

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **New Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship Program Announced in York County, PA**

by Katie Caples

Community Connections for Children (CCC), York County Economic Alliance (YCEA), and ECHO (Every Child Has Opportunities) announce a new early childhood apprenticeship program in York County, PA. The application window opens today, July 16, and will close August 2 at 5:00 pm. Participants will be notified in early August.

### **ECHO York County Teacher Aide Program**

In this first-of-its-kind talent attraction program, early childhood education providers will receive salary reimbursement for teacher aides. In the groundbreaking program, up to 30 teacher aides and paired mentor teachers will receive stipend pay and wrap-around support including a community of practice, coaching, and leadership training.

Teacher aides will participate in a weekly, in-person Child Development Associate (CDA) course offered in partnership with Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) at Community Progress Council (CPC) in York. This is a second phase of a partnership with CPC, who piloted an in-house teacher aide program earlier in the year.

Goals of the Teacher Aide Program include attracting and retaining qualified early childhood educators; enhancing the quality of care and education at existing providers; strengthening the early childhood education ecosystem in York County; and increasing capacity for low-income children in high-quality early childhood education programs.

The Teacher Aide program will award ECHO funds to selected providers of up to \$22,000 for each teacher aide and mentor matched pair. ECHO will also fund the CDA Course for teacher aides and a leadership training series and coaching for mentor teachers. Eligible provider applicants include DHS Certified family, group, and center providers, Early Head Start/Head Start, and Pre-K Counts grantees located in York County, PA.



For program details, visit [echoyork.org/grants-and-programs/](https://echoyork.org/grants-and-programs/).

This comes in direct response to the workforce shortage in early childhood education. In 2020, pre-pandemic, York County had 221 early childhood education providers. In three years, that number dropped to 170. Those that survived the pandemic are operating on average at 85% of typical enrollment due to teacher and workforce shortages. Early childhood education program waitlists average 50-75 children, and many have stopped adding to their lists.

Pennsylvania suffers a \$3.47 billion impact due to childcare issues in lost tax revenue and employer costs. Over half of employers in PA said one of the most significant reasons they lost employees was due to childcare issues. According to American Progress, 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.

ECHO is administered by Community Connections for Children (CCC) and the York County Economic Alliance (YCEA) and funded by J. William Warehime Foundation, Powder Mill Foundation, United Way of York County, WellSpan Health, Kinsley Foundation, and York County Community Foundation.

For more information about ECHO, visit [www.echoyork.org](http://www.echoyork.org) or contact Katie Caples at [kcaples@cccforpa.org](mailto:kcaples@cccforpa.org) or (717) 714-8561.

