



Bessie Tartt Wilson Children's Foundation Prospectus



overview

FOUNDED 2002

CURRENT REVENUE \$465,000

DESCRIPTION: The Bessie Tartt Wilson Children's Foundation works through research, advocacy, and policy reform to strengthen early education and care for low-income children, ages 0–5, across Massachusetts. A pioneer in early education, Bessie Tartt Wilson opened her first childcare center in 1946, serving working families in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Her daughter, Mary Reed, followed in her mother's footsteps and led Tartt's Day Care Centers, where she witnessed firsthand the challenges low-income families face in their attempt to access reliable, quality care for their children. Recognizing that many of these challenges are due to shortcomings in the early education system and seeking broader, more enduring impact, Mary decided to shift her role from practitioner to advocate. She established the Foundation in her mother's name and is working to elevate and permanently sustain the quality of early education for low-income children across Massachusetts. The Foundation partners with parents, childcare providers, and government leaders to develop and implement effective policy solutions that positively impact the lives of tens of thousands of children and families.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY: The Foundation is seeking \$1.1 million over two years to support its next research and policy initiative and build organizational capacity to increase its presence within Massachusetts.

THE NEED

Despite the proven benefits of quality early education, low-income families in Massachusetts are less likely to have access to high-quality care than their more affluent peers.

- Infants and toddlers who are not exposed to high-quality early education and care are 30% less likely to graduate from high school and 50% less likely to graduate from college.
- Statewide, only one-fifth of 300,000 income-eligible children receive subsidies for early education through the state-run voucher program, and more than 22,000 children are on the waiting list.
- Research has shown a clear link between quality and teacher compensation and credentials. Teachers who work in centers serving subsidized children earn up to two-thirds less than their peers who teach in public preschools.
- Only 10% of classroom staff at centers serving mostly low-income families have a two-year college degree, as compared to 61% for those serving moderate to high-income families.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Recently completing the successful implementation of policy reform that positively impacted over 50,000 children in the commonwealth, the Bessie Tartt Wilson Children's Foundation has developed an effective model for improving early education and care for low-income children. Today, the Foundation is drawing upon its statewide network of families, providers, and advocates for its next initiative to improve quality and access for families by addressing the needs of the early education workforce. Accomplishments to date include:

- Improved continuity of care for children, as voucher certification period was extended from 6 months to 1 year.
- Improved access to care for families with limited English proficiency by ensuring that translated materials and live translation services are available.
- Reduced administrative burdens for families and agencies with the elimination of the requirement to provide the same documentation to multiple state agencies.

TWO-YEAR GOALS

Early Education Workforce Access and Advocacy Initiative

- Conduct research and engage grassroots constituencies to develop meaningful policy recommendations
- Write and publish policy papers and articulate recommendations and strategies for change
- Implement and monitor policy reforms

Organizational Capacity

- Hire director of research; expand development and administrative capacity
- Upgrade technology and Web site

WAYS TO INVEST

Financial

- \$25,000 – Funds accountability studies to assess how reform impacts the lives of children across Massachusetts
- \$5,000 – Funds compilation and analysis of data from grassroots research
- \$1,000 – Supports outreach to 500 early educators and families across the commonwealth

In-kind

- Printing and marketing support
- Space to convene large-scale meetings and other events
- Computers, network infrastructure, IT support



Although Massachusetts ranks third in the nation for overall well-being of children, it ranks 50th out of 50 states for well-being of its low-income children.

—KIDS COUNT 2007

SOCIAL INNOVATION IN ACTION – THE BESSIE TARTT WILSON CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION MODEL

The Bessie Tartt Wilson Children's Foundation strengthens early education and care for children with the greatest need through research, advocacy, communication, and policy implementation. The Foundation's work leads to systemic change by focusing on critical policy issues that impact the early education experiences of children from poor and low-income families in Massachusetts. The sections below describe how the Foundation works to achieve policy reform:

I. RESEARCH: In order to establish a basis of scholarly research to frame its work, the Foundation



Keeping the Promise:

A Study of the Massachusetts Child Care Voucher System

In its first major policy initiative, the Foundation examined quality and consistency of care for children who receive childcare subsidies through vouchers provided by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. After following 3,200 children and conducting town meetings statewide, the study concluded that limited funding for the voucher program and significant administrative burdens result in reduced quality and accessibility for subsidized care. In early 2006, the Foundation presented a paper with recommendations for action and began work on its top priority, extending the voucher certification period from six months to one year. Within the year, the Foundation achieved its goal, enhancing continuity of care for the over 50,000 children in the program. Additional challenges to address include reducing the two-year waiting list, extending state agency hours to accommodate working families, and easing administrative burdens for childcare providers.

partners with researchers from Wellesley Centers for Women, Boston EQUIP, and other institutions to conduct an extensive investigation into its key issues. The Foundation then conducts grassroots town meetings in each of the six regions of Massachusetts identified by the Department of Early Education and Care. These meetings with educators, administrators, parents, and childcare advocates test assumptions and gather critical feedback from the field. The research phase concludes with a major policy report that summarizes findings and articulates the Foundation's policy recommendations.

II. ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION: The Foundation prioritizes which recommendations will be most likely to realize positive change for its target population. The Foundation then engages in an extensive effort to turn its priority recommendations into policy or legislative change. This effort includes publishing additional reports; placing op-eds in newspapers; and educating legislators and policymakers on the issues, the need for change, and the impact change would have on the commonwealth's children.

III. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: After policy change has been achieved, the Foundation monitors the effects of the change to assess whether desired outcomes have been realized. Follow-up research studies and interviews with grassroots stakeholders help the Foundation to understand the implications of its work and highlight the areas where continuing efforts are needed.



Early Childhood Education Workforce Access and Advocacy Initiative

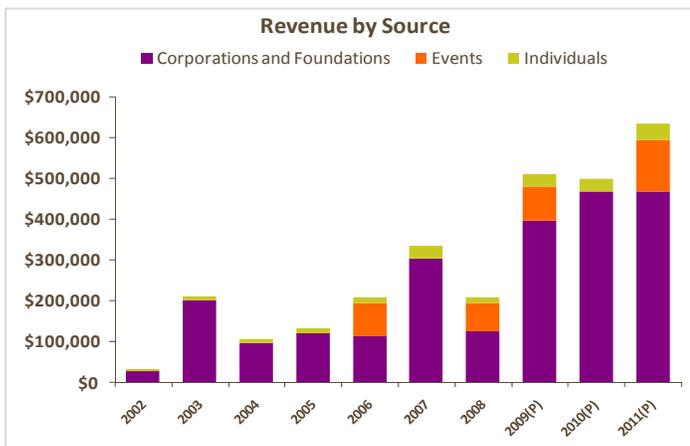
Research has shown a significant connection between a well-educated and well-compensated workforce and the quality of learning experiences for children. In 2007, the Foundation began its second major project in response to data showing that teachers who work with low-income children are the lowest paid, least well educated, and have the highest turnover rate in their field. The Workforce Initiative aims to improve quality of care by addressing compensation issues and improving opportunities for professional development and educational access. The Foundation has conducted its initial research and is currently holding town meetings across the state to identify the most critical paths to reform. Policy recommendations will be released by the end of 2009, and in 2010, the Foundation will focus on advocacy for its priority issues.

TEAM AND GOVERNANCE

Mary L. Reed, president, established the Foundation in 2002 and worked as a volunteer until 2007. Mary brings over 40 years of leadership experience in the field of early childhood education and non-profit management to her work at the Foundation. The president is supported by a group of expert consultants who are an integral part of the Foundation's team. Annemarie Lewis Kerwin, legislative policy consultant, has over 25 years in the field, including serving as the director of communications for the University of Massachusetts at Boston. Lori Smith Britton, the Foundation's development consultant, has 15 years' experience with a variety of Boston-area nonprofits, including serving as director of capital support for the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. Additional policy consultants are called upon to support the work on a project-by-project basis. A 12-member, all-volunteer board of trustees actively governs the Foundation and guides its overall direction and mission. The board includes representatives from diverse backgrounds, and is chaired by Phyllis B. Cater, CEO of Spectrum Health Services. Gail Kirk, vice-chair, has extensive experience working in government and serves as a lead fundraising volunteer for the American Cancer Society.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Since its inception in 2002, the Foundation has realized significant achievements with a modest amount of financial resources. From its first grant of \$25,000, its annual revenue has grown to \$500,000 and its revenue projections for 2011 reach \$635,000, including proceeds from a special event held every other year. With increased funding, the Foundation plans to hire a director of research and expand the development and administrative functions. This will allow the Foundation to accelerate its work, taking



less time to reach policymakers with its reform priorities. The Foundation will build on its

successful history of corporate and foundation support and seek to increase support from individual donors who want to foster policy change that can improve the lives of thousands of children and families across Massachusetts. In addition, the Foundation is in the early stages of planning for an endowment that will provide it with flexibility to address emerging opportunities for impact.

KEY SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTORS

- AC Ratshesky Foundation
- Bank of New York Mellon
- The Barr Foundation
- The Boston Foundation
- Citizens Bank
- John Hancock Financial
- Mabel Louise Riley Foundation
- State Street Foundation

Success Story: Tiffany



Tiffany, 26, lives in Boston's South End and is a single mother of two children. She works full time as a teacher in a childcare center and is studying to earn her bachelor's degree in human services. With the help of vouchers, Tiffany is able to provide her children with quality early education in a childcare center of her choice. She has benefited from the extended certification period, as she no longer has to take time off from work as frequently to renew her vouchers.

She says, "If I didn't have the vouchers, I would have to sacrifice much of what I provide my children, and possibly my own education."



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Program Performance and Organizational Health: Below is a summary of the key measures that the Foundation will be tracking to demonstrate progress, capture lessons learned and make course corrections as needed. *Note: Fiscal year is July 1–June 30.*

	FY 2009	FY 2010 (P)	FY 2011 (P)
Early Childhood Education Workforce Access and Advocacy Initiative Milestones			
Conduct six town meetings in regions across the state	Completed		
Produce policy paper including recommendations for action		Completed	
Prioritize recommendations and articulate reform goals		Completed	
Engage in communications and education to achieve reform		In process	In process
Monitor results of change to ensure desired outcome			In process
Organizational Health/Capacity Building			
Move into new office space	Completed		
Upgrade technology and Web site		Completed	
Hire full-time administrative assistant	Completed		
Hire Director of Research	Completed		
Expand development manager position to full time			Completed
Expand board with two new members		Completed	
Total revenue	\$511,000	\$500,000	\$635,000

Social Impact: While advocacy and policy reform have the potential to generate broad and enduring impact, results often emerge over an extended period, and because of the number of factors involved, it is often difficult to attribute social impact to a single source. The Foundation tracks its work to foster greater equity in early education by focusing on changing policies (short-term outcomes) that improve access and quality (intermediate outcomes) and ultimately support the success of low-income children and families in Massachusetts (long-term outcomes). A review of the Foundation's first initiative, *Keeping the Promise*, shows the organization's efforts have already resulted in significant policy reform and positive outcomes for the tens of thousands of families who live in poverty and require subsidies to afford childcare. The table below summarizes outcomes to date, along with anticipated outcomes for the Foundation's next major initiative.

Short-Term Outcomes <i>POLICY REFORM</i>	Intermediate Outcomes <i>RESULTS</i>	Long-Term Outcomes
<p>Keeping the Promise Accomplishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voucher certification period extended from six months to one year • Double documentation requirement eliminated • Translation of written materials and automated translation systems 	<p>Improved Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50,000 children have greater continuity of care • Less administrative burden on families and childcare providers • Improved communication with families of limited English proficiency 	<p>Low-income children and families more likely to succeed</p>
<p>Workforce Initiative Potential Reforms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to state scholarship fund • Work with colleges and universities to develop advanced curricula that is accessible to working teachers 	<p>Improved Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More teachers with advanced degrees • Lower teacher turnover 	

“Second only to immediate family, child care is the context in which early development unfolds.”

–Jack Shonkoff and Deborah Phillips, eds.

FROM NEURONS TO NEIGHBORHOODS, NATIONAL ACADEMY PRESS, 2000