

### Program Overview

AMHA has found an efficient way to promote high quality early care and education to the nearly 3,000 children under age five living in AMHA housing (almost 10% of children under age five living in Summit County). AMHA launched its Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) in 2007 to build on its vision that a spirit of community and adequate resources will empower AMHA residents to become independent, educated, healthy and self-sufficient. The comprehensive content areas recommended by the State of Ohio for early childhood, also utilized by Summit County *First Things First*, are incorporated into the programming.

The ECI program consists of three components: Home Visitation Services, which include the Parents as Teachers™ curriculum; early childhood Family Outreach Events; and a Maternal Depression Program.

#### HOME VISITATION SERVICES AND PARENTS AS TEACHERS™

ECI Home Visitation Services are offered to families with children up to kindergarten entry, providing families with needed support and referrals to existing high quality early childhood programs, as well as services to support basic needs and promote self-sufficiency. ECI Child & Family Partners utilize Parents as Teachers™ (PAT), which is a voluntary home visitation program for at-risk families with children birth to kindergarten entry. An evidence-based program, PAT provides a curriculum to assist parents to be their children's most important teacher.<sup>1</sup> The curriculum includes health, nutrition, vision, developmental and social-emotional assessments, as well as age-appropriate developmental activities and parenting information. AMHA's home visitors offer monthly visits to enrolled families with one risk factor, and twice-monthly visits to families with two or more risk factors.

#### FAMILY OUTREACH EVENTS

Family Outreach Events are held at six locations (four in Akron, one in Barberton and one in Cuyahoga Falls). These events provide an opportunity for families to come together for fun, fellowship and learning. They are designed to create awareness and foster community around the importance of early childhood learning and development. Quality early childhood programs offered by community partners attend these events to provide information. They serve as a recruitment tool for community programs as well as the other ECI components offered by AMHA.

#### MATERNAL DEPRESSION PROGRAM

Because maternal depression is a significant risk factor affecting the well-being and school readiness of young children, the AMHA Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) provides a Maternal Depression Program in collaboration with Child Guidance & Family Solutions (CG&FS) and with the assistance of the Akron Area YMCA. Maternal depression services are offered to mothers with children in the targeted age range (birth to five). Onsite support groups facilitated by a professional from CG&FS, called *Mom-ME-Time*, are offered monthly in three AMHA family developments and at Cascade Village. The program screens mothers for depression and make needed referrals to a mental health provider for further evaluation and treatment. Childcare services during the group sessions are provided by the YMCA.

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<sup>1</sup> Four independent randomized controlled trials (RCT) and seven peer-reviewed published outcome studies involving more than 16,000 children have evaluated PAT. The research has shown statistically significant and sustained benefits in the following four program goals: (1) Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices; (2) Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues (screenings for health, vision, social-emotional and the five development domains are conducted annually); (3) Prevent child abuse and neglect; and (4) Increase children's kindergarten readiness and school success.

# Recent and upcoming changes to the Initiative

## PROGRAM EXPANSION

### Geographic Expansion

With the opening of the Reach Opportunity Center in July 2014, the Early Childhood Initiative extended home visitation/PAT, Family Outreach Events and Mom-ME Time services to non-AMHA residents in the Summit Lake neighborhood.

The Early Childhood Initiative also extended Family Outreach Events services into the Valley View neighborhood in Akron. While home visitation services were already available to residents at Valley View, events were not. As a result, Parents as Teachers participation should increase in the 44310 zip code. December 9, 2014 marked the first event at Valley View.

### Curriculum Expansion

Thanks to increased funding from the Ohio Children's Trust Fund, and the United Way of Summit County, the Early Childhood Initiative added the Parents as Teachers™ (PAT) *Three to Kindergarten Entry* curriculum to its programming. Prior to August 2014, AMHA only offered PAT to families with children prenatal to three years old. Now, families that do not have access to Greenleaf's SPARK program are eligible for this extended curriculum.

## ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS

### Greenleaf Family Center / SPARK

In the Fall of 2014, AMHA and Greenleaf held its first all staff meeting with the AMHA Early Childhood Initiative and the Greenleaf SPARK program. The intention of regular meetings between these two staffs is to bring the programs closer together in order to facilitate a smooth, successful transition for families served by both programs.

### Summit Education Initiative

In 2015, AMHA will work with Summit Education Initiative to pilot an online version of the Transition Skills Summary.

### Twinsburg Library

In February 2015, the Twinsburg Public Library will begin to offer programming at AMHA's Pinewood Gardens neighborhood. The Library will expose children and their parents to books and reading through weekly sessions in a fun, welcoming space they will create at the Pinewood Gardens Community Room. An AMHA Child and Family Partner will participate in these efforts. This partnership should produce greater participation in Parents as Teachers™ in the 44087 zip code.

## Evaluation

To ensure ECI is affecting positive change, AMHA continues to place a high value on the evaluation component of the initiative. ECI has contracted with *Smile Minded SmartStart, LLC* to conduct a high-quality research program which includes the following assessment measures.

AMHA uses the following tools to measure program success and guide the program’s decision-making process:

- Focus Groups
- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)
- Parent Engagement Questionnaire
- Parent Satisfaction Survey
- Protective Factors Survey
- Tracking-at-a-Glance (a case management database)
- Transition Skills Summary (TSS) (beginning 2015)

<b>Table 1. 2015 Program Objectives</b>			
ACTIVITY	OUTCOME	INDICATOR(S)	MEASUREMENT TOOLS
1. Families with one or fewer high needs characteristics will receive at least 12 personal visits annually and families with two or more high needs characteristics will receive at least 24 personal visits annually.	Increase parent knowledge and improve parenting practices.	At least 75% of parent/caregiver participants show improvements in the Child Development/ Knowledge of Parenting factor of the Protective Factors Survey (PFS).	The PFS is a 20-item pre-post self-administered survey that measures caregiver protective factors against child abuse and neglect. The survey has undergone four national field tests for establishing reliability and validity. Results are designed to help agencies measure changes in protective factors and identify areas to focus on increasing individual family protective factors.  The PFS, administered at least annually, measures parent knowledge and parenting practices.
2. A complete screening will take place within 90 days of enrollment for children 4 months or older and then at least annually thereafter (infants enrolled prior to 4 months of age are screened prior to 7 months of age).	Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues.	At least 60% of children receive a complete annual screening.	ECI uses a web-based social services database to track screenings.  A complete screening includes developmental screenings using PAT approved screening tools (ASQ and ASQ:SE), along with hearing and vision screening, and completion of a health record. Developmental domains that require screening include language, intellectual, social emotional and motor development.
3. At least 60% of families that receive at least one personal visit (excl. families enrolled less than 90 days) will be connected by their Child & Family Partner to two or more community resources.	Connect families to resources that help them reach their goals and address their needs.	At least 50% of ECI referrals result in participation.	ECI uses a web-based social services database to track the referral process (from referral to service). ECI gathers referral follow-up data from providers when appropriate, but it mainly comes from parent self-reporting.

**Table 1. 2015 Program Objectives**

ACTIVITY	OUTCOME	INDICATOR(S)	MEASUREMENT TOOLS
4. ECI will offer monthly onsite maternal depression support groups, Mom-ME Time, at four locations in Summit County.	Decrease prevalence of maternal depression.	Of the mothers showing signs of depression at intake, at least 30% show improvement at their 3rd dose, and 35% at their 6th.	ECI assesses all mothers participating in Mom-ME Time (maternal depression support groups) for maternal depression at intake and after every 3 sessions. Aggregate and same-participant data are analyzed.

## Funding

Approximately 70% of the AMHA Early Childhood Initiative is financed by Building for Tomorrow, a non-profit, 501(c)(3) instrumentality of AMHA that supports services to residents of AMHA that promote stability, education and economic independence as a means to strengthen the greater community. (Learn more about Building for Tomorrow at [www.amhabft.org](http://www.amhabft.org).) Most of the remaining 30% of funding for the program is from a state grant by the Ohio Children’s Trust Fund and earned income from The Community Builders for fee-base services at Akron’s Cascade Village neighborhood.

### 2015 BUDGET

	Proposed	Note
<b>REVENUE</b>		
<b>Contractual Services</b>		
Building for Tomorrow	299,199	Foundation grants, and individual and corporate contributions
The Community Builders	30,000	Fee-based income for ECI services at Cascade Village
<b>Total Contractual Services</b>	<b>328,955</b>	
<b>Government Grants</b>		
Ohio Children's Trust Fund	86,365	
<b>Total Government Grants</b>	<b>86,365</b>	
<b>Other Revenue</b>		
Betty Jacobson Foundation	5,000	
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>5,000</b>	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>420,564</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>		
Wages	217,930	4 FTEs (frontline staff; increased by 1 from previous year); 1 PTE (PAT Supervisor); 55% of ECI Manager & 20% of Director of Strategic Engagement
Benefits	136,190	
Payroll Taxes	7,130	
<b>Total Personnel Expenses</b>	<b>361,250</b>	
<b>Program Expenses</b>		
<b>Contractual Services</b>		
Evaluation	6,750	
Maternal Depression Facilitator (CG&FS)	18,560	
MMT Childcare Professional (YMCA)	1,080	
<b>Total Contractual Services</b>	<b>26,390</b>	
<b>Programming &amp; Administration</b>		
Family Outreach Events	8,950	24 events+5 play groups: incl. marketing/outreach, supplies, and special presentations
Focus Groups	550	Incl. incentives and supplies
Maternal Depression	3,300	48 Mom-ME Time group sessions: incl. participant incentives, marketing/outreach, and supplies
Parents as Teachers/Home Visitation	4,550	Incl. incentives, marketing/outreach, supplies, membership fees, and training
Administration	15,580	Travel, office supplies, partnership costs, cell phones
<b>Total Programming &amp; Administration</b>	<b>32,680</b>	
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>59,070</b>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>420,564</b>	

## Staff & Advisory Board

### AMHA EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE STAFF

Richelle M. Wardell, Early Childhood Initiative Manager  
Jill Spillman, Data & Compliance Coordinator/Parents as Teachers™ Supervisor  
Nicole Higgins, Child & Family Partner  
Lindsey Klucar, Child & Family Partner  
Kari Sansone, Child & Family Partner  
Tiffany Knox, Child & Family Partner

### AMHA LEADERSHIP

Anthony W. O’Leary, Executive Director  
Sherri Scheetz, Chief Administrative Officer  
Christina Hodgkinson, Resident Services Director  
Christine C. Yuhasz, Director of Strategic Engagement  
Cathy Watson, Finance Director

### EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE ADVISORY BOARD

Akron Children's Hospital – Heather Wuensch  
Akron Public Library – David Jennings  
Akron Public Schools – Ellen McWilliams  
Akron Summit Community Action Head Start – Malcolm Costa/Allyson Lee  
Barberton City Schools – Patti Cleary  
Child Care Connection – Amy McLaughlin  
Child Guidance & Family Solutions – Elaine Harlin  
Family & Children First Council – Tonya Block  
Greenleaf Family Center – Dawn Jones  
Summit County Educational Service Center – Linda Fuline  
Summit Education Initiative – Derran Wimer  
Twinsburg Public Schools – Kathi Powers  
United Way of Summit County – Bob Kulinski  
Woodridge Local Schools – Valerie Riedthaler