



What Is Success By 6?

United Way Success By 6® is the nation's largest network of early childhood coalitions, focused on improving school readiness through community change. In more than 350 communities or states, Success By 6 (SB6) coalitions are changing the way things work so young children can come to school ready to succeed.

Operating with support from local United Way organizations, SB6 coalitions are galvanizing business, government and non-profit leaders around early learning. For 16 years, SB6 coalitions have been raising awareness of the importance of early childhood development, improving access to services, advocating for public policies and overhauling systems – budgets, laws and supports – to improve young children's lives.

At the national level, United Way Success By 6 provides a strategic framework and support for local innovation. In the last 5 years, more than 500,000 children have benefited from SB6 early learning, child care, parent education, health, literacy and family resource center programs.

What Does Success By 6 Do?

Chattanooga, Tennessee offers just one example of how SB6 makes a difference. In 1997, 60% of Chattanooga's low-income young children were developmentally behind – and coming to school ready to fail. In response, Chattanooga's SB6 crafted a collaborative, community-based response called *Invest in Children*. It includes public awareness efforts, a parent help line, a one-stop resource center called Parents' Place, and a coordinated network of 50 community partners to provide information and hands-on help in poor neighborhoods. After finding parents lacked literacy skills to read to their children, the SB6 created mini-libraries – staffed by volunteers – in the poorest neighborhoods. Seven years later, thousands of parents and children have visited the reading centers and Parents' Place. And 30% more at-risk children are on track developmentally – and better equipped to succeed in school, work and life. Chattanooga's neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach not only brings the community together around its children, but it's making a lifelong difference for children and families.

The National Success By 6 Initiative

Building on 16 years of early childhood change/improvements at the community level, United Way of America is providing national leadership to take Success By 6 to scale. Working with national and local partners, SB6 aims to improve school readiness nationwide in the next decade by focusing on three major strategies:

1. Equipping Parents, Grandparents and Caregivers to Encourage Early Learning

United Way Success By 6 is helping parents provide their children with a strong foundation for school, work and life success:

- By supporting local SB6 initiatives in their awareness, education and action efforts.
- By implementing a national public engagement campaign called *Born Learning* to inform, engage and motivate parents, grandparents and caregivers to encourage early learning.

Strategic Partners include **The Ad Council**, the nation's pre-eminent producer of public service advertising; **Civitas**, which creates innovative educational tools for parents, caregivers and professionals working with young children; and **Families and Work Institute**, a research institute working to translate, from science to action, what is known about how young children learn.

Strategies

- Sustain the *Born Learning* national public engagement campaign, focused on creating early learning opportunities for young children. Public service advertising, a Web site (www.bornlearning.org) and research-based educational material gives parents and informal caregivers easy, “doable” action steps to help young children learn. The ads, Web site and much of the material are also available in Spanish.
- Help local United Ways partner with other organizations to use *Born Learning* as a support for outcome-focused community change efforts, including policy.
- Support communities and states with tools, templates, and technical assistance to help them mobilize around policies and systems that support early learning.
- Identify up to 10 communities or states as Enhanced Campaigns and provide intensive support to help them develop an outcome-focused, customized strategy to educate, support and mobilize their communities around early childhood learning.

2. Increase the Quality of Early Education and Care

United Way SB6 is working in states and communities for quality rating systems (QRS) – a strategy to improve the quality of child care by providing “star ratings” like those for hotels and restaurants. With these ratings, parents can choose the best care – and demand quality with their pocketbooks. In place in ten states and underway in over half the country, QRS improves the quality of early learning and makes it easier for parents to choose the best care for their children. It can also help policymakers create policies to improve quality; promote accountability; and give providers a roadmap to quality improvement.

Strategic Partnerships:

- **National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC)** – Develop and distribute *Stairsteps to Quality*, a one-of-a-kind guide to help communities and states build and sustain “star rating” systems.
- **Qualistar Early Learning** – Launch a pilot QRS effort that measures critical areas for success in early education programs and provides a roadmap for improvement.

Strategies

- Provide assistance to national/state/local networks as they plan and advocate for “star rating” systems.
- Build on the success of the Qualistar pilot and help replicate it in other communities.

3. Strengthen Local & State SB6 Infrastructure

Although some 75% of local United Ways already support early learning, United Way SB6 seeks to increase the number and level of long-lasting community change efforts that support school readiness.

Strategies

- Promote the importance of early learning and SB6 to expand the number of United Ways creating community change for young children and families.
- Fine-tune skills, increase knowledge and share innovations among local and state United Ways and their partners.

4. Public Policy

UW *Standards of Excellence* encourage local United Ways to participate in public policy, especially at the local level. Working together, the extensive United Way and Success By 6 networks possess the potential to deeply impact not only local, but also state and national early childhood policy. United Way SB6 seeks to increase the number of local United Ways & SB6 initiatives that are actively promoting policy agendas that focus on providing high quality early learning opportunities for children.

Strategies

- UWA/SB6 initiative is a member of the Buffett Birth to Five Policy Alliance with 9 other national organizations. Through this effort we will work with selected states to engage in state-level public policy efforts, particularly focused on early learning.