

Dr. Melanie Johnson
President and CEO
Collaborative for Children

*Center for Houston's Future
Leadership Forum
September 18, 2024*



OPENING THOUGHT



The evil that is in the world always comes of ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as malevolence, if they lack understanding.

Albert Camus

Overview: Childcare in Houston has improved in the past few years – but still has a long way to go



Houston has historically struggled to provide high-quality child care, especially for low-income families...

- ❖ 90% of a child's brain is formed by age 5.
- ❖ Research shows that a child who lags when starting Kindergarten is up to 80% more likely to be held back and require additional educational support by the time they enter fourth grade.
- ❖ Centers of Excellence ensure that children are prepared for Kindergarten and beyond with essential cognitive and social/emotional skills.
- ❖ The Collab-Lab is a mobile classroom that directly brings early childhood education and resources to underserved communities. Since 2021, the Collab-Lab has served over 8,000 children.
- ❖ Technology is crucial in Collaborative's early childhood education strategy, using tools like robotics and AI to enrich learning in our Centers of Excellence. By providing interactive, tailored educational experiences to children in underserved communities, we bridge the digital divide and equip them for the tech-driven world while minimizing biases in teaching and assessments, ensuring fair opportunities for all children

Only **45%** of Houston's Children are Kindergarten-Ready. Only 1 in 3 of Houston's children can pass the Third Grade Literacy exam. We work to close the achievement gaps often emerging by third grade, particularly for children from low-income families.

Collaborative for Children Theory of Change

- OUR SPECIAL SAUCE -

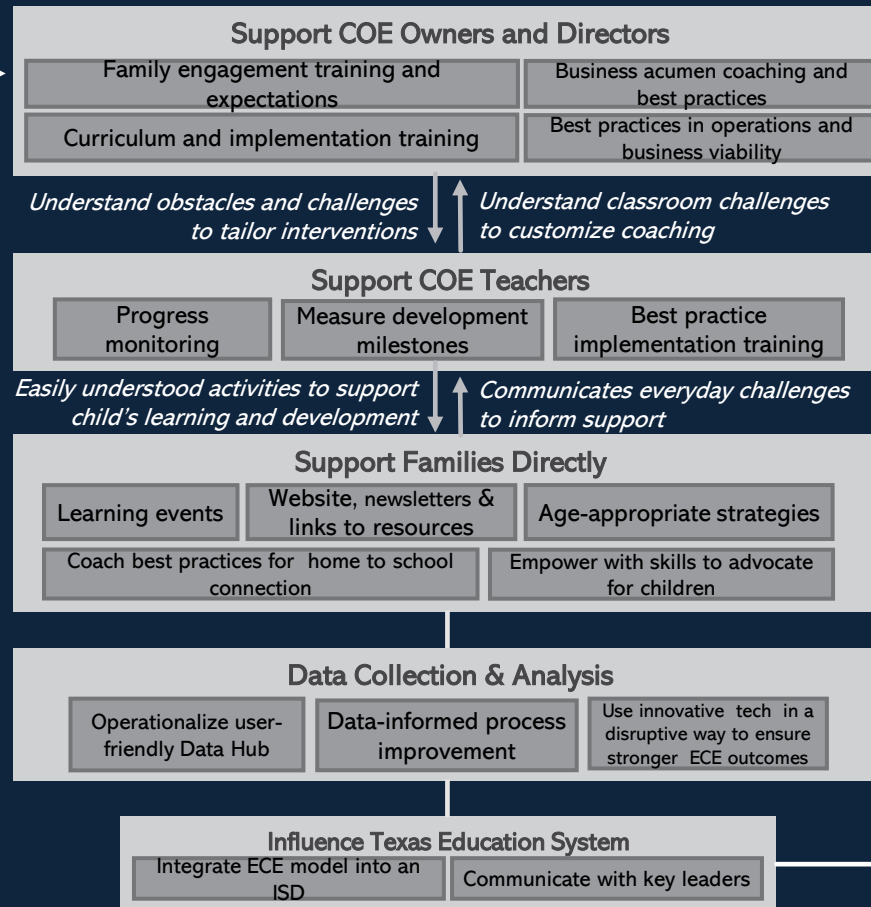
Our Centers of Excellence (COE) meld the best practices of early childhood education (ECE) with data driven technology that enables unparalleled academic preparation for every child. We provide comprehensive business support to a COE business owner to become a high caliber center and to address the academic needs of children enrolled in the center. We offer professional early childhood education coaching and training to teachers and parent engagement support to prepare children for school readiness.

OUR FOCUS POPULATION

Children ages 0 - 5 and their parents/ caregivers who are located in under-sourced areas in Greater Houston*

**Under-sourced areas include Complete Communities, childcare deserts, and other historically underserved areas (e.g. communities of color, rural communities)*

OUR WORK



INTENDED IMPACT

Ensure that at least 70% of the children we serve are school ready in:

- Social Emotional Learning**
Effective communication and feelings
Following instruction
- Literacy**
Phonetic recognition
Recognizing capital and lowercase letters
- Numeracy**
Count to 30
Count up to 10 uniquely different objects

ULTIMATE SOCIAL GOAL

- Demonstrate the impact of our approaches on early learning outcomes with a programmatic model that is sustainable and scalable
- Prove the viability of adapting and integrating dynamic technology into the ECE space
- Integrate our ECE model into an ISD to demonstrate results in order to influence the Texas education system as a whole

Theory of Change

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OUR FOCUS POPULATIONS

Ages 0 to 5



OUR WORK

Business, Parents and Teachers



INTENDED

IMPACT

Social Emotional Learning
Literacy
Numeracy



ULTIMATE SOCIAL

GOAL

Integrate/demonstrate
Technology in ECE



Researcher/UH Professor Jose Contreras uses robots to inspire young students to pursue careers in STEM



Teachers



Parents



Center Owners



CHILD
OUTCOMES



COE ADVANTAGES



Centers of Excellence offer:

- ❖ Business development training
- ❖ Teacher development training
- ❖ Family empowerment



COE ADVANTAGES



Tear down the barriers one by one, we won't quit till the work is done!

Centers of Excellence

Reduce Costs for Centers

- Provide equipment grants, stakeholder training, certify teaching

Reduce Costs for Parents

- FindChildcareNow.org for subsidies, create COEs in child care deserts



COE ADVANTAGES



Tear down the barriers one by one, we won't quit till the work is done!

Centers of Excellence

Reduce Barriers for Teachers

- Systemic change for sustainable support
- Increase pay wages and benefits through policy changes
- ISDs adopting additional assessment opportunities





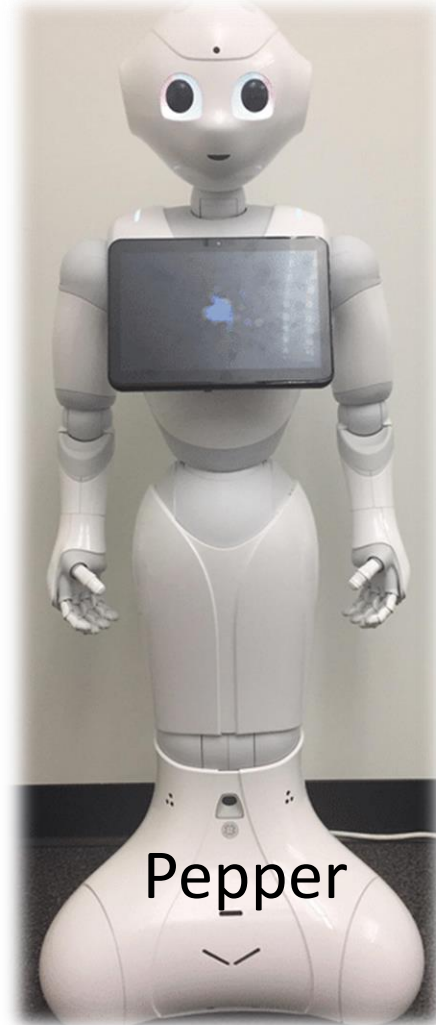
Collaborative for Children uses STEAM to teach social emotional, literacy and math skills.



Meld best practices of data-driven technologies...



Kibo



Pepper



Nao



Moxie

Tech in use by CC



Training Our Early Learning Specialists



Training Houston's Child Care Teachers



Tech. Now in COE Classroom Instruction

TECH IN THE CLASSROOM



THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Education equity-focused nonprofit taps into robotics, AI to better serve Houston children

Generally, when children are under the age of five, educators believe that they are best suited for and interested in learning, because those are the years in which there is the strongest opportunity to build a broad and solid foundation for lifelong literacy and well-being.

That sentiment is deeply held by [Collaborative for Children](#), the Houston-based nonprofit organization with the mission to meaningfully improve the quality of early childhood education and provide access to cutting-edge technology through its Centers of Excellence to all children, especially those in low-income and marginalized communities.

"The reason the organization was started about 40 years ago is that a group of philanthropists in the greater Houston area suggested that this was so important because 90 percent of the brain develops or grows in the time frame between ages zero to five years of age," Melanie Johnson, president and CEO of Collaborative for Children, tells InnovationMap.

"And if we were losing children and not preparing them by third grade to be literate, and then subsequently losing them after that for high dropout rates and achievement gaps between poor and affluent children, that this would be the perfect place to start," she continues. "And so, they put the collaborative, the emphasis, and finances collaborative of every, most every early education effort around this region."

COLLABORATIVE
for **CHILDREN**



APRIL 13, 2024
AT RICE UNIVERSITY

COLLAB KID U

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Tudor Fieldhouse, Rice University
6100 Main St, Houston, Texas 77005

FULL STEAM AHEAD ACTIVATIONS!

Collaborative for Children will engage young minds (3-6 yrs old) with captivating Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics stations. Explore coding, climate solutions, life sciences, renewable energy, and robotics hosted by vendors and STEAM experts from Collaborative for Children and Rice University.

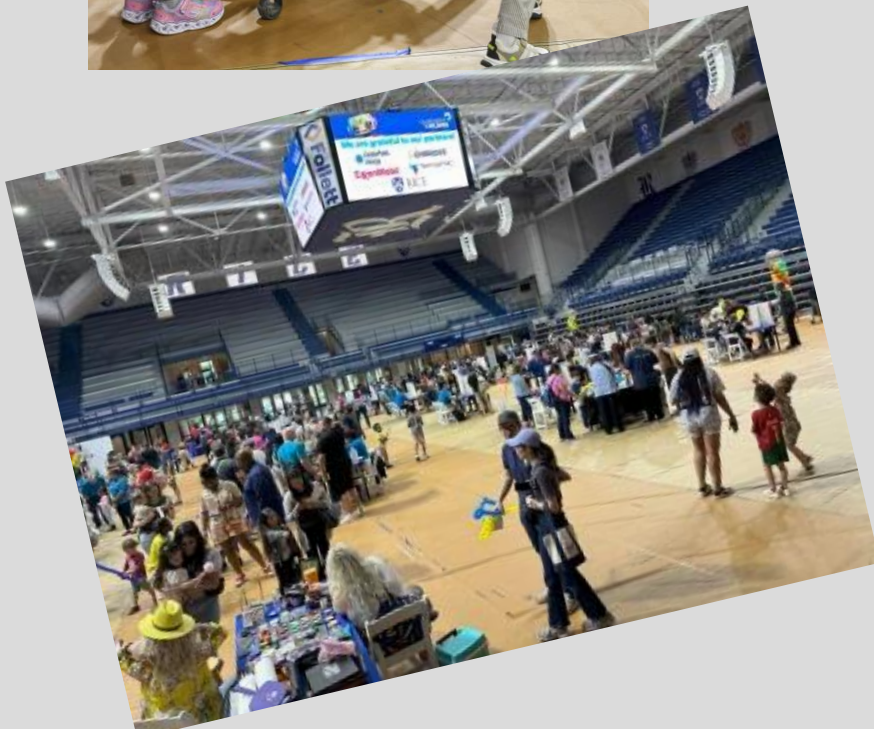
Cost: \$10 - Kids / \$15 - walk up

Kids must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
Parents and Guardians - Free Admission

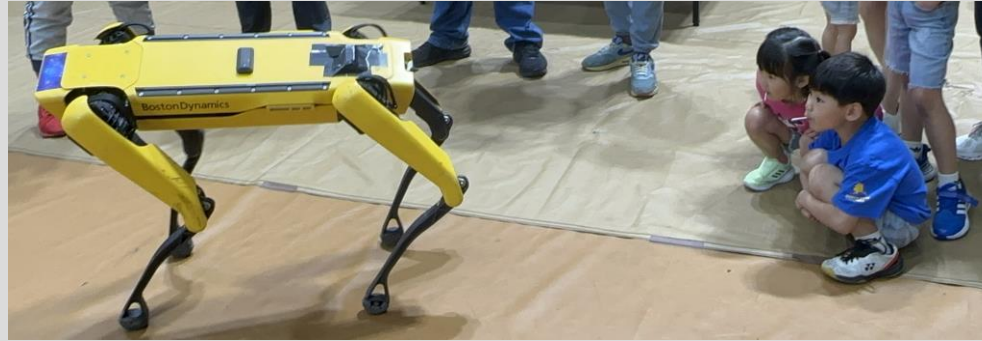
Visit www.collabforchildren.org for more information.

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

COLLAB KID U



COLLAB KID U



Collab-Lab



Our innovative mobile school takes quality early education to parents and children where quality child care businesses are not probable.

COLLAB-LAB IN ACTION



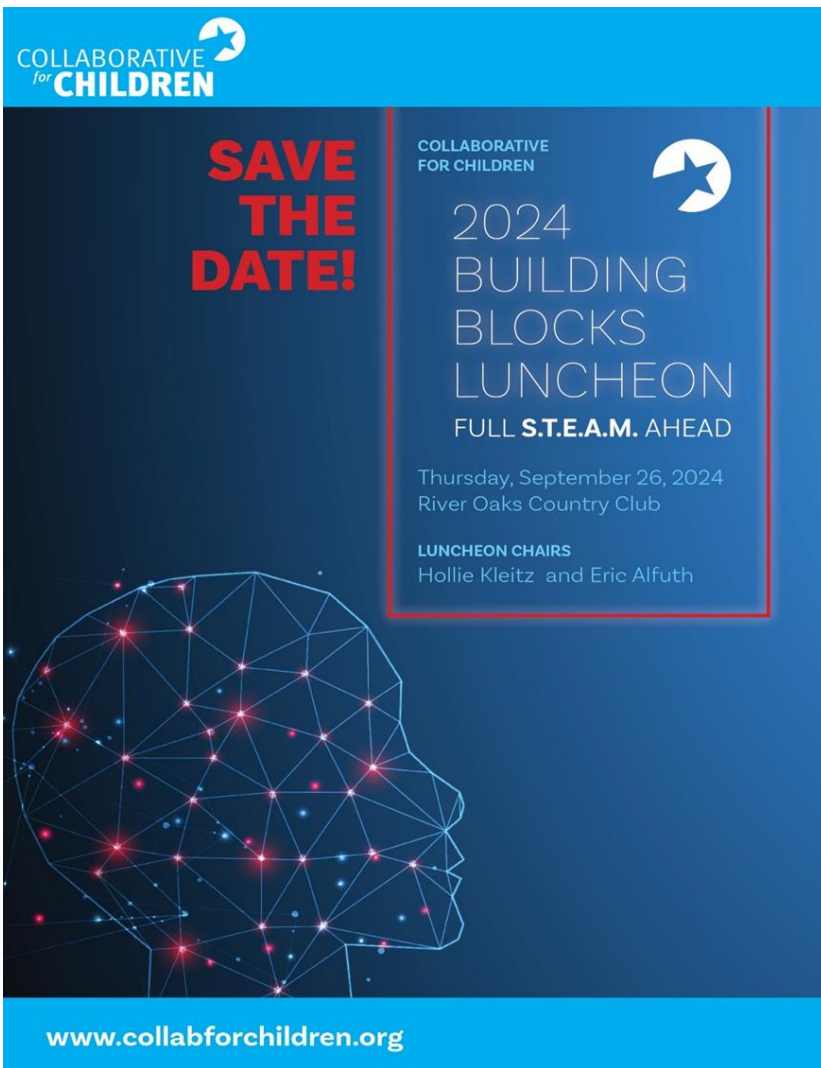
VOLUNTEERING WITH CC



Collab's "STEAM" Shuttle




Upcoming Event



COLLABORATIVE
for CHILDREN

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

COLLABORATIVE
FOR CHILDREN 

2024
BUILDING
BLOCKS
LUNCHEON
FULL **S.T.E.A.M.** AHEAD

Thursday, September 26, 2024
River Oaks Country Club

LUNCHEON CHAIRS
Hollie Kleitz and Eric Alfuth

www.collabforchildren.org

Building Blocks Luncheon
Thursday, September 26, 2024
11:30am – 1:00pm
River Oaks Country Club



NOTHING HAPPENS

until the pain of **REMAINING THE SAME**

OUTWEIGHS *the pain of* **CHANGE.**

~ Arthur Burt

