We want the children of our community to be successful....

Let’s get them off to a good start with quality early learning!
Why?

Why our community should know about the importance of early learning:

Quality early learning promotes positive brain development.

Skills such as language, math, logic, relationship-building, self-esteem, all begin at birth. From birth to age 3, 85% of the brain has developed. This increases to 90% of the brain by the age of five.

“The brain undergoes its most rapid development in the first three years of life, and in this development the environment plays a central role. Nerve connections that are associated with specific skills such as language are developed during this critical period.”

Robert Dugger, managing partner of Hanover Investment Group and co-founder of the Partnership for America’s Economic Success

Having access to affordable quality early childhood programs acts as an educational foundation for children and provides an opportunity to “set the stage” for their entire lives.

Children who participate in quality early education programs:
• Are more ready for school and are more likely to do well in school.
• Are less likely to need special education services.
• Are more likely to do well on academic achievement tests.
• Are more likely to graduate high school
• Are more likely to attend college

Quality Childhood Education has economic benefits.

Access to early childhood education has positive financial impacts for families and the community! Research has shown that families with access to child care assistance are up to 15 percent more likely to be employed, stay off welfare, and have higher earnings.

Quality early learning translates into a successful economic environment for the long term in which businesses can hire skilled employees and new industries can enter Pennsylvania with quality, skilled jobs.

“The skills employers look for in quality employees, such as being team-oriented, literate and numerate, are capacities that are essentially shaped by age five. A child’s early years provide a small window of opportunity for development. Once that window closes, it is much more difficult for children who are behind in their development to catch up.”

Robert Dugger, managing partner of Hanover Investment Group and co-founder of the Partnership for America’s Economic Success

Quality early learning saves tax dollars.

“Every $1 spent on high quality early education saves $7 in reduced future expenditures for special education, delinquency, crime control, welfare, and lost taxes.”


Pre-K is important because we want all of our children to be successful in school and in life.

Early Learning Opportunities in Warren and Forest Counties…..Something for Everyone!

Head Start: a comprehensive child development program that serves income-eligible children ages 3 to 5 and their families. The program promotes social competency and school-readiness including literacy and number recognition within a classroom center-based learning environment. Classrooms are located throughout Warren County and in Tionesta in Forest County.

Child Care Center: serves seven or more children and is licensed through the Department of Public Welfare to meet the health and safety standards. The child care facilities have the option of participating in the Keystone STARS program to improve the quality of care, services, and education.

Child Care Facilities include:

- Grace Day Care
- Jefferson Defrees Family Center
- Kid’s Choice Day Care (Marienville)
- North Warren Presbyterian Day Care
- Rose Children’s Center
- Russell United Methodist Day Care
- Ruth M. Smith Day Care Center
- Warren County YMCA Child Care

Preschools: Preschool programs for 3 to 5 year olds come in many forms, ranging from private academic preschools to parochial operated facilities. Some programs are half day, while others are full day. Most meet two, three, or four days per week.

Preschool Facilities:

- Don Mills Achievement Center
- First United Methodist Church Creative Preschool
- Forest Area School District
- Gloria Chase Preschool
- St. Joseph School
- Sugar Grove Free Methodist Imaginative Preschool
- Tidioute Charter School
- Warren YMCA Preschool
- Youngsville First United Methodist Church

Financial Help is Available

Child Care Works: The CCIS assists working parents with the cost of child care using a sliding scale based on family size and monthly income. Applications and locations of licensed and registered providers are available on-line at www.compass.state.pa.us. In addition, information on choosing quality child care, opening a child care facility, and state regulations is available upon request.

Pre-K Scholarship: Warren-Forest EOC sponsors the Pre-K Scholarship Program to assist families with the cost of early learning programs for 3 and 4 year olds. This program is made possible through the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program. Money from Ellwood Group, Northwest Savings Bank, PNC Bank, Highmark, and UPMC Health Plan assisted 113 children with the cost of quality Pre-K Programs in Warren and Forest Counties. Because of the scholarship and other programs offered at no cost or minimal cost, the financial barriers for pre-K programs has been eliminated.

For more information about Child Care Works or the Pre-K Scholarship program, contact Tish Montgomery at 726-1361.
Office of Child Development and Early Learning Programs (OCDEL)

Keystone STARS
Keystone STARS is an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to improve, support, and recognize quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania. Keystone STARS recognizes four levels of quality performance standards that allow providers to achieve a quality rating designated by one or more stars.

Star 4
- Jefferson DeFrees Family Center
- Beaty Warren Middle School After School Program

Star 2
- Kid's Choice Day Care (Marienville)
- Rouse Children's Center
- Rita Kelly Family Day Care
- Lisa Jordan Family Day Care

Star 1
- YMCA of Warren
- Sandra Benedict Family Day Care
- JoAnn Gazdak Family Day Care
- Lori Ann Johnson Family Day Care
- Marina Yeager Family Day Care
- Kelley Sansgiver Family Day Care
- Lucinda Benner Family Day Care

PA Pre-K Counts
PA Pre-K Counts was established by the PA Department of Education to bring quality pre-K to 3 and 4 year olds. In Warren County, 12 children participated in this program through our two sites: Jefferson DeFrees Family Center and Warren-Forest EOC. The children follow the district schedule and are involved in early learning 6 hours a day.

Child Care Works
Child Care Works is a subsidized childcare program to assist families in paying for quality childcare for qualified families based on a set of income guidelines. In addition, the staff educate parents on the importance of quality child care and early education. More than 462 children were subsidized in Warren and Forest Counties.

Mission Statement
We, the Warren-Forest Early Care and Education Coalition, will make a positive difference in the lives of children and families by supporting accessible, quality child care and early education so that our children will achieve their highest potential in school and life.

Who We Are.....
The EOC’s Warren-Forest Early Care and Education Coalition is an active group of stakeholders from our schools, health and welfare agencies, child care provider community, organizations, businesses, and families that are committed to the advancement and promotion of quality early care and education for the young children of our community. Our lead agency is the Warren-Forest Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. and we are funded by a grant from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

This proactive, dedicated, energetic group works together to create positive change in many aspects of early care and education in our community. Research clearly shows that quality early care and education is critical to the development of the young mind. 90% of brain development occurs before the age of 5. It is imperative that all children have access to quality care and education to ensure their success in school and in life. The Early Care and Education Coalition is dedicated to making this happen in Warren and Forest Counties.

 Participating Members:
- Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems
- Don Mills Achievement Center
- EOC's Child Care Information Services
- EOC’s Head Start
- First United Methodist Church Creative Pre-School
- Forest Area School District
- Forest County Assistance Office
- Forest County Department of Human Services
- Forest County State Health Center
- Grace United Methodist Church Promise Preschool
- Henry R. Rouse Children's Center
- Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield/CHIP/Caring Place
- Intermediate Unit 5
- Intermediate Unit 6
- Jefferson DeFrees Family Center
- Keystone STARS
- Kid's Choice Learning Center
- Russell United Methodist Day Care
- Ruth M. Smith Day Care Center
- St. Joseph’s Educational Center
- Warren County Assistance Office
- Warren County Court
- Warren County Department of Human Services
- Warren County Library Association
- Warren County School District
- Warren County State Health Center
- Warren County YMCA Preschool and Day Care
- Youngsville First United Methodist Church Preschool
Highlights of 2010-11

- Coordinated the Pre-K Scholarship program. Area businesses contributed $205,556 through the Earned Income Tax Credit program. The money was used to assist 113 children with the cost of early learning.

- Conducted community outreach to inform parents, legislators, business leaders and the community at large about the importance of early learning.

- Provided information about the importance of early learning and the availability of programs in Warren and Forest Counties at various community events.

- Continued work to create a seamless transition from pre-K to kindergarten for the students and their families. Many schools in the Warren County School District and Forest Area School District invited pre-K students to visit their school and get a glimpse of what school will be like when they begin kindergarten.

- Coordinated a transition workshop for teachers, administrators and early learning professionals to explore the most effective ways to help parents get involved in their child’s education and how to ensure families feel part of the school community. Anne Henderson, author of Beyond the Bake Sale, was the workshop presenter and moderator.

- Promoted registration for pre-K and kindergarten in coordination with early learning programs, Warren County School District, and Forest Area School District. Information was released in newspapers, radio, and at the libraries.

- Coordinated a six hour Professional Development Day for 50 early learning professionals in the community. This assisted them in meeting their annual training requirements.

- Coordinated Month of the Child activities during the Month of April.

- Coordinated the “Read 2 Me…..Just 5 minutes a Day” reading campaign. The goal is to raise awareness of the importance of reading to children from the time they are born and encourage families to read with their children. Tracking calendars were distributed through the early learning facilities and the Warren Public Library. 226 children participated, logging 77,718 minutes of reading with family members.

Goals for 2011-12

1. Communicate with and engage families to make good early learning choices for their children.

2. Provide families with information about child development and appropriate early learning activities and encourage them to take an active role in helping their children develop academic and social skills.

3. Provide support to the children and families transitioning into an early learning setting.


5. Act as a local resource on quality early learning for families, businesses, and community leaders.

Month of the Young Child

The Warren-Forest Early Care and Education Coalition celebrated Month of Young Child during the month of April. The purpose of the Month of the Young Child is to celebrate the children of our community, bring community awareness of the needs of the children, and to recognize the significant role early learning and child care professionals play in the lives of our children and their families. The highlights of the month were:

Children's Art Exhibit – 854 visitors visited the Wetmore Gallery of the Warren Public Library to view 35 group and 285 individual pieces of artwork of children from 22 early learning programs.

Community Readers – 43 community readers visited 59 early learning classrooms throughout the two counties to read a book to the students and donate books while they were there.

Children’s Fair – Over 300 children and their families attended the Children’s Fair held at the Jefferson DeFrees Family Center. The families were able to spend an afternoon enjoying activities provided by businesses, agencies, and early learning programs. Each child received the book Whose Shoes: A Shoe For Every Job, by Stephen R. Swinburne, and were given information on the importance of early learning.

Annual Provider Appreciation Dinner was held to honor the early care and education providers for the impact they have on the lives of children and families each day. Amanda Hetrick, Director of Secondary Education of Warren County School District, served as the Master of Ceremonies and showed her support for the early learning professionals through kind words and praise for the tireless work they do. The early learning facilities who participate in Keystone STARS were recognized. In addition, donors of the Pre-K Scholarship were given special thanks for making the program possible.

Coins for Shoes – The early learning community collected coins to give to the Warren Salvation Army to help stock their Clothing Closet. Over $1400 was raised to help the families of our community.