



ECRC Community Chronicle

EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER :: *Fall News 2017*

Going Regional

THE ECRC BROADENS ITS SERVICE AREA

We're excited to announce that the Early Childhood Resource Center is going regional and adding locations.

As of July 1st, the state of Ohio has named the ECRC the child care resource and referral agency for **Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Trumbull counties**. This state award significantly expands the ECRC's service area, taking it from primarily serving Stark County to serving a six-county area of northeastern Ohio.

Ohio's resource and referral agencies ensure that parents, educators, and the community have the information they need to give our

children the best possible start. The work is a crucial part of realizing the state's vision of all children being valued, healthy, and happy.

There's a great need for resource and referral services.

In 2016, nearly 70,000 families received referrals from Ohio's resource and referral agencies, and more than 38,000 care providers accessed training.

In addition, more than 3,200 early childhood programs received on-site technical assistance.

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We're thrilled that the state of Ohio has named us a regional child care resource and referral agency. This expansion will allow us to serve so many more families and educators, and reach many more communities.

Although our service area is expanding, this is simply an extension of the work we've done throughout our 17 years in operation.

- We've always assisted families in identifying high-quality child care options.
- We've always provided professional development, coaching, and technical assistance for educators.
- We've always worked to ensure the community understands what high-quality early childhood programs look like and values their role in securing our future.

We're proud to be the early childhood resource and referral hub for Stark County. And we're pleased to have the opportunity to serve Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Summit, and Trumbull counties as well. We look forward to forging productive collaborations throughout the region.

Amanda Kendle

AMANDA KENDLE, BOARD CHAIR

Scott Hasselman

SCOTT HASSELMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ECRC: AT YOUR SERVICE!

GOING REGIONAL *continued from page 1*

To ensure convenient access throughout the region and to ensure local needs are met locally, the ECRC's Canton facility will serve Stark and Portage counties; a Warren office will serve Trumbull and Mahoning counties; and an Akron office will serve Summit and Medina counties. Each office will serve as its own community early childhood hub offering resources, referrals, training, and assistance.

All three offices can be reached through a central phone number: **877.691.8521**

FAMILIES can call 877.691.8521 for help in finding child care. The ECRC's referral specialists will guide them through the more than 1,500 available options to find providers that meet their needs, even if they need a provider who offers unconventional hours, speaks a language other than English, or can care for children with disabilities.

EDUCATORS AND CARE PROVIDERS have access to numerous professional development opportunities through the ECRC, as well as on-site assistance with quality improvement, family engagement, business practices, and licensing standards.

We will also be educating **THE COMMUNITY** about the importance of high-quality early education and care. We will be distributing information about Ohio's Step Up To Quality rating system and working to ensure employers understand the value of making child care accessible to all employees.

OUR NEW RESOURCE AND REFERRAL STAFF MEMBERS ARE EXCITED TO GET TO WORK!



Guiding Educators and Families to High-Quality Care

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

As the region's resource and referral agency, the ECRC is expected to guide early childhood providers as they work to enter and ascend the state's five-star Step Up To Quality rating system. The year 2020 is right around the corner, and all providers receiving public funding must be star rated by then. As the table shows, there's a lot of work to do:

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS RECEIVING PUBLIC FUNDING

County	Number of Providers	Percentage that are Star Rated
Trumbull	76	34%
Stark	132	29%
Portage	46	26%
Medina	52	27%
Summit	206	29%
Mahoning	158	23%
	670	28%

The goal is to ensure that approximately 55% of all programs in the region are star rated by the end of 2018, with 70% star rated by the end of 2019. To accomplish this, staff will reach out to providers in high-need areas

For families, a star rating indicates that a program goes far above and beyond minimum licensing standards.

to help them achieve their goals. Support will include professional development, technical assistance, peer support groups, and guidance throughout the process for administrators and educators alike.

The ECRC is also expected to help the community understand what the star ratings mean and why they should value high quality in early childhood programs.

For families, a star rating indicates that a program goes far above and beyond minimum licensing standards to offer highly trained teachers, a focus on school readiness, a commitment to continuous improvement, and an emphasis on family engagement.

An extensive marketing campaign will help families understand how to Follow the Stars. Brochures and other marketing pieces will be produced and disseminated throughout all six counties at community events, pediatricians' offices, schools, child care centers, housing developments, social services agencies, libraries, and health departments. Information will also be shared via both traditional and social media. Community organizations will be asked to spread the word as well. The ECRC intends to reach 20,000 families and community organizations by the end of 2018, and another 25,000 by the end of 2019. ♦



FOLLOW THE STARS TO HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE

These are some differences between the star ratings.

ONE-STAR PROGRAMS 	TWO-STAR PROGRAMS <i>Programs meet all one-star criteria, plus:</i> 	THREE-STAR PROGRAMS <i>Programs meet all two-star criteria, plus:</i> 	FOUR- & FIVE-STAR PROGRAMS <i>Programs meet all three-star criteria. They also focus on improving in ways that support their values, goals, & structure.</i> 
<p>Program researches curriculum.</p>	<p>Program obtains curriculum.</p>	<p>Program implements selected curriculum in activity planning.</p>	<p>Program plans developmentally appropriate activities; teacher-child ratios may be lower than state requirement.</p>
<p>Program researches developmental screening tools.</p>	<p>Program obtains a screening tool; trained staff screen children for developmental needs.</p>	<p>Screenings are administered at least annually. All children receive formal & informal assessments.</p>	<p>Children's screening results inform referrals; assessment results are used to individualize learning/development goals.</p>
<p>Program collects family information & provides community resources.</p>	<p>Program collects family information & provides family engagement, education, & access to resources.</p>	<p>Families & staff develop goals for children; families are given information on comprehensive health screenings.</p>	<p>Program shares assessment results with family, transition planning supports families, parent group may be established.</p>
<p>Program selects a tool to assess program quality.</p>	<p>Program completes self-assessments to evaluate program & write goals.</p>	<p>Action plans with improvement goals are written & implemented.</p>	<p>Community partners & families complete annual surveys to help plan improvements; program may be accredited by an approved organization.</p>
<p>Professional development plans are created for all staff & updated annually.</p>	<p>Teachers are formally observed at hire & then annually.</p>	<p>Formal teacher observations inform teachers' professional development plans.</p>	<p>Formal teacher observations are used to plan additional professional development & program goals.</p>
<p>Staff complete required specialized in-service training.</p>	<p>Teachers attend training & may earn credential leading to a degree.</p>	<p>At least 50% of teachers must have credentials or degrees.</p>	<p>Administrators & teachers have higher levels of education.</p>

Engaging Families, One Center at a Time

Part of becoming a high-quality child care center is making sure families are engaged in their children's early development. In fact, the state of Ohio won't allow a center to become star rated unless a family engagement plan is in place. By 2020, all centers accepting public funding will need to be star rated. That means family engagement is becoming increasingly crucial for centers in high-need communities.

The Ohio Children's Trust Fund has awarded the ECRC a grant to help centers boost engagement. The ECRC's strengthening families coordinators will work directly with staff members at 60 high-need centers in Ashland, Holmes, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Trumbull, and Wayne counties.

The coordinators will help the child care centers offer training

for families, create opportunities for parent volunteering, and work with families to set goals for their children.

The coordinators will train some center staff members to facilitate Parent Cafés. At these small group discussion sessions, parents share their viewpoints and experiences. The process helps parents develop resilience, connect with others, and learn new parenting strategies.

Some center staff members will be trained to deliver other parenting education programs as well. In addition, staff members will learn about community resources that are available for the families they serve.

To ensure responsiveness to the unique communities they're serving, coordinators outside of Stark County will be conveniently housed at our new regional offices. ✦

Learning How to be a Dad

I would like to take the time and personally thank the 24/7 Dad program.

I took the classes a year ago and still practice what I have learned today. I grew up not having a father figure in my life. When I had children myself, I was not sure what my duties as a father were. I never thought about how the way I act will directly affect my children.

The 24/7 Dad program showed me several coping skills that I apply every single day:

- I learned how to cope with my anger when I get frustrated and not take it out on my children.*
- I learned how to communicate properly with my children.*
- I learned how to create a bond with my children being a father and a friend.*
- I learned how to be a role model for my family and for myself.*
- I communicate with my wife, never argue with my children around, and always make time for my family.*

I just wanted to thank the 24/7 Dad program for teaching me how to be a father, a husband, and a better man.

— Ryan Myers

24/7 DAD CLASSES

The National Fatherhood Initiative's **24/7 Dad**® curriculum helps fathers learn to be involved, responsible, and committed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

24/7 Dad is one of several parenting education courses offered by the ECRC. It supports the growth and development of fathers and children as caring and compassionate people who treat themselves, others, and the environment with respect and dignity.

The program focuses on building self-awareness, self-caring, fathering skills, and relationship skills.

PNC presents
 The Early Childhood Resource Center's
The Big, Big, Really Big TOY BOX
 Sunday, September 24th
 Cultural Center for the Arts in Canton

Family Fun You Won't Want to Miss

The ECRC is always looking for innovative ways to serve as a community resource. One way we do that is our annual *Big, Big, Really Big Toy Box* family event. Sure, it's a fun outing for the family on a Sunday afternoon. But it's also so much more than that.

The event will offer lots of developmentally appropriate activities that engage young children and help them learn about our world. At the event, they'll be able to explore physics (by creating super-sized bubbles, riding the big slide, or taking a train ride), strengthen fine motor skills (by making a wide variety of crafts), and learn about cause and effect (by playing mini-golf, tossing a football, or building with giant blocks). There will be many other activities to help children learn and discover. We hope parents recreate our ideas at home! Children will even get to strengthen their social-emotional skills by interacting with life-size versions of some of their favorite characters, including Elmo, Batman, and Daniel Tiger.

Join us from 2-6 pm to make family memories that will last a lifetime. Tickets can be purchased for \$5 at the door.



The Big, Big, Really Big TOY BOX

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EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

1718 CLEVELAND AVENUE NORTHWEST
CANTON, OHIO 44703

ecresourcecenter.org

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the Early Childhood Resource Center is to promote the healthy development of young children by strengthening families, improving the quality of early learning experiences, increasing school and community readiness, and informing public policy.

CENTER HOURS (NEW!)

Monday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The Center is closed on weekends.

330.491.3272

ECRC has chosen to print responsibly on recycled paper.

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The ECRC Board of Directors plays an important role in providing fiscal and legal oversight, making policy decisions, conducting strategic planning, and more. Chosen for their professional expertise and understanding of early childhood issues, each board member can serve a maximum of three three-year terms.