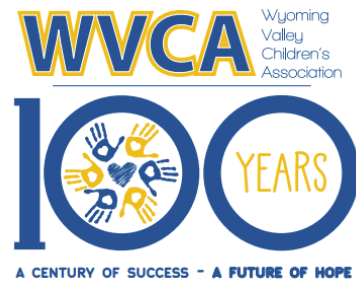


WVCA is a private, non-profit early childhood education school offering educational and therapeutic programs for typically developing children, as well as children identified with special needs, from birth through Kindergarten.

As WVCA celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> year in 2024, we are proud to say that we have supported the Wyoming Valley through its ebbs and flows of need for decades and will continue to for decades to come. What our community, and our state, have been experiencing in recent years, is the increased need in early childhood education and special education services. In fact, our 2022 – 2023 school year was the highest enrollment in our school's history for the fifth consecutive year. The need for therapeutic services for children is increasing in our community and at the same time state funding is decreasing.



Based on the most recent PA Reach and Risk Analysis Reports, in Luzerne County 31% of children under age five live in economically high-risk families and 70% live in families of 300% below the Federal Poverty Level. Additionally, 44% of children are below proficient reading levels and 59% are below proficient math levels by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 7% of children under the age of five need Early Intervention Services (a 28% increase). What is perhaps most alarming is that with this increase in the need for services, the State of PA has paid a decreasing share of what it costs to educate students in Special Education, placing a heavier burden on both private and public schools.

***During this centennial year, we have been finding private donors and community foundations to support our school's growth to meet this increased need in our community.*** WVCA's leadership made the decision to go the extra mile for our students and invest time and resources into developing an insurance billing program. This way, when a student needs therapeutic services not covered by state funding, WVCA is still able to provide that service by our dedicated Speech, Occupational, and Physical Therapists. This move is both monumental to WVCA as well as our community, as WVCA will be an industry trend-setter. *There is no other independent, nonprofit school in thousands of miles of Luzerne County to have taken this on.*

In order to prepare for this increased service to our community, WVCA has been able to purchase a piece of property with a modern, industrial building perfectly adjacent to our school. WVCA will be moving our therapeutic services to this building to prepare for the rise in services being provided in the near future, due to our insurance billing program. Currently, our Occupational and Physical Therapists work in a small space in WVCA's basement. We are proud to be able to purchase the building to provide a larger space with more daylight, more expansion opportunities, and an independent building to support the upcoming program growth.

**WVCA would like to respectfully ask the Millennium Circle of the Luzerne Foundation to provide grant support in order to offset the cost of upgrades and renovations to the building in preparation to host therapeutic services to our community.**

WVCA's mission to *provide the highest quality early childhood education to ensure the greatest developmental potential of ALL children in partnership with families, including therapeutic and support services as needed* unfortunately, at times, this can become difficult to fulfill especially with roadblocks such as the state funding crisis decreasing services in our community for high-risk children. However, with strong partnerships and a dedicated staff, we rise above these roadblocks time, and time again. We thank the Luzerne Foundation for this consideration and continued belief in our mission.