



Small Magic is seeking a senior leader to build what does not yet exist. The *Managing Director, Initiatives* will translate our vision for early learning into a concrete portfolio of initiatives, building a best-in-class early learning ecosystem that will shape outcomes for more than 10,000 children over the next three years.

KEY DETAILS

Reports to: Executive Director

Manages: All program design, launch, iteration, and performance across Small Magic

Location: Flexible (Birmingham based is plus; regular, extended travel to Birmingham is required)

Compensation range: \$115,00 - \$135,000 annually

WHO WE ARE

Small Magic is a Birmingham-based organization focused on one goal: ensuring children under five are ready for kindergarten and a life of opportunity. We work alongside civic leaders and partners to strengthen the systems that support early learning across our city, from direct-service program delivery to broader ecosystem work.

We are entering a defining chapter. With significant new public and private investments committed, Small Magic is scaling rapidly—and the stakes are real. We're looking for a proven senior leader who will design and own the organization's initiatives portfolio. This high-impact role will translate vision into an execution-ready set of programs that deliver measurable results for our community's youngest children. This role will architect the next phase of early learning in Birmingham, moving from prototype to scale with speed and discipline.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

The *Managing Director, Initiatives* is responsible for translating Small Magic's vision into a coherent portfolio of initiatives—and ensuring that portfolio delivers results.. You are, effectively, the CEO of Small Magic's community work. The person in this role will:

- **Translate vision into execution** | You'll develop a concrete initiative portfolio, deciding what we build, scale, refine, or sunset in order to meet our impact and community goals. You design the operating model for initiatives—sequencing work, structuring teams, and launching new efforts with speed and discipline. You believe in prototypes over perfection and know how to move from pilot to scale responsibly.
- **Own data and reporting infrastructure** | You are accountable for how we define and measure success across initiatives. You oversee a clear performance framework that tracks reach, impact, and experience—and you ensure data drives decisions. You partner closely with the Managing Director, External Affairs to translate data into compelling impact stories for funders and partners.
- **Design and lead a high-performing team** | You oversee the largest team (10+) in the organization, managing through multiple levels. You design the structure of the initiatives team so growth simplifies rather than complicates our work. You hire thoughtfully, set a high bar, develop managers, and make hard calls when needed.
- **Balance urgency with community trust** | You move quickly—but not carelessly. You set the standard for how our team engages families and childcare providers, ensuring programs are shaped by real insight and delivered with respect. You would never install a playbook without understanding whether it fits Birmingham.



- **Partner upward and across** | Roughly 70% of your time will focus on leading the initiative portfolio and the team delivering it. The remainder will focus on cross-functional alignment and senior partnership. You bring informed recommendations—not open-ended problems. You work closely with the Executive Director and leads of the Development and Operations functions to ensure strategy, execution, and external engagement stay aligned.

To make this concrete, if you were in the role today, you might be:

- Standing up a new initiative prototype within weeks—not months—while building the systems required for scale
- Deciding to refine or pause a program based on performance data and communicate that decision clearly
- Redesigning how families move between services to reduce friction and improve experience
- Building a hiring plan that sequences talent strategically over the next 18 months
- Presenting a concise, data-backed recommendation to the Executive Director and board about portfolio priorities

WHO YOU ARE

We'll evaluate candidates for this role based on demonstrated strength in the areas below:

- **Builder with results** | You have led complex initiatives from vision to execution. You know how to build things from the ground up, scale significantly, and adjust in real time.
- **Judgement under complexity** | You make sound decisions when tradeoffs are real and information is incomplete. You anticipate second-order effects and protect long-term outcomes.
- **Calibrated urgency** | You move with speed and discipline. You avoid both analysis paralysis and reckless execution. You know when to prototype, when to pause, and how to explain why.
- **Data informed decision making** | You think beyond dashboards. You know how to define what success looks like, ensure the right data is captured, and drive course correction when results lag. You expect conversations to be grounded in evidence—and you model that standard consistently.
- **Team architect and people builder** | You have experience managing managers and shaping team structures as organizations grow. You clarify roles, develop talent, and maintain a high and consistent performance bar. You understand that structure drives behavior—and you design teams accordingly.
- **Deep respect for families and providers** | You believe families and childcare providers are experts and partners. You design programs that reduce barriers rather than reinforce them. You are attentive to how history, policy, and power shape opportunity, approaching that reality with humility and seriousness.

While not requirements for application, competitive candidates will likely have:

- Significant experience leading portfolios of work or complex programmatic teams
- Experience successfully launching and refining new initiatives
- Responsibility for managing multiple teams or layers of staff
- Experience living in or working with lower income communities

WHAT ELSE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Small Magic is committed to building a team that reflects the diversity and strength of the community we serve. We encourage applications from people and communities most impacted by inequity. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, or any other protected characteristic.



The compensation range for this role is \$115,00 - \$135,000, commensurate with demonstrated competency and prior experience. Benefits include a highly flexible work environment, premium health insurance, retirement matching (up to 5% after 3 months), paid time off (approximately 30 days), professional development funds, and a work-issued laptop.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please visit: smallmagic.org/careers