

# EARLY CHILDHOOD COALITION – CHARTER

## Lead Staff

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## United Way Mission and Vision

United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley exists to improve lives and community conditions. It accomplishes this by **assessing** community conditions, **raising and investing** money and **mobilizing** people to action. Through collective impact, United Way will work with others to achieve a community goal of increasing 3rd grade reading levels by 50% and increasing the number of 8th grade students proficient in reading and math by 2022.

## Early Childhood Coalition (ECC)

The Early Childhood Coalition (ECC) is comprised of educators, community members and parents who, through collective impact, support the mission and strategies of the UWGLV Council for Grade Level Reading (CGLR) for children ages birth to five, parents and teachers. The CGLR collaborates with community partners to ensure that resources are available to implement the strategies required to meet UWGLV's education goals.

## Early Childhood Coalition Mission and Vision

The vision of the ECC is that each child in the Lehigh Valley is reading on grade level by third grade.

Their mission is to ensure that UWGLV's education strategies are implemented and that the outcomes listed below are met and assessed:

- Lehigh Valley babies are born healthy.
- Families are prepared to provide adequate early literacy support
- Children, birth to age five, receive a quality education including pre-k
- Each preschool teacher is prepared to build skills that enhance age-appropriate development of children
- The educational system is prepared to successfully transition each child into kindergarten

## Guiding Principles

The Early Childhood Coalition will:

- Work collaboratively and collectively with local, state and national entities to ensure the greatest possible impact for children and families.
- Ensure that all work is consistent with current best practice and research.

- Provide communication within the Coalition that is timely, consistent with its charter and made available to the Council for Grade Level Reading and the community as appropriate.
- Complete all work consistent with the framework of UWGLV's education goal, its outcomes and strategies.

## Responsibilities

The Early Childhood Coalition is guided by the UWGLV Birth to Five strategies and outcomes under the guidance of the Council for Grade Level Reading. It is committed to:

- Integrating United Way and community resources to meet the UWGLV impact goal of increasing the number of third grade students reading on grade level by 50% by 2022;
- Monitoring the implementation and assessment results of birth to age 5 projects funded by UWGLV;
- Identifying, aligning and assessing current practices and priorities in the Lehigh Valley related to the UWGLV education outcomes for children ages birth to age 5 and their families;
- Creating an annual work plan that prioritizes, develops and sequences activities and/or scales-up proven programs and strategies; provides measurable outcomes that are consistently updated based on results to ensure that there is evidence that the strategies are working;
- Identifying and adapting/adopting best practices successfully implemented in other communities;
- Communicating and collaborating across the ECC work groups, between the ECC and the wider Lehigh Valley community, and the Council for Grade Level Reading;
- Creating and supporting, in collaboration with the CGLR, an early childhood education policy platform.



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### **Structure and Member Responsibility**

The ECC will consist of a steering committee and three work groups. The steering committee will serve in a leadership role to provide information, guidance and support to the ECC work groups and the UWGLV education team.

### **Steering Committee**

Steering committee members will meet monthly and will be responsible to further advance grade level reading efforts in the Lehigh Valley through:

- Facilitating the mission and direction of each work group;
- Coordinating and supporting the work groups;
- Ensuring collaboration with the Council in support of grade level reading;
- Monitoring the work groups' reports;
- Ensuring communication across all work groups and the community;
- Reviewing the assessments provided by UWGLV of the funded programs aligned with the birth to K strategies;
- Annually reviewing, evaluating and making recommendations to the work plan to ensure successful implementation;
- Recruiting and overseeing volunteer opportunities to support the work of the work groups and work plan;
- Ensuring UWGLV's mission and goals are being met through all UWGLV early childhood programs and services.

The steering committee will be responsible to sponsor a gathering of the community twice a year for discussion of the Early Childhood Coalition's progress and plans as well as progress of the work groups and suggestions from the participants. These will be held in March and September of each year.

The steering committee will consist of:

- Chairperson (appointed by the Asst. Director, Early Childhood Education);  
*The Chair shall represent the education priority area as defined by United Way.*
- Co-chairperson (appointed by the Asst. Director, Early Childhood Education);
- 10–15 additional members with a minimum of one representative from Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton; members will represent the birth to K community including, but not limited to, preschool teachers, administrators, elementary principals, case workers, librarians, parents, etc.

### **Work Groups**

Each member of the Coalition will serve on one work group:

- Continuity and Pathways
- Family Engagement
- Teacher Effectiveness.

Each one of the three working groups is led by a Chair/Co-chair.

### **Responsibilities of Committee Chair**

- Establish, along with work group members, a schedule of meetings, send reminders and efficiently lead each meeting. Each work group establishes and maintains its own meeting schedule.

- Ensure that the work group establishes and implements priorities, creates an annual work plan and assesses its identified priorities.
- Communicates progress to the steering committee Chair after each meeting.
- Provides input to recommendations for the Council for Grade Level Reading through the steering committee.

### **Responsibilities of Work Group Members**

Continuity and Pathways:

- Research transition practices currently in place in the Lehigh Valley and determine strengths and weaknesses of all.
- Develop a plan to outreach to early education providers who serve children in the catchment areas of the priority schools.
- Develop a plan to connect those providers to the priority schools they serve.
- Create a valley-wide campaign to ensure on-time registration for all incoming kindergarteners.

Family Engagement:

- Research current family engagement practices in the Lehigh Valley and determine strengths and weaknesses of all.
- Research best practices on how to engage families.
- Research best practices on barriers to engaging families and how to overcome them.
- Link families to support resources (e.g., GED training, mental health services) through collaboration with community partners.

Teacher Effectiveness:

- Research teacher effectiveness practices in the Lehigh Valley and determine strengths and weaknesses of all.
- Define teacher effectiveness.
- Research barriers to teacher effectiveness.
- Develop a plan to address barriers and incorporate successful models.

*The entire Early Childhood Coalition will meet twice a year to learn about the progress of the three working groups.*

### **Commitment Quality, Meaningful Volunteer and Partner Engagement**

- Meetings will begin and end on time, unless extended by an agreement of participants;
- Pre-meeting materials are distributed in a timely manner in order to permit participants to review/comment prior to meeting and to be fully prepared to participate fully;
- Meeting notes and post-meeting action items are communicated in a timely manner to permit participants time for review/comment;
- Each convened group strives for consensus on key decisions and recommendations. If unable to reach consensus, the decision will be made by majority vote of those participants who are present;
- Participants who are unable to participate in meetings are strongly encouraged to be briefed by UW staff and/or work group leadership between meetings.