The Basics Pilot in Montgomery County

About The Basics in Montgomery County

In November 2020, Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF), an initiative of Nonprofit Montgomery (NM), was approached by The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services’ Community Action Agency (DHHS-CAA) to serve as a start-up incubator for a 6-month pilot project of The Basics. This pilot program is funded by DHHS-CAA at the level of $100K from January 1- June 30, 2021, made possible through a reallocation of CARES Act funds designated to support the County’s Head Start programs, and includes the county’s Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC) as a strategic partner.

The pilot will be focused on the 20877 zip code of Montgomery County, specifically working with the Head Start programs at South Lake, Washington Grove, Gaithersburg, and Summit Hall Elementary Schools, and their community and service partners.

What is The Basics?
The Basics is a community-level initiative to improve early childhood outcomes, including kindergarten readiness. It is based on 5 parenting and caregiving pillars that promote high-quality social and emotional development for all children from birth-age 5. These pillars are: (1) Maximize love, manage stress; (2) Talk, sing, and point; (3) Count, group, and compare; (4) Explore through movement and play; and (5) Read and discuss stories. The Basics originated in Boston, MA with Founder Dr. Ronald Ferguson. View a 1-page summary of The Basics and visit the website for more about the intervention.

This program has been successful in reaching families and improving outcomes for all children, including those who may never attend any formal early learning setting. It is free for families and it teaches parents/caregivers how to incorporate learning into everyday activities. This program is currently in use in about 45 communities in the United States and abroad, including in two counties in Maryland.

Goals of The Basics Pilot

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Head Start families who already live with many challenging factors have experienced more stress due to loss of employment and housing as well as illness. Head Start children are struggling to participate in virtual learning settings and many Head Start parents are considered essential workers and lack the time to assure their children are engaged in virtual learning classrooms.

The five principles of The Basics support parents in understanding and supporting their child’s development. Providing The Basics education materials and activities to community partners that work with Head Start families, among others, in the 20877 zip code, will strengthen recognition of and awareness among parents about the five Basics principles and their access to tailored learning materials that underscore their role as their child’s first and primary teacher through trusted community service, health, and education providers.
By undertaking a focused marketing, outreach, and education campaign in the 20877 zip code, program partners aim to increase recognition of The Basics principles and practices among Head Start families and community partners in the designated zip code.

Implementing Partners
We are thrilled to have a growing group of committed implementing partners to lead the pilot effort. These include:

- Montgomery County Public Schools and their Pre-K and Head Start programs at Emory Grove, Summit Hall, Washington Grove, Gaithersburg, and South Lake Elementary Schools;
- Identity, Inc.;
- Sheppard Pratt; (formerly Family Services);
- City of Gaithersburg
- Montgomery County Public Libraries;
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Service, Early Childhood Services;
- Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program;
- Housing Opportunities Commission, Fatherhood Initiative

Join Us!
The launch of The Basics in Montgomery County, MD is on **Friday, March 19th at 12 noon.** [Register](#) and join us for this virtual event. You can also find us [online](#) and on social media, and can find a live stream of the launch on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

Are you a parent or a child care provider caring for children ages 0-5 and want to be a part of The Basics in the 20877 community?

Are you a community partner and want to join The BASICS pilot effort? You can share Basics information via your website, listserv, and social media; include flyers in diaper and food donation boxes; put up posters in your business, apartment building; help enroll families in a free text messaging service; show Basics videos in the waiting room of your dental or health office; and more!

Do you want to support The Basics with in-kind, financial, or institutional support so that it can be sustained beyond the pilot period?

**We want to hear from you!**