



Redefining Early Education, Child by Child, Parent by Parent

VOCEL 2017 IMPACT REPORT



VOCEL

“The first five years
have so much to do
with the how the
next 80 turn out.”

BILL GATES, SR.
Chairman, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

On the cover:

After one year in the VOCEL
Child Parent Academy with her
parents Sarah and Michael,
2-year-old Sophia-Loren
enrolled in the founding Toddler
classroom at VOCEL's Early
Learning Center.



When 90% of a child’s brain is formed by age 5, there’s no time to waste.

In this 2017 Impact Report, we are pleased to highlight how your generosity has helped us fulfill our commitment to help young children succeed in school and thrive in life. As former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said at our 2017 Early Expressions Luncheon, “Not equipping children for kindergarten is almost like dooming them to failure.” With 95 percent of our students graduating kindergarten-ready, you can be confident that your investment in VOCEL’s children is helping shatter this inequity.

With our city at a crossroads, we believe our work is more important than ever. As 2018 begins, we’re excited to continue to grow our team of exemplary educators, continue incorporating technology to harness powerful data, expand our bilingual outreach to more families, and empower more parents to use our techniques at home.

Yes, we know that children born into poverty have the odds stacked against them and that the families we serve often face extraordinary circumstances. But with your continued support, know we are uncovering new approaches to shift this trajectory and making a profound difference in the lives of young children and families in Chicago.

Barbara Koren
Chairman of the Board

Kelly Lambriatos
Executive Director, Co-Founder



How VOCEL stacks up

VOCEL's language-first approach equips children with the tools they need to succeed in school and beyond. All children in our Early Learning Center wear LENA Digital Language Processors every week to track their expressive communications. We use this data to track student progress and measure our outcomes.

2,529 words per hour

The average number of words VOCEL preschoolers hear from teachers and volunteers, **exceeding the 99th percentile** in LENA's normative sample set.

335 vocalizations per hour

The average number of vocalizations VOCEL preschoolers make, **exceeding the 87th percentile** in LENA's normative sample set.

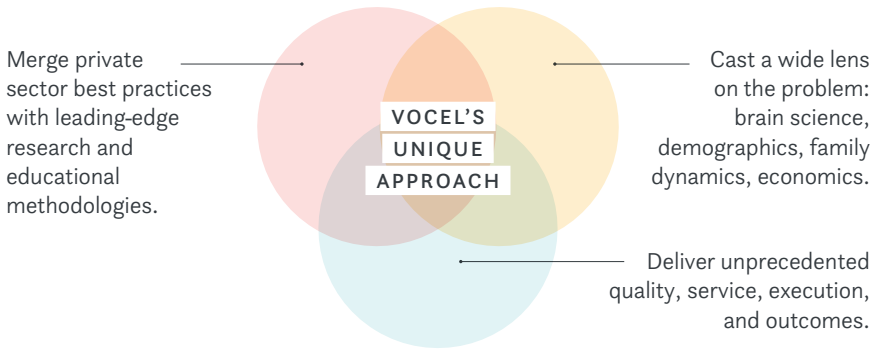
99 exchanges per hour

The average number of back-and-forth exchanges VOCEL preschoolers have in conversations with adults, **exceeding the 97th percentile** in LENA's normative sample set.



We're working to raise the bar in early education

Our innovative approach is rooted in language development, parent coaching, and an open, intentional teaching style. In 2017, we expanded our programs to reach more families in underserved communities, as well as moved our Early Learning Center to a new, state-of-the-art facility.



PROGRAMS THAT MEET CHILDREN AND PARENTS WHERE THEY ARE

VOCEL Early Learning Center

LAUNCHED 2014

Full-day, year-round program for children 15 months to 5 years old

All parents are employed, in school, or working to get there

100% of families served are low income, with 68% living below the federal poverty level*

Housed in new state-of-the-art facility in the Austin neighborhood

VOCEL Child Parent Academy

LAUNCHED 2016

10-month early learning accelerator for parents, caregivers, and their children up to 5 years old

82% of families served are low income, with the great majority (76%) living below the federal poverty level*

Operating in two schools in the Belmont Cragin and West Humboldt Park neighborhoods

GUIDED BY OUR FOUNDATIONAL DRIVERS



Outcomes-driven programming



Top-notch human capital



Evaluation and responsible growth



Continuous, strategic innovation

*The federal poverty level for a family of four is \$24,600. VOCEL defines "low-income" as an annual income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, or \$45,510 for a family of four.



A continuum of learning and development

In 2017, VOCEL expanded its Early Learning Center to serve children as young as 15 months old. Our programs adapt to each child's developmental milestones to promote discovery and growth.

Discovery

3-year-old Trinity explores on her own, developing inquiry skills that will continue to foster independent learning.

Socialization

2-year-olds Sophia and Janiyah partner together in their play, building language and social skills.



Collaboration & Negotiation

Our oldest students collaborate to problem solve and often negotiate ideas, plans, and approaches to their play and exploration.

The End Result

Young children equipped for kindergarten and beyond—ready to start their formal educational experiences on track and prepared to succeed.



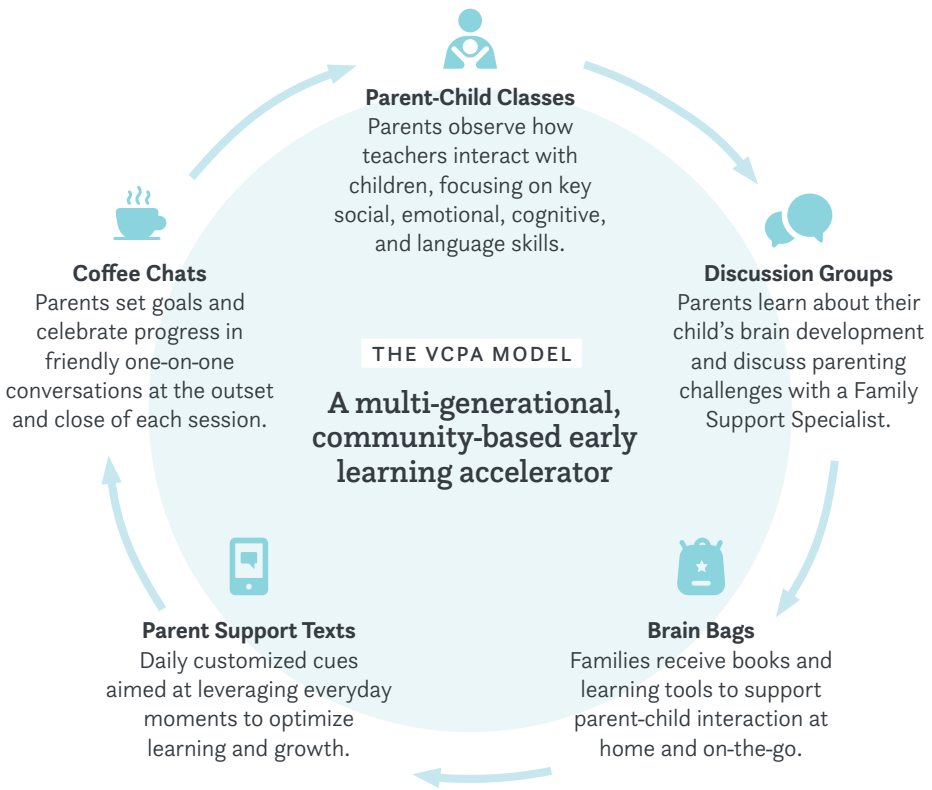
Claire's Story

I joined the VCPA shortly after moving to my new neighborhood. The overwhelming support I've received and techniques I've learned have helped me at home with my fun-loving, rebellious son. Most importantly, I've found a community of people I can grow with as a parent."



How we're empowering children's first teachers

With the VOCEL Child Parent Academy (VCPA), we are able to share the same tools and approaches we use in our Early Learning Center with parents and other primary caregivers for children under age 5. In 2017 we grew the VCPA to the Belmont Cragin and West Humboldt Park neighborhoods, expanding our reach to more underserved communities.



AFTER MEETING TWICE A WEEK FOR 10 MONTHS PARENTS REPORTED:

100%
learned more
All said their knowledge of their child's language and social-emotional development increased.

89%
had more support
The great majority felt they had more support from other parents by the end of the program.

100%
would recommend
All said they would recommend the VCPA to other parents of young children.



Moments and events from the past year that your support made possible

More than 82 children and parents grew stronger.

While the focus of our Child Parent Academy is on the youngest children, there is promising evidence that relationships with all children improved regardless of age.



We ran and jumped outside every day.

Students love the play atrium at our new Early Learning Center in the Austin community where safe outdoor space is a rarity.

We became an official partner of the new LENA Grow™.

Our teachers are tracking children's communication growth and incorporating powerful data into their practice.



We shared our impact with 235 educators and advocates at 6 conferences.

We're committed to contributing to the early education field and learning from our peers across our city and nationally.



In partnership with Children's Research Triangle, we brought counseling services to VOCEL families.

Our full-time Family Support Specialist uses trauma-informed techniques in her work with kids and families.

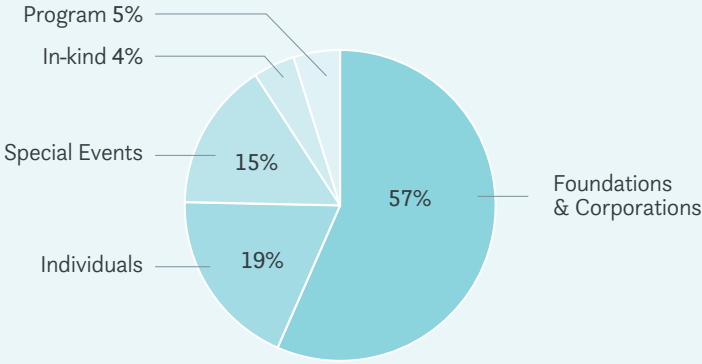
More than 100 business, civic, and social sector leaders visited our programs to learn about our strategic model.

We shared our innovative language-first approach with education advocates from across the country, including California and New York.

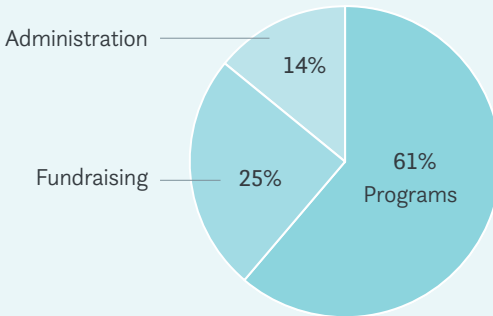
Financials

For the fiscal year running September 2016 through August 2017.
Audited statements available on request.

REVENUE BY CATEGORY



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



During the 2016-2017 school year VOCEL relocated to its new home in the Austin community. VOCEL's staff was lean and many human capital resources were dedicated to the successful transition and licensing of the new facility. Program expense allocations are expected to be above 70 percent in 2018.

GROWING A TRADITION: OUR 3RD ANNUAL EARLY EXPRESSIONS LUNCHEON



On November 15, 2017 we welcomed Arne Duncan for a thoughtful conversation on how early childhood education will impact Chicago's future. More than 500 early education proponents attended our third annual Early Expressions Luncheon to hear from the former U.S. Secretary of Education on how investing in our youngest children is critical to our city.

Annual Contributors

Gifts received September 1, 2016 to August 31, 2017.

Annual gifts support the programs and operations of VOCEL.

*Indicates part of a multi-year gift

\$100,000+

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Locations

**VOCEL HEADQUARTERS
AUSTIN**

VOCEL Early Learning Center
5317 West Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60651

BELMONT CRAGIN

VOCEL Child Parent Academy
The Chicago Academy
Elementary School
3400 North Austin Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60634

WEST HUMBOLDT PARK

VOCEL Child Parent Academy
Piccolo School of Excellence
1040 North Keeler Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60651

All photographs courtesy of Sarah Dickerson, Wildwood Photography

It may look like just play, but millions of neural connections are formed every second of a child's first three years of life. This brain development is supported by interactivity – child's interactions with adults, with peers, and with the environment around them.

At VOCEL, we capitalize on this window of rapid development and provide children with the supports they need to succeed in school and thrive in life.



Redefining early childhood education, child by child, parent by parent.

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