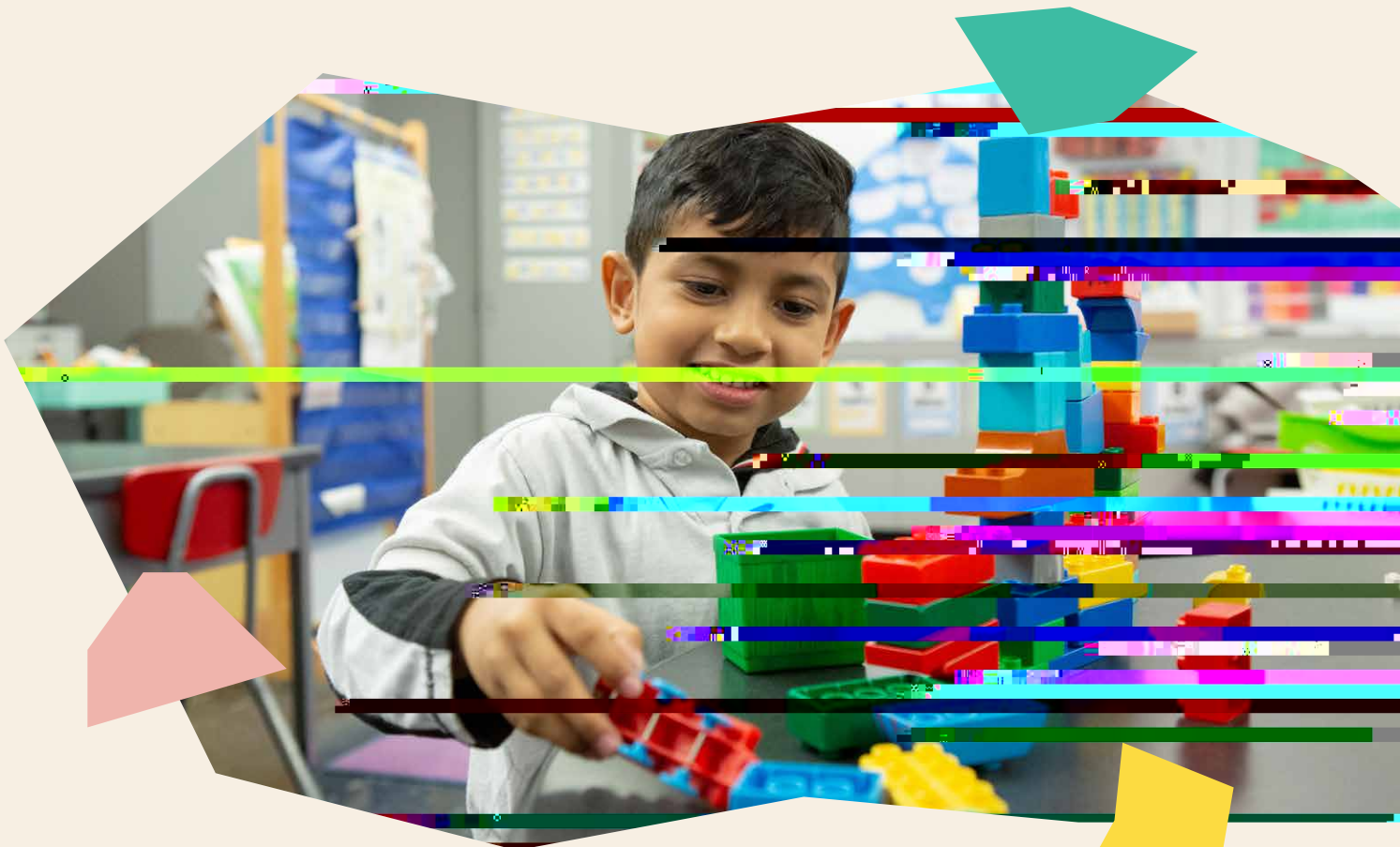
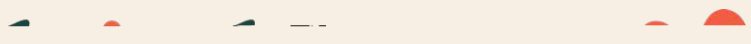


# Theory of Change

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*If children have access to quality child care with sufficient dosage, they will be ready for kindergarten. We stand on the result of being ready for kindergarten. Think Small's contribution is to ensure quality early care and education is available and accessible.*





**Mission**

Think Small's mission is to advance quality care and education of children in their crucial early years.

Our mission statement describes our purpose and answers the fundamental question

## “Why does Think Small exist?”

To achieve this mission, Think Small must embrace a continuous improvement process in which we seek to answer the question:

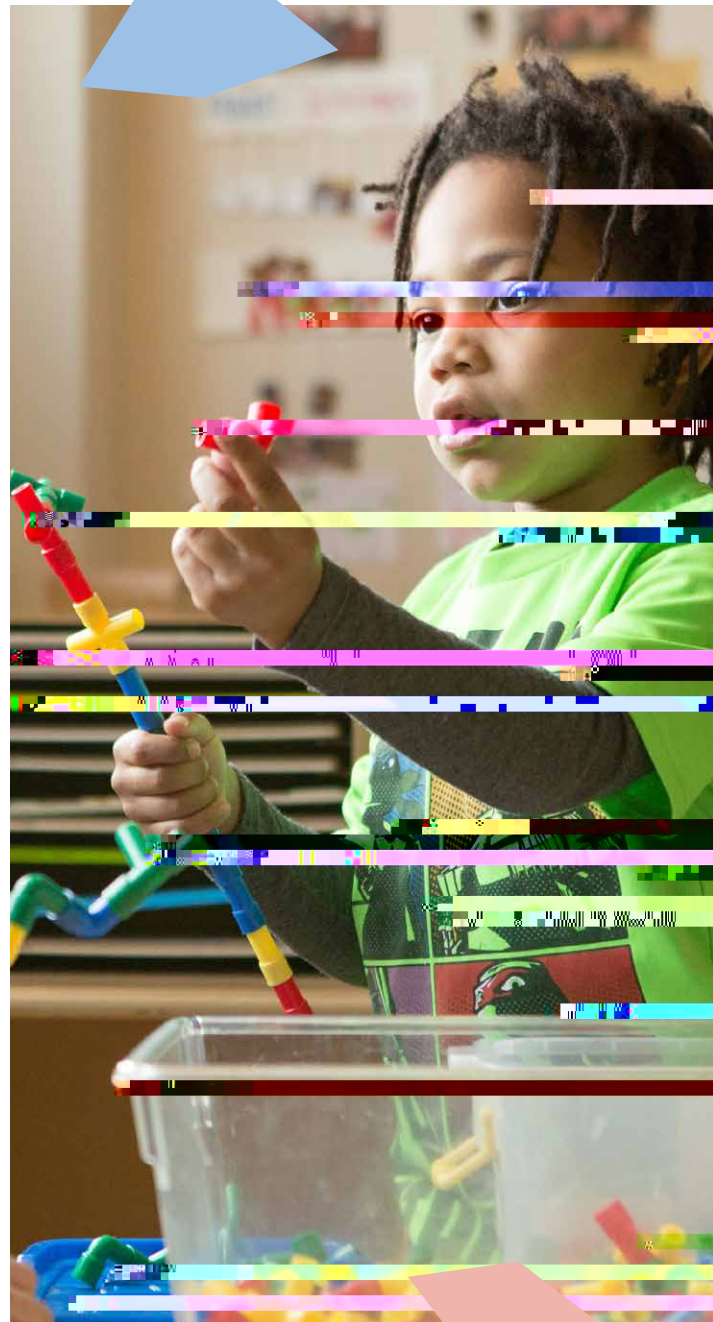
**“How do we advance quality care and education of children in their crucial early years?”**

Accumulating evidence shows that access to quality early childhood experiences will result in positive outcomes for young children, both in regard to kindergarten readiness and lifelong success. There is a robust set of research findings, both locally and nationally, supporting this conclusion. Minnesota currently utilizes Parent Aware, the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), to measure quality early childhood experiences. As a QRIS, Parent Aware is unique in that it is developed and implemented through the lens of kindergarten readiness.

## Statement of Equity

To support the full potential for every child, Think Small commits to **changing policies and practices of equity** that empower a just, inclusive, and equitable care and education system for children in their crucial early years.

Minnesota has one of the largest K-12 achievement gaps in the nation when comparing White children to children of color. These achievement gaps can start before a child’s first birthday, rooted in opportunity gaps, that is, the lack of sufficient quality early childhood experiences. Therefore, to close the achievement gap, Minnesota must close the opportunity gap by prioritizing early childhood investments. The single best investment the state can make is targeted early childhood investments in our most vulnerable children.



## Results Based Accountability (RBA)

To begin answering the question of how we advance quality care and education of children in their crucial early years, Think Small is utilizing a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to align its FY24-FY26 Strategic Plan to support the above theory of change. Within this RBA framework, the following terminology will be utilized:

**Indicator** is a population condition of well-being for children, adults, families and communities and is stated in plain language. Because it is about the well-being of a population, no one organization can 'own' the result. Rather, it is through partnership and a collective impact lens that success is achieved.

**Indicator** is a measure that helps quantify the achievement of a result and is articulated as a rate or a percentage. It is displayed as a trend line that has a baseline (how we're doing) and forecast (where we're heading).

**Strategy** is a collection of actions with the goal of improving results that represent our best thinking about what works.

**Impact Measure** is a measure of how well a program, agency or strategy is working. The most important performance measures tell us whether the target population is better off by answering the following questions:

How much did we do?

How well did we do it?

Is anyone better off?

## Population Level Result

With our theory of change and the evidence supporting the impact of access to quality early care and education in mind, Think Small has adopted the following

*Population Level Result:*

All children will be ready for kindergarten.





In order for us to make progress on our population level result, we are well aware **we must address issues of racism and equity** to eliminate barriers

