

Capturing the Ripple Effect

Developing a Theory of Change for
Evaluating Parent Leadership Initiatives

Final Report Phase I



Annenberg
Institute for
School Reform

AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

Across the country, parents who want greater opportunities for their children are stepping up to become civic leaders, and the field of parent leadership development is growing along with them. New initiatives are cropping up throughout the United States to ensure that families can acquire the knowledge and skills to be effective advocates.

We are finding that when motivated by concern for their own children and others in their community, parents can be a powerful force for equity and greater opportunity. In the past few years, these initiatives to cultivate parent leadership have enabled parents to develop civic skills and voice as leaders and advocates for children, across class, race, and culture.

Being involved is not a choice anymore. . . . People come to me for my opinion or to join something – they seek me out! I used to be just a parent – now I am a community leader.

Increased understanding of how these new initiatives contribute to more and better opportunities for children, and what constitutes a high-

quality program, will help those who wish to grow the field. The research on which this report is based seeks to describe how well-prepared parent leaders make change, and to lay the groundwork for developing appropriate indicators that parents, philanthropists, and policy leaders might use to evaluate parent leadership opportunities.

Over the past year, in the first phase of the this work, we have collaborated with parent leaders, researchers, practitioners, and experts in the parent leadership field, to co-create a draft theory of change (TOC) that describes how the parent leaders who emerge from those initiatives make change in themselves and their children, families, and communities. We have also sought input from public officials, community leaders, and staff of leadership initiatives. Their voices are embedded all through this report. We call this TOC the “ripple effect.”

In Phase II of the work, we will identify and/or develop indicators that are aligned with the TOC, then pilot them in sites with active and mature parent leadership initiatives. The work will culminate in an evaluation framework,

including a variety of field-tested methods, indicators, and measurements that can be customized to evaluate a particular program, which will provide a reliable guide for the field.

To clarify, our focus has been on the initiatives and the opportunities for leadership development they offer, not on parent leader candidates themselves and the particular individual character traits that might predict success. We have found that parents of many diverse backgrounds and dispositions respond enthusiastically to the training they receive and forge a pathway to leadership that corresponds to their own experiences and preferences.

The Ripple Effect Theory of Change

A *ripple effect* can be defined as a gradually spreading influence or series of consequences caused by a single action or event. This ripple effect action begins with stable, well-structured opportunities – such as the ones described in this report – for parents to gain civic leadership skills. When parent leaders speak out, their voices carry the authority of lived experience. They understand how gaps in social, health, and educational services limit their children’s future in critical ways. They learn to work with parents across boundaries of education, race, income, language, and culture.

When elected officials and policy-makers listen to parent leaders, they become more aware of how their actions affect children and families, especially those who lack income or education, or who are marginalized by race, language, and culture. As public officials and parent leaders increasingly work together on issues and programs, collective action to improve conditions and outcomes for children gains momentum, resulting in more public forums, more public will to support education, and more formal inclusion of valued parent leaders in decision-making. Civic climate improves and the whole community benefits.

A growing number of parent leadership initiatives around the country have been successfully demonstrating this ripple effect. Without such dedicated initiatives, opportunities for parents to develop civic and leadership skills are hard to come by. But with access to this kind of training, parents can become powerful advocates for greater opportunities for children, and the family becomes a vital constituency for improved child and community outcomes.

After one Parent Ambassador spoke at a hearing, the Republican legislators walked up and hugged her. She connected on a fundamentally human level about what the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) has meant to her family. People tend to have their guard up, especially when poor people are involved. She told us that these investments are working. Not only did this solidify support, it opened people's hearts and minds.

The theory of change for this work addresses questions such as these:

- Does belonging to a cadre of knowledgeable and committed parent leaders who engage in civic action have a transformative effect on parents' lives and on their children and families?
- Are there common pathways through which alumni of these programs work to influence the quality of life for children in their communities?
- What supports, conditions, and opportunities are most likely to sustain parent leadership programs and the efforts of alumni over time?
- In what ways do parent leaders influence their children, friends, and the network of grassroots contacts they form?
- In what ways do parent leaders and parent constituencies influence the practices of public officials and community leaders and the culture of their organizations?
- Do parents as civic leaders, both as individuals and acting in a group, have effects on public policies, the quality and accessibility of programs and services, and the equitable distribution of community resources for children?

As part of our experience in Parent Voices, we learned how to testify or tell our story in a powerful and effective way.

 : Parent
 : Public Official

What Was Our Process?

Our Phase I work has involved:

- scanning the landscape of parent leadership development for examples of quality evaluation frameworks grounded by theories of change;
- drafting our TOC, which provides a strong foundation for identifying and developing fair and appropriate indicators, methods, and metrics;
- collaborating with national experts and parent and community leaders to refine the draft;
- testing the logic of the refined draft TOC via focus groups and interviews with diverse parent leaders, staff of parent leadership development initiatives, community leaders, and public officials; and
- interviewing selected stakeholders (public officials, elected leaders, civil servants, and community leaders) who have interacted with parent leaders seeking change and better opportunities for children.¹

Parent leaders and program staff in focus groups represented Parent Ambassadors from Washington State, Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) from Chicago, Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ) from New Mexico, Parent Voices from California, and three national programs: Abriendo Puertas, the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), and the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI).²

Parents are powerful storytellers. Their stories are compelling and they tie the issues together, like poverty and child care access.

¹ Viewpoints from public officials and position leaders were also excerpted from interviews published by COFI in Chicago in their 2014 report, *The COFI Way*, <http://www.cofionline.org/cofi-reports/the-cofi-way-policy-systems-change/> (Interviews are also available at <http://www.cofionline.org/publications/policymaker-interviews/>).

² For descriptive profiles of these initiatives, see <http://annenberginstitute.org/publications/RippleEffect>.

During these reviews with veteran parent leaders and stakeholders, our goal was to verify that the core components of the draft TOC reflected their actual lived experiences. We sorted parent focus group and individual interview responses by content and frequency, grouped their main ideas under broader themes, then compared the qualitative results across the three focus groups and stakeholder interviews.

Across the focus groups, the themes showed many commonalities with the draft TOC, with some suggestions for revisions. Parents credited the leadership development experience and their civic engagement with engendering personal transformation – their own and that of others they influenced – as well as an increase in knowledge, confidence, and skills.

Interviews with stakeholders reinforced the themes expressed in the focus groups. In describing how they perceived the parent leaders with whom they interacted, these officials affirmed the political influence of authentic stories, the power of active parent constituencies, and the value parents can add to policy development and decision-making. They also recognized the valuable role that initiative staff play in preparing and mentoring the new leaders.³

As a final step, we cross-walked the findings collected from these small samples and from descriptive profiles of the parent leadership initiatives that participated in this phase of our study to affirm their compatibility with the draft TOC components. For more detailed descriptions of what we heard from parent leaders in the focus groups, see Appendix A at <http://annenberginstitute.org/publications/RippleEffect>.

³ For more details about the findings from the focus groups, see <http://annenberginstitute.org/publications/RippleEffect>.

Key Components of the Ripple Effect

To illustrate the compatibility between our TOC and the experiences of those in the field, we have laid out the components of the TOC (see the figure on page 4) and representative quotes from our sample that illustrate how diverse parent leaders, program developers, public officials, and community leaders experienced the main ideas in the draft. The figure shows the sequence of impacts as parents learn, develop, and exercise their knowledge and skills as leaders. The remainder of this section elaborates these pathways, illustrated with the voices of parents and stakeholders.

RIPPLE 1. **Parent leadership initiative builds capacity.**

Based on our study and what we heard from program staff and parent leaders, we have identified several key attributes of initiatives that successfully develop parent leaders:

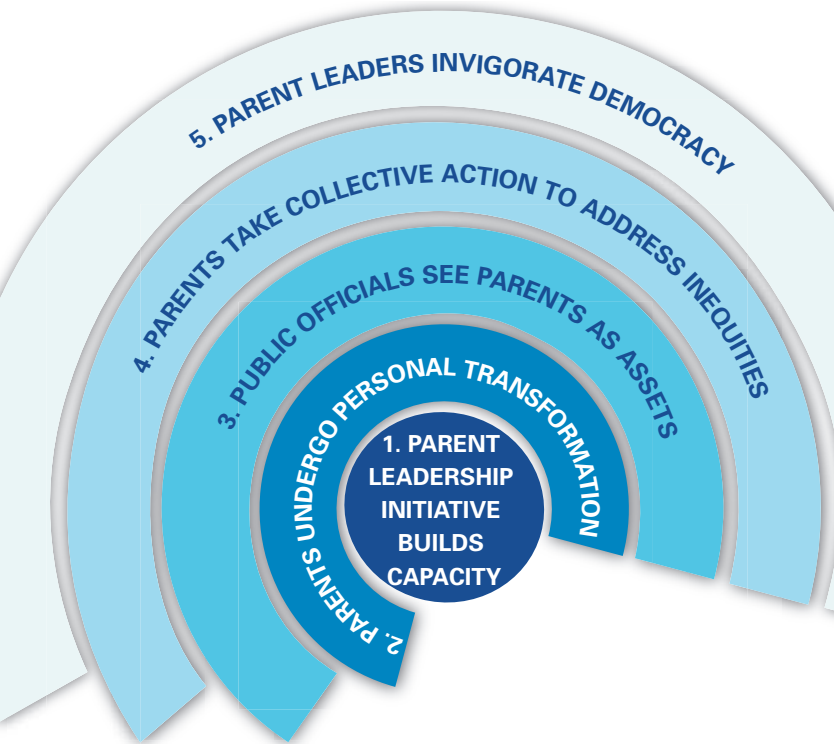
- A mission that is anchored in a **core belief** that parents of all backgrounds and circumstances can be effective advocates and civic change agents on behalf of children.

For example, the mission of Parent Ambassadors is:

To build and sustain a cadre of parent leaders who fight for positive social change in family policies and for increased investments in Head Start, state funded preschool, and other early learning programs that serve children from families with low income.

- An intentional parent leadership training experience that **builds parents' confidence and is taught through hands-on practice** of acquired knowledge and skills, delivered over a specified period of time.
 - **PLTI's** curriculum covers how change occurs for children, then guides parents to apply their knowledge and skills to address an area of interest, with each participant carrying out a civic project.
 - **ABRIENDO PUERTAS** emphasizes interactive learning and incorporate “dichos” (Latino sayings that convey values and beliefs), music, and games into a warm and welcoming learning experience.
 - **COFI** participants become a team that works together to set and reach attainable goals.

Capturing the Ripple Effect: Theory of Change



2. PARENTS UNDERGO PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION.

Applying what they learn to solve problems, watching their inner strengths unfold, attracting recognition as a trusted information source, and building networks that bridge race, class and culture, parents say, leads to profound personal transformation.

I can create the life I want, need, and deserve for me and my children!

Parent leaders speak across race and class in a voice that is effective and authentic.

3. PUBLIC OFFICIALS SEE PARENTS AS ASSETS.

As public officials listen to parent leaders, they gain new information, create new opportunities to learn from diverse parents about local issues, and consider parents' ideas. Support grows for greater opportunities for all children.

We're not "just parents," we're someone public officials want to listen to!

My agency learned that important resources for children just don't exist!

4. PARENTS TAKE COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS INEQUITIES.

When parent leaders see opportunity gaps, they know the consequences for their children and take action, forming networks and joining forces with other groups. Using their own stories, backed by data and told in their authentic voices, they offer ideas that lead to more equitable policies and practices.

We brought officials, providers, and parent leaders together to talk through the challenges and come to concrete solutions!

Parent leaders have become the eyes and ears and voices for our legislative committee.

5. PARENT LEADERS INVIGORATE DEMOCRACY.

As parents become key informants, community leaders open new forums for dialog, providing a platform to increase public support for better children's outcomes. Parents step up to be decision-makers on committees, boards, and task forces. Some parents run for public office; others join the staff of public agencies to provide a family perspective.

We pushed for improved standards and increased quality of childcare – and won!

Well-coached parent leaders can make points that lobbyists can't, and they are much more passionate about it than lobbyists are.

THE IMPACTS OF PARENT LEADERSHIP

All parents, regardless of class, race, and culture, are motivated by concern for their children. When parents gain civic leadership skills, especially in marginalized communities, they can be powerful advocates for equity. Parent leadership initiatives around the country are starting to show how

I was just a mom. I had no platform to work from.

the actions of parent leaders on behalf of their children ripple throughout the community.

1. PARENT LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE BUILDS CAPACITY.

Through hands-on learning and support, parents develop knowledge and skills: for example, developing a strategic plan, giving testimony before public officials, analyzing a budget, and running a committee meeting. The initiatives strengthen civic values, such as respect for others' opinions and appreciating cultural differences, and broker connections

We've become like family, and my family holds me accountable!

among parents, public officials, and community leaders. Supported by this "second family," parents gain confidence as they apply their skills.

 : Parent
 : Public Official

<http://annenberginstitute.org/publications/RippleEffect>

- **OLÉ** uses classroom-based and experiential education to grow parents' leadership skills, using readings, group discussion, and out-of-class assignments.
- **PARENT AMBASSADORS** learn the basics of how government works and how to communicate effectively, set goals, and manage conflicts as they reach, educate, and mobilize parents in their local programs and communities.
- **PIQE's** parent leaders learn how to become change agents in their children's schools, and practice conducting effective meetings and expressing their ideas. The training ends with a parent-led dialogue with the school principal.
- **PARENT VOICES** uses a "learn-by-doing" approach; parent leaders organize the annual Stand for Children Day in Sacramento, where hundreds of parents, children, and childcare supporters make legislative visits and convene for a high-visibility march and rally.
- Creating **a sense of community and shared civic values** of mutual respect, tolerance, and cross-cultural understanding among parent leaders, program staff, and community mentors. In parents' words, they become "a second family."
- **Developing connections and sustaining effective networks** among parent leader alumni and stakeholders. As participants' children watch their parents become leaders, they are profoundly affected by becoming part of this new family. Organizations embed positive peer support throughout their leadership training and team-building process, and help participants and alumni stay connected through regular meetings and communications via phone, email, text, and social media. For example, COFI parents partner with local organizations and public partners to ground advocacy campaigns in the experiences, needs, and priorities of low-income parents.
- A **sustainable organizational home** with community support, stable funding, and technical assistance to support growth and ensure fidelity of the model. Of the seven programs sampled, three have reached a double decade anniversary (PIQE, twenty-eight years; PLTI and COFI twenty years). The remaining groups have existed between five and ten years. Several have long-term affiliations with strong institutional partners.
 - **PARENT AMBASSADORS** program is housed at the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP (WSA) and receives guidance from staff and parent coordinators.
 - **PLTI** was founded in 1995 as an initiative of the Connecticut Legislature's Commission on Children, draws support from a state trust fund, and has now expanded to twelve states and thirty-one sites.
 - **PARENT VOICES** was established in 1996 by the California Child Care Referral and Resource Network and has chapters in fifteen counties.
 - **PIQE**, founded in 1987 as an independent nonprofit organization, has entered into a long-term relationship with the California State University (CSU), which sponsors PIQE in five K–12 schools annually in each of the CSU's twenty-three campus regions.
- A commitment to **collecting and using data** and evaluation results for improvement, and to demonstrating the value of the initiative for parent leaders, their children, and the community. Most programs track immediate results by surveying their participants, but few have had the resources to track parent leaders over time to assess long-term impact. For example, the Washington State Head Start Association does a pre- and post survey of parents going through Parent Ambassadors, along with intensive listening and focus grouping during and after the program year to measure the impact of its work. PLTI collects pre- and post-survey responses from its classes every year. For the past three years, RMC Research has provided analysis of this database and conducted qualitative interviews.

At the end of each review, we asked parent leaders what they felt were the most valuable components of their training. Across all the sites, these three components were most frequently mentioned:

- Coaching and support from skilled staff, mentors, and other parents in the group.
- Access to public officials and other decision-makers in their community and state.
- Knowledge of how government works and how to make it work for their children.



RIPPLE 2.

Parents undergo personal transformation as they exercise individual and collective leadership.

Parent leaders described constructing a new role for themselves, as they find place and purpose in the democratic

process. They feel equipped with the know-how and confidence to take action in the public affairs of their community.

Parent leaders have told us that they know how to work within

We are more than “just parents”; we are someone that public officials want to listen to. Why? Because we have networks [of parents] to draw on and can bring in others with clout and credibility.

the system and to be seen as credible by public officials and community leaders.

[Public officials] are just like us! We can talk to them and they listen. I have their cell phone numbers in my phone.

It isn't enough to allow parents to be at the table. We brought officials, providers, parent leaders, and others together, where we could talk through the challenges and barriers. With all the stakeholders at the table, we could come to concrete solutions.

As one program evaluator noted:

The Parent Ambassadors who took the financial literacy course had a ten-fold increase in influence, especially through “teach backs” such as conversations at the grocery store, sharing information with neighbors. We saw a snowball effect.

Realizing their leadership potential brings personal transformation to these parent leaders. Parents spoke eloquently about the tremendous change they feel in themselves as

they learn how to apply their talents and experience, and about the great internal energy that is unleashed as they begin to take action.

Parents described the dynamics of what they portray as a profound personal transformation. As they apply what they learn while developing various projects and joining coalitions to make change, they see their inner strengths and abilities unfold. This transformation, in turn, attracts recognition and respect and continues to build their networks of support and political influence.

As one program director put it: “Getting a business card is transformational. Being in a space where they can speak freely to decision makers is transformational.”

Parents reflected that they now know how to be leaders and feel like they belong to a new – and diverse – family.

We have become like family, and my family holds me accountable!

I overcame my prejudice and racial bias; now I value immigrants, all people. I also speak out to conservative friends and challenge their attitudes.

I do not have to accept the life for me and my children that was “set as fate” for me. I learned that the power in setting a foundation of success for me and my kids was in my hands, and that I can actually create the life I want, need, and deserve for me and my children.

RIPPLE 3.

Public officials see parents as assets.

Public officials and community leaders gave examples of how listening to parent leaders can influence the policy

The power of parents, when coached on how to talk to policy-makers and testify at committees, is amazing.

positions they take. These interactions influence their perception of parents. For example, public officials said when parent leaders tell their authentic stories, they begin to see parents as

knowledgeable citizens who can help them make better public policy for children and families. Parent leaders can bring a new voice and point of view to public deliberations about policies and the allocation of resources that benefit children and families.

They also became key informants for public officials.

One of the ways we work is having a meeting with legislators to convince them that it is a lot better for them to invest to get results in education . . . instead of investing in jails and juvenile justice.

What is most critical about the Parent Ambassadors is their authenticity. They are not some group's political pawns. They are not spouting a group's message. They are talking about their own experience.

Parent leaders become adept at creating allies by engaging local, state, and federal public officials and legislators, changing perceptions of parents and bridging barriers of race, class, and culture.

PLTI graduates are not afraid to go to meetings, not afraid to raise their hand and speak out, not afraid to seek out public officials. In our city, we have parents from everywhere in the world. Our community leadership, from the PTA to the city council, should reflect this diversity. For everyone to succeed, we no longer can have a handful of White citizens making all the important decisions that affect our children and the community.

Such leadership may lead to more respectful and inclusive behavior toward parents active in civic life on the part of policy-makers, as well as increased openness to listening to families' perspectives and intentionally reaching out to parent leaders to find out what they think.

Through COFI, I met families that didn't just demand things of me. [These] families I could rely on and have dialogues with. Not like a Town Hall meeting, . . . but, like, "Tell me what's going on for you and I'll tell you what's going on in Springfield. Let's see if we can put the two together."

RIPPLE 4.

Parents take collective action to address inequities.

As parent leaders establish their credibility and value to public officials and community leaders, they offer their own ideas to solve problems, based on their authentic experience navigating the system on behalf of their children. They know where the gaps in services are; they have run up against arbitrary rules that make it difficult for families to enroll their children in programs; they know, better than anyone, the value of learning resources for their children. In addition to providing their view on government programs, they also undertake their own initiatives.

As a result, parents begin to speak out against inequities, form horizontal networks, and take civic action in their neighborhoods, at City Hall, and at the State House.

School nurses told me their pet peeve was kids' coming to school sick because their parents don't have thermometers. So I thought I'll get them thermometers, not just for my daughter's school, but all the elementary schools. The mayor liked what I was trying to do. I presented my research and showed him the [Centers for Disease Control] article that parents don't know to keep their kids home when they have a fever. He set me up with a manager at Walgreens, who donated 7,000 thermometers!

Parent leaders partner with like-minded groups to amplify their voice while working for change at the grassroots level in their neighborhoods, cities, and states.

Supporting parents to act as leaders empowers parents across the community.

We contacted alumni, used email to get out the vote. After our voting rate went up, we got Native Americans on the school board and county commission, as well as candidates for state legislature.

It only takes one or two people who become leaders and get support to find success. Then they bring others along.

And this foundation of leadership creates new roles for their children.

My becoming a parent leader has motivated my whole family. My children see a better future, and they are using their voices, advocating for themselves and others.

The confidence of my eleven-year-old daughter is evident; she takes charge of herself and communicating is much easier for her. She shadows me in action. She solves her own problems and those of her friends.

RIPPLE 5. **Parent leaders invigorate democracy.**

Creating space for parents to serve as leaders and key partners in education enlivens the climate for civic action and promotes greater understanding of the challenges and injustices facing lower-income families. At the beginning of each review, we asked parent leaders this question: What would be different for children in your state/community if many more diverse parents became effective advocates and civic leaders on behalf of children?

Their answers reflect not just their dreams, but their experience-based assessment of what a small army of parent leaders could accomplish:

- Instead of serving less than half all the eligible kids, there would be unlimited funding so that every child would be in a high-quality early learning program.
- Public officials would see parents as experts on early childhood issues and find out what parents think and want, then make better decisions.
- The community would be tighter, less divided. For example, immigrants would have more opportunities and become accepted, and there would be racial equity.
- Children would have more skills and greater dreams for themselves, which will carry to next generations, leading to better outcomes and lower costs.

In more concrete terms, parent leaders have had an increasingly dramatic impact on child policy and programs.

I know this sounds simple, but presenting to policy-makers changes policy! I am astounded at the impact of parents on state policy when they are trained to be advocates.

As a result of their activism, parent leaders reported that they were able to increase funding for childcare and basic benefits for families, improve the quality of childcare by raising standards, lighten the load on parents by creating a continuity of care in early childhood education, and improve the treatment of children by eliminating suspensions in the lower elementary grades.

It is happening! At City meetings and public hearings, PLTI grads are showing up and saying, "I'm a PLTI graduate." That means, "I am here and I mean business!" . . . The City sees that PLTI grads are prepared, talented advocates who don't have a narrow agenda. And now, the City calls PLTI when they're looking for people to fill seats on committees, task forces, and commissions. At [one] official City planning activity, PLTI grads were asked to facilitate the table discussions and to take a real role in running the sessions.



Next Steps for the Ripple Effect

Phase I concludes with this report. To guide the second phase of this work, we are identifying a small pool of uniquely qualified researchers and organizations to develop indicators, scales, metrics, and methodology recommendations that will advance evaluation practices for the field of parent leadership development. Reviewing the framework's tools with field-based evaluators, parent leaders, and program staff, and implementing a pilot evaluation using these tools, will comprise the next steps of this work.

Our goals for Phase II are to create:

- A **Parent Leadership Indicator Framework**: a compilation of field-friendly indicators, measures, and data sources that are aligned with the Theory of Change; and
- A **Parent Leadership Research and Evaluation Concept Paper**: an agenda detailing recommendations for advancing research and evaluation of parent leadership training and organizing initiatives.

We are delighted to report that support for this work has been pledged from the Peppercorn Foundation, the Hagedorn Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation; additional sponsors are anticipated.

For a list of further resources and references that guide our work, author bios, organizational profiles, and other materials, see <http://annenberginstitute.org/publications/RippleEffect>. For more information about the parent leadership organizations participating in this study, see:

- Parent Ambassadors: <http://www.wsaheadstartceap.com>
- Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI): <http://www.cofionline.org/>
- Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ): <http://olenm.org/>
- Parent Voices: <http://parentvoices.org/>
- Abriendo Puertas: <http://www.ap-od.org/>
- Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE): <http://www.piqe.org>
- Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI): <http://www.nationalPLI.org>

These organizations and others have formed the United Parent Leaders Action Network (UPLAN) to build a voice that will influence policies and programs that matter to children and families, especially families with young children. For more information about UPLAN and the development of parent leadership initiatives, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/UnitedParentLeadersActionNetwork/>



Acknowledgments

This report and the diagram that illustrates the “Capturing the Ripple Effect” Theory of Change truly were co-created with a wide variety of parent leaders; directors of parent leadership initiatives; experts in the field of parent, family, and community organizing and engagement; and others familiar with the benefits of broad civic participation. Every one made an invaluable contribution, and we deeply appreciate their insights and suggestions.

Participants at the two think tank meetings on evaluating parent leadership development programs in Hartford on March 13 and August 14, 2014, greatly enriched this draft with their thoughtful advice. We thank Bill Campbell (PLTI graduate and school board member, Alexandria, VA), Joanna Geller and Sara McAlister (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University), Dawn Homer-Bouthiette and Elaine Zimmerman (Connecticut Commission on Children), Patti Keckeisen and Donna Thompson-Bennett (National Parent Leadership Institute), Cathleen Love (University of Connecticut), Elisabeth O’Bryan and Robin Stern (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence), Lynda Parmely (Hagedorn Foundation), Ada Sanchez (Peppercorn Foundation), and Ron Thomas (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities). Extra thanks to Eileen Forlenza (Family and Community Engagement Specialist, Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment), Arthur McFarlane (Children’s Hospital of Colorado), Karen Mapp (Harvard Graduate School of Education), and Deloris Vaughan (Everyday Democracy) for their thoughtful suggestions.

We also want to thank the parent leaders who attended the two focus groups with established programs, Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) and Parent Ambassadors.

Attending the focus group on December 12, 2014, in Alexandria, Virginia, were PLTI alumni from the classes of 2007 to 2013: Bill Campbell (2007), Roxana de Lauchu (2007), Cathy Santiago (2007), Cassandra Ford (2008), Jeff Murphy (2009), Sahr Pombor (2009), Jennifer Murphy (2010), Katharine Fogden (2011), Angela Drake (2012), and Nora Mead (2013). Faye Slotnick and Adrienne Fikes, the immediate past and current chairs of the Alexandria PLTI, gave invaluable assistance in organizing the session and recruiting the PLTI alumni.

Attending the focus group on March 11, 2015, in the Seattle area were alumni of the seven cohorts from the Parent Ambassadors program led by the Washington State Head Start Association: Tafra Jones, Natasha Fectcan, James McBride, Sonya Lennox, Maybell Russo, Julianna Johnson, Victoria Hilt, Maricela Rodriguez, Drayton Jackson, Lynda Popplewell, Abril Mitchell Ward, Grace Sselangwawo, and Kylee Allen.

On the same date, we held a focus group with Parent Ambassadors stakeholders. All who attended gave us additional understanding of the program and its impact on state agencies, policies, and resources: April Messenger (Washington State Department of Early Learning), Maggie McKenna (evaluation consultant), Nubia Lopez (Puget Sound Educational Service District), Hana Gregory (Washington State Head Start Association), Holly Wyrwich (Thrive Washington), and Hannah Lidman (Early Learning Policy Council). We thank Lori Pittman, coordinator of the Parent Ambassadors program, and Joel Ryan, director of the Washington State Head Start Association, for their expert and cordial help organizing these sessions and for their ideas and insights.

The third focus group review was held on March 16, 2015, at the Parent Leader Network meeting in Alexandria, Virginia. We thank the parent leaders for participating in a two-hour review of our Theory of Change and Will Fay for his excellent note taking:

- **ABRIENDO PUERTAS** (Opening Doors)/National: Jessa Bunker, Luz Gonzalez, Alma Mendoza, Ivon Rodriguez, and Zully Rodriguez.
- **COFI** (Community Organizing and Family Issues)/Chicago: Rosazlia Grillier, Maria Cristina Martinez, Rosalva Nava, and Treyonda Towns.
- **OLÉ** (Organizing in the Land of Enchantment)/New Mexico: Reina Acosta, Kris Buchanan, Juperi Johnson, and Royal Sexton.
- **PLTI** (Parent Leader Training Institute)/National: Toyin Anderson Willis, Clarisse Harris, Patti Keckeisen, and Mariemee Rodriguez Aviles.
- **PIQE** (Parent Institute for Quality Education)/California: Socorro Fernandez, Lilia Perez-Mejia, and Julia Sosa.
- **PARENT VOICES**/California: Lourdes Alarcon, Aaleyah Gaphoor, Eloise Rossiter, and Jessica Wood.

- **PARENT AMBASSADORS**/Washington State Head Start Association: Bianca Bailey, John Jones, Maricela Rodriguez, and Grace Ssebugwawo.

We wish to extend our deep appreciation to all the parent leaders in these three groups. Their insights, personal testimony, family stories, and accounts of their experiences were both inspiring and deeply informative.

In addition, we conducted in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of Parent Leadership Training Institute (Alexandria, Virginia), Parent Ambassadors (Washington State) and Parent Voices (California). We are thankful for their time and their candor:

PLTI: William Euille, Mayor of Alexandria, Virginia; Margaret Lorber, Director, Bi-Lingual Family Services, Alexandria City Public Schools; Fay Slotnick, Director, Alexandria PLTI; Joyce Woodson, former member, Alexandria City Council.

PARENT AMBASSADORS: Sarah Bolton, Education Counsel for Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) on the U.S. Senate HELP Committee; Mike Gentile, staff, U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, GOP-Majority side; Ruth Kagi, Washington State House of Representatives and Chair of the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee; and Frank Ordway, Government Affairs Director at the Washington State League of Education Voters.

PARENT VOICES: Elizabeth Fuller, Consultant to the Legislative Women’s Caucus, California State Assembly; Nancy Strohl, Consultant for California State Senator Holly Mitchell; and Debra McMannis, California Department of Early Childhood Education and Support.

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ABOUT THE ANNENBERG INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL REFORM AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) is a national policy-research and reform-support organization affiliated with Brown University that focuses on improving conditions and outcomes for all students in urban public schools, especially those attended by traditionally underserved children. AISR’s vision is the transformation of traditional school systems into “smart education systems” that develop and integrate high-quality learning opportunities in all areas of students’ lives – at school, at home, and in the community. AISR conducts research; works with a variety of partners committed to educational improvement to build capacity in school districts and communities; and shares its work through print and online publications.

Rather than providing a specific reform design or model to be implemented, AISR’s approach is to offer an array of tools and strategies to help districts and communities strengthen their local capacity to provide and sustain high-quality education for all students aligned with a set of values and design principles that promote equity and excellence.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

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This report is available online at <http://annenberginstitute.org/publications/RippleEffect>, along with author bios, further resources, and other materials.

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