



ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR | 2023

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

What NONE OF US can do **ALONE**,
ALL OF US can do **TOGETHER**.



**The
Basics™**

"I have been in the early childhood field for more than 35 years, The Basics is the best tool I have ever come across to communicate [to parents] their role in school readiness. Thank you!!!"

2023 Partner Survey Respondent

"I like the program. It motivates me on what I need to do with my child because I have no experience. He is my first child and I'm alone here."

**Mother of an 18-month old receiving
Basics Insights text messages**

"As we train our professionals, they begin to apply the methodology with the children we serve, and we see positive feedback almost immediately."

**Rafael Carvalho
Secretary of Human Services
City of Guarujá, Brazil**

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

I was the faculty director of the Achievement Gap Initiative (AGI) at Harvard University when I learned that skill gaps between racial and socioeconomic groups emerge by the age of two and that parents have major impacts on early brain development.

That's why the AGI conference at Harvard in 2011 focused on parenting.

The conference title was Sharing Knowledge to Enable Effective Parenting and Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund kicked it off. She said:

"The nation is literally being born anew every second of every day in the bodies and minds and spirits of each baby entrusted to the adults who bear responsibility for their safety and nurturing, ... Addressing [the achievement gap] from the family point of view today is very, very, important."

The next day a participant said the following during the closing:

"There was a really refreshing dialogue yesterday about creating approaches as distinct from programs. It was thinking about this as a social movement – the idea really lends itself to organic growth by distributing responsibility, but it also demands a high degree of coherence and a long-term scope, adaptable enough to learn along the way and to heed research insights as it goes."

That statement anticipated what became The Basics Strategy.

As commitment grows across the nation to increase access to high quality and affordable early education and care, The Basics Strategy provides a common language while also assuring, in Marion Wright Edelman's words, that "a family point of view," pertaining to life at home, is included. It provides a framework in which every stakeholder has a role to play.

The Basics Strategy is taking root. Several states now have clusters of participating communities and there is movement toward formalizing state-level support. To stay ahead of this expansion, we will focus during FY24 on strategic planning to help chart the course forward and continue our learning.

Thank you for being an ally in this work to prepare children better for school and for life across whole communities, starting at home, and beginning at birth.

Yours truly,

Ron Ferguson, PhD

President and CEO

The Basics, Inc.

Founding Faculty Director

The Achievement Gap Initiative at Harvard University



"As commitment grows across the nation to increase access to high quality and affordable early education and care, The Basics Strategy provides a common language while also assuring, in Marion Wright Edelman's words, that 'a family point of view,' pertaining to life at home, is included."



Our Vision

The Basics vision is a world where infants, toddlers, and preschoolers of all racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds are on track to achieve their full potential—having benefited from early experiences that foster healthy brain development, learning, joy, and resilience.

Our Mission

The Basics, Inc. mission is to cultivate collective, cross-sector commitment and capacity in communities to support families in promoting children’s wellbeing and development through piloting innovative approaches and scaling effective practices to create sustainable change in the systems and cultures that support families.

The Basics Principles

All our work is grounded in five science-based tenets for early caregiving.



**Maximize Love,
Manage Stress**



**Talk, Sing,
and Point**



**Count, Group,
and Compare**



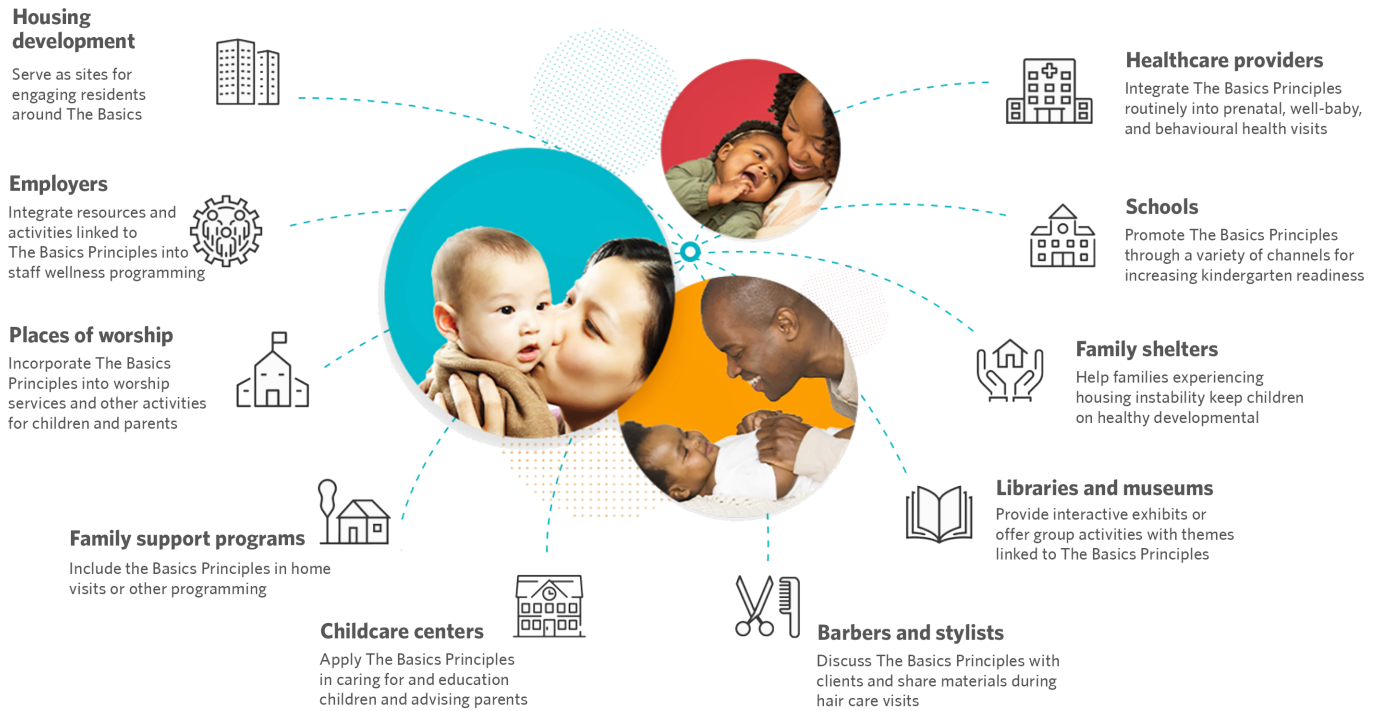
**Explore through
Movement
and Play**



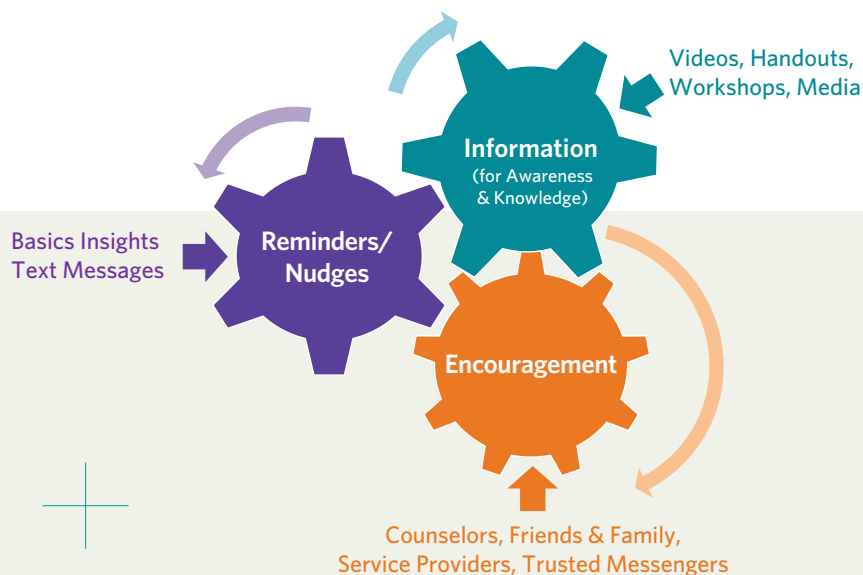
**Read and
Discuss Stories**

Our Strategy

The Basics strategy is to guide institutions in multiple sectors to apply **The Basics tools and resources** to reach parents and caregivers *where they are* through trusted messengers.



The Basics three gears support parents and caregivers in applying The Basics Principles in everyday interactions with their children. The Basics, Inc. provides tools and resources that help organizations implement the gears.



We Are a Growing Movement

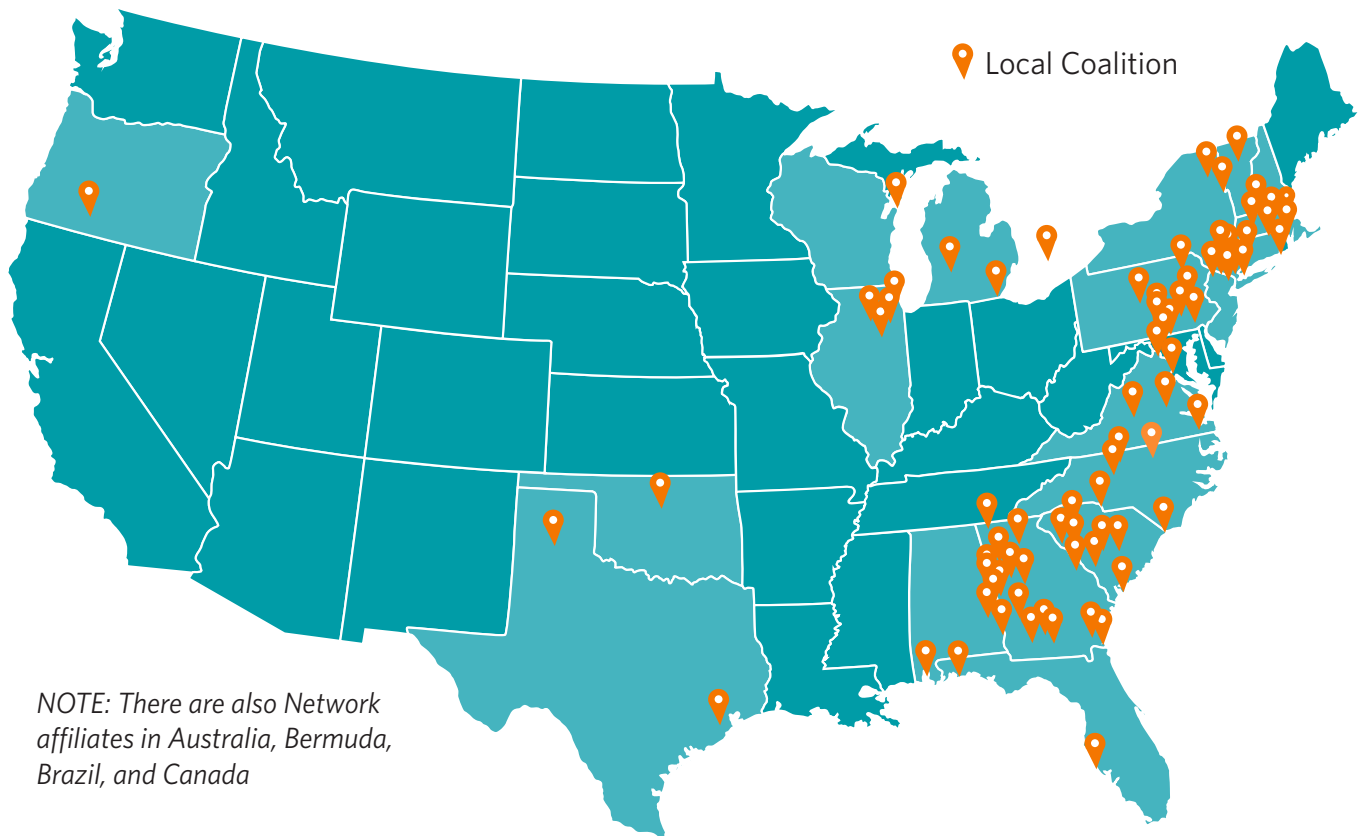
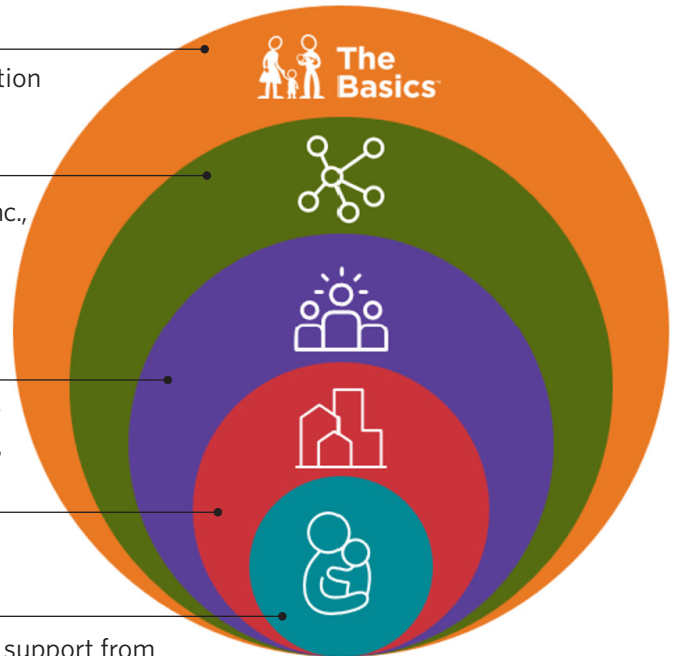
THE BASICS, INC. develops tools and resources for implementation and provides technical assistance to localities and states in the US and abroad.

THE BASICS LEARNING NETWORK, convened by The Basics, Inc., provides regular opportunities for peer learning, innovation, and sharing best practices across member communities. Member communities are licensed to implement The Basics Strategy in their regions and pay a small annual fee to participate.

BACKBONE LEADERS recruit and train cross-sector community partners to join the local Basics movement and embed The Basics Principles into their work with families.

FRONTLINE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS make sharing and reinforcing The Basics Principles part of their routines.

FAMILIES receive information, nudges and reminders, and social support from trusted messengers to make The Basics Principles everyday caregiving routines.



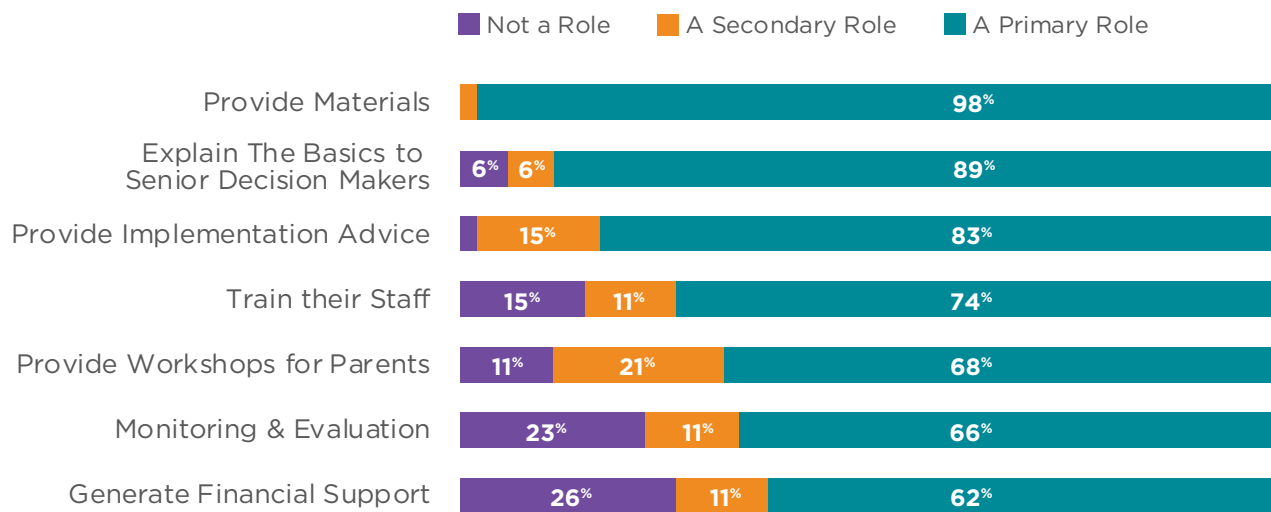
NOTE: There are also Network affiliates in Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, and Canada

In FY23, **The Basics Learning Network** expanded from **93 to 102** cities, towns, and counties.

Our Local Backbones Are Building Community Capacity

The Basics local Backbones tend to be housed in larger organizations, representing a variety of sectors such as collective impact initiatives, early education and care, school districts, public health, and others. Backbones recruit and train cross-sector partners to engage families with The Basics Principles, and provide support and overall coordination for their local movements.

Ways That Local Backbone Organizations Support Partner Organizations*



The Basics Elmont launch event (NY)



Convening led by the Coalition for Health Equity and Early Development, backbone for The Basics Southcoast (MA)

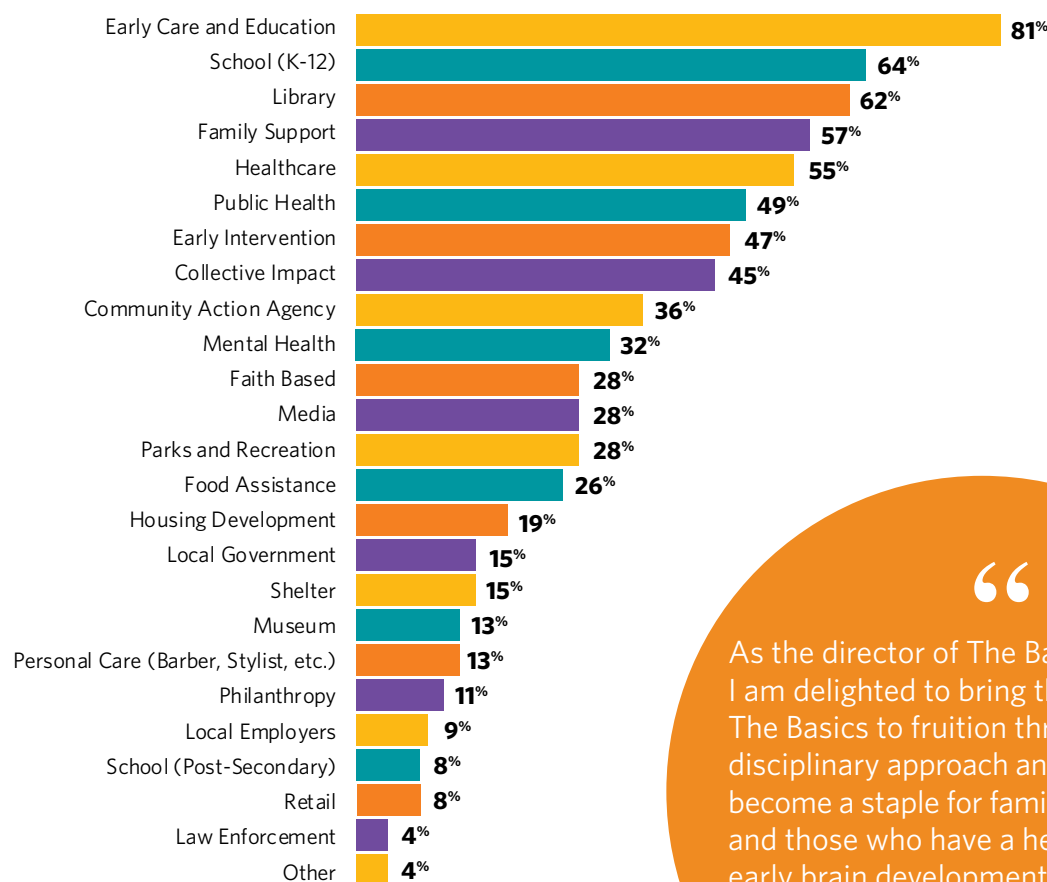
*Data are from 53 communities that responded to the relevant item on the 2023 network-wide Census

Our **Impact** on Communities is...

Cross-Sector Engagement and Alignment

Across member communities, Backbones are recruiting and supporting partner organizations from a wide range of sectors to engage families with The Basics Principles. Together, these partner organizations are working toward socioecological saturation, reaching families where they are.

Percentages of Basics Learning Network communities with at least one partner organization in each sector



Data are from 53 communities that responded to the relevant item on the 2023 network-wide Census

“

As the director of The Basics Houston, I am delighted to bring the vision of The Basics to fruition through the multi-disciplinary approach and leading it to become a staple for families, caregivers, and those who have a heavy hand in early brain development throughout the Houston communities.”

Robyn Kebede
The Basics Houston Director

The Impact on Providers is...

Enhanced Skills and Communication with Families

Providers in participating communities are learning to become more effective in supporting families. Survey results indicate multiple types of enhancement in their capacity to communicate about Basics-related topics and more attention to such topics during routine interactions with parents and caregivers.



77%

Agree or strongly agree that sharing The Basics Principles helps them do their **job more effectively**.

"The Basics Principles are important to share with families, and it is convenient for us to share the printed materials/resources by including them in our existing community resource efforts. While most families come to us because of economic, financial, or health crisis, it is good to also connect these families with The Basics Principles..."

Partner Survey respondent



88%

Communicate at least somewhat **more frequently** with parents about The Basics Principles and related ideas now, compared to before they learned about The Basics Principles.

88%

Communicate at least somewhat **more effectively** now about the types of ideas that The Basics Principles cover, compared to before they learned about The Basics.

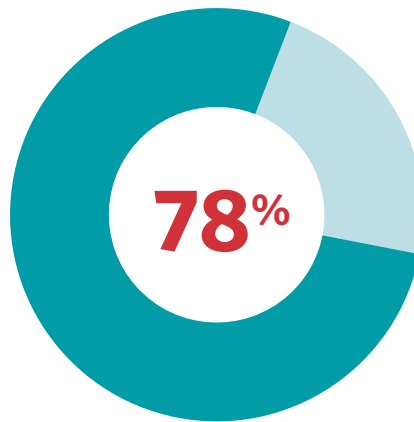
The Impact on Families is...

Increased Awareness of The Basics Principles and Ways to Apply them in Caring for Children

Across The Basics Learning Network, cross-sector partner organizations and trusted messengers have engaged over 74,100 families with children age 0-5. These connections occurred in a variety of contexts, including routine service delivery, family programming, and Basics installations, such as learning trails in public spaces.



The Basics Fun*Shops at Children's Museum Houston (TX)



Of frontline partner survey respondents agree or strongly agree that **parents do The Basics Principles more frequently** after they talk about them.



The Basics Chattahoochee Valley and the Springer Opera House's Theatre for the Very Young program (GA)



The Basics Engagement Station at the DeKalb County Health Department (IL)



The Basics Parent Workshop run by The Basics Southwest Alabama



The Basics Virginia Preschool Nature Trail (Charlottesville, VA)

SPOTLIGHT

Basics Insights

Twice-Weekly Text Messages Improve Parenting Practices

Basics Insights text messages deliver facts and ideas for applying The Basics Principles in everyday routines. We're excited about new research documenting their impacts on families.

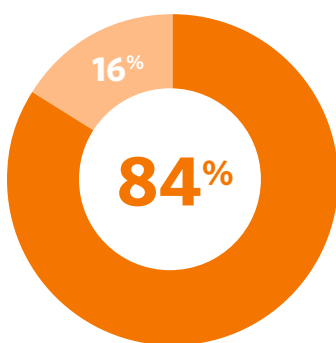
We administer baseline surveys at the time people enroll to receive the messages and conduct follow-up surveys 3.5 months later. The evidence indicates that Basics Insights is leading to meaningful changes in parenting practices. The charts below show that for each listed practice, Basics Insights accounts for more than half the change over 3.5 months in the frequency with which respondents used the parenting practice.*



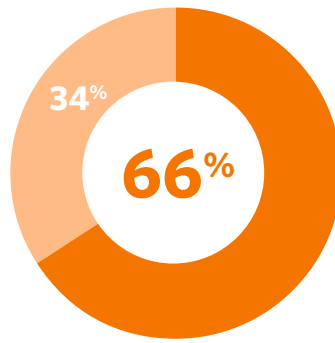
"I was a first-time mom and didn't have family or friends near me. I would get messages and see I was on track. It was really helpful. It's such a cool thing... I've had this for almost 4 years and I love it!"

Basics Insights survey respondent, mother of 4-year-old

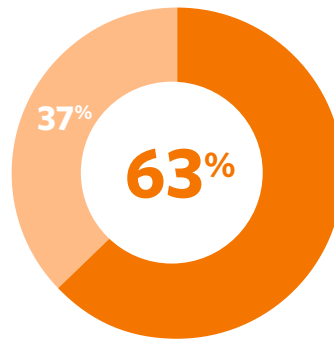
■ Indicates the Percentage of the Positive Change in Parenting Over the 3.5 Months Between Baseline and Follow-up Surveys that Results from Receiving Basics Insights Text Messages



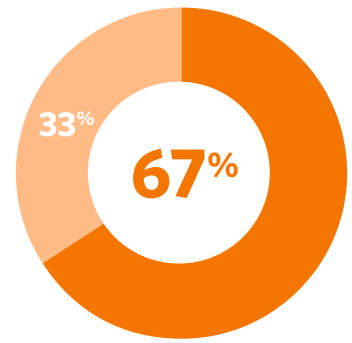
Talking about feelings
(Total 3.5 month change = 0.30 std)



Talking about numbers or counting objects
(Total 3.5 month change = 0.47 std)



Playing together
(Total 3.5 month change = 0.41 std)



Reading or looking at books together
(Total 3.5 month change = 0.35 std)

* By the end of FY2023, 5494 subscribers had responded to baseline and/or follow-up surveys. Of those, 711 had responded to both. These charts are for those who responded to both. The estimates for normal changes are based on the age pattern in the baseline trend. The change that results from receiving Basics Insights is estimated as the total change over the 3.5 months, minus the normal change that would have occurred, as indicated by the baseline trend.

THE BASICS LEARNING NETWORK

FEATURED COMMUNITY



Stacy Baker

The Basics Mecklenburg Manager

Smart Start Mecklenburg County

North Carolina

“The Basics is for everybody,” says Stacy. Whether she’s giving a workshop to childcare providers on The Basics Principles to create a positive, stress-free classroom or helping to plan a community baby shower, Stacy sees The Basics as a fundamental tool for building awareness around best practices in early childhood development. “We always spread the message that 80 percent of brain growth occurs by the time a child reaches age three,” she explains, stressing the importance of intentional engagement at this critical stage.

Stacy takes a strategic partnership approach to ensure The Basics reaches the right communities, fostering relationships with organizations that serve families with young children, like The Learning Collaborative (TLC). Offering a holistic approach to early childhood education, TLC engages parents to actively participate in their child’s education by having them complete a series of workshops centered on supporting their role in their child’s life in exchange for high-quality, tuition-free education.





“Parents are thrilled to learn that so many of the things they were already doing with their child, such as singing and playtime, have such a positive impact.”

Stacy Baker
The Basics Mecklenburg Manager

Stacy hosts workshops presenting The Basics Principles, which she says have been well-received. “Parents are thrilled to learn that so many of the things they were already doing with their child, such as singing and playtime, have such a positive impact,” she says.

Drawing on her experience as an educator and mother, Stacy also demonstrates how The Basics benefits parents. “I like to give examples of how using The Basics can reframe everyday challenges,” she explains. “If we are in the car and my kids are stir-crazy, I put on a song that excites them and changes the mood from stressful to playful. By maximizing love, parents can be more equipped to notice their reactions in tense moments and have the tools to help manage their stress.”

In the future, Stacy hopes to work with home visitation organizations and home daycare centers, in addition to exploring the corporate space with the idea of integrating The Basics as part of employee wellness initiatives.



Formalizing Membership

In the spring of 2023, we began transitioning from an organic affiliation structure to a more formal membership model for communities in The Basics Learning Network (BLN). The new approach provides clarity about what communities can expect from joining the BLN, a standardized onboarding process, and enhanced support from The Basics, Inc. Annual membership fees support the sustainability of The Basics, Inc. and as a result, the collective capacity of the Network.

Membership in the BLN provides local Backbones with access to:

NEW!



The Basics Learning System
Asynchronous courses
Playbooks with sector-specific implementation



Monthly Meetings
with other BLN members



Full suite of resources in our
Community Toolkit

NEW!



Weekly **Office Hours**



Participation in annual **Partner Survey**
with custom community-level report

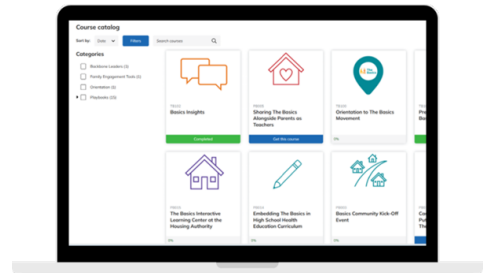


SPOTLIGHT

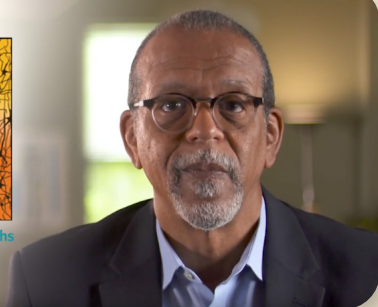
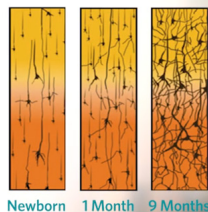
The Basics Learning System

The Basics Learning System is a growing repository of asynchronous learning resources for BLN members.

It launched at the end of FY23 with 15 playbooks featuring implementation examples from around the BLN, such as integrating The Basics Principles into pediatric practices, home visiting programs, and public housing facilities and programming.



In addition, two multi-media courses introduce The Basics Movement and the Backbone role. In the future, this system will allow us to better track and assess the impact of our training, scale our reach, and support the learning needs of BLN members.



Course 1 | Orientation to The Basics Movement

Modules covered:

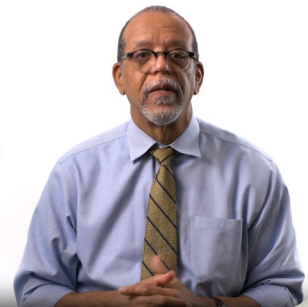
- The Basics Vision and History
- Early Learning and Brain Development
- The Basics Principles
- The Basics Strategy
- The Basics Tools and Resources

For a sneak peak of 'The Basics Strategy' video from our orientation course, scan the QR code.



Make Introductions

- allies make contact
- participate in meetings
- schedule group orientations
- multiple organizations attend



Course 2 | Preparing to Lead a Local Basics Movement

Modules covered:

- Welcome to The Basics Learning Network
- Your Backbone Journey
- General Talking Points
- Building Your Startup Coalition
- Engaging Early Childhood Stakeholders
- Which Families in Which Places
- Engaging Partner Organizations
- Following Through with Partner Organizations
- Engaging Funders as Collaborators
- Marketing and Communications Strategy
- A Local Kickoff Event
- Evaluation

THE BASICS LEARNING NETWORK

FEATURED COMMUNITY



**Based on an interview with Pam Booker
Senior Manager of Child Wellbeing
Thrive Birth to Five, Richmond, Virginia**

Since becoming the Backbone coordinator for The Basics in the Richmond region of Virginia last January, Pam Booker has focused on creating an integrated network of healthcare workers, literacy and childcare programs, as well as public media figures.

Her work as Senior Manager of Child Wellbeing at Thrive Birth to Five (TB5), which leads a collaborative effort providing early childhood resources for families throughout a designated Ready Region as part of a statewide network, seamlessly blended with The Basics ethos. Recently expanding its scope from Richmond to 17 additional localities, Pam sees the Ready Region's structure as creating ample opportunity to saturate The Basics statewide.

"Any opportunity I get, whether at an event or meeting or talking to a potential partner, I try to give a quick orientation to The Basics Principles," says Pam.

While spontaneous conversation has been an effective way to grow the movement through word of mouth, she also emphasizes the importance of building intentional partnerships.



While spontaneous conversation has been an effective way to grow the movement through word of mouth, she also emphasizes the importance of identifying thoughtful partnerships.



“I make sure to emphasize how our specific expertise can blend and show ways that we can support each other to get the message further out there.”

Recently partnering with Virginia Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Pam coordinated with Virginia Public Media’s (VPM) early childhood director to devise a plan to saturate the greater community by establishing an interactive space where parents and children can learn and play.

“Most people don’t even know the building is a WIC office,” explains Pam, describing the tall mirror glass windows on the face of WIC’s current location in a former shopping plaza. “We want to use the architecture and the space to create more visibility for both WIC and The Basics by hanging oversized window clings featuring all of The Basics Principles.”

VPM also plans to enhance the space with toys, a library, and a large television that will play The Basics video content on a loop so families can learn the Principles while they wait for appointments. Once the project is completed, there are plans to share the concept with additional WIC offices throughout the state.

Alongside working with external partners, Pam recently set up a monthly call with two additional Backbone organizations in the state to exchange information and continue building their network of trusted community stewards throughout Virginia.

Looking Forward

A Year of Strategic Capacity Building

With allies and supporters like you, we are enabling an international network of locally driven coalitions.

Below are some key components of how we are proceeding.



Boston

Here in our home city, where the BLN began, a new focus for FY24 is The Basics Boston Alliance Cycle, which in addition to our ongoing work, will involve highlighting each of the 5 Principles in separate two-month public awareness cycles. For each phase, messaging will be cobranded by The Basics Boston and two prominent local institutions whose reaches are wide and whose core missions are well-aligned with the featured Principle.

The Basics Learning System

Now that version 1.0 of the BLS has launched and member communities are actively using it, our agenda includes:

1

Expand the suite of materials for training staff of frontline organizations.

2

Tailor offerings for distinct user groups such as healthcare providers.

3

Develop tools to align and integrate with state and national partners.

System Building and Technical Assistance

Deliberations are underway in several states to develop in-state clusters of BLN communities. Our role includes:

1

Helping leaders from public, private, and philanthropic sectors to strategize implementation and align visions.

2

Coordinating deliberations around how implementation support can be codified in public funding.

3

Continuous improvement of our technical assistance for BLN communities.

Research, Evaluation, and Reporting

Our FY24 work includes:

1

A third-party evaluation of Basics Insights.

2

Two randomized studies to examine representativeness of Basics Insights survey respondents.

3

Case studies of implementation to build the knowledge base for technical assistance and BLS Playbooks.

We at The Basics, Inc. are developing tools and supports for use by locally driven coalitions that are determined to make The Basics Principles daily routines of early caregiving.

**What none of us can do alone, all of us can do together.
Thank you for being part of the movement.**

Staff and Board

Staff



Ronald F. Ferguson, PhD
Founder & CEO: Founding Faculty
Director of the Achievement Gap
Initiative at Harvard University



Open Position*
Program Director



Olivia Smith
Program Manager



James Quane, PhD
COO



Zoë Hansen-DiBello, PhD
Sr. Liaison, Basics Learning
Network



Nimrah Bakhsh
Program Manager



Jocelyn Friedlander, EdM
Director of Learning &
Innovation

Note: Consultants and volunteer colleagues augment the staff.

*Haji Shearer, the previous Program Director left during FY23 to become Associate Commissioner of Family and Community Supports with the Massachusetts Department of Early Care and Education

Board of Directors



Turahn Dorsey
Chief Impact Officer
Eastern Bank Foundation;
Past Chief of Education,
City of Boston Mayor's Office



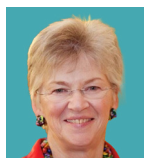
Tom Manning
Past Chair & CEO Dun &
Bradstreet, Alumnus Advanced
Leadership Initiative at
Harvard University



Jeri Robinson
Chair, Boston School Committee;
Retired VP, Boston Children's
Museum



Jeff Howard
Co-Chair of Black Philanthropy Fund;
President, Efficacy Institute, Inc.



Katherine S. McHugh
Retired Boston Philanthropic
Leader; 32 years as Trustee
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Pediatrician; Co-Chair,
Board of Playful Learning
Landscapes Action Network;
Assistant Professor Harvard
Medical School



Wendell Knox
Co-Chair of Black Philanthropy
Fund; Retired CEO Abt Associates
(17 Years)

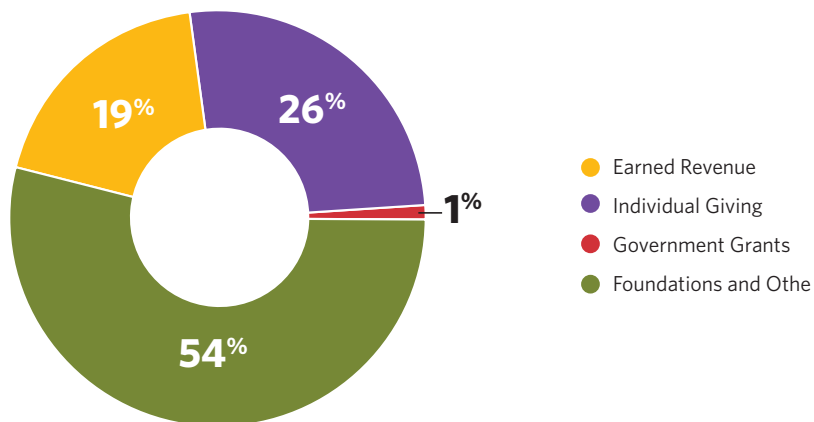


Mehrdad Noorani
Founding Partner Global
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Alumnus, Advanced Leadership
Initiative at Harvard University

Financial Report FY 2023

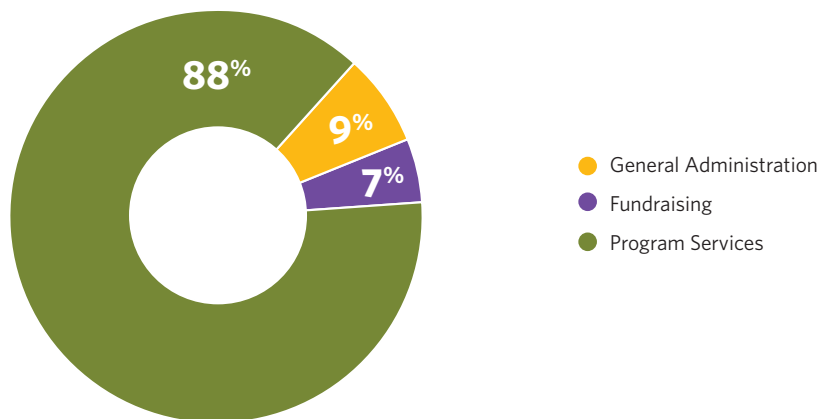
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Total Revenue \$660,831*



*Revenue is recognized in the period it is earned. This year's deficit was planned in order to spend down revenue realized in FY22 for use in FY23. Our total net assets at end of FY23 were \$1,039,655

Total Expenses \$826,262



Not included in the resources represented on this page, is over \$3 million catalyzed annually in member communities.

Thank You to Our Contributors

Individuals & Organizations

Abt Associates

Mari Barrera

Kari C. Bedford

Robert and Denise Blumenthal

E. G. Bondlow

Ronald Ferguson

Terry Fitzpatrick

Robert Friedlander

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To donate, go to
thebasics.org/donate/
or scan here

