



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Inaugural Meeting Held of Children's Fund Working Group

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald announced today that a 26-member working group has been convened and begun looking at the creation of a potential children's fund to provide resources to early childhood learning and out-of-school time programs across Allegheny County. The co-chairs of the working group – Trisha Gadson, Ph.D. of Macedonia FACE, and Michelle Figlar of the Heinz Endowments – held their first meeting on March 20, 2019 and expect to deliver a report to the County Executive in approximately six months.

“Ensuring that the children in Allegheny County have the best services available to them is important to me and is why I've put this working group together. Children who have access to quality early childhood learning have improved social skills, better grades, and enhanced attention spans. Children who have access to after school programs do better in school, have fewer behavioral problems, and do not become involved with crime as young adults,” said Fitzgerald. “We want that for all of our children. The effort last year resulted in having more than 250,000 voters say yes; this is important to them too. And many other voters wanted to know more – which is why I've convened this group, to help all of us put together what a countywide program can look like.”

County Executive Fitzgerald has charged the working group with the following tasks:

- Review available data to assess the state of children and children's programming in Allegheny County;
- Gather information from providers, parents and experts across the county especially regarding:
 - the demand for programming across the county;
 - the supply of programming across the county; and,
 - the gaps between the demand and supply;
- Gather input from the larger community
- Review state and federal policies and their impact on children's programming in the county;
- Design the operations of a possible children's fund to provide resources to early childhood learning and out-of-school time programs across the county;
- Provide concept budgets for operations with budgets of \$5 million, \$10 million and \$20 million annually;
- Provide sample allocation models and scenarios; and
- Report out findings to the County Executive.

“This is exactly the work we should be doing,” said Co-Chair Gadson. “Looking at why early learning and after school are important for Allegheny County and trying to figure out the best way to provide more access and opportunities for all kids across the county.”

The working group is expected to host some focus group discussions with stakeholders, including parents and providers. Additionally, the group will hold approximately four community roundtable discussions to share information with the public and gather input.

“County Executive Fitzgerald has assembled a knowledgeable, experienced and diverse group to do this work. I am confident that together we can provide the recommendations that will enable him to move Allegheny County in the right direction for our children,” said Co-Chair Figlar.

In addition to the co-chairs, the other members of the working group are:

The Honorable Tom Baker
Dr. Quintin Bullock
Rosamaria Cristello
Wanda Franklin
Beth Heeb
Walter Lewis
Jesse McLean
Robert Nelkin

Carol Barone-Martin
Cara Ciminillo
James Doyle
Debbie Gallagher
Rosanne Javorsky
Betty Lisowski
Rebecca Mercatoris
Kathryn Vargas

Earl Buford
Dave Coplan
Colleen Fedor
James Guffey
Dr. Valerie Kinloch
Sally McCrady
Nancy Murray
The Honorable DeWitt Walton

In November 2018, voters of Allegheny County considered the question of whether to create a children's fund for the purposes of supporting early childhood learning and out-of-school time programs.

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