



# *Care4Kids*

Huntingdon  
County  
Child Care and Education  
Initiative

County Plan 2004-2005



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Roy Thomas, *Commissioner*

June 30, 2004

Huntingdon County Child Care and Education Initiative



A project of

**Families and Communities Together Collaborative**

*...promoting healthy children and youth, strong families and safe communities  
in Huntingdon County*

# Huntingdon County Childcare Initiative

## Introduction

### VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Huntingdon County Child Care and Education Initiative is that children will be healthy, safe, successful and ready for life.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Huntingdon County Child Care and Education Initiative is to promote quality, affordable, and accessible child care for all children of Huntingdon County.

It accomplishes its mission by supporting parents and child care providers with the best tools, skills, and resources to create a healthy, safe, and educationally-appropriate child care environment.

### PRIMARY INITIATIVE GOAL

The primary focus of the Initiative is to improve the quality of life of children from birth to 16 years of age through activities in five focal areas of concern: (1) capacity, (2) quality of early care and education, (3) child care provider career development, (4) child care for children with special needs, and (5) public and parent awareness and education.

## I. Status of Child Care in Huntingdon County

The intent of the Initiative in the coming year is to continue to develop and expand knowledge of resources and services available in Huntingdon County to support, promote and expand child care and early education services. The current plan describes information available at the close of the current grant year. A committee of the Initiative will conduct a resource mapping of available services to update the plan and better describe the status of child care within the county. Given the Initiative's current level of functioning, the information below provides a broad, yet incomplete, overview of the county's child care system. In the next grant year, the Initiative intends to develop a more refined and complete understanding of the resources as well as identify additional gaps in the system.

### County Population

Census data for Huntingdon County indicate that the population of the county has increased only slightly (.098%) from 1990 to 2000 to 44,599. The residents of the county reside in largely rural (78%) areas with the remainder living in several small towns (22%). Employment in the county is fairly stable with unemployment rates ranging from 6 to 12 percent over the past decade. In comparison to the rest of the state, Huntingdon County ranks as one of several counties with high unemployment as employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector continue to decline. Additionally, the county is adversely affected by higher rates of school dropout (25 percent of the adults 25 years and older are without a high school diploma, and 6.3 percent of current high school age youth are no longer in school), low literacy and achievement rates, and high early pregnancy. Given the geographically terrain, transportation to services is a major barrier throughout the county. Additionally, approximately 30% of the population do not have reliable transportation.

### Status of Children

There are approximately 9,895 children from birth to 16 years of age living in the county. A breakdown of age categories is shown in the following table:

**Table 1. Children by age category<sup>1</sup>**

Year	0-5 Months	6-12 Months	13-23 Months	24-35 Months	3-5 Years	6-9 Years	10-12 Years	13-16 Years	TOTAL
1990	235	235	469	499	1,494	1,585	1,594	2,188	8,298
2000	1,460				1,517	2,116	2,378	2,422	9,895

The table below describes the child population of Huntingdon County by gender.

**Table 2. Size and Age Structure of the Child Population under Age 18 by Gender<sup>2</sup>**

Age Group	Total		Males		Females	
	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population	Number	Percent of Population
Total population under age 18	9,893	100	5,133	51.9	4,760	48.1
Under 5 years	2,481	25.1	1,302	13.2	1,179	11.9
5 years	485	4.9	247	2.5	238	2.4
6 to 9 years	2,127	21.5	1,103	11.1	1,024	10.4
10 to 14 years	2,878	30.1	1,542	15.6	1,436	14.5
15 to 17 years	1,822	18.4	939	9.5	883	8.9

Of the children in the county in child care services, the following chart describes the current capacity of early care and education in Huntingdon County.

<sup>1</sup> Huntingdon County Child Care Information Services, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> KIDS COUNT Census Data Online (2002).

**Table 3. Early Care and Education Capacity**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>PA Rate (%)</b>	<b>Rural Counties Rate (%)</b>	<b>Huntingdon County Rate (%)</b>
Regulated Child Day Care Capacity (per 100 child under 14 years of age in need) –1998	88.4	56.1	32.2
Children enrolled in Head Start (per 100 eligible children ages 3 – 4 years old) – 2000	50.8	54.6	81.7

For the purposes of this report, the following definitions with respect to child care providers will apply. Child care providers can be broadly classified as being relatives or nonrelatives of children. *Relatives* include mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, and *other relatives* such as aunts, uncles, and cousins. *Non-relatives* include in-home babysitters, neighbors, friends, and other non-relatives providing care either in the child’s or the provider’s home, in addition to *family day care providers* who are non-relatives who care for one or more unrelated children in the provider’s home. An *organized child care facility* is a day care center, nursery school, or preschool. To present a comprehensive view of the regular weekly experiences of children under 15 years old, this report also shows the incidence of children enrolled in school and enrichment activities (such as sports, lessons, clubs, and after- and before school programs), and the time children are in self-care situations<sup>3</sup>.

The chart below describes the types of settings and percentage of children receiving subsidized child care in Huntingdon County. Neighbor/relative child care is the predominate type of child care service provided in the county and at a disproportionately higher rate in comparison to contiguous counties. U.S. Census Bureau (2000) statistics indicate that 312 (46.6 percent) grandparents living in a household with one or more of their own grandchildren under 18 years of age are responsible for the care of a grandchild.

**Table 4. Children in State Subsidized Child Care Setting – Contiguous County Comparison Rates<sup>4</sup>**

<b>County</b>	<b>Licensed and Registered Care</b>			<b>Unregulated</b>
	Centers (%)	Group Day Care Homes (%)	Family Day Care Homes (%)	Relative & Neighbor Care (%)
<b>HUNTINGDON</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>33.3</b>
Bedford	70.5	10.5	6.8	12.1
Blair	81.7	2.8	4.6	10.9
Mifflin	63	8.2	10	18.7
Franklin	48.4	3.8	25.1	11.7
Fulton	47.4	0	26.3	26.3

From available data, the table below describes the current average monthly number of unduplicated recipients of child care services, the number less than 200 percent of the

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2000).

<sup>4</sup> Child Care Information Services (2002)

federal poverty income guidelines (FPIG), days of service and attendance, and daily cost by provider type.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 5. Child Care Utilization Report for Huntingdon County.**

<b>Type of Service</b>	Unduplicated Service Recipient	<200% FPIG	Service Days (Average)	Attendance Days (Average)	Daily Cost (Average)
Center-based Services	113	100	124.4	102.6	\$22.69
Family Day Care Services	94	81	155	127.4	\$13.24
Group Home	35	33	120.3	91.1	\$19.72
Unregulated	130	114	136.2	119.2	\$09.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>135.9</b>	<b>113.6</b>	<b>\$15.04</b>

In general, most residents of Huntingdon County define themselves relative to their school district. In keeping with this perspective, the table below describes the current availability of subsidized child care throughout the county by school district, the type of child care service and number of children.

**Table 6. Current Availability of Subsidized Child Care by School District<sup>6</sup>**

<b>School District</b>	Center-based		Group Day Care Home		Family Day Care Home		Relative/Neighbor Care	
	Providers (#)	Children (#)	Providers (#)	Children (#)	Providers (#)	Children (#)	Providers (#)	Children (#)
Huntingdon Area SD	3	40			6	20	8	15
Juniata Valley SD			1	7	2	7	3	5
Mount Union Area SD					7	30	15	32
Southern Huntingdon County SD					1	2	5	9
Tussey Mountain SD							2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>64</b>

## Health Status

The following charts provide an overview of the general health status of children (birth – 19 years old) in Huntingdon County<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Sample information obtained from Huntingdon County Child Care Information Services, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Information provided by Huntingdon County Child Care Information Services, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> State of the Child in Pennsylvania (2002), KIDS COUNT Census Data Online (2002).

**Table 7. Health Status Comparative Table**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>PA Rate (%)</b>	<b>Rural Counties Rate (%)</b>	<b>Huntingdon County (%)</b>
Low Birth Weight (per 100 births) – 1990	7.2	5.7	5.5
Low Birth Weight (per 100 births) – 1999	7.9	7.1	6.6
Lack of Early Prenatal Care (1990)	20.4	20.4	15.2
Lack of Early Prenatal Care (1999)	14.8	14.3	9.8
Births to Single Teens (1996)	9.4	8.5	12.8
Births to Single Teens (1999)	9.2	8.5	10.6
Infant Mortality (per 100 births) – 1990	9.5	8.3	9.5
Infant Mortality (per 100 births) –1999	7.1	7.7	4.0
Child Deaths Ages 1-19 (per 100,000)	36.3	42.8	27.3
Children enrolled in Medicaid (per 100 children under age 19) 2001	24.5	24.9	29.4
Children enrolled in CHIP (per 100 children under age 19) 2001	2.3	4.3	4.5

In Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Mental Retardation, is responsible for early intervention services to children birth to three years of age. From age three to entrance age for public education, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, is responsible for these services. Locally, the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit provides services for eligible children three to kindergarten age. Intervention and supportive services may be provided in the child’s home, child care center, Head Start, or other familiar setting<sup>8</sup>. Children with one or more special needs are described in the table below.

**Table 8. Special Needs Children by School District<sup>9</sup>**

<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>Huntingdon Area</b>	<b>Juniata Valley</b>	<b>Mount Union</b>	<b>Southern Huntingdon County</b>	<b>Tussey Mountain</b>
Children receiving Early Intervention Services					
Ages: 0 – 3	21	7	14	9	7
Ages: 3 – 5	38	19	17	20	
Children with Disabilities					
Number	374	138	242	190	
Percent (%)	13.6	14.0	14.5	12.9	

<sup>8</sup> Information provided by Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11, Early Intervention Services.

<sup>9</sup> Data were obtained from Tuscarora Intermediate Unit #11; HMJ Tri-County Mental Health/Mental Retardation, and State of the Child in Pennsylvania (2002).

## Children in Poverty and At-Risk<sup>10</sup>

National data support the general conclusion that children are at greatest risk of poverty than other age groups and that rural children are at greater risk (proportionally speaking) than urban children as a result of fewer available services. These findings are no less true in Huntingdon County where the number the children in poverty is substantially higher than the rest of the state due to the poor economic conditions of the county. The following tables provide information about the current poverty status of children in the county as well as other socio-economic and risk factors associated with the effects of poverty.

**Table 9. Selected Socio-Economic Indicators for Children in Huntingdon County**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>PA Rate (%)</b>	<b>Rural Counties Rate (%)</b>	<b>Huntingdon County Rate (%)</b>
Children under 18 receiving TANF (per 100 children) – 1998	9.8	5.5	4.5
Children under 18 receiving TANF (per 100 children) – 2001	6.0	3.1	2.7
Children in Single Parent Homes – 1990	20.1	15.5	15.9
Children in Single Parent Homes – 2000	25.1	20.7	21.2
Children ages 17 and under in poverty -- 1997	16.6	16.9	17.8
Children age 6 and under in poverty – 1997	17.4	19.9	20.3
Children dropping out of school (per 100 students enrolled in grades 9 – 12) – 1997	3.8	29.	2.8
Children dropping out of school (per 100 students enrolled in grades 9 – 12) – 1999	3.9	3.1	4.0
Children born to mothers with less than a high school education – 1990	16.4	18.0	16.6
Children born to mothers with less than a high school education – 1999	14.8	16.8	13.9
Births to Single Teens – 1996	9.4	8.5	12.8
Births to Single Teens – 1999	9.2	8.5	10.6
Substantiated Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (per 1000 children) – 2000	1.7	2.0	1.9
Child Welfare Placements ages 0 – 18 (per 1000 children) – 1999	8.0	4.1	5.7

<sup>10</sup> State of the Child in Pennsylvania (2002), KIDS COUNT Census Data Online (2002).

**Table 10. Free and Reduced Lunch Participation Rates of Elementary Schools in Huntingdon County 1999-2000.<sup>11</sup>**

School District/Elementary School	Enrollment	Eligible for Free Lunch	(%)	Eligible for Reduced Lunch	(%)	Free & Reduced Lunch (%)
<b>HUNTINGDON AREA</b>						
Brady Henderson	185	55	35	22	14	49
Jackson Miller	105	28	27	15	14	41
Southside	397	78	20	51	13	32
Standing Stone	512	151	29	38	7	37
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>1202</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>36.4</b>
<b>JUNIATA VALLEY</b>						
Juniata Valley Elementary	397	98	25	51	13	38
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>MOUNT UNION AREA</b>						
Kistler	54	12	22	9	17	39
Mapleton –Union	136	43	32	13	10	41
Mount Union	330	131	40	34	10	50
Shirley Township	245	92	38	25	10	48
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>46.9</b>
<b>SOUTHERN HUNTINGDON COUNTY</b>						
Rockhill	215	49	23	32	15	38
Shade Gap	147	39	27	18	15	38
Spring Farms	243	39	16	30	12	28
Trough Creek	142	6	25	27	19	44
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>32.1</b>
<b>TUSSEY MOUNTAIN</b>						
Robertsdale	173	62	36	16	9	45
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Huntingdon County</b>	<b>3284</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>38.5</b>

## Unemployment

Employment in Huntingdon County has been a major issue for several decades. Of the population 16 years and over, 54.2 percent are in the civilian labor force, 5.6 percent are unemployed. Of parents of children under six years of age, 63.6 percent are in the labor

<sup>11</sup> National School Lunch Program (2001)

force and spend an average of 28.9 minutes of travel time to work<sup>12</sup>. Per capita income is \$15,379 with median earnings for male and female full-time, year-round workers being \$29,977 and \$21,840, respectively. Residents of Huntingdon County have been adversely affected by downturns in the economic as reflected by a change in employment sectors (from manufacturing to service industries) and sustained periods of high unemployment (ranging in 2002 from 6 to 12% monthly unemployment).

The percent of families below poverty level is 8.2, with 12.1% below poverty with children under 18 years of age and 15.9% below poverty with related children under 5 years. Of families with female householder (no husband present), 28.0% are below poverty, 40.5% with children under 18 years are below poverty level, and 59.0% of female head of household families with children under 5 years of age are below poverty level.

## II. Local Planning Committee Structure

The Huntingdon County Child Care and Education Initiative began its work in March 2003 under the sponsorship of Families and Communities Together (FACT) Collaborative as part of their Children Action Team.

The Initiative was created to develop a comprehensive early care and education plan for Huntingdon County by June 30, 2003. From its inception to the end of the first funding year of the project, an Executive Committee has met to develop and implement the start-up plan. With the recruitment of members of the Initiative, the following has been accomplished:

1. **Organizational infrastructure.** An Executive Committee was recruited with six active members representing the community, CCIS, business and the Collaborative. The current membership (35 active members) of the Initiative was recruited with the major child care stakeholders actively involved in subcommittee work. As a result of strong coordination and communication, four (4) monthly meetings of the Initiative were held. A vision/mission statement was developed collaboratively and endorsed. Consistent with the philosophy of the FACT Collaborative, group leadership and consensus-based decision-making have been operational norms of the Initiative in identifying and addressing early care and education concerns.
2. **Comprehensive Child Care Plan.** Provider, parent, and employer surveys relative to child care needs and gaps in Huntingdon County were developed from standardized instruments in 2002. 5,500 parent surveys were distributed and 315 responses were received (6% return rate) by the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Analysis of these data and the development of a follow-up parent survey will be conducted in the current planning year.

In the development of the current plan, members of the Initiative participated in

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, Summary File 3, DP-3—Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics.

subcommittees to identify key priorities areas, as well as to develop goals and objectives. These form the foundation of the Initiative’s work for the next fiscal year and will be adapted and refined, as survey data are available. Four community forums will be conducted in three regions of the county to obtain a broad overview of the child care needs of parents. These findings be incorporated in the final report and will influence the prioritization of needs for the current and next fiscal year.

3. **Sustainability Plan for Child Care Initiative.** Linkages with the Collaborative’s Resource Development Group have been established and discussions with the Collaborative’s Coordination Team relative to supportive funding for planning purposes have been reviewed and endorsed. Subject to the availability of Family Service System Reform Initiative funding, these matching dollars will be used to leverage activities related to the goals and objectives of the plan. Through the efforts of members of the Collaborative participating in the Initiative, federal grant proposals to support early care and education will be monitored. Activities in the past year, for example training initiatives have garnered support of other state initiatives as well as local support from child care providers. The county, likewise, has provided technical assistance in the development of a map of child care providers and training and review of emergency management plans for each provider.
  
4. **Child Care Advocacy Plan.** Members of the Care4Kids Initiative have developed several educational and outreach media pieces to heightened the need for “quality” child care and the development of materials for distribution at health and community events. These projects will continue throughout the 2004-2005 planning year.

The Huntingdon County Child Care and Education Initiative has a current membership of 35 members representing child care providers, parents, local and state government, education, community-based organizations, and social service agencies. The current members of the Initiative are identified below:

**Table 11. Huntingdon County Child Care and Education Initiative Membership List – 2002-2003**

Name	Organizational Affiliation
Carol Allenbaugh	Families and Communities Together Collaborative
Mark Peters	Families and Communities Together Collaborative
Amy Streightiff	Child Care Information Services of Huntingdon County
Julie Duffey	Huntingdon County Business and Industry
Melanie Hawn	Center-based Day Care – Parent
Connie Baker	Child Care Resource Development Group
John LaRose	Child Care Resource Development Group
Deb White	Child Care Information Services of Huntingdon County
Debra Gregory	Penn State Cooperative Extension
Dawn Shields	Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11
Larry Sather	PA State Representative
Nancy Peone	PA State Representative – Assistant
Keith Black	PA State Representative – Assistant

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organizational Affiliation</b>
Louise Ketner	Huntingdon County Child and Adult Development Corporation
Margaret Kough	Huntingdon County Children's Services
Dick Sciablaba	United Way
Mike Honstine	Center-based/Faith-based Day Care Provider
Judy Wilson	Home Day Care Provider
Cordy Henry	Home Day Care Provider
Tammy Eastman	Parent Child Home Program
Dr. Martin Keeney	Center-based Day Care – Parent
Laurie Claar	Home Day Care Provider
Regina Raffenberger	Home Day Care Provider
Amy Reeder	Home Day Care Provider
Kathleen Reeves-Davignon	Home Day Care Provider
Donna Waleski	Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11 – Special Needs
Bethlyn Corbin	Huntingdon County Base Service Unit
Mary Wittaker-Myers	Tuscarora Intermediate Unit 11
Brenda Barron	Employment and Training Services, Inc. and PA CareerLink
Deb Cisney	Employment and Training Services, Inc. and PA CareerLink
Linda Hancock	Huntingdon County Information and Referral Services of Southwestern PA
Kara Cook-Ritchey	Center-based Day Care – Parent
Tonia Brode	Nurse-Family Partnership – Nurse Home Visitor
Jim Hoover	Huntingdon County Women-Infant-Child (WIC) Program
Christine Breene	Juniata College Early Childhood Center
Carolyn Lehman	Community member/concerned parent

The members of the Initiative come from the various regions of the county associated with the four school districts: Huntingdon Areas School District, Juniata Valley School District, Mount Union Area School District, and Southern Huntingdon County School District.

The membership of the Initiative has formed a number of subcommittees to identify needs, goals, objectives and action plans. Committees and members are identified below:

#### **Executive Committee**

- Melaine Hawn, Parent
- Amy Streightiff, CCIS
- Julie Duffey , Huntingdon County Business and Industry
- Carol Allenbaugh, Families and Communities Together Collaborative
- Mark Peters, Families and Communities Together Collaborative

### **Capacity Committee**

- Louise Ketner
- Amy Streightiff
- Carol Allenbaugh

### **Quality Committee**

- Laurie Claar
- Amy Reeder
- Regina Raffensberger
- Melanie Hawn
- Carol Allenbaugh

### **Child Care Career Development Committee**

- Judy Wilson
- Cordy Henry
- Judy Wilson
- Tammy Eastman
- Carol Allenbaugh

### **Families with Special Needs Children Committee**

- Bethlyn Corbin
- Donna Waleski
- Mary Myers
- Carol Allenbaugh

### **Parent/Public Education Committee**

- Deb White
- Dawn Shields
- Tonia Brode
- Debra Gregory

## **III. Progress for Planning Year 2003-2004**

Care4Kids has worked toward the following goals, objectives, and activities with respect to its primary goal of developing a comprehensive, integrated and quality early care and education system in the past year:

### **1. Capacity Committee: Increase the Capacity for Child Care in Huntingdon County**

- *Increase the capacity of the current child care provider system.* Increased the number of child care providers from 3 to 7 applying for the “First Step to Stars” grant opportunity with all (100%) receiving funding to enhance the quality and capacity of child care services.

- *Increase accessibility to child care services by reducing barriers to service.* In collaboration with the local Child Care Information Service and the Huntingdon County Planning Office created a Geographical Information System (GIS) map of child care providers in the county: a) to allow the CCIS and Capacity Committee to see where gaps in child care and early education services exist within the county, and b) for parent and employer/employee education as to provider locations to increase access to child care service.

- *Address costs associated with capacity-building initiatives and investigate available and additional funding sources.* Collaborated with Head Start/ Early Head Start to develop and submit an Early Learning Opportunities Act federal grant to improve early literacy and to support and expand early care and education throughout Huntingdon County. While not funded, the workgroup intends to resubmit a revised competitive application to provide tools and materials and provider education about early learning opportunities and literacy activities.

## 2. Quality Committee: Improve the Quality of Child Care and Education in Huntingdon County

- *Increase Safety of Child Care Provider Sites.* Collaborated with the local Emergency Management Coordinator to plan, develop, and present a provider training to create an approved emergency plan. Of 35 child care providers, 33 (94 % attendance rate) attended the training. The EMS Coordinator reviewed each plan to ensure its coordination with the county’s emergency plan.

- *Increase Funding to Ensure Quality of Services and Accessibility.* Increased from 3 to 7, the number of child care providers applying for the “First Step to Stars” grant opportunity with all (100%) receiving funding to enhance the quality and capacity of child care services.

- *Ensure that Child Care Services are Reliable and Dependable.* Action yet to be taken.

- *Improve System of Communication among Providers, Parents, and State.* Conducted regular meetings of Care4Kids where providers, parents, and state representatives were informed of and discussed local and state needs and initiatives. A “Provider Support Network” of home, group, and center providers was formed to discuss issues and needs, and to share resources.

- *Improve Quality Assurance Monitoring of Child Care Services.* Cooperated with Smart Start, Center County Local Community Planning Initiative, to distribute

window clings to providers and their families that say “I Can Be At Work Today Because Of Quality Child Care,” as a way to increase awareness of, need for, and extent of quality child care used by employees.

3. Career Development Committee: Increase Child Care Career Development Opportunities within Huntingdon County

- *Develop training schedule that meets the local needs of Huntingdon County child care providers.* Local providers and Penn State Cooperative Extension created a Huntingdon County Child Care Provider Training Calendar, to increase access to local DPW and TQAS approved hours for those involved with Keystone STARS. Local trainers have been approved for a “one time” TQAS certification to qualify the training toward the Keystone STARS process. Training was leveraged from state and local systems and trainers to provide local, low or no cost training to child care providers.

- *Increase the number of available training opportunities.* Developed a local training calendar that increases the number of local trainings from 2 to 10. DPW credit hours will be available as well as “one time” TQAS certification to qualify the training toward the Keystone STARS process.

- *Make trainings more accessible to providers throughout Huntingdon County.* Local training events will be hosted locally to increase access and addresses a high priority issue for providers who previously traveled out of the county for training.

4. Special Needs Committee: Increase the Availability and Accessibility of Child Care Services to Families with Special Needs Children

- *Identify the needs of families with children with special needs.* Action yet to be taken.

- *Increase the availability of child care that makes accommodations for children with mental and physical disabilities.* Action yet to be taken.

- *Increase linkages among family, child care providers, and educational system.* Worked within the various other committees to ensure that planning process was aware of, considered, and included special needs issues.

5. Parent/Public Education Committee: Increase Parent and Public Education relative to Child Care Services in Huntingdon County

- *Develop a media strategy to promote child care.* Created a new name and logo for easier public identification and awareness of the Care4Kids Initiative.

- *Develop stronger relationships with the medical community (i.e., pediatricians and medical centers), non-profit and business sectors.* Plans to produce and distribute a literacy development tool, “Books for Babies” booklet, which lists available children’s

books in the public library, parenting tools and tips for early literacy, and local parenting resources is in process. Window clings will be distributed by providers to their families that say “I Can Be At Work Today Because Of Quality Child Care,” as a way to increase awareness of, need for and utilization of quality of child care used by employees.

- *Develop educational and promotional materials on quality child care.* Care4Kids “Fact Sheets” are being finalized to serve as the Initiative’s brochure, community report card, and other topics on readiness for school, developmental stages, etc. for distribution to parents at work, community education events, and health fairs.

Barriers of the past year have included:

1) Sustaining involvement in the work of the initiative. Meeting in the evening—after working in a child care setting all day—proved to be challenging for sustained involvement. The formation of the provider support group and regular communication through minutes and email has helped to maintain the members’ awareness of activities and involvement.

2) Funding for Action Planning. The lack of funding has led to creative and low-cost solutions and a willingness to provide in-kind services to support these activities and outcomes. Several projects, however, are on hold because of a lack of funding. The initiative is requesting additional funding so that implementing their “action” planning may continue along with efforts to attract the investment of local dollars.

3) Involvement of Neighbor/Relative Providers. Neighbor/Relative providers represent a significant proportion (33.3%) of the subsidized child care system in Huntingdon County with an undetermined number who provide the service outside the subsidized system. The quality of this care varies widely and many avoid any involvement with a systems-related organization. As a greater number of families are using this level of child care, the implications on early learning are uncertain.

4) Measurement of Outcomes. The Initiative is concerned about the impact of planning efforts on early care and education, early learning opportunities, and readiness of children in the county for their first day of school. In the coming year, we want to know more about this and will request additional funding to begin answering this question.

## IV. Quality and Capacity Child Care Plan 2004

### Task One: Goals and Objectives

Last year’s focus upon: 1) assessing and strengthening the child care provider system and 2) increasing parent and public awareness of the importance of quality child care in Huntingdon County will continue within a broader framework--quality early learning

system--consistent with state and federal initiatives. Accordingly, the major goal of the project has been refined to: *Develop a comprehensive quality early learning system that involves partnership and collaboration at the local level so that children are ready for school and success in life.* The Initiative's priorities have been linked to the Commonwealth (CP) and federal BUILD Initiative's (BI) early learning priorities. Each respective committee will be responsible for implementing the following goals, objectives, and activities with support from and monitoring by the Project Coordinator:

## **1. Increase the Capacity of Early Care and Education in Huntingdon County**

- a. *Increase the capacity of the current early care and education system.* The Capacity Committee will focus upon:
  - 1) providing support and advocacy to encourage the adoption of full-day kindergarten in the remaining district by May 2005;
  - 2) recruiting, encouraging and assisting new child care providers to seek technical assistance when setting up their business to fill a current service gap by December 2004.
- b. *Increase accessibility to quality early care and learning services by reducing financial and availability barriers to service.* Proposed activities include:
  - 1) monitoring the number of regulated and unregulated early care providers by September 2004,
  - 2) encourage awareness of and complete participation in available funding and training programs by December 2004, and
  - 3) ensure the functionality of FACT Collaborative's website and availability of the GIS map of child care providers by September 2004 and provide quarterly updating of child care provider information and resources.
- c. *Address costs associated with capacity-building initiatives and investigate available and additional funding sources to assist early care educators.* Activities to include:
  - 1) consult with current providers about regulations by September 2004,
  - 2) reduce these barriers with available technical and financial assistance through CCRD by October 2004, and
  - 3) conduct a provider technical assistance training program by December 2004.

## **2. Improve the Quality of Child Care and Education in Huntingdon County**

- a. *Increase Safety of Child Care Provider Sites.* Activities to complete will include:
  - 1) coordinate and conduct two safety training programs by November 2004 and April 2005 for child care providers with safety incentives to induce unregulated providers to attend,
  - 2) distribute a safety checklist to parents for home use and when selecting or using a child care provider with emphasis upon unregulated neighbor/relative child care providers by September 2004.
- b. *Increase Funding to Ensure Quality of Services and Accessibility.* Actions to be completed include:
  - 1) ensure that all providers are aware of funding opportunities and,
  - 2) coordinate technical support within two weeks of an announcement and arrange, as needed, a training event to complete necessary applications.
- c. *Improve System of Communication among Providers, Parents, and State.* Actions to include:
  - 1) conduct six (6) Care4Kids meetings and distribute minutes and announcements on the Collaborative's website,
  - 2) continue to support and develop the monthly "Provider Support Network" meetings, and
  - 3) develop a Parent Forum for increased awareness of the importance of early care, general expectations of skills required for school readiness, and early learning opportunities to increase school readiness by December 2004.
- d. *Improve Quality Assurance Monitoring of Child Care Services.* The committee will accomplish the following:
  - 1) research indicators of quality early care and education by September 2004,
  - 2) develop a monitoring instrument/survey for use by parents and providers by November 2004 to enhance the quality of child care,
  - 3) devise a method for measuring whether the instrument changed the quality of parental and professional child care by December 2004, and

4) report the findings to the Care4Kids Initiative by January 2005.

### **3. Increase Child Care Career Development Opportunities within Huntingdon County**

*a. Implement the approved training schedule to increase the availability and accessibility of training opportunities. Activities to be accomplished include:*

1) coordinate training events and publicize the calendar through ads, web and provider list,

2) coordinate events with trainers and credentialing organizations by September 2004 to ensure proper credit is available,

3) determine type of participant incentives to provide following each training by September 2004, and

4) conduct and evaluate the training event and post the results of the event on the website within 30 days of the event.

*b. Increase the number of cross-systems trainings to promote and enhance early learning opportunities provided by early care professionals. To accomplish this objective, the following will occur:*

1) committee will coordinate and develop a cross-system training event with early care providers and full-day kindergarten school districts to enhance early learning opportunities, school readiness expectations, and knowledge of state standards by November 2004, and

2) develop by December 2004 a countywide early learning opportunities and school readiness booklet for use by parents and child care providers to enhance their understanding of the districts' school readiness expectations.

### **4. Increase the Availability and Accessibility of Child Care Services to Families with Special Needs Children**

*a. Identify the needs of families with children with special. The Special Needs Committee will:*

1) survey families with children with special needs as to their child care needs by October 2004, and

2) report their findings by November 2004.

*b. Increase the availability of child care that makes accommodations for children with mental and physical disabilities. The committee will:*

- 1) prepare and conduct a training for child care providers to increase their knowledge and skills in early identification of and in dealing more effectively with children with disabilities by December 2004, and
  - 2) produce a information packet for parents and child care providers by November 2004 about the early warning signs of a disability to increase early identification and referral sources for follow-up.
- c. Increase linkages among family, child care providers, and educational system. The committee will:*
- 1) increase by two the number of early screenings of infant and toddlers at regularly scheduled child-oriented community events (October, April, May, June) and provide follow-up contact for those in need of more complete evaluations.

## **5. Increase Parent and Public Education relative to the Importance and Value of Early Care and Education in Huntingdon County**

- a. Develop a media strategy to promote child care services in Huntingdon County. Activities to be completed will be:*
- 1) implement Care4Kids flier campaign to promote quality early care, school readiness, safety, parental and local stakeholder advocacy of affordable early care services, etc. by September 2004.
- b. Develop stronger relationships with the medical community (i.e., pediatricians and medical centers), non-profit and business sectors. The Parent/Public Awareness committee will:*
- 1) implement the “Books for Baby” program by identifying needed books by September 2004,
  - 2) recruit business and community financial support by November 2004, and
  - 3) announce and launch the distribution of the booklet by December 2004.
- c. Develop educational and promotional materials on quality child care. The committee will:*
- 1) go to scale with the Care4Kids fliers (September 2004), “I Can Be at Work Today Because of Quality Child Care” (September 2004), and “Books for Baby” (December 2004); and
  - 2) provide materials for posting on the Collaborative’s website on a quarterly basis related to quality care, early learning, school readiness, and other related

topics.

- d. *Develop an outcomes monitoring and reporting system on the impact of early care and education in Huntingdon County.* Activities associated with this objective will be to:
  - 1) collect, organize and report information about the status of children, youth and families in Huntingdon County by November 2004;
  - 2) identify a core set of expectations that schools have regarding school readiness, coordinate these with state and national indicators, and with the Parent and Public Awareness Committee, promote increased parental and early care provider understanding of school readiness expectations and early learning opportunities to prepare children for pre-school by January 2005;
  - 3) develop relationships with each full-day kindergarten so that the current status of entering children's readiness for school can be assessed as baseline data to measure the impact of full-day kindergarten by October 2004;
  - 4) inform the Initiative semi-annually of progress toward improvements of children in the county related to school readiness as well as systems integration efforts from data available from school districts; and
  - 5) collaborate with the Parent and Public Awareness Committee in the development and presentation of an annual community report and have it available to the public through the (FACT) Collaborative's website by June 2005.

## **Task Two: Care4Kids Advisory Group**

The membership of the Care4Kids Advisory Group, by stakeholder groups, number and percentage of the group, is as follows: child care providers (6, 23%); early intervention (5, 19%); parents (4, 15%); education and school districts (3, 12%); Head Start (2, 8%); communities-based organization (2, 8%); social services organizations (2, 8%); government services (1, 4%); and business (1, 4%).

Early membership—at the inception of the initiative--consisted of child care providers, parents and early intervention and prevention specialists. For the current planning year, the following will occur:

- a) recruit early childhood professionals and district administrators from the remaining two school districts by October 2004,
- b) recruit additional business sector representatives to support early care and learning advocacy and activities by September 2004; and

- c) recruit an additional county-level official to participate and advocate for early care and learning at the local and state level by September 2004.

To support and sustain the stakeholder Advisory Group the following will occur:

1. limited number and length of evening meetings of the Care4Kids Initiative,
2. conveniently scheduled committee meetings to complete goals and objectives,
3. posting committee activities, meeting minutes, and feedback to the FACT Collaborative website,
4. coordination of and support services to committee meetings to ensure member involvement and goal completion; and
5. celebration of successes.

Outreach activities occur by personal contact and interest, through identification of prospective by members of the Initiative for follow-up and recruitment by committee members or staff, and through information dissemination and community events.

Expectations of each stakeholder group include:

1. participate (attend meetings, become involved in committee work),
2. promote (share information, get others to think about and become involved in early care and education),
3. provide (bring ideas, resources, and solutions to the table), and
4. produce (get behind an idea or activity and work toward seeing it accomplished and celebrate its success).

The role of the Care4Kids Advisory Group is to implement identified goals and objectives, identify unmet needs, strategize a course of action and monitor the community agenda, and collect and disseminate outcome information related to early care and learning.

### **Task Three: Resource Development**

Evidence of capacity to leverage resources includes the following. A collaborative federal grant, Early Learning Opportunities Act, was developed and submitted by Louise Ketner, Huntingdon County Child and Adult Development Corporation (federal Head Start grantee) and represented \$8,000 to \$10,000 of in-kind service to apply for the grant. Families and Communities Together (FACT) Collaborative (Mark Peters, Project Director) provided administrative services in the amount of \$10,000 in donated services

and support. Huntingdon County Planning Office (Richard Stahl, Director) provided \$300 of in-kind service on the GIS Child Care Resource Mapping project. Huntingdon County Emergency Management Services (Adam Miller, Director) developed and presented a three-hour training and reviewed each plan for compliance--donated services of \$750. Juniata College (Dr. Cynthia DeVries, Department of Sociology) provided \$4,000 of in-kind service in the GIS Resource Mapping Project and Child Care Survey. Advisory Group members have provided \$5,000 of in-kind services in meeting time and committee projects. Success-by-Six, Centre County, provided technical information and resources (\$2,500 in-kind donation) for reaching parents and gave permission to reproduce ideas and materials for dissemination in Huntingdon County. The Paisley Group (Toni Duchi, President) donated \$800 in professional services in the development of the marketing strategy for the Initiative.

In the current planning year, the following resource development activities will occur:

1. business sector support for implementing the “Books for Baby” booklet project. The county librarian will identify books that need to be purchased by September 2004; recruitment by the Executive Committee and Advisory Group of business leaders to purchase books will be completed by November 2004; media coverage, placement of the books in the libraries, and announcement of the availability of the booklet by December 2004;
2. the Resource Development Committee of FACT Collaborative will identify at least one additional funding source to support early learning, literacy, professional early care development, and/or parent involvement by April 2005;
3. school district and business support of a teacher and child care provider cross-system training on and publication of a parent resource book about early learning environments and opportunities by November 2004; and
4. business support (cooperative project with Huntingdon County Business and Industry and Huntingdon Area Chamber of Commerce) to conduct two (2) business breakfasts related to early care and education by November 2004 and April 2005 to raise awareness and to seek resource sharing of parent and public awareness campaign.

#### **Task Four: Child Care Systems Infrastructure Development**

The development of a professional development and training calendar consisting of DPW and TQAS approved trainings has been an important infrastructure development in the previous year.

Support of the local training system (PA Pathways and Keystone STARS) and Penn State Cooperative Extension has been instrumental in assuring that training hours will apply to the respective programs, and are more widely and easily available within the county for child care providers. Two (2) child care providers are currently enrolled in the TEACH

program and additional information has been and will continue to be made available to child care providers about the availability of the program. Support of the CCIS and CCRD systems is active with the full participation of the CCIS Director on the Executive Committee of Care4Kids, and regular and routine involvement of CCRD staff with the Care4Kids Project Coordinator and meetings.

In the current planning year, greater emphasis and support of local training events will continue in close collaboration with CCRD and other state-funded training programs.

### **Task Five: Community Collaboration**

There are a limited number of local planning efforts within Huntingdon County: Huntingdon County Healthy Communities Partnership (SHIP), Head Start, Literacy Council, and Families and Communities Together Collaborative and its associated planning endeavors (Care4Kids and Huntingdon County Community Prevention Collaborative Initiative). Members of Care4Kids are actively involved and key leaders in these planning initiatives as they relate to child development, school readiness and success, and prevention-oriented services to young children and their families.

Several initiatives are working toward the development of a common set of community indicators and a comprehensive community "Report Card." Care4Kids will be involved in developing the early childhood, and early care and education section of the Report Card by June 2005.