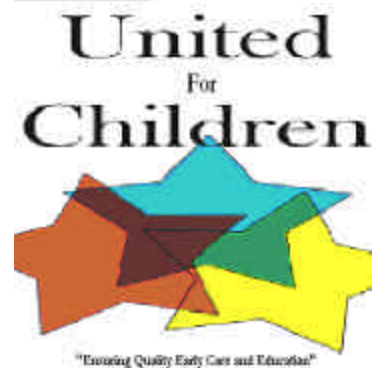


United for Children

"Ensuring Quality Early Care and Education"

*Formerly known as the Allegheny County Local Planning Group (ACLPG)
For Early Care and Education*



Background Information

Since January 2002, over 80 individuals representing many organizations in Allegheny County have collaborated in a process to develop a comprehensive plan for early care and education. Prior to this, there was no community organized and driven plan, and there was no organized system for working collectively and in a coordinated fashion in Allegheny County.

With funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, the Allegheny County Local Planning Group for Early Care and Education completed the plan in June 2003 and initiated the beginning of a comprehensive system for early care and education. **The mission: "one coordinating group, developing and implementing one plan that brings many people together to ensure quality early care and education in Allegheny County."** Why focus on ensuring quality services? Because research has shown that children who participate in high quality early learning programs demonstrate improved school readiness, particularly children at risk for starting school behind.

Implementation efforts are being coordinated by the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development and a Steering Team that covers seven focus areas. Steering Team members include:

- **Advocacy/Public Awareness** – *Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children,*
- **Capacity** – *Child Care Partnerships at the YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh,*
- **Parent Engagement** – *The Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension,*
- **Professional Development** – *The Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children,*
- **Quality** – *The Allegheny Conference on Community Development,*
- **Special Needs** – *The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers,*
- **Transition** – *School Readiness Group,* and
- **Members-at-Large** – *Shady Lane Resources and the Children's Cabinet.*

Each Steering Team member leads work groups to reach out and involve the full community in working together to improve quality and to direct the Plan. Steering Team and work group meetings are held regularly and are open to all interested organizations and/or individuals. Please contact Wendy Etheridge Smith at (412) 244-7089 or wee@pitt.edu if you would like to learn more and get involved in our Allegheny County early care and education system.