
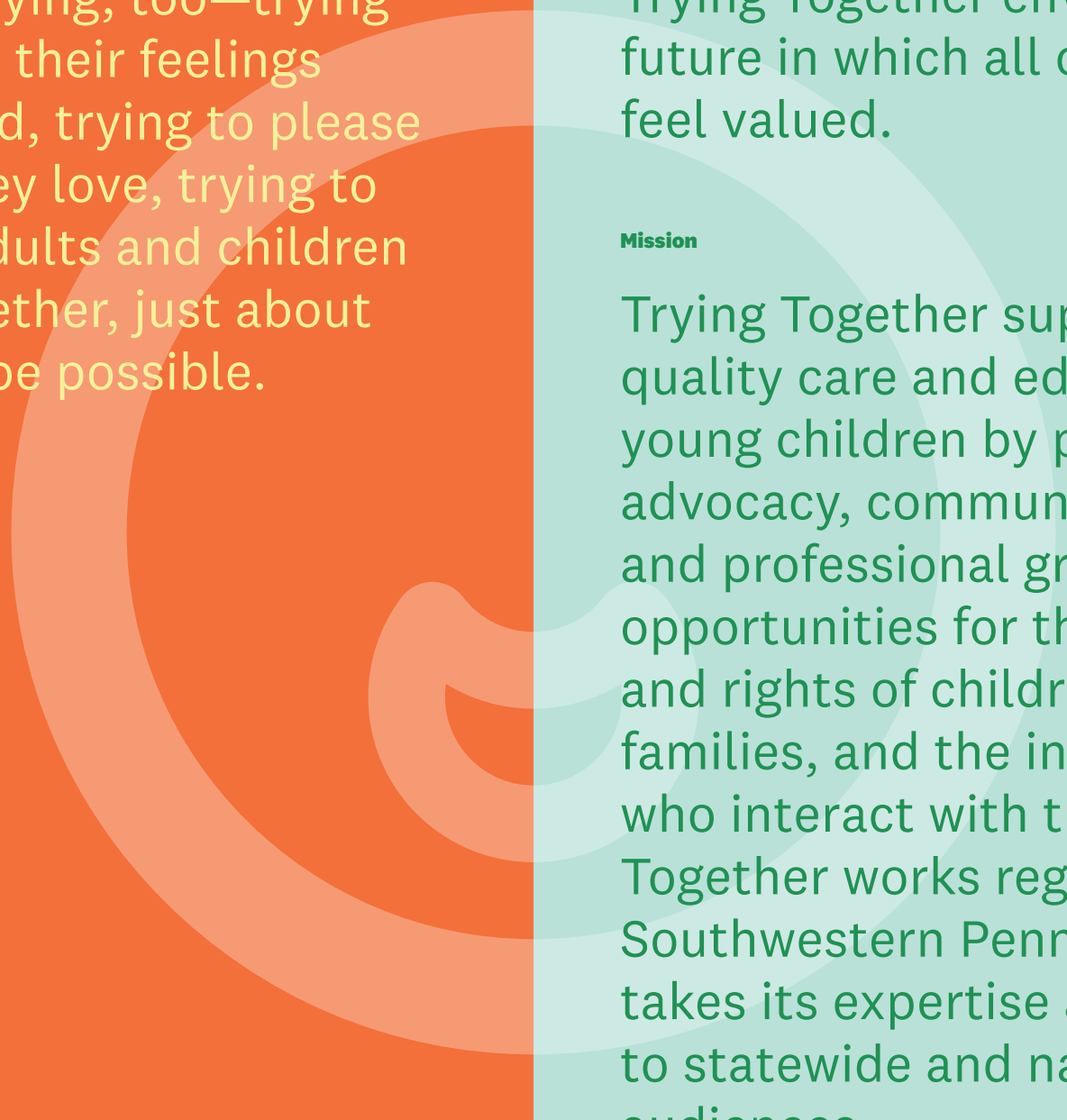


Trying
together

**Donor Impact
Report**

2022-2024





We need to remember that children are trying, too—trying to understand their feelings and their world, trying to please the people they love, trying to grow. When adults and children are trying together, just about anything can be possible.

Fred Rogers

Vision

Trying Together envisions a future in which all caregivers feel valued.

Mission

Trying Together supports high-quality care and education for young children by providing advocacy, community resources, and professional growth opportunities for the needs and rights of children, their families, and the individuals who interact with them. Trying Together works regionally (in Southwestern Pennsylvania) and takes its expertise and models to statewide and national audiences.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

Trying Together envisions a future in which all caregivers of young children feel valued for their work. When we inspire belonging among caregivers, we inspire belonging within them. Our inclusive approach to advocacy, community resources, and professional growth opportunities strives to place diversity, equity, and racial justice at the core of everything we do. We encourage our team, our partners, and our communities to interact compassionately and honor the range of cultures, ideas, and identities that root for us. Young children develop and learn by example; this means that children whose early learning environments reflect just actions, equitable opportunities, diverse representation, and inclusive approaches experience healthier interactions and build relationships that enable them to thrive.

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Timeline

1963

Early care and education professionals volunteer to create the Pittsburgh Area Preschool Association (P.A.P.A.).

1983

P.A.P.A. affiliates with the National Association for The Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and becomes The Pittsburgh Association for The Education of Young Children (PAEYC).

Early 2000s

PAEYC moves from a volunteer to staffed model.

2013

The Homewood Early Learning Hub opens and the Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative is co-founded with the Carnegie Museum of Art and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.

2016

PAEYC becomes the lead organization for Homewood-Brushton Family Support Center.

2017

PAEYC Board approves a five-year strategic plan and rebrand. PAEYC partners with PennAEYC to support its Pittsburgh chapter.

2018

PAEYC rebrands as Trying Together and helps to qualify The Allegheny County Children's Fund Initiative as a ballot referendum, the first to be added as the result of collecting petition signatures.

2019

Trying Together joins as an advisor for the Allegheny County Children's Fund Working Group. In partnership with local agencies, ELRC Region 5 launches, supported by Allegheny County DHS, OCDEL, The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, and Trying Together.

2020

The Allegheny Child Care Finder tool developed to help families locate and caregivers promote early care and education programs. Homewood locations have merged to form The Homewood Early Learning Hub & Family Center.

To support its new goal of directly aiding families, Trying Together launched the first three parts of a 12-part Developmentally Appropriate Parenting (DAP) Resource Series to help families make informed decisions about their child's early experiences.

Trying Together begins to use NeonCRM to build relationships, record data, and support continuous quality improvement of its resources and services.

2021

Trying Together strengthens its commitment to racial justice by forming the Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI) Committee to guide staff and organizational efforts.

Trying Together launches the Parenting Together Pathway videos to provide high-quality information on early childhood topics for caregivers.

Allegheny County establishes the Department of Children's Initiatives (DCI) based on recommendations from the Children's Fund Working Group Report.

2022

Trying Together conducts an audit of its fundraising and develops an annual giving plan.

Trying Together and ELRC Region 5 partner to form the Rapid Response Team in Allegheny County, providing immediate support to children at risk of suspension or expulsion from early childhood programs.

Trying Together leads the new Start Strong PA and Pre-K for PA Provider Advisory Board, a group of 40 ECE professionals statewide focused on amplifying provider voices, offering policy feedback, and advocating for the field.

2023

Five-year strategic plan is approved by the Trying Together Board of Directors.

2024

Trying Together launches The Institute for Early Childhood Career Pathways to centralize workforce recruitment, placement, retention, and ongoing professional development for new and current early care and education professionals in Southwestern PA.

OCDEL renews its five-year contract with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, in partnership with The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers and Trying Together, to operate the ELRC Region 5.

Welcome

Dear Early Care and Education Supporter,

More than 60 years ago, a group of dedicated volunteers in Pittsburgh had a vision. They envisioned a future where early care and education professionals would be valued for the essential role they serve in supporting the healthy development and learning of young children. Inspired by the legacy of our founders and in continued support of their vision, Trying Together developed a new five-year strategic plan to guide our work through 2027. You can read more about this plan and our goals at tryingtogether.org.

To expand our commitment to fulfilling our vision that all caregivers feel valued, Trying Together has made investments in the last several years to increase philanthropy for the organization. Through these efforts, we have seen an exponential increase in donations from individuals since 2022, including meeting and exceeding our fundraising goal for the Highmark Walk For A Healthy Community for the first time in 2024! In addition to individual giving, we have also sought increased corporate support. Through the generosity of several local businesses, we were able to obtain our first sponsorships for the Annual Celebration of Early Childhood Educators Dinner that we hosted in April 2024 for more than 700 early educators, 98% of whom said at that event they felt valued for the work they do.

In honor of the impact your increased philanthropic giving has had on our work, we have decided going forward to reframe this biennial publication as our Donor Impact Report. We hope as you read through this report that you are as pleased with what has been accomplished in the last two years and as invigorated as we are to continue these pursuits so that together we can continue to positively impact the lives of our youngest citizens. While this fundraising momentum is exciting, we know that we will continue to need the collective financial support of businesses, foundations, individuals, and legislators now and into the future so we can continue supporting the work of early childhood.

If you haven't already, please join us by becoming a donor today, or consider an additional, increased, or recurring monetary gift so we can continue to extend our collective impact on the early care and education sector.

<https://bit.ly/donate-donor-impact-report-trying-together-2024>



On behalf of our Board and staff, and the children, families, educators, and communities we serve throughout our 10-county region, many thanks to our donors, grantors, and sponsors for their sustained generosity that enables Trying Together to continue supporting the work of early childhood in Southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond.

With sincere gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cara Ciminillo".

Cara Ciminillo
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jan Sapotichne".

Jan Sapotichne
Associate Executive Director

Your Support Helps Us Meet Our Strategic Goals

A trusted source for families to collaborate with regarding their child's early experiences.

From 2022 to 2024, Trying Together:

Expanded the Buzzword early literacy initiative throughout Allegheny County

Provided developmentally appropriate resources to caregivers of young children on a variety of topics

Provided free diapers and infant formula to families in need



Buzzword

With the generous support of PNC Grow-Up Great and the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS), Buzzword has continued its growth as an early literacy initiative. Produced by Buzzword partners, BUZZ Boxes and its programming provides children’s books, family engagement activities and materials, and partner organization resources. BUZZ Boxes are distributed through the Allegheny County Family Center Network.

From 2022 to 2024, Buzzword:

- Created a toolkit to assist the Allegheny County Family Center network in facilitating the Buzzword initiative for the children and families they serve
- Developed BUZZ Boxes for 10 different words and themes, **including the program’s first-ever bilingual box for Spanish-speaking families**
- Distributed **2,350 BUZZ Boxes** throughout the Allegheny County Family Center Network and via other community agencies and events
- **Hosted 10 in-person events** (including one bilingual event)
- **Engaged with almost 5,500** people at community tabling events

Trying Together facilitates Buzzword along with its partners, including arts and sciences-based organizations such as ACH Clear Pathways, Carnegie Science Center, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Pittsburgh Festival Opera, and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy in consultation with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny County Family Center Network.

Buzzword is supported by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and PNC Grow Up Great. Learn more at: buzzwordpgh.org.



Story of Impact

Scarlett was born with a condition that resulted in her being in and out of the hospital often as a baby. While in the hospital, a friend gave us our first BUZZ Box, and it helped save our sanity on some of those long in-patient days, as Scarlett has loved to read and do crafts ever since she was a toddler. Eventually, we got to come to our first Buzzword event. Scarlett was a bit hesitant at first, but you all made her feel so welcome and calm, and she was able to participate in a way that I have rarely seen before. I appreciate your team and everything that you have done for us!

— Christy & Scarlett Miller, Local Mom & Daughter

Developmentally Appropriate Parenting (DAP) Resource Series

Trying Together's Developmentally Appropriate Parenting (DAP) Resource Series continues to help caregivers learn to engage in positive ways with their young children to support healthy early learning experiences.

From 2022 to 2024, caregivers and community members:

- Requested approximately 5,000 DAP Resource Series card sets
- Visited tryingtogether.org more than 50% of the time to view DAP Resource Series pages on the tryingtogether.org website
- Viewed the DAP Resource pages 449,276 times, with "Types of Family Structures" being the most popular resource, with 255,188 page views

By providing valuable guidance and strategies, the DAP Resource Series helps caregivers learn more about the topics they care about to better facilitate their children's overall development and well-being.



Currently, there is no direct funding support for the DAP Resource Series. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities, contact Kerry Chapman at kerry@tryingtogether.org or **412.206.1053**.

The Homewood Early Learning Hub & Family Center Diaper & Formula Banks

Families and caregivers with young children can visit The Homewood Early Learning Hub & Family Center for diapers and infant formula.

The Hub & Family Center has been a diaper bank location in the region since 2020. In 2022, it became an infant formula bank location of the Greater Pittsburgh Infant Formula Bank in response to a baby formula shortage caused by a global supply chain crisis.

From 2022 to 2024, The Hub & Family Center:

- Provided 245 families with infant formula 418 times
- Provided 290 families with diapers 560 times

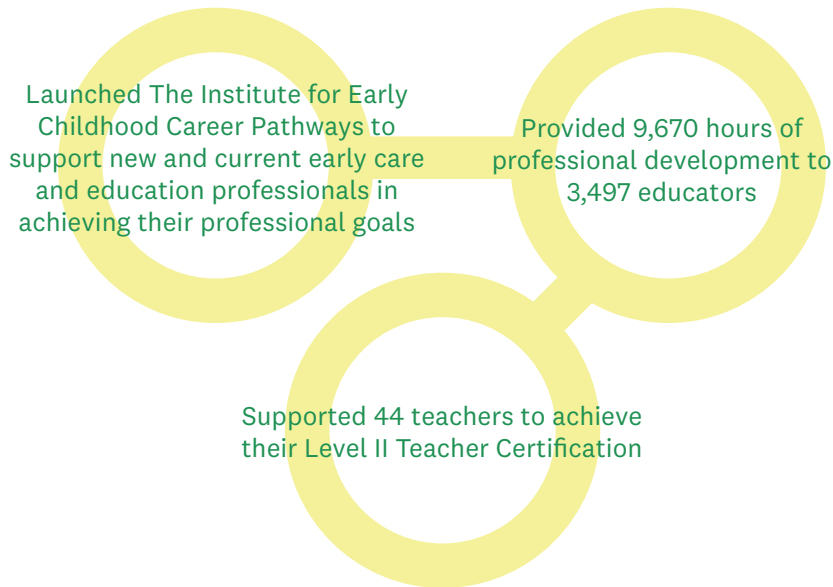
Supporting the healthy growth and development of young children encompasses their physical health, including nutrition and sanitary needs, so these resources are invaluable to families with young children in need.

Allegheny County Family Centers, including The Homewood Early Learning Hub & Family Center, are funded by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/community-resources/hub-and-family-center.



An experienced facilitator of inclusive learning opportunities for educators that aims to ensure every child has access to high-quality early care and education.

From 2022 to 2024, Trying Together has:



The Institute for Early Childhood Career Pathways

In Spring 2024, Trying Together launched The Institute for Early Childhood Career Pathways to support new and current early care and education professionals in Southwestern Pennsylvania by centralizing workforce recruitment, placement, retention, and ongoing professional development.

The Institute envelopes all of Trying Together’s quality initiatives and professional development offerings. Through The Institute, Trying Together connects educators to professional learning opportunities—such as credit-bearing coursework, degrees, credentialing, teacher certification, mentoring, workforce development programs, and a variety of other career advancement opportunities with the organization’s partners—as educators work their way through Pennsylvania’s ECE Career Pathway.

By the numbers, the Quality Initiatives Team has **provided 143 professional development events to 3,497 participants**, with **200 students completing one of six Child Development Associate (CDA) Cohorts**.

The CDA Cohorts allow educators to gain new knowledge on important early childhood topics, especially child development and developmentally appropriate practice, to provide a high-quality early learning experience for young children. Trying Together CDA coursework matriculates into 6-9 college credits, which allows educators to continue their educational journey by moving on to an associate or bachelor’s degree program.

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential program is funded by Hillman Foundation, McSwigan Family Foundation, PwC Charitable Foundation, The Buhl Foundation, The Early Childhood Education Professional Development Organization (PDO) at PASSHE, The Department of Children’s Initiatives (DCI), and individuals who donated to the 2024 MOYC Campaign. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/the-institute-for-early-childhood-careers.

Story of Impact

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential program benefits the center, children, and their families by educating staff about child development and early childhood best practices. Our staff reported that the program was excellent and they felt empowered. After completing the CDA program, two staff members are choosing to continue their Early Childhood Education degree, and one is participating in Trying Together's Advocacy Fellowship. Their success has inspired other staff to participate.

— Judy Albenze and Maureen Karas, Crafton Children's Corner



ELRC Region 5

As the quality partner of the ELRC Region 5 since 2019, Trying Together has supported quality improvements for more than 600 licensed child care providers and more than 1,000 relative care providers throughout Allegheny County.

Staff has worked with program administrators, classroom teachers, assistant teachers, and home-based child care providers to develop new skills and continuously improve their early childhood teaching practices to achieve higher program quality.

Between 2022 and 2024, 34 child care providers made positive movements in Keystone STARS, and 171 maintained their STARS 2,3, or 4 level.

STAR 1 to STAR 2



STAR 1 to STAR 4



STAR 2 to STAR 3



STAR 2 to STAR 4



STAR 3 to STAR 4



Story of Impact

I wanted to let you know how much of an impact my new Quality Coach has made in such little time. Her expertise and guidance have significantly enhanced the overall quality of our center, and her positive and constructive approach has helped me gain a hold of my program, and get back on the road to providing the best care for my families. I am grateful for all the support she is providing.

— London Fitzgerald, London Bridges Child Development Center, LLC

ELRCs, including ELRC Region 5 in Allegheny County, are funded by OCDEL. Learn more at: elrc5.alleghenycounty.us.



Pediatric First Aid/CPR Facilitation and Instruction

In 2022, OCDEL changed its training requirements and announced that all Pediatric First Aid and CPR training for child care providers must be conducted by an approved Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) Instructor using an OCDEL-recognized curriculum.

OCDEL requires staff to complete professional development in Pediatric First Aid and CPR within 90 days of hire and to renew their certification on or before the expiration date. Recognizing the increased demand for child care providers to stay current with their certifications, Trying Together and ELRC Region 5 offered several trainings with PQAS-certified instructors at no cost for child care providers.

In 2023, several PQAS-certified Trying Together and ELRC Region 5 staff members also became certified to instruct Pediatric CPR and First Aid for child care providers to eliminate barriers for educators who need to complete their training. **To date, staff have facilitated 17 in-person and hybrid trainings, helping almost 200 teachers and educators become certified.**

These offerings were funded in part by ELRC Region 5.



Home-Based Child Care Business Cohort

To address barriers for early care and education professionals and to open up more child care spots in Allegheny County, Trying Together—in partnership with Chatham University’s Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship— facilitated four Home-Based Child Care Cohorts from 2022 to 2024.

The 12-week course included information on: best business practices for opening a small business; child care licensing; Keystone STARS; zoning and occupancy processes; marketing; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and developmentally appropriate practices.

The 47 participants who completed the course were eligible for a \$5,000 grant to start up their businesses, a one-year membership in the Chatham University Center for Women’s Entrepreneurship, and peer mentoring from local child care business owners. Participants reported gaining considerable knowledge, developing the skills necessary to open a home-based child care business, and that the continued support of Trying Together was helpful. To date, all have completed the cohort experience, and several have opened their new business as a result of the Home-Based Child Care Cohort.

The Home-Based Child Care Cohorts are funded by the Allegheny County Department of Children Initiatives (DCI).



Community-Based High School Child Development Associate (CDA) Program

In Fall 2023, Trying Together piloted a new Child Development Associate (CDA) program for high school seniors interested in an early childhood education career in partnership with Forbes Road Career & Technology Center in Monroeville.

Through the program, Trying Together instructed participating students on in-person CDA content two to three times a month; offered expertise on the CDA competencies, preparing the CDA portfolio, and completing the CDA application process; and provided books, materials, application and clearances support, and technology assistance to participants.

By the end of the 2024 school year, all 11 students completed the coursework and graduated “workforce ready” by having either obtained their CDA or continuing to move through the application process.

Story of Impact

The Child Development Associate (CDA) grant from Trying Together has been such a blessing for our high school students, allowing them to jump-start their work and college careers. From organizing different speakers and activities to preparing the students for their observations and tests, the team at Trying Together has been wonderful, providing help and knowledge every step of the way. We hope we get the chance to continue this collaboration in the future.

— Cherie O’Neal, Forbes Road Career & Technology Center



UnConference(s)

Made possible by PNC Grow Up Great’s continued support, Trying Together resumed its in-person innovative, hands-on professional growth “UnConferences” in 2022 centered on a range of the following early childhood themes and topics. **From 2022 to 2024, 308 early educators earned 1,656 PQAS credits at the following in-person events:**

- UnConference: Race Equity in Practice | February 2023 | The Frick Pittsburgh
- UnConference: Mental Health in Early Childhood Education | February 2024 | Carnegie Science Center
- UnConference: Launching School Age Summer Programming | June 2024 | Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

UnConferences are funded by PNC Grow Up Great and the ELRC Region 5. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/professional-development/conferences/unconference.

The Community-Based High School Child Development Associate (CDA) Program was funded by Hillman Foundation. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/professional-development/child-development-associate.

A collaborative convener that coordinates and helps to connect systems to support early care and education.

From 2022 to 2024, Trying Together has:

Provided immediate support to families and early educators through the Rapid Response Team if a child is in danger of suspension or expulsion

Consulted with private industries to remove barriers such as child care access

Collaborated to increase investment in local child care programs



Rapid Response Team

Trying Together, in collaboration with the ELRC Region 5 and other early childhood organizations, has been expanding the services provided by the Rapid Response Team in Allegheny County, which supports a child, family, and educator when a child from birth to age five is at risk of being suspended or expelled.

From 2022 to 2024, the Rapid Response Team:

- Provided support to 348 children and families in 53 classrooms
- Referred 107 cases to other organizations for support, with the most going to Allegheny Intermediate Unit Preschool Early Intervention, The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Pittsburgh Public School Early Intervention, and Functional Behavior Assessment services
- Closed 72% of cases “successfully,” with the students either remaining in the existing program or moving to another placement with parental agreement

In December 2022, Trying Together received a \$250,000 grant to research, develop, and implement activities to support children’s access to targeted early interventions to ensure an improved developmental path. In Fall 2023, Trying Together received a \$200,000 Rapid Response Team grant from the Pennsylvania Key, on behalf of the state’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

Trying Together is using the OCDEL grant to build on the Rapid Response Team's success by hiring additional staff to respond within 24 hours of a referral; providing program- and classroom-wide support, such as mentoring and coaching, technical assistance, and professional development; and increasing the number of functional behavior assessments based on the needs of the child.

The Rapid Response Team is funded by the ELRC Region 5, The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), and the Richard King Mellon Foundation. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/rapid-response-team.



Story of Impact

My family and I worked with the Rapid Response Team to support my son and his preschool program. I really appreciated the approach that the Rapid Response Team had with the situation and the way they partnered well with the child care center. I liked that we worked together as a team to create a plan that stayed consistent between home and my son's classroom. This type of resource is invaluable for families and early learning programs to support the growth and development of children.

— Mother of a Rapid Response Team family

Child Care Access at Pittsburgh International Airport

As part of its employer-sponsored child care solutions and workforce development strategy from 2021 to 2023, Trying Together provided consultation to the Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) Executive Team.

As a result, La Petite Academy, the first employee-dedicated child care facility at the airport, opened its doors in fall 2023 and can serve up to 61 children. The addition of an early learning program, located at the airport's landside terminal, was part of a strategic plan to tackle three major barriers—child care, job training, and transportation—for people entering the workforce.



While there was no direct funding to support this effort, Trying Together is welcome to collaboration. Businesses that are seeking to explore ways they can meet the needs of employees who have families with young children may contact Trying Together at info@tryingtogether.org or **412.421.3889**.



Hi5! Kindergarten Transition

Hi5! supports school districts with lower on-time kindergarten enrollment, providing guidance and connecting communities in the Mon Valley with partners across Allegheny County.

As a coordination hub, Hi5! hosted six “Coffee & Conversation” professional learning sessions for early learning programs, school districts, and community partners on kindergarten readiness and transition to encourage cross system alignment. Hi5! Leadership also participated in an Early Childhood Education System Design Partnership for Allegheny County to further develop a coherent and aligned model across prenatal to early elementary grades.

In May 2024, Hi5! celebrated early education champions at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit with a keynote by Dr. Tamara Allen-Thomas, Superintendent of Clairton City School District, and Deputy Secretary Shante’ Brown of the Office of Child Development & Early Learning.

Early Learners First

Trying Together collaborates with Early Excellence Project and Duolingo to establish their first-ever signature social impact program, Early Learners First: A New Early Education Program for our Pittsburgh Neighbors. This program works to ensure families have greater access to quality early childhood experiences.

Through this program, Duolingo pledged \$1 million to invest directly in local child care programs to amplify the quality of early care and education and create a lasting impact on staff retention and sustainable business practices.

In fall 2023, nine local early learning programs with STAR 3 or 4 (high) quality ratings were selected to receive up to \$80,000 to assist them in meeting the true cost of care, which can include expenses such as staff benefits and facility improvements, allowing them to welcome more children to their programs.



Early Learners First was funded by Duolingo. Learn more at: blog.duolingo.com/early-learners-first-program.



Hi5! Kindergarten Transition is funded by The United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/community-resources/kindergarten-transition.

Allegheny Child Care Finder Tool

For the past five years, families have been able to search available spots at all early learning, after-school, summer camp, and virtual programs in Allegheny County in real time with the Allegheny Child Care, After School, and Summer Camps Finder Tool.

Initially funded by The Heinz Endowments and Eden Hall Foundation, the finder tool allows caregivers of young children to filter results based on the program season and subsidy acceptance, including programs that accept Child Care Works (child care subsidy) payments. Subsequently, early learning programs can update their program's listing to promote and market to families, expediting the process of getting children enrolled.

From 2022 to 2024 on the Allegheny Child Care Finder tool:

- An average of 700 families searched per month
- More than 1,300 providers updated their profiles to be represented on the Finder Tool

The Allegheny Child Care Finder Tool was initially funded by Eden Hall Foundation and Heinz Endowments. Learn more at: alleghenychildcare.org.



A committed advocate mobilizing for policy change alongside communities to elevate the needs of young children, families, and educators for an equitable early care and education system.

From 2022 to 2024, Trying Together:

Started the state's first Provider Advisory Board with 40 early care and education professionals

Facilitated a Fellowship for 22 early educators to train them in advocacy for the early childhood field and profession

Advised on legislation updates, resulting in fewer operational barriers for home-based child care providers in the City of Pittsburgh

Statewide Provider Advisory Board

Since 2022, Trying Together has led the first statewide Provider Advisory Board for Start Strong PA and Pre-K for PA, serving as a meaningful way to ensure early childhood educators are driving policy priorities for the campaigns.

Through the Provider Advisory Board, a diverse group of 40 early care and education professionals from across the state (including two from each ELRC region) have had the opportunity to provide more input on advocacy efforts to influence policies that impact their families and programs. More than 200 providers across the state initially applied to serve on the board.

Guided by the members of the Provider Advisory Board, Trying Together worked with campaign partners on the mobilization and communication committee to create a toolkit titled “Imagine a Day Without Child Care,” inspired by the national movement, “A Day Without Childcare.” The toolkit included social media and family engagement activities that encouraged providers to engage in advocacy without actually closing their programs.

In May 2024, Trying Together’s policy team coordinated the Provider Advisory Board’s first trip to the State Capitol in Harrisburg, where the group met with nearly 20 legislative offices that day and made deliveries to all 253 offices throughout the building.



The Statewide Provider Advisory Board is funded by The William Penn Foundation. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/advocacy/public-policy-agenda.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Advocacy Fellowship

In January 2024, Trying Together commenced its fourth Early Childhood Education (ECE) Advocacy Fellowship. Throughout the year, fellows convened monthly, focusing on acquiring public policy knowledge, enhancing leadership skills, and cultivating their voices as advocates for early childhood education.

Fellows gained an understanding of Early Learning PA (ELPA) campaigns, including Start Strong PA, Pre-K for PA, Childhood Begins at Home, and Thriving PA. They also heard from past fellows, gaining valuable insights on how to maximize their Fellowship experience and how their advocacy actions can make an impact.

On June 25, advocates from the ECE Advocacy Fellowship visited the Pennsylvania State Capitol to share their stories with 20 policymakers. Representing parents, providers, and community members, they emphasized the importance of early care and education during these discussions.

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Advocacy Fellowship was funded by The William Penn Foundation. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/advocacy/public-policy-agenda.



Story of Impact

As alumni of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Advocacy Fellowship, our participation has impacted each of our early childhood education and advocacy journeys. By equipping us with the knowledge and skills to serve as leaders and advocate for our communities, we knew that when we faced challenges, Trying Together had our backs. Due to our participation, some of us have run for mayor, started an early learning business, and even joined the staff of Trying Together.

— Qiana Buckner, Lesely Crawford, Shellie Grooms, and Takeela Washington, ECE Advocacy Fellowship Alumni



Zoning Changes for Home-Based Child Care Programs

Pittsburgh City Councilman Bobby Wilson and Councilwoman Deborah Gross introduced legislation in October 2023 to amend the City of Pittsburgh's Zoning Code to make the requirements less burdensome for home-based child care businesses throughout the City.

Prior to the legislation being introduced, Trying Together met with Wilson's staff and representatives from the Department of City Planning to advocate for the changes. In early 2024, the Pittsburgh City Council approved the Zoning Code bill, which allows facilities caring for up to six children to be permitted within single-family residentially zoned neighborhoods without needing special exemptions.

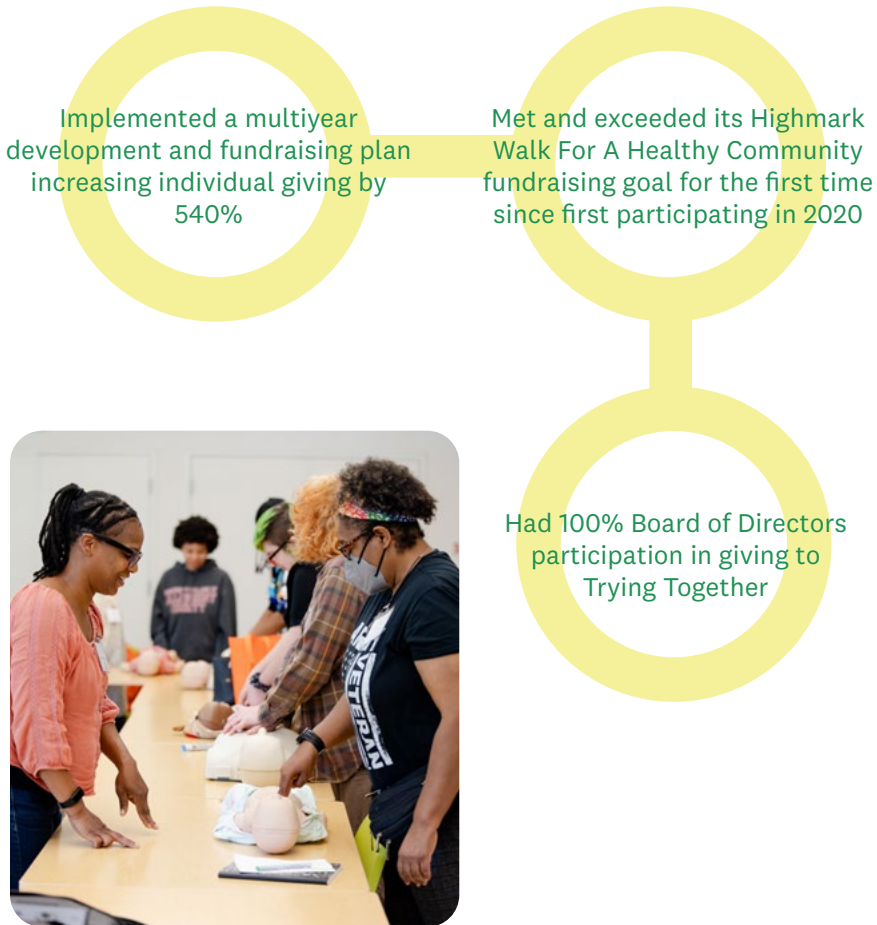
The bill also exempts child care accessory units from current home occupation standards when they take care of three or fewer children and when the home is the primary residence of the provider. Additionally, the bill eliminates parking requirements for such facilities.

This work aligns with the Trying Together Public Policy Agenda. Individuals and communities who are seeking support in addressing similar issues with their regional government and policymakers can contact Emily Neff, Director of Public Policy, at emily@tryingtogether.org or 412.567.4163. Learn more at: tryingtogether.org/advocacy/public-policy-agenda.



An accountable nonprofit that prioritizes ethics when raising funds in support of its mission and provides transparent stewardship to its donors.

From 2022 to 2024, Trying Together:



Create and Implement A Development & Fundraising Plan

With the assistance of fundraising consultants Advancement Advisors, Trying Together kicked off a three-year fundraising plan in fiscal year 2023 to diversify its funding mix and broaden its support base with a focus on renewable and unrestricted revenue available through private philanthropy. As part of the plan, Trying Together hired an assistant director of development and enacted gift acceptance and naming policies and procedures, setting out to build a culture of philanthropy at Trying Together. Through these efforts, individual giving increased sixfold. Additionally, Trying Together’s development team developed sponsorship packages and benefits for a variety of the organization’s events and offerings.

In recognition of the organization’s growth, **Trying Together received the Platinum Seal of Transparency in 2023 and 2024**—the highest level of transparency—from Candid, a national data and insights nonprofit.

The creation of the Trying Together Development & Fundraising Plan was funded by Hillman Foundation. Give now at: <https://bit.ly/donate-donor-impact-report-trying-together-2024>.





Story of Impact

When I joined the Board of Trying Together, I was hesitant to ask for donations. But reflecting on my “why” for serving and Trying Together’s mission to advocate for quality care and education for young children gave me the courage to reach out. I realized that not asking guaranteed a ‘no,’ but by asking, I could indeed get ‘yes’ responses. This new mindset fueled my efforts on GivingTuesday, leading me to not only meet but exceed my fundraising goal with a huge shout out and thank you to the generous support of my friends and family.

— **Dr. Christine Herring, Trying Together Board Member & Founder & CEO, Herring Seminars & Consulting**

Fundraising Goal Exceeded for Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community

Since 2020, Trying Together has participated in the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community, an annual fundraising walk that benefits local health and human service agencies.

Though the Highmark Walk is a great opportunity for nonprofit organizations to raise funds, not all entities meet eligibility standards. In 2023 and 2024, Trying Together invited all early childhood program directors to create a fundraising team on behalf of Trying Together. For all funds raised by an early learning program, 75% of the money raised by a program’s walk team was donated back to their respective programs. Four programs participated in 2023 and six programs participated in 2024, collectively raising \$3,400 for early learning programs throughout the region.

For the first time in 2024, Trying Together met and exceeded its walk fundraising goal, raising more than \$6,000.



Month of The Young Child (MOYC) 2024

In April 2024, Trying Together created its first Month of The Young Child (MOYC) fundraising campaign for individual donors. Suggested giving levels were based on the costs of providing specific Trying Together professional development offerings to early educators, such as:

- \$50 (average cost for one educator to attend one course)
- \$500 (one educator taking the Child Care 101: New Hire Orientation Professional Development Series)
- \$2,500 (one educator obtaining their Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential or School-Age Professional Credential)

Through the generosity of individual donors, the campaign raised \$10,500.

In addition to the MOYC fundraising campaign, corporate sponsorship packages were developed for the first time to support the Annual Celebration of Early Childhood Educators Dinner. For the 2024 Dinner, three corporate sponsors provided a total of \$25,000 to help support costs. Guests were also provided with the opportunity to pay an amount closer to the estimated value of their ticket, raising approximately \$2,400. Six ads were purchased in the first-ever program book for the Dinner, bringing in \$1,300.

As a result of the Dinner, 98% of the more than 700 regional early childhood educators who attended reported that they felt valued at the event for the work they do.



The Annual Celebration of Early Childhood Educators Dinner was sponsored by Duolingo, Grantmakers of Western PA/Early Childhood Funders Alliance, PNC, and ELRC Region 5.



Staff Representation

Trying Together staff provide their expertise to support the work of early childhood as members on the boards and committees of the following companies and organizations and/or through membership:

Regional

African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development

Allegheny County Children, Youth, and Family Advisory Board

Allegheny County Family Center Network

All for All Coalition Education & Family Support Subcommittees

All in Allegheny

Best Books for Babies Committee

Bridge to Learn Steering Committee

Buzzword

Digital Media and Learning Affinity Group of Remake Learning

Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 5, Local Leadership Council

Early Literacy Workgroup

Equitable and Just Greater Pittsburgh

Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce

Hi5! Transition from Pre-k to Kindergarten Team

The Homewood Community Engagement Center Advisory Council

Lead Safe Allegheny

Let's Play, Pittsburgh! (Remake Learning)

The Northside North Shore Chamber of Commerce

One North Side

Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce

Pittsburgh Learning Collaborative

Playful Pittsburgh

Positive Racial Identity Development in Early Education (P.R.I.D.E.) Advisory Committee

Remake Learning Council

Western Pennsylvania Early Literacy Team

Westmoreland County Chamber of Commerce

Statewide

Childhood Begins at Home Campaign

PA Coalition for Healthy Families and Workplace

Pennsylvania School-Age Child Care Alliance

Pittsburgh Chapter of PennAEYC

Pre-K for PA Campaign

Start Strong PA Campaign

State Advisory Council (SAC) - Child Care Certification and Quality Rating Subcommittee

Thriving PA Campaign

International

International Play Association (IPA): Promoting the Child's Right to Play



Revenue & Support

Trying Together is fortunate to have the financial support of these leading corporations and foundations and generous individuals and extends its heartfelt gratitude to:

4imprint	Joanne Ault
ABK Learning & Development Center	Carol Austin
Kathleen Accornero	Rose Avery
AE Works Ltd	Avonworth Primary Center
Judith Albenze	The Ayers Foundation
Luis Alfaro	Simone Baer
Sarah Allan	Glenn Bafia
Alaine Allen	David & Lauri Bailey
The Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Inc	Cheryl Baker
Alison Altemus	Kristin Baldauff
Amazon Smile	Charles Banks
David & Megan Andros	Nicole Banner
Anonymous	BarkBox
Nancy Artz	Donald Bayerlein
Kristin Ash	Jenn Beer
Brittany Ashe	Svetlana Beltyukova
Monica Aston	Danielle Benchoff
	Kenneth Berryman

Bertelsen Education	Crafton's Children's Corner
The Birmingham Foundation	Lesley Crawford
Blackbaud Giving Fund	Juan Cruz
Rachel Boesing	Jessica Cummings
Scott Bowen	Danielle D'Andrea
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Traci Braid	Charles Davis
Katie Brown	Kendall Davis
Kevin Brown	Tamia Davis
Linda Bryant	Alice Davis
Katherine Buchanan	Bridgette Alexis Davis
Blaire Bucki	Nathan Davis
Sara Bucki	Meena De Schutter
The Buhl Foundation	Cathy C. Droz
Charita Bush	Katherine Dufala
Sherie P. Cannin	Duolingo
Nancy Carman	Shirley Duong
Courtney Centner	Valisa Dutrieuille
Holly Cessna	Wendy Gebert Dyer
Anna Chaikovska	Ashley Dynan
Chris & Kerry Chapman	Eat 'n Park Hospitality Group
Christine Chen	Early Childhood Funders Alliance
Bonnie Chen	Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 5
Erica Chernysh	Eden Hall Foundation
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh	EHS Coaches Team
Chipotle - South Hills	Linda Ehrlich
Cathy Cicco	Ashley Elliott
Cara Ciminillo	Roxanne Elizabeth Epperson
Kathy Ciminillo	Escape Room Pittsburgh
Lena Ciminillo	Thomas Esposito
Rashonda Clark	Lauren Fabean
Clark Hunter Foundation	Loretta Fairley
Anita Claytor	Megan Feathers
Julia Covelli	Barbara Felix

Erin Felix
Olivia Ferrante
Heather Fletcher
Emily Flick
James Fogarty
The Food Shoppe
Mara Frank
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Jessica Freeman
Rebecca Friedrich
Fun Fore All
Deborah Gallagher
Amy Gardner
Jeffrey Genkinger
Yukiko Giho
Gismondi Family Fund of The
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Give Lively Foundation
Loni Gooden
The Grable Foundation
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Judy Graca
Maureen Grant
The Grantmakers of Western
Pennsylvania
Norton Gusky
Vance & Chelsea Hall
Lisa Hammer
Hammond's Childcare
Allison Hannon
Ashley Russo Harland
Stacey Harris
Dr. Sherlyn Harrison
Mary Hawk
Richard Hawkinberry

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Cheryl Herring
Dr. Christine Herring
Dr. Chuck Herring
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Allison Hritz
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Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens
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The Pittsburgh Foundation
Pittsburgh Glass Center
The Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation
Pittsburgh Riverhounds SC
Pittsburgh Steelers
Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium
LaWanna Plater
Playnotes
Laura Pollick
The PNC Financial Services Group
The PNC Foundation
PNC Park
Pritzker Children's Initiative
Chris Pryor
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Raising Cane's
Lindsey Ramsey
Rebekkah Ranallo
Marion Rathbun
Antoinette C. Raymond
Reading Ready PGH
Casey Rich
The Richard King Mellon Foundation

Juliana Rios
Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area
JoAnn Rizzo
Lisa Maria Rizzo
Eliana Roberts
Allison Robinson
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Cassie Rubino Hoedeman
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Diana Schwab
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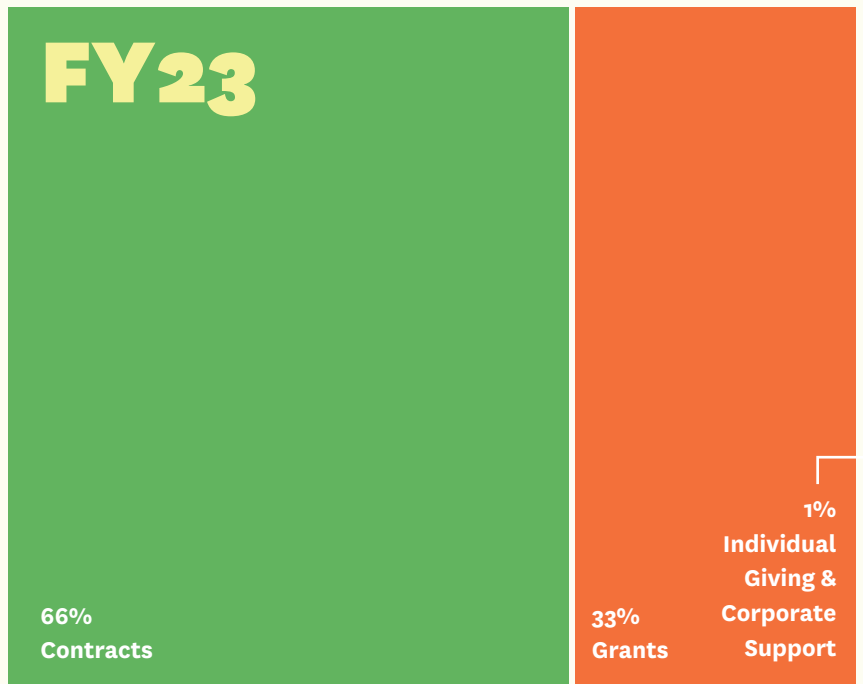
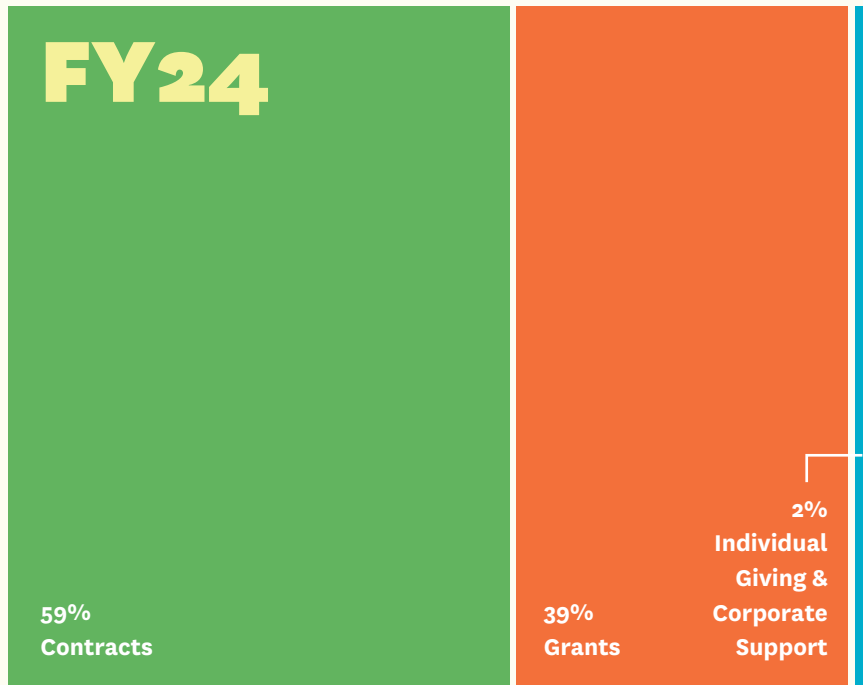
Acknowledgments

Trying Together, its Board of Directors, and staff thank all who have contributed to supporting the work of early childhood in collaboration with us over the past two years.

Best wishes and thanks to all of the Board of Directors, but especially the following members whose terms ended in 2024, including: David Andros, Kristin Ash, Dr. Christine Herring, and Dr. Jane Kwon. A special note of gratitude goes to Dr. Todd Wolynn, former Trying Together Board President, who continues with us as an At-Large Board Member and Dr. Christine Herring, who continues with us as a community member on our organization's Development Committee.

And last, but not least, thanks to the Trying Together staff, without whom this work could not be achieved.

Credit: The 2022-2024 Trying Together Donor Impact Report was written and edited by the Community Relations Team, including Kerry Chapman, Nathan Duke, Elizabeth Lennox, Maria Pisano, Julianna Rios, and Heidi Winkler, with contributions from Trying Together staff, and was designed by Little Kelpie.





**Giving
Opportunities**

Join Trying Together in supporting the work of early childhood!

When Trying Together collaborates with early care and education professionals, families, and other individuals like you to advocate together, partner together, and learn together, we create a future in which caregivers feel valued; children have access to high-quality, early learning environments; and families have the resources they need to support their children's early learning experiences.

While Trying Together and our partners are working daily to make this future a reality, there are still many children, families, and caregivers in our own neighborhoods who need our help. We need your financial support to continue and expand this work so all children in Southwestern Pennsylvania can experience healthy development and thrive for years to come. Read in the following pages several ways you can give today.



Individual Giving

One-time online and monthly electronic deductions save on paper and mailing waste. Visit www.tryingtogether.org/about-us/support today to set-up your tax-deductible contribution. To request a paper donation form or to learn more about Trying Together's giving opportunities, please contact Kerry Chapman, Assistant Director of Development at 412.206.1053 or email kerry@tryingtogether.org.

Early Childhood Supporter

\$5 per month (\$60 annual)

Early Childhood Sustainer

\$10 per month (\$120 annual)

Trying Together Champion

\$83.33 per month (\$1,000 annual)

To send a check, please make payable to "Trying Together" and mail to:

Trying Together
5604 Solway Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Special Giving Opportunities

Give Big Pittsburgh

Join thousands of Pittsburgh residents and give at www.givebigpittsburgh.com/organizations/trying-together

In-Kind

Trying Together accepts gifts in-kind that help us to achieve our mission. If you're interested in making a gift in-kind or a donation to one of our programs, please contact us in advance to discuss our areas of greatest need. You may also complete our in-kind donation form at: tryingtogether.org/about-us/support/in-kind-donation/

Stock

An outright gift of appreciated securities, or stock, is a quick and easy way to make a meaningful gift and to receive an income tax deduction for the fair market value of the stock at the time of the gift.

United Way Donor Choice

Use **#1524827** for Trying Together

Donor Advised Funds

Donor Advised Funds (DAFs) are an increasingly popular way to make charitable donations that are both streamlined and flexible. With a DAF, donors can easily support the organizations they care about most by making a charitable contribution to the fund and receiving an immediate tax deduction. They can then suggest grants from the fund to organizations they want to support, including Trying Together. By recommending a grant to Trying Together through your DAF, you can support children and caregivers in a way that is easy and efficient.

Planned Giving

Planned gifts provide creative and flexible strategies for your estate and charitable planning. Some planned gifts provide you with income. Many can reduce your taxes. The greatest benefit, however, lies in knowing that by including Trying Together in your estate planning, you will ensure you're supporting the work of early childhood for generations to come.

Employee Matching Gifts

Many companies match the charitable donations made by their employees. If you or your spouse work for or are retired from a company that offers this benefit, your gift to Trying Together may be doubled or even tripled. Please ask your company's Human Resources department about matching gifts.

In Honor/ In Memory Gifts

Honor or memorialize a special child, parent, grandparent, friend, family member or business associate by making a tax-deductible gift to the Trying Together in their name. Your gift will be acknowledged with a personalized letter sent to the honored individual/family.



Supporting the work of early childhood

5604 Solway Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
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Trying Together is pleased to partner with PennAEYC
to support the Pittsburgh Chapter of PennAEYC.

