



EARLY LEARNING INDIANA

DAY EARLY LEARNING • CHILD CARE ANSWERS
PARTNERSHIPS FOR EARLY LEARNERS



The History of Early Learning Indiana

Early Learning Indiana was founded nearly 120 years ago as Day Nursery in a rented room off of West Washington Street. We spent more than a century building a reputation as Central Indiana's standard-bearer for excellent child care. Early Learning Indiana has grown from a team of a handful of caring volunteers to a fully professional staff whose mission is to ensure the highest level of early care and education for children in Indiana.

The King's Daughters Society 1890-1900: Creating Support for Working Mothers

Beginning in 1890, the King's Daughters Society outfitted under-privileged children and provided food baskets for the needy in the "rapidly growing community." By 1899, these women began focusing on the need that working mothers had for child care. Day Nurseries had been started in several large cities, and the King's Daughters embraced the idea of establishing one in Indianapolis. One of the founders, Grace Wood, said, "We had no money, no experience in organization, but we had plenty of enthusiasm."

With what was surely radical thinking in Indianapolis at that time, the Society opened their day nursery. A room was rented at 911 West Washington Street. Friends donated a stove and furnishings for the comfort of the first patrons – a deserted mother and baby. They lived in the room and received milk and food. Later, another employed mother brought her baby to be cared for and was charged five cents per day for the service. Recognizing that their child care services had to be affordable, the fee was modest and supplemented by the Society's "silver offering" teas. The fee, together with the gifts the Society solicited, provided the funds that supported the small care center. As the use of the service increased, the center was moved to 521 West Walnut.



The Day Nursery Association 1901-1930: Finding Ways to Serve More Clients

As more and more working mothers sought child care services, both the day nursery facility and the Society's organization needed attention. In 1901, the group rented a house at 518 West Vermont. Then, on December 20, 1901, the Day Nursery Association was established. The Articles of Incorporation were drawn up and signed by Belle C. Wilson, Julia F. Walk, Grace H. Smith, Grace H. Brown, and Grace H. Wood.

Within a few years, the Vermont Street quarters became inadequate, and the adjoining property on the east was added. This was used for children left for the day only, while the main building housed children who boarded by the week. By 1927, to accommodate the agency's growth, Day Nursery purchased a 15-room house and brick building at 542 Lockerbie Street, next door to the James Whitcomb Riley home. A gym/auditorium was added in 1941.



1931-1960: Establishing Quality Standards, Organizing Volunteers and Meeting Demand

By 1930, the nursery program had evolved from combined day and boarding care to exclusively daycare; and in 1940, modern child care standards were established. World War II created more demand for such services, and the mothers from all walks of life were served by the Day Nursery Association. As enrollment grew, so did the number of well-qualified staff members. The program was further strengthened by volunteer activity and cooperation with other organizations. Day Nursery was meeting the needs of wartime working mothers.

It was during this period that Day Nursery, originally organized by volunteers, began receiving the benefits of new, energetic, and growing volunteer corps. In 1938, Mrs. James T. Cunningham, Association Board member, organized the Junior Auxiliary. The Auxiliary's mission, then and now, includes raising money for the Association, providing volunteer services to the Day Nursery centers (nurseries), and promoting the work of Day Nursery to the community.



The Fletcher Day Nursery was added in 1946. This center remained in operation until the summer of 1956 when a new center, West Branch, was opened at 2402 West Michigan Street. The changes were made because of the Association's desire to be of more service to the community. In August 1971, West Branch was moved to 1105 South Blaine Avenue in property that was rented from the former Assumption Parochial School.

1961-1984: Building Capacity

Following a recommendation by the Health and Welfare Council (now known as the United Way), Day Nursery expanded its facilities by building a center at 3522 North Central Avenue. Dedication ceremonies were held for North Branch on April 12, 1964.



On November 20, 1970, the land at 855 North East Street was acquired, and a fundraising campaign was launched to build a new downtown branch to replace Lockerbie Street. Construction began in April and was completed in November 1971. It was named the Day Nursery - Wiles Center in honor of Nellie Wiles who was a Kings Daughter and a Day Nursery founder and benefactor. An open house with some 200 in attendance was held on April 16, 1972, to celebrate the opening of the new center. In 1979, more space was added to Day Nursery - Wiles Center, bringing its capacity to 166 children.

On January 18, 1972, Day Nursery's Articles of Incorporation were updated, and the new version was approved unanimously.

On January 1, 1974, Day Nursery added a fourth center when it assumed operation of the ABC Day Care Center at 1012 Stafford Road, Plainfield, Indiana. The facility was owned by the Plainfield First Baptist Church.

In April 1974, North Branch added a prefabricated building, containing two classrooms, to the property. The enrollment of 50 more children brought the center's capacity to 130 and greatly reduced a long waiting list.

The North branch was renamed the Day Nursery - Lilly Center in appreciation of a \$2 million contribution from the estate of former board member, Ruth Allison Lilly.

Due to declining enrollment, West Branch closed in October 1979.

In September 1980, Day Nursery began operating a center located in Wishard Hospital, 1001 West 10th Street. Day Nursery - Medical Center serves 120 children.

In April 1984, the Plainfield Center was moved to a new site near Galyan's Trading Post in Plainfield. The center's capacity remained at 71 children. This center continued operation until September 1994 when it was moved to the new PSI building.

1985-2000: Setting Trends in Child Care Services

By 1985, Day Nursery was a mature, well-established organization. Year in and year out, the centers were providing a quality child care program for hundreds of children and their working or student parents. At the same time, the organization maintained its commitments to serve ethnically diverse clients and to offer tuition subsidies in accordance with the family income for the children of low- and middle-income parents.

The organization then embarked upon a period when it continued to build capacity and, it is fair to say, became a trendsetter in the industry.



**CHILD CARE
ANSWERS**

A program to provide support and training for family child care home providers began in September 1985. At the same time, Day Nursery instituted a resource and referral service, now called Child Care Answers (CCA). Parents seeking help in locating and evaluating child care can call CCA and receive information, tailored to their needs, from its database of more than 3,000 providers.

In May 1987, responsive to an opportunity to provide quality services, Day Nursery purchased the business of the Northside Family Child Development Center. Known as Day Nursery – Northside Center, Day Nursery provided child care in the same facility, leased from the owner. In 1995, Day Nursery purchased the facility and renovated it in 1996, maintaining capacity at 90 children. Due to continued problems with the building, it was closed in 2000.

Day Nursery assumed operation of a center caring for 90 children in the Minton-Capehart Federal building in May 1991.



The center is now known as Day Nursery – Federal Center.

The years 1993 and 1994 were ones of significant change and growth for Day Nursery. Infant care was introduced at Day Nursery – Wiles Center, reducing capacity to 160. Plans were drawn and construction completed for a new state-of-the-art child care center in Plainfield. This \$2.4 million joint venture by PSI Energy, the town of Plainfield, and Day Nursery yielded the Day Nursery – Community Child Care Center at 110 Dan Jones Road in Plainfield. The center opened in September 1994, and the capacity was increased to

160 children, ages infant to eight.

During 1993 – 1995, Day Nursery conducted a capital campaign to procure funds needed for an extensive renovation of the Day Nursery – Lilly Center. The most visible changes included razing the prefabricated classroom building and replacing it with two new classrooms attached to the center, providing new furniture and equipment, and constructing and equipping a new playground.

During 1994 and 1995, all Day Nursery playgrounds were replaced or upgraded.



Between 1993 and 1996, all Day Nursery centers received national accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Achieving and maintaining accreditation is a distinction shared by only 10% of child care centers nationwide.

In 1993, Day Nursery initiated an ongoing, professional fundraising program to increase public financial support. And in another effort to increase its financial strength, in 1995, Day Nursery began marketing Corporate Child Care Answers (CCCA) to employers as an employee benefit. Employers find this a cost-effective way to meet many employees' child care concerns. Day Nursery benefits financially through contracting with employers to provide them with child care resources, referrals and expertise.

In 1998, Day Nursery won the contract for operation of the child care center at the State Government Center. Day Nursery State Center, whose capacity is 135 children, brings the total of Day Nurseries to seven, serving more than 750 children.

2000 and beyond: Growth in our Second Century

In 2001, Day Nursery was awarded the contract for a child care center serving Federal employees at facilities located at Ft. Benjamin Harrison. The building was designed and built specifically for child care. Day Nursery – Start Smart 4 Children Child Development Center opened in January 2002, and has a capacity of 107 children.



Day Nursery – Medical Center closed in October 2002 when Wishard Hospital expanded and converted the space to meet hospital needs.



In October of 2003 Day Nursery opened a center near Methodist Hospital in partnership with Clarian Health Partners. The center was renamed the Day Nursery Indiana University Health Early Care and Education Center in 2010 to reflect a rebranding by the health care organization.

Also in 2003, Day Nursery took over the management of a child care center near 56th and Guion Road on Indy's Northwest side. The center remained at that location until 2009.

In the summer of 2006, Day Nursery again partnered with Clarian Health in the creation of a center, this time on the campus of hospital's new "west" campus in Avon. The Day Nursery Hendricks County Early Care and Education center replaced the Day Nursery center in Plainfield which closed earlier that year.



In 2009, the Day Nursery Guion Road center moved from 56th and Guion to a new home in Park 100 on W. 73rd Street. The center was renamed Day Nursery Northwest.



In 2013, Day Nursery opened a new center to meet the demand of infant and toddler care in the community. The new center, located at 1030 W. 16th Street, can accommodate 60 infants and toddlers 6 weeks to 35 months old.

In 2014, Day Nursery partnered with two local charter schools, Phalen Leadership Academy and Vision Academy @ Riverside, to open Pre-K classrooms in their schools.



In late 2014, after over 100 years, Day Nursery changed its name to Early Learning Indiana to better reflect the work that they do. The center names were changed as well to Day Early Learning. At the same time, the Board of Early Learning Indiana officially changed the organization's mission to reflect a statewide focus.

Building on the organization's new statewide focus, in late 2014, Early Learning Indiana was awarded a \$20 million grant from the Lilly Endowment to expand access and quality of early childhood education all across the state through a new initiative called Partnerships for Early Learners. The grant supports quality improvement, capacity-building, workforce development, family engagement and innovation and leadership efforts all across the state.



In early 2015, Early Learning Indiana received its first-ever direct federal grant to implement the model infant and toddler program, Early Head Start, in local child care settings.



In mid-2015, Day Early Learning partnered with Eastern Star Church to address the growing need of Pre-K for low income families that were accessing the On My Way Pre-K and Indianapolis Preschool Program funds. They opened 5 new preschool and Pre-K classrooms in the church's location on 30th Street.

In 2016, Early Learning Indiana was awarded a state contract to significantly expand Partnerships for Early Learners to provide best-in-class services and supports statewide to local child care resource and referral agencies, early childhood professionals and programs, families of young children and decision-makers in communities.



In 2016, in partnership with United Way of Central Indiana, Early Learning Indiana helped to create and launch All IN 4 Pre-K, a new coalition of families, community advocates and business leaders working together to expand access to high-quality pre-K in Indiana. The coalition released Success Starts Early: Indiana's Roadmap for Pre-K Expansion, which included the findings of a first-ever statewide, representative poll of Hoosier voters about pre-K. The poll found that 71% of Hoosiers support a significant pre-K expansion.

Today, Early Learning Indiana operates 9 child care centers in the Indianapolis metro area and 1 satellite location in an Indianapolis-based charter school.