

Closing Gaps

Creating
Youth
Opportunities



Who are our children?

52%

of the students in our four school districts are a race or ethnicity **other than white**

Over 60%

of some Carbondale and Glenwood Springs schools are

Latino

117

students across the region are homeless



23%

of public school students are English Language Learners (**ELL**)

58%

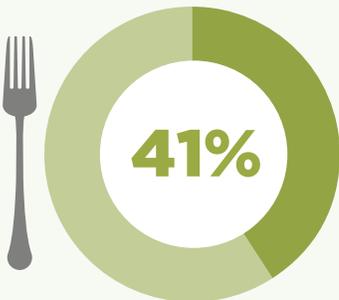
of these **ELL** students live in the **Roaring Fork** School District*

*Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt

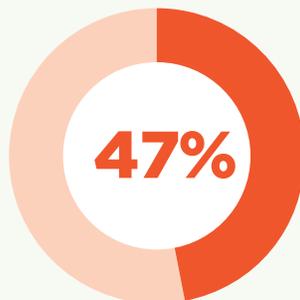


Around **20,000 children**, aged 0-18, live from **Aspen** to **Parachute**

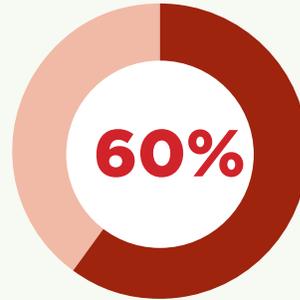
FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCH (FRL)



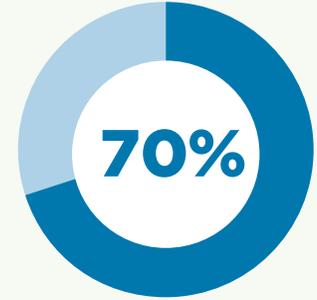
41% of our region's students qualify for FRL



47% of students in Garfield County qualify for FRL



Over 60% of Carbondale Middle School students qualify for FRL



Over 70% of Rifle's Wamsley Elementary School students qualify for FRL

Community Moving Toward Brighter Future, Yet Many Children Still At Risk

In 2011, when Aspen Community Foundation began early planning for the Aspen to Parachute Cradle to Career Initiative (CCI), a quiet crisis faced our region's 20,000 children.

Profound achievement gaps existed between our low-income children and their more affluent peers. In addition, the rapidly growing number of English Language Learners in our region challenged schools, and many high school students were unprepared for college and career. We knew that improving youth outcomes - from birth through career readiness - would substantially benefit our region's quality of life and economy.

Collective Impact

In late 2012, around 100 community leaders from nonprofits, schools, governments, civic groups and philanthropy began meeting monthly to create a regional blueprint for youth success. Since completing the CCI Action Plan in May 2014, CCI partners have now launched over a dozen collaborative projects between Parachute and Aspen to help our children flourish.

Nationally, family income correlates closely with academic success – as one study concluded, *the higher the poverty, the lower the test scores.*

This report offers an overview of how our region's children are doing and how the collaborative projects of CCI partner organizations are helping.

CCI participants established four goals for our youth:

1. **All children should be ready for kindergarten**
2. **All children should develop the social and life assets for success and happiness**
3. **All children should succeed academically**
4. **All children should graduate high school ready for college and career**



GOAL 1: All Children Ready for Kindergarten

At 18 months of age, children from affluent, educated families already have larger vocabularies than most children from low-income families. By age three, well-off kids hear 30 million more words than low-income children, and their vocabularies can be more than twice as large.

By the time children enter kindergarten, a developmental and IQ gap emerges between children from low-income and those from middle-to high-income families. Some low-income children enter kindergarten as much as 18 months behind their peers, slowed by a lack of early education, limited vocabularies and little preparation for learning. Frequently, this *kindergarten gap* is never closed — too often, the same children are dropping out of high school a dozen years later.

These issues can be overcome. Research shows that young children of at-risk mothers receiving evidence-based home visits are significantly more likely later to graduate from high school. Similarly, providing high-quality childcare builds healthy communities, and preschool for low-income children can result in increased high school graduation rates, along with lower arrest and welfare rates, higher lifetime salaries, better health, higher homeownership, and lower divorce rates later in life.

Healthy development of young children in the early years of life literally provides a foundation for just about all of the challenging social problems that our society faces.

— Jack Shonkoff, M.D., Director of the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University



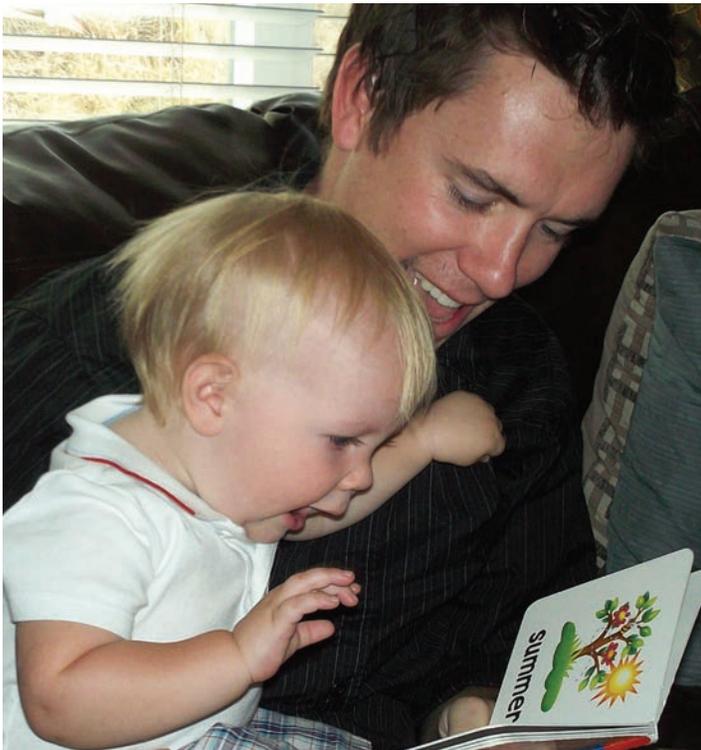
A dollar invested in high-quality preschool returns a 7% to 10% annual return on investment.

REGIONAL PRESCHOOL PARTICIPATION



Percentage of kindergartners who had participated in some form of preschool

The data at left are based on parental reports when children register for kindergarten. Prior to 2014 (pre-CCI), regional data were not collected, but preschool participation was significantly lower before the creation of Preschool on Wheels, Jumpstart, and other excellent efforts by regional preschool providers.



An array of home visitation services is provided by Family Visitor Programs.

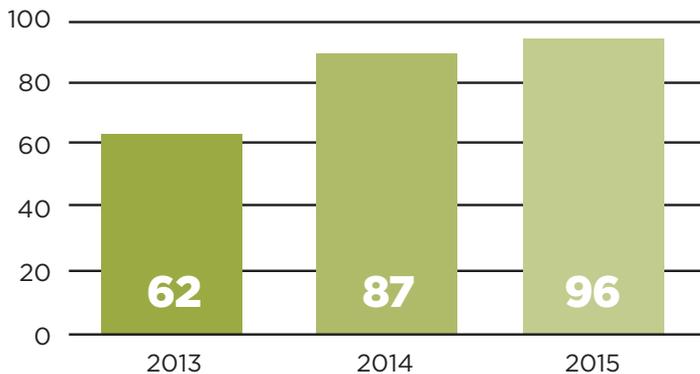
Teaching Strategies GOLD

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an assessment tool that allows the community to know whether children are ready for kindergarten. (Before CCI, our community had no way to collectively assess kindergarten readiness.) TS GOLD is also a powerful quality-improvement tool that preschools can use to improve their own teaching.

In 2013, **15%** of all children in childcare and preschool were enrolled in programs using **TS GOLD**

In 2015, **62%** of all children in childcare and preschool were enrolled in programs using **TS GOLD**

NUMBER OF MOTHERS WITH MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS RECEIVING INTENSIVE HOME VISITS*



* Healthy Families America visits provided by Family Visitor Programs



The CCI Ready for Kindergarten Action Team formed a partnership with prenatal providers and Valley View Hospital to increase the number of home visits provided to at-risk mothers. The 2014-15 increases (at left) are the result.

PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In 2011, most of our region's children were not attending preschool. Thanks to the hard work of Cradle to Career Initiative (CCI) partners and other regional preschool providers, the situation has improved.

On the other hand, in 2016, 200 families still remained on the waiting list at Blue Lake Preschool in El Jebel. Our challenge today is to continue expanding access while also enhancing the quality of our region's childcare and preschool programs.

COMBINED CHILDCARE & PRESCHOOL CAPACITY:

Regionally, we have approximately **5,000 children** aged **0-5** and the capacity to provide some type of **program** for about **2,000**

The children who entered my kindergarten classroom after Preschool on Wheels were well prepared. They had a strong foundation of skills, including letter knowledge, book awareness, and early math skills.

– Emily Raymonda,
Kindergarten Teacher,
Highland Elementary School, Rifle

Building Success Through Community Collaboration

A partnership between Aspen Community Foundation and Garfield School District Re-2, the Preschool on Wheels (POW) program brings licensed, high-quality preschool to low-income children in the Rifle-Silt-New Castle area who previously had no access to early education. On Gus the Bus and Sunshine – school buses converted into colorful preschool classrooms with bilingual teachers – Latino and Anglo children learn and play together as they gain language, math, social-emotional, literacy, and cognitive skills.

POW STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN KINDERGARTEN

SKILLS	FALL*	SPRING*
Uses language to express thoughts & needs	49%	97%
Demonstrates knowledge of alphabet	86%	100%
Demonstrates emergent writing skills	79%	100%

*2014-2015 school year



Jumpstart

Jumpstart provides intensive full-day, 5-week, 5-days-a-week summer programs in Basalt, Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs for children about to enter kindergarten with little or no early education. Jumpstart reduces the *kindergarten gap* among low-income, primarily Latino children.

Jumpstart children demonstrate solid progress across a wide variety of kindergarten assessments, demonstrating that most were, in fact, ready for kindergarten. According to kindergarten teachers and elementary

school principals, all kindergarten students did better post-Jumpstart (not just the Jumpstart children), indicating that fewer classroom disruptions from unprepared children created benefits for all.

This was the smoothest kindergarten start I've ever experienced. Teachers had kindergarten classes up and running so much faster than ever before.

– Suzanne Wheeler-Del Piccolo, Basalt Elementary School Principal

Jumpstart partners: Family Resource Centers, Raising a Reader, Roaring Fork School District, Roaring Fork School Health Centers, Summer Advantage, and Valley Settlement Project



Gus the Bus and Sunshine are the first two licensed mobile preschools in Colorado. The positive educational outcomes of their children are comparable to those in traditional preschools.

Mastering social skills early on can help children stay out of trouble all the way into their adult lives.

– National Public Radio report on recent Duke University social-emotional learning research

GOAL 2: Children Develop Social and Life Assets for Success and Happiness

Social-emotional skills are powerful predictors of success in and beyond school. Students who demonstrate higher perseverance or “grit” also have higher academic grade point averages, better college and career readiness, and fewer career changes over their lifetime. Similarly, Gallup has shown that a student’s hope for the future is a better predictor of college success than SAT and ACT scores or high school grade point average.

Building Success Through Community Collaboration

The CCI Character Asset Task Force created the Character Asset Toolkit, a simple curriculum to help nonprofits cultivate creativity, hope, perseverance, and social responsibility in youth. Ultimately, this toolkit will be used by nonprofits and businesses across our region.



The Aspen Valley Ski & Snowboard Club uses the CCI Character Asset Toolkit to help youth succeed both in and out of school (and on and off the slopes).

How are our children doing?

OUR REGION'S 5TH-12TH GRADERS



45%
Strongly Hopeful

36%
Stuck

19%
Discouraged

Hope

In the Gallup Student Survey, **45%** of our region's 5th-12th graders report being **strongly hopeful**. **36%** are **stuck**. **19%** are **discouraged**.

71%



5th Grade

Engagement

Student engagement in our schools **drops dramatically** from **5th grade** to **8th grade**. Later, in **high school**, it rises again

35%



8th Grade

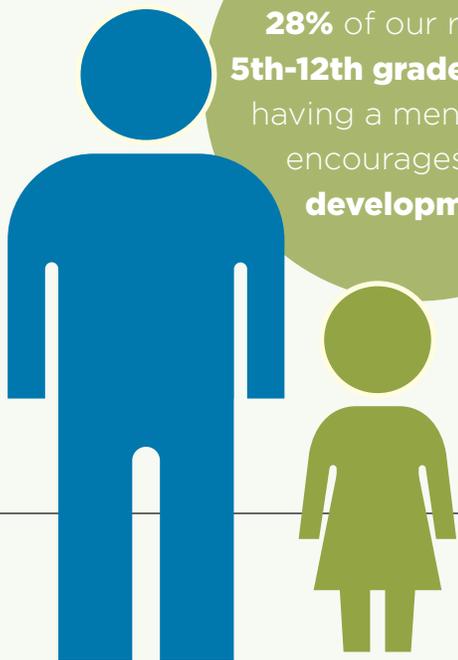
49%



High school

Mentors

28% of our region's **5th-12th graders** report having a mentor who encourages their **development**.



Our Hope Gap

51% of **Anglos** report being **strongly hopeful** compared with only **38%** of **Latinos**

(In national Gallup surveys, 47% of Latino students report being hopeful.)



51%
Anglos



38%
Latinos



Hope Outlook

75% strongly believe they will **graduate** from **high school**

GOAL 3: Students Succeed Academically

Academic success is a universally recognized strategy to improve lifelong outcomes. Our valley’s children need early literacy, supportive families, English language learning, effective teaching, tutoring and intervention, clear expectations of grade levels, and social-emotional learning.

3rd grade reading and 8th grade math are strong predictors of high school success.

Children not proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade are **four times** more likely to drop out of high school than children who are at grade level.

Proficiency in 8th grade math is an indicator for both high school success and postsecondary readiness.

Academic results are good predictors of all kinds of outcomes in life: not just how far you’ll go in school and how much you’ll earn when you get out, but also whether you’ll commit crimes, whether you’ll take drugs, whether you’ll get married, and whether you’ll get divorced.

– Paul Tough, *How Children Succeed* (2012)

How are our children doing?

3rd GRADE READING: 69%
Percentage of our region’s 3rd graders at grade level

Middle & upper income students at grade level **84%** **THE GAP** **51%** Low-income students at grade level

8th GRADE MATH: 47%
Percentage of our region’s 8th graders at grade level

Middle & upper income students at grade level **58%** **THE GAP** **27%** Low-income students at grade level



A Culture of Literacy father with his son

Building Success Through Community Collaboration

Culture of Literacy (COL)

Culture of Literacy gives parents of struggling readers in Carbondale simple ways to help their kindergarten children learn to read at home, and it reduces the number of kindergartners who require intensive literacy interventions in school.

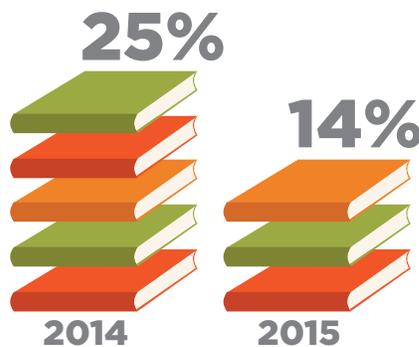
Community Connectors

This program in Parachute gives students real world connections and experience in order to increase academic success — including 3rd grade reading and 8th grade math — as well as graduation and postsecondary readiness.

Academic Success Projects

In development: A collaborative Leadership Academy organized by four school districts to offer training to our 30 regional school principals. Also being planned: A community reading and writing tutoring center for elementary school students.

In 2014, before Culture of Literacy, **25% of students required intensive literacy** intervention at the end of the school year. In 2015, after Culture of Literacy, **only 14% required intervention.**



COL partners:

Crystal River Elementary School, Raising a Reader, and Valley Settlement Project

GOAL 4: Students Graduate High School Ready for College and Career

By 2020, economists predict that three-fourths of Colorado jobs will require postsecondary education and training. This does not necessarily mean college — not all youth wish to attend college — but to compete for today’s jobs, young people need something beyond high school, such as trade school, vocational school, or career-tech training.

Post High School Success partners:

The Aspen Skiing Company, Colorado Mountain College, local businesses, Mountain BOCES and Our four school districts



In 2015, Americans with bachelor’s degrees earned salaries over 100% higher than those with only high school degrees.

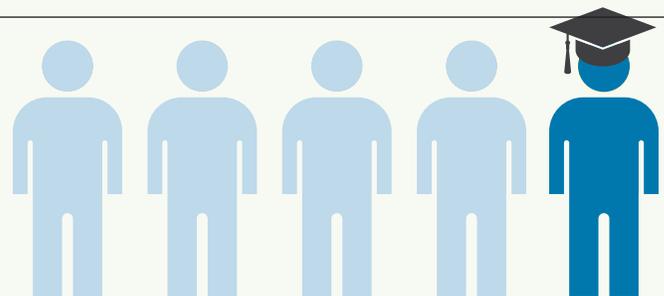
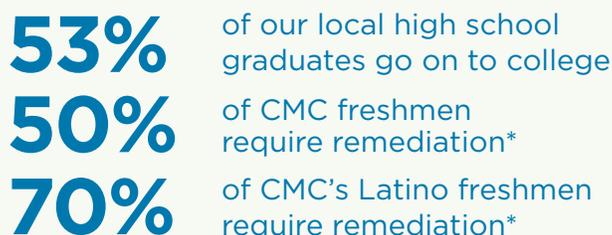
How are our children doing?

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES



In Colorado today, **only 24%** of our **9th graders** go on to earn a **2- or 4-year postsecondary degree.**

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT



Statistically, when low-income students enter college needing remediation, fewer than one in five ever complete a two-year degree.

* Colorado Mountain College freshmen entering from our local high schools

Building Success Through Community Collaboration

The Post High School Success project is infusing schools and families with a culture of college and career by expanding dedicated college and career counseling to all nine high schools in our region, along with “discovery classes” that help students explore their interests and consider what they might do after graduation. The project began in Basalt in 2012/2013. In fall 2015, it expanded to five additional high schools — and in fall 2016, all nine of our regional high schools will have dedicated counselors.

Valley Intern Program

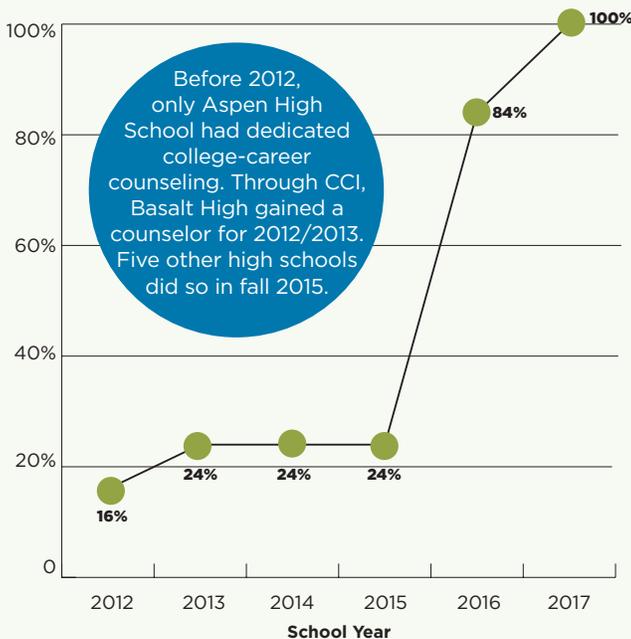
(VIP) was created by the CCI Business Roundtable to create internship, job shadowing, and other job opportunities for local high school students.



Community Connectors

is aimed at creating internships for every student in Parachute’s Grand Valley High School.

STUDENTS WITH ACCESS TO DEDICATED COUNSELORS



A graduate of Roaring Fork High School in Carbondale



Basalt High School College and Career Counseling was the pilot for CCI's Post High School Success project.

BASALT HIGH SCHOOL OUTCOMES

While more time will be needed to assess the impacts of dedicated counselors and discovery classes across our region, we can see positive early trends in Basalt High School.



* Federal financial aid form

** In 2015, 85% of Basalt High School seniors were admitted to college and declared their intention to enroll; some did not do so in the fall.

Moving the Needle Toward Youth Success Across Our Region

From kindergarten readiness to college and career readiness, the organizations and individuals working collaboratively on the Aspen to Parachute Cradle to Career Initiative are measurably increasing youth success, while also ensuring the future success of our region.

CCI partner organizations are building a region of thriving children, supported and supportive families, economic vitality and healthy communities.

*Because of CCI,
we see social
innovation today
that wasn't
there before.*

– Tom Heald, Aspen School
District Assistant Superintendent
and CCI Implementation
Strategy Group member



**Kindergarten
Ready**



**Social &
Life Skills**



**Academic
Success**



**College &
Career Ready**

We are grateful for the innovative and collaborative work that the Aspen to Parachute Cradle to Career Initiative is doing to build youth success and then to measure the results. We commend the Aspen Community Foundation for its leadership and applaud the region's citizens for supporting their youth in this visionary way.

- JOHN HICKENLOOPER, GOVERNOR OF COLORADO



Through the strategy of *collective impact*, the **Aspen to Parachute Cradle to Career Initiative** gathers nonprofits, schools, governments, civic groups, businesses and philanthropy to implement collaborative and innovative ways of working together to measurably increase youth success across our region.

Aspen Community Foundation (ACF) was founded in 1980 to build philanthropy, support nonprofit organizations, and bring people together to solve community issues. In the more than 35 years since its founding, ACF has convened local organizations and leading stakeholders to identify regional needs and implement effective solutions through its relationships, institutional knowledge and grantmaking. The Aspen to Parachute Cradle to Career Initiative (CCI) originated in the Foundation's recognition of the serious achievement gaps between low-income and more affluent youth in our region.

For more information and to learn how to become involved in the Cradle to Career Initiative, contact **Tamara Tormohlen**, Executive Director, or **John Bennett**, Cradle to Career Director. Tamara@aspencommunityfoundation.org John@aspencommunityfoundation.org

110 E. Hallam St. Suite 126
Aspen, Colorado 81611
aspencommunityfoundation.org
info@aspencommunityfoundation.org

