About the Program

University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development Early Head Start Family Foundations (EHS/FF) has been serving families in low-income communities in the city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County for over 20 years. The program provides weekly 90 minute home visits and two socialization/play groups per month to expectant families and families with children ages 0-3 years. Services include health and development for infants and toddlers; and the promotion of the parent’s abilities to support their child’s cognitive, social, emotional and physical development in order for the child to be ready for school. The program continues to enhance its expertise in infant mental health, promoting healthy parent-child relationships, and preparing families and their children for success in school. The program completed the second two of four federal monitoring reviews; Management Systems and Governance and Comprehensive Services, and School Readiness. The program was found to be in compliance in our management systems and governance areas. In the comprehensive services and school readiness review it was found that the program was not using a research-based curriculum. As a result, in partnership with our governing board, policy council and parents, the program has implemented a research-based curriculum, Partners for a Healthy Baby.

Health and development of enrolled expectant families and children aged 0-3 is the primary goal of the EHS/FF program.

- 100% of enrolled children are up-to-date on their immunizations, have a medical home and have a health insurance provider.
- Through continuing collaboration with Children’s Hospital Dental Clinic and Big Smiles Pennsylvania 49 of our eligible 1 year old children received dental exams this year. All families and children enrolled in the program have access to a dental home and dental screenings. As is shown in research, oral health is essential for the health and success of expectant families, infants and toddlers.
- EHS/FF has recently partnered with Allegheny Link, a referral and information line for county home visiting programs.

Financial Report

The FY15-16 budget includes $4,029,765 federal funds and $180,000 through the generous support of The Heinz Endowments. $3,358,924 is budgeted for four sub awards for six sites. This includes the following:

- **Focus on Renewal** – $455,925 McKees Rocks
- **Community Human Services Corp** – $959,041
  $443,563 Hill District and $515,478 North Side
- **The Consortium for Public Education** – $1,561,833
  $987,369 Clairton, $477,408 East End
  Training & Technical Assistance $97,056
- **Turtle Creek Valley Services** – $382,125 Triboro/Braddock

The remainder is budgeted for expenses incurred by the University’s Office of Child Development for compensation, supplies, travel and space rental $670,841.
Read Early and Often

Children Take Social Cues from Parents

Learning About Me

Role Playing

Family Meals and Nutrition

Wonderful Expectation

Family Foundations
Early Head Start
Our Families
Making a Difference
How Early Head Start/Family Foundations Makes a Difference in Family Life

As outlined in the Family Engagement Outcomes, Family Advocacy is key to insuring that families are successful in their home, the school setting, and in their community. Advocacy provides a process by which families are confident on speaking and acting on behalf of themselves and others which provides a necessary tool in the lives of children and families in order to be successful in life. One family’s story illustrates the role of EHS staff in developing a relationship that serves as a foundation for families to reach their goals.

In April of 2016, a pregnant mom enrolled in our Early Head Start/Family Foundations program. This was the mother’s fifth pregnancy and she previously lost custody of her other four children. All of the mother’s four children were adopted and she reportedly only had contact with one, the four year old. Mom had significant challenges throughout her life as an adult and as a child.

At the time of enrollment the mother had been participating in services through Genesis House, her mental health provider, and then EHS/FF. The mother had reportedly lost custody of her other children due to unstable housing. In May of 2016 the mother delivered her fifth child at Magee Women’s Hospital of UPMC, at which time there was no CYF involvement. During her recovery in the hospital, nurses and hospital staff reportedly saw concerns with mom’s ability to provide a safe sleep environment and proper nutrition for the baby. However, the EHS/FF Program Nurse had visited mom in her home and she had no concerns for the safety of the child. Consequently, the child was taken into CYF custody from the hospital and placed into foster care.

Upon learning this information, an EHS/FF Home Visitor attended the shelter hearing and subsequent permanency hearings in the interest of the family and child. The home visitor and an intern went to the mother’s home and helped her prepare for a home visit with the CYF caseworker. They assisted her in organizing the child’s belongings and ensuring the sleep space was clean and clear of any clutter.

Mom received training by the Home Visitor in preparing to ask questions that were of importance to her and she was encouraged to maintain regular and consistent contact with her legal representation. The mother was encouraged to generate a list of questions with the support of her legal representation that were directly geared at CYF expectations to maximize the opportunity for return home of the child.

The Home Visitor and Program Nurse accompanied the mother during court proceedings and meetings coordinated by CYF. The EHS/FF staff spoke to her compliance with the program and her ability to learn, retain and implement information she attained for proper care of her child. The mother also had significant literacy issues and her reading ability was very low.

The mother was encouraged by her Home Visitor to ensure that ANY and ALL documents be read to her before signing anything. This behavior was consistently modeled for the mother by her Home Visitor — reading everything that was written on the home visit record and service review form before allowing her to sign it.

Any and all handouts from CYF were read aloud to the mother providing an opportunity for her to ask questions and gain an understanding of the information. While the child remains in CYF custody, mom has regular visitation. The goal is reunification of mother and child.

The home visitor supported the mother to advocate for herself through a relationship built over time that helped the mother to become confident in her voice to speak with agencies on behalf of the progression of reunification with her children. Reunification has not happened yet but the mother is fully engaged in reuniting with her baby.
School Readiness Goals

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL GOALS
▶ Children will establish a secure attachment to their parents.
▶ Children will begin to develop and demonstrate a positive sense of self and express their needs and wants.
▶ Children will begin to develop and demonstrate control of their feelings and behaviors.
▶ Children will begin to learn and integrate routines and directions.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
▶ Children will use receptive and expressive language and communication strategies in their home language.
▶ Children will understand and use oral language to engage in conversations.
▶ Children will use words to describe what they are thinking and doing.

APPROACHES TOWARD LEARNING
▶ Children will demonstrate interest, curiosity and imagination in exploring their world.
▶ Children will demonstrate persistence in learning and discovery.

COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE
▶ Children will engage in stories and books.
▶ Children will use their senses to discover how to make things work, what objects and people do and how they can make things happen.

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT
▶ Children will develop control of large muscles for movement, balance and coordination.
▶ Children will develop control of small muscles for manipulation and exploration.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND SAFETY
▶ Children and their family will practice a healthy lifestyle.
▶ Expectant parents will participate in prenatal care and healthy nutrition to ensure the best possible outcomes for baby.
▶ Children will play and learn in safe home environments.

TRANSITION
▶ Parents will have a relationship with the pre-school setting in their community or school district.
▶ Children will understand what to expect in their new environment.

All goals are culturally sensitive and adapted to meet the varying developmental needs of children.

The program will aggregate child assessment data quarterly during the program year, analyze the data, share the information from the data with parents and community members and revise/add to the school readiness goals as the data shows a need.