



Wabash County Early Childhood Education Committee

Strategic Plan 2017-2021



Community
Foundation of
Wabash County

We're here for giving. We're here for good.



TRANSFORM
— CONSULTING GROUP —

BACKGROUND

The Community Foundation of Wabash County partnered with Transform Consulting Group to facilitate the Wabash County Early Childhood Education Committee. Key community members were asked to join the committee to help assess the availability and affordability of early childhood education programs in Wabash County. The purpose of the Committee was to reach consensus on an actionable plan to increase the availability and affordability of high-quality early childhood education programs for children and families in Wabash County.

SUMMARY

The Wabash County Early Childhood Education Committee has come to a consensus on an actionable plan to increase the availability and affordability of high-quality early childhood education programs for children and families in Wabash County. This strategic plan aligns with their mission to transform the community by connecting school readiness to economic success. The strategic plan is structured by five key goals: (1) Increase Capacity, (2) Increase Accessibility, (3) Improve Quality, (4) Improve Affordability, and (5) Increase Parent & Community Engagement.

Over the course of the year, information was collected to support the identification of these goals and actions. Data, resources, and tools will continue to be collected to implement the strategic plan and monitor its impact along the course of the Committee's work.



VISION/MISSION

Our vision is to revitalize our community so it can thrive long term.

Our mission is to transform our community by connecting school readiness to economic success.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Studies¹ show that for every dollar a community invests in early childhood education, the return on investment can be \$4-\$15 due to lower special education costs, retention savings, reduced cost for social services, increases in post-secondary attainment, and lower crime costs.

A community like Wabash doesn't have to wait 15-18 years to see that return. Early childhood education impacts parents and the workforce now:

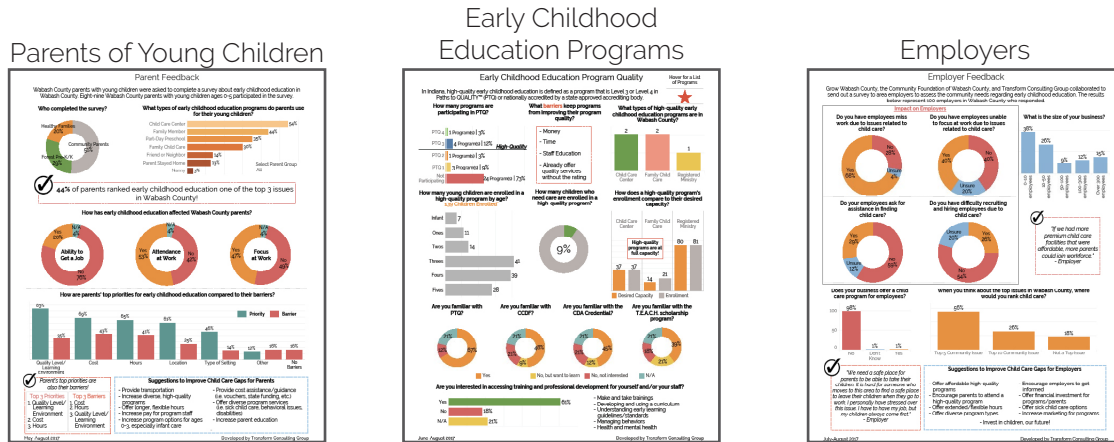
- 45% of parents are absent from work annually at least once due to childcare issues²
- 65% of parents' work schedules are affected by childcare challenges an average of 7.5 times annually.
- These childcare challenges cost US employers an estimated \$3 billion annually.

1. Nelson, A. 2016. "The Economic Impacts of Investing in Early Childhood Education in Indiana" (2016). Accessed at <http://www.elacindiana.org/documents/economic-impacts-investing-early-childhood-education-indiana.pdf>.

2. "Solutions for Employee Child Care," Child Action (2015). Accessed at <http://www.childaction.org/providers/booklets/docs/Solutions%20for%20Employee%20Child%20Care.pdf>.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In order to make plans for the future, the Committee wanted to gain a better understanding of the current state in Wabash County to inform future planning. In order to accomplish this, the following key stakeholder groups were asked for feedback via individual interviews, focus groups and surveys. The Committee compiled feedback from 89 parents, 28 early childhood education programs, and 100 employers. To view this data and other information collected, view this in an [interactive dashboard online](#).



Some key findings include:

3/4

of young children live in households where all parents work & need care

Wabash County has
1,982
young children ages
0 - 5

35%

of children are living in poverty, which is the **5th** highest in the state

48% of young children are enrolled in a known early childhood care and education program

There are **5** designated high quality programs

9%

of young children are enrolled in a high quality program

68%

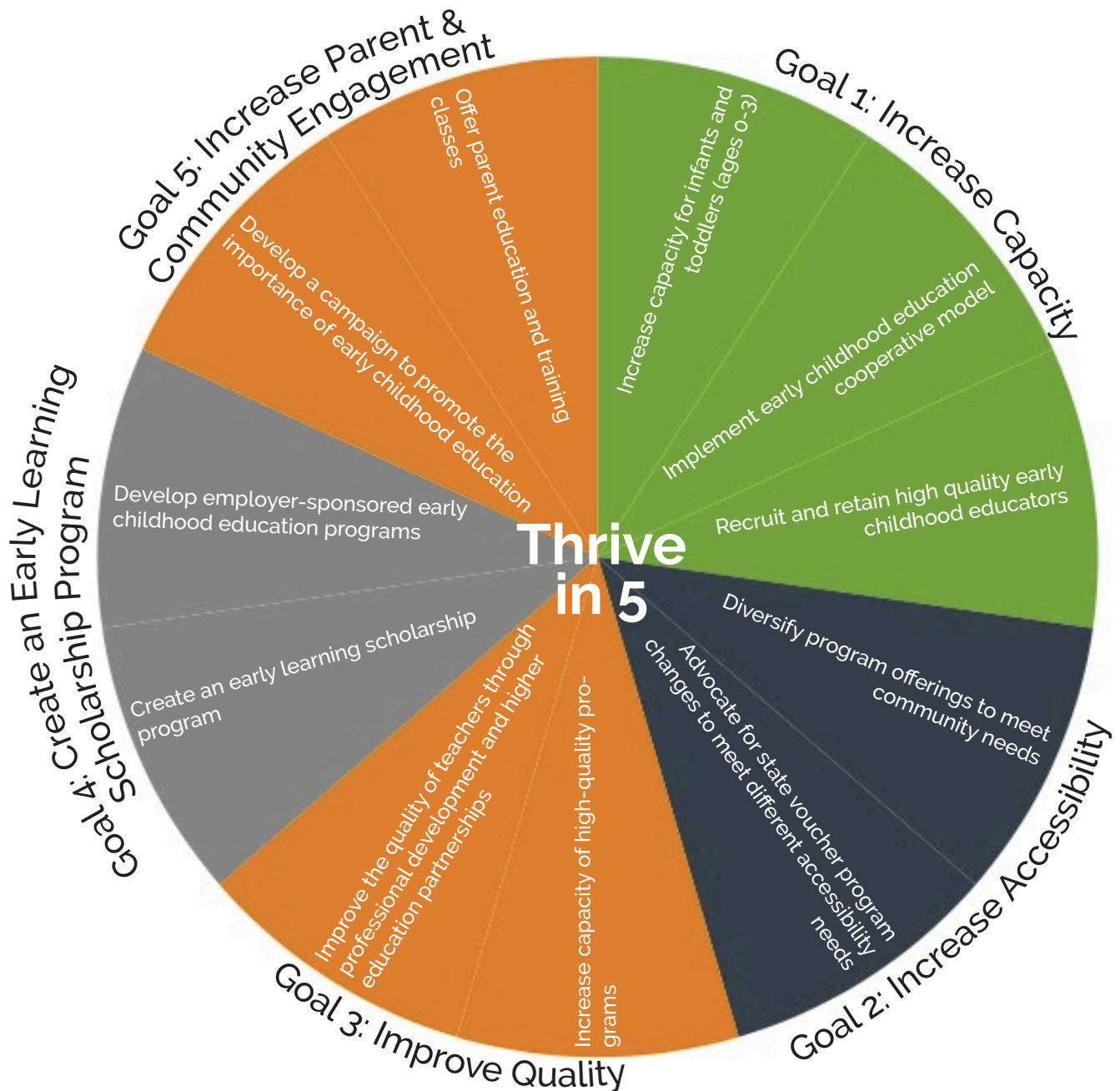
of employers report having issues with employees missing work due to child care

It costs
\$5,622

to pay for high quality education for 1 child. That's 28% of the income for a family of 3 in poverty.

Over half of employers and parents rate child care as a top 5 community issue.

GOALS & STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN



1

GOAL 1: INCREASE CAPACITY

Objective 1.1: Increase capacity for infants and toddlers (ages 0-3)

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Increase seats for infants/toddlers (ages 0-3)	Secure capacity building grants to support expansion of current programs (Early Learning Indiana, state capacity grants, community foundation, united fund)	Steering Committee	Year 1+	50% increase capacity for infants and toddlers (ages 0-3) ~300 seats
Support/ encourage part-day programs to become full-day	Grants	Access Committee	Year 2+	50% of part-day exempt preschool programs become full-day programs. ~4 programs by 2019
Support/ encourage unlicensed programs to become licensed/ registered	Grants, word-of-mouth	Access Committee	Year 2+	Add 2 unlicensed programs to become licensed annually

Objective 1.2: Implement early childhood education cooperative model

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Develop model for individuals (co-op space available for separate owner/ operator responsibilities)	Grants	Access Committee	Year 2+	Add 50 new seats for 0-5 year olds by 2019

1

GOAL 1: INCREASE CAPACITY

Objective 1.3: Recruit and retain high quality early childhood educators

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Increase the number of teachers with a CDA, AA, or BA	Post-secondary institutions, TEACH Scholarships	Access Committee	Year 1+	Annually increase by 20% the number of teachers with a CDA, AA, or BA
Create an apprenticeship program (Ivy Tech, Manchester University, and Heartland) to develop more high quality early childhood educators	Post-secondary institutions, TEACH Scholarships, a large enough demand	Access Committee	Year 1+	Recruit 10 individuals to enroll and complete program

2

GOAL 2: Increase Accessibility Across the County

Objective 2.1: Diversify program offerings to meet community needs

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Implement a sick care program	Grants, Parkview Hospital, Employers	Access Committee	Year 2	One sick care program
Implement diverse program models, including support for children with disabilities	Grants	Access Committee	Year 2	Number of different ECE program models being implemented
Increase second and third shift offerings	Child Care Solutions, Employers	Access Committee	Year 2	Add 2 2nd shift and 2 3rd shift offerings
Increase geographic location offerings	Grants, trainings	Access Committee	Year 2+	Parents would have options within a 10 mile radius
Implement an intergenerational program	Peabody, Timbercrest, Wellbrook	Access Committee	Year 2+	One intergenerational program

Objective 2.2: Advocate for state voucher program changes to meet different accessibility needs

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Clarify the rules for families to receive the part-time CCDF voucher	Northeast Indiana Regional Chamber	Steering Committee	Year 1	Understanding of change needed to the rules

3

GOAL 3: Improve Quality

Objective 3.1: Increase capacity of high-quality programs

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Increase the number of rated high-quality programs	Grants, Child Care Solutions, Paths to QUALITY coach	Quality Committee	Year 1+	Add 2 rated (high-quality) programs/ year; goal is to increase by 100% rated, high quality programs within 5 years (10 programs)

Objective 3.2: Improve the quality of teachers through professional development and higher education partnerships

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Implement a professional development network "Thrive in 5"	Capacity building grants, conferences, partnership with university, Child Care Solutions	Quality Committee	Year 1+	10 programs actively participate
Implement the CLASS assessment with programs to improve child outcomes	Capacity building grants, conferences, partnership with university, Child Care Solutions	Quality Committee	Year 2+	10 classrooms / teachers

4

GOAL 4: Improve Affordability

Objective 4.1: Create an early learning scholarship program

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Determine how much is needed to cover the cost of a tiered scholarship program for low-income and working parents	Wabash County demographic data, Program cost data, Other programs leading by example (Elwood)	Development Committee	Year 2+	Identified amount of funding needed
Determine the cost of high quality program with livable wages for teachers that would be built into the scholarship fund	Wabash County demographic data, Program cost data	Development Committee	Year 2	Identified amount of funding needed
Determine a source to host the scholarship fund	Community Foundation, Wabash County United Fund, Banks, etc.	Development Committee	Year 2+	Identified fund host and structure
Raise the funding to support the scholarship fund	Businesses, individuals, philanthropic organizations	Development Committee	Year 2+	Developed funding campaign to raise money

4

GOAL 4: Improve Affordability

Objective 4.2: Develop employer-sponsored early childhood education programs

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Develop toolkit/ dashboard for employers to offer sponsored early childhood education for employees	Transform Consulting Group	Development Committee	Year 1	Employer- sponsored early childhood education program options
Recruit employers willing to offer early childhood education supports for employees	GROW Wabash, Community Founda- tion, United Fund	Development Committee	Year 2	5 employers offer early childhood education sponsorship program

5

GOAL 5: Increase Parent & Community Engagement

Objective 5.1: Develop a campaign to promote the importance of early childhood education

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Develop a communication plan, including branding, logo, website, and social media page to engage the community	Capacity grant, Community Foundation, United fund	Communication Committee	Year 1	Launch a brand, logo, website and collateral material
Host an annual early childhood education fair for parents to learn about the different programs and resources	Capacity grant, Community Foundation, United fund, Parkview	Communication Committee	Year 1	100 parents attend fair
Create an early childhood education program summary sheet that summarizes the early education programs and key features	Capacity grant, Community Foundation, United fund, Parkview	Communication Committee	Year 1	Availability of a shareable tool; Tool distributed throughout the community
Create a video and/or tour options to show parents and the community "A day in the life of early childhood education programs"	Capacity grant, Community Foundation, United fund, Parkview	Communication Committee	Year 2	Video highlighting high quality programs

5

GOAL 5: Increase Parent & Community Engagement

Objective 5.2: Offer parent education and training classes

ACTION STEPS	RESOURCES/ FUNDING	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME	INDICATORS
Reach out to Parkview to learn about parenting education classes/ trainings available	Parkview, grants	Communications Committee	Year 1	The number of parenting classes available and/or possible
Enroll infant parents in education/ parenting classes	Parkview Ob Department; Parent-Pay; Fee assistance program	Communications Committee	Year 2+	Have 75% of new parents enrolling in parent education classes/training
Determine what data can be collected from parents enrolling in these classes/training	Registration/ enrollment forms; Parkview data-base; Compare with other programs	Communications Committee	Year 2+	Data to support the impacts of the parent classes/ training, Share data updates on the website

Timeline



Wabash Early Childhood Education Committee

The following community stakeholders were involved in the development of this strategic plan.

Jason Callahan, Superintendent, Wabash City Schools

Jonathan Cornell, Pastor, Wabash Presbyterian Church

Jason Cussen, Director, Bowen Center for Mental Health

Shelly Enyeart, Director, Healthy Families Area 5 Agency

Julie Garber, Program Director, Community Foundation of Wabash County

Keith Gillenwater, Executive Director, Grow Wabash County

Lauri Gunderman, Director, Wabash-Miami Area Programs, Developmental Preschool

Pam Guthrie, Executive Director, Ivy Tech Community College Wabash

Rachel Guyer, Director, Little Friends Daycare

Trisha Haines, Probation, Wabash County Probation

Dr. Pam Higgins, Physician, Parkview Manchester

Rachel Higgins, Early Childhood Education Instructor, Heartland Preschool

Steve Johnson, Executive Director, Wabash County United Fund

Michelle Kanable, Program Director, Child Care Solutions

Clint Kugler, Executive Director, Wabash County YMCA

Sarah Lochner, Chief Probation Officer, Wabash County Probation

Scott Long, Mayor, City of Wabash

Kerri Mattern, Manager, Parkview

Chris McCallen, Assistant Director, Manchester Early Learning Center

Danielle Miller, Principal, OJ Neighbours Elementary

Tonya Scalf, Executive Director, Friends Counseling Center

Dr. Heather Schilling, Chair and Director of Teacher Education, Manchester University

Kelly Stouffer, Director of Human Resources, Ford Meter Box

Maggie Wimberly, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity of Wabash County

Andrea Zwiebel, Programming & Clark Gallery Manager, Honeywell Center