

School Readiness Pipeline

A Data-Driven Approach to Early Childhood

Thrive in 5's School Readiness Pipeline is a **groundbreaking initiative for achieving universal child development screening for young children** in the city of Boston. Understanding children's developmental progress – individually and citywide – **creates opportunities for prevention and intervention in the critical “brain building” phase of a child's life**, when services are more effective and less costly. The data collected through the Pipeline will allow families, teachers, health providers, and the city to take a data-driven approach to early childhood, making informed, strategic decisions to tailor support and resources to the children, families, and communities that need them most.

Goals

- **Support Children & Families:** Build community capacity to screen children early for potential developmental delays, and use the ASQ as an opportunity for family engagement, education, and referral to services. Help families take an active approach to gaining more knowledge about their child's development, and advocating for the resources necessary to support their children's school readiness.
- **Drive Policy & Systems Change:** Create a universal screening system in order to gain a better understanding of the developmental progress of young children in Boston to inform funding and policy decisions.

How It Works

The Pipeline uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to screen young children in Boston. ASQ data is collected through three sources:

- **Peer-to-Peer Parent Screeners** – The Pipeline utilizes a peer-to-peer model, hiring and training parents in Boston neighborhoods to become parent screeners. Parent screeners connect to families in their communities, conduct the ASQ screening during home visits or in neighborhood-based settings, and offer resources and information for families based on screening results. Parent screeners represent multiple cultures and languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Cape Verdean Creole), creating connections to isolated communities and ensuring screening is available to diverse families.
- **Parents Screening Their Own Children** – With the support of trained staff, parents complete the ASQ screening about their child on their own during parent-child playgroup sessions. As with Parent Screeners, screening helps parents and caregivers understand more about their child's developmental strengths and challenges. Parents are also connected to community resources and provided with activities to engage in with their children at home.



Parents may not be aware of their child's development because they don't have time or are just too busy. But these tools really do show you where your kids are doing well and where they need help.

Parents feel more comfortable having other parents come in their home. I've found that parents will feel more open and empowered by those who have shared their own experience.

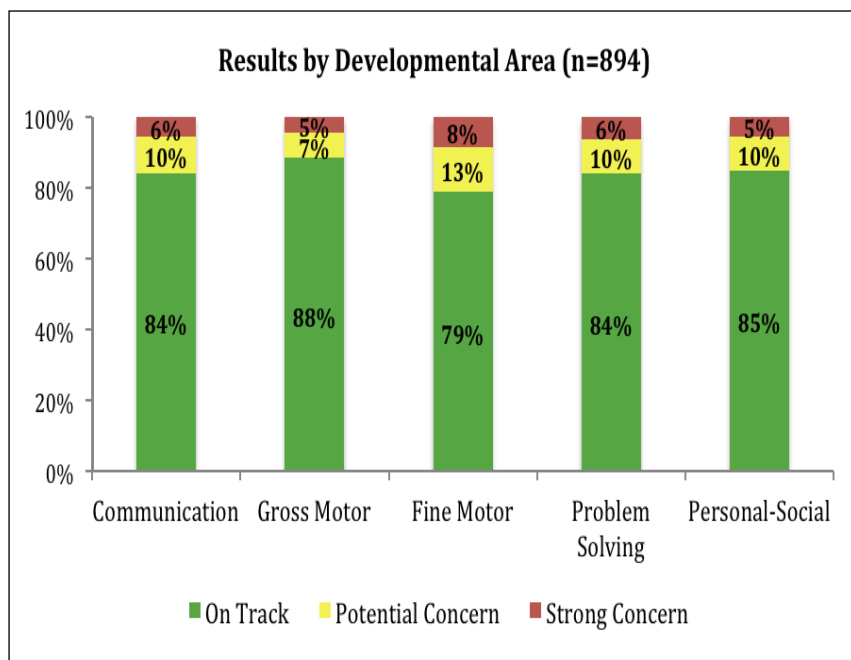
*- Samilla Quiroa,
Thrive in 5 Parent Screener*

- **Early Education and Care Providers** – The Pipeline partners with early education and care providers to gather data from ASQ screening conducted in their programs, generally when a child enters the program or moves to a new classroom. Through their involvement in the Pipeline, early education programs are increasing their capacity to use the screening process to better engage families in supporting their children’s learning and development at home.

Building a Foundation to Support Future Progress

Since 2012, the Pipeline has:

- **Trained and supported 16 parent screeners** working in two pilot neighborhoods – Allston/Brighton and Dorchester – who have conducted approximately 400 screens with families in these communities.
- **Partnered with 11 family engagement organizations** to offer ASQ screening during playgroups and other family activities. They have conducted approximately 400 screens with families.
- **Partnered with 6 early education and care providers** to gather data from approximately 200 children screened in their programs.
- **Formed a learning community with parent screeners and early education partners** to maximize how partners use ASQ screening as a family engagement opportunity and to ensure children and families’ needs are met.
- **Influenced the activities and opportunities that community-based organizations are providing for families with young children.** For example, based on initial screening results from children in the Dorchester community, Fields Corner Children Thrive planned workshops for families that supported fine motor skill and problem solving development.



Partners

- Allston/Brighton Children Thrive (led by the Family Nurturing Center of MA)
- Boston Family Engagement Network
- Boston Public Schools – Special Education
- Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester
- College Bound Dorchester
- Countdown to Kindergarten
- Fields Corner Children Thrive (led by Dorchester House Multi-Service Center)
- Nazareth Child Care Center
- N.I.C.E., Inc.
- Nurture (formerly Associated Early Care and Education)
- Parent Child Home Program (led by the Family Nurturing Center)
- South Boston Neighborhood House
- *Thrive in 5*
- UMass Boston Center for Social Policy

For more information, visit <http://thrivein5boston.org/pipeline> or contact Gina Mittal, School Readiness Pipeline Coordinator at gina.mittal@thrivein5boston.org or 617.624.8074.

