

Invest in the Future

INVEST IN KIDS



Annual Review
2008/2009



**INVEST
IN KIDS**

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LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

At Invest in Kids, 2008-2009 could be summed up in two words: growth and change.

Invest in Kids' growth this past year has been substantial, despite the economic downturn. We are proud to report that the number of clients we served grew by 20%. Our staff grew with this expanded set of services. And we added two new members to our Board, whose contributions have already been invaluable.

Our proven program outcomes also grew in strength, which tells us that our programs are working better than ever to help vulnerable young children. As the number of children who need our services continues to increase, we always keep our focus on the quality of the programs that we provide.

Invest in Kids also saw important changes. Jennifer Atler, our founding executive director, stepped down after ten incredibly successful years as she welcomed a second child into her own family. We are very happy that she will continue to serve actively on our Board of Directors. The board unanimously concluded that Lisa Merlino, deputy director of Invest in Kids since 2000, would be the ideal choice to lead Invest in Kids into the future. She has since led the staff through a remarkably smooth leadership transition.

As part of this transition, and especially in light of the difficult economic times we all experienced in 2008 and 2009, Invest in Kids has increased our focus on the organization's long-term sustainability. Prior to 2008, we intentionally increased our cash reserves in an effort to fortify ourselves against unforeseen events like the current economic downturn. As a result of this preparation, we did not have to cut a single program or program site. Instead, as more children fell into poverty, we served more children than ever before. Because Invest in Kids' programs address many of the problems faced by children living in poverty – social and emotional problems, compromised physical health, and decreased school readiness – we feel a great deal of hope about these children's futures. Our programs produced quantifiable, scientifically-validated increases in mental, social and emotional health, physical health, and academic skills – all indicators that the children we serve are set on the right track from a very young age.

None of this could be accomplished without the incredible support of our generous donors. In a period of economic stress, our supporters were more generous than ever. We are humbled by their faith and confidence in our work. Together, by investing in kids, we can change not only individual lives, but also the future of our state. For these children, the sky is the limit.



- John Walsh



“An increasing rate of poverty means that more Colorado children and families face difficult challenges. More than ever, we need the smart, hard work and the hope offered by Invest in Kids. This dedicated nonprofit organization plays a vital role in helping to increase access to education and health for young children across Colorado.”

*- Irene Ibarra, President,
The Colorado Trust*

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A CHANCE TO THRIVE

The most important investment any of us can ever make is in a child. Every child deserves that investment, every day. Invest in Kids was founded ten years ago on the notion that every child, no matter what their background, deserves a chance to live a happier, healthier life, and that there are proven programs, measurable over time, to make that happen.

As of 2007, over 16% of Colorado’s children live in poverty. Over 35% of Colorado’s children qualify as low-income (parents earning less than 200% of the federal poverty level). Children who grow up poor are at significantly higher risk of being born too early, being abused, having developmental delays, and failing in school. These risks are not only detrimental to these children, but they are also bad for our local communities and detrimental to the future of our state.

PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK FOR COLORADO’S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Invest in Kids was founded in 1999 by a group of community leaders who felt growing despair over the barriers that poor children face. Billions of dollars were being poured into social programs, but the problems seemed to be getting worse. They decided to turn despair into hope by investing in research-based, proven programs. These programs prevent and treat the issues that low-income children face most, beginning during their mothers’ pregnancies. The programs Invest in Kids supports and implements combat these barriers from the first moment of a child’s life - reducing their risk of being born too early, being abused as a child, and having impaired social, emotional, and cognitive development. They support a vulnerable child’s mental, social, and emotional health and significantly increase their school readiness.



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“As state treasurer, I feel fortunate that we have an organization like Invest in Kids that is targeting our most at-risk children with research-based interventions.”

– Cary Kennedy, Colorado State Treasurer

These programs are very different from the vast majority of interventions being implemented both locally and nationally. They are supported by the gold standard of research, research that dates back over twenty years for each program. By addressing each identified risk factor, these programs are proven to have significant long term effects. There is no other organization in Colorado that implements such rigorously evaluated interventions for young children and their families.

When at-risk children receive interventions early in life, everyone benefits. The child, who may have ended up in jail or worse, can now thrive in school and in life. Taxpayers benefit from dollars saved on later, more expensive interventions (such as social services, juvenile court, and welfare). The economy benefits from more productive workers. Society benefits from less crime and more money funneled to things like education. Investing in kids early makes sense from every angle.



An Adams County participant in The Incredible Years.



A classroom waits for Dina, one of The Incredible Years’ puppet friends, to emerge from her home.

“Good Behavior Game promotes incredible teamwork. After I began using the game, the students began helping one another throughout the day, even outside the game. It has made my job easier because it is a learning community where we all help each other.”

– 1st grade teacher, Adams County

GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME

Teachers may disagree about some things, but there is one thing that they can all agree on: the ability to manage classroom behavior is one of the most important skills a teacher can have. We all have seen the results of poorly managed classrooms, especially when they are filled with at-risk children: shouting, throwing, hitting, swearing, and worse. In this environment, children cannot learn and teachers cannot teach.

On the other hand, a teacher with good behavior management skills can transform the classroom and the lives of the children in that classroom. By helping a troubled child learn to focus, self-motivate, and maintain self-discipline, a teacher can put a child on a path of lifelong success.

Good Behavior Game is a program that helps students and teachers create just such an environment. In this simple, cost-effective intervention, teachers divide the class into teams that compete to see which can behave the best. If all of the teams behave well, everyone can win. A structured system of praise, rules, and rewards, Good Behavior Game creates a classroom where teachers can teach and children can learn.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT GOOD BEHAVIOR GAME:

- *STANDARD CLASSROOM RULES*: create a predictable environment for children and easy reference points for teachers
- *TEAM MEMBERSHIP*: by having peers reinforce behavior (rather than just teachers), troubled students learn that other children can help them, while higher-functioning students learn the value of helping others
- *MONITORING OF BEHAVIOR*: allows teachers the opportunity to monitor student behavior and academic progress
- *POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT*: by rewarding children for good behavior, rather than ostracizing poorly behaving children to the principal’s office, teachers create a positive, motivating environment for their students

COLORADO RESULTS

During school year 2008-2009, Colorado schools took part in a pilot study of Good Behavior Game in Colorado. Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this controlled, scientific trial was conducted by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence in partnership with Invest in Kids and the American Institutes for Research. As soon as results from the trial are available, they will be published for your review.



RESEARCH RESULTS

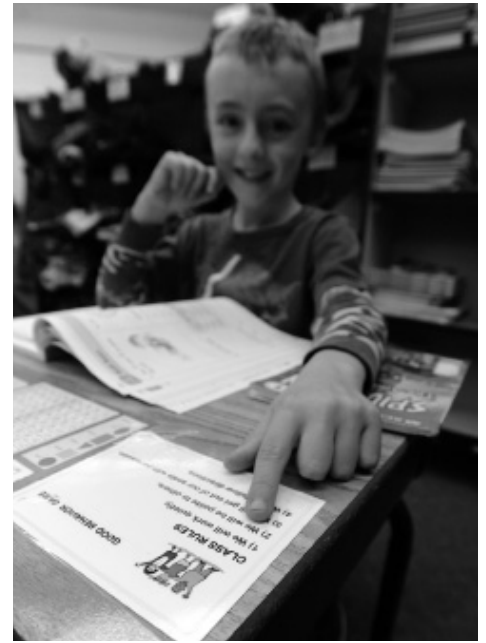
Research began on Good Behavior Game in 1984 in Baltimore, Maryland. Since then, the program has been lauded by organizations such as the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention, and the White House's inaugural Helping America's Youth conference. Some highlights of research results include :

- 35% lifetime risk reduction for alcohol abuse or dependence (followed until age 19-21)
- 65% lifetime risk reduction for drug use or dependence for highly aggressive boys; 50% reduction among all males (followed until age 19-21)
- 48% decrease in use of school-based services for psychological, social, or emotional disturbances for highly aggressive boys (followed until age 19-21)
- 43% less likely to be in need of mental health services, based on their teachers' reports (followed until age 11)

Mary's Story

"This was my first year using Good Behavior Game. This year, I had a student in my class with a number of developmental delays and other disabilities; she had vision problems, generally low academic performance, severe hearing loss, and speech difficulties. These problems were first identified in pre-school. She participated in the game and was part of a team, just like every other student. As part of the game, I give students independent work time, during which they must obey the classroom rules and get their work done. This student was out of class often, but when she arrived back in class during the game, she knew exactly what to do and what was expected of her. Her teammates gave her compassionate, quiet, and polite feedback, which they learned from the game's constantly-reinforced fourth rule: "we will be polite to others." Toward the latter part of the year, she had gained so much self-confidence that she wanted to do work just like the other kids – instead of modified math during independent work time, she was ready to try math like everyone else. She knew that she had the support and skills to do it.

When I met with her parents, they were brought to tears as they told me the progress that she had been making not only at school, but also at home. There was something different about her and she had a newfound faith in herself. I don't think any of this would have been possible without Good Behavior Game." – A first grade teacher in Adams County



A child keeps track of the Good Behavior Game classroom rules.



When teams win the game, they track their success with stars on a weekly scoreboard.

“As a career prosecutor, I know the importance of crime prevention. Invest in Kids implements research-based programs to help our kids and families that need it the most. The dollars invested in their early childhood programs result in tremendous long-term savings —both in dollars and in saving the futures of the children and families they touch.”

*– Don Quick,
District Attorney,
Seventeenth Judicial District*

THE INCREDIBLE YEARS

How do mental illness or signs of severe stress manifest in young children? Poor behavior. Specifically, certain misbehaviors indicate that a child is experiencing psychological stress or problems at home or in their neighborhood. According to researchers, approximately 50% of early childhood behavior problems do not resolve themselves and persist into childhood. Problems like conduct disorder or oppositional defiant disorder, if left untreated, can develop into full-blown mental health problems such as depression, substance abuse, and juvenile delinquency.

The Incredible Years, Invest in Kids’ early childhood social and emotional health program, was developed in a treatment center for troubled young children. The program developer quickly realized that the program could be adapted and implemented more widely in classrooms. In 2002, The Incredible Years’ first year in Colorado, we served approximately 200 low-income children and 80 parents. In school year 2009-2010, we will serve approximately 4,000 low-income children and over 300 parents.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE INCREDIBLE YEARS

- **THREE COMPLIMENTARY COMPONENTS:** a child curriculum, a parent group curriculum, and a teacher education curriculum
- **CHILD CURRICULUM** teaches children anger management, problem solving, emotional competence, empathy, and friendship development. The curriculum is taught using child-size puppets, music, cards, posters, and other engaging methods.
- **PARENT GROUP CURRICULUM** is conversational, with an emphasis on sharing of experiences, demonstration and role-playing, and videos. Weekly assigned home activities help parents practice their new skills. Program goals and results include increased parental competency, increased school-home connection, and increased knowledge of relationship between self-care and child well-being.
- **TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM** educates teachers about the most effective strategies to manage behavior and promote positive child social, emotional, and academic development.



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COLORADO RESULTS

The Incredible Years has been implemented in Colorado since 2002. Recent independent evaluation results include:

- significant increases in children’s prosocial/communication skills and emotional regulation skills
- significant increases in overall social competence
- significant increases in academic skills
- percentage of children who improved in their overall social competence from pre-test to post-test was: 73.2% for the children with above average social competence at pre-test, 87.1% for the children with average social competence at pre-test, and 93.9% for the children with below average social competence at pre-test
- among parents, significant increases in positive parenting skills (such as praising and playing with children) and significant decreases in negative parenting skills (such as inconsistent or harsh discipline)

RESEARCH RESULTS

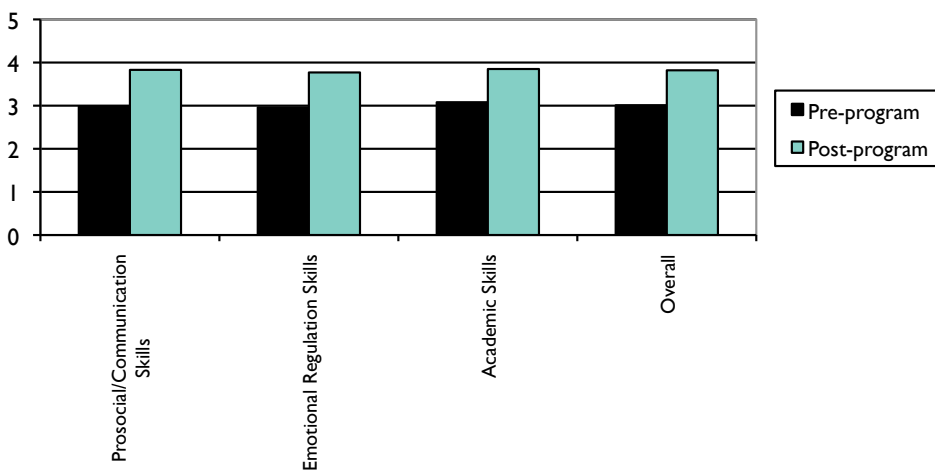
Testing began on The Incredible Years program at the University of Washington in 1982. Dozens of studies since that time have documented its effectiveness in treating a wide array of early childhood difficulties. A series of controlled trials have shown the following results (among many others):

- 91% of the children showed significant reductions in conduct problems
- 73% of the children showed significant reductions in negative behaviors at home
- 69% of the children showing poor social skills at school-year beginning demonstrated normal skills at year’s end
- 80% of children continued to show improved conduct a year after program end
- Significant reductions in parental depression and increases in parental self-confidence

Foster Child Learning to Manage His Anger

“In our classroom, we have a three-year-old child who is now in foster care. His foster family is great but this child has had a very abusive past. He often hit and became angry when things did not go his way. By following the guidelines and applying the things I have learned during my three-day Incredible Years training I have helped him manage his feelings in a more positive way. I have used praise to build his confidence and self-esteem. The calming down tactics have helped him to spend much less time in the ‘Time Out’ chair, or as we call it, the ‘Planning Chair.’ He gets along better with the other children and has recently begun to initiate play and share toys with other children. He loves coming to school, and has a big smile on his face most of the time. I don’t think he would have made this kind of progress without The Incredible Years.”

– an Incredible Years teacher in Cortez



A child talks with Dina, one of The Incredible Years’ puppet friends used in the child curriculum.

“In the case of early childhood intervention and particularly in the Nurse-Family Partnership program, we actually have solid, rigorous, experimental-based evidence that demonstrates that this is a program that generates not only benefits to participating children and their families... but real economic returns that are a payback to society for making those investments.”

*~ Lynn A. Karoly, Senior Economist,
RAND Corporation*

NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP™

Some of the most vulnerable members of our communities are young, low-income, first-time mothers. Research shows that babies born in low-income families have strikes against them from the moment they are born; they are at significantly greater risk of being born too early, being born underweight, and not receiving their immunizations. Their prenatal environments can be stressful and detrimental, resulting from maternal psychological stress, domestic violence or substance abuse.

Nurse-Family Partnership addresses all of these issues by pairing low-income, first-time mothers with highly trained nurses. These nurses visit the mothers in their home weekly or bi-weekly from the time the expectant mother enrolls in the program until her baby is two years old. The nurse, the mother, and her baby form a close, trusting relationship in which the mother feels safe to discuss problems and change problem behaviors. A set curriculum focuses on improved prenatal health, improved child health and development, and increased maternal economic self-sufficiency. This transformational program changes not only the life of the mother, but the future of her child.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

- *VOLUNTARY ENROLLMENT OF LOW-INCOME, FIRST TIME MOTHERS*: optimal time to promote positive behaviors
- *LONG-TERM PROGRAM DURATION*: from early in pregnancy through child's second birthday for continuity and support
- *DELIVERED BY HIGHLY-TRAINED, REGISTERED NURSES*: trusted and competent professionals who deliver skilled consultation and mentoring
- *RELATIONSHIP-BASED*: nurses develop close, trusting relationships with the mother and her child
- *STRENGTHS-BASED*: emphasis on client's strengths and development of a positive vision and plan for their lives and the lives of their children

COLORADO RESULTS:

Thus far, Nurse-Family Partnership in Colorado has served over 11,000 first-time, low-income mothers and their babies. In 2008, results from 2,640 program participants show:

- 20% smoking reduction of mothers during pregnancy (vs. 15% Nurse-Family Partnership national average)
- 91% of babies were born full-term (vs. 87.8% Colorado overall average)
- 92% of children received all recommended immunizations by 24 months (vs. 78% Colorado overall average)
- 88% breast feeding rate at birth (vs. 75% Nurse-Family Partnership national average)



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“The success of the Nurse-Family Partnership is undeniable; this program should be expanded to every community in this country, not just a select few.”

~ then-U.S. Senator Ken Salazar, upon introduction of the bipartisan Healthy Children and Families Act (S. 1052)

- 41% of mothers who completed the program and did not have a diploma/ GED at intake earned their diploma/ GED
- Increased employment by Nurse-Family Partnership participating mothers

RESEARCH RESULTS

Research on Nurse-Family Partnership began in 1977 in Elmira, New York. Since then, three controlled trials have demonstrated the short- and long-term effectiveness of the program. Just some of these results include:

- 48% reduction in child abuse and neglect
- 59% reduction in arrests among children
- 72% fewer convictions of mothers
- 56% reduction in emergency room visits for accidents and poisonings
- 67% reduction in behavioral and intellectual problems among children

Melissa’s Story

“I was the oldest of four children and was called “Mom” most of my life. My mother left me and my siblings when I was fifteen and moved to another state. I did what I needed to do to survive. I had two jobs, and was in the work study program at my school. As you can imagine, taking on the

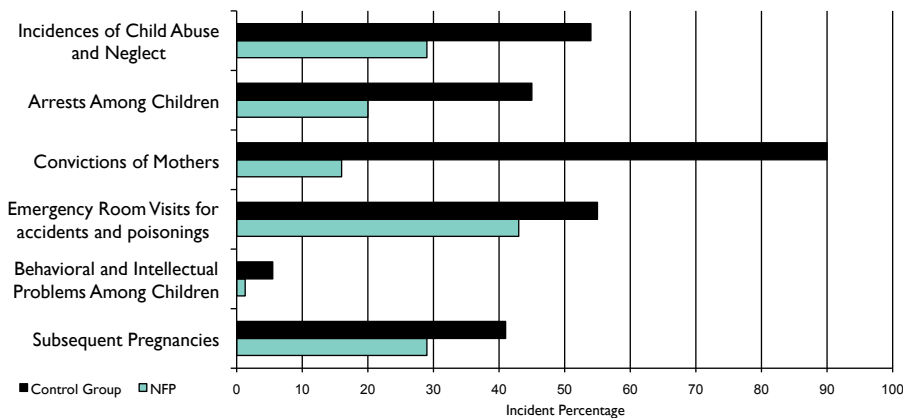
household chores, school and two jobs was very challenging for a fifteen year-old. I did the best I could, but had to quit school given everything that was going on. When I turned sixteen I was able to get my GED.

When I found out that I was pregnant a few years later, I was scared. I didn’t want my kids to grow up the way I did.

Being in the Nurse-Family Partnership Program changed my life. The relationship with my nurse and the empowerment I felt by her encouragement is what helped me the most. She helped me to believe in myself and that I could accomplish anything. We set goals together, and it was wonderful to have someone to talk to about what I wanted to do with my life. She told me that I could take baby steps to accomplish anything I wanted to. That was amazing to me. Her encouragement changed my way of thinking.

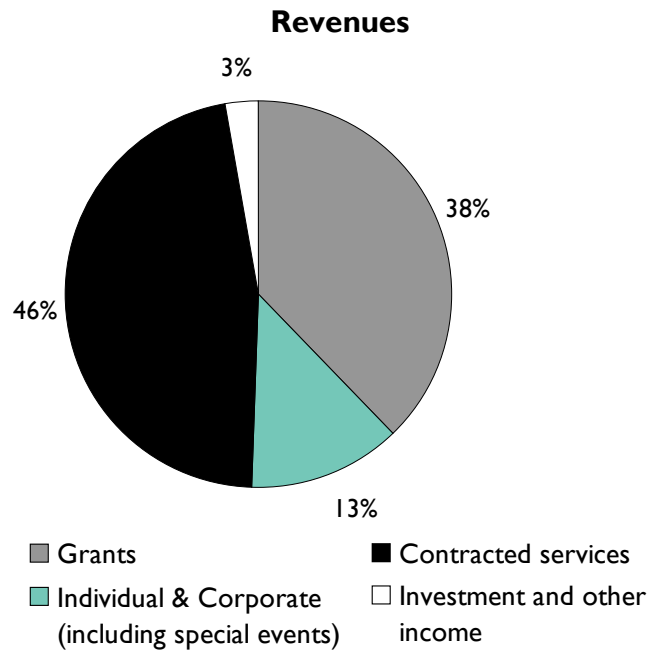
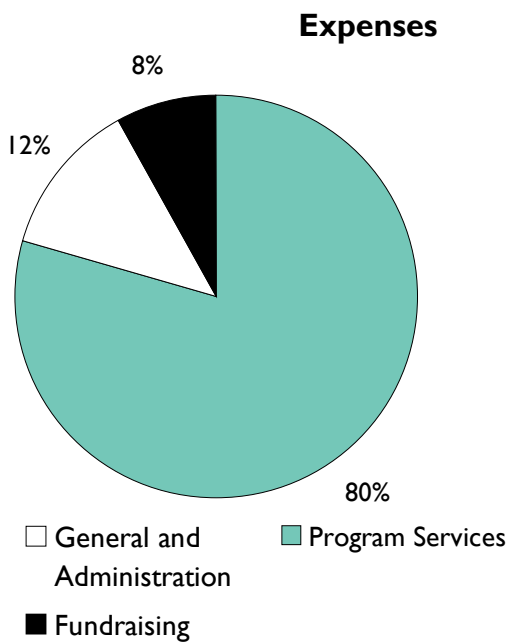
I now believe in myself and have all of the inner resources I need to move forward in life. And, I seem to have come full circle – I now work for the Nurse-Family Partnership program in my county. This program is so empowering for women and I feel truly blessed to have been a client!”

- a Nurse-Family Partnership client in Arapahoe County



A nurse checks the weight of her client’s baby during a visit.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



INVEST IN KIDS STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (fiscal year ending December 31, 2008)

REVENUES, GAINS, AND SUPPORT:

Grants	\$	463,885
Individual & Corporate Donations	\$	119,868
Contracted services	\$	572,595
Special events	\$	34,704
Investment income	\$	24,994
Other income	\$	9,876
TOTAL REVENUE, GAINS, AND SUPPORT	\$	1,225,922

EXPENSES:

Programs services	\$	1,027,252
General and administration	\$	160,714
Fundraising	\$	105,083
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$	1,293,049

Net assets, beginning of year	\$	1,422,523
Change in net assets	\$	(67,127)
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$	1,355,396



DONORS

To our donors: your contributions, large or small, make a difference in the lives of thousands of at-risk children across Colorado. We are deeply grateful for your generosity.

Donors (January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008. Donors who made contributions in 2009 will be acknowledged in the 2009-2010 annual review. We deeply regret any misspellings or omissions.)

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