



PARENTS SAY ...

“I’ve met other families with young kids in my community, and we help each other.”

“It’s great to have a friend who knows all about child development to come visit my baby and me.”

“I found the child care I needed through the AOK Family Yellow Pages.”

“I found out my child has special needs, and we got support so he could start preschool with no problem.”

“Now I know how to keep my family strong and healthy.”

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COMMUNITIES

build what they dream

FAMILIES

get what they need

CHILDREN

thrive



Creating the Future

In order for kids to start off healthy in life, families need strong communities where everyone is working together toward common goals for young children.

Across Illinois, AOK Early Childhood Networks are forging powerful connections so that service providers, parents, and community members can create the future they want for their kids. These networks are breaking down barriers and building strong, effective relationships among:

- * Health care
- * Early intervention
- * Recreation
- * Faith communities
- * Family support
- * Education
- * Advocates
- * Parents/caregivers
- * Child care/preschool
- * Social services
- * Local employers
- * Mental health

Taking Action Together

AOK Early Childhood Networks put practical, innovative strategies in place to make sure parents can keep their kids healthy and their families strong. Together, network members:

- * Forge positive, productive relationships among providers

- * Identify gaps in services
- * Plan, strategize, and advocate for funding needed to fill those gaps
- * Build excitement and interest in early childhood issues
- * Improve opportunities for their communities' youngest kids and their families

This work is supported by the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois State Board of Education, local health departments, the Ounce of Prevention Fund, and other local agencies.

Reaching Common Goals

AOK Early Childhood Networks help communities ensure that:

- * Babies are born healthy
- * Children maintain physical and emotional health
- * Children enter school ready to learn
- * Families know about community resources and are connected to the services they need

If these goals speak to your concerns for young children and their families in your community, AOK Early Childhood Networks want to hear from you! See the back panel of this brochure to contact your network or our statewide office.

AOK NETWORKS IN ACTION

Early Screening for All Young Children

To meet children's needs as early as possible, the Will County AOK Network stresses the importance of early childhood developmental screenings. By offering screenings at schools, community fairs and social service and health agencies, network partners are working to make sure that every child aged 0–3 gets the care and resources he or she needs—and sending the message that screenings are for all children.

The Family Yellow Pages

Before 2000, when the Tazewell County AOK Network began publishing the annual Family Yellow Pages, parents could spend all day searching for information or services. Now community resources are at their fingertips. Distributed at developmental screenings, child care centers and preschools, physician's offices and partner agencies throughout the county, this pocket-sized resource guide provides information on crisis support, therapeutic services, adult education, housing, libraries, social service agencies and recreational opportunities for the entire family. An invaluable tool for families and agencies, the Yellow Pages has also become what people in Tazewell County think of when they hear "AOK."

Seamless Service for a Changing Community

As development and gentrification changed Chicago's west side, social service agencies were scrambling to keep up. The Greater Westside of Chicago AOK Network stepped in with a forum called Let's Communicate, bringing together over 50 agencies in education, advocacy, prevention, health, social, and child protective services. Now the agencies know each other's strengths and how they fit together, and they're working to bring seamless service to families in their community.

“Communities build what they dream.”

—Theresa Heaton, Kane County AOK Network