

Our Founders: The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine

The Early Childhood Resource Center is a proud ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System. The Health System was established to carry out the ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine.

The Sisters have a long history of work with babies, children, and families.

In fact, the Sisters founded **St. Ann Hospital and Infant Home** in 1873, followed by the **DePaul Infant Home**. In 1922, the Sisters opened **St. Augustine Academy** in Lakewood, which taught elementary students for eight decades and continues as Lakewood Catholic Academy.

And in 1925, the Sisters opened **Parmadale Children's Village**, which was the nation's first cottage plan home for dependent children.



Sisters with the children at DePaul Infant Home (top) and Parmadale Children's Village (bottom).

The Sisters' efforts continue today with work that includes:

- The **Catholic Worker Community of Akron**, which has served the community for more than two decades. The Community extends hospitality to women and children, with a heavy emphasis on serving immigrants, in cooperation with other grassroots groups in the neighborhood and with strong support from the community at large.
- **Interfaith Wellness Ministry**, which was founded in 1977 by Sister Loretta Spotila, promotes healthy living in Estill County, Kentucky by providing access to medical care, healthy food, mental health resources, and means for healthy living at home, work, and school.

Other Health System ministries are bringing the mission to life in Cleveland, Ohio and in South Carolina:

- Through its **Central Promise Neighborhood Initiative**, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland transforms the educational and developmental outcomes of children in an environment and culture where families feel supported, so their children can achieve academic, and ultimately, career success. In close collaboration with numerous community partners, the initiative is making a difference by focusing on five areas: Quality Early Learning, Family Partners, Successful Student Transitions, Nurturing Community Leaders, and Neighborhood Safety and Stability.
- **Healthy Learners** collaborates with communities, schools, health care providers, and families in several South Carolina counties to remove health barriers to learning for students by providing screening, referral, and access to critical health care services.
- The **South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families** creates stronger, more successful families by helping fathers build the skills they need to be responsible and engaged, and by advocating for fathers and father-friendly policies at the state level and educating leaders and the public about the importance of fathers.



Sister Catherine Walsh with families at the Catholic Worker Community House, Sister Marian Durkin supports a family with love (top), and Sister Loretta Spotila with families at Interfaith Wellness.



SPARK children in Cleveland's Central Neighborhood.

Here at the Early Childhood Resource Center, the Sisters' legacy of love and service guides all of our work: whether we are helping parents strengthen their families, helping families get ready for kindergarten success, or helping educators educate better, the mission is always top of mind.