



# ACTION PLAN

---

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INITIATIVE

IN COLLABORATION WITH:

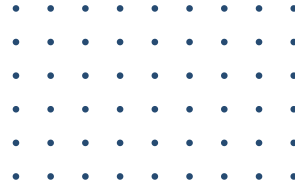
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN

YORK COUNTY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

[www.echoyork.org](http://www.echoyork.org)

# Every Child Has Opportunities

## A CATALYST FOR CHANGE



Research shows that for every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education, society gains up to \$7.30 in economic returns over the long term.

– First Five Action Fund

The vision of Every Child Has Opportunities (ECHO) is to increase the number of children, particularly low-income children, who are served in high-quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs in York County. The Action Plan outlines how we will achieve this, with an approach which focuses on 1) Children and Families, 2) Workforce, and 3) Community.

ECHO will serve as a catalyst for innovation and collaboration and will provide a blueprint for addressing the issues that limit opportunities for children, families, and ECE educators. ECE impacts multiple generations, the current adult workforce, and the future workforce. By focusing our attention and resources on improving ECE we are positively impacting the current and future economy of York County.

The two leading organizations, Community Connections for Children (CCC) and York County Economic Alliance (YCEA) are committed to ECE and ECHO.

CCC will use it to guide its work with families, ECE providers, school districts, business and community leaders, and elected officials to ensure every child has access to high-quality ECE. It aligns with CCC's mission and the work they have been committed to since 1987.

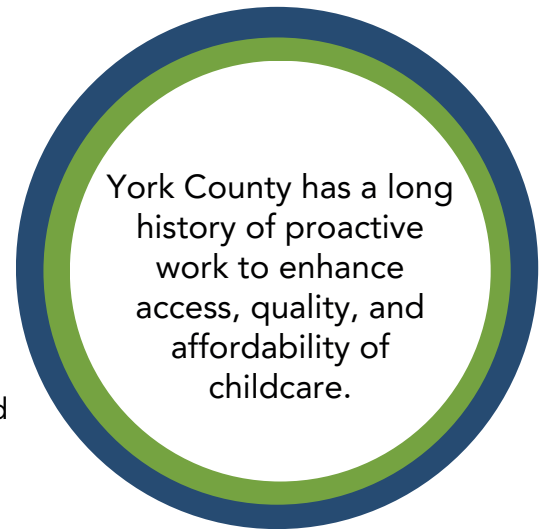
YCEA will play a key role in the plans' ongoing development and implementation, including advocacy efforts. Awareness is key, so more people in York County will understand and identify the link between high-quality, accessible, affordable childcare and a healthy, equitable, and growing economy.

The plan takes strategic steps toward challenges identified by the York County Economic Action Plan.

ECHO Action Plan: Updated April 2024

Every Child Has Opportunities  
**ABOUT THE PLAN**

## PROJECT TIMELINE



### 2020

The York County Economic Action Plan placed additional strategic focus on ECE and its strong correlation to workforce stability and a healthy economy. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded issues related to ECE capacity, access, and affordability.



### FALL 2022

Representing the J. William Warehime and Powder Mill Foundations respectively, Dave Meckley and Michael Hady convened a focus group of community stakeholders to discuss issues facing families with young children. Recognizing these persistent challenges and their impact on our economy, key backbone organizations were identified, CCC and YCEA.



### LATE 2022 to MAY 2023

CCC and YCEA laid the action plan groundwork. Meetings were held regularly to review various drafts. A presentation was made to the York Funders Group.



### JUNE 2023

J. William Warehime Foundation and Powder Mill Foundation made a multi-year commitment of \$1 million each to this bold initiative.



### AUGUST 2023

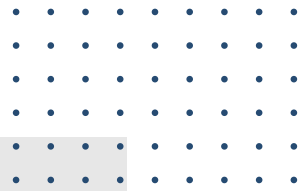
WellSpan Health joined with a multi-year commitment of \$1 million. The York County Community Foundation (YCCF) committed \$75,000 while additional community philanthropic support was being considered. A consultant was secured to operationalize the plan and develop a timeframe for implementation.



### LATE 2023 to MARCH 2024

A project name was secured: ECHO, Every Child Has Opportunities, branding was completed, the plan was approved, and Katie Caples was hired as ECHO Director. The Kinsley Foundation committed \$50,000 annually for five years. And United Way of York County pledged financial support as well.

# Community Leadership



## The Importance of Early Childhood Education

The period between infancy and Kindergarten is the most expensive time to educate a child, due to the low teacher-to-student ratio. It's also the period when 95% of a person's brain development occurs and as research indicates, sets the trajectory for their future success and health. And it's the only sector of our education system that public funds are not available to support every child.

It is important for us to be innovative in the ECE field to address systemic issues. We must support bold methods to engage the public and private sectors to implement new strategies that will bring about real change.

### Why Community Connections for Children (CCC)?

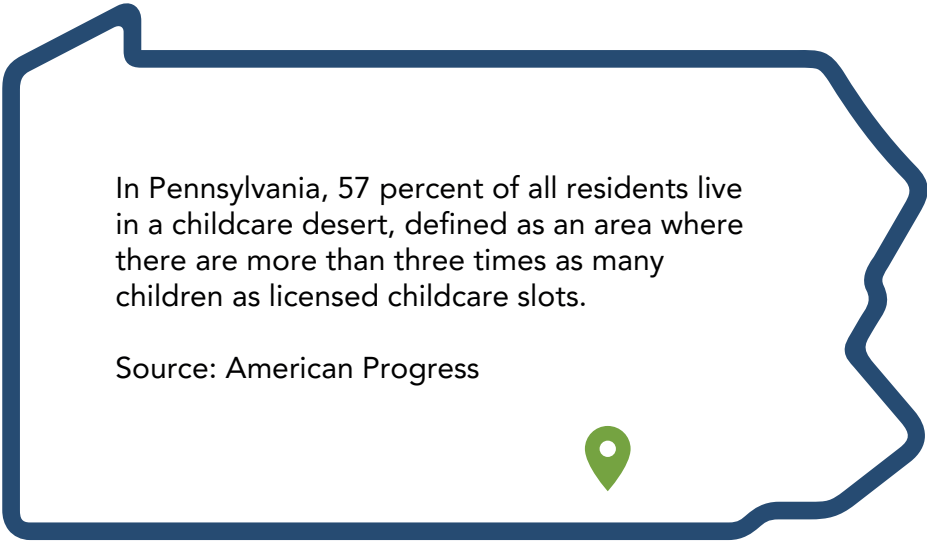
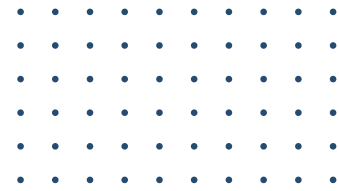
As an Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC), CCC serves as the direct liaison between the federal and state government, early childhood education programs, and parents. CCC is the trusted resource for childcare providers, parents, and stakeholders, constantly focused on enhancing access, quality, and resources for this critical industry.

### Why York County Economic Alliance (YCEA)?

As a countywide economic development corporation, chamber of commerce, and historic main street organization, the YCEA drives widespread economic prosperity throughout York County and is best positioned to leverage our business community and major employers. The YCEA serves as the backbone organization to advance York County's 10-Year Economic Action Plan, which has identified expanded access to affordable, quality childcare as critical to York's economic vitality.

A Closer Look At...

# Pennsylvania Child Care Issues



In Pennsylvania, 57 percent of all residents live in a childcare desert, defined as an area where there are more than three times as many children as licensed childcare slots.

Source: American Progress

One-third of PA families rely on formal center-based care, another third have multiple arrangements or informal care, and only a quarter do not rely on any childcare. Only 39% of all childcare in PA currently meets high-quality standards.

Pennsylvania suffers a \$3.47 billion impact due to childcare issues in lost tax revenue and employer costs. And 54% of employers in PA said one of the most significant reasons they lost employees was due to childcare issues.

Source: Growing Tomorrow's Economy Means Investing in Child Care Today, PA ELIC

Source: The Impact of Childcare on Business and the Workforce, PA ELIC

## York County, At-A-Glance

Early Childhood Education Providers:  
121 Centers  
11 Group  
34 Family Home-Based Providers

550 children served in Head Start and Early Head Start

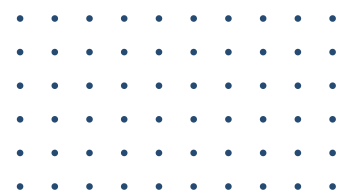
Approximately 1,400 early childhood educators

In 2022-23, \$30 million was allocated by CCC programs to York County ECE providers for the CCW, Keystone STARS, CACFP, PAT and UWYC programs



## York County Statistics

---



# 85%

On average, York County early childhood education programs are operating at 85% of typical enrollment.

# 50+

Early childhood education program waitlists average 50-75 children, and many have stopped adding to their lists.

# 15+

Home-based providers in York County report wait lists of 15-20 children.

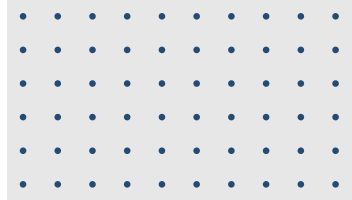
# 80%

After completing the CCC Home-Based Provider Certification Program and staying connected with CCC, 80-100% of the businesses remain in operation.



# Every Child Has Opportunities

## The Goal for York County



The overarching goal of ECHO is to double the number of children from low-income families in York County who will receive high-quality early childhood education. This is equivalent to 1,600 additional 0-6-year-olds. We will achieve the goal by utilizing a strategic and targeted approach, addressing immediate, crisis issues while developing solutions to long-term, chronic issues.

All elements of the action plan will be developed and implemented with an equity lens. Programming is designed to prioritize resource allocation to the populations with the greatest needs.



## Focus Areas

This action plan is structured around the following areas:



**Children + Families**

Create opportunities for all.



**Workforce**

Enhance economic mobility.



**Community**

Mobilize, engage and promote.

# Create Opportunities for All: Children + Families



## GOAL:

Double the number of children from low-income families in York County who will receive high-quality early childhood education.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Reduce the number of unserved Child Care Works (CCW) eligible children from 82% to 70% in four years.
- Increase capacity and accessibility for ECE programs, by supporting 20 newly DHS-certified in-home programs and expanding 15 center-based opportunities each year, with a special focus on underserved areas.
- Increase Kindergarten Readiness in York County through expanding access and participation of pre-kindergarten children in programs like First 10 and the Basics Campaign.

## STRATEGIES:

- 1 Home-based provider support: expand the CCC program and partner with BLOOM to grow home-based providers through recruitment, education, and funding support. [Years 1-3]
- 2 Innovative Challenge Grant: create a grant opportunity to directly fund ECE's who present creative solutions to increase ECE capacity. [Years 1-3]
- 3 Utilize School District Assets: identify 1-3 pilot partnership school districts to increase collaboration with ECE providers.



Enhance Economic Mobility:

## Workforce



### GOAL:

Recruit, upskill, and retain qualified early learning educators.

### MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

- Increase pipeline development and educational attainment through apprenticeship, certifications, and degree programs each year by serving 20 apprentices and increasing active workforce education levels by 10%.
- Increase employee retention in the ECE industry by 10% per year.
- Decrease the number of ECE staff receiving ALICE support by 5% annually.

### STRATEGIES:

- 1 ELIC Educator Retention Award Program: expand the newly created ELIC Early Childhood Educator Retention Awards. [Years 1-3]
- 2 ECE Educator Pre-Apprenticeship, Apprenticeship & Scholarship Program: partner with HACC, YCST, Central Penn College, ECEPDO at PASSHE, and T.E.A.C.H. to establish an ECE pre-apprenticeship & apprenticeship program and create an incentivized scholarship program.
  - Year 1: stakeholder conversations
  - Year 2: launch a pilot apprenticeship program
  - Year 3: launch an apprenticeship program
  - Year 4: roll the program out across York County
- 3 Expand awareness of ECE careers through partnerships with local K-12, the Workforce Investment Board, and public relations campaigns. Recognize individuals who are standouts in ECE.

## Mobilize, Engage + Promote: **Community**



### **GOAL:**

Encourage all parts of our community to support early childhood education through communication and advocacy efforts.

### **MEASURES OF SUCCESS:**

- Enhance collaboration with K-12 school districts, with the goal of three per year.
- Increase ECE impact awareness in the community with six presentations per year to new audiences.
- Attract new public and private dollars to leverage the impact of ECHO.
- Decrease the financial impact of absenteeism and staff turnover due to childcare-related issues by 5% per year.
- Increase the number of businesses providing ECE benefits and/or centers on campus by five per year.

### **STRATEGIES:**

- 1** Grow awareness of the Capital Campaign Process for ECEs: develop case studies of York Day, JCC, and YWCA and share with ECEs throughout York County.
- 2** Group Healthcare Purchase: assess the opportunity to pool and leverage the purchase of health insurance, to provide cost savings and/or enhanced benefits. Potential public partnerships with State or County healthcare.
- 3** Employer Guaranteed Pre-Pay Partnerships: identify employers willing to pre-pay a discounted annual rate for X number of childcare slots to provide to its workforce; strategically pair employers and ECEs. Provide funding to cover the gap in cost to ECE to initiate the partnership with a potential phase-out period.
- 4** Employer Childcare Stipend Program / Dependent Care Savings Program: evaluate and promote employer-offered childcare stipends or dependent care savings accounts to the workforce.
- 5** ECE Educator YoCo Incentives: examine possible benefits, such as a homebuyer incentive program, to support ECE educators in York County.

Every Child Has Opportunities  
**Community Impact**



Investment in early education pays a considerable return on investment to an economy, a community, and the lives of its residents. We must be bold, determined, committed, and strategic to live up to our commitment to future generations.

The community will rally around this action plan because we collectively understand the critical importance of solving the issues faced by the early childhood education sector.

Continuing to drive York County's leadership and innovation, this plan will build upon our strong foundation and move us closer to achieving our goal of every child having access to high quality, affordable, accessible early childhood education.

---

## Contact Us :



Phone Number  
**717-714-8561**  
**Katie Caples**



Email Address  
**kcaples@cccforpa.org**



Office Address  
**29 North Duke Street**  
**York, PA 17401**



[www.echoyork.org](http://www.echoyork.org)