

# Chicago Asset Building for Children (Chicago ABCs)

**A FAMILY-CENTERED, DUAL-GENERATION APPROACH TO ECONOMIC MOBILITY**

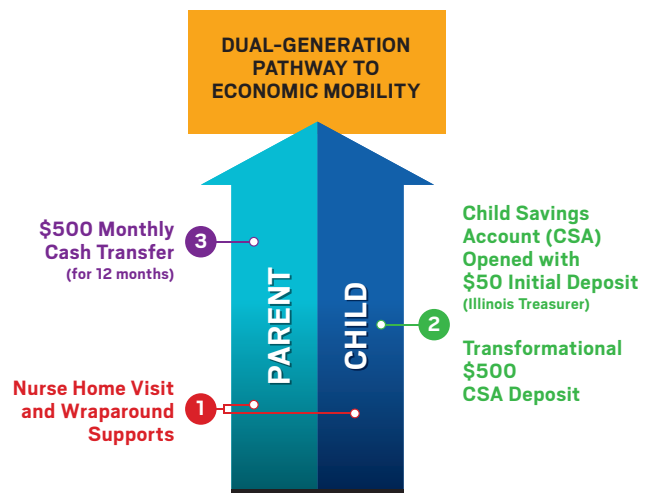
The day a child is born can be filled with many emotions—wonder, apprehension, and joy. Looking at a newborn child is like looking into the future—what will the child look like? How will they laugh? Who will they become? What kind of community will they inherit?

For too many families living in poverty, and those marginalized or oppressed by systems of inequity, the birth of a child also brings anxiety, fear, isolation, and doubt about their financial ability to support their expanded family. Unfortunately, **there is limited institutional or financial support for families after the birth of a baby.** There is often no shared, societal investment in children, no financial buffer for the added costs children bring, and no built-in peer support network. As a result of generational economic injustice and wealth stripping of communities of color, many low-income families of color bear these financial burdens more profoundly.

Every family deserves the opportunity to feel and see hope in the eyes of their newborn child. All too often, however, **hope is stratified across economic and racial lines.** These disparities in hope and financial wellbeing reflect our country's vast and growing racial wealth divide.

It doesn't have to be this way. **We can change this.**

Recognizing the birth of a child as a moment to provide a stronger foundation and greater hope for the future, Chicago ABCs proposes a strategic integration of three proven strategies into **one comprehensive, dual generation model.** In doing so, this model will provide low-income parents and caregivers immediate, tangible financial and community support while building a bridge to hope and opportunity for the future—ultimately increasing a family's likelihood of economic mobility. Chicago ABCs will provide financially vulnerable families—the majority being Black and Latinx—with **monthly cash transfers of \$500 for a year, a \$500 children's saving account deposit for the newborn, and a nurse home visit and wraparound supports.**



A PARTNERSHIP POISED FOR IMPACT AND SCALE



During this critical time in life, supporting the entire family will produce positive outcomes for their economic footing, overall wellbeing, and the child's academic trajectory.

Pieces of this model are being piloted or rolled out in Chicagoland: (1) direct cash pilots providing families with immediate financial resources, (2) a statewide Children's Savings Account (CSA) program being developed to provide assets for children's future education, and (3) the Family Connects visiting nurses pilot at four hospitals. Integrating these siloed solutions will leverage the life-changing experience of childbirth.

Our model reflects a hypothesis that **these three proven strategies—when combined—will work together to accelerate and deepen financial security for families. Chicago ABCs is the first time these supports are being proposed simultaneously and from the moment of birth.**

**We believe that this combination of supports is replicable and scalable, leading to transformative economic equity and justice within and beyond our city.**

**\$10M INVESTMENT**

Will establish a **three-year program reaching over one thousand low-income families in Chicago** and a robust evaluation that will inform replication and scale of the strategy.

**\$5M INVESTMENT**

Will allow a **pilot version of the plan, reaching several hundred families** over two years.

**\$1M INVESTMENT**

Will allow Chicago ABCs **partners to test aspects of the model.**

## Chicago ABCs Theory of Change

Chicago ABCs will work primarily with **Black and Latinx families in Chicago who recently had a baby and are considered liquid-asset poor**



Why? Because 49% of Chicago families are liquid asset poor and at high-risk of falling into poverty after the birth of a child. In Chicago, Black and Latinx families are disproportionately represented in this group, with **67% of Black and 71% of Latinx households considered liquid asset poor.**

The program will braid **three interwoven, evidence-based, dual-generation strategies** to stabilize financially-strained families and establish assets for the child's future



**\$500 Deposit in Child Savings Accounts (CSAs)**



**\$500 monthly direct cash transfers to parents for one year**



**Wraparound family supports** (e.g., nurse visit, peer support and leadership training, financial education)

Combined, these strategies will drive **sustained economic mobility for 1,050 families** in Chicago



Families will move out of poverty, increasing their household wealth and improving overall social and emotional health. Other indicators include:

- Increased household assets, savings, and monthly income
- Increased hope, agency, and future orientation

**Children will participate in post-secondary career pathways that increase their socioeconomic status.**

Chicago ABCs will share our findings of the impact of this integrative model with stakeholders and policymakers nationwide to promote the development of similar models and programs throughout the country—ultimately advancing a life-changing approach to family wellbeing for everyone.