

CHERISH EVERY CHILD (CHECHS) works to achieve measurable improvements in the well being of Springfield's children from birth to five by:

- **Convening and facilitating the work of organizations engaged in or critical to the mission of CHECHS,**
- **Grant making for programs aligned with CHECHS goals,**
- **Communicating and raising public awareness of the status of and issues facing Springfield's youngest children and their families,**
- **Educating in relevant public policy areas,**
- **Educating on the value and payback of investing in early childhood**
- **Evaluating its work.**

Accomplishments

2001

- Cherish Every Child Initiative (CHECHS) launched by the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, in collaboration with businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations.

2003

- January: CHECHS completed the "Cherish Every Child Action Plan" for Springfield's Youngest Children, outlining what it will take for every child in Springfield to have access to the health, education, social, emotional and recreational services they need.
- November: CHECHS unveils the "Status Report on Springfield's Children" highlighting quality of life indicators around education, health, economics, and safety.
- Winter 2003/2004: The Early Education and Care Inventory Workgroup updated and expanded a local inventory of early childhood programs in Springfield. The database is used to inform parents of young children about available child care services, as well as an updated list of open childcare slots throughout the city.

2004

- Spring: The Transition Workgroup and the Springfield Early Care and Education Partnership developed a single transition packet for children leaving preschool and entering kindergarten, to be used by the public school system in Springfield.
- April: The Recreation and Culture Workgroup collaborated with the Massachusetts Cultural Council and START on a survey to identify methods of attracting low-income and minority populations to cultural and recreational venues in the city.

- April: ABC-40 television features a daily segment on Springfield's children during the 2004 Week of the Young Child.
- May: A legislative breakfast is held with state legislators to raise awareness of CHECHS and issues facing Springfield's children.
- June/July: The Early Childhood Workforce Workgroup releases its Training Directory for Early Childhood Professionals, listing training programs for early educators in the region.
- June/July: The Early Childhood Workforce Workgroup releases a report on the current level of training and education of the existing early childhood workforce.
- Fall: The Strengthen and Coordinate Services to Families Workgroup completes a parent survey to determine the greatest barriers facing families. The survey receives significant press attention.
- September: The University of Massachusetts' Donahue Institute completes the first official evaluation of CHECHS.
- September: **A Day in the Life of Springfield's Children** photo exhibit is launched at the Valley Photo Center.
- October: CHECHS is a co-sponsor for the Affiliated Chambers of Commerce of Greater Springfield's annual "Super 60" event, at which Minneapolis Federal Reserve Senior Vice President of Research
- In affiliated grant-making, CHECS funded
 - Partners for a Healthier Community's pilot oral health program, Springfield Open Wide, targeting five early childhood centers and 150 children (Oral Health area)
 - Thom Springfield IN-TIME Infant Mental Health Training Project for Early Intervention clinicians
 - Literacy Works of Hampden County, a program of the Hampden County Regional Employment Board (Raising Incomes area)
 - **Early Education for All** Campaign
 - City of Springfield Maternal Child Health Commission's Community Baby Shower
 - GOODSTART program of Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

2005

- On July 1, a new Department of Early Education and Care was created by the Massachusetts Legislature as a result of the public policy work done by Margaret Blood and Strategies For Children to create the state-wide public will around universal voluntary early education for all

3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. The new Department of EEC will consolidate, streamline and coordinate state-level administration, policies and funding for early education and care program to maximize resources, reduce duplication and improve services for children and families.

- July, August: **A Day in the Life of Springfield's Children** photo exhibit is housed at Eastfield Mall, Springfield
- September: Newly appointed Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care Ann Reale speaks to the CHECHS Implementation Team and other invited guests in her first visit to Western Massachusetts since the inception on July 1 of the Department of Early Education and Care.
- September: CHECHS News, a newsletter on the work of the initiative, is launched and distributed to 2000 members of the Greater Springfield early education, education, non-profit, business and governmental communities
- October 1: Culture and Recreation Workgroup plans LittleFest of Storytelling on the Quadrangle, with storyteller Abigail Jefferson performing African and African-American tales, Leeny Del Seamonds performing Latin American stories and songs and Cindy Melikian performing classic children's stories with live rabbits and doves, as well as hands-on art-making workshops. An Information Fair was held under the tent on the Quadrangle for families with young children to learn about valuable services and programs.
- October – December: **A Day in the Life of Springfield's Children** photo exhibit is housed at the Central Library, Springfield.
- November: Home Visiting Workgroup (formerly Strengthen and Coordinate Services to Families) designs and implements survey to local providers of home visits to determine scope of visits, funding sources and target populations for visits.
- December: Administration of QUEST (Quality Education for Springfield Teachers), a five-year workforce program designed to support a cadre of Springfield early childhood educators as they attain their associates and bachelors degrees, begins at the Preschool Enrichment Team. The program was developed by the CHECHS Workforce Workgroup, is initially funded by Cherish Every Child Springfield and the Springfield Early Care & Education Partnership.
- December: Dr. Nancy Marshall of the Wellesley Centers on Women speaks to Implementation Team and invited guests on the recently-released Massachusetts Capacity Study, a privately-funded study of the current early education and care workforce, of the capacity of Massachusetts' colleges and universities to prepare the EEC workforce, as well as the progress on the elements identified by the Early Education and Care Advisory Committee as critical to advancing a professional development system.
- In affiliated grant-making, CHECS funded

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- GOODSTART program of Massachusetts society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- Behavioral Health Network's Springfield Community and School Internship program to bring Latino doctoral level Psychology students to offer culturally competent, language-specific mental health services to children and families

2006

- January: Davis Foundation takes an eleven-member delegation from the Greater Springfield business community to the Committee on Economic Development /Pew Charitable Trusts/PNC Financial Services conference, **Building the Economic Case for Investments in Preschool**
- March: Elizabeth Burke Bryant, JD, Executive Director of Rhode Islands Kids Count speaks to Implementation Team on the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative, a multi-state initiative that developed sets of indicators at the state level to track results for children from birth through age eight. The goal is for states to use the school readiness indicators to inform public policy decisions and track progress in meeting key goals for young children.
- March: Home visiting workgroup completes survey of organizations in Western Massachusetts doing home visiting programs, in order to inform their development of a targeted pilot home visiting program for parents with newborns.
- April: CHECHS convenes ad hoc workgroup to develop and submit a \$1.2 million grant to the United States Department of Education for program for early childhood educators' professional development
- April: Coinciding with the Week of the Young Child, CHECHS and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission host a Legislative Breakfast in support of early childhood issues in Western Massachusetts.