

500 under 5

Who?

Five Hundred under Five (FHu5) is an effort to identify 500 children under age 5 and their families in two north Minneapolis areas, learn about their lives and then enhance services and knowledge to help these children enter kindergarten ready to learn and grow into productive, thriving adults. Partners will include the faith community, caregivers, child care centers, schools, parks, libraries, residents, and community agencies.

What?

The project will seek to understand and improve the multiple factors that affect school readiness for young children, including environment, housing, health, nutrition and family history. Partners will work to reduce barriers to achievement, measure those changes and document the impact they have on children and families. This is the initial planning phase of what will be a long-term commitment to children and their families in these areas. There are two main parts to the work:

- **Community engagement/service enhancement:** FHu5 will identify 500 children under age 5 by door-knocking in two areas of north Minneapolis to invite families to participate in the project. Building on what is learned from the families as well as other community partners, we will search for ways to better engage families in their young child's learning while improving supports for families in the community.
- **Information gathering:** Through discussions with the families and by following the children's progress, we will explore questions such as *How are young children doing? What helps young children do better—family factors, neighborhood features and specific services? How long and at what level of intensity do children and their families need these things to thrive? How can this information be used to help parents and communities make positive choices about what they want for their children?*

Where?

Work will be focused in two areas in north Minneapolis (see map on back):

- I-94 to Colfax Avenue North and 26th to 35th Avenues North
- I-94 to James Avenue North and Olson Memorial Highway to Plymouth Avenue North

Whatever is learned will be shared broadly for others to build on.

How?

The planning process will include the following:

- Engage the community, early on, in project planning by creating a community advisory committee.
- Work with existing community outreach workers, home visiting programs and child care providers to build on their knowledge and enhance parent engagement strategies.
- Identify existing or new services and supports that parents might want or need to help their children's growth.
- Ensure that parents have as much information as possible to continue making the best decisions for their families.
- Use outcomes on an individual level with parents and more broadly with the community to advocate for receiving needed services.

Why?

What happens (or in some cases does not happen) in early childhood has a lasting impact on a person's life—leading to lifelong successes or challenges. Early childhood intervention is one of the most effective ways to promote school success and life-long positive outcomes.

Funders and project leaders: *Blue Cross Blue Shield; Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives; Minnesota Early Learning Foundation; Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board; University of Minnesota-Center for Early Education and Development.*

Questions? *Contact Lauren Martin, Folwell Center for Urban Initiatives, 612-521-2100, laurenm@folwell.org.*

Figure A-1: Five Hundred under Five Focus Areas

Basemap

