

# KINDERGARTEN CAMP 2015



Kylie Myers reads during the Kindergarten Camp held summer of 2015 in DeKalb County. All students in this camp received books to take home.

Kindergarten Readiness Camp is a collaboration between Indiana Association of United Ways, local United Ways and Funds, funders and many community partners. K-Camps provide an intensive session for incoming kindergarteners who are at risk of falling behind their peers.



Practicing letters in  
Tippecanoe County

## BACKGROUND

**Kindergarten Readiness Camps** are offered to incoming kindergarteners who are at risk of falling behind their kindergarten classmates. “At risk” is defined as little to no prior pre-K experience, free/reduced lunch eligibility and/or low assessment scores. The summer orientation program provides essential academic and social development skills so that children are ready to learn on the first day of school. While each camp varies based on local needs and school availability, camps are typically half-days, 4 weeks in duration and include 20-25 children, a kindergarten teacher and assistant. Camps include a planned curriculum and activities that practice skills needed for success in school.

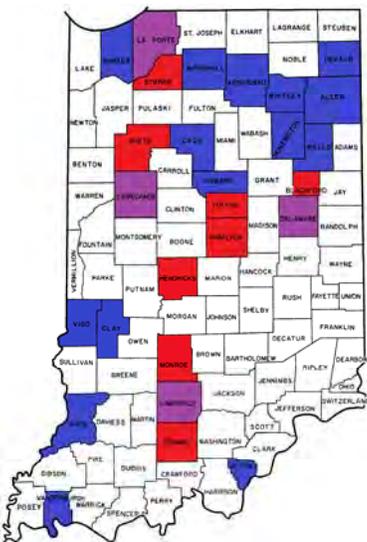
## CAMP COSTS AND SUPPORT

Kindergarten Readiness Camps grew out of the Kindergarten Countdown (KCD) program developed by United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI). K-Camps have been expanded through a collaboration between IU Health and Indiana Association of United Ways (IaUW) since 2011. For the last two years, with **grants from IU Health, IaUW and Lilly Endowment**, IaUW has been able to increase the reach to have a larger impact around the state. We continue to see ongoing need for K-Camps in spite of other new programming in quality early education.

A typical 4-week camp with 20-25 students costs **about \$16,500**, but out-of-pocket cash expenses can be as low as **\$6,000** if the school, organizations and businesses provide in-kind contributions. Typical expense breakdown includes (from highest to lowest costs): **teachers and assistants (34%), bus transportation (18%), staff coordination (18%), meals and snacks (12%), printing and consumables (6%), curriculum and assessments (5%), taxes, benefits and background checks (4%), and backpacks and t-shirts (3%)**. Most camps enjoy in-kind contributions from schools for use of the classroom, a portion of meals and bus transportation. Organizations and businesses most often support book and supply drives, backpacks, printing and consumables.



Green Valley Schools Campers  
in Floyd County



- All – supported by local cash and in-kind
- Red = supported by IU Health
- Purple – supported by IU Health and IaUW
- Blue = supported by IaUW grants

## CAMPS ACROSS INDIANA

With growing attention on the importance of kindergarten readiness as the first step for children to succeed in school, more counties are launching the Kindergarten Readiness Camp model. For summer 2015, **78 camps** were held in **27 counties**. IaUW and its members implement K-Camp as one component of a multi-prong strategy to increase kindergarten readiness.

**Twenty-seven counties** served by the camp model in 2015 included Allen, Blackford, Cass, Clay, DeKalb, Delaware, Floyd, Hamilton, Hendricks, Howard, Huntington, Knox, Kosciusko, LaPorte, Lawrence, Marshall, Monroe, Orange, Porter, Starke, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Vanderburgh, Vigo, Wells, White and Whitley.



“Beginnertenters”  
in Cass County

# SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

Local United Ways/United Funds, schools and communities value the strong outcomes from the Kindergarten Readiness Camp program. Below is an abbreviated summary of outcomes.

## Reached more at-risk children

In 2015, laUW's program registered over **1,400 campers** from over **twenty-seven counties** in **seventy-eight camp classrooms** in over **fifty schools**. Camp attendance sizes ranged from 12 to 25 students per classroom. Kindergarten Camp is reaching many children not served by the state-supported Child Care Development Fund subsidy, Early Education Matching Grants and 5-county pre-K pilot programs.



K-Camp in Blackford County



Small group activities led by an IU Health volunteer in Tippecanoe County

## Identified special needs

Because so many of the K-Campers have had no experience with quality early care and education, Kindergarten Camp sometimes is a first chance to observe a learning disability, speech, hearing or vision issue. Camp leaders were able to **identify students with special needs** before school starts and to request the appropriate assistance through the school administration and community organizations. In rural areas, early identification is critical for an administration to request appropriate school personnel and accommodations. These students will now be on track to start in the right classroom with appropriate accommodations on the first day of school.

## Engaged parents and community volunteers

**Parental engagement** has a direct relationship with student success. Camp leaders created opportunities to increase family engagement in their child's learning by sending home materials, hosting events and recruiting parent volunteers. Early family engagement is especially critical for parents and caregivers who may not have had positive experiences in their own lives.

**Volunteers from colleges, IU Health, retiree groups, faith communities and businesses** provided invaluable support in planning and conducting camp activities. Volunteers gained an appreciation for the educational and basic needs of students and their families, as well as the demands placed on teachers.



A firefighter visits campers of Adams Elementary in Allen County

## Promoted kindergarten readiness in the community

Kindergarten Camp provides an opportunity to promote the **importance of Kindergarten Readiness** through registration events and promotions in local schools, libraries, community organizations and in the media. K-Camp resulted in earned media in nearly every market touched by a camp. For example, Kindergarten Readiness was the subject of a Power of the Purse fundraiser in DeKalb County attended by hundreds of local women.

Camp leaders **increased partnerships** with businesses, community organizations and teachers to improve school readiness and success. Some camps hosted a fire fighter, police officer or community leader to come to class with a learning activity.



Porter County campers are visited by a live turtle

## Camps increased kindergarten readiness

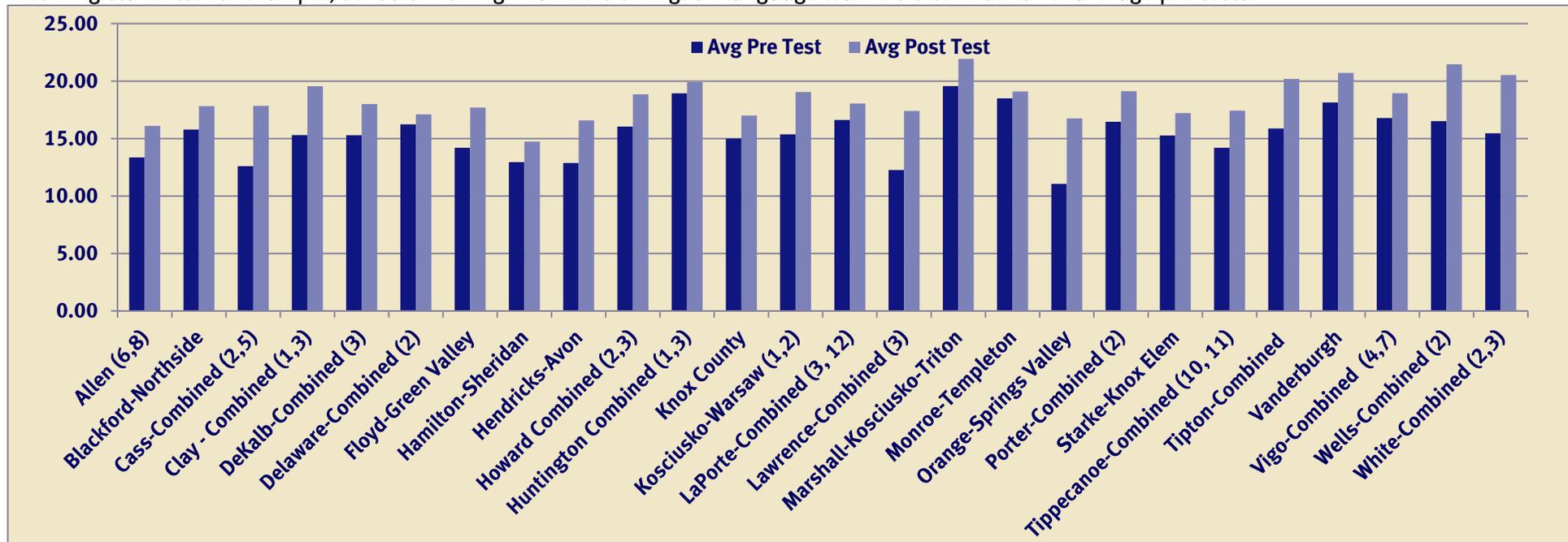
- Results from the *Get Ready to Read* pre- and post-tests showed that K-Campers had a **21% average increase in pre-literacy scores**. Average growth ranged from 2% to 57%. See chart below.
- Teacher and parent surveys and student portfolios demonstrated student achievement in **basic skills** (recognition of letters, numbers, colors), **social skills** (sharing, listening) and **school behaviors** (lining up, using the restroom, eating meals). Students, teachers and parents report that campers are more confident and excited about starting school.
- Camps included more children who may not speak English at home. Pre-literacy scores and teacher observations showed **some of the greatest gains by these English Language Learners**, building confidence and readiness for school success, as well as positive relationships with their families.



Letter and name recognition in Cass County

## ASSESSMENTS SHOW 21% GROWTH IN PRE-LITERACY

The chart below represents the average aggregated pre- and post-test scores on *Get Ready to Read* assessments by county<sup>1</sup>. Note that individual camp class pre-test averages ranged from a low of 10 in Lawrence County to a high of 18.5 in Monroe County. Average post-test scores ranged from a low of 14 in Lawrence County to a high of 23 in Wells County. Counties with multiple schools showed wide variance, demonstrating the diversity of needs of incoming students. For example, schools with high numbers of English-language learners often had lower average pre-tests.



<sup>1</sup> The *Get Ready to Read* (GTR) assessment by Pearson Education measures **pre-literacy readiness** only. This tool was selected because it may be administered by trained volunteers as a pre-test and post-test. It does not measure social, emotional or behavioral outcomes. The administration of the GTR assessment varied among sites—on the days of the camp, the number of camp days between pre-and post-tests, who administered the test and the level of distraction for children being assessed.

# LEARNINGS AND BEST PRACTICES

Kindergarten Readiness Camp is an **effective, popular and quality project** for Indiana’s United Ways/Funds of all sizes. The program has **measurable outcomes** and **strengthens relationships** with schools and some nontraditional partners. Each year brings new challenges, experiences and learnings, and laUW provides multiple opportunities for Camp leaders to share information and best practices with each other.

## Consistency of the K-Camp intervention drives outcomes

Results show that the program works best when local implementers follow the **K-Camp model**, which includes a 4-week, half-day program, certified teacher(s), aide(s), volunteers, action-based learning, parental and community engagement and targets children who are most at risk. *Balanced school calendars and snow make-up days have challenged K-Camps in scheduling the full four-weeks for maximum camper attendance. Some camps struggled to recruit and utilize volunteers effectively. Engagement is especially challenged in rural communities where families and volunteers live or work some distance from the school.*

The **same trained staff should do all assessments** to ensure consistency. *Get Ready To Read*, which is relatively inexpensive and easy-to-administer, is only one measure of pre-literacy. *Ideally, K-Camp could include a comprehensive assessment. Note that Indiana does not use a common kindergarten readiness assessment.*



Starke County campers practice colors and balance

## Quality programming is age-appropriate, evidence-based

High-quality education incorporates **action-based learning techniques**, because research shows the relationship between action-based learning techniques and improved academic learning and retention, as well as school behavior. *Effective use of action-based learning is often dependent upon the culture in the school.*

**Student portfolios** were developed in order to illustrate to the student, parents and teachers the skills and the progress of each student. *Kindergarten teachers commented how they appreciated the ability to know their incoming students, and parents appreciated the progress reports with tips for learning at home.*

## The non-educational needs of children are great

Camps provide deeper insight to local children and their needs.

- Some camps were able to discover **children with special needs** before school, which will allow them to *access accommodations for children with disabilities.*
- The **nutritional meals and snacks** provided at camp may be one of the *only food sources* that some children have in the summer. *One child asked if he could take food home for a hungry sibling. One camp set up a food pantry for children to fill their backpacks each Friday.*



Enjoying a nutritional lunch in Starke County



Campers, teachers and volunteers at Templeton in Monroe County

## Resource limitations force difficult choices

K-Camp leaders have relied on **in-kind contributions from schools**. *As school systems limit budgets for summer school and corresponding transportation, the direct cost of K-Camp increases and/or the K-Camp model is limited. Many rural and low-income families are not able to participate without transportation.*

Local United Ways are creative in their resource development to mobilize volunteers and in-kind resources. However, **demand outpaces capacity and resources to meet needs in most communities**. *Even if more grants enable more camps, there is inadequate staffing to coordinate and execute a quality program to meet the need for all children who score low on readiness assessments or who are otherwise at risk.*

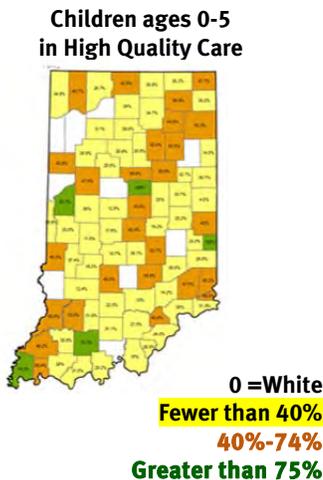
# WHY K-CAMPS ARE STILL NEEDED

When Indiana Association of United Ways began working in Kindergarten Camps, we believed that K-Camps would be a temporary program while simultaneously working on programmatic and policy changes at the local, state and national levels. While Indiana has made incredible progress in improving the number of high quality early education experiences, the need is still overwhelming. Improvements and investments by new State programs have not been equal throughout the state<sup>2</sup>.



Tippecanoe County campers select books

## The State Of Early Learning in Indiana



Indiana is home to more than 500,000 children below the age five. **Two-thirds of children** have all parents in the home who work. Parents have varying access to child care and early education in **unlicensed and licensed homes, registered ministries and licensed centers**. Depending upon age, family income, special needs and local capacity, a parent might be able to access **Head Start or programs for children with special needs**. Quality education experiences provide the foundation for lifelong learning, health, family and financial stability.

Indiana is a leader in its **Paths To Quality™** voluntary rating system with the number of early care programs increasing each year. In spite of the progress, **less than 40% of children ages birth to 5 are enrolled in a high quality child care or early education program**. In some counties, there are **no high quality programs**. Only five counties of Indiana's 92 counties have more than 75% of children enrolled in high quality programs.

## Recent Advances in Early Education

Funders, policy makers, business leaders and early education advocates joined forces to strengthen the early learning continuum, which starts with prenatal health and continues as 85% of the brain is developed by age 5. Within the last year, the State of Indiana has:

- Implemented **higher standards** for taxpayer-subsidized child care programs;
- Worked with the **Early Learning Advisory Committee** to track conditions;
- Revised the **reimbursement system for child care subsidies** to incentivize quality;
- Continued to fund **Early Education Matching Grants (EEMG)** targeted at providers of high-quality programs (outside of pre-K pilot counties); and
- Developed and partially funded the first **pre-K pilot program** within 5 counties (Allen, Jackson, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh).



2015  
Pre-K Pilot  
EEMG

## The Need Remains High--Especially in Certain Communities

High quality slots in child care and pre-kindergarten are very limited, or nonexistent in certain communities. While the number of Hoosier children in poverty has remained stable, the number of children in homes above poverty but below the free/reduced lunch income eligibility has increased. **Over 12,000 children remain on the wait list** for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy (Oct. 2015).

**An estimated half of Hoosier children arrive in kindergarten lacking basic academic and behavioral skills.** Kindergarten Camps are a sort of last-chance intervention to impact Kindergarten Readiness and to set the stage for positive educational experiences for students and their families.

laUW advocates for programs and policies that support quality early care and education. Help us keep the momentum and **join us by giving, advocating and volunteering** to improve education opportunities in Indiana.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics are from *ELAC Annual Report 2015*, [www.elacindiana.org](http://www.elacindiana.org), and FSSA reports, <http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/4083.htm>

# PARTNERSHIP: IAUW AND IU HEALTH



IU Health Arnett CEO AI Gatmaitan visits

IU Health has been a key partner with laUW since 2011. IU Health supports Kindergarten Camps in Blackford, Delaware, Hamilton, Hendricks, LaPorte, Lawrence, Monroe, Orange, Starke, Tippecanoe, Tipton and White counties.

IU Health provides far more than the **\$90,000 grant** to laUW and separate funding to United Way of Central Indiana for Hamilton and Hendricks counties. IU Health provides **books, backpacks and t-shirts**. Certain hospitals provided **nutritional snacks and meals, on-site volunteers** and in-house **printing and marketing**. IU Health’s in-kind contributions help to keep the out-of-pocket costs lower than in other communities without similar support.

For 2015, IU Health focused its attention on **20 camps in 12 counties**. IU Health increased its volunteer engagement to support **over 220 volunteer shifts**. Teachers sincerely appreciate that volunteers enable **hands-on instruction** and **personal attention** to children who need extra help. Parents and teachers both report increased readiness and confidence for the first days of kindergarten.

A special partnership between **IU Health and Barnes and Noble Bookstores** enabled IU Health to deliver over 8,000 age-appropriate, quality books to its supported camps. Teachers, parents and children appreciated the ability for children to start their own libraries at home with Level 1 Readers. Multiple copies of the same book allowed camps in Lawrence and Orange to read books together as a part of the camp classroom experience.



Thank you from Tippecanoe County campers for the books

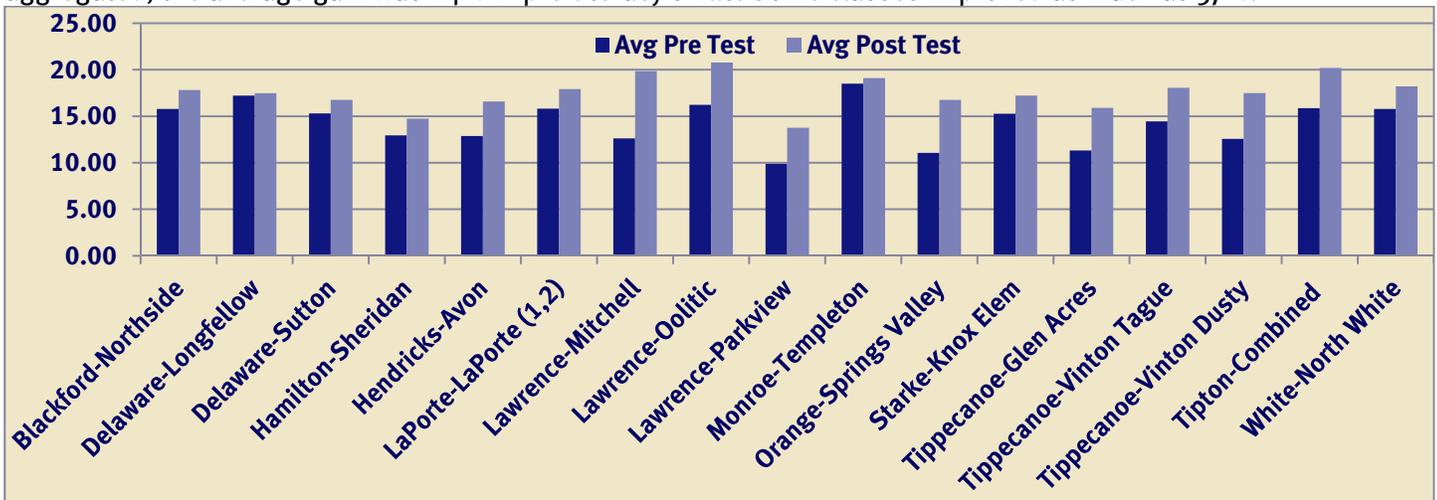


Campers in Lawrence County display their “oinky” artwork

Camps in targeted areas by IU Health experienced an average increase of **24% in *Get Ready To Read* pre-literacy skills**, as illustrated in the graph below. Please note the very low pre-test scores in many communities, especially in Lawrence, Orange and Tippecanoe. Some of the largest gains are made by the children entering camp with the lowest incoming skills. The one-on-one and small group attention helps place at-risk students on track with peers.

Peggy Shidaker, Curriculum Director at Knox Schools in Starke County, reports that children who participated in Kindergarten Camp continue to stay on track through third grade in contrast to at-risk students who did not participate.

The chart below represents the pre- and post-test averages by camp classroom supported by IU Health. While aggregated, the average gain was 24% in pre-literacy skills. Some classes improved as much as 57%.



# THE NEED FOR K-CAMPS IN IU HEALTH COMMUNITIES REMAINS HIGH

The need for K-Camps in most IU Health communities remains strong, as illustrated by the graph below. The color gradation reflects *highest need with darkest red*.

County	IUH campers of total campers in 2015 <sup>1</sup>	Total # of Kindergarteners 2014-2015 <sup>2</sup>	# below 185% of FPL <sup>3</sup>	# of children in Indiana Preschool Initiatives 2014-2015 <sup>4</sup>	# children ages 0-5 in county <sup>5</sup>	% of children 0-5 enrolled in any program	% of programs that are high quality <sup>6</sup>	% enrolled children 0-5 who are in high quality programs <sup>7</sup>
Blackford	34 of 34	143	59.6%	0	762	8%	25.0%	23.0%
Delaware	25 of 47	1,203	52.8%	42	7,272	26%	19.6%	30.7%
Hamilton	20 of 20	4,108	14.8%	0	26,291	23%	38.2%	47.9%
Hendricks	24 of 24	2,095	24.1%	0	11,856	27%	15.3%	18.1%
LaPorte	30 of 210	1,367	55.4%	10	7,747	18%	18.8%	22.7%
Lawrence	48 of 48	533	49.3%	0	3,103	26%	13.0%	18.8%
Monroe	17 of 17	1,043	42.1%	22	7,580	32%	32.5%	40.9%
Orange	19 of 19	239	59.3%	0	1,283	22%	5.0%	26.7%
Starke	20 of 20	282	63.2%	0	1,598	4%	0.0%	0.0%
Tippecanoe	72 of 261	2,001	46.7%	10	12,725	24%	25.2%	41.8%
Tipton	17 of 17	156	26.4%	0	915	12%	33.3%	75.5%
White	20 of 59	317	46.3%	0	1,800	17%	19.0%	22.7%

Notes about the data above:

- For comparison with the need, we show the number of children who started camps sponsored by IU Health of the total number of K-Campers in the county.
- We show the total number of Kindergarteners to illustrate the impact of the camps.
- 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is the threshold for free and reduced lunch, as well as textbook subsidies. **Only three of IUH's 12 K-Camp communities has fewer than 40% of the students qualifying for assistance.** Our recent *ALICE report* ([www.iau.org/alice](http://www.iau.org/alice)) shows that counties such as Hamilton and Hendricks have families earning above poverty but below the cost of living, putting quality early education out of reach for many parents.
- Indiana's preschool initiatives include the 5-county pre-k pilot (only Marion of counties where IUH has a presence) and the Early Education Matching Grant (EEMG) program, which provides matching grants to eligible high-quality programs. In the last year, Indiana's preschool initiatives have enrolled only 84 children total in 4 of IUH's K-Camp communities. **Fully 8 of 12 remain untouched by new preschool programs.**
- We show the total number of children ages birth to 5 to illustrate the scale and future need, especially in contrast to the small percentage of children enrolled in quality programs.
- Several counties in IUH K-Camp footprint have no or few options for quality early care and education.**
- Of the children enrolled in programs, only 1 county in the IUH footprint (Tipton) has the majority of its *enrolled children* in quality programs, recognizing that only 17% are enrolled in any program.



IU Health volunteer from LaPorte County helps make masks



Indiana University Health

Indiana Association of United Ways  
www.iau.org

