

OUR VALUES: COMMUNITY-FIRST APPROACH TO EARLY CHILDHOOD WELLNESS.

Building authentic relationships for early childhood wellness opportunities in Cuyahoga County.

Early Ages Healthy Stages values our community members as experts in early childhood wellness. We believe that everyone—from parents and teachers; to hospitals and businesses—has something to offer to improve early childhood wellness.

Working together involves “making space at our table” for all interested partners, as well as reaching out to those who have previously been left out of the conversation.

Over the next three years, Early Ages Healthy Stages will reach out to our community to make sure that our initiatives, tools, and processes represent the unique needs and interests of the young children, families, and providers we serve.

OUR GOAL:

Early Ages Healthy Stages will engage early childhood stakeholders in diverse communities and locations through regular dialogue to define and strengthen early childhood health initiatives.

Objectives: By December 31st, 2020, Early Ages Healthy Stages Coalition will:

1. Engage community residents in the planning and implementation of early childhood wellness programs through surveys, focus groups, and community forums to understand needs and define engagement.

- Develop and conduct focus groups and/or forums.
- Make sure that child care incentives for participation and food are provided.
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate data.

2. Establish partnerships with support services to improve access to resources in early care and education (ECE) settings and EAHS organizations

- Complete an audit of support services available to Cuyahoga County ECE providers and families.
- Collect and share resources on EAHS website, social media, and at meetings.
- Engage community resources (schools, churches, parks, recreation centers, etc.) to partner in ongoing events and programs for early childhood wellness.

Like parents and caregivers, early care and education (ECE) providers are the backbone for early childhood wellness in our communities.

ECE providers are role models for healthy habits that young children will use for life. The ECE providers at Early Ages Healthy Stages consistently go above and beyond state requirements to create opportunities for the children in their care.

When ECE providers are supported by community and financial resources, they become a source of health and wellness expertise not only for the children that they serve, but also for their families and community as well. Unfortunately, inconsistencies in funding, financial strain, and work/home stressors often keep ECE providers from giving the energy that they would like to the classroom.

In Cuyahoga County, we recognize that early care and education providers are not always recognized and appreciated for the significant contribution they make to the development of our youngest citizens.

**OUR VALUES:
ELEVATING
THE
SUCCESS
OF
EARLY
CARE AND
EDUCATION
PROVIDERS**

EXPANDING OHIO HEALTHY PROGRAMS

Early Ages Healthy Stages is responsible for the local implementation of Ohio Healthy Programs- an Ohio-Approved initiative that offers training and technical assistance for early care and education providers on best practices in building healthy habits, menus, and policies. Designated Ohio Healthy Programs are ECE programs that have chosen to go above and beyond licensing requirements for health. These programs show their families and community that they are dedicated to the health and wellness of the children that they serve.

Throughout our work with Ohio Healthy Programs, we have been inspired by the many ECE providers who go the extra mile to provide health opportunities for their children. We believe, and have witnessed, that when early care and education providers have support from public health and other agencies they can provide authentic opportunities for child and family wellness beyond what each partner could achieve individually.



OUR GOAL:

Early Ages Healthy Stages will build on the success of our designated Ohio Healthy Programs efforts to increase early childhood wellness knowledge and skills among early care and education providers in Cuyahoga County.

Objectives: By December 31st, 2020, Early Ages Healthy Stages Coalition will:

1. Establish partnerships with organizations that support early care and education to expand the reach of Ohio Healthy Programs and recruit new early care and education providers.

- Engage with local organizations and institutions that support early care and education providers.
- Engage with currently designated Ohio Healthy Programs to learn about successes and challenges.
- Promote Ohio Healthy Programs training and technical assistance, and recruit providers.

2. Provide follow-on support for designated Ohio Healthy Programs that includes newsletters and professional development opportunities.

- Survey current Ohio Healthy Programs sites in Cuyahoga County to learn what health topics and communication efforts are desired.
- Look for current training and opportunities that may be disseminated to compliment Ohio Health Programs training.
- Fill gaps in current materials (newsletters, handouts, and/or webinar).