

American Rescue Plan Child Care Provider and Family Forum
Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Somerset,
Washington, Westmoreland Counties

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

10:00 – 11:30 am

70 Participants

Link to recording

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/5LS_pyxz8qzry7-WT2Oq2wDiDWUDsUaX653iP55azP1fZF_9t3CZhA8Twa2ceVYE.7OPqG9kLKPnhCPp9?startTime=1620740133000

Panelists

Marsha Androsik, Vice President of Children Services, Pathways/Rainbows End Early Learning Center

Emily Whigham, Parent

Tammy Clark, Parent

Nicole Pardus, Parent

Shirley Hough, Owner, Our Buddy's Place

Eva Wood, Director, Latrobe Kinder Schull

Erin Schellenberger, Early Childhood Educator, Latrobe Kinder Schull

Abigail Enz-Doerschner, Assistant Director, Once Upon a Time, Early 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?

- Remove parent copays for child care subsidy for a period of time.
- Support families who don't qualify for child care subsidy.
- Provide additional support to rural families, families of color and spanish-speaking families to identify care options in their area.
- Expand eligibility for more families to qualify for subsidy.
- Reimburse centers so they can pay for more teachers/staff and serve more children for families' working hours.
- Increase the subsidy base rates.
- Increase infant/toddler contracted slot rate.
- Provide grants to assist child care programs in moving up in STARS.
- Provide grants to programs to expand, particularly in rural areas and for families needing nontraditional hours.

- Use funds to help cover revenue loss during the pandemic and current under enrollment.

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

- Reinststate the Keystone STARS Education and Retention Awards.
- Increase compensation for child care staff.
- Provide funds for child care programs to offer benefits.
- Provide grants for recruitment tools, such as sign-on bonuses
- Fund new staff educational attainment (TEACH, CDAs) along with compensation while they achieve credentials.
- Fund additional staff to cover classrooms of teachers working towards degrees and credentials.
- Offer loan forgiveness for teachers employed in child care programs.

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.	42.31%	11
Expand to STAR 3 and 4 center and home-based providers.	42.31%	11
Expand to providers serving in specific under-served zip codes.	30.77%	8
Do not use funds to expand pilot project.	11.54%	3
Other	7.69%	2
Answered		35
Skipped		

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.	50.00%	13
Eliminate up to 75% of the waiting list.	19.23%	5
Eliminate between 50 - 75% of the waiting list.	19.23%	5
Do not use funds for the subsidy waiting list.	11.54%	3
Answered		26
Skipped		

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.	7.69%	2
Increase base rates to 60th percentile.	76.92%	20
Do not use funds to increase base rates.	15.38%	4
	Answered	26
	Skipped	

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.	84.62%	22
Do not use funds to increase tiered reimbursement rates.	15.38%	4
	Answered	26
	Skipped	

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.	50.00%	13
Do not use funds to advertise Keystone STARS.	50.00%	13
	Answered	26
	Skipped	

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).	69.23%	18
Do not use funds to increase support for STAR 2 programs.	30.77%	8
	Answered	26
	Skipped	

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.	62.00%	16
Eliminate family co-pay for subsidy through 2021.	35.00%	9
Do not use funds to advertise the child care subsidy program.	19.00%	5
Do not use funds to eliminate the family co-pay.	31.00%	8
Other	8.00%	2
	Answered	40
	Skipped	

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.	50.00%	13
Establish a pay scale for certified teachers comparable to certified teachers working with Kindergarten students in the public school system.	50.00%	13
Establish specific funds to support benefits for all staff at child care programs, like health care or retirement.	69.00%	18
Reinstate the Education Retention Awards (awards granted to teachers after specific educational milestones; degrees, credentials, certificates).	88.00%	23
Provide additional funds to support the child care workforce to reach higher degrees (T.E.A.C.H., Rising STARS).	65.00%	17
Other	23.00%	6
	Answered	90
	Skipped	

Q9. Additional suggestions

Answer Choices	Responses	
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support family child care providers.	23.00%	6
Use funds for initiatives to specifically support child care providers who offer non-traditional hours.	35.00%	9
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.	54.00%	14
Use funds so continue to support provider costs for PPE/cleaning supplies until the pandemic ends.	42.00%	11
	Answered	40
	Skipped	