

American Rescue Plan Child Care Provider and Family Forum Philadelphia County

Friday, April 30, 2021

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

70 Participants

Link to recording

<https://youtu.be/wEVD-S6dy1g>

Panelists

Jada Arnold, parent - Sweet Dreams and Fairytales
Omari Baye, People's Emergency Center
Rebecca Bohey, Director- Kinder Academy
Rafael Calzadilla, Director - Queen Lane Montessori School
Megan Cerebe, parent - KinderAcademy
Laverne Cheeseboro, Owner/Director - Heavenly Made Creations
Paige Davis, Sweet Dreams and Fairytales
Kellie Ketchum-Umphrey, Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center
Turricka Reese, parent - Younger Days Childcare
Evelyn Stevens, parent - Heavenly Made Creations
Carol Wong, Executive Director - Chinatown Learning Center
Robyn Younger, Owner/Director - Younger Days Childcare

Media clip

<https://whyy.org/articles/philadelphia-pre-ks-could-see-millions-in-federal-dollars-parents-and-providers-weigh-in-on-how-to-spend-it/>

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 all copays for parents for a short period.
- Expand eligibility for more families to qualify for subsidy.
- Raise threshold for CCW income would help many parents.
- Make sure working families qualify for subsidy by raising the wage requirements.
- Make access and navigating systems easier for parents.
- Reimburse for the actual cost of care rather than the market rate.
- Raise the base reimbursement rate.
- Include more funds for home-based programs, not just centers.
- Expand funding Pre-k for all families.
- Pay Pre-k contracts at a level that allows providers to compete with K-12 schools for teachers.
- Stabilize revenues and eliminate fluctuations to providers when families are on and off subsidy-programs.

- Fund a position at the Early Learning Resource Centers for homelessness and foster care issues.
- Integrate the data system to better identify and support homeless children and their families.
- Increase home visiting options to ensure families have the support they need to care for their children.

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

- Provide funds to pay a market-based wage for teachers (school-district level) and a living wage (which is about \$22/hr. in Philadelphia) for teacher assistants.
- Increase wages for providers with degrees.
- Reinstate the Keystone STARS Education and Retention Awards.
- Increase pre-K funding to provide more contracted slots.
- Expand contracted slots to include infants and toddlers.
- Fund programs like T.E.A.C.H., CDA training, and childcare facility fund grants.
- Provide funds for benefits such as health, dental, and vision for the workforce.

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.	23.36%	25
Expand to STAR 3 and 4 center and home-based providers.	42.06%	45
Expand to providers serving in specific under-served zip codes.	25.23%	27
Do not use funds to expand pilot project.	9.35%	10
	Answered	107
	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.	55.41%	41
Eliminate up to 75% of the waiting list.	24.32%	18
Eliminate between 50 - 75% of the waiting list.	17.57%	13
Do not use funds for the subsidy waiting list.	2.70%	2
	Answered	74
	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.	25.35%	18
Increase base rates to 60th percentile.	70.42%	50
Do not use funds to increase base rates.	4.23%	3
	Answered	71
	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.	94.20%	65
Do not use funds to increase tiered reimbursement rates.	5.80%	4
	Answered	69
	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.	53.62%	37
Do not use funds to advertise Keystone STARS.	46.38%	32
	Answered	69
	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).	73.40%	69
Do not use funds to increase support for STAR 2 programs.	26.60%	25
	Answered	94
	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.	36.56%	34
Eliminate family co-pay for subsidy through 2021.	41.94%	39
Do not use funds to advertise the child care subsidy program.	9.68%	9
Do not use funds to eliminate the family co-pay.	11.83%	11
	Answered	93
	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.	15.00%	30
Establish a pay scale for certified teachers comparable to certified teachers working with Kindergarten students in the public school system.	18.50%	37
Establish specific funds to support benefits for all staff at child care programs, like health care or retirement.	23.50%	47
Reinstate the Education Retention Awards (awards granted to teachers after specific educational milestones; degrees, credentials, certificates).	24.00%	48
Provide additional funds to support the child care workforce to reach higher degrees (T.E.A.C.H., Rising STARS).	19.00%	38
Do not use funds to support the child care workforce.	0.00%	0
	Answered	200
	Skipped	0

Q9. Additional suggestions

Answer Choices	Responses	
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Use funds for initiatives to specifically support family child care providers.	19.70%	26
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support child care providers who offer non-traditional hours.	21.21%	28
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.	30.30%	40
Use funds so continue to support provider costs for PPE/cleaning supplies until the pandemic ends.	28.79%	38
	Answered	132
	Skipped	0