

**CASE
STUDY**

**NPC Lowers Financial Barriers
to High-Quality Pre-K**

When the only pre-K in the Blair County town of Claysburg closed its doors, NPC helped lead a community drive to fill the gap.

The Need: In the formative prekindergarten years, children need high-quality experiences that lay the foundation for lifetimes of learning and development. And yet, 106,000 eligible 3- and 4-year-olds in Pennsylvania don't have access to high-quality, publicly funded prekindergarten.

The Business Investment: NPC, a third-generation family business managing time-sensitive print and mail programs for the government and private sector. Its support for local causes and economic development is rooted in the belief that strong communities make business stronger, and strong businesses strengthen communities.



The Innovation: In the town of Claysburg, population 1,196, the per capita income of \$24,320 is about two-thirds the statewide average. Most employment in rural Blair County comes from healthcare, education, and government. When Claysburg's sole preschool closed, NPC joined an innovative partnership created with the Claysburg-Kimmel Education Foundation and The Learning Lamp, a high-quality early learning provider, to create a solution that accommodates the economic needs of local families.



How It's Done: The Learning Lamp established full-day preschool for 4- and 5-year-olds, conveniently located in Claysburg-Kimmel Elementary School. Families earning less than \$100,000 annually enroll their children for free. To assure quality learning, the program's teachers are highly qualified. The specially designed, research-based curriculum develops children's oral language and early literacy skills, with time to explore science, social studies, math, writing, and music.



How It's Funded: NPC stepped up to support the affordability piece, contributing toward the scholarships that allow qualified families to enroll their children tuition-free.



The Impact: Early childhood education costs vary by type and quality, but one 2019 study from The Pennsylvania Key determined that the median cost families pay is \$290 per week per child. Higher-quality programs with STAR 3 and 4 designations on Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS quality rankings generally cost more. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that parents should pay no more than 10 percent of income on child care. In a town such as Claysburg, access to high-quality, free or affordable preschool prepares young children for kindergarten while providing reliable care that helps parents hold down self-sustaining jobs. Community Hospital President & CEO Kendra Aucker, "it's 'What can we do as employers to help the region have better child care but also address some of the challenges we have in keeping a workforce and retaining and recruiting a workforce?' I think some of our success could come in developing a more robust child care program."

Get Involved: Most Pennsylvania employers want to help working families address child care needs, but few realize that resources are available to help. The Case Studies in Caring series explores award-winning business initiatives created with available resources and are custom-crafted to meet local child care needs for communities and workforces. To learn how your business can join the movement to invest in caring, contact the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission at info@paearyllearning.com and find an online toolkit for businesses to support working families and child care at [Investments in Caring PA, www.investmentsincaringpa.com](http://InvestmentsinCaringPA.com).