

Montgomery County Early Childhood Coalition Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan 2020 - 2024



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Early Childhood
Coalition

BACKGROUND

The Montgomery County Workforce Roundtable formed a child care task force to study the needs of the community before launching any new initiatives related to child care. The Montgomery County Community Foundation and the City of Crawfordsville collaborated with local employers to hire a consultant, Transform Consulting Group (TCG), to complete a community needs assessment related to child care in the county as well as develop a strategic plan to respond to the need.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

TCG and the Montgomery County Child Care Task Force began the needs assessment and strategic planning process in July 2019. The two groups discussed stakeholders in the community from which the Task Force wanted to solicit feedback and other helpful information to be used in the assessment of the community. Based on this discussion, TCG conducted research and gathered the following information:

1. Qualitative feedback from key stakeholders: TCG created four online and paper surveys to solicit feedback from parents, employees, employers, and nonprofits in Montgomery County. TCG also conducted four focus groups with local parents, including a group of second shift parents. TCG interviewed all three superintendents of the local public-school districts and 19 early childhood education providers located in Montgomery County. Through the surveys, focus groups and interviews, the Child Care Task Force received input from 1,490 individuals.



2. Early childhood education landscape assessment: TCG gathered publicly available data to create a comprehensive profile of the County in comparison to the state.

TCG compiled this information into a pre-read report for the Task Force to review before the planning sessions were held in November and December 2019. The Task Force reviewed and discussed the information and reached consensus on five top goals and support strategies for the next five years.

TOP GOALS

**Increase
Community and
Parent Education**



**Improve
Accessibility**



**Increase Program
Quality**



**Improve
Affordability**



**Strengthen
Program Supports**



TOP STRATEGIES FOR EACH GOAL

Increase Community and Parent Education



- Develop a name, brand, and mission statement for the Montgomery County Child Care Coalition
- Create a communications plan with local connections and information
- Partner with organizations and businesses to share information about the importance of early childhood education
- Develop a platform (e.g., webpage, portal, etc.) for families to access local child care providers and information

Improve Accessibility



- Provide support for 5 unlicensed programs to become licensed/registered
- Assist 5 existing programs in expanding to serve infants/toddlers
- Identify/support new early childhood education programs
- Explore swing shift models/options to meet the local workforce needs

Increase Program Quality



- Increase number of high-quality programs according to Paths to QUALITY (PTQ)
- Create a resource fund to help programs reach PTQ
- Increase number of staff with CDA or other early childhood education credential or degree
- Partner with local school corporations and Ivy Tech to identify students with potential and desire for a career in early childhood education and appropriate career paths
- Assist programs in researching how to improve wages for teachers to improve quality
- Assist programs and schools to set standards regarding goals for Kindergarten readiness
- Establish county-wide Kindergarten readiness assessment

Improve Affordability



- Promote the use of dependent care accounts offered by employers
- Promote the availability of publicly funded child care programs (CCDF vouchers, OMW Pre-K, and Head Start)
- Explore pay for success (social impact bonds) and similar funding models
- Explore tuition scholarships for families

Strengthen Program Supports



- Hire Director of Early Learning for Montgomery County Child Care Coalition
- Partner with organizations (e.g. Purdue Extension) to provide training and professional development
- Provide networking opportunities for programs
- Establish a provider recognition program
- Offer business management support for Montgomery County early childhood education programs to understand finances and business models
- Identify volunteer pool to provide additional classroom education supports on an as needed basis
- Establish a scholarship system to support programs in paying for tuition costs for staff working toward their CDA credential (or degree) and to pay for screenings and other new hire requirements

Year 1

Action Items

Top Strategy	Detailed Action Items
Develop a name, brand, and mission statement for the Montgomery County Child Care Coalition	Including logo, colors, etc.
Create a communications plan with local connections and information	Utilize a website, simple materials including one pager of the importance of early childhood education with a list of resources, have a social media presence with the branding above that will direct users to resources
Assist 5 existing preschool providers in expanding infant/toddler spots	Work with partners such as First Steps to ensure improving accessibility needs and spots extends to all children
Create a resource fund to help programs reach PTQ	Identify the common cost items that programs need to address to advance in PTQ and how to support them
Partner with local school corporations and Ivy Tech to identify students with potential and desire for a career in early childhood education and appropriate career paths	Form partnership between local CTE, Ivy Tech to support high school students earning their CDA while in high school and dual college credit from Ivy Tech
Hire Director of Early Learning for Montgomery County	Director would develop and manage strategic plan

Year 2

Action Items

Top Strategy	Detailed Action Items
Develop a platform (e.g., webpage, portal, etc.) for families to access local child care providers and information	E.g. insurance, real estate, human resources departments, clinics, doctors, swaddle program (through paramedicine group). Research showed that the community would more likely value local resources over state resources
Partner with organizations and businesses to share information about the importance of early childhood education	Develop some info sheets, slide decks and other materials that can be shared with employers to post on their bulletin boards, share with their employees
Increase number of staff with CDA or other early childhood education credential or degree	Explore options to help teachers obtain their CDA and barriers to accomplishing it; look at partnerships with IAEYC and local Ivy Tech
Promote the availability of publicly funded child care programs (CCDF vouchers, OMW Pre-K, and Head Start)	Help get the word out about existing, available subsidized child care programs and ensure parents in the community are signing up
Partner with organizations (e.g. Purdue Extension) to provide training and professional development	Determine trainings that Purdue offers and how you can increase enrollment and participation
Offer business management support for Montgomery County early childhood education programs to understand finances and business models	Businesses could use their charitable donation to be all in for early education and then the return on investment (ROI) of using it for recruitment of new employees
Establish a scholarship system to support programs in paying for tuition costs for staff working toward their CDA credential (or degree) and to pay for screenings and other new hire requirements	Explore the costs and challenges involved with hiring teachers and helping them advance their education; determine amounts to cover these costs

Year 3

Action Items

Top Strategy	Detailed Action Items
Provide support for 5 unlicensed programs to become licensed/registered	Support county-based coaching model (resources/support)
Identify/support new early childhood education programs	Determine if any existing organizations or individuals are interested in starting a new program and what support they might need
Increase number of high-quality programs according to Paths to QUALITY (PTQ)	Identify barriers for programs to participate and advance in PTQ and how to help them overcome them
Assist programs and schools to set standards regarding goals for Kindergarten readiness	Convene pre-k and K teachers; review state standards; work with local experts
Establish county-wide Kindergarten readiness assessment	Assess utilizing new state KRA assessment tool or creating own tool
Promote the use of dependent care accounts offered by employers	Employer could also match contributions and tie strings to money that it is used for a high-quality program, etc.
Establish a provider recognition program	Possible opportunity to connect with retired teachers
Explore tuition scholarships (child/family)	Gave example of Pam's Promise and the availability of short term or emergency scholarships. Potential role for the coalition
Provide network opportunities for providers	E.g., gift cards, stipends, etc.; hold an annual luncheon or dinner

Year 4

Action Items

Top Strategy	Detailed Action Items
Explore swing shift models/options to meet the local workforce needs	Run some business scenarios to determine scheduling/ staffing to make it financially feasible; Partner with employers to determine what this should look like
Explore pay for success (social impact bonds) and similar models	Look at alternative funding models to expand access and make child care affordable
Identify volunteer support pool to provide additional classroom education supports on an as needed basis	Possible opportunities to connect with retired teachers



Year 5

Action Items

Top Strategy	Detailed Action Items
Assist programs in researching how to improve wages for teachers to improve quality	Complete business scenarios; research other communities to determine opportunities to increase wages

