

Investing in a brighter future for Pennsylvania through quality early education

Whether you define success for Pennsylvania as a strong economy, effective schools, reduced crime, or thriving communities, early education is key. Research shows that early education:

- Provides more regional economic stimulus than any other sectorⁱ;
- Is important to community growth, sustainability and diversity as working families need access to quality, reliable educationⁱⁱ;
- Promotes healthy brain development in the critical first five years;
- Helps children, especially those at risk for school failure, build early language, math and social skills to enter school ready to learn; and
- Provides long-term benefits that a child carries throughout his/her life, making them more likely to graduate high school, attend college, have higher earnings and own a home.

Pennsylvania's early education continuum is:

Providing quality early learning opportunities for children throughout Pennsylvania that work well together

Pennsylvania's early education programs are based on quality standards that align with each other, through kindergarten and beyond.

- All programs use the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards to guide curriculum, child observation and assessment.
- Teachers and directors can follow the Early Childhood Career Lattice and get help to earn professional credentials and college degrees to increase their skills and remain in the field for a lifetime.

Establishing strong accountability across the system

Pennsylvania has a comprehensive accountability system to ensure that quality expectations are met and public funds are used appropriately.

- Regular reporting on teacher qualifications, classroom demographics, and financial expenditures required; onsite review of policies and practices for most programs.
- Independent assessors use the nationally-recognized Environment Rating Scales to assess classroom quality and teacher interaction.
- Pennsylvania's Early Learning Network collects information of children's participation in early childhood programs and their developmental progress to help teachers better guide children's growth and help the state evaluate program effectiveness.

Supporting leadership in local communities

As parents demand more quality early learning opportunities, local communities need to share information on why quality early education is important and what opportunities are available.

- Pennsylvania's Early Learning Council and advisory committees provide feedback and guidance on Pennsylvania's policies and share information through their leadership networks.
- Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups bring together early education programs, schools, and other organizations serving children to educate their communities on early learning opportunities.



Pennsylvania's early education continuum is working for children and families:

Since 2003, classroom quality scores on the **Environment Rating Scale** have continued to rise, showing a positive trend of increasing quality in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Keystone STARS and Head Start classrooms.

Nearly every child (99 percent) showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and social skills after attending **Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts** in 2008-2009.

More families accessing **Child Care Works** subsidy are choosing regulated care than ever before, with 70% of children living in families receiving TANF child care assistance using regulated child care in 2008-2009, a 38% increase since 2006.

Nearly one-third of child care programs in **Keystone STARS** moved up at least one STAR level in 2008-2009. The number of STAR 3 and 4 high quality programs increased by 30% as well.

Child Care Certification | Child Care Works | Children's Trust Fund | Early Intervention | Full-Day Kindergarten | Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program | Keystone STARS | Parent-Child Home Program | Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts | Nurse-Family Partnership

Not enough children who can benefit have access to quality early education programs

According to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning's (OCDEL) 2008-2009 Program Reach and Risk Report, young children in 76% of Pennsylvania's counties (and 89% of its largest cities) are at moderate-high to high risk of school failure. Every community has children affected by risk factors for school failure. For example, each county has at least 15% of its children under age five living in low-income families. **Yet only about one-third (36%) of young children have access to publicly-funded quality early education programs.**

Children served in Select Early Childhood Programs in FY 2002-2003, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 (est.):

Program	FY 02-03	FY 09-10 ¹	FY 10-11 ¹	Program	FY 02-03	FY 09-10 ¹	FY 10-11 ¹
Class Size Reduction (K-3rd Grade)	Did not exist	16,705 ²	16,705 ²	Head Start			
Child Care Works				Total Head Start in PA	30,986	35,311 ²	35,311 ²
TANF	33,939	34,743	37,012	Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program	Did not exist	5,743 ²	5,626 ¹
Former TANF	20,000	33,223	32,746	Keystone STARS			
Low Income	45,908	59,825	64,614	Estimated Children in Keystone STARS	45,745	177,530	177,530
TOTAL (monthly average)	99,847	127,791	134,372	Number of Providers in Keystone STARS	898	4,464	4,464
Early Intervention				Nurse-Family Partnership	3,092	4,247	4,247 ²
Birth to 3 Program	22,020	33,212	34,384	Pre-K			
3 to 5 Program	33,726	46,052	47,312	School Based Pre-K and K4	2,684	9,256	14,675
Full Day Kindergarten	42,015	80,454	80,454	PA Pre-K Counts	Did not exist	11,800	11,732 ¹
1 Fiscal Year End Goal or Projection		2 Projection based on Previous FY Program					

As our economy continues to rebound, Pennsylvania recognizes the vital importance of providing supports to our young children and families (especially to our most vulnerable) while being fiscally responsible.

In 2010-2011, Pennsylvania will:

- Strive for higher quality and increased access** by implementing Keystone Babies, a quality initiative for at-risk infants and toddlers; and develop a Director's Toolkit for Continuous Quality Improvement.
- Refine accountability and document positive outcomes for children** by incorporating additional programs into the Early Learning Network.
- Support local leadership** by implementing the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) Early Childhood Leadership Program.

The Governor's proposed budget for early education for 2010-2011 will:

Serve additional families in:

- Early Intervention** – Expanding to reach 81,696 children (34,384 infants and toddlers and 47,312 preschoolers) by adding 1,172 infants and toddlers and 1,229 preschoolers.

Sustain progress in:

- Child Care Works Subsidized Child Care Program** – Sustaining to reach approximately 134,400 children (monthly average).
- Keystone STARS** – Sustaining higher quality early learning opportunities for over 177,000 children and making it possible for programs to achieve higher STAR levels.
- Nurse-Family Partnership** – Sustaining to reach more than 4,200 children and families.
- Parent-Child Home Program** – Sustaining to reach approximately 1,500 children and families.

Reduce services to children in:

- Head Start Supplemental** – Services to 117 children will be removed, which would lower the children served from 5,743 to approximately 5,626 children.
- Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts** – Services to 68 children will be removed, which would lower the children from 11,800 to approximately 11,732 children.

¹ Source: Zhilin Liu, Rosaria Ribeiro & Mildred Warner. "Comparing Child Care Multipliers in the Regional Economy: Analysis from 50 States," 2004

² Source: Planning for Family-Friendly Communities, American Planning Association, November/December 2008