

United Way bornlearning® Academy

Start-Up Guide



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INTRODUCTION

We are so excited in your interest in starting a United Way bornlearning® Academy, a parent engagement strategy to promote kindergarten readiness and create an early relationship between parents of young children and their school.

Successful implementation of a United Way bornlearning® Academy requires dynamic leadership and strong commitment on the part of school and community leaders. Both components are vital to the success of the program and its sustainability. This start up guide provides a set of guidelines in order to start a United Way bornlearning® Academy. Knowing that parents are a child's first teacher, this effort was developed as a way to reach parents early and ultimately help to increase school readiness through strong community partnerships. It is important to remember that the steps along the way are critical and will greatly influence the quality of the program and its intended outcome. This document is written to inform you of the core components and to provide resources and ideas to assist along the way.

Partner Statements of Support

- "My administration has made a strong commitment to helping every Kentucky child reach kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life. Children who enter school prepared are more likely to read at grade level, graduate from high school, and to be college and career ready. Parents, as the child's first and best teachers, often need support to know how to best teach their child. bornlearning® Academies are an innovative way to help parents prepare their child to enter school with the skills and behaviors they need to be successful in school and beyond. I commend the public-private partners for working to expand this initiative." *Governor Steve Beshear, Commonwealth of Kentucky*
- Since learning starts long before school does, achievement gaps can develop before children begin kindergarten. The bornlearning® Academy allows a meaningful conversation about essential building blocks of education to start early with parents, in their local school, so they can support their children's future academic success. *Kentucky Department of Education*
- The bornlearning® Academy is an excellent strategy to engage entire communities around the importance of education at every stage of a child's life. Families with young children need support to help set children on the right track for learning. The bornlearning® Academy teaches busy parents how to turn everyday moments into learning opportunities to support school readiness. *Kentucky Family Resource and Youth Service Centers*

OUR STORY

What is Born Learning?

Everyday life is a learning experience for children. *Born Learning* is a public engagement campaign that helps parents, grandparents and caregivers explore ways to turn everyday moments into fun learning opportunities.

Born Learning was created in 2005 in partnership with United Way Worldwide, The Ad Council and the Families and Work Institute to help any United Way – with or without a Success By 6® initiative – or early learning coalition boost community engagement around young children. Today, some 700 United Ways and early childhood coalitions or organizations are using *Born Learning* community engagement tools to boost awareness, educate parents and move communities to action. For more information, visit www.bornlearning.org

The Vision

Inspired by The Harlem Children's Zone in New York and United Way Worldwide bornlearning® materials, then Kenton County (KY) Schools Superintendent, Tim Hanner, approached United Way of Greater Cincinnati's Success By 6® Initiative with the idea of creating school-based parent workshop series. The intent was to connect expectant mothers and families with young children to the school system in order to set children on the right track for learning as early as possible.

Dr. Jaesook Gilbert and Dr. Helene Harte, both Early Childhood faculty at Northern Kentucky University developed the curriculum, training guide and supplemental materials. With additional support from Kenton County (KY) Schools and United Way of Greater Cincinnati's Success By 6®, the first bornlearning® Academy was implemented in 2009.

Expansion Efforts

The initial bornlearning® Academy experienced overwhelming success and has been highlighted by United Way Worldwide as a best practice. A statewide partnership developed in early 2012 to explore expansion of the academies throughout the state of Kentucky (see acknowledgments for key state partners). With an initial 5 year funding commitment from Toyota, ten pilot schools implemented academies in the Fall of 2012 with the intent of adding additional schools per year through 2016.

Word traveled fast and more schools began hearing about the academies and wanted to know how they could start a program in their school. To expand school readiness support and to make the program accessible to those schools eager to have it, the founding partners developed this start-up guide as a resource to get you started.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Based on our experience with helping schools start United Way bornlearning® Academies , the following steps are required and are outlined to help ensure fidelity of program implementation and successful results.

- 1) Review program core components
- 2) Confirm interest and build implementation team
- 3) Develop budget
- 4) Register for training
- 5) Sign a Memorandum of Agreement
- 6) Develop recruitment plan for academy participation
- 7) Collect, submit and analyze data from academy sessions.

STEP 1: REVIEW CORE COMPONENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

These core components as well as the requirements within them need to be carefully considered as the decision making process develops.

Curriculum

The goal of the academy is to help parents prepare their child for kindergarten entry by providing information about what *it means* to be *ready* for kindergarten and by offering them strategies they can use at home to maximize their child's early learning and development. Research-based materials from the Born Learning public engagement campaign were used to create the required curriculum for the program. The short term outcome is to increase knowledge of program participants while the longer term outcome is to foster behavior change in the daily routines/lives of the families involved. Ultimately more families will form a relationship with the school and more children will be better prepared for school when they enter kindergarten (see Appendix A: Logic Model).

Program Setting and Format

Academies must take place in an elementary school setting. If families are engaged in positive interactions in the school setting before school even begins, they are more likely to feel welcomed and remain engaged. Children are also more likely to be ready for kindergarten when parents, schools and communities work together to meet the needs of the child.

The Academies are structured around six monthly workshop sessions. Sessions are led by the designated facilitator of the academy. Topics include:

- 1) Series Overview
- 2) Building Relationships
- 3) Ready to Read: Building Your Child's Language Skills
- 4) Nutrition & Health
- 5) How Children Learn
- 6) Routines & Learning on the Go

Each session follows the same format/agenda including:

Greeting & Dinner

Transition to Child Care

Activity to introduce the topic for the week

Pre-Survey

Mini lecture

Activity that exemplifies the mini lecture topic/focus

Hands on practice of bornlearning® skills

Post-Survey

Families practice new skills together

STEP 2: CONFIRM INTEREST OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND BUILD TEAM

The importance of convening a preliminary meeting to gauge interest and capacity for starting a United Way bornlearning® Academy should not be underestimated. The purpose is to make sure everyone understands the requirements and commitment needed to be successful. Outcomes of such a meeting may include designating the facilitator and coordinator, identification of potential funding sources or partners, forming an implementation team (see next paragraph) and establishing ties between community members. A timeline (see Appendix B) is included to assist in planning and preparing for the start of your academy. In addition, a list of potential partners is also available (see Appendix E).

Selecting a Facilitator and Coordinator

It is essential that each United Way bornlearning® Academy have one facilitator and one coordinator per school who are seen as the primary leads for the program. It has been our experience that the quality of the academy is greatly influenced by the commitment,

leadership and creativity as well as the implementation team.

The facilitator and coordinator need to be school personnel (i.e., Guidance Counselor, Kindergarten Teacher, Principal) and their roles are the following:

FACILITATOR

- Make the sessions accessible and fun
- Use and follow the required curriculum
- Review all training modules and become familiar with the Facilitator Guide and any parent materials prior to conducting training workshops
- Observe skills of the participants and provide support as necessary
- Work with the coordinator to distribute and collect pre/post surveys
- Commit to using data to inform future sessions
- Track children participating who are also entering kindergarten the following school year. Names of students are not necessary but rather the number of participants entering kindergarten and cumulative results of their kindergarten readiness screen.

COORDINATOR

- Make copies of all necessary materials
- Review all materials prior to training
- Assist facilitator in making connections between the handouts provided
- Commit to using academy data in an on-going way for improvement
- Support the facilitator in distributing, collecting and organizing pre/post surveys
- Set up/schedule regular Implementation Team meetings
- Understand that bornlearning® is a trademark of United Way Worldwide, the Ad Council and Families and Work Institute and that United Way bornlearning® Academy or Born Learning materials may not be modified or altered in any way

Building Your Born Learning Implementation Team

The establishment of a United Way bornlearning® Academy implementation team is critical to the functioning of the program. The main role of this group is to provide outreach, counsel and ongoing assistance before, during and after implementation of the program. It is the implementation team's ultimate responsibility to ensure that the program remains sustained and viable. The implementation team should be diverse, consisting of school leadership, teachers, volunteers for the program, child care providers and local partners (i.e. data evaluators, sponsors, etc.) The following is a list of some specific responsibilities typically assumed by implementation teams:

- 1) Promote United Way bornlearning® Academies within and outside of the community.
- 2) Assist in the procurement of funds and/or in-kind donations for the United Way

bornlearning® Academy.

3) Provide input and advice regarding planning, implementation and problem solving.

4) Assist the facilitator and coordinator with various program needs such as ordering materials, securing donations, set-up and scheduling volunteers.

5) Assist the facilitator and coordinator in promoting cooperative working relations with appropriate agencies, community and volunteer groups and other early childhood/family support programs.

STEP 3: DEVELOP BUDGET

Program Costs

The program was designed as a low cost, high-impact strategy. Depending on local partnerships and funding streams, costs can vary considerably but usually range between \$4,000 and \$7,000. Schools with lower costs generally have significant in-kind donations (see Appendix E: Best Practices). There are required costs to implementing a United Way bornlearning® Academy. However, there are some suggested supporting costs to consider as well. A sample budget is outlined below and a budget worksheet has been provided (See Appendix C).

Required Budget Components (costs will vary depending on in-kind contributions):

Curriculum: *one-time cost.*

Total Cost: \$300 (includes cost of periodic curriculum updates and membership to website access/hosting).

Child Care and Staff Stipends (salary scales are determined by local school district and will be dependent on level of staff and number of program attendees)

Example:

\$25 for 2 hours x 6 workshops = \$300 x 2-4 Teachers (typically)

\$11 x 2 hours x 6 workshops = \$132 x 2 Assistants (typically)

Average cost ranges between \$900 and \$1500

Data Entry and Evaluation:

\$250 annually

\$75 x 6 hours for Evaluator

\$50 x 3 hours for Technology Support

Average cost is \$850

Food: (dependent on in-kind donations and number of program participants)

$\$6.00 \times 50$ participants (dinner for adults and children) = $\$300 \times 6$ Workshops = $\$1,800$
Graduation $\$8.00 \times 100$ guests= $\$800$ (includes participants, guests, school leadership, etc.)

Average cost ranges from $\$1,100$ to $\$2,200$

Supporting Budget Components: Although not required, these costs are recommended to boost attendance and enhance the program. Costs will vary depending on in-kind contributions):

Supplemental Born Learning Materials: depends on the # of families who attend and how many supplemental materials are purchased. Materials below are calculated based on 30 families and rounded up.

Kid Basics \$7.51	= \$ 230
Begin with Love DVD \$4.50	= \$ 135
Recipes for Learning \$14.51	= \$ 440
Grocery Store Tip Pads \$6.76	= \$ 205
Playbook \$1.96	= \$ 60
Born Learning Bid \$7.50	= \$ 225
Born Learning Changing Pad \$12.50	= \$ 375

Total Range of Costs: $\$554$ (for 10 families) to $\$1,670$ (for 30 families)

Participation Incentives: depends on the # of families who attend and these are only examples. Materials are calculated based on 30 families.

Passes to local attractions, gift cards, etc. as incentives to continuously attend sessions.

Total Costs $\$250$ to $\$500$

Total Range of Recommended Costs for Program Implementation: $\$4,000$ to $\$7,100$

*Potential funding partners and ideas for generating in-kind donations can be found in *Appendix E*:

STEP 4: REGISTER AND ATTEND TRAINING

Any community interested in starting a local United Way bornlearning® Academy must be trained in curriculum as well as commit to ongoing conference calls and learning sessions.

STEP 5: SIGN MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Once all initial requirements have been met, the local school must sign a **Memorandum of Agreement**. This agreement spells out the conditions under which the bornlearning® name and United Way bornlearning® Academy materials can be used and provides the local community with the exclusive right to implement a United Way bornlearning® Academy.

STEP 6: DEVELOP RECRUITMENT PLAN

See Appendix E for Recruitment Ideas

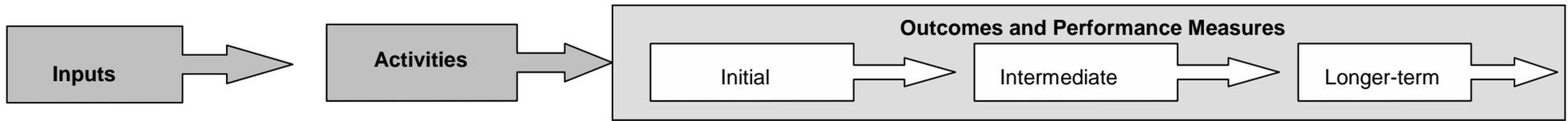
STEP 7: COLLECT AND SUBMIT DATA FROM SESSIONS

A foundational principle among founding partners is using data to drive decisions and continuous improvement. The United Way bornlearning® Academy materials are revised and updated in an effort to have the most effective curriculum. This is done in response to local academy data, experiences of local partnerships implementing academies and feedback from program participants. A group of advisors made up of representatives from founding partners are convened to provide guidance on all continuous improvement activities.

Your local academy data is a critical component in informing future action and improved outcomes. That is why all participating schools are required to collect data and information on their academy. They include: Pre/Post Performance, Overall Participant Feedback, Attendance Results and Demographics. Implementation Teams must use this information (and provided templates) to help inform practice and preparation for the next workshop. Outcome data is imperative in helping to continuously evaluate and improve the curriculum, training and your school's success with its Academy.

APPENDIX DIRECTORY

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Leadership Partners

- Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
- Toyota Kentucky
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Success By 6@
- United Way of Kentucky
- Governor’s Office of Early Childhood

Collaborative Partners

- Parents/Caregivers
- School Districts/Teachers
- Family Resource Centers

Evaluation Tools/Data

- Demographic data
- Parent Surveys (pre/post tests and overall feedback)

Other

- Schools(gymnasium/library/classrooms/cafeteria)
- Site Coordinator
- Workshop Facilitator
- Formalized Curriculum with Supporting Resources
- Website (bornlearning.org)
- Incentives for Parents (Door Prizes)
- Free meal and child care
- Guest Speakers (TBD by site coordinator or facilitator)

Parent Recruitment (site coordinator will partner with school and other community partners to recruit and enroll families)

Dinner (each workshop will begin with 30 min. dinner)

Academy = six 90 minute Instructional Workshops

- Series Overview
- How Children Learn
- Nutrition & Health
- Routines & Learning on the Go
- Ready to Read: Building Your Child’s Language Skills
- Building Relationships

Parent Networking/Sharing

Practicing (parents practice learned skills with their child toward the end of each workshop)

Parent survey administration

Data Collection (school-level data team will analyze pre/post surveys for each workshop)

Parents learn about early childhood (0-6) development and begin to understand the importance of their child’s environment being conducive to learning, beginning at birth.

**Parents demonstrate increased knowledge via data collected from pre/post surveys.*

Parents use the acquired skills/information to capitalize on learning opportunities through everyday experiences.

**Parents optimize their child’s learning opportunities by employing “born learning” strategies in their home and in other environments, i.e. the grocery store, etc.*

Children experience increased quality learning opportunities, better preparing them for kindergarten entry and ultimately for life success beyond kindergarten.

Parents become acquainted with their child’s school and his/her teachers and begin to view their relationship with the school as a “partnership”.

The foundation for a strong parent- teacher relationship will be established based on a higher level of mutual respect and trust, which will lead to regular parent interaction with the school well before their child is enrolled.

Parents will demonstrate a healthy level of engagement in their child’s school, once their child is enrolled, which will result in improved communication regarding the child’s strengths and needs.

APPENDIX B

Example Timeline

January

- Convene a preliminary meeting to gauge the interest of school leadership and capacity for starting a bornlearning® Academy.

February

- Build implementation team and convene meeting.
- Share history of bornlearning® and The Academy.
- Review project core components and make sure the implementation team understands the requirements and commitment needed to be successful.
- Recruit the school facilitator and school coordinator.

March

- Identify existing resources and gaps in resources.
- Develop a plan to identify potential funding sources and partners.
- Develop a plan to begin recruiting families.
- Begin building excitement and interest by meeting with PTA and Site-Based Council, etc. (i.e. School/Community Council).

April

- Meet with school staff to provide Academy history and overview.
- Outline the role of all staff in recruitment and on-going engagement.

May

- Meet with implementation team to schedule workshops.
- Begin gathering and/or ordering necessary educational materials and incentives.
- Think through possible obstacles you'll encounter during the start-up year and how to overcome them

June/July

- Attend training and acquire materials
- Begin implementing recruitment strategies for upcoming sessions.
- Promote United Way bornlearning® Academies within community partners.
- Sign Memorandum of Agreement.

August

- Begin planning Academy Launch via Kick-Off Event, Meet & Greet, etc.
- Begin discussing how your school will keep families connected and engaged *during and after* The Academy.

September - March

- Plan, prepare and execute Workshops #1-6.
- Implementation teams meet regularly after each workshop to review data strengths, opportunities and next steps.
- Continue discussing how your school plans to keep families connected and engaged.
- Identify participants along the way that could serve as future ambassadors of the program.

April

- Host a graduation to highlight successes, thank families, volunteers and staff. Offer special recognition to those families who attended all six sessions.
- Recognize importance of school/family partnership during child's career.
- Ask graduates to become Academy Ambassadors.

APPENDIX C

ESTIMATED SAMPLE TOTAL PROGRAM BUDGET

Program Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3 & Beyond
CURRICULUM			
SUB-TOTAL			
LOCAL PERSONNEL Coordinator Facilitator Child Care			
SUB-TOTAL			
OTHER COSTS			
SUB-TOTAL			
TOTAL			

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Please be mindful of the need to deposit the grant dollars into an account where you readily have access to the dollars while maintaining expenditures.

APPENDIX D

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES

State and Local Networks

For those geographic areas (i.e. regions, counties, or states) where there are multiple United Way bornlearning® Academies, it is encouraged to form networks to establish goals for activities, develop strategies and share best practices.

United Way bornlearning® Academy resources, templates, etc. can be found at www.uwky.org. The site contains basic and pertinent information about Born Learning and its activities, our partners and links to other resources. Included are documents that can be downloaded by programs. For questions related to trainings, best practices, resources, etc. please contact:

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APPENDIX E

BEST PRACTICES IN RECRUITMENT AND KEEPING FAMILIES INVOLVED

Recruitment

- Sending flyers home on multiple occasions for each session
- Scheduling workshop times to meet the needs of participants
- Providing attendance incentives
- Making follow-up and reminder phone calls/emails to potential participants
- Providing personal invitations through phone calls/emails and home visits
- Encouraging attendees and “graduates” to bring a guest
- Using school data to identify and recruit families with young children
- Actively seeking new participants to attend throughout the year
- Collaborating with local child care centers, apartment complexes, Head Start, public preschool and other agencies
- Organizing a Graduation for parent /caregiver participation and dedication to their family
- Provide special recognition for volunteers
- Communicating success of each session to school staff, Family Resource Center Advisory Council, School Board, United Way, community and parents.

Continued Engagement for Parents Who Have Participated in and Academy

- They become ambassadors for the program and future recruitment
- They are a prime group to pull from for PTO's, Site Based Councils, Classroom Volunteers, etc.
- They can serve as mentors for future classes
- They can eventually be trained and teach future sessions
- School personnel can connect families to additional resources – public library programs, health department, high quality child care, etc.
- They can form an alumni group and plan activities together
- They are recognized at events as “bornlearning Academy graduates” or (insert school name) Ambassadors.

The key is keeping them connected to the school, to local resources and to each other...helping them feel welcomed and a part of the school as time goes on.

PARTNERSHIP IDEAS

Community Possibilities

- Partner with other districts/orgs/human service agencies and split the cost
- Partner with a local church, private school or daycare
- PTA's, parent groups and Booster clubs (get them to use or raise funds)
- Civic Organizations - Rotary, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, Elk's Lodge etc.
- School puts on a fundraiser of its own
- Get a local business to sponsor a session or a part of the cost (i.e. food, incentives, etc.).

Utilizing Existing or Getting Additional Grants

- Use Title 1 funds or current Family Resource Grant Dollars
- Use staff development funds
- Collaborate from your local Community Early Childhood Council. For more information, contact the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood.
- Reach out to your local United Way for potential investment dollars

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

United Way bornlearning® Academy Founding Partners



Kentucky Statewide Partners



National Partners



Special thanks to the following individuals who had the original vision and developed the foundation for United Way bornlearning® Academies

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Ms. Vicki Martin
Ms. Kim Mott
Ms. Amy Neal
Ms. Teri O'Brien
Mr. Mike Sames

And thank you to the families who have participated in the bornlearning® Academies over the past few years. We hope this program provided you with some everyday tools that all parents could use to ensure the success of their child(ren).