



EHCA@Home

Special Edition

100th Anniversary Year

Erie Homes for Children and Adults

assisting people with disabilities to live rich & fulfilling lives

Erie Homes for Children and Adults

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January is National Birth Defects Prevention Awareness Month



It might be easy to see the correlation between birth defects and an agency dedicated to serving people with developmental disabilities, but we wanted to let you know that we are more than an intervention organization. We are successfully working with high risk populations to prevent premature births and birth defects, too. We call it [Project First Step](#).

Did you know 1 in every 33 babies is born with a birth defect?*

Did you know birth defects cause 1 in 5 infant deaths?*

And did you know most birth defects affect the baby's heart?*

This January, we are raising awareness of birth defects, and are recommending you visit additional resources, such as the [National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities](#) and the [March of Dimes](#), a leading nonprofit fighting premature birth and birth defects to learn more.

Because 70% of birth defects can be prevented or cured,** we are working hard to make a difference.

In 2000, Project First Step began offering doula services to moms who have disabilities, are below the poverty level, and who are at high risk of delivering a premature baby or a baby with a birth defect. In 2011, the service affiliated with [Healthy Families America \(HFA\)](#), a national initiative of Prevent Child Abuse America, and changed the services offered to "enhanced family and doula services," providing more benefits to the families served. As the first program in Pennsylvania to adopt this model, we are excited to bring the curriculum to the Erie community.

Following a study performed by Gannon University's Dr. Sara Lichtenwalter that credited Project First Step for its successful birth outcomes, this alliance only strengthens the programming being done at EHCA to promote healthy families and to deliver healthy babies.

[[Read more...](#)]

*Statistics from CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

**Statistic from March of Dimes

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