We are delighted to present the Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative third annual report. This report sums up the progress the Initiative has made in its first three years and outlines the plans for Years Four and Five, based on the lessons learned. The Early Childhood Initiative has met, and in many cases surpassed, most of its goals, thanks to the hard work of each of our invaluable partners.

The goals of the Early Childhood Initiative are to enhance effective parenting, improve the health of children, and increase the quantity and quality of child care in Cuyahoga County. A comprehensive set of program strategies was launched three years ago with the ambition of meeting these goals and delivering services to all the families in Cuyahoga County who would benefit from them. Since then, the Initiative has formed partnerships with almost 80 service-delivery agencies and more than 2,000 home-based child care providers to build the capacity to meet the needs of children and families in our community. In fact, in the last two and a half years, the Initiative has reached nearly 83,000 children from birth through age five. Almost 70 percent of all children born in the County in the last three years have received at least one of our services. We are reaching our children and families, and the ongoing evaluation reports show that the services they receive are making a positive impact on their lives.

It has been an exciting three years. We thank you all for your ongoing commitment to children and families and look forward to continuing our partnership and building on the progress we have made.

The first three years in review

- **Welcome Home** made 19,700 visits to first-time and teen moms
- **Early Start** served 9,451 families
- The Early Childhood Awareness Campaign more than met its goal of reaching 200,000 women and families
- **Healthy Start or other Medicaid health insurance** reached enrollment of almost 46,000 children from birth through age five
- Almost 1,500 new home-based child care providers were certified, creating more than 14,000 new child care slots
- Child care providers received technical assistance on behalf of over 1,700 special needs children

While there is much work to be done to ensure that our youngest children get the best possible start in life, we’re pleased to report the progress being made in each of our program strategies in the pages that follow.
The Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative

The Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative is a unique, County-wide public-private partnership aimed at ensuring all children get the best possible start in life to achieve their maximum potential. With the commitment of local and national philanthropic and corporate funders, program staff, and the community, a continuum of services and resources is provided to all families with young children, regardless of income or where they reside. The Initiative began as a three-year, $40 million partnership, with $30 million coming from County, State, and Federal sources and $10 million coming from foundations, corporations, and other private partners. The Initiative has now completed its first three years and has secured funding at the same levels for Years Four and Five.

The Early Childhood Initiative takes a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of children from birth through age five. This is the first age group to be addressed within the Board of County Commissioners’ Child Well-Being Plan. Community leaders recognized that for the Initiative to be effective, services must be provided within a framework of principles that reflect our best understanding of children’s needs, parents’ roles, and the resources of the community. Evidence shows that early care and nurturing have a decisive, long-lasting, positive impact on development, learning, and emotional and physical health. However, the Initiative strives to make an impact not only on the children and families it serves, but also on the communities in which families live and the systems that serve them. Ultimately, we hope to create a community that is more responsive to the needs of all children and families.

The Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative has three key goals, each supported by one or more program strategies:

- Effective Parents
- Welcome Home
- Early Start

- The Early Childhood Awareness Campaign

- Healthy Children
- Healthy Start/Medicaid Expansion

- Quality Child Care
- Home-Based Child Care
- Special Needs Child Care
In its first three years, the Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative has made great strides towards meeting the goals it has set. In the last two and a half years (data is currently available only through December 31, 2001), the Initiative reached nearly 83,000 children from birth through age five in the County. Since the start of the Initiative, approximately 68 percent of young children received one or more ECI services – this percentage has been rising since the start of the Initiative and has surpassed 70 percent in recent quarters.

One of the aims of the Initiative is to offer services to all children in the County who could benefit from them

Children all over the County, regardless of their income level or the neighborhood in which they live, are receiving ECI services. However, in low-income neighborhoods, where families and children may have the greatest needs, a greater concentration of ECI services is being provided.
With the program strategies working together, the Initiative strives to make an impact on all children and families in the County. The Initiative has set, and is measuring its progress toward achieving, the following population-based outcomes:

- Reduced incidences of child abuse and neglect
- Increased number of economically self-sufficient families
- Increased number of children with health insurance and better access to health care
- Increased enrollment of children in public preschool or Head Start
- Increased enrollment of children in certified child care
- Reduction in child deaths

Early trends in these indicators look optimistic:

- Families with young children experienced increased employment and reduced poverty rates
- The supply of regulated child care has increased greatly, enrollment of children under age three in regulated care has increased by 25 percent, and the number of certified home-based child care providers increased by more than 150 percent since the start of the Initiative
- The number of uninsured children in the County fell to an all-time low, due to Medicaid and Healthy Start outreach and expansion
- Cuyahoga County’s preschool enrollment rates, while not universal, greatly exceed national norms (76 percent in Cuyahoga County versus 57 percent nationally)
- While we have not yet seen progress in reducing the overall rates of child maltreatment, there are encouraging signs that the ECI is beginning to prevent recurrences of maltreatment
- Deaths among children under six fell steadily throughout the decade

Over the past three years, our programs have grown to meet the needs of more and more children. And as the number of children and families served by the ECI has increased, the average age at which we reach the children has decreased. This is particularly true in the case of special needs children requiring Early Intervention services – again, not only are more children being identified, but they are being linked with the services they need at younger ages than ever before.

On a broader community change level, the Initiative has:

- Facilitated a cultural shift among the partner organizations to create a coordinated response to children’s needs
- Created formal, structured collaborations that did not previously exist
- Facilitated cross-system referrals
- Developed new linkages between community-based agencies and families across the County

The pages that follow highlight the accomplishments in each of the program components.
Welcome Home offers registered-nurse home visits to every first-time and teen mother in Cuyahoga County. The nurses are in the home within days of the birth to do a health check on mom and baby, make sure the family is aware of various community supports available to them, and link the family with any additional services they may need.

**Goals:**
- To complete at least 6,000 visits to families of new and teen moms in Cuyahoga County annually
- To visit at least 85 percent of eligible families in Cuyahoga County

**Progress in meeting the goal:** Over 19,700 visits were completed in the first three years (more than 6,000 per year), representing more than 86 percent of eligible families County-wide.
Other accomplishments since the start of the Initiative

- The majority of families receiving a Welcome Home visit remember the information provided by the nurse and report using the information in caring for their infants
- 24 percent of families visited were linked to Early Start or Early Intervention services by nurse home visitors
- 90 percent of families were visited within 20 days of their child’s birth
- Over 83 percent of babies had a medical provider identified at the time of their visit (this percentage has increased since the start of the Initiative – from 63 percent in the first year to 95 percent in the third year)

“The home visit helps a great deal. If there are any questions you have about your baby during the first days at home, you can ask the nurse.”

“The nurse really helped us settle in and understand our newborn.”

“When the Welcome Home nurse arrived, she sat with my husband and me to simply address and ease our concerns. She was so patient and caring…”

“I cannot tell you how much I appreciated having such a wonderful service. It made me realize no matter what past experiences you have been through, when you are faced with a new challenge, everyone can benefit from support and services.”
Early Start provides additional support, such as parenting education and developmental screening for the child, to parents with children up to three years old through ongoing home visits. The home visitor and family together develop an Individualized Family Service Plan outlining goals for the child and family and steps to meet the goals.

Early Start services are provided by numerous community-based agencies throughout the County. One of the challenges of Early Start has been building sufficient provider capacity to meet the need for Early Start services. Over the last three years, Early Start has done this and expanded to serve more and more families.

**Goal:** To serve at least 4,000 families per quarter

**Progress in meeting the goal:** The number of families served per quarter has been rising since the start of the Initiative – with over 4,000 families served in the most recent four quarters

**Other accomplishments since the start of the Initiative**

- The total number of families served since the start of the Initiative is 9,451
- As the program matures, Early Start home visits are being delivered earlier in infants’ lives. In fact, in recent quarters, infants referred before they were six months old received an initial home visit in the first month of life
- Early Start is having better success with families who most need it - Early Start referrals who present the highest level of risk, as measured by the Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAP), are twice as likely to receive an initial home visit and engage in the program as those with the lowest CAP scores
- Once engaged in Early Start, 94 percent of families remain enrolled at least three months, and 75 percent remain in the program at least six months
- We are seeing some signs that a greater number of Early Start services may reduce families’ risk for physical abuse and increase parents’ sense of competence and comfort in caring for their children
We’re pleased to report that our referral process seems to be working well

Early Start has received referrals for more than 14,000 families since the start of the Initiative. Over time, the source of these referrals has changed. The percentage of referrals coming from OWF has decreased, while those coming from the Welcome Home program, from family and friends, and even from parents themselves have increased. This is a clear indication that Early Start is identifying more families at birth through Welcome Home and that program participants are requesting assistance for themselves or their friends and family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year One</th>
<th>Year Two</th>
<th>Year Three</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OWF</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>1%</td>
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Areas for improvement moving forward

Early Start, like many home-visiting programs, is working to improve its engagement rates and to ensure that, once engaged, families receive all the services available to them. While it’s encouraging that such a large percentage of them stay in Early Start once engaged, about one-third of the families referred never engage or receive a home visit. Moreover, once in the program, families receive only about half the number of visits called for by the model.

“The home visitor saw my good points. She helped me feel good about myself as a parent.”

“Finally someone listened to me and gave me support. My kids and I are much better now.”

“I learned about resources that are available to us that I never would have known about before.”

“Involvement in these types of programs early on can make a difference in your child’s life.”
The Early Childhood Awareness Campaign raises public awareness of the importance of a child’s first years. Campaign messages are targeted to parents, service providers, medical professionals, and the community through a variety of media.

The Early Childhood Awareness Campaign has surpassed our expectations. The goal for Year One was to reach at least 25,000 families. The target was substantially increased after it was more than met in the first year. We have again surpassed the goals set for Years Two and Three.

**Goal:** To reach at least 200,000 families per year with our message

**Progress in meeting the goal:** Well over 200,000 families reached
Other accomplishments since the start of the Initiative

- Over 20,000 parents received information about child development, parenting, and available community resources through the Welcome Home newsletter
- Thousands of parents requested information through the Totline, the Family Helpline, or other resources
- Over 35,000 interactive parent-child coloring books were distributed to families (about 30 percent of which were in Spanish)
- Over 200,000 listeners were reached through radio spots highlighting ECI programs and messages
- Shoppers at local area malls received, or were exposed to, more than 20,000 tray liners and more than 170,000 table tents with the Early Childhood Initiative message
- ECI print ads appeared in Cleveland magazine, with a readership of 75,000; Sun newspapers, with a readership of 200,000; the Cleveland/Akron Family magazine, with a readership of over 125,000; and the Just 4 Kids Directory, with a readership of 36,000
- An estimated 278,000 riders per day were exposed to a series of seven placards, each highlighting an ECI program component, that were placed in 250 RTA rapid cars or buses throughout the city
- Four commercial spots, each linked up with a Web page, aired on Channels 19 and 43, reaching a viewership of over 700,000
Healthy Start and other Medicaid for children provides free health insurance for low-income children. The Early Childhood Initiative aims to enroll children in State and Federally funded insurance programs, to connect children with a health-care professional for well-child visits, and to identify children with developmental delays and disabilities and link them with needed services.

The number of children from birth through age five who are enrolled in Healthy Start or other Medicaid has been steadily increasing over the past three years and reached its highest level yet in the last quarter.

**Goal:** To increase the percentage of eligible children from birth through age five who are enrolled in Healthy Start or other Medicaid health insurance for children

**Progress in meeting the goal:** The total number of children five and under enrolled in Healthy Start or other Medicaid health insurance reached almost 46,000 in the last quarter of Year Three.
Other accomplishments since the start of the Initiative

- Information regarding Healthy Start/Medicaid is given to families through all other ECI program strategies.
- The percentage of children covered by health insurance (public or private) rose from approximately 90 percent in 1998 to 98 percent in 2001.
- Since the start of the Initiative, the age at which children enroll in Medicaid has been decreasing and the length of time they are covered is increasing. In fact, the percentage of children enrolled in the first month of life increased from 45 percent to 62 percent in the last three years, and the percentage disenrolled within 13 months of enrollment decreased from 36 percent to 25 percent.

“With Healthy Start, there isn’t any reason in the United States why a parent shouldn’t have health care for their child.”

“When I heard about Healthy Start, I jumped right on it and they took me straight through, and I was at ease then and I still am.”

“Basically, the program saved my life. It took a worry off me at a time that I couldn’t handle any more worries. The people are wonderful on the phone and in person. I can’t say enough about it.”
The Family Child Care Home Network seeks to increase the supply and enhance the quality of certified, neighborhood-based child care by creating a regional network with four regional managers to recruit, train, and support home-based child care providers in those areas.

**Goals:** To recruit, train, and certify 1,025 additional home-based child care providers and thereby increase the number of child care slots by 4,100

**Progress in meeting the goal:** 1,499 child care providers have been certified since the start of the Initiative, resulting in over 14,000 new child care slots (including first, second, and third shift)
Other accomplishments since the start of the Initiative

- 74 percent of newly certified home-based child care providers received technical support visits
- Home-based providers received 9,338 technical assistance visits focused on improving the quality of care
- 1,375 training sessions focusing on improving the quality of care and business practices were attended by home-based providers
- More than 100 home-based providers received training and/or technical assistance on caring for a child with special needs
- 107 home-based providers cared for a child with special needs
- 1,328 home-based providers (both those certified since the start of the Initiative and those in existence prior to the Initiative) have signed up for “Care for Kids,” the voluntary quality-improvement program

Areas for improvement moving forward

In Cuyahoga County, as in many communities around the country, the quality of child care is a critical concern. While quality of care increased in some of the homes we observed over the past 12 months, the level of care remains poor overall.

“This program has helped me in so many ways! The education has helped me care for the kids better. Without it, I think I would go nuts! It’s amazing how much I use all the training every day. Thank you so much!”

“I couldn’t have done it without all of you. This was my third year of being a provider and by far the best! You don’t realize how much your help and support means to me. I’ve had so many questions this year and you were always prompt to answer. Please know the job you do for us makes the difference in remaining a home day care provider.”
Special Needs Child Care

Special Needs Child Care is an important component of the Early Childhood Initiative. The Initiative is striving to increase and improve the care available to children with special needs by training and equipping child care providers. Special needs children may have physical, behavioral, mental, or emotional needs that call for specialized approaches. Through the Initiative, community agencies provide technical assistance, equipment and supplies, and support to child care providers and families, to enable children with special needs to be accommodated in regular child care facilities within their communities.

Goal: To provide technical assistance to child care providers on behalf of 500 children per year needing additional assistance to stay in a child care setting

Progress toward meeting the goal: Technical assistance was provided to child care centers and homes on behalf of over 1,700 children with special needs since the start of the Initiative – more than 500 per year
Other accomplishments since the start of the Initiative

- More than 760 child care providers received technical assistance and more than 900 providers attended at least one training session on caring for children with special needs
- More than 250 families received assistance in finding child care placement for their children
- Child care providers reported a greater willingness to care for children with special needs after receiving support through this program
- 80 percent of parents with children enrolled in this program reported their children stayed in their child care placement for at least six months
- An average of 338 parents per quarter participated in one or more parent-focused activities, such as parent education, counseling, and parent-support activities, or received information and referrals to other services

“Thank God this program is here.”

“I can see the difference in my child’s behavior since he has been in this program.”

“I don’t know what I would do without this program.”

“I don’t know of any other program that advocates for children the way you do.”

“I want to continue using this program for my child whether she is 4 or 14 years.”
In its first three years, the Early Childhood Initiative budget was $40 million. $30 million came from County, State, and Federal sources, including the County’s Ohio Department of Health allocation for Welcome Home and Early Start, TANF dollars for Early Start and Child Care, and County dollars. $8.9 million was raised from 23 private philanthropic funders.

### Early Childhood Initiative
Financial Statement:
Third Annual Report

<table>
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<th>Years 1, 2, &amp; 3</th>
<th>July 1, 1999, through June 30, 2002</th>
<th>Total Expenditures</th>
<th>Total Government Dollars</th>
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<td><strong>$28,154,337</strong></td>
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*Unaudited*
Since its inception, the Initiative has formed partnerships with over 25 funding partners, almost 80 service-delivery agencies, more than 2,000 home-based child care providers, and numerous researchers and other advocates interested in family and early childhood issues. The success the Initiative has seen is due to the commitment and hard work of all of these partners.

**Early Childhood Initiative Funding Partners**

In order to engage the funders in providing direction to the Initiative, the County Commissioners formed the Early Childhood Initiative Partnership Committee, comprised of the three Commissioners, a representative from the Ohio Department of Human Services, and one representative from each contributing private funder. This committee meets quarterly and serves as the oversight structure for the Initiative. This committee includes the following representatives:

**Cuyahoga Board of County Commissioners**

Jimmy Dimora  
Peter Lawson Jones  
Tim McCormack

**State of Ohio**

Governor Bob Taft

**Private Funders**

The Abington Foundation  
The Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation  
The Cleveland ClearingHouse Association  
The Cleveland Foundation  
The George W. Codrington Charitable Foundation  
Florence Crittenton Services Fund  
Deaconess Community Foundation  
Eaton Corporation  
Hershey Foundation  
Initiatives in Urban Education Foundation  
Mount Sinai Health Care Foundation  
The Reinberger Foundation  
Saint Ann Foundation  
Saint Luke’s Foundation  
The Sherwick Fund  
The Billie Howland Steffee Family Fund  
The Treu-Mart Fund  
The TRW Foundation  
United Way Services  
Verizon Foundation  
The Raymond John Wean Foundation  
The Thomas H. White Foundation  
The Woodruff Foundation
One of the Initiative’s biggest challenges – and biggest successes – has been building the capacity in our community to meet the needs of all the families and children who could benefit from it. To do this, partnerships have been formed with agencies and organizations throughout the County to deliver ECI services.

There are three lead agencies, each responsible for one of the three goals of the Initiative:

**Effective Parents**
The *Cuyahoga County Help Me Grow Collaborative* is responsible for the home-visiting programs – Welcome Home, Early Start, and Early Intervention

**Healthy Children**
The *Cuyahoga Employment & Family Services* (formerly called Cuyahoga Health & Nutrition) is responsible for the Healthy Start/Medicaid Expansion component

**Quality Child Care**
The *Starting Point for Child Care and Early Education* is responsible for the child care components
Working with these lead agencies and their programs are almost 80 service-delivery agencies:

**Welcome Home** has partnership with all of the birthing hospitals in the County, as well as with a number of nursing agencies that deliver Welcome Home services:

- Cleveland Clinic Foundation
- Cleveland Clinic Home Health Care
- Fairview Hospital
- Hillcrest Hospital
- Huron Hospital
- Lakewood Hospital
- Meridia Euclid Hospital*
- MetroHealth System
- Mount Sinai Hospital*
- Parma Community General Hospital
- Professional Nurse Associates/Health Design Plus
- St. John West Shore Hospital
- Southwest General Health Center
- UHHS Bedford Medical Center
- University Home Health Care
- University MacDonald Women’s Hospital

**Early Start** has had contracts with 29 community-based agencies since the start of the Initiative:

- Achievement Centers for Children
- Applewood Centers, Inc.
- Beech Brook
- Bellefaire JCB
- Bellflower Center for Prevention of Child Abuse
- Berea Children’s Home
- Cleveland Clinic Children’s Hospital for Rehabilitation
- Collinwood Community Center*
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health – Nursing
- Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities
- East Cleveland Neighborhood Center*
- Family Life Education – Parents As Teachers
- Friendly Inn Settlement
- Garden Valley Neighborhood House
- Garfield Heights Community Center
- Harvard Community Service Center
- Heights Youth Center
- Lexington Bell Community Center
- MCH Services
- Merrick House
- Myers Taylor MDC Lifeline
- Options for Family and Youth
- Positive Education Program
- Professional Nurse Associates/Health Design Plus
- St. Ignatius*
- St. Martin de Porres & Parent-Child Program
- University Hospitals HOME Team
- University Settlement
- West Side Community House

**Cuyahoga Employment & Family Services** has partnered with a number of community agencies over the past three years to enroll children and families in Healthy Start.

- Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services Board
- Alex Community Development Corp.
- Automated Health Systems
- Berea City School District
- Catholic Charities
- Cleveland Municipal School District
- El Barrio, Inc.
- Garden Valley Neighborhood House
- IMR Global/Orion/CGI Inc.
- Merrick House
- MetroHealth System
- NAAACP Cleveland Branch Development Fund, Inc.
- Neighborhood Centers Association
- Neighborhood Family Practice
- North Coast Health Ministry
- Northeast Ohio Neighborhood Health Services
- St. Vincent Charity Hospital
- Spanish American Committee
- Unicare Corp.
- University Hospitals
- University Settlement, Inc.
- West Side Ecumenical Ministry

**The Family Child Care Home Network** includes four regional providers who recruit, train, and provide ongoing technical assistance to home-based providers:

- Applewood Centers, Inc.
- Children’s Hunger Alliance
- Early Childhood Options
- Neighborhood Child Care, Inc.

Additionally, the network has partnership with the nearly 1,500 new providers who have been certified since the start of the Initiative, as well as the almost 900 who were in place prior to the start of the ECI.

**The Special Needs Child Care** component has had six partners since the start of the Initiative, which provide training and technical assistance to child care providers:

- Achievement Centers for Children
- Applewood Centers, Inc.
- Beech Brook
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Hanna Perkins Center*
- Positive Education Program

*No longer working with the ECI or have gone out of service*
Much of the data highlighted in this report comes from the evaluation being conducted by our partners at the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western Reserve University and the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.*

Stakeholders felt that an external evaluation was a critical component to the success of the Initiative. A multidisciplinary team of researchers from several institutions was assembled and is coordinated by the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. This team is led by Dr. Claudia Coulton, the Lillian F. Harris Professor at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences and co-director of the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, and coordinated by Dr. Rob Fischer, Senior Research Associate at the Mandel School. National experts include researchers from the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, which has the primary responsibility for evaluating Welcome Home and Early Start. Additionally, consultants from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provide consultation in measuring the quality of family child care homes and expansion of child care for special needs children.

The evaluation includes six components:

- **Population Outcomes Study** - Directed by Claudia Coulton, PhD, Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, CWRU
- **System Change Study** - Directed by Judy Simpson, MA, TRANS.FORM, INC, and Claudia Coulton, PhD, Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, CWRU
- **Home Visiting Studies (Welcome Home and Early Start)** - Directed by Deborah Daro, PhD, Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago
- **Family Child Care Homes Study** - Directed by Sue Pearlmutter, PhD, Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, CWRU
- **Special Needs Child Care Study** - Directed by Gerald Mahoney, PhD, Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, CWRU
- **Healthy Start/Medicaid Expansion Study** - Directed by Siran Koroukian, PhD, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Medicine, CWRU, and Claudia Coulton, PhD, Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, CWRU

*Additional information about the evaluation can be found at the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change's Web site: [http://povertycenter.cwru.edu](http://povertycenter.cwru.edu)
Plans for Years Four and Five
The first three years of the Early Childhood Initiative have passed quickly. The Initiative has touched the lives of many children and families. While the Initiative has met and even surpassed many of its goals, there is still work to be done.

We still have a long way to go before indicators of well-being for children and families in this community are where we would like them to be. While it’s encouraging that more than 70 percent of young children have benefited from at least one ECI service in recent quarters, many families referred for our programs never enroll in them – and some families never receive referrals. We must continue to make improvements in program quality in order to ensure that our programs make a positive difference in the lives of the people they touch.

Continued focus on quality
In the first three years of the Initiative, we have worked to build the capacity of the system to serve thousands of children and families. Staff members are to be commended for their work in building the infrastructure needed to bring programs up to scale. Moving forward, we must maintain the current capacity and enhance the quality and service delivery throughout the Initiative to make a positive impact on children and families in this community.

Continuing to grow and evolve as we learn more
One of the most exciting parts of the Initiative is the successful launch of programs and efforts that were made possible, at least in part, by the foundation the Initiative has laid. These efforts have taken many forms – new policies and programs developed on the basis of needs or gaps the Initiative has uncovered, collaborative relationships the Initiative has fostered, more families identified and linked with services that were already existing in the community, and greater communication and collaboration among service providers in the community to meet the needs of children and families in new ways.

The Prenatal Pilot is one example. Since the planning stages of the ECI, stakeholders felt that a focus on the prenatal period was critical in ensuring the well-being of families and young children. Building on the foundation the ECI has laid, a prenatal component has been incorporated into the Initiative. This component aims to build awareness community-wide about the importance of getting early and adequate prenatal care and has implemented a pilot project to provide home visits to expectant mothers, using a new curriculum developed for Early Start.

The Initiative beyond Year Three
A solid base of public-private support was established in the first three years and is continuing into Years Four and Five. Plans are being laid to continue and build on the Initiative’s programs to better meet the needs of all young children and their families in our community. We look forward to strengthening the partnerships that have been built through this Initiative with our funding partners, program and administrative staff, the research team, the families we work with every day, and all the others who have lent support to the ECI. It is because of the hard work and commitment of our partners that the Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative has been successful and will continue to make an impact on the lives of the children and families in this community.

Contact Information
Family and Children First Council 216-698-2875

The Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative is a public-private partnership administered by the Board of County Commissioners and committed to ensuring the well-being of our youngest children.
The Cuyahoga County

EARLY CHILDHOOD

INITIATIVE

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Effective Parents
Healthy Children
Quality Child Care