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Fast Track Recommendations

1. Provide payments to child care providers serving families receiving subsidy to be used exclusively for recruitment of new staff and retention of existing staff. Payments would be calibrated based on program type/capacity of the child care program. This would address the current challenge of hiring and retaining staff, allowing more children to be served.

1



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Fast Track Recommendations

2. Eliminate copays for families receiving subsidy. Use ARP funds to reimburse child care providers for loss of copays. This would relieve families of a financial burden as they return to work post-pandemic and ensure providers receive stable payment.

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Fast Track Recommendations

3. Advertise the child care subsidy program, focusing on targeted geographic areas, to assist more families in getting back to work. Designate ARP funds to fund all child care subsidy slots so no family has to wait to receive services.

3



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4. Pay subsidized child care providers based on enrollment and not attendance beginning July 1, 2021 through 2024, consistent with proposed child care subsidy regulations. Retroactively pay subsidized child care providers who have suffered losses due to under-enrollment from September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Base payment on pre-pandemic enrollment and account for the difference between those losses and any pandemic payments made through federal stimulus funds. This would provide financial stability for child care providers while enrollment increases as parents return to work.

4



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5. Fund an additional 3,000 high-quality, contracted infant/toddler slots to help more families get back to work.

5



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6. Create a five-party workgroup that would convene within 60 days of the signing of the fiscal code, which would include the majority and minority Appropriations Committee Chairs in the House and Senate and a representative of the Governor's Executive Office. The working group will consider the remainder of the Start Strong PA field forum and survey recommendations as they determine how the remainder of funds will be spent.

6



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We are urging state lawmakers to reach consensus on child care investments that enable parents to get back to work and children to benefit from the high-quality care we know prepares them for school and a lifetime of success.

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The child care sector is reeling and needs an immediate infusion of resources to re-open and rebound. Programs need help recruiting and retaining staff so that working families can enroll their children.

8



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These specific recommendations address the child care crisis by:

- Helping families afford and access care
- Helping providers stabilize their income.
- Helping providers strengthen their program by filling open staffing positions and keeping them from leaving the field.