

American Rescue Plan Child Care Provider and Family Forum Adams and York Counties

Thursday, April 29, 2021

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

19 Participants

Link to recording

<https://vimeo.com/552539315>

Panelists

Ashley Boone, Parent and Assistant Children & Youth Director, YWCA Gettysburg
Ashley Dreschler, Parent and Assistant Director, St James Lutheran Child Early Learning Center
David Gonzalez, Manager, Advocacy, York County Economic Alliance
Dr. Irene Hudson, Early Learning Center Director, Crispus Attucks York
Ruby Martin, Chief Child & Youth Programs Officer, YWCA York
Ruth Robbins, Chief Program Officer, Community Progress Council (York)
Theresa Rodgers, Child Enrichment Program Administrative Officer, YWCA Gettysburg
Suzan Seibel-Willard, Director, St James Lutheran Church Early Learning Center

Media clip

https://www.gettysburgtimes.com/news/local/article_3b6bc963-0aac-5851-9da0-36820316851f.html

Issues and Themes

How should American Rescue Plan funds be used to increase the share of children in high-quality programs and support families who need child care to return to work?

- Provide funds for basic operating costs, specifically staff wages and scholarships.
- Increase subsidy rates annually, not every 10 or 12 years.
- Increase Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) funding/staff/support. Support for lower ratios when children with special needs are enrolled in a program. Create ECMH support exclusive to early childhood birth – 5 in every community. Provide dedicated mental health services for ECE so that support staff aren't pulled out of child care and put into a "more pressing" school setting situation.
- Make sure that programs that have been serving school-age children during the pandemic receive support.
- Don't focus on only 3- and 4-year old classrooms. Infants and toddlers need high quality as well.
- Reinstate Merit Awards.

- Offer funding to increase access to high quality child care for middle class families as well as low-income families.
- Educate parents on high-quality child care.

How should American Rescue Plan funds be used to support the child care workforce?

- Include home-based providers in all recommendations.
- Reinstate Keystone STARS Education and Retention Awards.
- Provide benefits for child care staff.
- Support a livable wage for individuals who are currently in the field.
- Ensure that contracted slots reflect the true cost of care to allow appropriate salaries for staff.
- Recognize and compensate people for prior experience.

Survey Questions and Results

Q1. Pennsylvania currently funds a pilot project, providing contracts for infant and toddler subsidy slots to a limited number of Pre-K Counts providers. Should this pilot project be expanded?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Expand to more Pre-K Counts providers.	16.67%	1
Expand to STAR 3 and 4 center and home-based providers.	50.00%	3
Expand to providers serving in specific under-served zip codes.	0.00%	0
Do not use funds to expand pilot project.	33.33%	2
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q2. Pennsylvania normally has a waiting list for child care subsidy. As we move beyond the pandemic and more parents are able to return to work the waiting list is expected to grow. Use funds to:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Completely eliminate the waiting list.	33.33%	2
Eliminate up to 75% of the waiting list.	16.67%	1
Eliminate between 50 - 75% of the waiting list.	50.00%	3
Do not use funds for the subsidy waiting list.	0.00%	0
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q3. Pennsylvania’s child care subsidy base rates were increased on March 1, 2021. (The amount the state reimburses after the family’s co-pay.) With the exception of a small increase in 2018, this is the first significant increase in 14 years. The increase places Pennsylvania’s child care provider reimbursement rates at approximately the 40th percentile of the market rate (meaning, the amount charged by the lower 40% of the area’s providers). The federal government requires rates to be at the 75th percentile.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Increase base rates to 50th percentile.	33.33%	2
Increase base rates to 60th percentile.	66.67%	4
Do not use funds to increase base rates.	0.00%	0
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q4. Pennsylvania’s child care subsidy reimbursement rate includes a quality add on called tiered reimbursement. Additional amounts are connected to the provider’s STAR level intended to better support the cost of quality.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Increase tiered reimbursement rates at STAR 2-4 levels.	100.00%	6
Do not use funds to increase tiered reimbursement rates.	0.00%	0
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q5. Pennsylvania’s child care program quality improvement system is called Keystone STARS. Only 42% of child care programs are STAR 3 or 4 (high-quality).

Answer Choices	Responses	
Advertise Keystone STARS to parents.	83.33%	5
Do not use funds to advertise Keystone STARS.	16.67%	1
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q6. Pennsylvania’s child care program quality improvement system is called Keystone STARS. Only 42% of child care programs are STAR 3 or 4 (high-quality).

Answer Choices	Responses	
Increase support for STAR 2 programs’ efforts to move to STAR 3 (provide quality coaching, mentoring, curriculum costs, professional development).	50.00%	3
Do not use funds to increase support for STAR 2 programs.	50.00%	3
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q7. Pennsylvania's child care subsidy program currently serves only 19% of eligible children under 5.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Advertise the child care subsidy program; target information to under-served communities/families.	50.00%	3
Eliminate family co-pay for subsidy through 2021.	0.00%	0
Do not use funds to advertise the child care subsidy program.	16.67%	1
Do not use funds to eliminate the family co-pay.	33.33%	2
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q8. Pennsylvania child care providers earn an average wage of \$10.69/hour. Nearly 50% of child care teachers qualify for government subsidies

Answer Choices	Responses	
Establish a minimum wage for child care teachers based on job classification.	33.33%	2
Establish a pay scale for certified teachers comparable to certified teachers working with Kindergarten students in the public school system.	0.00%	0
Establish specific funds to support benefits for all staff at child care programs, like health care or retirement.	33.33%	2
Reinstate the Education Retention Awards (awards granted to teachers after specific educational milestones; degrees, credentials, certificates).	33.33%	2
Provide additional funds to support the child care workforce to reach higher degrees (T.E.A.C.H., Rising STARS).	0.00%	0
Do not use funds to support the child care workforce.	0.00%	0
	Answered	6
	Skipped	0

Q9. Additional suggestions

Answer Choices	Responses	
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support family child care providers.	0.00%	0
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support child care providers who offer non-traditional hours.	16.67%	1
Use funds to pay providers that still have not been fully-compensated for their under-enrollment during the pandemic to ensure they are stabilized and do not close.	33.33%	2
Use funds so continue to support provider costs for PPE/cleaning supplies until the pandemic ends.	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	50.00%	3
Answered		6
Skipped		0