



### Just the Facts

- Long-term studies such as the Abecedarian project and the Perry Preschool Project have shown that children enjoy positive and lasting benefits from high-quality preschool education.
- Participating children consistently did better in school, needed fewer special services, and were more apt to graduate and stay clear of trouble. As adults, they out-earned their counterparts and were more likely to be healthy and own their own homes.
- 410,739 children under the age of five reside in Indiana; 64 percent of working mothers in the state have children under six.
- Studies show that investment in quality preschool education is money well spent. Analysis of the Perry Preschool Project, for instance, demonstrated a 7:1 return on dollars invested, primarily from a reduction in crime and increased earnings.
- The number of kids in special education in Indiana increased by 34 percent between 1994 and 2004..
- The Indiana Department of Education reported that 8,045 students dropped out during the 2003-04 school year, an increase of 19 percent over the previous year.

Sources: Kids Count in Indiana 2005, Healthy Child Care Indiana (2001), The Status of Child Care in Indiana (1999), W.S. Barnett: Lives in the Balance.

### Snapshot

- Sixty-five percent of all mothers with children under six and 79 percent with children from six to 13 are in the labor force. Twelve million preschoolers are in childcare or preschool. [USDL: Bureau of Labor Statistics]
- Sixty percent of all American children under five are cared for by family, friends, and neighbors in formal or informal childcare settings. Despite the advantages of home-based care, a study found that 71 percent of family-licensed daycare providers earned a "minimal quality" rating or worse. [Urban Institute, UC Berkeley]
- Only a quarter of formal preschool care was deemed of "good" quality. [University of North Carolina]
- Full-day childcare and preschool can cost between \$4,000-10,000 a year per child, a significant expense for most working families. One quarter of U.S. families with young children earn less than \$25,000 a year, and a family with both parents working full-time at minimum wage earns only \$21,400 a year. [U.S. Census]

Sources: Children's Defense Fund, Nat'l Assoc. of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

### Get Connected

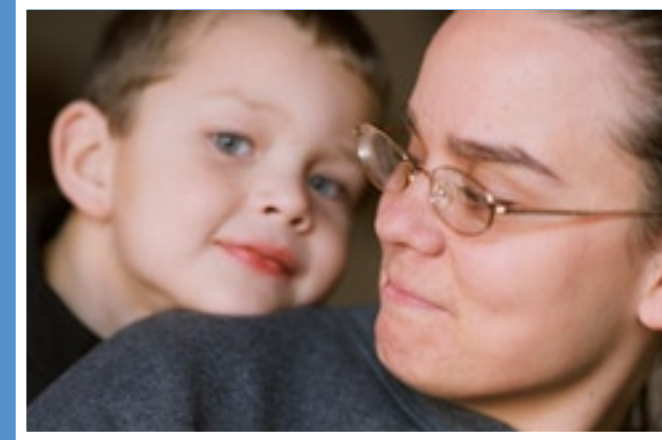
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# Real Stories

Meet the people who live in *Making Connections* neighborhoods

Shane Ray

School readiness/Jobs

Quality preschool programs can help parents give their kids a good start—a jump on their ABCs and support for those qualities of heart and mind that will sustain them as they grow. Shane Ray was a recently-single mother of two when she heard about a new preschool program in her neighborhood that promised help for her and her son. *This is Shane's story.*



### Making Connections

*Making Connections*, an initiative of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, works to improve the lives and prospects of families and children living in some of America's toughest neighborhoods. Common sense tells us that children do better when their families are strong, and families do better when they live in communities that help them to succeed. *Making Connections* works for real change in three areas:

- increasing opportunities for people to earn a decent living, save, and invest
- fostering close ties among family, neighbors, faith communities, and civic groups
- creating connections to reliable, respectful services close to home

### The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. Its mission is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that meet the needs of vulnerable children and families.

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation

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### Making Connections Indianapolis

Two distinct neighborhoods comprise *Making Connections* Indianapolis. Martindale Brightwood is a historic African American neighborhood of 9,000 people; across town, Southeast is home to 29,000 white, African American, and Latino residents. REAL (Residents Engagement and Leadership) is a joint effort between

the two neighborhoods to build local leadership and get people involved. The endeavor seeks to harness the energies of young people and natural leaders. *Making Connections* is a lead partner in city-wide school readiness initiatives, including United Way of Central Indiana's *Success by 6* and the Family Strengthening Coalition.



**S**hane Ray grew up in southeast Indianapolis. She liked school and was an honor roll student. But at the end of her freshman year, she abruptly dropped out. “My folks never finished high school. I did well in school, but I picked things up slower than everyone else,” she says. “I don’t know what happened. I just couldn’t stay with it.” Soon, she married a boy from the neighborhood, and had a daughter, Paytton. Brady (below), now five, arrived two years later.



“I had dropped-out. I had to do *something* to set a better example for my kids. And I needed a job.”

**S**hane was a stay-at-home mom. Her father had always worked long hours in a machine shop, and her mother worked full-time on a production line and a second job in the evenings. “I didn’t really have them helping me with school stuff when I was growing up,” Shane says. “I wanted more for my kids.”

But Shane’s life took an unexpected turn when her marriage ended and she suddenly found herself alone with two young children and no way to support them. “I had dropped-out. I had to do *something* to set a better example for my kids. And I needed a job.”

Shane and her children moved back home with her folks. One day she heard other mothers on the playground talking about a literacy program that offered GED classes for parents while their kids were in preschool. It was located in the elementary school right across the street from her parents’ house. “I thought if I got my GED it would help me get a job,” she says. “And I was having trouble with Brady—he’d get on my nerves and I’d yell at him. I didn’t feel he was learning.”

Shane and Brady enrolled in Even Start, a family literacy program that serves more than 110,000 families around the country.

**Ninety percent of Even Start families are living below the poverty line; nearly half live on less than \$6,000 a year. The program recognizes parents as their children’s first teachers, and seeks to strengthen literacy skills.**



**S**hane spent mornings in class with other young mothers while Brady was in a classroom down the hall with other three- to five-year-olds. “Brady was kind of clingy at first but he got used to being without me,” Shane says. Every afternoon, moms and kids spent structured time reading together. Home visits from Amy, the Even Start family coordinator, along with the preschool teacher, helped Shane work through problems. Amy and the teacher brought crayons, scissors, books, and lots of suggestions—tools that Shane could use on her own.

**Amy also just listened. “Amy was a shoulder to cry on, she was there for me to vent. If she sees you’re going to do something with the help she gives, she’s there for you.”**

Shane began passing sections of the GED test and worked hard on subjects like math, in which she wasn’t as strong. Within six months, Brady began to show a marked improvement in reading, math, and social skills. He tested on par with his age group at fall enrollment, but by spring he had leapt ahead in all areas, scoring more than a year ahead of his age group. All 34 children who entered Even Start with Brady advanced in every area.

Learning isn’t just about test scores though. Brady was also busy learning lessons crucial to any young child navigating a complex and bewildering world: how to get

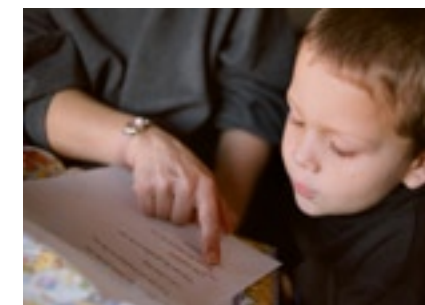
along, how follow directions, and how to meet his own needs and respect the needs of others. These are the building blocks that make for strong relationships and a meaningful life. Quality preschool programs offer children like Brady a solid foundation of growth and learning that leaves them better equipped to take on whatever life hands them.

Shane often struggled to match the energy of her bright, strong-willed son, and they sometimes tangled. One day when Brady knocked his lunch and milk off the table, Shane snapped at him and started to clean it up. Amy stopped her. Instead, she suggested letting Brady clean up the mess himself.

“I was really mad at Amy. I didn’t like someone telling me I can’t do something when it’s my own kid,” Shane says. Another troubled day, Amy showed Shane how to enforce a “time-out” until Brady calmed down. “I realized after awhile that, hey, she’s not trying to make me feel like a bad mother, but is offering me another way to do things.” Shane says Brady listens better now, a skill certain to serve him well in school and in life.

When she was a little girl, Shane wanted to be a pediatrician. Now she’s enrolled in school to become a nurse’s aide. “If that goes OK, I’ll become a registered nurse,” she says. Transportation is poor between her neighborhood and her new school, but she makes the trek five times a week, leaving early in the morning. Brady is now in kindergarten. Every day Shane arrives in time to walk Brady and his older sister Paytton home from school.

“I’m divorced with two kids, but I’m doing it myself now,” says Shane, who still talks with Amy on a regular basis. “I worry: Will I be able to give my kids what they need? But they’re doing great in school. Brady is calmer, I’m calmer. I feel good about that.”



Small photo above: Shane attends job training classes to become a nurse’s aide.