the Network. This year's PLCs focused on relevant field topics in the areas of Workforce, Innovation, DEIB and Family Engagement.

Together, we further advanced the Network's role as a unique source of innovation and learning for the broader early childhood field, making additional strides in addressing challenges shared by early learning and care professionals across the country.

Key areas of focus for Educare programs included:

- spotlighting the significance of trauma-informed care and healing-centered engagement,
- empowering families, showcasing the transformative role of Educare schools, and
- pushing for equal access to high-quality learning in all communities.

Professional Development

In addition to direct service, the Network also continued to scale proprietary best practices to be implemented in early education programs nationwide that power program, policy and systems change at every level.

Through the **Essential Practices of Educare** training series – part of Start Early’s collection of research-backed professional development solutions – our experts provided training to **27 organizations** across **15 states**. Revisions to this training continued as part of the Supporting Equitable Educator Development (SEED) grant to update content and materials with a DEIB lens with the first two modules scheduled for completion and use in early 2024.



Celebrating 20 Years at the Educare Network Meeting

An essential touchpoint for the Network this past year was the annual **Network Meeting** held in New Orleans, LA in May 2023. Over 200 Educare staff, leaders, parents, local and national philanthropic partners and board members attended, with all 25 Educare schools represented. Participants spent the conference learning, connecting and building relationships with their colleagues from across the country, **focused on transforming the field and innovating for a brighter future**. Discussion topics ranged from responsive classroom practices and healing-centered engagement to rebuilding our workforce, amplifying the phenomenal work of Educare schools nationwide and beyond.

We also celebrated Educare’s milestone 20th anniversary in partnership with Educare New Orleans at Clover, NOLA-style!

Field-Building Partnerships

At the Educare Network, we continue to be active partners in the early childhood education field, contributing data and expertise to ongoing research, policy and practice work. Educare leaders contributed to countless conversations this year on topics such as staff retention, intensive family engagement and data-informed professional development. Notable collaborations and conferences include the National Head Start Association, Zero to Three, Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TXAEYC), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Trust for Learning and others. Together with these partners, we addressed challenges faced by early childhood centers, ongoing racial equity and social justice issues and more.

For the fifth consecutive year, we also partnered with Comic Relief US for the annual Red Nose Day campaign, spotlighting **the inspiring work** of Educare schools across the country.



RECOGNIZING OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



The Educare Network is generously funded by **Buffett Early Childhood Fund** and further supported by collaboration with and contributions from various foundations, organizations, partners and individuals, including **John and Kathy Schreiber**. Our immense gratitude for all those who help make our work possible!

Foundations & Corporations

Anonymous
 Buffett Early Childhood Fund
 CME Group Foundation
 Comic Relief US
 George Kaiser Family Foundation
 J.W. Bagley Foundation
 Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry
 Trust for Learning
 UBS Optimus Foundation

Educare Steering Committee

Cynthia Jackson
 Diane Horm
 Gary Bingham
 Gladys Montes
 Ginger Ward
 Laura Kos
 Lori Pittman
 Paula Moujalli
 Rafel Hart
 Shawn Gerth
 Valerie Wheatley
 William Browning

National Collaborators

American Heart Association
 National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers
 National Women’s Law Center
 Parent Ambassador Programs
 Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry
 Trust for Learning

Educare School Partners

Atlanta Public Schools
 Balsz School District
 Bayou District Foundation Catholic Charities
 Clayton Early Learning
 Clover
 District of Columbia Public Schools
 Flint Early Childhood Collaborative
 Franklin-McKinley School District
 Genesee Intermediate School District
 Holyoke Chicopee Springfield Head Start
 Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
 Lincoln Public Schools
 Long Beach Unified School District
 Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce/LA United
 Next Door Foundation
 Oklahoma City Public Schools
 Project EAGLE (University of Kansas Medical Center)

Puget Sound Educational Services District
 Santa Clara County Office of Education
 Sheltering Arms
 Southwest Human Development
 Start Early
 Sunbeam Family Services
 Tulsa Public Schools
 United Way of Miami
 Waterville Public Schools
 West Chicago Elementary School District 33
 Winnebago Public Schools
 Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska

Evaluation Partners

American Institutes for Research
 Applied Survey Research
 Arizona State University
 Clayton Early Learning Institute
 Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
 Georgia State University
 Long Beach Unified School District

OER Associates LLC
 Start Early
 Sunbeam Family Services
 Tulane University
 University of Kansas
 University of Maine
 University of Maryland
 University of Miami
 University of Nebraska Lincoln
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 University of Oklahoma Tulsa
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