

# Room to Grow



**FOUNDED:** Opened in Boston in 2004\*  
**CURRENT ANNUAL BUDGET:** \$1.5M  
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\*Founded in New York City in 1998

## Investment Opportunity

Room to Grow seeks an investment over the next two years of \$3.75M, \$500K over the current budget, in order to double the program capacity in Boston from 300 to 600 families. This investment funds additional clinical social workers, increased acquisition of essential inventory for babies, creating a comprehensive, scalable, and efficient infrastructure, and ensuring program effectiveness through scientific evaluation and continuous assessment of the program model.

Room to Grow is dedicated to ensuring that babies born into poverty have everything they need to grow, learn, and succeed in life. The organization addresses poverty's cruelest casualty: one out of three children are born into poverty in Boston annually, and nearly half will remain in poverty as adults.

Room to Grow is committed to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty by providing babies and their parents with the support and resources they need during the most critical period of children's brain development, birth to age three. The comprehensive program provides families with a unique combination of one-on-one parenting education, referrals to other community services, as well as all the clothes, books, toys, and gear their babies need at every three-month stage during their first three years of development. With this strong foundation, low-income children meet developmental milestones on track and parents are equipped with the lifelong parenting skills and confidence that pave the way for supporting their children's future success.

## Two-Year Goals

- Double client capacity to serve 600 families
- Increase volunteers, storage space, and inventory reserves to accommodate doubling capacity and ensure that all families receive the market equivalent of \$10,000 in baby essentials over the three-year program
- Prove program quality through in-house and formal evaluation, and ensure quality is consistently replicated as program grows

## Ways to Invest

### FINANCIAL

- \$300,000 funds the doubling capacity of clinical program
- \$125,000 funds building the infrastructure to lay the groundwork for future expansion
- \$75,000 supports the doubling of donated inventory
- \$7,500 sponsors a baby's participation in the full three-year program

### IN-KIND

- Donations of baby clothes, toys, books, and gear to mitigate financial stress and help babies develop at every stage
- Marketing resources to tell Room to Grow's story broadly
- Off-site storage space, transportation, and database systems to manage inventory growth

## Leadership & Governance

Committed to unlocking the potential of children and families to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes in adulthood, Robyn Carter, LICSW, has dedicated her career to providing high quality service delivery and demonstrable results in Boston nonprofit organizations. Prior to Room to Grow, Robyn ensured high quality programming in leadership positions at United South End Settlements and the Home for Little Wanderers.

In Boston, Room to Grow is supported by an actively engaged 14-member Board of Directors, chaired by James Athanasoulas, Managing Director at Bain Capital Credit.

## ROOM TO GROW MODEL



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**The most important thing that we can do to help assure a brighter future for children living in poverty is help the adults taking care of them build their own capabilities.**

”

**JACK P. SHONKOFF, M.D.**  
Center on the Developing Child  
at Harvard University



Low-income families are referred to Room to Grow by their prenatal healthcare provider and begin the program in the third trimester of pregnancy, continuing every three months until their child turns three. Quarterly, two-hour visits at Room to Grow with a dedicated clinical social worker have a meaningful and sustained impact. To help build a relationship based on trust, families meet with the same staff social worker throughout their 13 visits. Each visit is structured using a strengths-based curriculum and is tailored to meet the individual needs of the family. Education, support, and guidance are provided on topics including developmental stages, strategies to recognize and respond to a child's many needs, and support to help cope with raising a child in typically stressful circumstances. In addition, Room to Grow social workers provide referrals to other resources in the community to address specific needs.

At every visit parents also receive age-appropriate material necessities for their growing baby, and guidance on how to utilize those items to ensure children have stimulating experiences and a safe environment optimal for healthy development. All of the new or near-new clothes, toys, books, and gear provided to families in the program – a market equivalent value of \$10,000 over three years – are generously donated by families in the community and corporations.

Room to Grow's unique approach fosters long-term positive change through a focus on child development, parenting knowledge, and family stability to increase the probability that children will enter school ready to learn and continue to meet their full potential.



**We thank Room to Grow for being our backbone – for allowing us to pour out all our concerns with no judgment. For giving us the strength we needed to become amazing parents.**



**MOTHER IN ROOM TO GROW'S PROGRAM**

### Key Investors

- BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS
- CONNORS FAMILY OFFICE
- LIBERTY MUTUAL FOUNDATION
- THE LOVETT-WOODSUM FAMILY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.
- MFS INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT
- THE TJX COMPANIES, INC.
- WELLS FARGO

### Partners

- ASCEND NETWORK AT THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
- BOSTON CARES
- BRIGHAM & WOMEN'S HOSPITAL
- CENTER ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD, HARVARD UNIVERSITY
- MIT SLOAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

## IMPACT

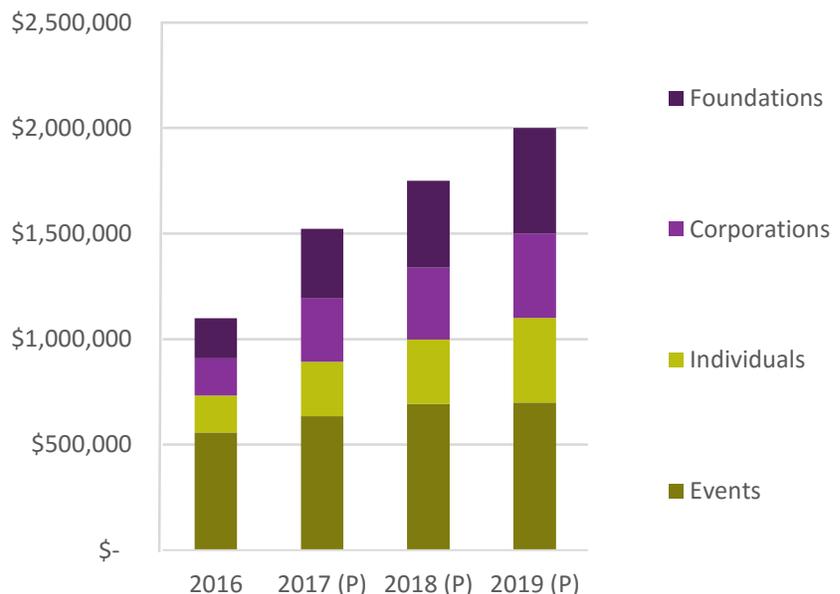
The first three years are a critical time for brain development; that development is directly influenced by early experiences, making the harmful effects of poverty particularly damaging for infants and toddlers. Developmental gaps among babies become noticeable as early as six months, widening over time. By the age of two, children from lower-income families can fall behind their higher-income peers by about six months developmentally. This gap can nearly double by kindergarten, making catching up improbable. Research shows that nurturing, responsive parenting in a stimulating environment can mitigate the harmful effects of poverty and prevent the developmental gap from ever forming.

Room to Grow's two-generation approach, working with both the parent and the child, facilitates a nurturing relationship, along with healthy growth and development. Children in the program meet appropriate developmental milestones, and parents gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to help their children fulfill their potential. Mothers in the program show a decreased risk of depression, providing the opportunity for healthy, strong bonds with their child. With this support, children who graduate from Room to Grow's program are able to start school on track, leading to ongoing success in school and beyond, ultimately breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Room to Grow is entirely privately funded by the local business and philanthropic community. Additionally, 100% of the material goods distributed to clients are donated by families in the community or corporate partners. With the ambitious goal of doubling program capacity by 2019, Room to Grow seeks to increase opportunities for multi-year investments to sustainably expand the program and operations.

### Revenue by Source



## Room to Grow Family Story

Receiving a double stroller was a “lifesaving moment,” recalls India, a single mother of twins who was struggling to navigate public transportation with two infants.

When India entered the program in her third trimester of pregnancy, her relationship with the twins’ father had just ended. As a single mother, she found herself unable to finish school or to work, but she had a deep desire to support herself and her babies. Room to Grow helped relieve financial strain by providing clothes, books, and gear for the twins. However, India soon found that Room to Grow offered much more than just material resources. Visits to Room to Grow were therapeutic. She could talk to her social worker about life’s challenges and worries about raising her boys. She received information, guidance, referrals, and support that made all the difference in her ability to be the best parent possible.

Today, the twins are thriving in kindergarten. They love school, sports, and playing with their grandmother. India is now certified in Early Childhood Education and is employed as a lead preschool teacher.



## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that Room to Grow will track to demonstrate progress, incorporate lessons learned, and make adjustments as needed. Note: Fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.

	2017 (P)	2018 (P)	2019 (P)
<b>PROGRAM PERFORMANCE</b>			
Client capacity	300	450	600
New families starting in the program	100	250	300
Baby items donated to Room to Grow	50,000	70,000	100,000
Baby items distributed to families	45,000	65,000	90,000
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING</b>			
Total number of social workers	2	3	4
Technology to support growth	Customize software tools	Implement paperless client records	Produce advanced reports
Evaluation and impact	Standardize measures	Individualize service using data	Share findings within the field
Groundwork for future expansion	Develop strategy	Create partnerships	Build infrastructure
Total revenue	\$1.5M	\$1.75M	\$2M

## SOCIAL IMPACT

One in three children under the age of five in Boston lives in poverty. Room to Grow’s two-generation approach, providing comprehensive support to both the parent and the child, is the most effective way to change the life trajectory of babies being raised in poverty. Room to Grow measures its impact based on critical areas helping children ultimately break the cycle of poverty: developmental milestones for school readiness (language, cognitive, and social-emotional development), parenting skills and confidence, and an enriched home learning environment.

2016	INDICATORS FOR ROOM TO GROW PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
9 out of 10	Children are meeting developmental milestones on target
99%	Parents report increased confidence as caregivers
20%	Decreased risk of maternal depression
88%	Families read to their babies at least a few times per week