

# American Rescue Plan Child Care Provider and Family Forum Allegheny County

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

10:00 am – 11:00 am

100 Participants

Link to recording

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/cUQdsvQ5b4u-ta0aq1wxLYSf2iqzpWBtVHct6MhkkB53eRczslxh9E8W7Rnj9vhm.ZptK\\_cx0I9gZe04g?startTime=1620135790000](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/cUQdsvQ5b4u-ta0aq1wxLYSf2iqzpWBtVHct6MhkkB53eRczslxh9E8W7Rnj9vhm.ZptK_cx0I9gZe04g?startTime=1620135790000)

Panelists

Brooke Barry, Owner and Director, Brooke Barry's Home Child Care  
Maya Blackman, Owner and Director, Small Steps for Little Wonders  
Lesely Crawford, Owner and Director ABK Early Learning Center  
Linda Grinage, Owner and Director, Blessed Assurance Christian Early Learning Center  
Jamie Leonardi, Parent from Riverview Children's Center  
Lori MacQueen, Executive Director at Providence Connections  
Stephanie Tabb, Parent  
Melanie Zaber, Parent

**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?

- Eliminate the subsidy waitlist.
- Provide scholarships for families who can't afford copays or cost.
- Increase the subsidy base rates.
- Offer grants to move up in Keystone STARS.

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

- Increase compensation for child care staff.
- Reinstate the Keystone STARS Education and Retention Awards.
- Provide funds for providers to offer benefits.
- Offer grants for recruitment tools, such as sign-on bonuses.

## 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.	25.76%	17
Expand to STAR 3 and 4 center and home-based providers.	53.03%	35
Expand to providers serving in specific under-served zip codes.	46.97%	31
Do not use funds to expand pilot project.	15.15%	10
<b>Answered</b>		<b>93</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		

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.	51.52%	34
Eliminate up to 75% of the waiting list.	13.64%	9
Eliminate between 50 - 75% of the waiting list.	21.21%	14
Do not use funds for the subsidy waiting list.	13.64%	9
<b>Answered</b>		<b>66</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		

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.	15.15%	10
Increase base rates to 60th percentile.	83.33%	55
Do not use funds to increase base rates.	1.52%	1
<b>Answered</b>		<b>66</b>
<b>Skipped</b>		

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.	75.76%	50
Do not use funds to increase tiered reimbursement rates.	24.24%	16
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>66</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	

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.	46.97%	31
Do not use funds to advertise Keystone STARS.	53.03%	35
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>66</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	

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).	63.64%	42
Do not use funds to increase support for STAR 2 programs.	36.36%	24
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>66</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	

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.	66.67%	44
Eliminate family co-pay for subsidy through 2021.	28.79%	19
Do not use funds to advertise the child care subsidy program.	16.67%	11
Do not use funds to eliminate the family co-pay.	24.24%	16
Other	3.03%	2
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>92</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	

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.	56.06%	37
Establish a pay scale for certified teachers comparable to certified teachers working with Kindergarten students in the public school system.	59.09%	39
Establish specific funds to support benefits for all staff at child care programs, like health care or retirement.	84.85%	56
Reinstate the Education Retention Awards (awards granted to teachers after specific educational milestones; degrees, credentials, certificates).	66.67%	44
Provide additional funds to support the child care workforce to reach higher degrees (T.E.A.C.H., Rising STARS).	65.15%	43
Other	7.58%	5
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>224</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	

Q9. Additional suggestions

Answer Choices	Responses	
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support family child care providers.	36.36%	24
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support child care providers who offer non-traditional hours.	48.48%	32
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.	68.18%	45
Use funds so continue to support provider costs for PPE/cleaning supplies until the pandemic ends.	63.64%	42
	<b>Answered</b>	<b>143</b>
	<b>Skipped</b>	