

**Jump**start

Children first.®

2015 - 2018  
Strategic Plan Brief

February 2015

# OVERVIEW

More than twenty years ago, four college students asked each other, “What if we could offer children from under-resourced communities individualized attention before they hit kindergarten, giving them the critical academic and social skills – the ‘jumpstart’ – they need to succeed?”

The idea took hold and by 2015, Jumpstart trained more than 36,000 college students and community volunteers to prepare over 76,000 children for kindergarten success. Jumpstart replicated its program across the country, leveraging partnerships with higher education institutions, Head Start, community-based preschools, and school districts, all while creating sustainable solutions to close the kindergarten readiness gap.

Today, Jumpstart is fueled by a core belief: providing equal educational opportunities to young children contributes to breaking the cycle of poverty. The research clearly supports this agenda. Recent studies have drawn a clear “link between failure to read proficiently by the end of third grade, ongoing academic difficulties in school, failure to graduate from high school on time, and chances of succeeding economically later in life – including individuals’ ability to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.”<sup>1</sup> And, with six million children under the age of six living in poverty, we are called to do more: to reach more children and achieve a greater impact.

We have concluded there is an unprecedented opportunity now, given Jumpstart’s track record of success and the growing national attention on high-quality early education. Jumpstart’s Strategic Plan positions us to strengthen our core competencies and work towards systemic, transformative change in early education, so that every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed.

## We will pursue this vision by focusing for the next three years on three strategic priorities:

- **Children:** Enrich the learning experiences in preschool classrooms for children from under-resourced communities
- **Classrooms:** Cultivate a high-quality early childhood education workforce
- **Communities:** Inspire public support and investment in high-quality early learning



# A UNIQUE AND EFFECTIVE APPROACH

The essential element in Jumpstart’s unique program is a caring, dedicated adult (i.e., college student or older adult) who forms nurturing relationships that encourage children to thrive. These adults, called Corps members, are trained to use effective strategies and a research-based curriculum to develop children’s language, literacy, and social-emotional skills. Jumpstart Corps members reduce the student to adult ratio to three to one, allowing children to benefit from a more intensive and individualized learning experience.

The “Jumpstart session” takes place more than 1,200 times each week in some 650 preschool classrooms around the country. Internal evaluations and external studies have consistently found that Jumpstart children show learning gains significantly greater than children in comparison groups.

## JUMPSTART’S MISSION

Jumpstart provides language, literacy, and social-emotional programming for preschool children from under-resourced communities and promotes quality early learning for all.

## JUMPSTART’S VISION

Every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed.

All Corps members receive 30 hours of professional-caliber training prior to their service, with another 10 hours delivered during the school year. Additionally, each Corps member commits to serving 8 to 12 hours each week, both directly in a classroom and in preparation for their time with the children.

Our impact is also seen in the college students and older adults whose lives are transformed by their service with Jumpstart. One study of our college Corps members found that “...students learned a range of valuable skills including teamwork, leadership, patience and time management. They worked collaboratively and learned to deal with problems in a professional manner.”<sup>2</sup>



# A VIBRANT CULTURE

Our values of learning, determination, connection, joy, and kindness are infused in our daily interactions and guide our individual contributions to the organization. However, alone they are not enough. To better define our shared efforts, our organization will mirror a classroom experience where we challenge each other to:

- **Learn** – we strive to improve and become a stronger, better organization
- **Play** – just as when we work with children, it is important for us to have a lively sense of playfulness
- **Build relationships** – authentic relationships provide the foundation for our work together across disciplines, geographies, and functions

# A COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

Jumpstart recognizes the critical role early childhood education plays in tackling the cycle of poverty. Addressing poverty as a social issue will require a collaborative and holistic approach from multiple players and a continuum of intervention from cradle to career.

We intend to be an effective contributor to this broad movement, and we believe that there are no easy solutions or shortcuts; we need bold ideas, hard work, and an unwavering commitment to social justice. Jumpstart brings these qualities and others, including:

- A multi-generational approach that benefits children and Corps members
- Deep, lasting partnerships
- A legion of passionate champions for early education, including 36,000 alumni
- An evidence-based program and superior training for Corps members
- Smart, driven, dedicated staff who live Jumpstart's values every day
- 22 years of experience, growth, and continuous improvement

These strengths position Jumpstart for the next phase in our evolution. We believe this Strategic Plan sets us on an exciting new path that will produce transformative outcomes both for our organization and for the children, classrooms, teachers, and communities we serve. As a result of our efforts over the next three years, we will have a meaningful impact on the state of early education, with hundreds of thousands more children on track for kindergarten success. We will have an impact on children from under-resourced communities directly, through Jumpstart's program; and indirectly, as the result of more passionate, prepared early education teachers, and a strong network of champions and key influencers at the national and state levels.



## CHILDREN

GOAL: Enrich the learning experiences in preschool classrooms for children from under-resourced communities

While the results Jumpstart has achieved over the last twenty-two years have been impressive, the reality is we can – and must – do more. By 2018, Jumpstart will expand our direct service program by 30% to serve at least 15,000 children annually, and improve efficacy so that at least 80% of children in the evaluation study are on track for kindergarten readiness in the areas assessed. To achieve this large-scale growth in results and reach, we will accomplish the following:

- 1. Increase the number of children served through direct service by:**
  - Expanding recruitment of Corps members at current sites
  - Increasing the number of university partners within current service cities
  - Assessing expansion opportunities in new cities
- 2. Improve the efficacy of the direct service model by:**
  - Revising our intentional curriculum to reflect current best practices and to emphasize oral language with specific attention to social-emotional development
  - Enhancing training to ensure Corps members have the skills – including cultural competency – they need to work effectively with the children we serve
  - Extending the Jumpstart experience to the families and caregivers of the children we serve by sending home resources, participating in the engagement activities of the classrooms where we serve, and partnering with family engagement agencies
  - Partnering with the preschools we serve to adapt to meet the needs of their classrooms and children while ensuring program fidelity
- 3. Expand upon existing relationships and cultivate new strategic partnerships to better serve children from under-resourced communities by:**
  - Leveraging our existing relationships with experts in the early education field, including Jumpstart’s National Early Education Council (NEEC), to ensure our programming is relevant in light of new research, evolving best practices, and trends in the field
  - Building upon our evaluation efforts by establishing a formal partnership with one research university and enhancing our existing partnerships with universities to co-author white papers, serve as the focus of case studies, co-present at major early childhood education (ECE) conferences, and lend expertise to our research efforts



4.

**Consider new, innovative program offerings including:**

- Bringing our effective training programs to other organizations
- Implementing “summer-slide” programming to help maintain school readiness skills during the summer before entering kindergarten
- Reaching children who are not in traditional preschool classrooms
- Pursuing partnerships, licensing opportunities, or contracts to leverage Jumpstart’s direct service model and expand our reach

## CLASSROOMS

GOAL: Cultivate a high-quality early education workforce.

We can do more to transform not only the current classrooms Jumpstart serves, but also future classrooms by connecting our Corps members to careers in early education and inspiring them to advocate for quality early education for all children. By 2018, 90% or more of our Corps member alumni will self-identify as early education teachers and/or champions. To achieve these results, we will accomplish the following:

1.

**Support the transition of Corps members into early education careers by:**

- Developing a workforce pathways program that connects our current Corps members and alumni with ECE career opportunities and encouraging them to be lifelong supporters of ECE issues
- Formalizing new partnerships and fellowship opportunities with organizations, institutes, and other entities to build a pathway to jobs in teaching for recent alumni
- Identifying and recruiting school district leaders so that we will better understand district trends and decision-making levers

2.

**Provide support to current early education teachers and classrooms by:**

- Extending our training and resources to current preschool teachers on classroom management, early literacy instruction, and building meaningful connections with young children
- Leveraging NEEC on program changes, training, technical assistance modules, and new models to ensure we are consistently aligned with ECE research and best practices



# COMMUNITIES

GOAL: Inspire public support and investment in high-quality early learning.

In order to affect real change and attain a system in which every child will have the educational opportunities to enter kindergarten prepared to succeed, the system of early education itself must be transformed. By 2018, Jumpstart will have a strong network of key influencers at the national level and in 75% of the states where Jumpstart serves who are active proponents of bringing such large-scale change to reality. To achieve these results, we will accomplish the following:

1.

**Increase public support for a strong early education workforce by:**

- Advocating for early education workforce development using a strategy that incorporates thought leadership, coalition building, and the education of key influencers and the general public
- Building a vibrant network of alumni by providing meaningful opportunities to increase their awareness of current ECE issues, continue their service through volunteer and mentor experiences, and advocate for the importance of a quality early education experience for all children
- Identifying and recruiting key influencers - including politicians, celebrities, and leaders - who can bring new skill sets and networks to Jumpstart and our advocacy efforts

2.

**Increase public awareness and support of Jumpstart by:**

- Continuing our commitment to and building support for national service, specifically for the Corporation for National and Community Service
- Growing our national brand and network by building out large-scale events (particularly Jumpstart's *Read for the Record*) in order to bring attention to the work of our organization, and to highlight the importance of early literacy efforts for all children

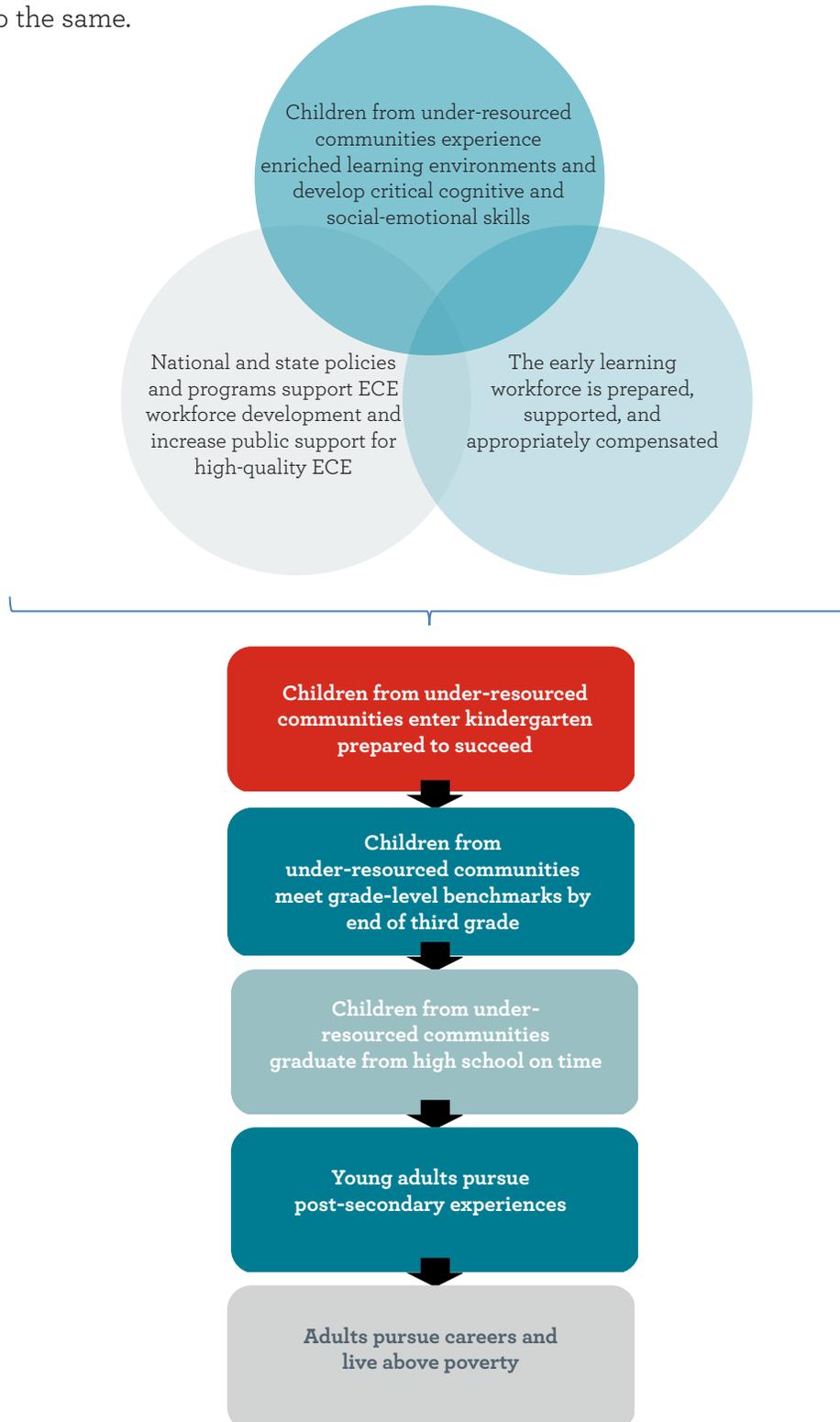
## WHERE WE SERVE:

Arizona  
California  
Connecticut  
Georgia  
Illinois  
Massachusetts  
Mississippi  
Missouri  
New Jersey  
New York  
Pennsylvania  
Rhode Island  
Texas  
Washington  
Washington, DC



# APPENDIX I: THEORY OF CHANGE

Jumpstart’s theory of change visualizes the relationship between our work and the larger ecosystem of intervention and support that will break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Research tells us that providing children in under-resourced communities with a high quality early learning experience increases the chances that they will be successful in school, pursue careers that enable them to live above poverty, and lead happier, healthier lives—developing the ability to support their future generations to do the same.



# APPENDIX II: MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

Jumpstart leads with quality. To monitor our performance and guarantee the highest outcomes possible, Jumpstart currently utilizes the following tools and performance measures throughout the year:

**Balanced Scorecard:** Jumpstart's Balanced Scorecard is an annual planning and management system that is used to align organizational activities to the strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor organization performance against strategic goals. A monthly dashboard analyzes trends for meeting the targets identified in each measure.

**The Test of Preschool Early Literacy (TOPEL):** Developed out of a decade-long series of research studies on early literacy, the TOPEL is a standardized, norm-referenced measure of early language and literacy skills for children age 3-5 years. The TOPEL has three subtests that align directly with Jumpstart's three target domains and skills: phonological awareness, oral language, and books and print knowledge. Currently, the TOPEL is administered on a sample of children from representative program partners.

**Jumpstart School Success Checklist (JSSC):** Derived from High/Scope's Child Observation Record (COR), the JSSC is a research-based assessment tool of language and literacy skills and social-emotional competencies. JSSC assessments are completed by teachers in classrooms in which Jumpstart serves (and when applicable, in demographically similar non-Jumpstart classrooms and centers for comparison data collection). Currently, the JSSC is administered across the Jumpstart network.

**Site Quality Standards:** Jumpstart uses a defined set of quality standards and ongoing, strategic processes for quality assurance to reinforce expectations among site, regional, and national staff, and to promote continuous quality improvement. Jumpstart's quality assurance approach fulfills three main goals:

- Articulate standards of quality and accountability
- Utilize a common language for the network that holds all levels of the network accountable for performance and enables Jumpstart to communicate our standards to other stakeholders
- Make use of site-based data collected throughout the program year to map a picture of site health and allow staff to understand the programmatic and operational quality of their site

**Jumpstart Learning Collaborative:** The Jumpstart Learning Collaborative recruits external researchers to conduct promising research that addresses significant questions on the impact of Jumpstart for early language, literacy, and social-emotional development as well as Corps member development. By raising our evaluation standards to include rigorous new external research, Jumpstart is better able understand the program's impact, find new ways to capture its effects, and add to the body of evidence enabling us to improve and replicate our program.

