

United Way of Lake County

2007
STEERING COMMITTEE

GLEND A ABBOTT, CHAIR

- Joy Appen-House
- Pam Baker
- Kim Bissing
- Shawna Huley
- Karlene Jacobs
- Brooke MacLean
- Julie Parsons
- Luann Pandy
- Azita Saleki-Gerhardt
- Cathy Specht
- Wendy Warren
- Melissa Young

Ms. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Dear ~~XXXX~~

Welcome to the Women's Leadership Council (WLC) of United Way of Lake County. Thank you for joining this amazing and powerful group of women who are committed to improving the lives of women and children in our community. I wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate our successes and invite you to participate in our upcoming networking events.

Under the leadership of last year's chair, Brooke MacLean, and the energetic WLC Steering committee, we accomplished much.

- We met the 2 for 1 WLC 2006-2007 Challenge Grant and grew from 5 to over 100 members!!
- The *Kindergarten Readiness Calendar* was distributed to over 40,000 families and shown to be **statistically relevant in increasing school readiness scores**. Along with this year's calendar a companion workbook was developed and provided for the children to reinforce the concepts in the calendar.
- Sponsorship money from the calendars underwrote increased operations for the Waukegan Bookmobile to neighborhoods with multiple home day care providers.
- Our first fund-raising event – Power of the Purse – resulted in 7 new members.

As your chair, I am proud to announce the following events and initiatives. Thanks to MacLean-Fogg, we have a new Women's Leadership Challenge Grant a \$ for \$ match of new members up to \$25,000. Revenue from the challenge grant will fund our newest project – **Kindergarten Club**.

Please join us for the second annual Power of the Purse event on January 16, 2008 at 5:30 pm at the Lake County Discovery Museum in Wauconda. Watch for the invitation and more detailed information.

Are you interested in rolling up your sleeves and making a more direct impact in our work? We have several opportunities on committees as well as through volunteer projects. Watch for volunteer opportunity updates in your monthly member e-brief or contact Stacey Robinson at 847-775-1020 for more information.

Thank you again for joining the Women's Leadership Council. Your leadership, in dollars and commitment, will help to make a difference in the lives of so many.

Sincerely,

Glenda Abbott
Women's Leadership Council Chair

United Way of Lake County's "Success By 6" early childhood education initiative recognizes the importance of preparing children to start school ready to succeed – because when children start school ready to learn they are more engaged in school and learning, are more likely to stay in school and graduate and have a greater chance of success later in life. So much has happened since January, when we announced the results of our second annual Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, conducted in both Round Lake and Waukegan. Our three volunteer subcommittees focused on these results while developing and implementing activities in support of Success By 6 goals areas:

- children are healthy
- parents engage with their children
- caregivers provide learning opportunities
- children are exposed to books and language
- children and parents have access to school readiness activities

The committees and United Way of Lake County staff have been unbelievably busy, and the results are amazing!

Kindergarten Camp ...getting ready for school

In its second year, these kindergarten preparation sessions experienced quite a transformation from its original setup. In planning for this summer's sessions, we responded to the requests of parents and other providers to give attendees increased learning time, more resources, and greater access to the program. Instead of using one host location again, the program was modified to offer materials and staff training to multiple sites. Colorful new materials were developed, two and three session formats were used, and six sites (schools, libraries and community organizations) offered the program in Waukegan and Round Lake. A total of 174 children were served, and several sites have committed to offer the programs again in the fall and spring. Prior to the program, each adult filled out a short survey to determine each child's existing skills, the amount of time the child had spent participating in learning activities, and each adult's comfort level in teaching the child. Follow up surveys are planned for distribution throughout the year, in order to track skill improvements in key areas.



Waukegan Public Library Summer Bookmobile Program

The Waukegan Public Library's Summer Bookmobile Program was expanded again this year, with funds from calendar sponsorship of the Women's Leadership Council of United Way of Lake County. The Bookmobile goes to Waukegan neighborhoods, providing special story times and activities. The curriculum is designed to improve school readiness skills for children in the three to five age ranges. Bookmobile stops included two parks, three churches and a food pantry. The two hour sessions ran Monday through Saturday for eight weeks (mid-June through mid-August) and cultivated excitement among many of the young children in the neighborhoods served!

Home Visiting Committee

Consider this -- Research shows us that what a child experiences in the first years of life profoundly influences how his brain will develop and how he will interact with the world throughout his life. Children who receive a healthy and stimulating start have a better chance to succeed academically throughout their entire lives.

Last fall United Way assessed the "school readiness" of the Kindergartners in Waukegan and found:

- 85% of students were just beginning to recognize the letters of the alphabet
- 64% were just beginning to write their name
- 42% didn't fully recognize primary colors
- 62% were just beginning to engage with books



These results illustrate the need for an intervention program that ensures young children and their parents receive the tools necessary to best prepare preschool age children for kindergarten. Research shows family home visiting programs are the most effective way to improve the health and school readiness for children of at-risk families.

These facts, coupled with Abbott's Promise for Life, have been instrumental in focusing our local philanthropic partnership efforts with United Way of Lake County to develop the Home Visiting Program, a new component of the Success By 6 early learning initiative tools and services.

The Home Visiting program, which began on September 20, 2007, will focus on providing services to parents of preschool age children in Waukegan who are also pregnant or have an infant at home. These families also face many other difficulties; most live in extreme poverty, many are teen parents or dropped out of school when they were very young, but all want their children to succeed. They just need help to do it.

The projected outcomes for the program include:

- improved immunization rates
- improved school readiness skills in language and communication
- increased parent engagement and age appropriate interaction
- ensure children have preventative health care and healthy nutrition
- decrease in number of reported child abuse or neglect cases
- increased awareness among families of how to find and access services

Kindergarten Readiness Calendar

The Women's Leadership Council has been busy developing fabulous resources that support the mission of Success By 6. This year, the 2007-08 Kindergarten Readiness Calendar has been distributed to thousands of families, schools, libraries, non-profit organizations and community festivals and kindergarten readiness programs across Lake County. Additionally, the Council developed a bilingual Kindergarten Readiness Workbook to accompany the Calendar distribution in targeted communities like Round Lake and Waukegan. The workbook is designed to give children practice in the 'basic skills' area, which was identified in the kindergarten readiness assessment as needing much improvement. Parents have reported to us that children loved having special activities to do all summer and a workbook of their own!

Kindergarten Club

The Kindergarten Club is a new and exciting program by mail developed by the Women's Leadership Council, funded by a Challenge Grant from MacLean-Fogg Companies. Designed around a health and nutrition theme, the Kindergarten Club boxes are mailed out quarterly to families who participated in Kindergarten Camp sessions. They reinforce the concepts learned in the summer programs and encourage the families to improve health and nutrition at the same time. In addition, each mailing includes a survey that will allow us to collect data on time spent in learning activities and skill improvement. To learn more about the Women's Leadership Council and their work in the community, call Stacey Robinson at 847-775-1020 or visit their website at www.lakecountylwc.org.

Early Learning Trails

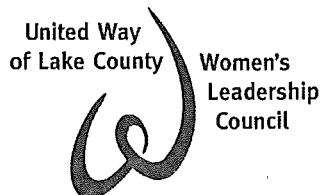
Learning can happen anywhere, and this year a lot more learning will happen on the playground thanks to investments of time and treasure by corporations that include the Chicago Bears and Discover. The concept of the Early Learning Trails is similar to exercise trails, except that numbers, letters, and shapes are painted on the blacktop. Signs nearby suggest activities for children that will help them learn shapes, colors, numbers, the alphabet and even early reading skills. In September and October, these Early Learning Trails were added to the playground of all the kindergarten buildings in Waukegan. Additional sites are available for volunteer teams to install the trails. If you are interested in this, or other volunteer projects, call Lynn Tracy at 847-775-1043 or visit www.volunteerlakecounty.org.



La Luz

In partnership with the weekly Spanish language publication *La Luz*, a children's activity page called **Abeceta's Page** has been printed in each edition since January 2007. Each page provides children with activities to complete, suggested reading, a color to learn, and a letter and number to trace. This partnership has also been effective in publicizing the Kindergarten Readiness Calendar and in showing the community at large just how successful it really is. In a January 20, 2007 story, Ryan Pagelow of *La Luz* and the *Lake County News Sun* writes

"Originally from Panama, Raisa Lew of Round Lake Beach...uses the Kindergarten Readiness Calendar for suggestions on activities she can do with her kids. So does Tami Willis of Round Lake Beach, who has a son in kindergarten and a daughter in first grade... 'I live by this Calendar,' Willis said. 'If I'm stuck on what to do, I look at the calendar and what it recommends. It helps me stay focused.'"



Engagement Opportunities

Are you looking to engage more with the Women's Leadership Council of the United Way of Lake County? Do you want to have a greater voice in shaping the directions and projects that are making a real difference in our community? Look no further! We have several standing committees in need of volunteers. We are also looking for volunteers to help plan and execute a number of events planned for 2008.

Membership

Chair: Cathy Specht (Cardinal Health)

The primary objective for the Membership Committee is to recruit new members, secure sponsorship and underwriting opportunities for our projects and leverage our current Challenge Grant. Volunteers should be willing to meet periodically to discuss strategies and progress. They should also expect to make calls to both prospective members as well as local business leaders.

New Member Cultivation

Chair: Melissa Young

Co-Chairs: Brooke MacLean, Shawna Huley (Abbott)

The primary objective for this committee is to plan and conduct fundraising events for new member solicitation. These events include our annual Power of the Purse and Book Club. We are looking for 10 – 12 volunteers overall, though volunteers may not necessarily work on every event.

Member Communications

Chair: Joy Appen-House (Abbott)

Co-Chair: Pam Baker (Baxter Healthcare)

This committee has primary responsibility in developing a communications for both members and prospects. What is the message? What is the vehicle? Who is the audience? These are the questions that will drive this committee's activity. Volunteers should expect to meet regularly to ensure that our communications are robust, meaningful and timely.

Initiatives Committee

Chair of Children are Successful sub-committee: Karlene Jacobs

Chair of Women's Health Initiative sub-committee:

This committee is charged with developing strategies and projects in support of United Way's Success By 6 initiative. Already finding wild success through projects like the Kindergarten Readiness Calendar and its companion workbook, this committee will continue to work closely with Success By 6 as it expands its scope to include issues such as health care, financial stability and graduation enrichment. We are looking for 6-8 volunteers who will meet regularly to plan and execute various projects.

If you are interested in learning more, or would like to volunteer, please call Stacey Robinson at United Way of Lake County, 847-775-1020.

United Way of Lake County's Summer 2006 Success By 6 Activities Update

United Way
SUCCESS BY 6™
...early learning matters

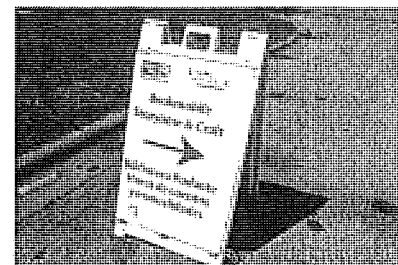
United Way of Lake County has been busy implementing programs and events in support of Success By 6 (SB6). Since launching this early childhood education initiative in January of 2006, the Lake County community has shown an outpouring of support and excitement around our mission of seeing all of our children enter kindergarten with the tools they need to succeed in school and beyond.

We know that 46% of the nation's kindergartners are coming to school at risk for failure and economically disadvantaged children are at an even greater risk of entering school more than a year behind and not catching up to their classmates.^{1,2} So, the case for this effort is clear, and we have been hard at work trying to change these outcomes. This summer alone, United Way of Lake County has coordinated efforts to bring exciting new programs and materials to our community.



Wild about Kindergarten! brought together educators and volunteers through Waukegan's preschool and kindergarten programs to help children and their parents become better prepared for the kindergarten experience. Using results from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, conducted in September 2005, a curriculum was created around these two-hour parent and child sessions. Attendance was targeted to local students entering kindergarten in the fall of 2006 who may have limited or no preschool experience. These sessions were a big hit; in all, 378 children attended a Wild session, leaving with a great school experience, a better understanding of letters and numbers, and a bag of tools to ensure the learning process continues at home.

To stress the importance of reading and provide parents and children with more access to books, we provided a grant to expand the **Waukegan Library Summer Bookmobile** program. This summer, instead of running just in the afternoons, the bookmobile visited an additional six locations, one each morning of the week, for two hours. This special program was quite successful; 926 items were checked out at these special stops, and in total, approximately 900 individuals visited the 48 sessions. At each stop, children were read a story and participated in craft time. Several home-based childcare providers who brought their children to the sessions remarked on how much they all enjoyed visiting.



In July, the Women's Leadership Council of United Way of Lake County launched the **Kindergarten Readiness Calendar**, which features 12 months of fun and simple cognitive and language-building activities that help parents and caregivers prepare children under the age of 5 for kindergarten. This project was championed by community leaders who have worked diligently towards supporting one of the main goals of Success By 6: that parents and caregivers of preschool aged children can and do engage them in frequent, meaningful school readiness activities. The calendar, affectionately referred to as the KRC, was reviewed by educators and translated to appropriate reading levels in both English and Spanish. Distribution is underway for this valuable resource.

This August, during Lake County Health Department's Kids 1st Health Fair, the Community Development team at United Way of Lake County conducted a health survey to help the Success by 6 committee better understand the health concerns of our target population. 245 surveys were returned from the one-day event, totaling approximately 42% of the families in attendance. Some of the information gathered was surprising; for example, 73% said that transportation was not a problem for them and 67% said they did not need help filling their prescriptions. Similarly, 76% said that they did not personally know someone that needed health care assistance. On the other hand, some of the information was not a shock; only 52% of mothers received prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy and 73% received W.I.C. assistance. This survey was a good indicator that the SB6 committee is on the right track in a several of its focus areas.



1. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Entering Kindergarten: A Portrait of American Children When They Begin School: Findings from The Condition of Education 2000*, Nicholas Zill and Jerry West, NCES 2001-035, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001.

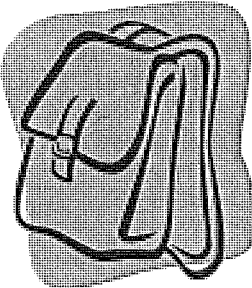
2. Pew Charitable Trusts, *Promoting universal access to high quality early education for three and four year olds: The Pew Charitable trusts and the Starting Early, Starting Strong Initiative*. Urahn, S.K., Washington, DC: Pew Charitable Trusts, 2001.

Ongoing Work



Local children have gone back to school and so are staff and volunteers of United Way of Lake County. It is time for the 2006 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and this year, in addition to again testing students and Whittier Kindergarten Center, we have expanded to the Round Lake Area Schools District 116. A representative sample from each of these two groups will be tested to determine where area children are strongest and weakest in language and other cognitive skills. Testing for both will be conducted in September, and results will be compiled and available by January 2007.

Through the end of the year and into next, the Success By 6 committee will continue to work on the Strategic Plan, which will guide the initiative into the coming years. As we learn more information about the specific needs of our community and barriers to quality education, we will work with even more community partners to expand and improve existing programs. Additionally, the committee is committed to exploring the option of creating more solution-based programming like Wild about Kindergarten.



This year, the Pack-a-Backpack school supply drive has gone high-tech. Instead of using the Lake County Center for Community Leadership as a large storage facility, we have once again partnered with Woodridge-based Kits for Kidz to take school supply donation orders online. The results of this all-virtual drive have been fantastic. Since beginning in June, our community has purchased 289 school supply kits and 255 backpacks. The drive will continue through October, so visit United Way of Lake County's website if you are interested in providing school supplies to benefit local children in need.

United Way
SUCCESS BY 6TM
...early learning matters

United Way 
United Way of Lake County

To receive regular updates about Success By 6 *...early learning matters* and other United Way of Lake County happenings, join our online community by visiting www.uwlakeco.org.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment September 2006 Findings in Round Lake



Statistically Relevant Characteristics of Children with Higher Scores

- Attended curriculum based preschool
- At least 5 years, 6 months at Kindergarten entry
- Female
- Had families who read more at home
- Lived in households with fewer people
- Had higher household incomes

Targets for Improvement in Language and Communication

Target for Improvement	Assessment Based Rationale
Increase alphabet letter recognition	72% of students were only beginning or had not yet started to recognize the letters in the alphabet
Children will be able to write name prior to kindergarten	47% of the students were only beginning or could not write their name
Increase exposure to books	62% of the children in the study have not yet started or are just beginning to engage with books
Improve comprehension of rhyming words	Only 33% of the students had any knowledge of rhyming words
Recognize basic colors	48% of students do not fully recognize primary colors
Improve familiarity with numbers	65% of the students could not consistently count 10 objects

Implications

- Overall, children need to be read to and talked with more
- Children who have some formal preschool experience are better prepared to start school
- Children from families that understand children should enter school with some skills, are better prepared
- Mother's education level, family income, language spoken at home, all affect the family views about the importance of starting school with some skills and thus the amount of knowledge a child enters school with
- Increased parenting support helps families increase engagement with their children
- Families will use and children do benefit from materials that prepare them to start school

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment September 2006 Findings in Round Lake



Purpose:

- Gather a portrait of children’s readiness for school when they enter kindergarten
- Determine the demographic and family factors associated with school readiness scores

Methodology:

Using the definition of school readiness developed by The National Education Goals Panel we adapted a multi part survey tool with the following components. A random sampling strategy was used to select student participation.

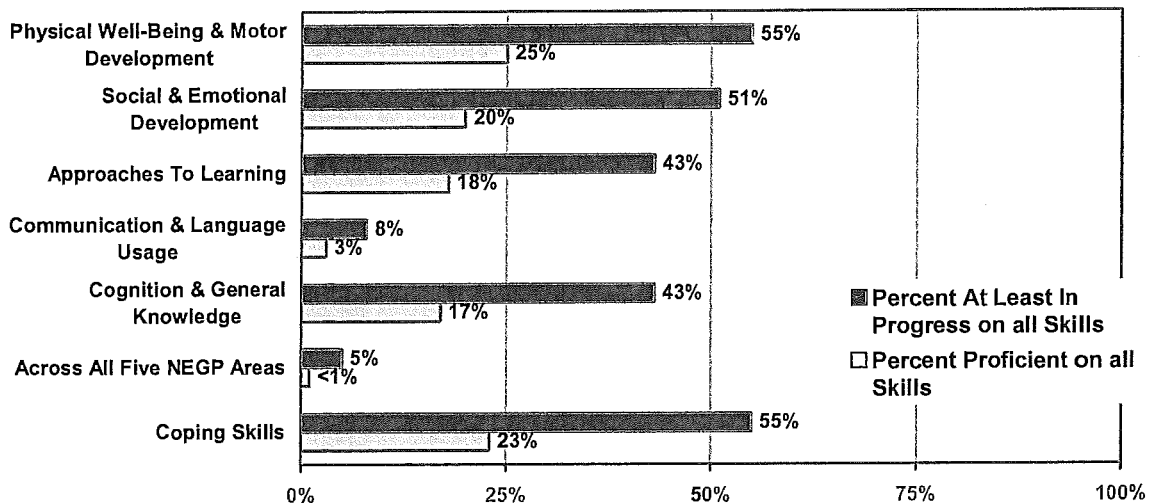
- Teachers observed 301 students individually (93% of sampled students) – during the 3rd week of school
- 251 families (83%) returned detailed information forms – available in English and Spanish
- An analysis of the skills that are considered to be key indicators of kindergarten readiness to gather data.

Demographics of the Kindergarten Families

- 63% Spanish is primary language (Kindergarteners)
- 66% Spanish is primary language (parents)
- 59% of households earn less than \$32,000 annually
- 25% of mom’s have an eighth grade education or less; 19% had dropped out of school by sixth grade
- 27% had attended formal pre-school

Percent of Children “In Progress” or “Proficient” in School Readiness Skills:

Most teachers report that students should be at least “In Progress” in all skills





...early learning matters



The Overview

United Way of Lake County knows that when children start school ready to learn they have a much better chance of succeeding as they make their way through school, and life. United Way has made it a priority to ensure that all children who enter kindergarten are prepared with the skills and tools they need to get the most out of their education.

Success By 6™ is a United Way of Lake County early childhood education initiative which brings together leadership and resources to make certain that all children have the opportunity to succeed when they enter school. This partnership unites many community groups, such as businesses, school districts, non-profit organizations and communities of faith to provide parents with the information and resources needed to be confident in the role of their children's first teachers, and to make sure that quality early learning opportunities are available to all of Lake County's children.

Success By 6™ is currently being implemented in our pilot community, Waukegan, which was chosen for the challenges it faces, as well as the unique assets and strong community partners already in place. As we continue to build an even stronger support system that will continue to increase children's readiness for school we will seek sustainable leadership and resources from area families, schools, corporations and the community at large.

Asking the Right Questions

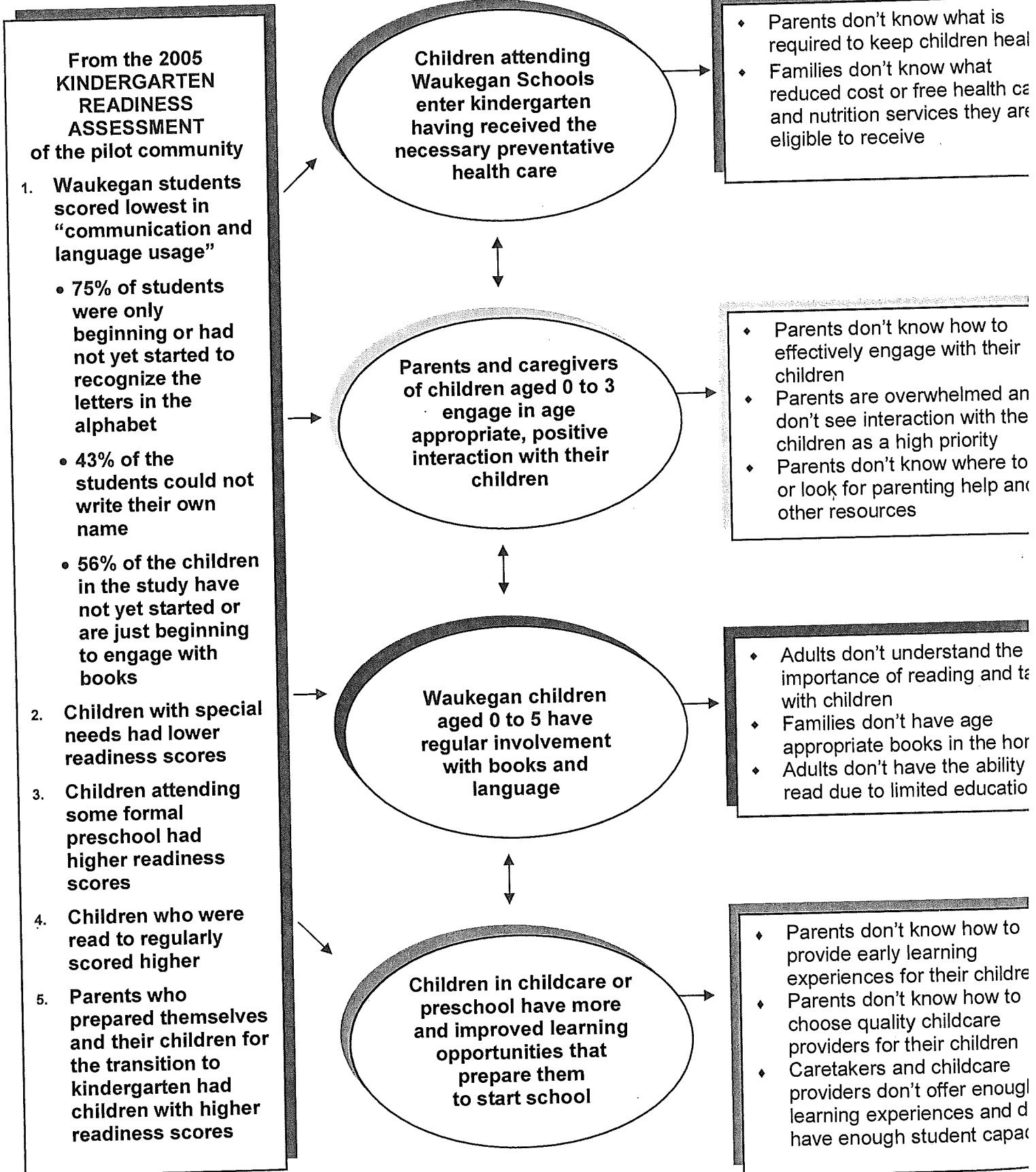
As we moved toward developing goals to create lasting change in community conditions, we found that there were a several questions that needed to be asked... and answered.

1. What are the areas of greatest need?
2. What, exactly, is our intended outcome?
3. What underlying issues stand between the population and the result?
4. What new conditions do we want to create?
5. What are the best ways to bring about these new conditions?
 - How will we know if what we are doing is working?
 - What is the highest priority for the resources we mobilize?
6. What is the overall plan for action?

Greatest Needs

Intended Outcomes

Underlying Issues



6TM Action Plan

Desired Conditions

Top Priority Actions

(Bolded items to begin summer 2006)

- ♦ Children are current on immunizations
- ♦ Children get preventive health care and medical attention when needed
- ♦ Children receive appropriate nutrition
- ♦ More women receive prenatal care
- ♦ People who are eligible enroll in WIC & "All Kids" programs
- ♦ Kids 1st Health Fair is expanded to reach more of the population in need

- ♦ **Conduct focus groups**
- ♦ **Promote health/nutrition at Kids 1st Health Fair**
- ♦ Expand home visit programs and provide incentives for families to get proper health care
- ♦ Local organizations and congregations sponsor health/nutrition nights
- ♦ Local businesses and groups promote prenatal care, good nutrition and healthy living

- ♦ Community businesses and groups provide education to parents on how to engage with their children
- ♦ Parenting videos are shown in places where parents gather and spend time
- ♦ Staff of local businesses give accurate information regarding local resources
- ♦ Home visit programs show parents ways to engage with children in daily activities
- ♦ Parenting materials are easily accessible and available to all

- ♦ **School Parent Resource Center and early childhood programs offer more information on young children's mental and physical needs**
- ♦ **Provide incentives for parents who participate in home visit programs**
- ♦ Expand the scope of home visit programs and increase the number of those who are eligible
- ♦ Establish "Shop and Learn with Your Child" campaigns at local stores
- ♦ Congregations offer "Welcome Baby" and "Happy Birthday" classes to encourage parents to effectively interact with their children
- ♦ Distribute Born Learning "Teachable Moments" videos to laundromats, grocery stores, etc.

- ♦ Community businesses and groups promote reading to children daily
- ♦ Families establish a pattern of library use
- ♦ Families have books in the home
- ♦ Families participate in community reading programs
- ♦ Family literacy programs are expanded and offered where people live and work
- ♦ Families participate in community reading programs

- ♦ **Expand Waukegan Public Library's Summer Reading Club by taking it to neighborhoods**
- ♦ **Grow Laundromat Children's Book Exchange**
- ♦ Establish "Read Every Day" awareness campaign
 - ♦ Distribute videos that encourage parents and caregivers to read with children every day
 - ♦ Provide in Spanish to local TV and radio
 - ♦ Distribute placemats that promote reading to children to grocery stores and restaurants
- ♦ Create list of ESL Classes to distribute by local groups and through community businesses

- ♦ Workplaces and healthcare providers offer assistance in finding childcare and providing early learning experiences
- ♦ Family member childcare providers get the support and training needed to provide quality early learning
- ♦ Training and resources for childcare providers are accessible, convenient and offered frequently

- ♦ **Mentoring programs for childcare providers promote providing early learning experiences:**
 - ♦ **Experienced childcare providers begin mentoring new childcare providers**
 - ♦ **Begin group education programs to be led by community leaders**
 - ♦ **Host a kick-off summer picnic to establish better relationships among providers**
- ♦ Workplaces and healthcare providers offer help to parents choosing childcare programs
- ♦ Expand library of materials accessible to providers
- ♦ Establish and expand faith-based support groups

Intended
Outcome

Parents and caregivers of preschool aged children prepare their children for kindergarten by engaging them in frequent, meaningful school readiness activities

Underlying
Issues

- ◆ Parents and caregivers don't understand or value what is needed to prepare kids for school
- ◆ Parents and caregivers don't have time to devote to school readiness activities
- ◆ Parents and caregivers don't know how to effectively teach and prepare their children
- ◆ Parents and caregivers don't know about or can't access school readiness services

Desired
Conditions

- ◆ Community-wide collaboration, "Countdown to School," provides information on easy, meaningful ways to prepare children for school
- ◆ Community health services like WIC and home visiting services are expanded to reach more residents and to include sessions on preparing children for school
- ◆ Parenting materials and other resources are readily available and accessible to parents where they gather and spend time

Top Priority
Actions

- ◆ **Kindergarten Readiness Calendar is widely distributed and available at widely used community locations**
- ◆ Businesses offer "Lunch and Learn" sessions to teach parents how to incorporate learning into daily activities and where to go for help
- ◆ Kindergarten readiness programs are successful at reinforcing skills parents and children need
- ◆ Health care professionals provide information to help parents prepare their children to start school
- ◆ Schools, childcare providers, libraries and churches provide learning activity lists to parents