United Way of York County is committed to helping children and youth achieve their potential. Our initiatives provide the support necessary for children and youth to achieve progress in every stage of development.

Research shows that 90% of the brain is developed by age five, demonstrating the importance of early efforts to lay the foundations of academic success. As a child ages, truancy is a leading factor preventing success in school, graduation from high school, and growth as a productive member of society. With your support, our education initiatives ensure that every child has an introduction to reading, is ready for the transition to kindergarten, and is engaged in learning through truancy reduction.

By providing quality programs and partnering with others to support opportunities for education, United Way is investing in youth today and in the next generation.

Take a look at our outcomes.
FOCUS, formerly known as Focus On Our Future, was developed in 1994 and launched in 1995 as a collaborative effort between United Way of York County, York County Community Foundation, Penn State York, and Child Care Consultants, Inc.

Initially funded by grants from the Howard D. Heinz Endowments and Pew Charitable Trusts, FOCUS has grown into a program supported by businesses, foundations, community leaders, individuals, educational institutions, and state government. FOCUS strives to ensure children enter school ready to learn.

Through inclusion, collaboration, research, and integrity, FOCUS works to improve the lives of children in York County by supporting quality early childhood experiences. FOCUS is looking forward to celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2020.
FOCUS partnered with the statewide Pre-K for PA Campaign for a fourth year, building on the shared belief that all children, regardless of income, should have the opportunity to enter school ready to learn.

Pre-K for PA was launched in 2014 to make pre-K a priority issue in the gubernatorial and legislative elections, and advocated for increased access to high-quality pre-kindergarten for all 3- and 4-year-old children in Pennsylvania. The campaign has grown quickly and was embraced by individuals and organizations across the Commonwealth who believe that investing in our children is the right choice and an urgent necessity.

FOCUS supports the campaign in York County, creates opportunities to share with York County legislators the importance of pre-K education, and advocates for funding for quality early learning for children.

High-quality early child care programs ensure a strong foundation for success. Programs that provide children with the best possible start are investments in our community’s future. Please visit our website to see a list of NAEYC Accredited Programs and Keystone Star 4 and Star 3 Centers in York County.

Identifying Quality Care

In order to support families with the high cost traditionally associated with high-quality child care and preschool programs, United Way accepts corporate contributions that specifically go toward scholarships for pre-kindergarten students to attend high-quality programs. For the 2018-2019 school year, scholarships were made possible from contributions from Avalon Insurance; BB&T; PeoplesBank, A Codorus Valley Company; and UPMC Health Plan.

EITC Pre-K Scholarships
Ready Freddy

United Way has successfully been running Ready Freddy in York County since 2009. Developed by the University of Pittsburgh, the program provides learning experiences for children entering kindergarten and their families. The 4-session program focuses on children’s strengths and needs, setting and achieving goals, literacy, numbers, social-emotional skills, and how parents can help their child learn.

In 2019, the program was implemented in Eastern York, Dover, Red Lion Area, South Eastern, and South Western school districts, and with Martin Library. Altogether, 292 families completed the program. Ready Freddy is made possible through funding from the PNC Foundation, Rehmeyer Trust, and The Donley Foundation.

Ready Rosie

Ready Rosie is an online resource that provides daily activities for adults to do with their children, from birth to 6 years old. Videos, delivered daily through email, text or app notifications, engage families through everyday activities, equipping parents and caregivers to have more meaningful interactions with their children and turn everyday situations into learning opportunities.

During the 2018-2019 school year and summer 2019, Eastern, Central and York City school districts offered Ready Rosie to students in pre-K through third grade. The program also serves all children from birth to pre-K who reside within the school district.

Funding for Ready Rosie was provided by United Way of York County and the Women’s Giving Circle of the York County Community Foundation.
With truancy as a leading factor preventing children’s success in school, graduation from high school and the ability to become a productive member of society, the York County Truancy Prevention Initiative (YCTPI) aims to assure that elementary and middle school students are prepared to succeed in later grades, and that young adults make a successful transition from high school to work life – two of United Way’s priorities in Education.

The mission of the YCTPI is to reduce the truant population in York County by establishing a protocol for improved communication, instituting a consistent response to the issues and initiating interventions.

The York County Truancy Prevention Initiative is a partnership between United Way of York County and the York County Bar Foundation.

**Attendance Awareness Month**

The York County Truancy Prevention Initiative for the past several years has joined the nationwide effort to celebrate Attendance Awareness Month in September. Many times students miss school because they do not have items such as alarm clocks, uniforms, hygiene items, and school supplies.

In 2019, we encouraged the community to get involved by donating school supplies to local school districts. Thanks to donations from the community and local companies, we were able to distribute 114 bags full of supplies to every building that participated. We also created the hashtag #gotoschoolyork and asked community members to share photos of children going to school on social media.
York County Truancy Task Force

One of York County Truancy Prevention Initiative's strategies to decrease truancy is through improved coordination of services provided to children, families, and providers. This includes the implementation of the Truancy Task Force, a combination of over 45 stakeholders who convene every other month to address strategies for truancy intervention and prevention. The stakeholders that come together are from school districts, nonprofits, service providers, and county/government offices that network and are provided with professional development topics.

The Truancy Task Force is co-chaired by United Way of York County and York County Office of Children, Youth & Family Services. The co-chairs of the Truancy Task Force report to the York County Children’s Roundtable and the York County Truancy Prevention Advocacy Committee.

Truancy Prevention Advocacy Committee

United Way of York County would like to thank and recognize the 2018-2019 Truancy Prevention Advocacy Committee.

Honorable John Uhler, Chair
CGA Law Firm

Janelle Black
York County Bar Association

Beverly Mackereth
Ridge Policy Group

Tanya Stauffer
York County Office of Children, Youth & Families

Stephanie VanGorder
York County Office of Children, Youth & Families

Daniel Elby
Alternative Rehabilitation Communities

Honorable Maria Musti Cook
York County Court of Common Pleas

Honorable John H. Fishel
Magisterial District Court 19-3-01

Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill
Senator – R-York Township

Mark Goedecker, M.D.
WellSpan Medical Group

Thomas Shorb
Stock and Leader

Rep. Carol Hill-Evans
Representative – District 95

Dr. Stacey Sidle
Northeastern School District

Leigh Dalton
Stock and Leader
York County Youth Court Alliance

Youth Court Alliance (YCA) had another successful year of diverting families from entering the Magisterial District Courts and reengaging students. During the 2018-2019 school year, YCA had 229 cases and served 650 students from York City, Red Lion Area, and Northeastern school districts.

67.9% of participants successfully completed the program and 96.9% of successful cases had no unlawful absences while they were enrolled in the program. An additional 180 students who previously went through the program were served by maintaining communication and mentorship.

IATDP Program of the Year Award

York County Youth Court Alliance was recognized in October with the Program of the Year Award from the International Association of Truancy & Dropout Prevention (IATDP), which recognizes one outstanding, emerging, or best practice program that meets the four criteria of innovation, across system, replication, and response to mission. Since the program’s inception in 2011, YCA has enrolled 970 cases, and 871 volunteers were trained and completed 11,000+ hours of community service.

Youth Court Alliance is a program of United Way of York County in partnership with the York County Truancy Prevention Initiative and the York County Office of Children, Youth & Families.
Early Literacy Reading Challenges

The Early Literacy Reading Challenges are pre-literacy programs that encourage families to read to their children birth to 5 years old every day. Books are delivered to participating early education classrooms, and the children take them home each night. Parents track the number of books read, with a goal of reading 100 books during the school year.

Early Literacy 100 Book Challenge

Through the Early Literacy 100 Book Challenge, 26 classrooms read a total of 67,079 books during the 2018-2019 school year, more than 6,000 more books than the previous year! Over 450 children participated, representing the largest participation rate since the program’s inception in 2005. Funding for the program was provided by the PNC Foundation and The Donley Foundation.

Early Literacy Read to Me Challenge

Launched in February 2019, the Early Literacy Read to Me Challenge served 120 children from 13 classrooms. The children read 4,295 books in the program’s first four months. Funding for the program was provided by the PNC Foundation, The Donley Foundation, and the Women’s Giving Circle of the York County Community Foundation.

Little Free Libraries

United Way of York County began installing Little Free Libraries to provide additional outlets for distributing books. There are currently four Little Free Libraries supported by United Way located in York City. Women United added another Little Free Library at the Bob Hoffman Branch of the YMCA of York and York County, and at Golden Connections Community Center in Red Lion. In the past year, 1,956 books have been distributed, bringing the total distributed since 2017 to more than 6,500 books. Funding for Little Free Libraries was provided by The Donley Foundation.
Reading Ready Corners continue to reach children who otherwise may not have access to age-appropriate books. Bookshelves are placed and filled in offices where families might wait for an appointment or services, to encourage parents and children to read books together. Children are encouraged to take a book home with them.

In 2019, the York County Bar Foundation provided funding for a Reading Ready Corner to be added at the York County Court Self-Help & Law Resource Center. **In the past year, 3,677 books have been distributed through 10 Reading Ready Corners.** Reading Ready Corner books were also distributed annually at special events. Since 2014, over 14,000 books have been distributed through Reading Ready Corners.

Reach Out and Read uses well visits at pediatrician appointments where doctors issue a “prescription” to read at home. At every well visit, children ages 6 months through 5 years old receive a new book to take home with them. Reach Out and Read was successfully launched at Family First Health offices in downtown York, Hannah Penn, Lewisberry, and Hanover. **In 2019, over 1,200 books were distributed.**

The effectiveness of the Reach Out and Read model has been recognized by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The program is a cost-effective way to increase reading frequency at home, which has a direct correlation with a child's vocabulary and puts them on the best path to reading proficiency. Funding for the program was provided by the Rotary Club of York and Dillsburg Kiwanis.