

Maryland

Baltimore City and Southern Anne Arundel, Caroline, Cecil, and Talbot Counties

The Maryland Family Network (MFN) is an EHS-CCP grantee in Maryland serving children across seven sites in four counties and the city of Baltimore. They have seven center-based partners, including PACT, a specialty program in Baltimore dedicated to serving young children and families experiencing homelessness. Partnership funding allows PACT to provide more health services and supports to the children and families they serve, to hire more education staff, and to increase the compensation of the early educators working in their program, among other improvements. Overall, through the EHS-CCP, the MFN works with their partners across the state to expand access to high-quality early education and comprehensive services to more than 100 children.

FAST FACTS

107

Children Directly Benefiting

0

Children Indirectly Benefiting

6

Child Care Partners

4 counties +
Baltimore

Local Communities Affected

\$1.6M

Total Grant Amount

THE MODEL STANDOUTS

A Focus on Families Experiencing Homelessness: Through the EHS-CCP, the MFN supports families with PACT: Helping Children With Special Needs, which is based in the largest shelter in the city of Baltimore and works exclusively with families experiencing homelessness. The core of the program is to support families through the trauma of experiencing homelessness by providing trauma-informed care and parent-child attachment-based programming. Many of the children who enter the program have separation anxiety, are in a state of “fight/flight/freeze,” or have speech and other developmental delays from experiencing the trauma and stress of not having a home. Supporting the whole family is core to PACT’s approach. The program has an embedded early childhood mental health consultant from the University of Maryland who has a close relationship with all of the early educators, families, and children. The EHS-CCP funding allows PACT to expand on the health services they provide. The MFN arranges for nursing students to do on-site screenings, monitor that children with chronic health conditions receive the care they need, help families understand their children’s health, advocate for families



Source: Photo provided by Maryland Family Network.

with community providers, and run public health initiatives such as smoking cessation. The partnership also enables PACT to hire new education staff to enhance learning experiences and to renovate the outdoor learning spaces so children have access to a playground. Partnership funding also means PACT can increase teacher wages.

Family Self-Sufficiency: An important tenet of the MFN partnership program is supporting parents to reach self-sufficiency in a variety of areas, including housing and employment. Partner sites offer intensive case management supports for children and their families, which include connections to adult education programs, access to community resources, and assistance finding stable housing and employment. Helping parents reach their goals provides more stable environments for young children.

FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

One parent who started in the program’s GED class received support to take college-placement assessments. She then scored at the required levels for a phlebotomy training program. She worked to get herself through school and is now completing her full-time clinical rotation at a hospital and anticipates completion this year.



Professional Development: The MFN works with their partners to provide financial and mentoring support to staff working toward a CDA and accessing higher education, including associate's and bachelor's degrees. The MFN also supports staff by partnering with the state, which has specialty programs to support early educators who want to earn

degrees. Partner sites receive training and coaching from specialists, including education, disability, and family support specialists. The MFN also provides coaching and training on curricula and assessments to ensure that all staff can provide high-quality early education experiences to the children they serve.

THE TRUE COST OF HIGH-QUALITY INFANT/TODDLER CARE

The MFN calculates that the cost per child is about \$20,000 per year, on average.

THE RESULTS

- 20 teen parents completed high school, and all went on to pursue higher education.
- Four parents completed associate's degrees, and 10 parents are currently enrolled in college coursework while working.
- 10 families who were homeless now have homes and parent/s who are employed.
- More than 10 teachers are completing a CDA and accessing higher levels of education.
- PACT found a 44 percent increase in parents' ability to support their child's cognitive development and a 26 percent increase in their ability to support learning and social-emotional development.

THE TAKEAWAYS

Nearly all communities across the country lack quality care for infants and toddlers. Communities in Maryland are no exception. The partnership grant now expands access to high-quality early care and learning services to more of Maryland's children, so they can thrive and so their parents can go to school or work.

Because the MFN serves expectant teenage mothers, there are many cases of young mothers being able to have their babies and go back to school because of an open infant/toddler slot from the partnership grant. In all four of the MFN's delegate programs, young mothers are often able to finish school, and some have gone on to college, thanks to a newly available slot.

The partnership program facilitates more communication and collaboration among the MFN, other early childhood providers, and the state's Department of Education, which oversees the child care subsidy system. Thanks to a new contract the MFN has with the state agency, the subsidy office will reduce the paperwork burdens on families and programs to make it as simple as possible for families to access and keep their subsidies.

Building new partnerships through the EHS-CCP is hard work. It requires compromise, negotiation, and seeing the system in a new perspective. But at the end of the day, the challenges are worth the benefits that partnership services bring to Maryland's young children and their families.



“Since my son has been enrolled in this program, I have been able to make plans, stick to them, and succeed at everything I planned. This program makes reaching your goals obtainable. In these three years, I was able to obtain my AA degree in science, buy a new car and a house, and land a good job. Importantly, my son is very smart and ready for the next level.”

—Partnership Parent



Another important takeaway are the new professional development opportunities and connections among the provider community. Staff no longer feel alone; they feel part of a larger group and part of a mission greater than themselves. This supports morale and motivates staff to seek out ways to improve their practice. Partnership funding makes it possible to provide financial support for those improvements in practice, such as accessing higher education and training.

In the case of PACT, the partnerships allow them to continue thriving in their realm of expertise, while providing a stable source of funding to enhance the supports children and families receive.

A reliable source of infant/toddler funding is critical in Maryland. The EHS-CCP funding came at a vital time for PACT, as they would have had to cut their enrollment by half without it. Though the system needs more resources, the EHS-CCP is making progress toward meeting that need.

