



Community Action, Inc.'s Early Care and Education Project

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Community Action, Inc.'s Mission

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

Community Action, Inc.'s Vision

To be recognized as a premier organization dedicated to solving social and economic problems of the community.

Early Care and Education Project Mission

Bring together parents, 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 Local Education And Resource Network (LEARN) meeting! For meeting dates, times and locations, contact us at (814) 938-3302, ext. 204 or via email at LEARN@jccap.org.



Pennsylvania State Police Sgt. Jeffrey Wilson visited Allegheny-Clarion Valley PA Pre-K Counts Center in April 2011 as a One Book, Every Young Child guest reader.

Community Partners

Dr. Peggy Apple, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Andrea Baker, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.
Catherine Bauer, North Clarion School District Pre-K
Laura Beatty, Community Action, Inc.
Steven Berfield, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.
Cydney Bezak, Punxsutawney Christian School
Brenda Biekert, Foxburg Free Library
Sharon Bobal, Reynoldsville Public Library
Dr. LouAnn Bonnet, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Erin Cameron, Family Child Care
Rachel Campbell, Eccles-Lesher Memorial Library
Kelly Carpino, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.
Barb Cherico, Clarion County MR Services
Jennifer Coleman, Summerville Public Library
Cindy Cornwell, Jefferson County Children & Youth
Michelle Confer, Brookville School District
Coral Ellshoff, Punxsutawney Memorial Library
Marsha Emhoff, Clearfield/Jefferson Drug & Alcohol Commission
Mary Faulk, Clarion-Limestone School District
Anissa Ferringer, Clarion County's Promise
Robin Fillman, Brookville Area School District
Mandy Fleming, Services Access Management, Inc.
Barbara Fortunato, Brockway Area School District
Maureen Freas, Punxsutawney Area School District
Lori Fulton, PA State Department of Health
Susan Fusco, Community Action, Inc.
Brenda Gaffey, The Guidance Center
Amy Glasl, Brockway Area School District
Amanda Griebel, Clarion County MR & Early Intervention
Susan Groner, PA State Department of Health
Linda Heath, Keystone School District
Denise Hetrick, Jefferson County Women, Infants and Children
Jan Huffman, Clarion-Limestone School District
Marlene Johnson-Pierce, Penn State University Extension
Mary Anne Jordan, Riverview Intermediate Unit
Erin Joyce, New Bethlehem Area Free Public Library
Amy Kaltenbach, Next Step Therapy
Cheryl Kennedy, Noah's Kids Child Care
Colleen Kennedy, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.
Kerry Kifer, Clarion County Mental Health
Darlene Kovacs, Early Connections and Northwest Regional Key
Lisa Kray, Parent to Parent - Northwest
Tammy Liebert, Crayon Castle Child Care
Valerie Liebert, Crayon Castle Child Care
Jeff Long, Redbank Valley School District
Janeen Love, Community Action, Inc.
Todd MacBeth, Clarion Area School District

Autumn Marshall, Keystone School District
Darlene Marshall, Mingle Memorial Library
Jean McCleary, Union School District
Matt McClelland, Clarion Free Library
Vicki McDowell, Brookville Area School District
Sarah McElhattan, Clarion County Early Intervention
Larry McGuire, Punxsutawney Spirit Newspaper
Erin McLaughlin, Play and Learn Preschool - Brookville YMCA
Roxanne Miller, Knox Public Library
Laura Moore, Redbank Valley School District
Joe Neal, Services Access Management, Inc.
Kate Nevins, The Guidance Center
Carrie Phillips, Northwest Regional Key
Rosalee Pituch, Rebecca M. Arthurs Memorial Library
Sheri Price, Community Action, Inc.
John Pozza, Northwest Regional Key
Paula Quick, Playhouse Children's Center
Lisa Rapp, Clarion Area School District
Natalie Rapp, Northwest Regional Key
Karen Ray, Jefferson-Clarion Pre-K Counts
Thelma Rhoades, Keystone SMILES
Kim Rhodes, Mentor Parent Program
Terri Rhodes, Riverview Intermediate Unit
Ruth Rowan, Clearfield-Jefferson MH/MR/Early Intervention
Penny Sackash, Sykesville Public Library
Linda Schaffer, Interim Healthcare
Melissa Schmadier, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.
Samantha Schrecengost, Community Action, Inc.
Elana Shively, Northwest Regional Key
Kathy Shugars, Achieva
Dr. Jocelynn Smrekar, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Annette Smith, Clarion County Women, Infants and Children
Linda Smith, Playhouse Children's Center
Shirl Smith, Cen-Clear Child Services
Heidi Stahlnecker, The Guidance Center
Matthew Steffy, Punxsutawney Spirit Newspaper
Jennifer Stevanus, Community Christian Daycare
Denise Storer, Creative Kids Learning Center
Lori Switzer, Clarion County Mental Health Administration
Barbara Thompson, Clarion Free Library
Tracy Weaver, PennAEYC
Sharon Weber, Punxsutawney Area School District
Monica Weeter, Keystone SMILES
Jennifer Welton, Keystone SMILES
Lisa Weyand, Northwest Regional Key
Jennifer Whitesell, Nurse Family Partnership
Dr. Mary Wolf, Clarion-Limestone School District



Early Care and Education

Program Year July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011



Mingle Memorial Library in Brockway displayed various shoes with a copy of the 2011 Pennsylvania One Book, Every Young Child literacy campaign's selection *Whose Shoes? A Shoe for Every Job* by Stephen R. Swinburne. The author visited three of Jefferson County's libraries on April 19, 2011.

2010-2011 Project Achievements

Community Action, Inc.'s Early Care and Education Project strives to bring together services and families to share resources, discuss ideas and solve problems. During fiscal year 2010-2011, the Early Care and Education Project reached all of its goals by:

- Engaging over 1,800 individuals through outreach events, parent/teacher meetings, kindergarten trainings and presentations to community groups.
- Conducting media outreach by releasing eight public service announcements and news articles, conducting one radio interview and placing three early learning initiative advertisements in local newspapers.
- Educating more than ten local business and civic leaders about local children's programs and how those programs can benefit the community.
- Engaging three state legislators or their staff and one federal legislator and staff to visit early learning settings and read to children or share information and resources regarding early education.

Quality Early Learning in Clarion and Jefferson Counties

Most people would agree our children are our most important future asset. According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, "Meeting the developmental needs of young children is as much about building a strong foundation for lifelong physical and mental health as it is about enhancing readiness to succeed in school." However, in Clarion and Jefferson Counties, young children are at risk of school failure before they even start kindergarten!

In a recent statewide study performed by Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), Clarion tied with six other counties for 36th out of 67 Pennsylvania (PA) Counties regarding the number of children at risk for school failure based on economic, family and educational factors. Jefferson County tied with six other counties for 43rd. Both counties are ranked in the moderately high risk category.

The study looked at the number of children under the age of five, statistics from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey Three Year Estimate, data from the PA Department of Education, PA Department of Public Welfare and PA Department of Health, and the amount of state and federal funding each county receives, then ranked the counties from lowest to highest risk.

Of the 2,009 children under the age of five in Clarion County, 75.1% live in economically at-risk families. In Jefferson County, of the 2,524 children under the age of five, 78.6% live in economically at-risk families. Approximately 22% of children in both counties live in economically high-risk families (\$22,050 annual income for a family of four).

Other statistics are equally harsh. For example, 6.9% of Clarion County Children scored below proficient in third grade math PSSA tests and 19.6% scored below proficient in reading. In Jefferson County, 11.4% scored below proficient in math and 17.5% scored

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below proficient in reading.

A resource, the Pennsylvania's Promise for Children website, is now available to help families in Clarion, Jefferson and all of PA's Counties. The Promise is for all children to have access to quality early learning opportunities and build a strong foundation for success in school and life. PA's Promise for Children is sponsored by the PA Build Initiative, PA Early Learning Keys to Quality, The Grable Foundation, The Heinz Endowments and William Penn Foundation.

OCDEL oversees several programs designed to help disadvantaged and low-income families, which make it a vital part of PA's goal to make the Commonwealth an attractive place to live and work. Programs include: Child Care Works; PA Pre-K Counts; Head Start Supplemental; Nurse Family Partnership; Early Intervention; and Keystone STARS.

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.

References:

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2010). *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*. Available online at <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (2011). *Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)*. Available online at http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/child_development_early_learning/7200.

Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (2011). *2009-2010 Program Reach and Risk Assessment*. Available online at <http://www.pakeys.org>.

2010-2011: The Year in Pictures

The Early Care and Education Project organizes or attends a variety of outreach events to engage parents, children and the public.

Events include: Back-to-School activities; One Book, Every Young Child Readings; Senator Scarnati's Kids Safety Expo; and the Week of the Young Child's Fun in the Sun Event.

During 2010-2011, Clarion and Jefferson County events reached more than 1,800 children and their parents.

School Transition: A Time of Change for Everyone

In an effort to help families prepare for kindergarten, Community to School Transition Councils have been established or renewed in the following school districts: Allegheny-Clarion Valley; Brookville; Punxsutawney; Clarion Area; Clarion-Limestone; Union; Redbank Valley; Keystone; and Brockway. 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, 40 elementary school teachers and child care providers participated in a professional development opportunity and were able to network and discuss transition practices. Participants were trained to use the Council for Environmental Education's *Growing Up WILD* curriculum provided through the Pennsylvania Game Commission.



Left: Children at Erin Cameron's Group Day Care, a Keystone STARS STAR 2 facility, learn about recycling on Earth Day by making paper-mache eggs.



Right: Children at Clarion Hospital Day Care Center wait patiently while a helicopter takes off so they can participate in a Let's Read, Let's Move! program.



Local panelists at the 4C Summit for Clarion County Child Caregivers in June 2011 present information regarding services offered in Clarion County. Twenty participants learned about the importance of preparing children for a smooth transition into kindergarten by keynote speaker, Dr. Jocelynn Smrekar, Clarion University of PA, as well as services available statewide. Pictured left to right are: Mandy Fleming, Services Access Management, Inc.'s Clarion County EI/MR Program Director; Lisa Kray, Parent to Parent; Anissa Ferring, Clarion County's Promise; Laura Beatty, Community Action, Inc.'s Child Care Information Services Director; Terri Rhodes, Riverview Intermediate Unit #6's Preschool Service Coordinator; Zandra Acree, Jefferson-Clarion Head Start, Inc.'s Early Head Start Home-based Manager; and Amanda Griebel, Clarion County EI/MR Contracted Quality Manager.

Download the Kindergarten Get Ready! Calendar of Activities and other resources at

<http://www.jccap.org/newer/EarlyCareEducationProject.asp>



Left: State Representative Donna Oberlander at Keystone SMILES Community Learning Center, a Keystone STARS STAR 2 facility.



Right: Sam Smith at PA Pre-K Counts Punxsutawney Center in April 2011 as part of Pennsylvania's One Book, Every Young Child Literacy Project.

Over 1,100 children participated in Community Action, Inc.'s 40 One Book, Every Young Child guest readings. Thirty-three local celebrities, including State Representatives Sam Smith and Donna Oberlander; Jefferson County Commissioners Jeff Pisarcik, Jim McIntyre and Paul Corbin; Clarion County Judge James Arner and Jefferson County Judge John Foradora, visited early learning sites throughout Clarion and Jefferson Counties to promote early literacy.



Left: This Jefferson County mother and toddler learned about the importance of healthy choices during Punxsutawney's Story Walk.

