

Early Care and Education Committee of Fayette County

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Fayette County Child Care

Fast Facts

Fayette County:

- Is home to 53 registered child care facilities serving 1,387 children
- Already has 9 providers enrolled in the **NEW** Keystone STARS quality improvement program supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare
- Provides child care subsidies for over 600 children through Child Care Information Services of Fayette County
- Subsidizes child care for approximately 39% of Fayette County children through Child Care Information Services

Looking Ahead...

The Early Care and Education Committee is looking forward to a busy year for 2004-2005. It looks to build upon past progress and move smoothly into expanded directions.

Some of the goals of the committee for this year are:

- To improve on community outreach, educating parents on the importance of quality and encouraging them to become advocates and partners for the care of their children.
- To inform local businesses of the impacts that the availability of quality care has on their employees and their bottom line.

- To further a collaborative partnership with the Connellsville Area School District, building on early education experiences to provide a smooth transition to Kindergarten.
- To continue to promote educational opportunities to Fayette County child care providers
- To encourage and assist child care facilities to reach the highest Keystone STARS level possible.
- To become more visible in the community through a presence at local events that are of interest to families
- To increase membership of the committee to include even

more families, community partners and educators

- To obtain funding to easily attain all of the goals mentioned above
- To learn from the successes of similar groups in other counties through a network of communication and sharing of ideas and ventures





Early Care and Education Committee of Fayette County Community Report Card 2003-2004

Building a Better Future...

Realizing that our children are our future and that they deserve the best, the Early Care and Education (ECE) Committee was founded in 2001 through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. Since then, this group of individuals concerned with the quality of early child care and education in Fayette County has been advocating for quality child care and early education for the youngest members (pre-K to eight years of age) of Fayette County. The ECE committee consists of members from local School Districts and institutions of higher learning, Child Care Information Services, Head Start, Early Head Start, Communities in Schools, local day care providers, businesses and parents. It works with child care providers, resources for children, businesses and parents to promote high standards of care and education.

The Mission of the Early Care and Education Committee is to Build a Better Future for Fayette County Children, their families and

neighborhoods. Its vision is to be dedicated to assuring quality child care and education that is accessible, affordable and available to all Fayette County families in need of such services inclusive of all children; embracing individual differences, while acknowledging the importance of well trained and adequately compensated child care workers.

Renewed funding from the Department of Public Welfare allows the ECE committee to continue its work and the new Pennsylvania Keystone STARS quality improvement program helps to provide a measure for the changes in care in Fayette County.



Early Care and Education
Committee of Fayette
County

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What is High Quality Care?

- ☺ Well prepared teachers
- ☺ Small Class size
- ☺ Interactive relationship among teachers and children
- ☺ Emphasis on both social and learning skills
- ☺ Involvement of parents
- ☺ Development of early literacy skills through early experiences with books and stories
- ☺ A safe environment

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Looking Back...

The ECE Committee made progress on number of goals for the 2003-2004 year.

Goals	Accomplishments
To provide low-cost training that addresses the core body of knowledge and professional development for child care directors and staff	*The ECE committee coordinated and sponsored a free full day conference for child care professionals in April 2003
To promote the importance of quality early care and education to the community	*With HSTV, the committee produced a video entitled "Everyone Can Educate" for television airing and use at community engagements *Fayette County Commissioners proclaimed April 18-24, 2004 "Week of the Young Child" *Provided sponsorship for the Human Service Council's Family Fun Fest, held at the Fayette County Fairgrounds in June *Maintains involvement with the County Family Collaborative Initiative
To assist parents in understanding the options available to them for their child's early care and education	*The committee established and maintains a website (www.fayettekids.org) that provides links to information on choosing quality care, child care subsidies, and child development
To provide awareness to local businesses regarding the impact of quality child care on their businesses and their employees	*The ECE committee is now a member of the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce
To seek grant funding to maintain the work of the ECE committee and the Fayette County Early Care and Childhood plan	*The ECE committee received a \$375 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health for use in its conference for child care providers *The committee received renewed funding from the Department of Public Welfare *The committee receives continued support from Fayette County
To provide incentive for providers/educators to maintain high quality early care and education standards	*The ECE committee sponsored the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce "Educator of the Year" award *The ECE committee co-sponsored a "Provider Appreciation Day" to demonstrate appreciation for providers through presentations, lunch, and children's books for their facilities

Week of the Young Child 2004

On April 19, 2004, Fayette County Commissioners Angela Zimmerlink and Vince Vicites proclaimed April 18 through April 24 as the "Week of the Young Child". The Commissioners were joined for the proclamation from the Fayette County Courthouse steps by members of the Early Care and Education Committee.

This national event was sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The 2000 census recognized that 17,838 children live in Fayette County.

The week of the young child was celebrated by a number of organizations that promote the education and well being of children.

To coincide with the celebration of the "Week of the Young Child", the Early Care and Education Committee of Fayette County sponsored a conference for educators and child care providers entitled "Growing Opportunities" on April 17 at Penn State Fayette, the Eberly Campus.



Commissioners Angela Zimmerlink and Vince Vicites Proclaim the "Week of the Young Child" in Uniontown (Photo courtesy The Daily Courier: John Brothers)

ECE Sponsors Second Annual Conference

The Early Care and Education Committee of Fayette County, in association with PA Pathways and Penn State Fayette, the Eberly campus, sponsored its second annual conference for child care providers and educators.

Entitled "Growing Opportunities", this conference offered providers and educators the opportunity to participate in two of eight different workshops focused on child care and child development issues such as : "Developmentally appropriate art classes", "That Happy Children's Music", and "Including Children with Disabilities in Your Classroom."

Participants also had the opportunity to enjoy a presentation entitled "Helping Children UnderStand Epilepsy Using Puppets".

Former Pittsburgh Steeler, Steve Courson, was the keynote speaker for the event.

More than 90 providers from the region enjoyed this free event.



Steve Courson is introduced by Sandi Molloy to give the keynote address at the second annual conference sponsored by the ECE committee