

# Early Care and Education

Program Year July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010



## Our Children Are At Risk!



Most people would agree our children are our most important future asset. However, in Clarion and Jefferson Counties, young children are at risk of

school failure before they ever get to kindergarten!

In a recent statewide study, Clarion was ranked 35th out of 67 Pennsylvania Counties with regard to the number of children at risk for school failure based on economic factors. Jefferson County was ranked 39th. Both counties are ranked in the moderately high risk category.

The study looked at the number of children under the age of five, economic statistics from the most recent census data and the amount of state and federal funding each county receives, then ranked the counties from lowest to highest risk.

Of the 2,042 children under the age

of five in Clarion County, 46.4% live in low-income families. In Jefferson County, 56.7% of the 2,516 children under the age of five live in low-income families. Approximately 20% of children in both counties live below the poverty level (\$22,050 annual income for a family of four).

Other statistics are equally harsh. For example, 12.7% of Clarion County Children scored below proficient in 3rd grade math PSSA tests and 12.6% scored below proficient in reading. In Jefferson County, 13.4% scored below proficient in math and 22.1% scored below proficient in reading.

To help families in Clarion, Jefferson and all of Pennsylvania's Counties, the Department of Public Welfare's Office of Child Development and Early Learning has implemented *Pennsylvania's Promise for Children*. The Promise is for all children to have access to quality early education programs and build a strong foundation for school and life success. Pennsylvania's Promise for Children is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Build Initiative, The Heinz Endow-

ments, William Penn Foundation, The Grable Foundation, and the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality in partnership with the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). It oversees several programs designed to help disadvantaged and low-wage earning families. Programs include Child Care Works, PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental, Nurse Family Partnership, Early Intervention and Keystone STARS. These programs compose the Early Learning System.

OCDEL focuses on creating opportunities for Pennsylvania's youngest children to develop and learn to their fullest potential through supports and systems that help ensure children and their families have access to high quality services. The intent is to give children a solid foundation in life-long learning and prevent future expenses associated with a low-skill workforce, drug and alcohol abuse, incarcerations, domestic violence and other similar crimes.

The statistics contained herein can be found online at [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).

## Early Care and Education Project Achievements

Community Action, Inc.'s Early Care and Education Project strives to bring together services and families to share resources, discuss issues and solve problems. During fiscal year 2009-2010, the Early Care and Education Project reached all of our goals by:

- Engaging over 1,700 individuals through outreach events, parent/teacher meetings, kindergarten trainings and presentations to community groups.
- Engaging state legislators to visit preschool programs and read to children or meet with staff to share information and resources.
- Educating civic and business leaders about local children's programs and how those programs can benefit the community.
- Engaging newspapers and radio stations to promote children's events and programs.
- Reaching almost 1,100 individuals through the One Book Every Young Child Literacy Campaign and our Business Leaders Transition Campaign.



PA Congressman Glenn Thompson read *What a Treasure*, during the One Book Every Young Child Literacy Campaign in April. He read to the children at Punxsy IV Head Start with Head Teacher Jan Pepper and Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc. Executive Director Steve Berfield.



## 2009-2010: The Year In Pictures



PA State Representative Sam Smith and friends enjoyed their *What a Treasure* books after a reading at the Punxsutawney PA Pre-K Counts site in April, 2010.



Children at Erin Cameron's Daycare in Punxsutawney enjoy an outdoor story on a beautiful day with Marlene Zimmerman as the guest reader from County Market.



Punxsutawney Area School District Superintendent, Dr. Tom Frantz, reads his favorite book, *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, to children at the Playhouse Children's Center.



Pennsylvania State Trooper Jamie LeVier talks to the students at Sykesville Head Start about *What a Treasure* a friend can be.



Brockway Area School District Elementary Principal Amy Glasl talks to the children at Pendleton's Child Care Center in Brockway about her treasure box after reading *What a Treasure*, during the One Book Every Young Child Pennsylvania Literacy Campaign. The children each received this book to take home and enjoy with their families.



Mike Vereb, from the Foxburg Inn, reads to some very interested children at Park Hill Day-care on Lime Plant Road in Parker for the Business Leaders Transition reading in June, 2010.



Dr. Jocelynn Smrekar and Dr. Louann Bonnett, two Clarion University's Early Education Faculty, speak to service providers at the 4C Summit for Clarion County Child Caregivers. This event was held in May, 2010 to help connect early education and care programs coordinate referrals in Clarion County.



Senator Joseph Scarnati's staff person, Michele Burgeson reads to the children at Brockway's Head Start Home Base. Looking on is Jefferson County Sheriff Carl Gotwald, who is also a member of the nationwide organization "Fight Crime, Invest in Kids".



Making giant bubbles during a summer event at the Rebecca M. Arthurs Memorial Library in Brookville was a fun activity.



Pam Miller, from Miller Brothers Furniture, reads books about going to Kindergarten for the first time to the Preschool students at SSCD in Punxsutawney.

The Early Care and Education Project organizes and attends a variety of outreach activities to engage families and the public.

Events range from Back-to-School activities, One Book Every Young Child Readings, Kids Celebration on Groundhog Day, to the Week of the Young Child's Fun in the Sun Event.

This year we reached more than 1,700 children and their families in both Clarion and Jefferson Counties.

Download the  
***Kindergarten Get Ready!***  
**Calendar of Activities and  
other resources at**  
[www.jccap.org/newer/  
EarlyCareEducationProject.asp](http://www.jccap.org/newer/EarlyCareEducationProject.asp)

## Goals for 2010-2011

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During fiscal year 2010-2011, the Early Care and Education Project will strengthen our relationships with local and state legislators, businesses, media, families and school districts. Specifically, we plan to:

- Engage families by distributing kindergarten readiness resources at outreach events, PTA/PTO meetings, back-to-school and Kindergarten registration activities.
- Conduct media outreach by printing news articles, doing radio interviews and releasing public service announcements.
- Educate local business leaders and encourage them to share early education resources with their employees.
- Invite all local and state policy makers to participate in literacy events and visit early education facilities.
- Update and improve Community to School Transition Councils in each school district in Clarion and Jefferson Counties.
- Distribute a minimum of 1,000 *Kindergarten Get Ready!* activity calendars to families who have pre-school children.

### *School Transition: A Time of Change For Everyone*

In an effort to help families prepare for kindergarten, Community to School Transition Councils were established or renewed in AC Valley, Brookville, Punxsutawney, Clarion Area/Clarion-Limestone, Union, Redbank Valley, Keystone and Brockway School Districts. Each council, which included school district and community-based early education programs, developed a district-specific school transition plan then organized activities to help children and their families become familiar with kindergarten classrooms.

The Early Care and Education Project partnered with Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc. and PA Pre-K Counts to facilitate parent trainings within each district to help ease families' concerns and help them become familiar with school personnel and practices.

Additionally, children from 35% of Keystone STARS, PA Pre-K Counts and Head Start centers visited the kindergarten classroom in their district's elementary school.

***Community Action, Inc. — Helping People. Changing Lives.***

## *What Services Are Available To Make Our Communities Stronger?*

### **Clarion County:**

- 5 private nurseries and preschools (separate from child care, Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts and Intermediate Unit)
- 12 family day care homes equaling 72 slots
- 6 group day care homes equaling 72 slots
- 9 child care centers equaling 640 slots
- 548 total regulated/certified child care slots

#### **Of these child care providers:**

- 0 are Keystone STARS Star 4 facilities
- 3 are Keystone STARS Star 3 facilities
- 2 are Keystone STARS Star 2 facilities
- 7 are Keystone STARS Star 1 facilities
- 12 of 27 (44%) are Keystone STARS participants

#### **Other Programs:**

- Early Intervention served 334 children
- The Nurse Family Partnership Project served 0 families
- Child Care Works served 259 children (aged birth through preschool)

### **Bi-County:**

**262 children are enrolled in 14 Head Start classrooms and one home-based program**

**198 children enrolled in 11 PA Pre-K Counts classrooms**

**571 children enrolled in 12 Early Intervention classrooms**

**These three pre-school programs reached 1,031 of 4,558 children under the age of five years. That's only 23% of age appropriate children!**

### **Jefferson County:**

- 8 private nurseries and preschools (separate from child care, Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts and Intermediate Unit)
- 16 family day care homes equaling 96 slots
- 4 group day care homes equaling 48 slots
- 6 child care centers equaling 429 slots
- 573 total regulated/certified child care slots

#### **Of these child care providers:**

- 1 is a Keystone STARS Star 4 facility
- 0 are Keystone STARS Star 3 facilities
- 10 are Keystone STARS Star 2 facilities
- 5 are Keystone STARS Star 1 facilities
- 15 of 26 (58%) are Keystone STARS participants

#### **Other Programs:**

- Early Intervention served 237 children
- The Nurse Family Partnership Project served 40 families
- Child Care Works served 360 children (aged birth through preschool)





## Early Care and Education Project

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**Community Action, Inc.** was established and incorporated in 1965 as a 501(c)(3) Pennsylvania private, non-profit corporation. We serve as a multi-purpose administering and service delivery entity for a variety of anti-poverty, social and/or humanistic programs to the residents of Clarion and Jefferson Counties.

### **Community Action, Inc.'s Mission:**

To provide and coordinate activities which alleviate poverty, promote family self-sufficiency and advance community prosperity.

### **Early Care and Education Project Goal:**

Bring together families, child service groups and others to help improve our children's quality of life by supporting and promoting early care and education.

*Join us at our next meeting! For meeting dates and times, contact us via email at [bruehle@jccap.org](mailto:bruehle@jccap.org) or by phone at 814-938-3302, ext. 245*

## **Community Partners:**

Jodi Askins, PennAEYC  
Andrea Baker, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.  
Jennie Ball, Service Access Management, Inc.  
Laura Beatty, Community Action, Inc. (CCIS)  
Steven Berfield, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.  
Dr. Luanne Bonnet, Clarion University of Pennsylvania  
Erin Cameron, Family Child Care  
Kelly Carpino, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.  
Barb Cherico, Clarion County Mental Retardation Services  
Bibiana Chestnut, Penn State University  
Cindy Cornwell, Jefferson County Children & Youth  
Michelle Confer, Brookville School District  
Marsha Emhoff, Clearfield/Jefferson Drug & Alcohol Commission  
Susan DeVaughn, Punxsutawney School District  
Mary Faulk, Clarion-Limestone School District  
Barbara Fortunato, Brockway School District  
Lori Fulton, PA State Department of Health  
Susan Fusco, Community Action, Inc.  
Dr. Suellen Gourley, Clarion Area School District  
Susan Groner, Pa State Department of Health  
Jennifer Hamilton, Jefferson-Clarion Early Head Start  
Linda Heath, Keystone School District  
Rayna Hoke, Jefferson-Clarion Pre-K Counts  
Jan Huffman, Clarion-Limestone School District  
Jason Huffman, Redbank Valley School District  
Mary Ann Jordan, Riverview Intermediate Unit  
Amy Kaltenbach, Next Step Therapy  
Cheryl Kennedy, Noah's Kids Child Care  
Deborah Kelley, Riverview Intermediate Unit  
Kerry Kifer, Clarion County Mental Health  
Aimee Knerr, The Guidance Center  
Darlene Kovacs, Northwest Regional Key  
Lisa Kray, Parent to Parent—Northwest  
Tammy Liebert, Crayon Castle Child Care

Valerie Liebert, Crayon Castle Child Care  
Melissa Maines, The Guidance Center  
Jean McCleary, Union School District  
Larry McGuire, Punxsutawney Spirit Newspaper  
Erin McLaughlin, Play and Learn Preschool—Brookville YMCA  
Joe Neal, Clarion Early Intervention, Birth to Three  
Carrie Philips, Clarion County ARC  
John Pozza, Northwest Regional Key  
Paula Quick, Playhouse Children's Center  
Sandra Rake, Service Access Management, Inc.  
Thelma Rhoades, Keystone SMILES  
Kim Rhodes, Mentor Parent Program  
Terri Rhodes, Riverview Intermediate Unit  
Ruth Rowan, Clearfield-Jefferson Early Intervention  
Faith Ruehle, Community Action, Inc.  
Linda Schaffer, Interim Healthcare  
Melissa Schmader, Jefferson-Clarion Early Head Start  
Elana Shively, Northwest Regional Key  
Dr. Jocelyn Smrekar, Clarion University of Pennsylvania  
Annette Smith, Women, Infants and Children  
Linda Smith, Playhouse Children's Center  
Shirl Smith, Cen-Clear Child Services  
Ray Snyder, Service Access Management, Inc.  
Heidi Stahlnecker, The Guidance Center  
Matthew Steffy, Punxsutawney Spirit Newspaper  
Jennifer Stevanus, Community Christian Daycare  
Denise Storer, Creative Kids Learning Center  
Linda Syktich, MH/MR Specialist  
Barbara Thompson, Clarion Free Library  
Tracy Weaver, Community Action, Inc.  
Monica Weeter, Keystone SMILES  
Lisa Weyand, Northwest Regional Key  
Jennifer Whitesell, Nurse Family Partnership  
Mary Wolf, Clarion-Limestone School District