Everyone Gains

When you invest in the early development of our greatest resource — our youngest children — everyone gains. Your investment pays dividends and provides a solution to developing better social and economic outcomes for us all.

Our collective prosperity depends on our ability to foster the health and wellbeing of the next generation. The greatest brain development happens in the first few years of life. It is the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health. Social skills and cognitive skills developed at an early age help to create more capable and productive citizens. For our children and grandchildren, you are making a smart investment.

IN OUR CLASSROOMS: SCIENCE DISCOVERY

SLIME SCIENCE
Slime experts experiment and describe the properties of their slime.

FLOWER POWER
Pre-K botanists predict what will happen when they put white flowers in colored water.

VOLCANIC REACTIONS
Students discover what happens to their volcano when they add baking soda.

WEATHER STUDY
Budding meteorologists study how rain clouds work in pre-K.

Support science learning in our classrooms by making a gift online at EarlyLearningIN.org/give.
Marilyn Pecsok: Mission Driven for 44 Years

Marilyn Pecsok is a long standing advocate, Day Nursery Auxiliary and Loyalty Society member of Early Learning Indiana. She joined the Day Nursery Auxiliary in 1974 and continues to be an active life member serving on the annual style show committee.

We sat down to talk to Marilyn about her many experiences and thoughts on Early Learning Indiana. Here is what she had to say:

What was your first memory of Early Learning Indiana?
My first memories are volunteering in the classroom at the Day Early Learning center downtown. As part of the Day Nursery Auxiliary membership, we were required to volunteer in the classrooms. I had the opportunity to spend the afternoon with the children as they played outside. It was astounding to see the teachers in action. They were so creative and patient. As a teacher myself, I know that it takes a true passion to teach.

What surprised you the most about Early Learning Indiana?
I have always been impressed by the level of training and education our teachers are receiving. Our program is truly unique and exceptional.

Why do you support Early Learning Indiana?
The mission is so important to me and our community. We need to give all children the best start in life, and this can be done with high-quality early care and education. I also greatly appreciate the friendships I have made through the Auxiliary. This group of women is extraordinary.

What might someone be surprised to know about you?
I have a bachelor’s degree from DePauw University and received my master’s degree from Butler University. For 11 years, I taught third grade at IPS school 90. Also, I am proud to say that I was a nationally awarded swimmer on the Riviera swim team from 1943-49.

Our Cover Student

Meet Andre
Age: 3
Favorite Color: Blue and yellow
Favorite Food: Mandarin oranges
Favorite School Activity: Playing with dinosaurs and blocks
Favorite Book: Monster trucks book
Favorite Movie: Sing
When I grow up: “Grow like a man and carry a wallet.”
EVENT SPREADS AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EXPERIENCES AND THEIR IMPACT ON EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

On Thursday, April 26, Early Learning Indiana presented **The Brain Advantage: Boosting Brain Growth From Birth to Three** at the Governor’s residence.

We were honored to have First Lady Janet Holcomb welcome local leaders and philanthropists to their home.

More than 55 individuals had the chance to hear from Kathleen Swec, M.D., F.A.A.P., who highlighted research about brain development and how critical the first three years are to cognitive growth.

**BRAIN SCIENCE OF EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. Swec stated, “The brain’s ability to form healthy connections that are critical to learning is strongest before a child enters kindergarten. Investing early in the youngest generation and their caregivers will improve the health and well-being of future generations.”
KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The first five years are the most critical to brain development — with 90% or more of brain growth occurring.
- Toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences during the first five years of life is damaging to brain development.
- 51% of children (age 0-5) in Indiana live in low-income households, a source of toxic stress.
- Ensuring children have high-quality early care and education protects their brains from the negative effects of chronic stress.

ADDRESSING TOXIC STRESS IN THE CLASSROOM

Understanding the connection that exists between toxic stress, mental health and challenging behaviors, our Day Early Learning centers are increasing support for children dealing with toxic stress.

Early Learning Indiana is partnering with Midtown Mental Health to provide training for teachers and directors. The trainings will help them develop strategies for supporting children who are exhibiting challenging behaviors as a result of living in toxic stress.

EARLY LEARNING INDIANA AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Maureen Weber, Early Learning Indiana President & CEO, also shared insights with attendees about our work and focus. “By widening the awareness of the importance of early brain development as we’ve done today, I’m optimistic that we’ll adopt a longer-term view of the challenges that we face. And that early childhood education will be increasingly recognized as a new frontier in our efforts to ensure that Indiana is a state marked by a competitive workforce and thriving families.”

THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS:

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Save the date for The Art of Early Learning.
Friday, September 7, 2018, 5:00 – 7:00 pm.
Shauna began her journey with Day Early Learning three years ago when she enrolled her eldest son, Elijah, in our Day Early Learning pre-K program.

Shauna described how lucky she felt when Elijah’s name was picked from a lottery for an On My Way Pre-K scholarship. Others weren’t as fortunate and did not receive scholarship assistance.

A newly-single mother at the time, the scholarship enabled Shauna to go back to work and eventually start her own small business.

“I began to explore other options and thought about hiring a babysitter to cut costs, but after seeing the amazing results in Elijah’s progress at Day Early Learning I did not want to put him in a lower-quality program.”

“Because of our experience I don’t see pre-K as a luxury, rather I see it as an essential beginning to my children’s education. I can confidently say my family has been positively changed and encouraged forever. Because it’s 100% clear and true that success starts early.”

Elijah, a proud graduate of Day Early Learning, now attends an IPS Montessori school, while Chance currently attends our Day Early Learning Lilly Family Center.

Today, Shauna is a passionate advocate for access to high-quality early care and education and proud small business owner.
First Lady Janet Holcomb Supports Indiana’s Youngest

First Lady Janet Holcomb welcomed us to the Governor’s residence for The Brain Advantage: Boosting Brain Growth from Birth to Three. Prior to the event, she shared some early memories with us.

The First Lady’s childhood loves were pets and books. “I loved any book that had a horse somewhere in the storyline,” she said. “I immersed myself in reading and started writing my own stories.” According to Holcomb, creative writing and art were outlets for expression in her early years.

The First Lady’s experiences as a child give her an appreciation for how high-quality education provides future opportunities. “I had some really wonderful art teachers as a kid, and loved visiting museums, attending performing arts shows and concerts.”

In high school, the First Lady attended Burris Laboratory School, where she joined a gifted and talent art program. Upon graduation, she continued studying art at Ball State, earning a bachelor’s degree in drawing and a master’s degree in print making.

“It’s so important to stimulate young minds in order to create the neuropathways that allow us to learn. Reading to kids, sharing new places and things, allowing them to express creativity through art and play are all vital,” said First Lady Holcomb.

The First Lady knows that providing children in underserved communities with access to high-quality care and education will make a real impact. We are grateful for her support of Early Learning Indiana and her passion for Indiana’s youngest citizens.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CENTER DONOR TOURS
Want to see early learning in action? Enjoy the opportunity to visit and lunch with Indiana’s littlest learners at our centers. Donor tours may be scheduled at any time and at most center locations.*

THE ART OF EARLY LEARNING
Friday, September 7, 2018, 5 – 7 pm
Whitsett Residence – Indianapolis, IN
Join us as we celebrate the art of learning in a unique and historic home.
Co-Chaired by Jill Robisch & Tony Kaufman

THE EARLY LEARNING SUMMIT FOR COMMUNITY COALITIONS
Tuesday, October 16, 2018, 11 am – 3 pm
Indianapolis, IN
The summit is for community leaders who are interested in learning how investing in early learning will support today and tomorrow’s workforce.

DAY NURSERY AUXILIARY’S ANNUAL FALL LUNCHEON AND STYLE SHOW
Thursday, November 1, 2018, 11 am – 2 pm
Ritz Charles – Carmel, IN
Join the Day Nursery Auxiliary for an afternoon of fashion trends, fun and shopping to support our little learners!

BIRTH TO THREE, BUILD WITH ME REUNION
Friday, November 16, 2018, 10 am – Noon
Day Early Learning Center for Infants & Toddlers
Come celebrate the 5th anniversary of the first-of-its-kind infant and toddler care and education center!
Co-Chaired by Jill Robisch & Tony Kaufman

*For more information on sponsorship or ways to get involved, contact:
Sarah Ferguson
317.737.1227
sarahf@earlylearningindiana.org
Loyalty Society Members Meet with President & CEO Maureen Weber

In May, the President & CEO of Early Learning Indiana, Maureen Weber, had the opportunity to sit down with Loyalty Society members for an informal coffee. Maureen celebrated the deep commitment of the Loyalty Society.

Loyalty Society donors have supported Early Learning Indiana for 20 consecutive years or more. Members who attended are pictured above. They are (standing left to right) Maureen Weber, Marilyn Goeke, Pat Hubley, Judy Pearce, Marjorie Skarbeck, Dotty Reehling, B.J. Maley, and Louise Collet; and (seated left to right) Marilyn Pecsok, Robert Anderson, Sally Anderson and Rosemary Tanner.

Loyalty Society members have helped change the landscape of early learning in Indiana, impacting a multitude of children and families. Thank you to our cherished members!

Pictured to the right:
Top: Bob Anderson, Dotty Reehling, Sally Anderson and Rosemary Tanner
Middle: Marilyn Goeke and Maureen Weber
Bottom: Dotty Reehling, Judy Pearce and Maureen Weber
Building Brighter Futures for More Hoosier Families

One of our goals is to impact more children beyond the limited space in our centers. Thanks to you we reach this goal in multiple ways such as providing child care referrals to families and training other child care providers. And now, we’re excited to introduce a new resource for families to help impact the lives of children across the state — Brighter Futures Indiana.

Brighter Futures Indiana is a comprehensive resource hub for families seeking online information about early childhood education and programs.

The website provides family-friendly resources on ways to support learning in their homes and during family time. From evidence-based guides for topics like potty training to useful information on Indiana-based educational resources, families will find a wealth of ideas for activating learning.

In addition, families can also find information to support their child care search such as:

- Information on the state’s quality rating and improvement system (Paths to QUALITY)
- Licensing requirements and health and safety practices
- Financial help for paying for care and other family services
- Indiana’s Child Care Finder online search tool and the Brighter Futures Indiana support staff

Visit BrighterFuturesIndiana.org to check it out and share with friends.

YOU CAN CHANGE LIVES AND CULTIVATE INDIANA’S FUTURE

Join friends and donors of Early Learning Indiana and support a developing mind. There are many ways to give a gift and ensure the highest quality of early care and education for Hoosier children.

Make a gift online at EarlyLearningIN.org/give or mail a check in the enclosed envelope.

Become a Monthly Donor and Make ONE Big Impact!

For $11 a month, you can provide 1 child with 1 day’s tuition assistance at Day Early Learning. The average annual scholarship amount for a child is $2,884. Through your monthly donation, you are giving 1 child 1 day of high-quality learning each month.

Sign up on line at EarlyLearningIN.org and become an early learning champion.

Leave a Lasting Legacy with a Planned Gift.

You can ensure children will have access to the best early education well into the future. Give through your estate, remember us in your will or consider other simple ways you can give that may provide tax benefits.

For more information, please contact Teresa Batrich Rhodes at 317.737.1267 or TeresaR@EarlyLearningIndiana.org or visit EarlyLearningIN.org/give.
Babies Explore and Delight in Their New Playground

Squeals, giggles and claps filled the air as our littlest learners discovered their new playground at our IU Health Day Early Learning center.

The new playground was made possible by our friends at FULLBEAUTY Brands and The Hagerman Group who helped remove the old playground and invested in new equipment.

“The Hagerman Group was honored to be a part of the IU Health Day Early Learning center playground upgrade in support of Early Learning Indiana,” said Early Learning Indiana board member Jeff Hagerman, chairman of The Hagerman Group. “We had the opportunity to join forces with FULLBEAUTY Brands on this exciting project, and they, like Hagerman, have been a long-time supporter of early childhood development and community engagement. I feel it is imperative for companies like ours to engage in the development of and commitment to children, and this opportunity was a small token of how we could help make a difference!”

“This means a lot to our teams to be able to see or be part of positive change in the community and specifically in early childhood development. This has been a consistent strategy for FULLBEAUTY Brands in the community for over a decade,” said Chip Edgington, Vice President Operations for FULLBEAUTY Brands.
Throughout high school, Katy Kniola loved babysitting, but she assumed she would care for others through a nursing career like her mother. In college, Katy was surprised to find the strong pull she had for young children.

“In college, I did a field observation with a kindergarten class. They let me have an active role in the classroom, and I loved it,” said Katy.

Katy completed her student teaching at Day Early Learning at Park 100 and returned to our centers for a full time position as soon as she graduated.

“I do not think that those of us who work in early care are always considered educators.” Katy prepares a lesson plan each week and works with children in groups and individually. She adjusts her lessons to each child's learning style and ensures they are meeting important developmental milestones. “I am a teacher, and I am proud to say it,” says Katy.

Katy credits a degree in early childhood education in giving her the tools needed in the classroom. Through her education, she learned various techniques to deal with specific situations. But she also feels that hands-on experience has been her greatest teacher. “Each child is unique,” says Katy. “Not every child learns the same way, so I need to figure out how to accommodate each child’s need to ensure they are learning. As the children’s learning evolves, so do my teaching techniques.”

Early Learning Indiana provides teachers with training and coaching. According to Katy, the coaches not only talk you through your challenges, they are active in the classroom demonstrating their ideas. “They break the topics down and show us how each topic is beneficial,” says Katy. “I feel stronger as a teacher thanks to excellent coaches and training opportunities.” Katy plans to continue her education by starting a master’s degree program in the next few years.

Katy's most impactful moments as a teacher are those days when a child opens up to her, understands a difficult concept or finally believes in him or herself. She feels strongly that Day Early Learning sets children up to succeed. Every day is a new opportunity for her to help a child grow, and she loves helping them achieve new accomplishments and reach new milestones.

“I want children who pass through my classroom to shine as bright as they can. I try to bring a positive energy to my classroom, and I want my kids to capture that and take it with them to their next classroom.”
Our mission is to ensure the highest level of early care and education for children in Indiana.

You are helping to educate me and give me a promising future!