



2023-2024  
Impact Report



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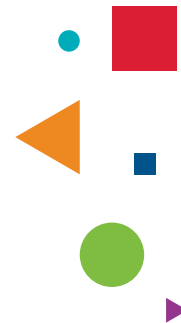
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# From the President/CEO

As I reflect on the past fiscal year and read the stories in this impact report, I am both humbled and inspired. We continue to work within a fragile environment that has been created within our post-pandemic communities. Although we can't single-handedly solve the enormous issues around child care, we can focus on finding solutions to make our work more impactful. Here are some of the ways we've done just that!



## **Growth and Innovation**

This year, we proudly continued to help reduce the staffing shortages in local child care programs and stabilize existing programs. The following efforts, combined with all our service areas highlighted in this report, are helping ensure those living in the diverse communities we serve have access to local, quality, affordable care and early education.

- **Child Care Careers Program.** This innovative program is directly impacting staffing shortages by attracting new people to the child care profession. To date, more than 100 new child care professionals have graduated from the program, with the majority currently employed in child care.
- **Business Training.** Thanks to state funds, private funders and local funding, we've been able to offer specialized training to help programs better navigate the extreme pressures on their businesses and ensure that their doors remain open. In addition, our Starting and Expanding Child Care Program staff continue to guide and coach new and current business owners to success.

## **Quality and Excellence**

Maintaining excellence in child care requires continuous improvement, and I am happy to report that our coaches continue to help administrators and owners raise the levels of quality in their programs. We have led the way in providing resources, guidance and tools to help programs rise in the Step Up To Quality rating system. And our training program continues to offer professional development opportunities to successfully meet the needs of child care professionals.

## **Resources and Support**

Our work with families has been more challenging this fiscal year as the barriers families face increase and the supply of child care shrinks. Our team continues helping families find child care options and providing support for Ohio's much-needed foster families.

## **Looking Ahead**

Looking to the future, our focus will remain on enhancing the quality of our services and expanding our reach to support more families and child care professionals. Thank you to our donors and generous community partners. Your commitment and trust are the foundation of our success. Together, we are making a lasting difference in the lives of children and the adults who care for them.

## **Vanessa Freytag**

President/CEO • 4C for Children

# OUR MISSION

To educate and support the adults who care for young children and advocate for public support for quality early education and care for all children.





Serving Our Community for More Than 50 Years



Starting & Expanding Child Care



Child Care Careers



Child Nutrition Program



Foster Family Support



Coaching



Child Care Referrals



Training





## STARTING AND EXPANDING CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

4C for Children has developed tools, documents, training and coaching that will successfully guide those interested in launching a child care business. Our early childhood experts walk with entrepreneurs to make the journey as easy as possible, from helping obtain the required training classes to providing business support and coaching.

**76** child care businesses earned new/expanded licenses resulting in **927** new child care seats

**1,642** hours of business coaching new or existing child care programs

**92** licensing applications in process, which will add **672** child care seats



## ▶ Owning a Nature-Based Preschool Fulfills Dream

Stephanie Thatcher had a dream of opening a preschool where kids could explore and learn without the temptation of electronic screens. She just didn't know how to make it a reality. Then 4C for Children came into the picture.

"I would not have been able to do this program without 4C," Stephanie says. "Without their help connecting me to funding and their emotional support and their resources, I would have been lost. The guidance they gave me helped to get from A to B or, sometimes, I had to go to C."

Today she's the proud owner/administrator of Farmhouse Friends, a nature and faith-based preschool in Tipp City. It's a program where

children can swing, use the outdoor play kitchen, dig and cultivate a garden and so much more as part of the curriculum.

It's all been possible thanks to the local funding she was connected to through 4C for Children as

well as other resources provided by the Business Services staff. These early childhood experts focus on helping individuals launch and expand child care programs.

Stephanie says parents have told her the difference the program makes with their children, many of whom don't even ask for screen time any longer. After spending just a few hours outside with six of her 4- to 6-year-olds, it's obvious that the kids love the outdoors.

"Everything you need to know about kindergarten, you can learn outside," Stephanie says. "It's fabulous and amazing and they are thrilled with insects and mud and dirt and rocks and sticks. And there's so many things you can do with those things. We can count with them. We can make shapes with them. We can build with them."

Even though her family child care business is up and running, she says 4C for Children is her "never-ending friendship" and she still calls and asks for advice. If she ever wants to expand her program, she knows 4C will be her first stop for help.

Stephanie's dream of children exploring the outdoors and learning at the same time is now a reality for her and all the children in her care. And the reality is much better than she ever dreamed!



Stephanie Thatcher

## CHILD CARE CAREERS

An innovative program launched by 4C for Children in 2023, Child Care Careers focuses on attracting new people to the early childhood education field with 4C staff dedicated to helping them get the foundational training needed to quickly move into a child care role. This program's goal is to help reduce the staffing crisis faced by child care programs in the regions we serve.



**135** individuals completed the program

**93** new early childhood educators employed





## New Mom, New Career, New Life

“My daughter is my biggest motivation. She’s my driving force. She’s my why.”

New early childhood educator and single mother Alex Price says it’s a double blessing to be able to care for her daughter, Luna, while also working at a Southwest Ohio child care center. But it hasn’t been an easy journey. After being laid off while six-months pregnant, Alex was unemployed until her daughter was three months old.

Then her sister-in-law told her about a job at Destiny Child Care in Cincinnati. Soon after, she learned about 4C for Children’s Child Care Careers Program that focuses on recruiting, training and helping place new early child educators.

Alex saw this as an opportunity to expand her new career. Once accepted into the program she began focusing on specific training and licensing she needed to obtain. In addition, she signed up for classes to earn a Child Development Associate, the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education. As a participant in the program, Alex also received a stipend, textbooks and a laptop for the classes.

For Alex, being part of the Child Care Careers Program is important because working on her

education and career is bigger than herself. She says it’s all about the kids she cares for every day and making sure she’s providing the best possible early education she can.



Alex Price

But sometimes the pressure of being a single, working mom is overwhelming. She says the 4C staff she worked with were always there to uplift her by providing motivation and encouragement.

“There were times where I felt like throwing in the towel. Giving up,” Alex says. “I would call (my career navigator) and she kind of pulled

me back and reminded me who I am doing this for. Why I am doing this.”

On the days she attended the virtual CDA classes, she would work from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., get home with just enough time to feed Luna and then be in class until 9 p.m. It was exhausting, she says.

But it’s all been worth it. She sees a big future for her and Luna thanks to everything the Child Care Careers Program provided to ensure she has the tools and credentials to grow her career. Alex sees “all the doors of opportunity it will open as far as becoming a child care educator and maybe even one day opening (her) own child care facility.”

[Learn more.](#)





## CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

4C for Children administers the child care component of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for licensed family child care providers and child care centers in Southwest Ohio and the Miami Valley. The 4C Child Nutrition Program (CNP) focuses on improving the diets of children under the age of 13 by helping child care providers deliver nutritious, well-balanced meals and helping children develop good eating habits.

**371**

participating child  
care programs

Reimbursed

**\$3,840,575**

to local child care programs through CACFP

# IMPACT



## ▶ Building Healthy Eating Habits

The smell of pulled pork fills the air as a pan is pulled out of the oven and onto the kitchen counter at Rainbow Early Learning Center in North Bend. Half a dozen carts filled with plates are waiting to be loaded with protein, vegetables, fruit and grains. Owner and administrator Missy Zucker makes a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for a special needs child as her oldest daughter scoops servings onto every plate.

“4C for Children has been a part of Rainbow for a really long time,” Missy says. “They have helped us with coaching, with Step Up To Quality and continuing education. We’ve taken different training through them. They’ve just been a huge support system for us.”

Missy has a 34-year-long relationship with the center, which she calls her baby. She started as a teacher in 1990 and worked her way up as her two daughters attended and eventually started working at Rainbow too.

When she bought the child care center in 2017, she discovered that in addition to training and coaching, 4C for Children also could help the program deliver nutritious, well-balanced meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federal meal reimbursement program that focuses on improving children’s diets.

The CACFP is administered to local child care programs through the 4C Child Nutrition Program

(CNP). Participating programs serving healthy meals are eligible for reimbursement.

On average, Rainbow provides 270 meals and snacks a day to about 90 children—that’s more than 7,500 meals a month. But Missy adds that 4C for Children’s assistance makes the paperwork associated with the program simple so that she can focus on running her business.



Missy Zucker

“The Child Nutrition Program administers funds that helps alleviate some of those huge expenses that we have in providing good, quality food.” Missy adds.

CNP coaches provide more than just help with paperwork, they also provide resources and recipes that programs can use to give children the nutritious meals they need.

Missy says the program has been a godsend. “I don’t believe Rainbow could survive long-term without having the support from 4C and CNP. It makes a huge difference in what we can offer the families here.”

[Learn more.](#) 

## FOSTER FAMILY SUPPORT

The Children Services Hub is a resource for families interested in providing a stable and loving home for children. 4C staff partner with public and private agencies to recruit, support and retain foster, adoptive and kinship care families in Southwest Ohio and Miami Valley.



**821** inquiries from families interested in foster care

**47** community partnerships created

**28** health and safety kits distributed to foster and adoptive families

# IMPACT



## Expanding the Number of Quality Foster Care Homes

About 700 children in Montgomery County are in need of foster homes at any given time. But there are only about 160 foster families in the area that can provide the housing, routine, connection and safety they need. In Montgomery County, 100 more foster families at minimum are needed, especially for children ages 12-17.

“Agencies are seeing a decline in families opening their homes, especially in foster care,” says Dan Deisher, resources to children and families supervisor at Montgomery County Job and Family Services (JFS). “The amazing thing about foster families is they can be as unique and different as any family. The biggest thing we’re looking for is a willingness to open homes and hearts.”

Local agencies work to find a home for children who need their help and 4C for Children partners with these agencies to help recruit more foster families.

“When children come into care it’s not a business-hours only circumstance,” Dan adds. When a foster family can’t be found immediately, the agency works to find a solution.

In an emergency situation a child may leave their home with only the clothes on their back.



Due to the lack of kinship and foster care families, it isn’t always possible to find that child a home right away.

Dan says the most impactful way a person can be involved and help ensure children have a place to go is to just take that first step of learning about the

foster care licensing process.

Recently when Montgomery County JFS shared that children coming into care often lacked hygiene items, 4C staff jumped into action and sent care bags filled with a variety of personal hygiene items.

4C for Children also provided 150 thank you gifts for foster families in Montgomery County to show appreciation for all they do.

Lakisha Ancrum, who leads 4C for Children’s team that focuses on supporting and recruiting foster, adoptive and kinship care families, says her team is committed to helping expand the number of quality foster care homes in the region.

“We know that all efforts to find and train foster families creates a better tomorrow for youth in need,” Lakisha says. “Our goal is to help expand the village of individuals to support children and that happens when the number of foster care homes increases.”



## COACHING

4C for Children offers individualized coaching to help Southwest Ohio and Miami Valley early childhood educators develop and implement strategies that enhance the quality of care for children. Coaching is free and provided one-on-one or in a group setting.

Coached

1,119

child care programs that serve  
36,745 children

Provided

6,203

hours of coaching to  
1,735 early childhood  
educators who each impacted  
an average of 33 children



## ▶ Coaching Helps Administrator Rebuild Child Care Program

“Debra knows her stuff. If I have a problem or a question, all I have to do is reach out and she is right there.”

That’s how Jessica McCann describes the coaching relationship she has with Debra Chin, quality program coach at 4C for Children. The relationship began in 2022 when Jessica became the administrator of BridgeWater Learning Center in Hamilton. At the time, the child care center was in non-compliance with state licensing standards.

“When I came on board, there was hardly anything in the classrooms, toys were broken, there were no established business practices,” Jessica says. “I had to start from scratch, which included reaching out to 4C for Children and connecting with Debra.

In just three months, Jessica and the “amazing” members of the team she assembled—including Debra—brought the program back into compliance.

Then the work began to move beyond simply meeting licensing requirements. “Debra walked me through every step that has led to us raising our quality of care,” Jessica says. As a result, the program

earned a 2-star Step Up To Quality rating. (The state’s quality rating system recently changed. A 2-star rating is now a Bronze level.) Jessica and her team are now working towards becoming highly rated at the Gold level.

Jessica isn’t the only one benefiting from coaching. She and her staff are also tapping into professional development provided by 4C. The center closes for in-service days several times a year and a 4C coach leads topical sessions.

“Most recently, 4C coach Katie Roberts led a session on Classroom Management and staff began implementing improvements the next day,” Jessica says. Two staff have earned Child Development Associate (CDA) certifications through 4C for Children and two others have started the process.

Jessica acknowledges that it’s been a struggle to raise this program from the ashes. But today, thanks to the commitment of her staff and the help she receives from Debra and 4C for Children, the program’s families and children are benefiting from receiving quality care and early education.

“Working with 4C’s coaching staff is absolutely wonderful,” Jessica says. “I could have probably gotten the program where it is today on my own, but it would have taken a lot more time. Working with Debra just makes things so much easier and ensures we’re providing the best care and early education we possibly can.”



Jessica McCann

## CHILD CARE REFERRALS

4C for Children referral specialists focus on providing referrals to families to help them find quality child care, while empowering them with the resources they need to choose the best care for their children. The referral team brings parent workshops to local communities to give families additional strategies to care for children.



**1,002**

families served (workshops, referrals, resources)

**~507**

vacancy checks per month

Served

**476**

families with special circumstances

(financially challenged, language barrier, children with special needs, homelessness)



# IMPACT



## Finding Light at the End of the Child Care Search Struggle

Stressful and overwhelming.

Those are the two words Tyona Davis uses to describe searching for child care for the past 10 months for her 5-year-old daughter D’Aren who is on the autism spectrum. Prior to moving to their new neighborhood, a family member who owns a child care program cared for D’Aren and her brother DJ.

“This has been the first time I’ve had to look for child care and I didn’t have any idea it would be this difficult,” Tyona says. While the children were in school, she and her husband managed to adjust their work schedules to be with the children before and after school. But once summer arrived, they had to make a choice between work and caring for their children.

“I’ve had to miss three months of work this summer,” Tyona says. As a result of the lost second paycheck, the family got behind on their bills, ultimately losing their car and falling behind on rent. “It’s been tough,” Tyona concedes.

Last month she reached out to 4C for Children for help in finding child care after being referred by one of D’Aren’s therapists at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.

Tyona describes connecting with the referral staff as a “blessing.” In a phone call to 4C, she detailed the type of child care she was looking for, paying special attention to D’Aren’s unique needs.

“Alicia responded so quickly. She gave me a list of potential programs that met some or all of our needs,” Tyona says. “After touring and researching programs, I found a family child care program with experience caring for children with autism just two minutes from our home.”

As part of the referral service, Tyona also received a child care checklist that helped her interview potential programs and better understand what to look for when she toured programs.



Tyona Davis and D’Aren

“Alicia really helped me understand the importance of touring programs and talking to the teachers,” Tyona says. “It’s important—especially when a child has special needs—to get to know the child care provider on a personal level because I have to trust them to care for and help educate my child.”

Working with 4C made everything easier, Tyona says. “I want to give D’Aren and DJ every opportunity I can and this is part of that journey. I just can’t say thank you enough.”



## TRAINING

4C for Children offers Ohio Approved in-person and virtual training to help early childhood professionals advance their skills, programs and careers. Health and safety training is also offered to better serve and protect the children in their care.

122

early childhood educators graduated from the Child Development Associate program after completing 16,470 hours of CDA training

Trained

4,281

early childhood professionals who obtained 57,396 training hours

# IMPACT



## CDA Expands Skillsets, Knowledge

When opening the door to La Casita Learning Center, guests are welcomed by music, a flurry of activity and toddlers speaking fluent Spanish.

This Spanish-immersion preschool and child care center in West Chester focuses on the growth and education of children ages 1–4. The opportunity to grow and learn also extends to the early childhood educators who care for and teach the children. Three of the teachers obtained their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential in 2024 after participating in the 4C for Children CDA Preparation Program.



Rocio Trevino

“My mind opened,” recent CDA graduate Rocio Trevino says. “I know why we are doing things. I have more ideas. I have more strategies.”

Like many teachers at the learning center, Rocio is a second career early childhood educator. She left a career as a lawyer in her home country of Mexico and is now a certified teacher in the U.S. She says after completing the CDA program, she understands children’s emotions better and knows how to help them more.

Understanding and empathy is a big part of La Casita, which is the only child care center of its kind in the region. Patty Soto and Shailyn Pavon, the program administrators, are proud of the success children achieve.

“Because we only speak Spanish to the children, they are fluent and bilingual by the time they graduate from La Casita,” Patty says.

But it’s about more than becoming bilingual. The teachers bring tradition and experiences from their native countries to open minds and hearts. Many of the teachers have degrees from their home countries and through the CDA they expanded their knowledge and skills. Two of the teachers say they would not have achieved their CDA credentials without support.



Nataly Suarez

“I’m so very grateful (to 4C for Children),” says Rocio. The encouragement she received and the scholarship availability were keys to helping her earn her CDA. In addition to CDA, 4C for Children offers a variety of ongoing professional training opportunities.

Fellow CDA graduate Nataly Suarez agrees. “I would like to encourage every teacher working with kids (to get their CDA) because we have gained so much knowledge and have learned how to put it into practice in the classroom every day.”

[Learn more.](#)

# Financial Information

## July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024

### Revenue



|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Government Grants      | 81% |
| Program Service Fees   | 6%  |
| Community Philanthropy | 13% |

### Expenses



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Child Care Professional Training & Coaching | 22% |
| Child Nutrition Program                     | 32% |
| Child Care Referral/Family Programs         | 7%  |
| Business Support                            | 13% |
| Fundraising                                 | 6%  |
| Administration                              | 20% |

# 4C for Children in the Community



## 4C for Children Champions Gala

4C for Children celebrated our Champions Gala, presented by PNC, at Cincinnati Music Hall in November 2023. More than 400 guests gathered to celebrate four honorees and their tireless support of 4C for Children and the mission of providing quality child care and early childhood education to every child in Southwest Ohio and Miami Valley.

[More on Facebook](#)



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## 4C for Children Leadership and Early Childhood Conference

The annual 4C for Children Leadership and Early Childhood Conference was held in October 2023 at the Sharonville Convention Center. Nearly 500 early childhood professionals attended for training, career development and inspiration. The professional development event featured breakout sessions, keynote speakers Charles Clark and Tabatha Rosproy and more than 40 exhibitors.

[More on Facebook](#)



[More on YouTube](#)



## Provider Appreciation Day

4C for Children staff and volunteers delivered more than 750 gifts to Southwest Ohio and Miami Valley family child care providers to celebrate National Provider Appreciation Day in May 2024. These providers run in-home businesses and support families and children in their communities. They and all child care providers make a difference by providing quality care and education to our youngest children.

[More on Instagram](#)



[More on YouTube](#)



## Day of Discovery at Boonshoff Museum

Nearly 200 foster families and child care providers and the children in their care joined 4C for Children at the Boonshoff Museum of Discovery in Dayton in May 2024 for a day of fun, learning and discovery. The free event was tremendously successful thanks to the many volunteers who supported the event, many of whom helped lead educational activities for children to enjoy.

[More on Facebook](#)



[More on YouTube](#)



## Day at the Cincinnati Zoo

Volunteers and 4C for Children worked together to host an event at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden in June 2024 for almost 300 child care providers and 200 foster families and the children in their care. Attendees received free admission to the Zoo, Zoo Bucks and had the opportunity to participate in special activities throughout the Zoo. In addition, they received copies of *The Yellow Bus* by local author, illustrator and 2024 Champion for Children Loren Long.

[More on Facebook](#)



[More on YouTube](#)



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 Shelby County  
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 Warren County

## \$50,000 and above

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 Greater Cincinnati Foundation  
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 PNC Charitable Trusts  
 PNC Grow Up Great Foundation

## \$20,000 and above

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Michael Privitera &  
Marcia Kaplan  
Ed & Carole Rigaud  
Barbara Rissmiller  
Cody & Stephanie Rizzuto  
Erin & Michael Rogers  
Elizabeth Rose

Paige & Scott Runion  
Annetta Rutland  
Angie Scheper  
Jessica Schindler  
Shannon Starkey-Taylor  
Colleen Swanson  
Connor Tate  
Thompson Hine LLP  
April Thompson  
Ryan Vellequette  
Stephanie Allgeyer Vest  
Joshua Vogt  
Natalia Votaw  
Julie Ware  
Warren & Pam Weber  
Terri & Anthony Wellman  
Eldrige White  
Donna Turnbow Williams  
Matthew Worthen





**Central Office/Southwest Ohio  
Regional Office**

2100 Sherman Avenue, #300  
Cincinnati, OH 45212-2213

513-221-0033  
800-256-1296

• • •

**Miami Valley Regional Office**

2621 Dryden Rd., Suite 107  
Dayton, OH 45439

937-220-9660  
800-256-1296

