

24 ANNUAL 25 REPORT



PLANO AREA ALLIANCE SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

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A Message From Laurel

Big things are happening for families in Grundy/Kendall Region 24—and PAASSS is leading the way.

At Plano Area Alliance Supporting Student Success (PAASSS), we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to begin their educational journey safe, healthy, eager to learn, and ready to succeed. What began in 2018 as a small gathering of early childhood champions has grown into a powerful movement driving real change across Kendall and Grundy Counties.

We are making a lasting impact through initiatives such as:

- **IRIS Implementation:** Launching a regional Integrated Referral and Intake System to streamline access to services for families.
- **EduDream Partnership:** Analyzing community data to better tell our story and shape future programs.
- **Leadership Events:** Hosting regional listening sessions and parent leadership trainings to elevate family and community voices.
- **Creative Outreach:** Publishing bilingual resources and launching the Kids of Region 24 project with our new mascots, Grundy and Kendall.

As we look ahead, we are excited to expand our reach, engage even more families, and strengthen our team with the addition of a full-time Executive Director and Family Engagement Coordinator.

We invite you to join us in building a future where every family has the opportunity to succeed. Together, we can ensure that all children in our region have the foundation they need to thrive.

With appreciation,



Laurel Mateyka

Chief Executive Officer

Plano Area Alliance Supporting Student Success (PAASSS)

paasss.org | paasssinfo@gmail.com



Empowering Families. Transforming Futures.

About PAASSS

Introduction

PAASSS is a community collaborative serving Grundy and Kendall Counties in Illinois with a promise to support children and families in their journey to success in learning and life.

Vision

A community where all children and families are empowered to succeed in learning and in life.

Equity vs. Equality

Equality uses the same strategies for everyone, but because people are situated differently, they are not likely to get to the same outcomes. Equity uses differentiated and targeted strategies to address different needs and to get to fair outcomes.

Source: Race Forward



Mission

PAASSS (Plano Area Alliance Supporting Student Success) will strengthen the community by ensuring that all families in the Grundy/Kendall Region 24 are aware of and have equitable access to services and supports that empower them to raise children that are safe, healthy, eager to learn, and ready to succeed.

Partnering for Awareness

Awareness and access equal equity. At PAASSS, equity means fairness and justice—ensuring outcomes that meet the unique needs of different groups.

Building Systemic Equity

Systemic equity involves a robust system and dynamic process consciously designed to create, support, and sustain social justice. It is not a static goal but an ongoing process of change. Source: Race Forward.



Meet the Team

The Faces Driving Change Across Region 24



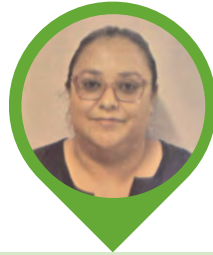
LAUREL MATEYKA
PH MILLER
CEO/Founder



KAMILAH BYAS
CHILD CARE
RESOURCE AND REFERRAL
Director SDA 5



RYAN CARRIE
KENDALL COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Community Action
Assistant Director



MARIBEL CECENAS
PH.MILLER
CENTENNIAL
Parent Mentor Organizer WIU Plano



KAREN CHILDRESS
FOX VALLEY YMCA
Vice President of Early
Childhood Education



MELISSA CREAMER
KENDALL COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Community Action Director



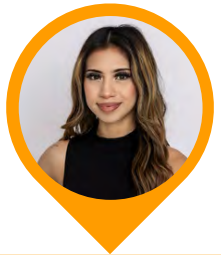
JACKIE EADE
FOX VALLEY FAMILY YMCA
Operations & Community
Relations Director



GABRIELLE FOSTER
PAASSS
Project Manager



DEVAN GAGLIARDO
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF
GRUNDY COUNTY
Program Director



MARIAH GONZALEZ
COMMUNITY
Parent Representative



LISA HAYSLETT
MUTUAL GROUND
Case Manager



TAYLOR HEADLEY
PAASSS
Marketing Consultant



JOELY JOHNSON
MUTUAL GROUND
Family Services Manager



SHARKISHA JONES
INCCRRA: BIRTH TO FIVE ILLINOIS
Regional Council Manger



MIA JUSUFI
ROE 24
Truancy Director



ANGELICA NICOLA
PH MILLER
Bilingual Family Support Specialist
Bilingual Early Childhood Educator



CORINA QUIÑONEZ
MUTUAL GROUND
Bilingual Therapist



SHERRI RACHFORD
PH MILLER
Family Support Specialist



MELISSA VARGAS
HEALTHY FAMILIES
Doula supervisor



MARTHA VENETUCCI-NENNI
LYNN G. HASKIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SANDWICH EARLY LEARNING CENTER
Principal

Powering the Journey

Collaborative Teams Fueling Progress Across Region 24

Plano Families With Vision: PAASSS Family Council

Jennifer Little
COFI Center for Action and Learning
Manager

Marisol Luna
POWER-PAC IL
Vice-president

Liliana Olayo
POWER-PAC IL
Co-president

Graciela Suarez
COFI Center for Action and Learning
Senior Trainer and Finance Coordinator

Janet Vargas
Illinois Action for Children
CS3 Family Engagement Strategy Coach

Doris Alegria
Angel Arroyo
Maribel Ceceñas
Keishana Crenshaw
Modeste Dadie
Amon Michelle Daly
Alex Esquivel
Brittany Lee
Glenda Love
Laurel Mateyka
Patty Moreno
Cameron Mueller
Megan Mueller
Rogelio Ortega
Michelle Strom
Laura Vazquez Cruz
Betsy Vega
Maria del Carmen Villalva



"Because of COFI, I have doubled my resolve to be part of the community to make it a better place for everyone."

-Plano parent and COFI graduate

EDU DREAM

Stephanie Hasford
EduDream
Research & Evaluation Associate

Monica Martinez
EduDream
Director and Co-founder

Michelle Oliva
EduDream
Director and Co-founder

Eliana Whitehouse
EduDream
Research & Evaluation Associate

Devan Gagliardo
Community Foundation of Grundy County
Program Director

Taylor Headley
PAASSS
Marketing Consultant

Laurel Mateyka
PAASSS
Chief Executive Officer

Angelica Nicola
Plano CUSD 88
Family Support Worker

Sherri Rachford
Plano CUSD 88
Family Support Worker



IRIS

Kamilah Byas
Childcare Resource and Referrals, Director of SDA 5
IRIS System Manager

Ryan Carrie
Kendall County Health Department
IRIS Data Manager

Devan Gagliardo
Community Foundation of Grundy County, Program Director
IRIS Community Champion & Systems Manager

Julie Herzog
Center for Public Partnerships and Research at The University of Kansas
Research Project Coordinator and Technical Assistance

Katherine Kanne
Center for Public Partnerships and Research at The University of Kansas
Research Project Coordinator and Technical Assistance

Laurel Mateyka
PAASSS, Chief Executive Officer
RIS Community Champion



"We're not just closing gaps — we're accelerating opportunity."

— Laurel Mateyka
CEO, PAASSS



Do you think you or your team could contribute to and benefit from working with PAASSS to advance our mission?

Reach out to Laurel Mateyka at paasssinfo@gmail.com. Together, we can change the future for our children and families.

How PAASSS Steers Success

Collaboration for Kindergarten Readiness

PAASSS partners with early childhood educators and care providers to ensure families have access to high-quality programs. These partnerships support skilled educators and a coordinated system that helps children build the social, emotional, and developmental skills needed for Kindergarten.

Connected Systems & Community Engagement

PAASSS builds a connected, equitable early learning system that supports smooth transitions from birth to Kindergarten. Community and family engagement are key pillars—empowering families and strengthening the support network around every child.

How You Can Help

Help Us Spread the Word!

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and help us grow by liking and sharing our posts. Encourage your followers to do the same. Together we can reach more families, share more resources, and make a bigger impact.

Support Literacy

Contribute to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library through the Fox Valley United Way and/or the United Way of Grundy County.



Fund Reading Nooks

Help bring literacy to local laundromats! Each nook costs \$1,530 and includes: Small couch (\$400), bookstand (\$429), small rug (\$329), educational toys (\$215), puppet set (\$149), and books (\$143).



**DONATE
TODAY**

Invest in PAASSS and help support young children and families across Region 24. Together, we can strengthen early learning, build brighter futures, and create lasting impact in our community.

The Road to Impact

The PAASSS Timeline

2018

PAASSS began meeting in February 2018 and has continued to meet quarterly ever since. The collaboration connects early childhood education and care providers with each other to share resources and to coordinate support for families with children from prenatal to 3rd grade.

In December, 2018 PAASSS formed a Leadership Team and applied to become part of the Partner Plan Act I Collaboration Institute (PPACI). Accepted into the Inaugural Cohort, PAASSS received monthly coaching and other targeted support throughout 2019.



2019

In January 2019, the Plano Family Resource Center opened at the Plano Methodist Church in Plano Illinois. Plano School District 88 then began offering playgroups and parent support at this site.



2020

The PAASSS leadership team completed the organization charter agreement and finalized the first strategic plan. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated annually by the leadership team.



2021

PAASSS partnered with the Plano Area Chamber of Commerce to offer a community wide screening of No Small Matter followed by a panel discussion. Viewing was offered in person and virtually.

To increase awareness and outreach, bilingual posters were distributed to collaboration partners and are posted on examination room doors at Healthy Beginnings Pediatrics. Parents/families can scan QR codes to request information, schedule developmental screenings, sign up for play groups, and more.

Collaboration leaders from Plano CUSD 88 and Fox Valley Family YMCA worked together to open three school district preschool classrooms on site at the YMCA in August 2022. The school district provided funding to renovate the spaces.



The Kendall County Community Food Pantry satellite site was relocated to the First Lutheran Church, Plano whose mission is feeding the hungry. The new location is more centrally located and allows families and/or community members struggling with food insecurity to have access to the resources they need throughout the month.

2023

The Grundy/Kendall Regional Office of Education agreed to be the fiscal sponsor for PAASSS. PAASSS received Birth to Five IL Funding for the first time in order to expand outreach to Grundy County and to launch its website.



In April 2023, PAASSS hosted a grand re-opening of the expanded Plano Family Resource Center to showcase the two additional rooms and office space, where PAASSS partners co-locate to bring much needed services to the community.

2024

In partnership with Kansas University Center for Public Partnerships & Research, PAASSS developed the Grundy-Kendall IRIS network, launching in August 2025, and will serve as the backbone organization for this integrated referral system. PAASSS also created and distributed key bilingual resources, including the Region 24 Roadmap Postcard, a Summer Activity Calendar, and two locally themed children's books.

Driving Change

Key Events That Advanced Our Mission in 2024-2025

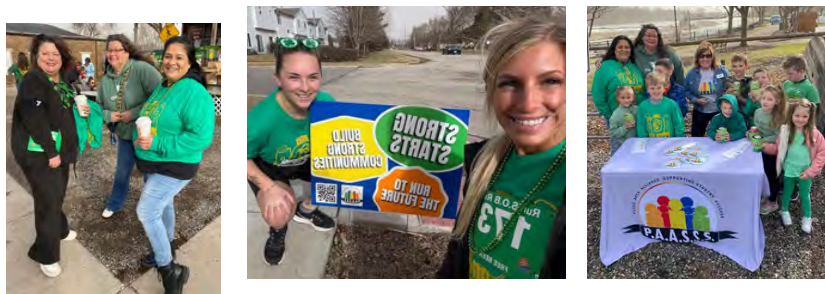
Community Listening Session

On October 17, 2024 PAASSS hosted a Community Listening Session that brought together close to 50 local leaders from the early childhood education and care sectors, along with several elected officials. The session provided an overview of the ongoing efforts to establish a new Illinois Department of Early Childhood, the transition process to this new agency, and the need for a streamlined and unified system to better serve Illinois families and children. Participants shared their insights and perspectives on the proposed changes after the presentation.



RUN S.O.B. RUN 5K

On March 15, 2025 PAASSS attended and was a sponsor for the RUN S.O.B. RUN 5K that benefits CASA Kendall County,, a nonprofit volunteer organization that advocates for the best interest of abused and neglected children within the Juvenile Court system.



Community Baby Shower

The 3rd Annual PAASSS Community Baby Shower brought families together for an afternoon filled with connection, support, and celebration. With the help of our dedicated partners, families received vital resources to help them thrive during the earliest stages of their children's lives.

Local Plano businesses led a successful diaper drive, collecting enough diapers for every attending family to receive diapers for their little one. Their generosity ensured no family left empty-handed.

The event offered more than just essentials. Families played games, enjoyed raffle prizes, and received high-quality gifts including car seat and stroller combos, high chairs, swings, and walkers.

These meaningful moments were made possible through our strong partnership with Fox Valley United Way's Home Sweet Home program. Together, we created a joyful, welcoming space where families felt seen, supported, and celebrated.



COFI Parent Training

On April 28, 2025, a dedicated group of 16 parents successfully completed Phase I of Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) training. Over the course of seven weeks, these parents engaged in intensive leadership development to prepare them to advocate for children and families in the Plano area.

The graduation celebration was supported by Heartland Bank and Trust Company, who generously provided dinner for the group. Chris Shue, CEO of Fox Valley Family YMCA, attended the event to show his support and encouragement. This milestone reflects the power of parent leadership and the commitment of families working together to build stronger communities.



Family Resource Night

April 29, 2025, PAASSS team members attended the first Family Resource Night for Saratoga Elementary School and Morris District 54. Organized by Family Support Specialist Christina Zetek from Morris 54, the event brought together local organizations to connect preschool families with valuable resources and services. PAASSS was proud to participate, sharing tools and information to help families in their parenting journeys.



EDU Dream Learning Session

On June 5, 2025, EduDream facilitated a virtual learning session with PAASSS leaders, 25 community stakeholders, and several elected officials from Grundy and Kendall Counties. The EduDream team shared key findings from the Region 24 early childhood education and care landscape analysis. A recording of the session and related slide show and handouts are available on the paasss.org website.

Kids Fair



On Saturday, June 7, 2025, PAASSS proudly co-sponsored the 1st Annual Kids Fair in partnership with the Fox Valley Family YMCA, State Senator Sue Rezin's office, and State Representative Jed Davis's office. The event brought families together for a day of fun, learning, and connection—offering free resources, engaging activities for children of all ages, and opportunities to connect with local leaders and community organizations.



Impact in Motion

A Data-Driven Look at PAASSS



3000

Childrens Books Printed

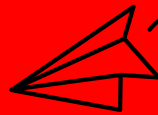
Cost: \$12180

1500 for Grundy County

1500 for Kendall County

IMPLEMENTED

Bimonthly newsletters to share updates on events, milestones, funding, and more with over 500 PAASSS subscribers.



77

Children who regularly attended weekly playgroups in Plano.



200



Newborn kits distributed via partners to families throughout Grundy and Kendall Counties.

5000

Bilingual

Roadmap

Postcards

Printed

Cost: \$1250



3600

Bilingual Summer Activity Calendars
Cost: \$8136



Delivered to 26 partners and delivered throughout Grundy & Kendall Counties.

2773+

Children enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library across Kendall and Grundy counties.



75% INCREASE

Social media engagement increased through targeted campaigns, including monthly features on family, health, toddler development, and community partners.



SECURED

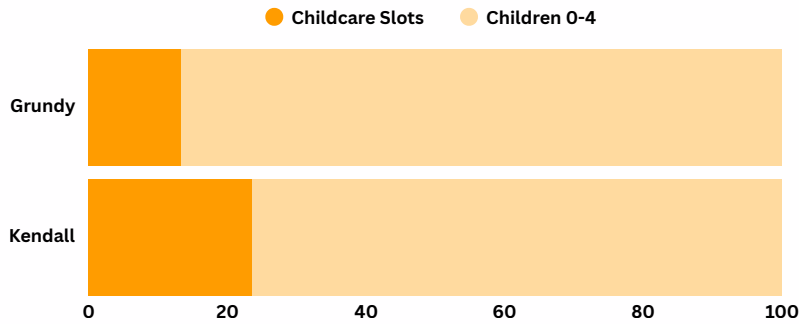
Funding to expand outreach to both Kendall and Grundy counties in 2025.

OVER 1000 SCREENED

Collaboration partners conducted over 1000 developmental screenings for children ages 3-5 in Grundy and Kendall Counties.

Community Needs and Growth – At a Glance

Childcare Total Potential Demand (0-4) vs Supply, 2030



SOURCE: Illinois Department of Public Health Office of Policy, Planning and Statistics Division of Health Data and Policy; U.S. Census Bureau

Childcare Trends

Childcare demand projections only look at the population 0-4, meaning that there could be more unmet demand than captured in the data provided.

+987 Grundy's 0-4 population is expected to increase by 2030.

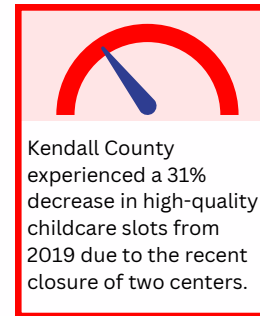
+3004 Kendall's 0-4 population is expected to increase by 2030.

Childcare availability is not expected to meet this increased demand.

Funded Childcare

Forms of Funded Childcare

- Early Head Start & Head Start: Federal programs offering school readiness and development services for low-income families.
- Preschool for All: State-funded preschool with expanded full-day options and added supports.
- Prevention Initiative: State-funded early support for families with children under 3 at risk of academic challenges.



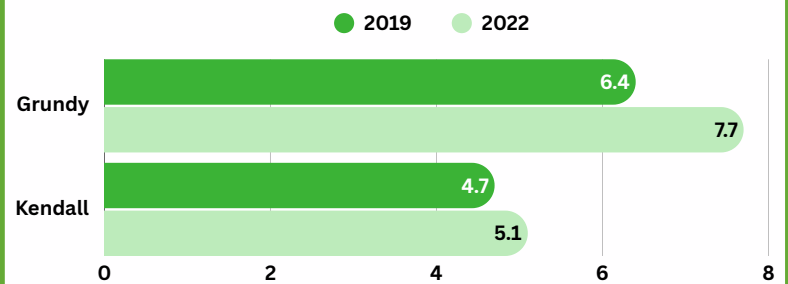
Early Intervention

Early Intervention: State-funded comprehensive child development and family supports for families with children 2 years and under who are at risk of academic failure.

Between 2019 and 2022, both Grundy and Kendall counties experienced slight increases in the number of children receiving home visiting services.

Developmental screenings and home visiting programs help identify families in need of supports and connect them to additional services.

Percent of Children Served by Early Intervention



SOURCE: Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map Database.

Community needs and growth insight provided by:

EDUDREAM
Champions of Educational Equity



Grundy's Future Starts Here

Did you know that 90% of brain development happens before age 5? Early childhood education lays the foundation for lifelong success. The highest rate of economic returns comes from the earliest investments in children.

Children in high-quality early learning programs are:

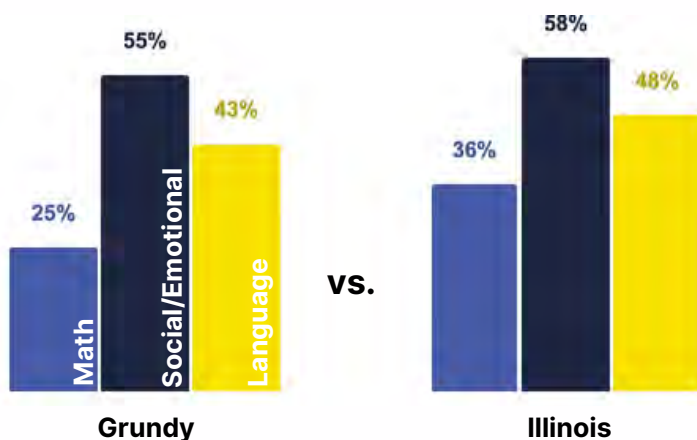
- ★ More likely to be ready for Kindergarten
- ★ More likely to graduate from high school
- ★ Less likely to experience behavioral challenges

Are Grundy Children Ready for Kindergarten?

Illinois rates kindergarten readiness in three developmental areas:

- Math
- Language and Literacy
- Social and Emotional Development

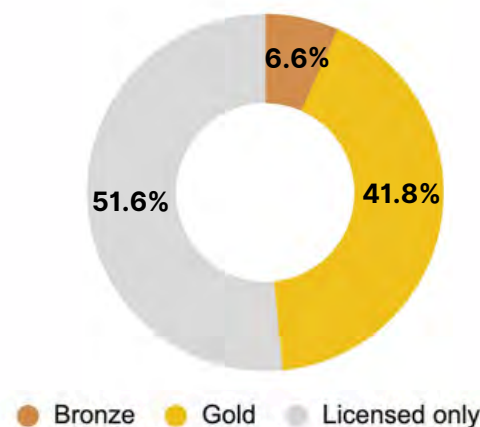
As of the 2022-23 school year, only **20%** of children in Grundy County are kindergarten-ready in all three areas, compared to 30% statewide.



High-quality childcare makes a difference.

ExceleRate Illinois is the state's quality rating system for licensed child care, helping families find high-quality options. Programs are rated as **Bronze**, **Silver**, and **Gold**, with Gold being the highest.

In 2022, **fewer than half** of licensed childcare programs were rated as either Bronze or Gold, and among those that were rated, the majority received a Gold rating.



Interested in knowing more about ExceleRate programs in Grundy?

Scan here:



Let's work together to ensure every child is ready for kindergarten!

- ✓ Look to elected officials to support policies and funding that expand access to quality care.
- ✓ Talk to your local leaders about the importance of early childhood education and care.
- ✓ Encourage school and district partnerships that support families and early caregivers.

Kendall's Future Starts Here

Did you know that 90% of brain development happens before age 5? Early childhood education lays the foundation for lifelong success. The highest rate of economic returns comes from the earliest investments in children.

Children in high-quality early learning programs are:

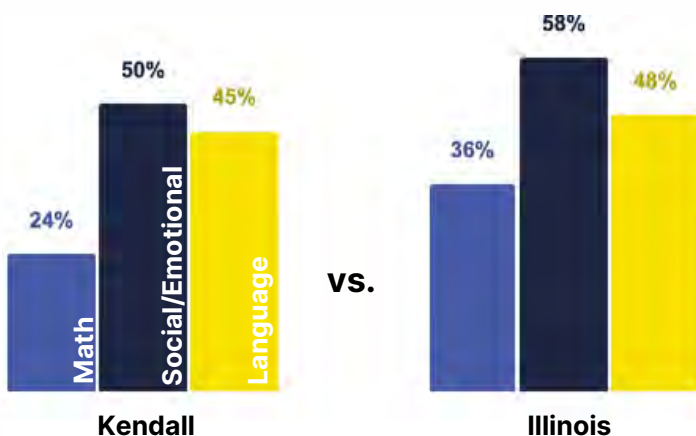
- ★ More likely to be ready for Kindergarten
- ★ More likely to graduate from high school
- ★ Less likely to experience behavioral challenges

Are Kendall Children Ready for Kindergarten?

Illinois rates kindergarten readiness in three developmental areas:

- Math
- Language and Literacy
- Social and Emotional Development

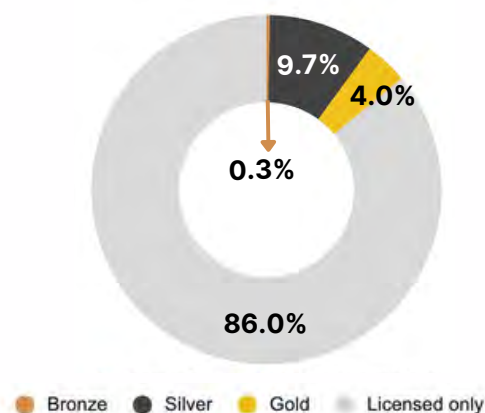
As of the 2022-23 school year, only **21%** of children in Kendall County are kindergarten-ready in all three areas, compared to 30% statewide.



High-quality childcare makes a difference.

ExceleRate Illinois is the state's quality rating system for licensed child care, helping families find high-quality options. Programs are rated as **Bronze**, **Silver**, and **Gold**, with Gold being the highest.

In 2022, **only 14%** of licensed childcare programs were rated Bronze, Silver, or Gold, and the majority received a Silver rating.



Interested in knowing more about ExceleRate programs in Kendall?

Scan here:



Let's work together to ensure every child is ready for kindergarten!

- ✓ Look to elected officials to support policies and funding that expand access to quality care.
- ✓ Talk to your local leaders about the importance of early childhood education and care.
- ✓ Encourage school and district partnerships that support families and early caregivers.

Paving the Way

Your support kept us moving forward



ENGAGE

50+ leaders and elected officials in shaping early childhood systems

EMPOWER

16 parent advocates trained

REACH

80% increase in website views & visits

CONNECT

15+ agencies connected through IRIS

Help Us Go Further

With your partnership, we're ready to take the next bold steps:

- **Expand our reach** to more communities across Region 24.
- **Invest in leadership** by hiring an Executive Director & Family Engagement Coordinator.
- **Empower families** with the tools and resources they need to thrive.



Smart Investments Begin Before Kindergarten



Every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education and care for children from low-income families yields a 13.7% return—primarily through reduced healthcare costs and decreased social service spending.

Children who enter kindergarten school-ready have an 82% chance of mastering basic skills by age 11, compared to only a 45% chance for children who do not.



Fuel the Road to Impact

Be part of the movement driving change for young children and families in Region 24. Scan the code or visit paasss.org/donate to support our work.

Together, we can pave the way to success—one family, one child, one step at a time.

The Road Ahead

Strategic Goals for 2025 –2026

1

Build awareness of the variety of resources and services available to families in the community.

Goal: Provide quarterly IRIS data updates showing the number of families using the system, the services they are requesting, and the overall impact of the integrated referral process for the Grundy-Kendall IRIS Network.

2

Encourage broad community participation in PAASSS to strengthen communication and connection.

Goal: Identify which service sectors are adequately supporting families and which are missing in order to strengthen the Grundy-Kendall IRIS network to meet the needs of all families. Sectors may include medicine, behavioral health, food pantries, parenting resources, family care providers, and child care providers to name a few.

3

Increase awareness of the importance of early childhood education for the whole community.

Goal: Provide another community screening of No Small Matter to increase awareness in Grundy and Kendall Counties about the importance of early childhood education with specific calls to action for funding and partnership opportunities to support future community saturation efforts through Basics Illinois.



Join us in powering brighter beginnings.

Visit [PAASSS.org](https://paasss.org) or contact us at paasssinfo@gmail.com to support this work.

Fueling The Mission

An Overview of Financial Contributions and Support

\$5,718

Community Foundation of Grundy County - The Board at Community Foundation of Grundy County approved a grant to PAASSS in the amount of \$5,718 to assist with the costs of IRIS.

\$78,000

Birth to Five IL - PAASSS received \$78,000 from Birth to Five IL for FY25! Deliverables include IRIS network development and launch for up to 30 partners, community engagement and outreach (specifically a book entitled Kids of Region 24, bilingual developmental milestone roadmap postcards, and bilingual summer activity calendars; additionally items for marketing and outreach include newborn welcome kits for families). We are very appreciative of the monetary support we received from Birth to Five IL again this year which allowed us to expand and enhance our outreach, support, and impact in Grundy/Kendall Region 24.

\$35,000+

EduDream and Illinois Action For Children CS3 Team - \$35,000-40,000 in value for a year's worth of data/research, analysis, and reporting - PAASSS was selected by the Community Systems Statewide Supports (CS3) team to receive Research & Data Analysis support with EduDream this fiscal year. Select members of the PAASSS leadership team met with the EduDream team every two weeks to develop three research questions, review publicly sourced data, provide context for data this was collected, and determine how best to represent the data to tell 'our story' for PAASSS in Grundy/Kendall Region 24.

\$20,000+

COFI and Illinois Action For Children CS3 Team - \$20,000+ value - This year PAASSS was excited to partner with Illinois Action for Children's CS3 team and COFI to offer FREE training to families in the Spring. A diverse group of 16 parents representing Region 24 attended seven training sessions between 3/10/25 and 4/28/25 to learn how to set and achieve goals for themselves, their families, and their community. The group is the first PAASSS family council and has two representative members on the PAASSS leadership team.

\$8,400

Plano CUSD 88 - contributed \$8400 to offset costs for use of the Plano Family Resource Center for preschool screenings, PH Miller Playgroups, and PAASSS collaboration office space.

Driven by a Common Purpose

Community Partners Who Shared the Journey

- Behavioral Perspectives, Inc.
- Birth to Five IL Region 24
- CASA Kendall County
- Centennial Counseling
- Child and Family Connections (CFC4)
- Child Care Resource & Referral (SDA5)
- Community Foundation of Grundy County
- Family Focus Aurora
- Fox Valley Family YMCA
- Fox Valley United Way
- Grace's Place
- Grundy County Health Department
- Grundy County Special Education Cooperative
- Grundy/Kendall Regional Office of Education
- Healthy Beginnings Pediatric
- Joi Counseling
- Joliet Easter Seals
- Kendall County 211
- Kendall County Community Action
- Kendall County Health Department
- Morris Elementary School District 54
- Mutual Ground
- Nandra Family Practice
- Oswego School District 308
- Plano CUSD 88
- Plano Community Library District
- Plano Police Department
- Rush Copley Health Care
- Sandwich School District 430
- Saratoga Elementary School District 60c
- Two Rivers Head Start
- Plano Methodist Church
- Plano Public Library
- United Way of Grundy County
- We Care of Grundy County
- Yorkville School District 115

Made possible by funding from



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