



CASE STUDY

Private Industry Council
of Westmoreland/Fayette

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Implementing intentional technology solutions.

How much more could technology do for kids in a PreK classroom? Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. (PIC) wanted to raise the bar and find out.

The organization, which serves more than 1,200 children in early learning centers, first began its push to get more technology when they moved their Fayette County office to a new facility.

They had been using traditional computers and iPads and piloted some Android apps, but according to PIC's Vice President of Early Childhood Education, Tonya Pierce-Heider, "iPads were being used to occupy the kids but not necessarily for learning. We just felt that it wasn't working."

That changed when PIC partnered with Hatch Early Learning to implement intentional technology solutions in their preschool classrooms, although there were some doubters at first.



FOUNDED

1984

WEBSITE

www.privateindustrycouncil.com

WHO THEY ARE

PIC assists youth, adults, dislocated workers, and the economically disadvantaged in reaching their educational goals, supporting their family growth, and obtaining training and employment.

MISSION

Building tomorrow's workforce in southwestern Pennsylvania through early childhood development, employment and training, education, and business services.



"With new software there is always a fear, especially with our 'old-school' instructors, that the software is trying to replace the teacher.

But, honestly, it has seen huge success among a lot of our teachers."

Collin Beattie

Instructional Technology Supervisor

The difference that the right tool can make in the classroom.

According to Pierce-Heider, she was sold on Hatch Early Learning technology because of its “focus on school readiness goals and academics for children.” She said she felt “it was more purposeful, more planned. There was a hierarchy for learning already built into it. It was a one stop shop where all that educational research was already done for you.” She also liked the way the Hatch technology links directly with Teaching Strategies GOLD® to automatically upload the documentation required for assessment.



The increase in documentation collected was eye-opening.

“Overall it was at least 100% more because a lot of teachers were not using Teaching Strategies GOLD® for documentation - they were still doing it by hand” Pierce-Heider said.

“The ones who were already using GOLD® were the teachers who really started using the Hatch tablets because they knew what it could do for them.” In fact, “When Teaching Strategies came to do training, the teachers who had been using Hatch showed how much documentation that had been collected and it was a big ‘A-ha!’ moment for the other teachers.”

Brenda Cousins is one of the PIC teachers who experienced that ‘A-ha!’ moment. When she was asked how soon she saw improvements in the number of documents collected, she said, “Almost instantly! After the first week we couldn’t believe how much documentation was in there. I want to say over 500 pieces of documentation in GOLD®—so much that it was crazy. **My mind was blown - I couldn’t believe it!”**

Having Hatch automatically sync up with Teaching Strategies GOLD® means teachers can spend more time focusing on their students. Some use the extra hours to write lesson plans or work with students in small groups. Others, including PIC teacher Mary Cronin, say the extra time lets her do things like make circle time more enjoyable and have more dance parties for gross motor skill development.

Teachers love Hatch because it reduces paperwork, gives them faster insights into kids' challenges, and helps them have more productive conversations with parents.

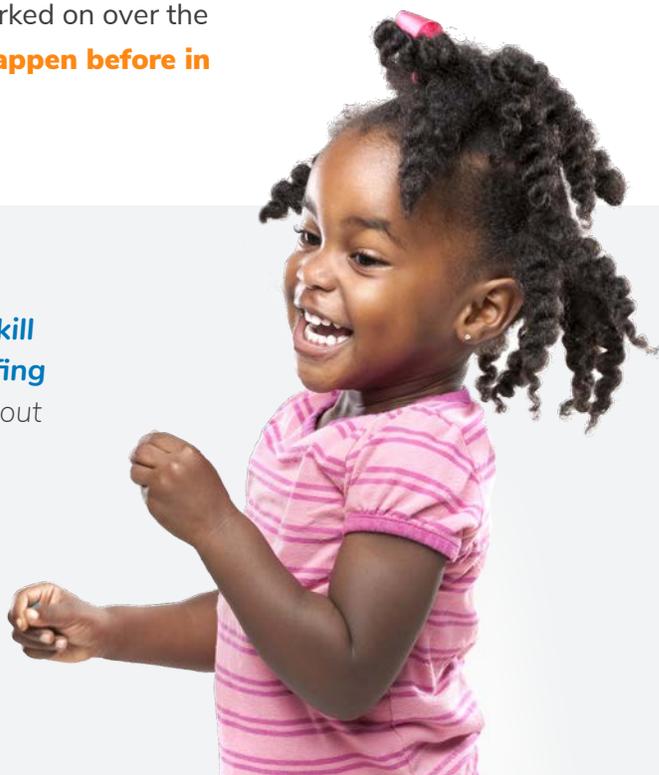
Hatch Insights helped teachers see where students were, identify trouble areas, and track their progress over time. PIC teacher April Shuman pointed out that “The reporting would tell us exactly what the student was having problems with so that we could create specific activities around those things.” And Hatch includes classroom activity suggestions that target learning speed bumps.

PIC teacher Kaytee Cumberland was pleased with the job Hatch did leveling her kids in GOLD®. “If I think a student is borderline but Hatch shows they have mastered a skill then I know it is accurate.” *That kind of confidence keeps teachers from second guessing themselves and makes sure kids aren't held back or pushed forward before they are ready.*

Another byproduct of the technology was the positive impact that Hatch had on students beyond the classroom. According to Cousins, “The parent-teacher report is the best thing. It's color coded and easy to understand. More important, the report is for their child and gives precise recommendations. And the parents do it! Out of the 20 families I have, probably 18 would tell me what they worked on over the weekend with their kid. **I've never had that happen before in all my years of teaching.**”

“This is my 15th year and I still worry about assessment and my bias. **Hatch assesses a skill multiple times, so it rules out any bias, bluffing or the bad day effects.** I'm more confident about who I put in small groups.”

Laura Rockwell
PIC Teacher





The results speak for themselves.

“When we started using Hatch, I saw improvements in literacy within the first two months,” said PIC Teacher Kaytee Cumberland. “Kids’ vocabulary changed with game play. I had one little boy who didn’t know the difference between a pancake and a waffle who started talking about getting ‘artifacts’ from the game. That’s a word that he wouldn’t have learned anywhere else.”

Christine Clowes recounted a success story about a little girl, saying: “This past year was her second year with me. She was grasping letter identification and sounds but after we got the Hatch technology her alphabet knowledge was dramatically improved and the sounds for the letters also. She was starting to put some of the letters together to make her own words - they weren’t spelled correctly but she was doing it. She doesn’t have support at home, so to see her doing this made me so proud of her.”

And then there was one of Laura Rockwell’s students: “This year he knew his letters and numbers, but he’s very quiet. He didn’t want to participate in circle time or dancing. He was very introverted. When I first did his documentation he was below level because he wouldn’t respond to questions - he would just shut down. When we got Hatch he finished everything 2 days before the last day of school. He went through quickly - knew the letters, numbers, shapes, sorting, sight words - he is way beyond what he needs to know for kindergarten. Without Hatch I probably wouldn’t have known that. He was afraid of getting things wrong which is why he wouldn’t respond verbally. By the end of the year he was much more confident because he was building his skills and getting positive feedback and achievement and was able to verbally answer questions. He was so excited by what he was doing on Hatch that he would forget his shyness and tell people about his accomplishments or what he discovered. It was nice to see him come out of his shell.”

PIC is committed to using Hatch Technology in the future.

“It has been fabulous working with Hatch,” said Pierce-Heider. “There have been some challenges. We’re a large organization and Hatch was always open to set up calls to talk and walk through them to take it back to their technology department to see if problems could be solved.

“They are definitely forward-thinkers,” said Pierce-Heider. “They are a company looking ahead to the future of technology and there will always be improvements. That is the type of program we are, and our experience is that Hatch wants to be the best of the best when it comes to technology. Our goal is that as iPads become outdated, we will replace them with Hatch technology.”

*“I had a child who needed some extra help and **he gravitated toward the Hatch technology and really improved once he started using it.** It was the thing he needed to get over the hump and be kindergarten ready.”*

Alaina Milnes, PIC Teacher



Early learning programs trust Hatch to provide effective and appropriate technology for their classrooms. Contact Hatch today and start writing your very own success story.

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