



Is it possible to reduce the incidence of developmental disabilities by designing a program aimed at disability prevention?

Will education, advocacy, and connection to community resources result in safer and healthier home environments?

Can steps be taken to keep families intact and prevent the need for ongoing child protective services?

**The answer is yes - through Project First Step.**

**For more information:**

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### What is the EHCA Difference?

We believe it's our compassion in action. EHCA provides homes, services, and support to individuals in order to assist them in living a rich and fulfilling life. We respect everyone as unique we provide them with high-quality, individualized care.

**Erie Homes for Children and Adults**

226 East 27th St., Erie, PA 16504  
814-454-1534 EHCA.org

**A life full of hope, promise, and care.**

*EHCA is a private, nonprofit agency headquartered in Erie, Pennsylvania, providing services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Erie, Crawford, and Venango counties. EHCA programs are licensed annually by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Admissions, the provision of services, and referrals of persons for services shall be made without regard to race, color, gender, age, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or limited English proficiency.*



**Project First Step**



**www.EHCA.org**

# Project First Step's goal is to promote family health, unity, and independence.

PFS works with families to help build stability and structure. This helps to ensure children lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

## PFS focuses on three outcomes:

- **Healthy Babies** - to maximize the number of babies born healthy and full-term
- **Safe and Healthy Homes** - to ensure that children live in a safe and healthy home environment
- **Preservation and Permanency** - to increase the likelihood that children will reside in their biological home

## What make someone a good fit for PFS?

- Mental Health
- Suspected Intellectual Disability or physical impairment/disability
- Drug and/or alcohol addiction
- Domestic violence
- Lack of social support
- Housing conditions
- Chronic referrals to the Office of Children and Youth
- Truancy

## Services

### PRENATAL SERVICES

- Provides support, advocacy, and parenting education to new mothers and those with high-risk pregnancies
- High-risk population includes medically compromised pregnancy, addiction, poor or limited medical care, intellectual disabilities, and mental health concerns
- Uses a variety of nationally-recognized teaching and assessment tools with childbirth classes and postpartum depression screening

### FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

- Serves families that are at risk of having children removed from the home
- In select situations, families who have already had children removed from the home and are seeking reunification
- Includes training, coaching, and support



### HOMEMAKER SERVICES

- Addresses home conditions that pose a health and safety risk to children
- Assists with house cleaning and training on how to clean
- Provides resources and tools to help create and maintain a safe, healthy home environment

### NURTURING PARENT PROGRAM

- Family Specialists work on developing parenting skills with the belief that the maltreatment of children can be treated and prevented
- Focus on replacing hurtful parenting patterns with healthier patterns of prenatal bonding and neonatal attachment
- Parents receive education to positively responding to the needs of children; a discipline that maintains the dignity of children, self-awareness of the adults' own childhood, and a sense of empowerment to make choices that promote personal and community health

**PFS staff achieves 96% success rate helping mothers with high-risk pregnancies to have healthy, full-term babies.**