

Young People Succeeding



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VISION

Children are well prepared for learning when they start school and receive support outside of the classroom for their efforts inside the classroom. Intellectual curiosity, skill development and achievement are valued. Young people receive mentoring, guidance and support as they develop the capacity to differentiate between positive and negative risk behaviors. Positive role models are plentiful, and others in the community talk to teenagers with candor and respect about the difficult choices they face. Students finish high school ready to compete successfully in the labor market and/or in continuing education and skills development.

YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCEEDING OUTCOME TEAM REPORT

The Young People Succeeding (YPS) Outcome Team continued work on its four focus areas:

- early care and education;
- youth opportunities as they relate to economic development for business;
- middle school career development programming for area school districts; and
- monitoring progress of the Alternative Learning Opportunities Team's (ALOT) recommendations.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Knowledgeable stakeholders—members of the YPS Team and members of a Design Committee—devoted more than two years to conduct research, consider viable options and develop an informed early care and education initiative to benefit children and families of Montgomery County.

Why early care and education (EC&E) is important. Research tells us 90% of a child's brain is developed by the age of five. This growth is the foundation for all future learning and behavior. Studies show that when children enter school ready to learn, they are 20% more likely to graduate from high school, as well as more likely

to go to college and more likely to obtain gainful employment.

School readiness involves the whole child: social, emotional, behavioral and physical development as well as academic development. It is now apparent that children who lack key experiences are much more likely to start kindergarten without the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for school success. National, state and local research confirms that children who come to kindergarten with delays are less likely to succeed in school, *despite subsequent intervention*.

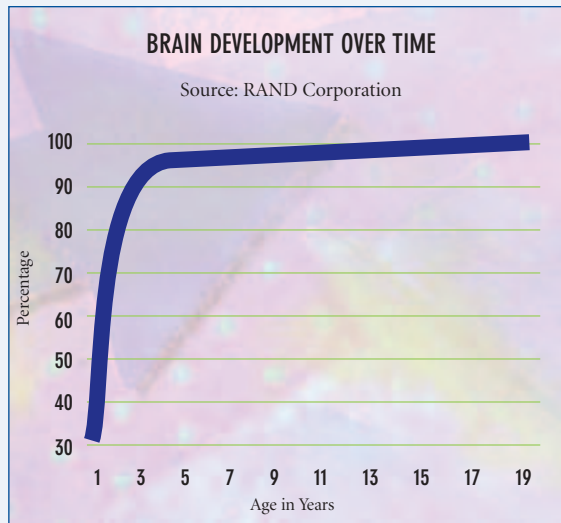
However, it has been shown that children from every economic background who attend high quality pre-kindergarten have improved learning and social skills.

Early education also makes economic sense. Studies by a variety of economists show long-term returns of up to \$7 for every \$1 invested.

Research findings about Montgomery County indicate that too many of our children are not ready to start kindergarten. One out of every four (25%) 5 year olds requires *significant* intervention in the classroom to help them reach a skill level considered age/grade appropriate. Another 42% may require *some* intervention.

In addition, the following gaps were found to exist:

- a general lack of awareness about the importance of quality early care and education;
- parents incorrectly assuming a center's license is an indicator of the quality of care and education when in fact a license is primarily a health and safety indicator;
- low salaries and wages for child care and education providers;
- lack of mandatory quality standards for child care and education;



- lack of a strong and well-established early care and education infrastructure resulting in the inability to draw down public funds and receive beneficial pilot projects made available from the state for early learning; and
- insufficient availability of training and education for EC&E providers.

The vision of the Early Care and Education initiative is that all children in Montgomery County will be school-ready by the time they enter kindergarten. The initiative will result in the creation of an EC&E system and begins with the following goals:

- ensuring more early learning professionals are highly qualified;
- making high-quality early learning available to more children;
- supporting parents and families in promoting their children's early social, emotional, behavioral, physical and academic development; and
- accessing state, federal and private funding to maintain a quality system of early care and education.

The EC&E Initiative will provide professional development and technical assistance to providers, ongoing coordination of resources and programming, and support for families to learn about and access quality care and

education services. The Frank M. Tait Foundation awarded \$50,000 for initiative leadership. The FCFC endorsed the EC&E initiative and provided \$420,000 in initial funding made available from the Human Services Levy.

Return on Investment. The \$420,000 FCFC investment will enable Montgomery County to access an additional \$2.8 to \$5 million annually in early learning funding at the state and federal levels by 2010. Over the long term, an EC&E system will position the county to obtain early learning funding from other sources, such as participation in state pilots, awards and grants.

Outlook. Stakeholder commitment is strong. Partners in the development of the initiative have begun involving additional stakeholders to implement a system of early care and education that will transform quality and access for children in our county. With funding from the FCFC, a program manager has been hired and is working diligently toward achievement of the initiative's goals. Status reports will be made periodically to the FCFC throughout 2008.

Go to page 24 for in-depth analysis



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

Montgomery County educational institutions and youth development organizations provide a rich and diverse mosaic of programs and opportunities serving thousands of participants and their families each year.

During 2007, the YPS Economic Development Communications Committee and



other community leaders developed a conceptual outline of an economic development-oriented Web site of youth development opportunities in Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Educational Service Center is aligning resources to create, launch and support this informative Web site which will enhance our county's ability to attract and retain businesses. The new site will provide a concise economic development-oriented document that positively communicates the youth development opportunities for all ages readily available through the formal and informal organizations serving youth in the county.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM

The Young People Succeeding Outcome Team partnered with the South Metro Regional Chamber of Commerce Business Advisory Council to produce effective career exploration videos for use in Montgomery County schools. The videos, which include descriptions of numerous careers in demand and target middle school students, were distributed in August 2007 to all school districts in Montgomery County.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TEAM (ALOT) RECOMMENDATIONS

The Young People Succeeding Outcome Team accepted the task of monitoring progress of two programs as recommended by the FCFC's Alternative Learning Opportunities Team (ALOT). The following sections briefly describe each program and its respective successes.

FAST FORWARD CENTER

The Fast Forward Center is the result of work by Montgomery County community volunteers who served on the Out-of-School Youth Task Force and the Family and Children First's Alternative Learning Opportunities Team (ALOT). Both groups identified the critical need to have an entity responsible for recruiting out-of-school youth in Montgomery County to continue their education (dropout recovery).

The Fast Forward Center, administered by Sinclair Community College, performs the following functions:

- recovers out-of-school youth;
- assesses students' reading and math skills;
- informs students and parents of educational options;
- participates in the development and funding of programs and schools;
- assesses effectiveness of programs and schools;
- partners with educational and community organizations; and
- presents information about Montgomery County's dropout recovery success.



programs appropriate for their needs. Of those students, 351 have received a General Education Diploma (GED) and 1,347 have graduated from an alternative high school.

The dropout rate has decreased significantly from 25% in 2000-2001 at the time Fast Forward Center opened to 14% in 2005-2006. This success means increased odds of young people being self-sufficient with less likelihood they will experience long-term

poverty or involvement with the criminal justice system.

Thanks to John N. and Connie Taylor, 40 graduates from partner

high schools will receive scholarships to Sinclair Community College each year through the Taylor Endowment Scholarship, implemented in 2007.

Recent awards and recognition received by Fast Forward Center include being named a "Model Program" in the field of career and technical education by the National Dropout Prevention Center and being featured prominently in a report published by the American Youth Policy Forum.

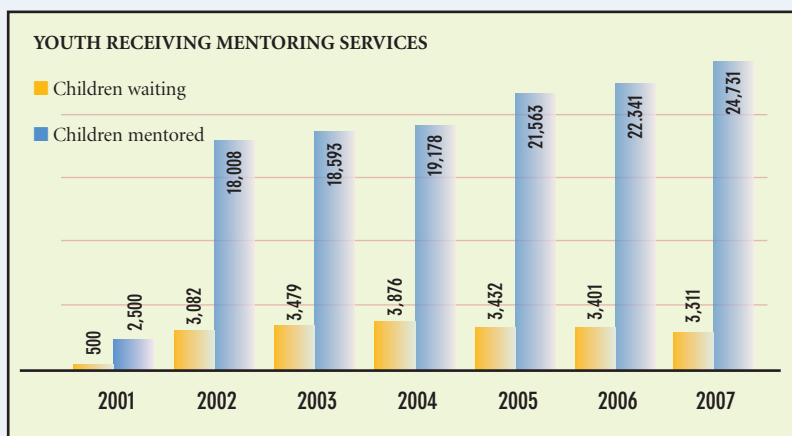
MENTORING COLLABORATIVE

The Montgomery County Mentoring Collaborative has been linking youth in our community with mentors since 2001. The Collaborative works to raise community awareness of the critical need for mentors, provides mentor training and background

checks, and sponsors local mentoring events.

During 2007, the Mentoring Collaborative partnered with over 80 agencies to mentor 24,731 children. Another 3,311 children are still waiting for caring adults to mentor them.

Since opening in April 2001, Fast Forward Center has assessed 3,500 students and referred them to alternative learning



The Montgomery County Mentoring Collaborative selected nine individuals to receive its fifth annual Outstanding Mentor Award. Community-based agencies nominated individuals who display extraordinary commitment to assisting young people in achieving their full potential by guiding them toward making positive life choices.



Pictured are 2007 Mentors of the Year and Mentoring Collaborative Staff (left to right)

Front: Jane Beach – Reclaiming Futures, Juvenile Courts; Kirsten English – Life Resource Centre; Denise Gilmore – Parents Advancing Choice In Education (PACE); Dennis Greer II – Jefferson Township Schools; Lindsay Pflieger – Big Brothers Big Sisters

Back: Kim Gambrell – Mentoring Collaborative; Amos Atwood – Parity; Robert Debord – Apostolic Lighthouse Church; Dave Guthridge – Campfire USA; Sara Berner – Miamisburg Schools; Mark Baker – Mentoring Collaborative



TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION

According to 2006 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the birth rate among teenagers ages 15 – 19 has risen in the United States for the first time since 1991. Teen pregnancy is associated with academic failure, lower economic status, and poor health outcomes for babies born to teen mothers.

The Family and Children First Council continues to understand the vital importance of supporting sustained efforts that promote the avoidance of pregnancy among teenagers. Through these efforts, TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) Wellness funds are utilized to prevent out-of-wedlock births among teenagers in Montgomery County. A committee of volunteers champions these efforts by reviewing trends, establishing priorities, determining contract awards for community providers, and monitoring progress. In 2007, teen pregnancy prevention efforts were provided by the following organizations: Abstinence Resource Centre, Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley, Dayton Urban League, East End Community Services, Girl Scouts of Buckeye Trails Council, Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio Region, Unified Health Solutions, Wesley Community Center, and YWCA of Dayton.

By educating teenagers regarding the consequences of their actions, and instilling in them the value of pursuing life-long goals, youth are able to make informed decisions that impact the

rest of their lives. In short, these community programs change lives. Consider the following story:

There was a family with four sisters, the two oldest of which had already become teen parents. This factor put the two younger sisters at a significantly higher risk to become teen parents themselves. In fact, according to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the younger siblings of teen parents are two to six times more likely to become pregnant as teens than younger siblings of teens who are not parents. Because of this risk, the two younger siblings enrolled and attended a Wellness-funded program. Their teenage years were riddled with family instability which negatively impacted their school work and culminated in one of them running away from home. Fortunately, she felt comfortable enough to share her problems with a staff person in the program. The staff mentored and assisted her with understanding her options and encouraged her to make good decisions even while facing obstacles. As a result of their participation in the program, both teens have had positive life outcomes: one secured employment as a camp counselor at a day camp, both stayed in school, and both have remained pregnancy-free.