

# New Strategic Direction

November 16, 2021

# Welcome

# Agenda

- New strategic direction
- Why early childhood education? Why now?
- Our three focus areas
- Future grantmaking
- Q&A

# Re-centering Early Childhood Education

Starting in 2022, Robins Foundation will re-center the bulk of our grantmaking to support the needs of young children in our community, with a focus on **Early Childhood Education (ECE) for ages 0-5.**

# Why ECE?

## **Investments in ECE...**

- Support the foundation's long-standing commitment to this focus area
- Prepare children for school and lifelong learning
- Provide monitoring of health and general well-being
- Allow parents to pursue careers and build a strong economic base
- Deliver significant returns for the community

# Why now?

- The pandemic exacerbated gaps in our ECE systems and networks of support and further exposed the vulnerabilities of young children
- Helps our youngest children and their caregivers recover from the pandemic
- Contributes to the growth and health of the Richmond region during a critical time by focusing on ECE providers, practitioners, and caregivers

# ECE impacts us all

- Child care impacts both lower- and middle-income families
- On average, child care costs consume 14% of middle-income families, double what the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines as “affordable”
- Many lower-income families cannot access and/or afford child care at all
- Efforts to improve both early childhood policies and the existing landscape of child care programs has the potential to lift nearly all families in the region

# Our 3 focus areas



ECE Provider  
Support &  
Infrastructure

Parenting Support  
& Engagement

Early Childhood  
Policy & Advocacy



# ECE provider support & infrastructure

- Our current ECE system faces massive challenges in the form of worker shortages, sub-living wages, and lack of government support
- Our system must be transformed, but our current one needs to be maximally supported while a new one is developed
- We are committed to supporting ECE providers—such as child care and preschool programs—while systemic change is brought about

# Parenting support & engagement

- Parents are children's 'first teachers,' and the first five years of life have major impacts on children's school readiness
- We are committed to supporting nonprofits that help parents in building their parenting knowledge and skills
- We are committed to helping parents understand the importance of their role during the first 5 years of life, as well as accessing the early childhood services available to them

# Early childhood policy & advocacy

- An effective early childhood system is not feasible absent transformed local, state, and potentially federal, policies
- We are committed to working with policy & advocacy partners, and civic leaders, to transform these systems for the benefit of providers and families

# Future grantmaking

- Robins Foundation will focus our grantmaking going forward to more deeply, and more narrowly, invest in early childhood education from birth to 5 years old
- This strategic shift will mean changes in the types of organizations we support
- Our next grant cycle will open in February, be due in March, and grantees awarded in June, 2022. It will focus exclusively on organizations with missions and programs focused in early childhood education for children 5 years of age and younger
- We respect and appreciate all our former grantees, and we know this is a significant shift during a challenging time

# What you can do

- Watch the Robins Foundation site for more information
- Reach out to your program officer if you have questions
- Check your inbox for more info on our March grant cycle

# Additional Questions

Thank you