What is collective impact?
We’re using the term “collective impact” to describe organizations working together to make changes in our community. What’s new about this approach is when organizations — nonprofits, agencies, foundations — share goals and measures of success for a specific community challenge, the pace of change is accelerated.

Why do we need collective impact?
No single program, organization or institution acting in isolation can bring about large-scale social change on its own. For change to occur there needs to be a concerted effort of the many different players around a common agenda.

How is GCF making collective impact work?
We have made a multiyear investment in seven “backbone” organizations that will serve as leaders to nonprofits in our community as they work on specific issues and systems. The backbones will help nonprofits report and measure progress, connect partners and collect data.

Our partnership with these seven organizations will help everyone work together across sectors, address resource gaps and fuel the implementation of proven strategies to make our community better.

Who are the organizations?
Agenda 360, Green Umbrella, LISC Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky, Partners for a Competitive Workforce, Strive Partnership, Success By Six®, Skyward.

What is it?
Throughout the ten county region that comprises Greater Cincinnati, Success By 6® is the driving force to achieve a shared vision that “all children are optimally safe, healthy and prepared to succeed in kindergarten.”

Success By 6® convenes partners to align strategies, measure progress and accelerate actions to achieve the community Bold Goal that 85% of children will be prepared for kindergarten by 2020. National research, and local data show that two strategies — evidence-based home visiting and high quality early childhood education are proven approaches to assure children are prepared. Expansion of these “bold plays” is a primary focus, with specific goals to:

- Double the number of families participating in best practice home visiting and
- Implement universal access to preschool for three and four year old children.

What is the problem?
Research shows that up to 90% of brain development occurs in the first five years of life, yet meaningful public investments in early education don’t begin until age six — after the most rapid period of brain development has occurred. Investments in proven programs during the critical early years of development are insufficient to meet the need. As a result, too many children in this region are entering kindergarten with gaps in key skills and knowledge. National and local data show that children who start school behind, stay behind, with harmful and costly outcomes. For example, a child is four times more likely to drop out of school when they aren’t reading proficiently by third grade; for children living in poverty it is 13 times more
likely. Kindergarten readiness is a critical link to third grade reading. In contrast, when children participate in quality early childhood programs, the outcomes are significant:

- Greater success in school, less grade retention and higher graduation rates
- Higher employment and earnings
- Better health outcomes
- Less reliance on public assistance
- Lower rates of crime

Yet despite these facts, our community has significant gaps.

- Every Child Succeeds, a best practice home visiting program for at-risk, first-time mothers, reaches less than 25 percent of its eligible population.
- Only 39% of eligible child care programs in the region (including Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana) are rated by the states’ Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- Based on available data, nearly 50% of children in the urban core and Northern Kentucky are not ready for kindergarten and in Cincinnati Public Schools, only 50% of children have a documented preschool experience.

Success By 6 Solutions

The bold “plays” are the two primary strategies that will achieve the community bold goal. They enable healthy child development, increase access to important early learning experiences and ensure that children are on track when they enter kindergarten. Success By 6® advocates for local, state and national policies that will sustain and grow successful strategies. It works to increase community awareness and public will about the importance of kindergarten readiness.

Effective solutions also encompass collaboration among schools, early childhood programs, families and communities — working together to identify and meet the needs of the young children well before they arrive in kindergarten. Success By 6® facilitates and supports regional strategies that foster this type of collaboration. Examples of these family-centric strategies are Born Learning Academies and Ready Schools Collaboratives.

Born Learning - Turning Everyday Moments into Learning Opportunities

Born Learning is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support parents in their critical role as a child’s first teacher, Born Learning educational materials have been available through the efforts of United Way since 2005. In 2007, United Way of Greater Cincinnati Success By 6®, Kenton County Schools and Northern Kentucky University partnered to develop the United Way Born Learning Academy. The United Way Born Learning Academy is a series of parent workshops that engage expectant parents and families with young children to support early learning and school readiness. Born Learning Academies are designed to increase kindergarten readiness and will undergo a national replication process through United Way Worldwide to increase kindergarten readiness across the United States. Northern Kentucky University early childhood faculty members developed the parent workshop curriculum, training guide and supplemental materials.

Ready Schools Collaboratives

Ready Schools action plans aim to ease the transition to kindergarten; to familiarize parents with school policies, facilities and expectations; and to identify developmental, behavioral or learning needs.