

American Rescue Plan Child Care Provider and Family Forum
Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike,
Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

60 Participants

Link to recording

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/oJouo41KBLVPuA_aPGZFXkSZ27I0TkV8sWuCOlejzebUqcqlva_hn8Vg8aVe1y_T-Bu7ntpHQMmMBFKLU.nk7SuN9t-dmplbd

Passcode: 613QR#.f

Panelists

Lisa Eick, Executive Director, The Growing Place Child Care Centers
Leigh Miller, Education Director, The Greater Scranton YMCA
Ashley Patete, parent and Early Intervention Specialist
Beth Ann Sheckler, Deputy, Children & Family Development Services Carbon County Head Start
Wico van Genderen, President/CEO, Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce
and Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry
Tonia Breech, Coordinator and Assistant Professor, Teacher Education, Lehigh Carbon
Community College
Sophia Estrella, Owner/Director, The Learning Center, Third Street Alliance for Women and
Children
Nancy Frederick, Director, The Learning Center, Third Street Alliance for Women and Children
Zubeen Saeed, President/CEO, Building Blocks Learning Center

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?

- Contract child care slots.
- Provide support to programs at Keystone STAR 2 level so they can move up to higher quality.
- Provide increased rates for care provided during nontraditional hours.
- Increase subsidy base rates to cover the cost of care.
- Increase subsidy tiered reimbursement.
- Provide support for children with mental and behavioral health needs, trauma-informed care.
- Provide funding so families pay no more than 7% of their income for high quality child care.
- Advertise Keystone STARS statewide.
- Educate and utilize pediatricians/obstetricians/public health to spread the word about Keystone STARS and high-quality programs.

- Provide funding for programs to offer equitable compensation, including wages and benefits.
- Provide funding for ECE professional certificate, credential and degree achievement.

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

- Reinststate and fully fund Keystone STARS Education and Retention Awards.
- Allow ECE professionals to convert ECE experience to college credits.
- Provide funding for programs to offer an adequate benefits package, including paid time off, mental health days and retirement.
- Provide funding to programs to support wages that are at least comparable to public school teacher salaries across all child care settings.
- Adopt and implement the [Power to the Profession](#), unifying framework.
- Establish a substitute service, where ECE students are utilized and required to participate as part of their academic program.
- Expand apprenticeships, CDAs, and T.E.A.C.H.

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.	27.78%	15
Expand to STAR 3 and 4 center and home-based providers.	35.19%	19
Expand to providers serving in specific under-served zip codes.	24.07%	13
Do not use funds to expand pilot project.	12.96%	7
Answered		54
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.	39.47%	15
Eliminate up to 75% of the waiting list.	21.05%	8
Eliminate between 50 - 75% of the waiting list.	31.58%	12
Do not use funds for the subsidy waiting list.	7.89%	3
Answered		38
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.	26.32%	10
Increase base rates to 60th percentile.	68.42%	26
Do not use funds to increase base rates.	5.26%	2
	Answered	38
	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.	88.57%	31
Do not use funds to increase tiered reimbursement rates.	11.43%	4
	Answered	35
	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.	57.14%	20
Do not use funds to advertise Keystone STARS.	42.86%	15
	Answered	35
	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).	54.29%	19
Do not use funds to increase support for STAR 2 programs.	45.71%	16
	Answered	35
	Skipped	0

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

Answer Choices	Responses	
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Advertise the child care subsidy program; target information to under-served communities/families.	36.00%	18
Eliminate family co-pay for subsidy through 2021.	22.00%	11
Do not use funds to advertise the child care subsidy program.	14.00%	7
Do not use funds to eliminate the family co-pay.	28.00%	14
	Answered	50
	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.	19.27%	21
Establish a pay scale for certified teachers comparable to certified teachers working with Kindergarten students in the public school system.	21.10%	23
Establish specific funds to support benefits for all staff at child care programs, like health care or retirement.	22.94%	25
Reinstate the Education Retention Awards (awards granted to teachers after specific educational milestones; degrees, credentials, certificates).	22.94%	25
Provide additional funds to support the child care workforce to reach higher degrees (T.E.A.C.H., Rising STARS).	13.76%	15
Do not use funds to support the child care workforce.	0.00%	0
	Answered	109
	Skipped	0

Q9. Additional suggestions

Answer Choices	Responses	
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Use funds for initiatives to specifically support family child care providers.	16.67%	9
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support child care providers who offer non-traditional hours.	12.96%	7
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.	37.04%	20
Use funds so continue to support provider costs for PPE/cleaning supplies until the pandemic ends.	33.33%	18
	Answered	54
	Skipped	0