

# **THE BOTTOM LINE IS CHILDREN:**

## **PCCY's Report on the State of Children in the Suburbs**

Our job—as parents, as neighbors and as a society—is to make sure that every child has access to the fundamental building blocks for success, including consistent healthcare, a high-quality education that begins with great early education programs, proper nutrition, and a dependable support network to help them grow into healthy and confident adults. Today, far too many children in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties do not have the tools they need to succeed. Our public schools are underfunded, state investment for Pre-K fails to meet demand, access to basic health care is not available to 5,700 undocumented children and thousands of families struggle to afford fresh and healthy food to feed their families and children.

While a majority of the 562,000 children living in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties are doing just fine, there are a growing number of children throughout the suburbs who are not receiving the basic supports every child needs to grow into healthy, happy adults.

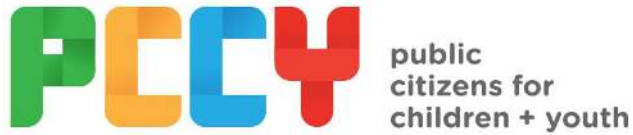
“The Bottom Line is Children” identifies positive and negative trends and provides recommendations to ensure all children get the support they deserve to lead successful lives.

### **Good News in the Suburbs**

- High school graduation rates are above the state average in 54 out of 61 school districts
- The number of high quality seats in early learning programs increased in every county over the last 4 years
- At least 95% of children in each county have health insurance

### **But Families are Struggling to Support their Children**

- More than 53,000 children in the suburbs live in poverty
- More than 20,000 children do not have health insurance
- 58,000 children are not reading or doing math at grade level



- Of all licensed early care providers, only 16% are rated as high quality
- Nearly 30,000 more children depend on SNAP (Food Stamps) in the last 4 years
- Because of a lack of State investment, 56 out of 61 school districts have raised property taxes
- About 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese

## **And Lack of Public Investment Hurts our Children**

- With an absence of a school funding formula, public schools are underfunded by \$145 million
- More than 5,700 children can not enroll in CHIP because of their immigration status
- Only a third of eligible families receive the assistance they need to help pay for child care
- Because of a lack of funding, only 1 in 5 eligible preschool children can enroll in a high quality state program
- Less than a third of eligible students participate in school breakfast programs

## **These Challenges Must Be Solved to Improve Childhood Success**

### **County Leaders Should:**

- Support a fair and adequate funding formula to support all Pennsylvania public school districts
- Work with county officials to ensure every child has health insurance
- Support the Pre-K for PA campaign to give every 3-and-4 year old in Pennsylvania access to high quality preschool programs
- Work with schools to dramatically increase breakfast participation and ensure all children have access to healthy meals at school

To view all of PCCY's Bottom Line reports on the state of children in the suburbs, please visit [www.pccy.org/bottomlinecountyreports](http://www.pccy.org/bottomlinecountyreports)