

# IMPACT REPORT

2023





# Letter from the Executive Director

2023 marked my fifth year as the Executive Director of the Cobb Collaborative, which seems a perfect opportunity for a little bit of celebration, a few moments of reflection and a whole lot of strategizing about the next five years. With the support, encouragement, and guidance of many stakeholders – former and current board members and staff, funders, volunteers and our many partners – we have been able to define, develop and refine our priorities. The most important part of this growth is that it has allowed us to deliver more robust programming to Cobb County.

On behalf of our Board and staff, we invite you to celebrate our growth and accomplishments from 2023 that are captured in this impact report. From the youngest residents that we see dancing and singing at our Basics workshops, to the elementary school children who are so excited to choose a favorite book at our summer reading programming, to the community members who practice their resiliency wellness skills, to the Veterans who seek support from our Connecting Cobb Veterans team, we are responding to the needs of our residents and improving outcomes for all children and all families.

Thank you to all who partner with us in this critical work. Let’s celebrate. Let’s reflect. And then, let’s get to work!

Warmly,  
Irene M. Barton

*Scan to read the bios of  
our Leadership Team  
and Board of Directors.*



## MISSION

Engaging, Educating  
and Empowering  
the community to  
improve the well-being  
of children and families.



## VISION

Cobb County partners  
working together to  
create opportunities  
for all people to thrive.



## VALUES

- Partnership
- Resource sharing
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Public Good
- Collective Impact
- Stronger Together

# 2023 IMPACT

## Literacy



**1,673**

BASICS COBB COUNTY  
Workshop Participants



Workshops

**464** BASICS BUNDLES  
DISTRIBUTED

Little Free  
Libraries  
Installed **13**



**5,238**

Books Distributed



Selected for Learn4Life's  
inaugural nonprofit cohort:  
Led **19** participants in  
**55** Cox Campus literacy classes

Selected to lead breakout session  
at Governor's Literacy Summit

## Mental Health

Unique Events

**93**



**1,836**

People  
Reached



**1,266**

Mind Your Mind  
Webpage Impressions



**24** Podcasts  
DOWNLOADS 871

Partnerships with  
Juvenile, Magistrate,  
Probate and State Courts



## Civic Engagement

Connecting Cobb Veterans



**106**

Veterans Received  
Direct Services

**170**

Emergency  
Lodging Nights



**3,459**

Veterans reached

Attendees at Quarterly Meetings

**197**



2 active Veteran Guides

+

3 Team Members

**6**

Coffees with  
the Collaborative



**157** attendees



Strategy

Team Meetings

Quarterly General  
Membership Meetings

**255** attendees

**497**

COMBINED  
ATTENDEE  
TOTAL

Children & Families,  
Homelessness, CCV  
and Birth-5



# Mental Health




**MIND YOUR MIND**  
A COBB COUNTY  
MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

## FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY RESILIENCY TRAININGS:

“The best part of the workshop was that the skills were easy to understand and implement. The tangible techniques and takeaways, along with the time to experience and practice the skills myself, made the workshop a worthwhile use of my time.”  
- Cobb Chamber of Commerce



“The small and intimate group made it feel very personal and allowed us to share stories and be vulnerable. It also taught me better ways to work on my emotions.”  
- Jerusalem House



*We are so thankful for the partnership with Cobb Collaborative! The tactile assets and written material are inspiring, bring awareness, and support the productivity of our external and internal stakeholders.*




Scan to learn more about our MIND YOUR MIND initiatives.



Cobb County Juvenile Court

“Julie Davis’s deep mastery of the course material was evident from the get-go. Mental health, particularly in the context of veterans, is a complex and sensitive issue. It requires not only comprehensive knowledge but also immense care in delivery. Julie Davis excelled in both. She presented intricate concepts with such clarity and grace, making them accessible to everyone, regardless of their background.”  
*Sharn S...workshop attendee*





## BY THE NUMBERS

In April,  
we distributed  
prevention  
kits to  
**21**  
partners.



In 2023,  
we facilitated  
**8**

Mandated  
Reporter  
Trainings.



# Prevent Child Abuse Cobb

The Cobb Collaborative became the lead agency for the local Prevent Child Abuse council in 2022, ending a multi-year gap with no coordinated prevention strategy.

We know that child abuse and neglect is not caused by a single factor but by multiple factors related to the individual, family, community, and society at large. This is why we work so that all child-facing adults will be equipped with knowledge on how to prevent child abuse, recognize signs of maltreatment, support resiliency and know how to make reports of suspected abuse or neglect.




# Literacy

The Cobb Collaborative engages all stakeholders in a community-wide reading initiative that unites families, educators and community partners to improve reading proficiency. As one of many solutions to improving outcomes for children and families, proficient literacy and language skills have been proven to directly influence the opportunities and successes of their lives.



Scan to explore all the ways we impact literacy in Cobb County.



ABOVE: Lockheed ES Literacy Ambassadors Sabrina L. and Megan M. at a fall festival.

RIGHT: Westside ES Ambassador Stacy J. hosted a book giveaway.



*"Cobb Collaborative is an amazing program. I learn new songs and games to play with my toddler. The daily reminder text messages are a way of sending small reminders of fun things I can do to engage with my child." Korien*

Year 3 of the Literacy & Justice For All initiative saw Marietta City School's 3rd grade reading scores grow five times larger than both state and metro Atlanta scores. The growth marks the highest mean scale score for MCS since the implementation of the Milestones in 2015. Our Literacy Ambassadors arranged for author visits, hosted pop up book give-aways, and shared with other parents how to incorporate literacy-based activities in every day life.

*We are grateful to the United Way of Greater Atlanta and the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation for their generous support of the Literacy & Justice For All initiative.*

Scan to visit *The Basics* Cobb County website.



The objective of our early learning initiative is to promote social, emotional and cognitive skills in our youngest learners in order to boost kindergarten readiness. The Basics is the foundation of our collective impact work. The Basics is a community-wide, public-health approach designed to raise awareness about early literacy and brain development to ensure that all families have access to science-based strategies for using every day moments with intentionality.



*"I have attended all three Cobb Collaborative sessions at my daughter's school and we have enjoyed every single one! I love how every session has a different theme. We always do different activities related to the theme and they are super interactive. At the end of it I always walk out with new information on how my child learns and what all I can do to help further along her learning. I would recommend any parent to attend a session with their child, not only is super fun but also super beneficial."* Tania

## BY THE NUMBERS

**1,673**

Basics Workshop Participants

**62** Basics Workshops

**464** Basics Bundles Distributed

Subscribers to Basics Insights text messaging = **160**

Follow The Basics Cobb County on Facebook and Instagram.



### BE A ROLE MODEL.

Your child learns how to act by watching you. Model the values and behaviors you want to pass on to them.



### Talk, Sing and Point

#### Sing.

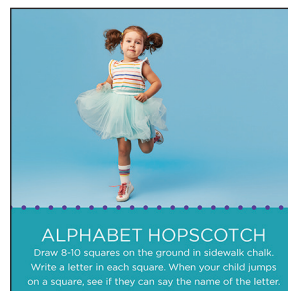
Sing songs and recite nursery rhymes from your childhood, from books, or make up new ones. Your toddler may especially enjoy the ones with rhyming sounds or hand motions. Try singing the same song whenever it's time for a special activity like bath time.



### EVERY CHILD'S BRAIN IS WIRED FOR MATH.

Talk about numbers, shapes, patterns, and comparisons as you go about your routines together.

WATCH YOUR CHILD LEARN TO LOVE MATH.



### ALPHABET HOPSCOTCH

Draw 8-10 squares on the ground in sidewalk chalk. Write a letter in each square. When your child jumps on a square, see if they can say the name of the letter.



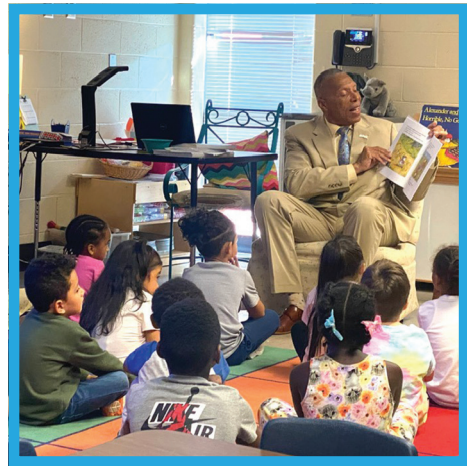
### READING TURNS KIDS INTO CONFIDENT THINKERS.

Make books a regular part of your relationship from the very beginning. Talk about pictures. Make it fun.



*We love our partnership with The Book Worm, an independent bookstore in Powder Springs. The Book Worm hosts Basics workshops and is a pickup spot for reading kits. Julia Smith, owner of The Book Worm, also displays our journaling prompt cards and uses those when she conducts journaling workshops.*

We are proud to have 4 Cobb-based mayors as part of the Mayor's Reading Club, sponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association. We support Austell Mayor Clemons and Powder Springs Mayor Thurman with monthly reading kits that are available at various distribution points in the cities.





# Civic Engagement



## Connecting Cobb Veterans

Getting Veterans the help they need.

With the support of funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, we officially launched our Connecting Cobb Veterans initiative in 2023. Housed at the VECTR Center on the main Chatt Tech Campus, the CCV team works to connect Veterans with the appropriate resources as efficiently as possible.

### Our services include:

- Organized Resources
- Connection to Providers
- Personalized Guides

Scan to learn  
more about how  
CCV supports  
Veterans.



*"When I suddenly discovered myself homeless, I felt very ashamed, alone and lost. You have been there with me every step of the way providing much needed guidance and I cannot thank you enough. I am deeply grateful and indebted to you and Connecting Cobb Veterans."  
- A now stabilized Veteran helped by CCV.*

## VETERAN SUCCESS STORY:

Our Connecting Cobb Veterans (CCV) program was able to support a 35-year-old, male Army Veteran (identified as John) who was referred to us. John was a victim of a lease scam and had been evicted from his residence in May of 2023. He is working in the event food industry with steady income but is under-employed. He lived in his car and when he was able to, would buy a few nights at a hotel in order to have shelter. We know that the cognitive burden of being unsheltered is huge and has spillover effect into every other aspect of a person's life.

John came to the CCV office and after the initial intake meeting, identified his priorities and created his plan of action. With CCV's guidance, he registered for a voucher program that he was qualified for. Thanks to the generous support of private donors, we were able to offer immediate lodging for John, enabling him to continue his employment, make phone calls and search for permanent housing. He was able to locate an apartment that meets the voucher program requirements. John is now stably housed near his employer, enabling him to work more hours and is searching for upskilled opportunities now that he is sheltered.

# In the Community



We installed 13 Little Free Libraries in 2023, with 6 of those in Marietta.



Thank to Sandi Purinton, owner of The Insurance Connection, for sponsoring our Coffee with the Collaborative series.



Irene Barton began her Leadership Cobb '24 journey and was named the East Cobb Citizen of the Year by the Cobb Chamber. She was appointed as a member of the Get Georgia Reading Cabinet and served as a panelist at several convenings.



MEET OUR PANEL SPEAKER:  
**IRENE BARTON**  
 COBB COLLABORATIVE

Irene is a proven leader in collaborative activities and convening stakeholders to identify and address issues in our community. As Executive Director of Cobb Collaborative, Irene works to improve outcomes for children and families in Cobb County. Find out more at:

[COBBCOLLABORATIVE.ORG](https://COBBCOLLABORATIVE.ORG)

HALF DAY 8:30 AM - 1 PM WEDNESDAY NOV 1, 2023

BRAWNER HALL SMYRNA, GA

**WOMEN'S BUSINESS FORUM**

# Leadership Accomplishments



Kaitlyn Ball received her Master's Degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology and became CRM Certified.

Cobb Collaborative was selected to present at the Basics Conference & Governor's Summit. We were selected to participate in the inaugural Literacy and Justice for All Nonprofit Cohort, organized by Learn4Life. Under the direction of our Literacy Coordinator, Leslie Danford, 19 participants completed 55 Cox Campus courses.





[cobbcollaborative.org](http://cobbcollaborative.org)

