Building Social and Emotional Competence in Children Drives Action and Improvement

Patty Nagelkirk, United Way of Greater Cincinnati
Paul LeBuffe, Devereux Center for Resilient Children
Bill Bresser, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati
Beth Wiseman, The Children’s Home of Cincinnati

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Session Overview

- How and why United Way of Greater Cincinnati leads a strategy to build social and emotional competence in children
  - 21 funded agency partners in a Learning Community (22 programs of varying design and purpose operating in numerous sites)
  - 18 afterschool programs in Cincinnati Public Schools (9 different agencies, some sites funded by United Way)
  - All voluntarily chose to use a common method of measurement and engage in shared learning in order to better drive impact
  - More than 4,000 children with at least two data points
- Learn about the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment and its use in Greater Cincinnati and beyond
- Audience Makes the Call
**BOLD GOALS FOR OUR REGION BY 2020**

**EDUCATION**
- 85% of children will be prepared for kindergarten
- 85% of youth will graduate from high school ready
- 45% of adults will have an associate’s degree or higher

**INCOME**
- 90% of the labor force will be gainfully employed

**HEALTH**
- 70% of adults will report having good health
- 95% of adults will have a usual place for medical care

**AGENDA FOR COMMUNITY IMPACT**

**EDUCATION**
**#1: CHILDREN PREPARED**
- Goal: 85% prepared for kindergarten
  - Key Strategies:
    - Best practice home visitation
    - Quality early care and education
  - Supporting Strategies:
    - Social, emotional, physical health
    - Parenting education

**#3: YOUTH SUCCEED**
- Goal: 85% graduating ready
  - Key Strategies:
    - Early grade reading proficiency
    - Quality out of school time
  - Supporting Strategies:
    - Social, emotional, physical health
    - Parenting education
    - Family involvement in schools

**INCOME**
**#2: FINANCIAL STABILITY**
- Goal: 90% gainfully employed
  - Key Strategies:
    - Family & work supports
    - Ready for work
    - Secure & maintain employment
    - Advance in career
  - Supporting Strategies:
    - Housing
    - Financial education

**HEALTH**
**HEALTHY LIVES**
- Goal: 70% reporting good health; 95% reporting a usual place for care
  - Key Strategies:
    - Prevention & wellness activities
    - Access to quality care
    - Chronic disease management
  - Supporting Strategies:
    - Child abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse prevention and treatment

**VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOODS**
Community Context Influences the Work

2004 – Afterschool Network (known then as CincyAfterschool) forms in Cincinnati Public Schools; provides leadership for Community Learning Center development

2005 – United Way of Greater Cincinnati releases the Agenda for Community Impact

2006 – Strive Roadmap released

2008-2010 – Multiple efforts to identify a small number of non-academic supports and measures considered “most important”; no consensus

2009 – Common databases implemented for early childhood, employment and basic needs programs | Youth Achieve funding pool decreased nearly $1M

2010-2011 – Development of Bold Goals for Our Region; Learning Partner Dashboard begins at Cincinnati Public Schools supported by Strive and Microsoft

2011 – Youth-serving agencies funded by United Way create the case for common measures; select a tool | Cincinnati Public School Afterschool Providers request support from United Way in using data/building capacity

2012 – Learning Community formed at funded agency partner request | Partnership developed with Devereux Center for Resilient Children | Cincinnati Public Schools Afterschool Programs pilot DESSA-mini and Youth Program Quality Intervention

2013 – Partners measure social and emotional competence in 4,000 children

Benefits of Common Measures for Program Providers
- Aids in communicating the program’s value
- Demonstrates program’s fit into a broader story of impact
- Leads to continuous learning and improvement

Benefits to Children and Families
- Programs become more effective and impactful
- Access to services improves when providers can advocate for funding based on “what works”

Benefits to United Way and Other Funders
- Deepens confidence in investments
- Increases potential for alignment on outcome reporting
- Strengthens ability to tell a compelling story to our donors

Step 1: The Start of Common Measures
United Way and Funded Partners Developed a Case
Step 2: The Start of Common Measures
Scanned the Research / Reviewed Our Funded Programs

Concepts considered for common measures pilot
- Academic performance
- School attendance
- Social and emotional competence
- Parenting education scales and inventories
- Risky behavior prevention

Step 3: The Start of Common Measures
Confirmed Stakeholder Interest

Appeal of a Strategy Focused on Social and Emotional Competence
- Research showed social and emotional competence is predictive of academic success; clear link to a regional Bold Goal - By 2020, at least 85% of youth will graduate from high school (prepared for life, college, and career)
- Expanded a focus of early childhood into the school-age arena, solidifying United Way’s approach to education as a continuum
- 80% of youth-serving programs funded by United Way intended to improve or build social and emotional competencies
- Would provide valuable data to schools, parents and program providers
Step 3: Confirming Stakeholder Interest

Case for the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)

- Strengths-based approach
- Valid and reliable tool; the scales grounded in research
- User friendly; didn’t need training to implement; different raters could be used over time
- Builds on local early childhood work, solidifying United Way’s approach to education as a continuum
- Measures children grades K-8; other tools started at Grade 5
- Cost-effective; under $2 per child
- Providers liked it

Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC)

- Our mission is to promote social and emotional development, foster resilience, and build skills for school and life success in all children birth through school-age, as well as to promote the resilience of the adults who care for them.
Social and Emotional Learning Defined

- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process by which children and adults acquire the skills to:
  - Recognize and manage emotions
  - Develop caring and concern for others
  - Establish positive relationships
  - Make responsible decisions
  - Handle challenging situations effectively
  (paraphrased from CASEL)

Benefits of SEL

**Student gains:**
- Social emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, school, and others
- Positive classroom behavior
- Average of 11 percentile-point gain on academic achievement tests

**Reduced risks for failure:**
- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

Universal Screening with the DESSA-mini

- Very brief, 8-items, completed by teachers or out-of-school-time staff
- Screen an entire classroom in one planning period
- Yields one score, the Social-Emotional Total
- Students place in the Strength, Typical or Need for Instruction range
Devereux Student Strengths Assessment-mini (DESSA-mini)

[Form 1]

Child’s Name: 
Gender: 
DOB: 
Grade: 

Date of Rating: 
School/Organization: 
Relationship to Child: 

This form is part of a series of tools for assessment. Read the statements at the bottom of the page. Underline the behavior that best describes the child’s typical behavior. Circle the number that follows the statements that best fit the child. Then, circle the number that follows the statements that best describe the child’s typical behavior. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer every item. If a child does not fit one of the behaviors, write a description in the space provided.

Items 1-4: During the past 6 weeks, how often did the child...

1. accept responsibility for what she/you did? (0) 1 (2) 3 (4) 5
2. do something nice for somebody? (0) 1 (2) 3 (4) 5
3. speak clearly, be pleasant? (0) 1 (2) 3 (4) 5
4. pay attention to group activities? (0) 1 (2) 3 (4) 5
5. show initiative in a task (0) 1 (2) 3 (4) 5
6. share toys when playing with another child? (0) 1 (2) 3 (4) 5
7. follow the table manners of a typical adult? (0) 1 (2) 3 (4) 5

8. rate your overall social and emotional behavior on a scale of 1 to 5.

TIP: Social/Emotional Total

Items

Percentile

Description: Th ready for college work and life

#Rb21NM
The Devereux Student Strengths Assessment

- Based on resilience theory & SEL principles
  - 72 items (8 Scales/ Social Emotional Composite)
    - Self Awareness
    - Self-Management
    - Social-Awareness
    - Relationship Skills
    - Goal-Directed Behavior
    - Personal Responsibility
    - Decision Making
    - Optimistic Thinking
- Takes 5-8 minutes by a teacher, parent, and/or program staff

Purposes of the DESSA

- Identify social-emotional strengths and needs of elementary and middle school students.
- Tier I - Produce classroom profiles that guide universal prevention strategies.
- Tier II - Identify at-promise students so that targeted interventions can occur.
- Tier III - For special education students, identify important strengths that can be incorporated into IEPs.
What have we learned?

- SEL and Academic Achievement
- SEL and the "Income Achievement Gap"
- Cincinnati’s success in promoting SEL skills

Relationship Between Academic Achievement and Social-Emotional Competence (Non-UWGC data)
**3rd Graders SEC (N=148)**

**Variance Explained**

- Economic disadvantage explains approx 24% of SBA variance.
- Low income students predicted to average 80 pts lower on the SBA (1 SD).

**SBA Reading**

- Low Income
  - 76%

**3rd Graders SEC (N=148)**

**Variance Explained**

- When DESSA scores are added, an additional 22% of SBA variance is uniquely predicted.
- Together, 47% of SBA variance is predictable from economic disadvantage and DESSA.
- Impact of poverty reduced to predicting an average of 50 points less on SBA.
- Students with SEC 1 SD above the mean predicted to average 40 pts higher on the SBA, controlling poverty.
Fall 2012 – Spring 2013 Results
United Way / Youth Achieve Learning Community Data

- 20 United Way of Greater Cincinnati Agency Partners collectively measured 4,102 children with the DESSA and/or DESSA-mini

Demographics of Children and Youth Measured Pre and Post DESSA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number Measured</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Age 4-6</th>
<th>Age 7-9</th>
<th>Age 10-12</th>
<th>Age 13-15</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>4,102</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool</td>
<td>2,776</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention / Intervention</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview of Results
United Way / Learning Community Data

Social Emotional Categories – Pre DESSA  
(Fall 2012)  
N = 4,102

Strength: 20%  
Typical: 60%  
Need: 20%

Social Emotional Categories – Post DESSA  
(Spring 2013)  
N = 4,102

Strength: 13%  
Typical: 62%  
Need: 25%

Social emotional categories correlate with the following t-scores: Strength = 61 or higher, Typical = 41-59, Need = less than 40
Overview of Results
Youth Achieve Learning Community Data

Pre to Post Comparison of Social Emotional Categories by Program Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention/Intervention</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESSA Normal Distribution</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No Change | Small Change | Medium Change | Large Change
---|---|---|---
50% | 12% | 9% | 28%
52% | 11% | 8% | 29%
50% | 18% | 11% | 21%
45% | 11% | 13% | 31%

* No assumptions about program effectiveness can be made based on percentage of children demonstrating No Change.
Partners Using the Tool

United Way Agency Partners / Learning Community


Cincinnati Public School Afterschool Partners

Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati - Cincinnati Early Learning Center, Inc. - Central Clinic - FamiliesFORWARD - Imani - The Children's Home of Cincinnati - University of Cincinnati - Urban League of Greater Cincinnati - YMCA of Greater Cincinnati

Provider Perspectives
Thinking About the Pilot Year 2012-2013

• The Learning Community set out to:
  – develop provider capacity to collect and use data
  – build a learning community (plan, implement, improve) around social and emotional competence, examining our changes over time
  – create a compelling message and unified story for stakeholders
  – link social and emotional data to measures of academic progress and other data points
  – compare our community to others
  – see if our programs actually build social and emotional competence

Pilot Effort Refined - 2013-2014
Deeper Collective Learning and Continuous Improvement

• Learning Community and CPS Afterschool Network collect and share knowledge
• Groups conduct comprehensive review of program data and results
• Plan to turn data into information
• Turn information into knowledge that drives change in practice
• Create feedback loops / engage in ongoing improvement
Learning Community Objectives  
2013-2014

• Find out if our programs build social and emotional competence in children and youth

• Identify what types of inputs and activities are in programs that see the greatest results (we will take other factors into account)

• Reflect together on how our collective learnings and shared effort could drive program improvement and systems-change

Next Steps  
Data Collection in May Will Drive Future Planning

• **Spring 2014**: data collection includes reporting negative change and written narrative
  Sample questions: What kind of change (if any) did the program see in children who were in "need" in the Fall? What, if any, specific activities took place?
  Describe interventions, activities, and/or curriculum considered most effective on one or more of the 8 scales measured by DESSA. Offer data but include informed opinions, too
  When and how did the program look at DESSA data in comparison to other program data? What are your observations and learnings?

• **Summer/Fall 2014**: set targets for individual programs, consider shared goals for Learning Community, enhance data collection and analysis
Momentum Grows!

Audience Make the Call

• How can we make the remaining time most beneficial to you?

  – Q&A with full group?
  – Break out by topics? (e.g., DESSA, leading a Learning Community, agency-specifics?)
  – Brainstorm with your team what parts of this session could be useful for your work?
Email to Learn More

Bill Bresser - bbresser@bgcgc.org
Paul LeBuffe - plebuffe@devereux.org
Patty Nagelkirk - patricia.nagelkirk@uwgc.org
Beth Wiseman - bwiseman@thechildrenshomecinti.org

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