



# **Parke County Early Care and Education Coalition Strategic Plan**

**2022-2026**

## Vision

Our vision is to create a community where all young children thrive and excel.

## Background

Cyndi Todd, Executive Director of Partnership Parke County, reached out to Transform Consulting Group (TCG) for assistance in forming an early childhood education coalition in Parke County to help address their child care issues. They want to deepen their understanding of the need for early childhood education (ECE) in the community to inform their future ECE strategy. Partnership Parke County, with funding from The Parke County Community Foundation and Scott Pet Products, engaged TCG to help assess the community's needs and create a strategic plan for the Coalition.

TCG created a Needs Assessment for early childhood education in Parke County using quantitative data gathered from public sources, and qualitative data from a variety of key stakeholders. This was summarized into an early childhood community needs assessment report.

The Coalition then worked to identify goals and strategies to further their efforts in early childhood education in Parke County. The goals and strategies are further outlined in this document, including action items, timeline, and committee structure.

## Needs Assessment

Key findings:

- There are 1,212 young children in Parke County, which is less than one tenth (7%) of the total population.
- The number of young children is declining at a higher rate in Parke County than it is in surrounding counties. Between 2015 and 2025, the number of children under five is expected to decrease by almost 80 (8%).
- At less than a one quarter (21%), Parke County ranks 27th in the State of Indiana for the number of children ages 5 and under who live in poverty.
- Less than one quarter (20%) of young children live in single parent households. This is significantly less than the State's rate of one third (32%).
- One half (49%) of young children need care in Parke County because all parents are working. This percentage is considerably less than Indiana's average (64%).
- The average annual cost of high-quality early care and education tuition for families in Parke County is \$4,731 for one child, which is lower than Indiana's average of \$6,804.
- Only 84 (14%) young children of those who need care are enrolled in a high-quality rated program.

<b>Quick Facts</b>	<b>1,212</b> Children under 6	<b>590</b> Children under 6 in need of care	<b>321</b> Known spots available for young children in early care and education programs	<b>84</b> Spots available for young children in high-quality rated programs
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## Goals

The Parke County County ECE Coalition has identified the following four goals to implement over the next five years:

**Access**

**Promotion/  
Affordability**

**Quality/  
Kindergarten  
Readiness**

**Staffing**

# Strategic Action Plan

## Goal: Access

### Strategies:

- Reach out to unlicensed providers
- Explore how schools can expand care
- Provide grants for programs to expand capacity and address facility barriers
- Provide Transportation

## Goal: Promotion/Affordability

### Strategies:

- Create an early care and education coordinator position
- Create a “brand” and “name” for the Coalition
- Get buy in from community and elected officials
- Build a website to be a “go to” resource for community partners, parents, programs and stakeholders
- Partner with organizations that can help disseminate information to parents and employees to help make the case of the importance of the first five years

## Goal: Quality/Kindergarten Readiness

### Strategies:

- Provide professional learning to early care and education professionals to enhance student success
- Promote participation in publicly funded early learning programs to ensure families are leveraging existing funding resources
- Increase the number of programs and seats rated high-quality by the state’s definition (and set a goal to increase by xx # or xx %)
- Strengthen and unify kindergarten round-ups across school districts
- Create kindergarten readiness materials/resources for parents

## Goal: Staffing

### Strategies:

- Grow Workforce and Improve Retention
- Build a network of cohesive programs

## Strategic Plan - Timeline

This is a proposed overview of how the strategic plan will be implemented over the next five years. Some of the strategies will require action steps before the end of the year.

Year 1 - 2022	Year 2 - 2023	Year 3 - 2024	Year 4 - 2025	Year 5 - 2026
<p>Reach out to unlicensed providers</p> <p>Create an early care and education coordinator position</p> <p>Create a “brand” and “name” for the Coalition</p> <p>Provide professional learning to early care and education professionals to enhance student success</p>	<p>Explore how schools can expand care</p> <p>Get buy in from community and elected officials</p> <p>Promote participation in publicly funded early learning programs to ensure families are leveraging existing funding resources</p> <p>Grow Workforce and Improve Retention</p>	<p>Build a website to be a “go to” resource for community partners, parents, programs and stakeholders</p> <p>Partner with organizations that can help disseminate information to parents and employees to help make the case of the importance of the first five years</p> <p>Increase the number of programs and seats rated high-quality by the state’s definition (and set a goal to increase by xx # or xx %)</p>	<p>Provide grants for programs to expand capacity and address facility barriers</p> <p>Strengthen and unify kindergarten round-ups across school districts</p> <p>Build a network of cohesive programs</p>	<p>Provide Transportation</p> <p>Create kindergarten readiness materials/resources for parents</p>

## Strategic Plan - Implementation Framework

### Goal: Access

Access Objective 1: Reach out to unlicensed providers

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Work to identify current unlicensed providers, and create a list	Program Committee	Year 1
Contact each provider or hold an informational meeting on becoming licensed	Program Committee	Year 1
Partner with CCR&Rs to help educate unlicensed programs/ work with them to license	Program Committee	Year 1

Access Objective 2: Explore how schools can expand care

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Connect local schools with resources and funding to create and/or expand ECE spots	Program Committee	Year 2

Access Objective 3: Provide grants for programs to expand capacity and address facility barriers

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Identify funding partners to create a grant program	Program Committee	Year 4
Create an administrative process for applications and funding	Program Committee	Year 4
Market the grant through the communication channels the Coalition has set up	Marketing Committee	Year 4

Access Objective 4: Provide Transportation

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Identify partners who have the potential of providing transportation (schools, public transit)	Program Committee	Year 5
Identify/apply for funding to help increase transportation to ECE programs	Program Committee	Year 5

## Goal: Promotion/Affordability

Promotion/Affordability Objective 1: Create an early care and education coordinator position

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Oversee the coalition's mission, goals, and marketing	Program Committee	Year 1
Build relationships with targeted community partners, employers and programs	Program Committee	Year 1
Connect parents and employers with resources	Program Committee	Year 1
Maintain and update the website and other communication channels	Program Committee	Year 1
Attend community events to build awareness	Program Committee	Year 1

Promotion/Affordability Objective 2: Create a “brand” and “name” for the Coalition

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Brainstorm and create a logo and color scheme to build unity and awareness for the work	Marketing Committee/ Coordinator	Year 1

Promotion/Affordability Objective 3: Get buy in from community and elected officials

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Host a breakfast or luncheon to explain the importance of child care	Marketing Committee/ Coordinator	Year 2

Promotion/Affordability 4: Build a website to be a “go to” resource for community partners, parents, programs and stakeholders

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Use examples from other communities as a model to determine the information to include on your website	Marketing Committee/ Coordinator	Year 3
Create a website or a designated webpage on a partner's website	Marketing Committee/ Coordinator	Year 3



Promotion/Affordability Objective 5: Partner with organizations that can help disseminate information to parents and employees to help make the case of the importance of the first five years

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Identify key partners (Human Resource Directors, birthing units at hospitals, pediatricians, OB-GYNs, and other places that families frequent to disseminate the information	Marketing Committee/ Coordinator	Year 3
Recommend partnering with your new Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R) who shares this role and responsibility and could help package and disseminate the information	Marketing Committee/ Coordinator	Year 3

## Goal: Quality/Kindergarten Readiness

Quality/Kindergarten Readiness Objective 1: Provide professional learning to early care and education professionals to enhance student success

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Provide targeted professional development and training addressing different topic areas and need	Program Committee	Year 1
Help more teachers get their CDA credential (run cohorts)	Program Committee	Year 1
Partner with local higher education institutions to offer training and other experiences for teachers	Program Committee	Year 1
Partner with K12 schools to include early childhood teachers in their trainings	Program Committee	Year 1
Provide stipends to teachers to go to workshops/ trainings and pay for a substitute in their absence	Program Committee	Year 1
Provide scholarships for teachers to attend conferences (ie., INAEYC)	Program Committee	Year 1

Quality/Kindergarten Readiness Objective 2: Promote participation in publicly funded early learning programs to ensure families are leveraging

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Fill Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment spots	Program Committee	Year 2



Promote and help enroll families to receive child care vouchers and On My Way Pre-K vouchers	Program Committee	Year 2
Work with K-12 school partners to layer their funding streams to enroll more families, specifically low-income	Program Committee	Year 2

Quality/Kindergarten Readiness Objective 3: Increase the number of programs and seats rated high-quality by the state's definition (and set a goal to increase by xx # or xx %)

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Identify programs willing to work towards increasing their PTQ quality rating	Program Committee	Year 3
Help the programs identify what they need to increase their quality rating	Program Committee	Year 3
Assist in finding resources to help programs get what they need to increase their quality rating	Program Committee	Year 3

Quality/Kindergarten Readiness Objective 4: Strengthen and unify kindergarten round-ups across school districts

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Use the state's new Kindergarten Readiness Indicators (KRI) assessment tool in all pre-k programs and classrooms in the county	Program Committee	Year 4
Combine the results of the KRI tool to assess the readiness of kindergarteners and identify areas to strengthen in the Pre-K programs through professional development, coaching and other support	Program Committee	Year 4
Create a combined round-up for the county (where all school districts come together)	Program Committee	Year 4
Use Kindergarten round up not only to assess incoming students but also as an opportunity to communicate this assessment with parents	Program Committee	Year 4
Share follow-up information to parents with tips and strategies for what they can do to help their children be ready for kindergarten (like a "countdown to Kindergarten by week or by month community wide)	Program Committee	Year 4

Quality/Kindergarten Readiness Objective 5: Create kindergarten readiness materials/resources for parents

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Create a kindergarten readiness/parent passport tool on the website to help parents know how to prepare their children for kindergarten	Marketing Committee	Year 5

## Goal: Staffing

Staffing Objective 1: Grow Workforce and Improve Retention

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Develop scholarship program for early learning professionals to continue their education	Program Committee	Year 2
Develop partnership with high school-based career centers/Ivy Tech/local colleges or universities, create an apprenticeship program	Program Committee	Year 2
Pilot a financial stipend for new hires (sign-on bonus, 90-day, 180-day and 1-year bonuses) to help with recruitment and retention	Program Committee	Year 2
Host a community award and recognition dinner for all programs and teachers	Marketing Committee	Year 2
Offer grants to programs to implement a wellness program and space for their teachers to support their emotional well being	Program Committee	Year 2
Determine feasibility of loan forgiveness program for teachers	Program Committee	Year 2

Staffing Objective 2: Build a network of cohesive programs

Action Steps	Responsibility	Time Frame
Develop cohorts (for family child care, church-based preschools, etc.)	Program Committee	Year 4
Provide training on topics relevant to their needs	Program Committee	Year 4

## Stakeholders

The following organizations were involved in the development of the strategic plan:

- Chances and Services for Youth (CASY)
- Country Kids Family Child Care
- Head Start/Community Action Program of Western Indiana
- Hamilton Center
- Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children (INAEYC)
- Ivy Tech
- North Central Parke School Corporation
- Parents
- Parke County Chamber of Commerce
- Parke County Community Foundation
- Parke County Council
- Parke County REMC
- Partnership Parke County
- Purdue Extension Health and Human Services
- Rockville Correctional Facility
- Rockville Elementary School
- Scott Pet Products
- Southwest Parke School Corporation
- THRIVE West Central
- Turkey Run Elementary School
- Valley Professionals