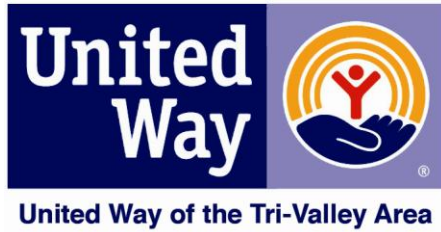


## Partner Profiles



Lisa Park Laflin, Executive Director

*Editor's Note: This is the twenty second in a series of articles that demonstrates the community impact of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area.*

Children are constantly learning, right from birth. Their early years are the foundation for growth and development, and what they learn during those years depends on the experiences they have each and every day. The Franklin County Children's Task Force (FCCTF) and the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area (UWTVA) are working collaboratively to connect communities to effectively serve young children. In late May, the two organizations jointly convened *Raising Happy and Healthy Children: Early Childhood Initiatives in Greater Franklin County*. This meeting looked at ways to foster conditions for children and families to achieve optimal health. Health is more than access to medical care, it includes social, economic, and environmental contexts as well.

At this meeting, Jan Clarkin from the Maine Children's Trust introduced the state's efforts to advance early childhood initiatives. She distributed a report entitled *Invest Early in Maine* which set goals under specific areas, called domains. These domains include family, health, early care and education, community, and state. This report is available at [www.maine-eccs.org](http://www.maine-eccs.org).

Knowing that navigating the community when you need help can be difficult— whether it be for a child with special needs, or access to parent education, UWTVA and FCCTF used this same domain structure to begin to categorize local resources and look at gaps that might exist in our community. A list will be available in the near future, as will a plan for addressing the challenges we face.

If you are interested in participating in future discussion, join the United Way and the Children's Task Force July 22, 2009 at 7:30 am at the Homestead Restaurant, Farmington. RSVP to Janice Crandall at 778-6960. Also, check out a terrific website for parenting tips and ways to engage a community in raising happy and healthy children: [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

*For more information on how to give, advocate, or volunteer in your community, visit [www.uwtva.org](http://www.uwtva.org), call 778-5048 or e-mail [info@uwtva.org](mailto:info@uwtva.org).*