

NOEEN CITY SEATS

Key Findings of Year 1 Program Evaluation



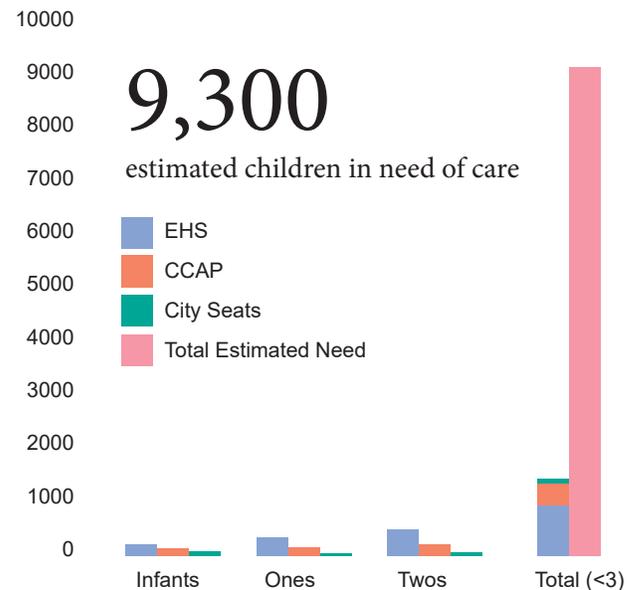
BACKGROUND

In December 2017, the New Orleans City Council and Mayor approved a historic investment in early childhood education, enabling the creation of fifty new, high-quality “seats” for children ages six weeks to three-years-old. A year later, the City of New Orleans doubled its investment, increasing access for 112 children citywide. Known as the New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) City Seats Program, this initiative is driven by three goals: to increase access to early learning, to improve the overall quality of participating centers, and to provide wraparound supports to caregivers and families. To ensure high-quality programming was delivered, NOEEN City Seats was evaluated by the Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Sciences Center.

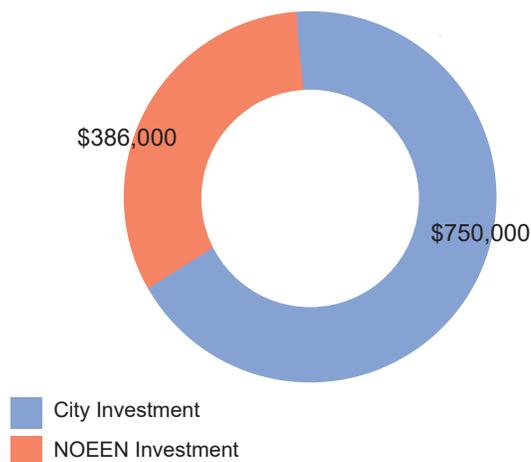
ACCESS, QUALITY, SUPPORT

The research is clear: early learning sets the foundation for the long-term health, economic viability, and academic outcomes of our city’s children. Unfortunately, an estimated 9,300 children under the age of three are in need of affordable quality childcare in New Orleans, and fewer than 15% of eligible children under three are currently enrolled in an Early Head Start program, or using a childcare subsidy. This means over 85% of eligible children are unable to access the critical care and education proven to impact their lifelong developmental, social, and emotional growth.

Citywide Need vs. Met Need



City Investment vs. NOEEN Investment



5%

increase in free early childcare options

NOEEN City Seats represents a 5% increase in free early childhood education options for families who are most in need of accessible early learning (100% of program participants live at or below the federal poverty line). However, NOEEN recognizes that increasing access for the highest-needs families requires a greater investment than simply increasing the total number of available “seats” at programs citywide: it requires meaningful investment in families, providers, and communities. To this end, NOEEN City Seats emphasizes comprehensive supports that directly address health, development, nutrition, mental health, and family engagement.

To facilitate essential wraparound supports, NOEEN leveraged an additional \$386,000, an over 50% increase in the city’s initial investment. This includes \$350,000 from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to provide ancillary supports to children, support continuous quality improvement for centers, and conduct an independent program evaluation; as well as an estimated \$36,000 in funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to provide daily healthy breakfast, lunch, and snacks to enrolled children.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

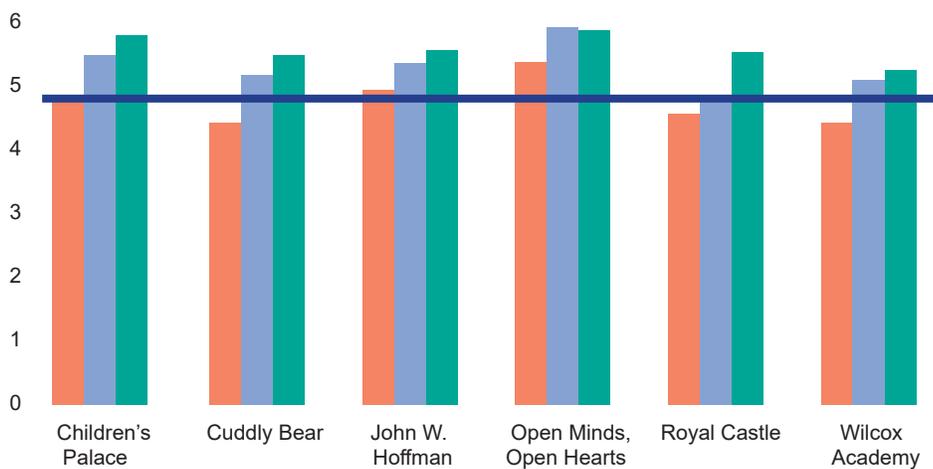


100% of participating children live below the poverty line.	100% of City Council Districts represented.	100% improvement in TS Gold® developmental indicators.	400+ hours of mentor-coaching provided to childcare staff.	100+ professional mental health consultations provided to childcare staff.
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Outcomes for participating children and Centers indicate strong growth across key quantitative and qualitative measures. In addition to overall performance increases for children (using DECA and TS Gold® developmental indicators) and Centers (100% of Centers increased performance between application for, and inclusion in, the program), wraparound services gave families and Centers the tools they need to raise healthy, engaged children beyond the scope of the NOEEN City Seats Program. Services included:

- “Active Parenting” workshops for families, as well as regular on-site information sessions.
- Free development, vision, and hearing screenings. Preventive health care arms families with knowledge, including how to identify signs of developmental or sensory impairments, find affordable care, and clarify developmental milestones.
- 403 hours of mentor-coaching, including 96 individual center visits. Coaching focuses on cultivating teacher-child interactions, which boosts children’s emotional, mental, and intellectual outcomes.
- 111 mental health consultation site visits, across 100% of partner sites. Mental health consultations enrich teachers’ understanding of development, building sensitivity to individual child needs, and bettering teacher-child relationships.

Participating Center Performance, Year-to-Year



83%

of participating Centers’ grew into the next echelon of performance, from “Proficient” to “High Proficient.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to maintain and expand the services that make NOEEN City Seats successful, sustainable funding, shared services, system-wide processes, and data systems must be developed. It is recommended that NOEEN prioritize establishing a program management structure that relies on expertise and capacity available in the sector. In addition, NOEEN is recommended to establish or leverage existing data systems to support daily operations of the NOEEN City Seats Program. An increased focus on identifying and monitoring quality indicators would increase accountability for how funds are spent, enabling strategic improvements to program operations, and drive data-driven, impactful amendments to existing programming.