



MISSION

The work of the STL Pre-K Cooperative is rooted in the notion that the St. Louis community can **collectively** work to deploy existing state pre-K funding through **innovative** and **collaborative** approaches. Through **high expectations** and **rigorous evaluation**, students will access **truly high-quality pre-K programs**.

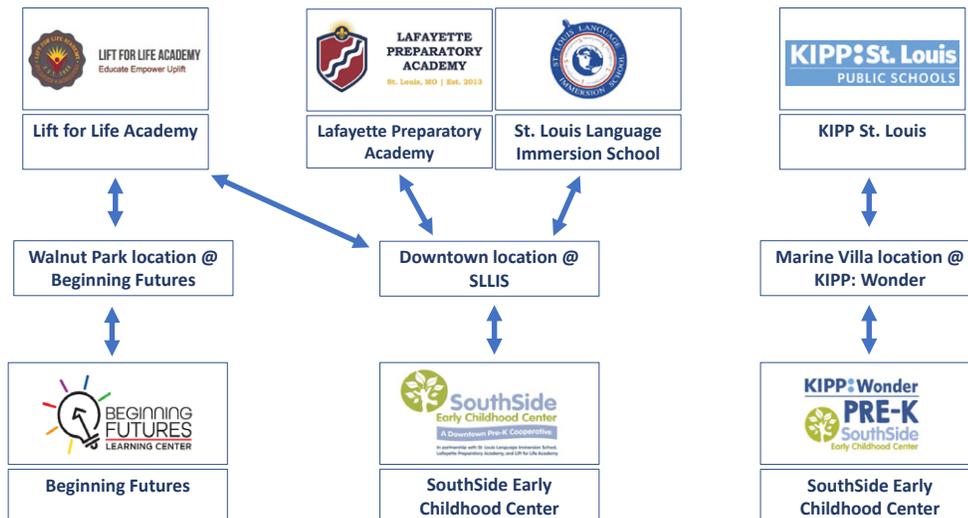
ABOUT

The STL Pre-K Cooperative provides access to high-quality pre-K to children growing up in underserved St. Louis communities. Established in 2019, the innovative collaboration between community-based pre-K providers and K-12 public schools launched its first classrooms in the 2020-2021 school year. This year, the Cooperative serves 100 students in five classrooms. The partnership is grounded in the notion that the St. Louis community can collectively pursue innovative and collaborative approaches to expand opportunity for young children in St. Louis. Working together, the Cooperative's members are utilizing previously untapped state pre-K funding to create more pre-K seats that, through high expectations and rigorous evaluation, provide truly high-quality early education.

The launch of the Cooperative builds on the growing momentum in St. Louis to reimagine the early childhood education landscape. Adding to the burgeoning collaboration within the early childhood sector, the STL Pre-K Cooperative brings K-12 schools into the effort to grow access to high-quality pre-K for three- and four-year-olds.

OUR PARTNERS

Two founding early childhood education partners bring their expertise to the Cooperative - Beginning Futures and SouthSide Early Childhood Center. Confluence Academies, KIPP St. Louis, Lafayette Preparatory Academy, Lift for Life Academy, and St. Louis Language Immersion School are the founding K-12 partners. Classrooms are located at Beginning Futures in North St. Louis, KIPP Wonder Academy in the Marine Villa neighborhood, and the Downtown Pre-K Cooperative located at St. Louis Language Immersion School.



MAXIMIZING INVESTMENT



With the 2014 passage of HB 1689, every school district in Missouri is eligible to receive funding as part of the state school funding formula for a number of pre-K students equal to four percent of their total enrollment of students eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch. Last year, however, some \$2.3 million was left on the table by eligible local education agencies in St. Louis City that did not access this funding. Working together, the Cooperative's members have overcome the barriers to accessing pre-K state aid funding they experienced working in isolation. This year, they have received some \$700,000 in pre-K state aid funding to operate their five classrooms. In accordance with state legislation, all of the children enrolled in the Cooperative are eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch. As recipients of state pre-K funding, each Cooperative classroom has earned Missouri Accreditation - a mark of program quality - and is led by a certified teacher.

IMPACT

Decades of research point to the importance of high-quality early childhood education in establishing a strong cognitive, social, and emotional foundation on which children can build throughout their education and their lifetime. As noted in the Clark-Fox Policy Institute's recent report *Launching Lifelong Success*, long-term studies of high-quality early childhood education programs consistently demonstrate participants are more likely to achieve academically, graduate from high school, go to college, get a good job, and see positive health outcomes in adulthood.

Analysis informing the design of the STL Pre-K Cooperative found, however, that just 40 percent of all three- and four-year-olds in St. Louis City have access to free pre-K seats. Because free pre-K seats are not all means-tested and are not evenly distributed by geography, pre-K is often difficult to access for low-income families. The largest gaps exist in Benton Park/Tower Grove East, Carondelet, Dutchtown, Fox Park, Lemay, North 70 Corridor, Penrose, and Southampton. Access to high-quality early childhood programs will be especially strained - and central to economic recovery - in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The STL Pre-K Cooperative has received philanthropic support from The Opportunity Trust, as well as the PNC Foundation and the Saigh Foundation, to ensure a successful launch and continued expansion. The Mid-America Regional Council and EdOps share their expertise to support the Cooperative's creation and ongoing operations.



theSAIGHfoundation

