

LENA[®]

Building brains through early talk

Funding Your LENA Grow Program



Our Mission

LENA is a national nonprofit on a mission to transform children's futures through early talk technology and data-driven programs.

LENA®

Building brains through early talk



120,000
children impacted
by LENA



200,000,000
conversational
turns counted

LENA
GROW®

17,000
LENA Grow
classrooms



200+
research papers
published

Outline of Session

- Introduction
- Starting at the End
- Importance of Interactions
- Q&A
- LENA Resources
- How to Stay Connected



Free Virtual Training:

Funding Your LENA Grow Program

September 18 at 1:00pm ET

REGISTER ONLINE!

Introduction



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Vice President of Impact

Hampstead, North Carolina, United States · [Contact info](#)

[500+ connections](#)



Starting at the End

Where do you want to end up after the program is funded?

For:



Your organization



Your LENA program



Theory of Change/Logic Model

Situation

The level of engagement children receive is predictive of child outcomes.

We have no idea how much engagement children are having in the classroom.

Inputs

Data from
LENA System

Activities

Review, Reflection,
Practice, and
Impact

Outcomes

Increased
conversation
al turns

Improved
child
learning and
development
al outcomes

Improved
3rd grade
reading
levels

Children
removed
from
language
isolation

Improved
provider
satisfaction
and
retention

Improved
early
childhood
policies and
practices

Starting at the End



Southside Family Nurturing Center

2019 Early Childhood Education & Family Stabilization - Logic Model

THEORY OF CHANGE	INPUTS - What We Invest	ACTIVITIES		OUTCOMES - Why this project?		
<i>We advance health and education equity across race and income by focusing on early intervention with families at highest risk via access to high-quality early childhood education and home visiting/ family support services</i>	Dual-generation program	What We Do	Who We Reach	Short-Term Results	Intermediate Results	Long-Term Results
	Highly trained, experienced and culturally relevant Early Childhood Educators and Home Visitors 1:4 Teacher/Child Ratio Competitive Wages & Benefits Children's Program Director Targeted Home Visiting Clinical Supervision Evidence-Based Curricula: <ul style="list-style-type: none">HighScope/play-based curriculumAMAZE (anti-bias/ anti-discrimination curriculum)Nurturing Parenting/Family SpiritIncredible Years Evidence Based Assessment Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Child Observation Record (COR)North Carolina Family Assessment ScaleAges and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) Center-Based Facility Classroom Materials & Equipment Outside Play Space Transportation & Nutritious Meals On-site Speech, Occupational, Music and Play Therapy Multi-lingual staff reflective of population served	Half-day, therapeutic and trauma-informed Early Childhood Education, 5 days-per-week On-site Speech, Occupational, Music and Play Therapy Bi-weekly home visits with weekly support as needed Family self-directed goal planning Resources and referrals for identified family needs Bi-monthly family events, including a shared meal and parent-child attachment building activities/field trips Parent support and education groups	Multi-cultural children ages 15 months to 5 years in ECE Program Parents/caregivers Children 0-18 years via Home Visiting Program Extended family members 100% of families served are families of color living in poverty (185% federal poverty guideline)	90% of children are up-to-date with immunizations (Licensing Files) 80% of children engage in regular toothbrushing. 90% of children complete annual well-child checkups (Licensing Files) 100% of children consume healthy breakfast and lunch Monday-Friday 100% of children explore the world of food cultivation through classroom & neighborhood garden activities 85% attendance rate in ECE program 90% of children receive early interventions (Therapy Files) 75% of families demonstrate positive, responsive parenting techniques (North Carolina FAS) 85% of families promote children's language development (North Carolina FAS) 95% of families access community resources as needed (North Carolina) 85% of children show progress in all areas of development: social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and language (COR; ASQ) 85% of children maintain or improve their social-emotional functioning (ASQ-SE)	Children are safe Children enter Kindergarten with more age-appropriate social-emotional skills Children are ready for Kindergarten and are more likely to stay in school Children support and respect each other across differences Children receive necessary supports throughout their school years Children realize their full potential Parents are empowered to access culturally relevant services and resources to meet their families' needs Parents progress toward family stabilization Parents can navigate the school system and advocate for their children	Children graduate from high school or earn a General Education Development (GED) certificate. Children are more likely to be employed as adults, have improved health and family relations Children are less likely to grow up and commit a violent crime or rely on public assistance Families break the cycle of multi-generational poverty and abuse Children grow up with more opportunity and are successful reaching their self-defined goals

Starting at the End



Children grow up with more
opportunity and are
successful reaching their
self-defined goals

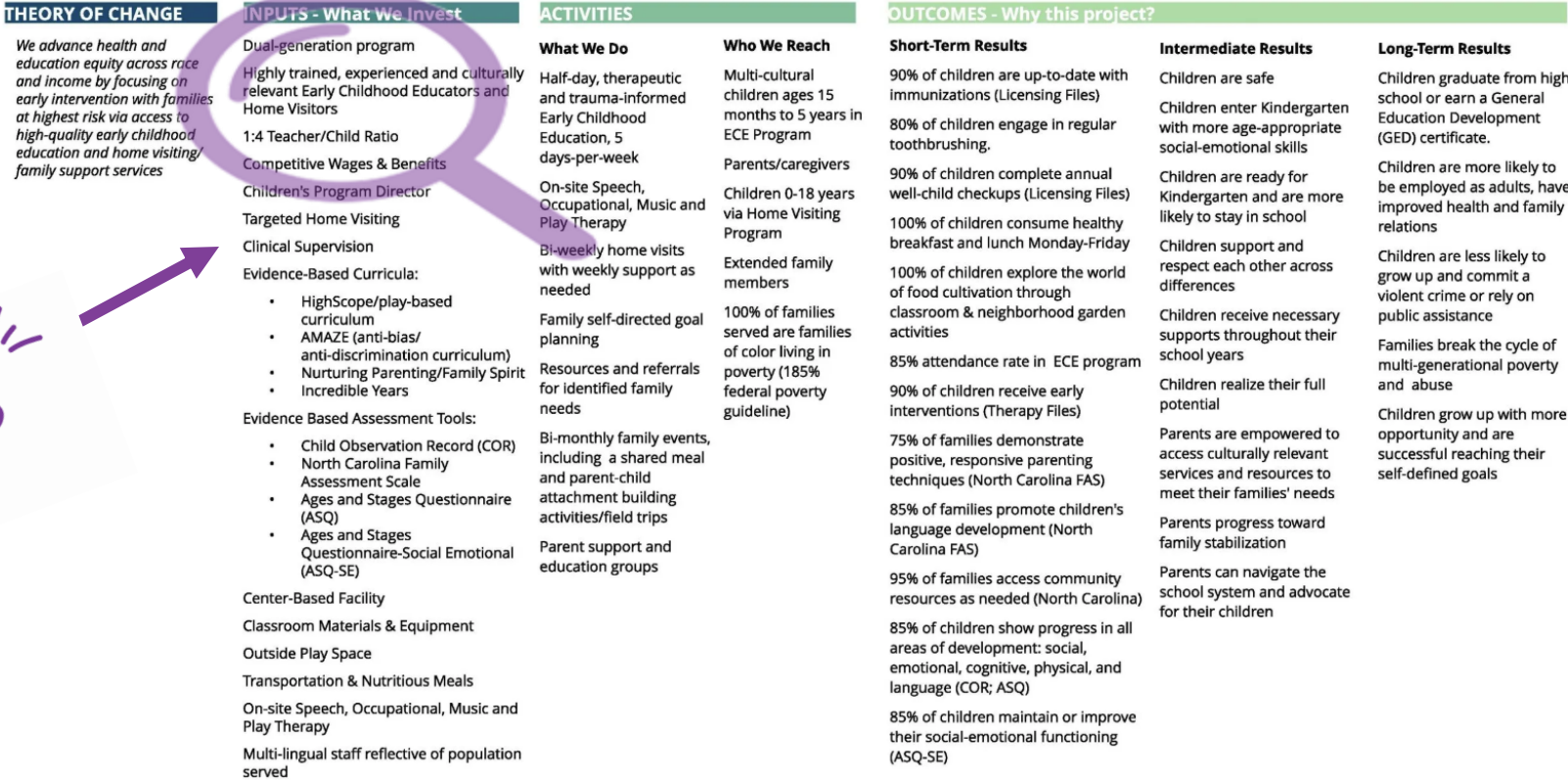


Starting at the End



Southside Family Nurturing Center

2019 Early Childhood Education & Family Stabilization - Logic Model



Starting at the End



Highly trained, experienced and culturally relevant Early Childhood Educators and Home Visitors



Starting at the End



	Theory of Change Mad Libs!
●	We want to _____ OUTCOMES
●	We'll do this by/through _____ ACTIVITIES
●	So, we need _____ LENA GROW [®] INPUTS
●	This matters because _____ CONTEXT/VISION

Starting at the End



BANK OF ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Increase conversational turns
- ☐ Offer job-embedded professional learning for teachers
- ☐ Increase engagement with multi-lingual learners
- ☐ Support social skills
- ☐ Provide a data-driven resource to coaches
- ☐ Spotlight language development in classrooms
- ☐ Supercharge our curriculum with data

BANK OF OUTCOMES

- ☐ Increase kindergarten readiness rates
- ☐ Improve classroom quality scores
- ☐ Increase teacher recommendation and retention rates
- ☐ Enhance teacher job satisfaction and confidence
- ☐ Strengthen early childhood education systems
- ☐ Create equitable language environments for all children

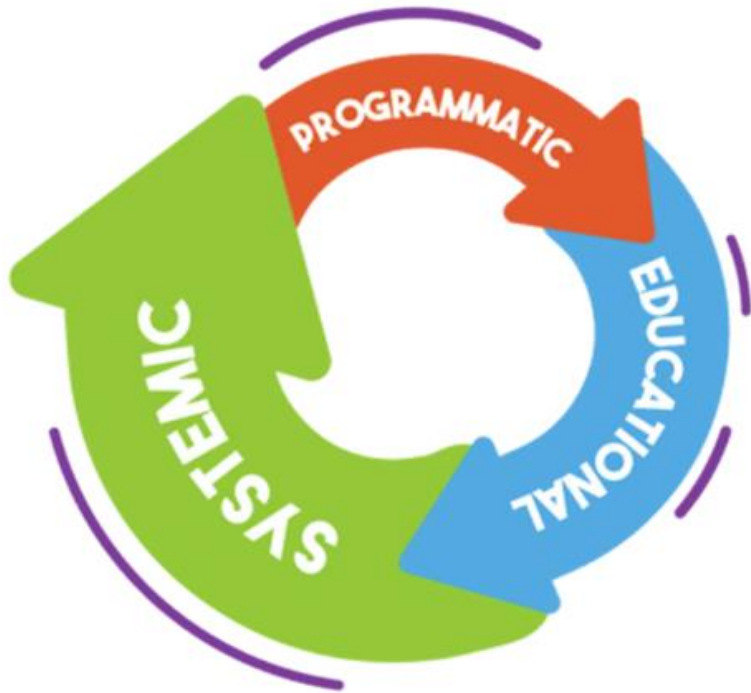
Starting at the End



	Theory of Change Mad Libs!	
●	We want to rates	Increase kindergarten readiness OUTCOMES
●	We'll do this by/through with data	Supercharg(ing) our curriculum ACTIVITIES
●		LENA GROW[®] INPUTS
●	So, we need	
	This matters because	only 45% of children are school CONTEXT/VISION

ready

Starting at the End



Think broadly about your impact!

- What **direct impact** is the program having?
- What **broader awareness or knowledge impact** is it having?
- How is the program **changing the system** in which you work?

Importance of Interactions



Who will you interact with to tell your story?

- Finding funders



How will you interact with them? (Answer: Often!)

- Communication



What do you need to be prepared for?

- How the grant process (typically) works

Importance of Interactions

Finding Funders



Send

To

Cc

Bcc

Subject

High impact project: referrals for other grantmakers?

ChatGPT

Provide me with the top 10 private grant-making foundations in California that invest in early literacy for children 0-5 years old.

Here are ten prominent private grant-making foundations in California that i
childhood development for children aged 0-5 years:

Alerts

Monitor the web for interesting new content

This will create an email alert for katharineyvonne@gmail.com.

Create Alert

Show options

Candid.

early literacy

All organizations



Importance of Interactions

Communication!



Be unique:
Data is a differentiator



Spotlight everything:
Convey excitement, every time



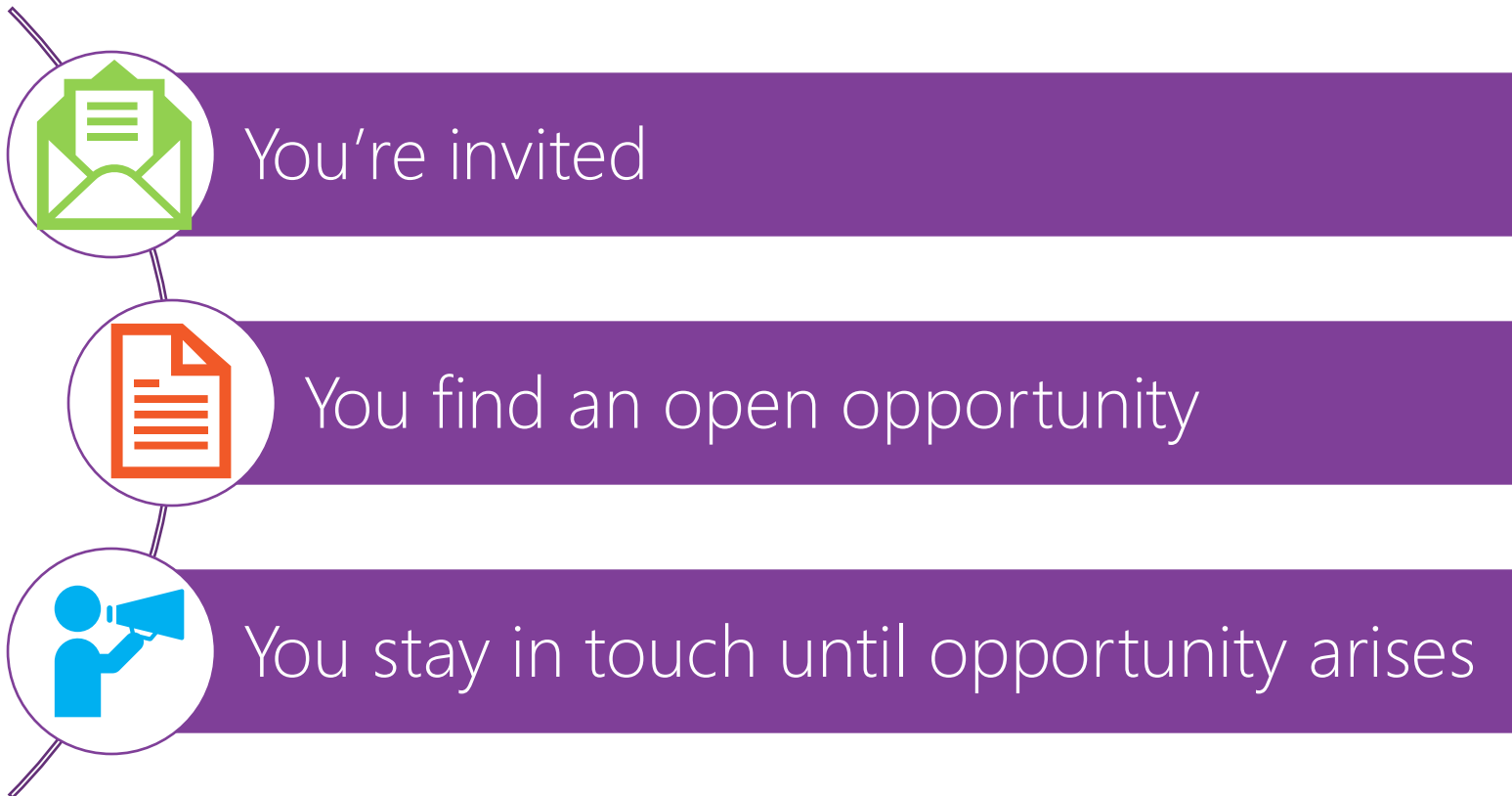
Keep at it:
No such thing as too
much



See the forest AND the trees:
Tell macro & micro stories

Importance of Interactions

How the grant process (typically) works



Importance of Interactions



What the proposal usually includes:

Organizational Info	• EIN, Financials, History
Narrative	• Need, Project Description (TOC/Logic Model)
Budget	• Direct, Indirect, & Implementation Costs
Timeline	• Month by month actions and milestones
Project Staff	• Bios or role for each person involved
Metrics/Outcomes	• LENA Data AND Your Outcomes

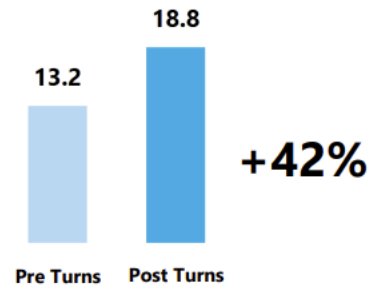
Importance of Interactions

Partner Impact Report:

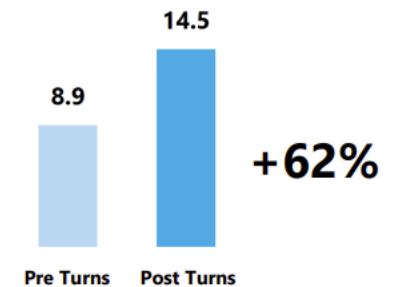


Children

LENA Grow is designed to encourage more talk for children who start out experiencing the least. We measure this in two ways:



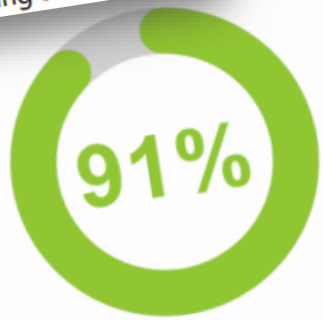
Children who started out experiencing **less talk than their peers in the same classroom** (in the bottom third) had an average increase of **+5.6 turns per hour**.



Children who started out experiencing **less talk than the national median of 15 turns per hour** had an average increase of **+5.6 turns per hour**.



Now feel **more confident** in teaching abilities



Saw changes in **children's language development**

LENA Resources



LENA Resources



14 Talking Tips: Program Officers



Program Officers (POs) are employed by Foundations of all kinds (private, corporate, community-based, etc.) to serve as the frontline for their organization. They are charged with deeply understanding a specific portfolio area(s), creating and managing grant opportunities that align with identified community needs, and selecting grantees highly capable of stewarding funding to support the goals of their portfolio and the Foundation at large.

As they are often the main contact and relationship that could lead to a grant, it can be intimidating to approach a Program Officer. However, establishing a relationship and ensuring that your organization and opportunity are the best fit for the Foundation's priorities leads to higher chances of funding your LENA Grow program.

Here are some tips for maximizing your relationship with a Program Officer:

1. **Approach with patience.** If a small amount, or is made to: projects can take 6-9 months.
2. **Don't hesitate; reach out!** If you truly enjoy meeting new orgs are there to help you. Many a their hardest to mitigate the
3. **Don't wait until D-Day.** Connect with potential grantees and opportunities for webinars, o

Tips for Impact: Storytelling



When storytelling for impact, we want to move beyond simple output data and combine methodologies to form compelling narratives. This helps to illustrate both direct and indirect changes that stem from an intervention, amplifying the value of a project or program. It connects, humanizes, inspires, and simplifies an often hard-to-quantify mission.

LENA measures impact on three levels: **programmatic**, **educational**, and **systemic**.⁷ This framework allows us to collect the metrics needed to move our impact beyond direct reach, which is our main mission, to demonstrate the changes we are making in the field of early childhood at large, which is LENA's overall vision.

Programmatic Impact: More and more children are benefiting from LENA programs.
Educational Impact: Building broad awareness of the importance of early interaction.
Systemic Impact: Changing practices and informing policies.



This can be a valuable framework to adopt when thinking about your LENA program. We'll use this framework to guide these tips on how we craft an impact story for your own work.

1. **Create a Theory of Change.** One way to help clarify impact and help guide your storytelling is to create a logic model known as a Theory of Change. It describes how change will happen, and the actions needed for change to be realized. It's a simple formula of:

Problem to solve -> **Inputs** -> **Activities** -> **Short-term outcomes** -> **Medium-term outcomes** -> **Long-term outcomes**

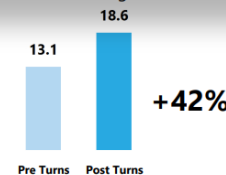
Inputs can be what your organization uses to accomplish activities. **Activities** should be the interventions themselves and the related outputs. **Outcomes** describe the change itself.

This is LENA's Theory of Change:

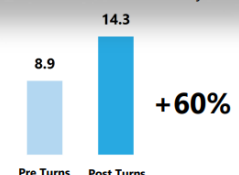
A Guide to Funding Your LENA Grow Program

9/16/2025

LENA Grow is designed to encourage more talk for children who start out experiencing the least. We measure this in two ways.



Children who started out experiencing **less talk than their peers in the same classroom** (in the bottom third) had an average increase of **+5.5 turns per hour**.



Children who started out experiencing **less talk than the national median of 15 turns per hour** had an average increase of **+5.4 turns per hour**.

Teachers

At the end of a 5-week sequence, teachers complete a survey reporting on the impact of the LENA Grow program.



Recommend LENA Grow to other teachers



Now feel **more confident** in teaching LENA



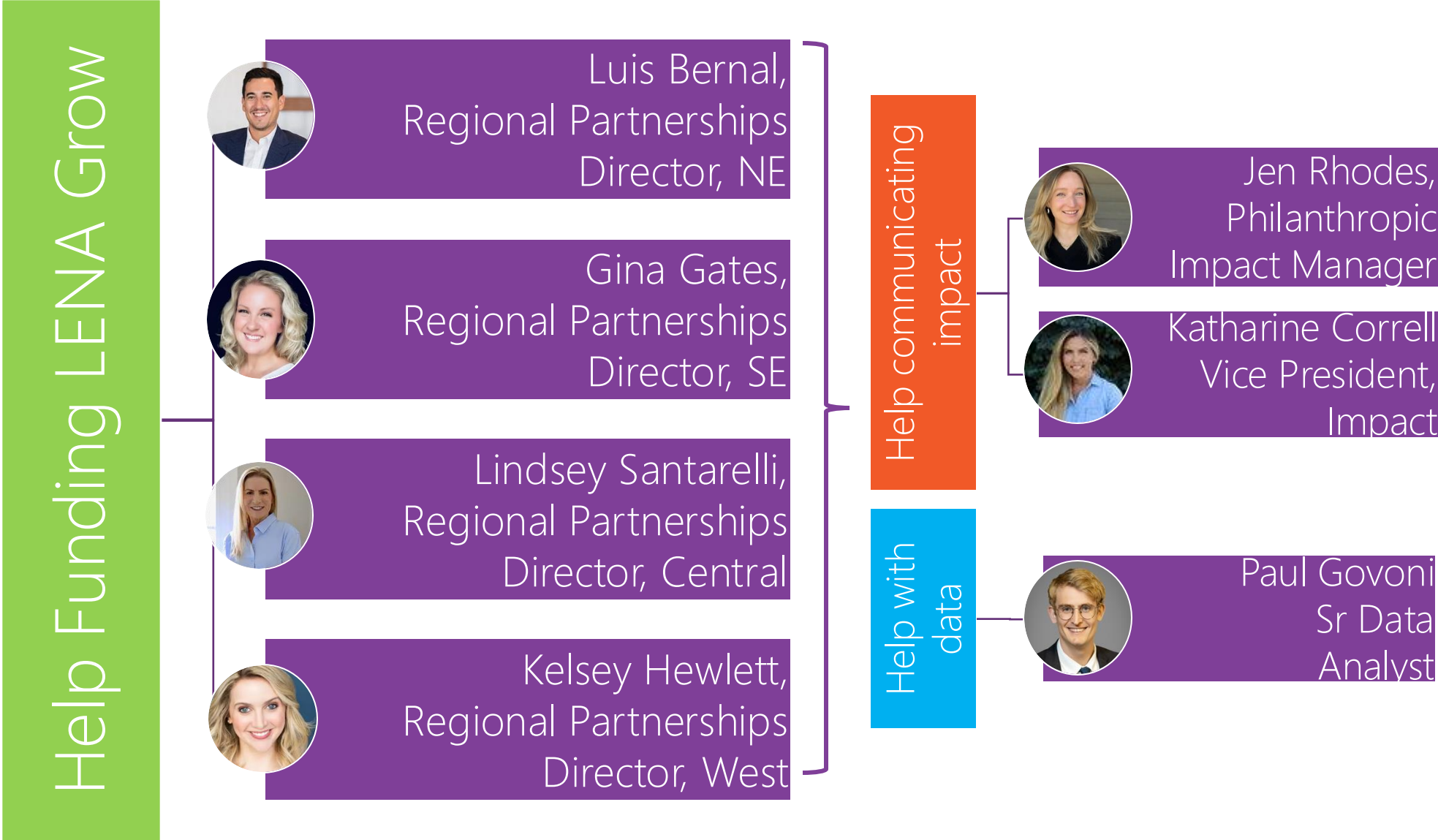
Increased overall **job satisfaction**



Increased **communication** with families



Saw changes in **children's** language development

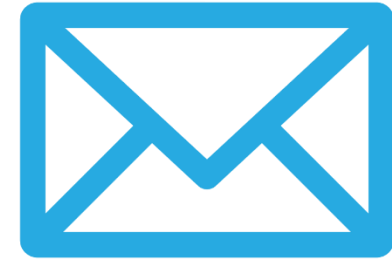


Stay connected

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and opportunities!

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