The Facts

Learning gaps in children can present themselves as early as 18 months. Children from low-income communities are particularly vulnerable to starting school behind their peers, and may then struggle to keep up as they move from grade to grade. At-risk children who do not receive high-quality early childhood education are 25% more likely to drop out of high school and 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime. High school dropouts are 72% more likely to be unemployed as compared to high school graduates.

- Only 34% of students in Cook County and 53% of students in DuPage County meet or exceed state standards for reading
- 13% of 9th graders in Chicago Public Schools are not on track for success in high school
- 18% of students in Cook County do not graduate

The Goal

By 2020, United Way will ensure 50,000 underperforming middle school students will enter high school achieving at grade level and on track to graduate.

What We’re Doing

United Way focuses on early learning and middle school supports so children start school ready-to-learn and enter high school on track for graduation.

To achieve our goal, United Way is focused on the following strategies:

- Expand resources for high-quality preschool and home visits so children start kindergarten with a strong foundation in language, motor skills and socio-emotional development
- Support at-risk middle school students and their families with academic resources, after school enrichment programs and physical and mental health services

Our Results - Exceeded Goal

60,223 previously struggling middle school students on track to graduate/promoted to next grade level

62,755 children better prepared/ready for kindergarten

FY 12-16 cumulative data
How We Do It

In our experience, no one agency or program can improve graduation rates alone. Our role as funder and coordinator allows us to provide a network of services that directly improve educational outcomes through practical partnerships with nonprofit agencies, businesses, government agencies and human service organizations.

PARTNER AGENCY INVESTMENTS

United Way of Metropolitan Chicago invests almost $8 million in 70 nonprofit agencies across the region that provide high quality early education and middle school programming to start and keep kids on track for successful learning, and ultimately, graduation.

- After-School All-Stars
- Association House of Chicago
- Aunt Martha’s Youth Service Center and Health Center
- Austin Childcare Providers’ Network
- B.U.I.L.D., Inc.
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Dundee Township
- Breaking Free, Inc.
- Bremen Youth Services
- Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
- Carole Robertson Center for Learning
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago
- Center for Community Academic Success Partnerships
- Center for Community Arts Partnerships at Columbia College Chicago
- Center for Independence through Conductive Education
- Changing Worlds
- Chicago Child Care Society
- Chicago Commons Association
- Chicago Youth Centers
- Childcare Network of Evanston (CNE)
- Children’s Center of Cicero-Berwyn, Inc.
- Children’s Home + Aid
- ChildServ
- Chinese American Service League
- Christopher House
- Citizen Schools Illinois
- City Year
- Community House, The
- Corazon Community Services
- Easter Seals DuPage and the Fox Valley Region
- El Valor
- Enlace Chicago
- Erie Neighborhood House
- Esperanza Community Services
- Family Focus Inc.
- Gads Hill Center
- Gary Comer Youth Center
- Greater Auburn Gresham Development Corporation
- HandsOn Suburban Chicago
- Harold Colbert Jones Memorial Community Center
- Illinois Action for Children
- Infant Welfare Society of Evanston
- Instituto del Progreso Latino
- Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
- Lawrence Hall Youth Services
- Metropolitan Family Services
- Namaste Charter School
- Oak Park & River Forest Day Nursery
- Outreach Community Ministries
- Partners for Our Communities
- Parenthood
- Project: VISION, Inc.
- Quad Communities Development Corporation
- Restoration Ministries, Inc.
- Salvation Army, The
- SGA Youth & Family Services
- Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)
- Spark Chicago
- Teen Parent Connection
- The Center Resources for Teaching and Learning
- The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired
- The Children’s Place Association
- The Resurrection Project
- Tri-Con Child Care Center
- Woodlawn Children’s Promise Community
- YMAC of Metropolitan Chicago
- Young Men’s Educational Network (YMEM)
- Youth Crossroads, Inc.
- Youth Guidance
- Youth and Opportunity United (Y.O.U)
- YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

ComEd and Exelon—United Way Stay in School Initiative

Since 2005, United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and Exelon have partnered with community agencies to deliver critical after-school services to approximately 25,000 students from 26 high schools, helping to improve course grades and to build leadership and pro-social behaviors. In the 2015-2016 school year, 91% of participating students had 90% or better attendance in school.

Get Involved

We know that a high graduation rate is critical to a qualified workforce and a competitive region. We focus on education, income, health and basic needs strategies to address interconnected challenges and ensure that our community members have the support they need to thrive.

You can make a difference.

Visit LIVEUNITEDChicag.org/education to learn more about how you can get involved in our work in education.