



What is a Maryland Judy Center?

The Judith P. Hoyer Center Early Learning Hubs, also known as “Judy Centers,” benefit everyone in Maryland by improving the quality of life for families. Through a dedicated staff of early learning professionals, they help prepare children age birth through kindergarten for school readiness. Located at Title I schools in every Maryland county, Judy Centers play an important role in the communities they serve.

Although each location is uniquely positioned to serve its individual community, all of Maryland’s Judy Centers employ the two-generational approach, which focuses on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of children, parents and families. Ensuring that children are ready for kindergarten requires a coordinated effort among parents, providers, teachers, school districts, local and state government, non-profits, business, and other community partners.

History

The first Judith P. Hoyer Family Learning Center, which began operations in Prince George’s County, served as the model for the rest of the state to follow. Dedicated to the needs of low income families in the local elementary school catchment area, this first Judy Center (although not named as such until after her death) quickly demonstrated the true value of such coordination.

Maryland’s legislature recognized the Judy Hoyer model and utilized funding to expand across the state. The Judy Hoyer model “Judy Centers” began offering comprehensive, integrated, full day and full-year early care and education services. The year 2001, the first year of operation, saw the establishment of thirteen Judy Centers in Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George’s, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s and Washington counties, and Baltimore City. The following year, eleven more centers were funded in Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Garrett, Howard, Montgomery, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester counties, and Baltimore City. The number of locations remained unchanged until 2011 when the Judy Center in Anne Arundel County and a third one in Baltimore City opened.

In FY2013, the RTT-ELC Grant provided funding for a second Judy Center in Prince George's County and a fourth site in Baltimore City. FY2014 resulted in the growth of more Judy Centers through diverse funding streams. First, a Judy Center in Harford County opened with state funding. Secondly, through a collaboration of the Baltimore Community Foundation, Baltimore City Public Schools and the MSDE, the first Judy Center funded by a public-private partnership in Baltimore City was established. Also of note, in FY2014, the passage of the Maryland Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014 (Senate Bill 332) ensured the addition of three more Judy Centers in FY2015 – an additional one in both Garrett and Caroline counties and a first-time Judy Center in Somerset County. This expansion completed the State's mission to have at least one Judy Center in each of the twenty-four jurisdictions. Also in FY2015, the public-private partnership with the Baltimore Community Foundation resulted in two more Judy Centers in Baltimore City. Since then, the Baltimore Community Foundation has helped to fund six additional Judy Centers in Baltimore.

Today there are 60 Judy Center sites throughout Maryland.

Community Partnerships

Most of the work of the Judy Centers is accomplished through its partnerships. The partnerships reflect Judy Hoyer's vision of how professionals collaborate to deliver a wide spectrum of early childhood education programs and family support services for children and families. Judy Centers are required to include the following in their partnership:

- public kindergarten and prekindergarten
- Early Intervention and preschool special education programs in the school catchment area,
- Head Start/Early Head Start programs in the school catchment area, and
- licensed/registered and accredited child care providers, including faith-based child care, family child care, and center-based child care programs

The number of partners varies across Judy Centers depending upon population density and the number of agencies, organizations and businesses available in the area. Judy Centers have a variety of partners that allow them to meet the needs of families in unique and creative ways. Partnerships may include thirty or more agencies and organizations and with no set limit for participation per organization, it is not unusual to see large numbers of participants representing different departments within an organization, involved with Judy Centers. Partnership meetings occur frequently to accomplish the work as quickly and as effectively as possible. Each partner plays a key role in decision-making and goal setting.

For more information on Maryland Judy Centers, please visit:

[Maryland Judy Centers](#) or contact Amy Beal at amy.beal@maryland.gov or 410-767-0675 for assistance