



CASE
STUDY

Benco Dental, Supporting Working Families and High-Quality Pre-K

It began years ago when a Benco Dental managing director served on the Luzerne County Head Start board, demonstrating his commitment to giving young children a strong start in life. He passed on his servant leadership to other company officials, and one now serves as the Head Start board president. Benco Dental's commitment to community begins with its associates, who find supports that help them meet their primary responsibilities as family caregivers.

The Need: In the formative pre-kindergarten 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 Innovators: Based in Pittston, Luzerne County, Benco Dental is the nation's largest independently owned dental distributor. The third-generation family business believes in doing well by doing good, with a deep devotion to the dental health and overall well-being of the community and the families it serves and employs. The company's family-friendly policies include flexible schedules, generous maternity and paternity leave, a new mothers' dedicated lactation room for staff and customers, and financial assistance for adoption support. Continuous feedback opportunities allow the company to craft its policies and community involvement to the needs and passions of its associates.



The Innovation: Benco Dental is a longtime partner with Luzerne County Head Start, taking a comprehensive approach to the educational, health, and family needs of children enrolled in the high-quality early learning program.



How It's Done: Through the Benco Family Foundation, support for Head Start includes donating more than 3,000 toothbrushes, raising funds through at-work events, providing volunteers, and "adopting" two local classrooms. The foundation also celebrates Head Start success stories with an annual \$2,000, merit-based scholarship for an alumna heading to college. On a national level, Benco Dental supports Head Start by participating in the PRO-SYS® Buy One, Give One toothbrush-donation program.



How It's Funded: The Benco Family Foundation, founded in 2005, supports oral health solutions and other causes locally and globally by partnering with organizations that are innovative, sustainable, measurable, and impactful.



The Impact: In its 2020-21 annual report, Luzerne County Head Start reported significant gains in the social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics skills of its 3- and 4-year-olds. Nearly all enrollees had health insurance and medical and dental homes, preparing children for lifetimes of good health. Nationally, long-term impact studies show that Head Start enrollment improves health outcomes and high school completion rates. Internally, making a difference in the community helps Benco Dental attract and retain a devoted workforce. "I think some of our success could come in developing a more robust child care program."

Get Involved: Did you know most Pennsylvania employers are interested in helping working families address child care needs, but 70 percent don't know about available resources? The Case Studies in Caring series explores award-winning business initiatives created with available resources and that are custom-crafted to meet local child care needs in their 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.