



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **PA Senate Passes Budget with NO Funding to Address Early Learning Workforce Shortage**

*Child care / pre-k waitlists expected to get even longer*

**HARRISBURG, PA (June 30, 2023)** — Today the Pennsylvania Senate passed its version of the state budget that fails to address the historic early learning workforce shortage. No new money was included for PA Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program or efforts to stabilize the child care workforce. This means early learning providers will continue to lose teachers and close classrooms jeopardizing families' ability to work.

For families with young children, access to child care and pre-k is a critical factor in their ability to go to work and ensure their children are in a safe and nurturing environment. Nearly 70 percent of all households with children younger than age 6 have all available caregivers in the workforce—that's over 537,000 households.

For all other business sectors, the early learning sector is the workforce behind the workforce. When families can't get child care, their children suffer, their income drops and the state's economy is shortchanged. In a time of severe labor shortages, and billions in state budget surplus, the Senate's failure to ensure parents have access to child care is a tragic oversight.

For all Pennsylvanians, when businesses aren't fully staffed or staff are unreliable due to lack of child care, they cannot produce goods or provide services, creating shortages and increasing prices. So whether one has young children or not, the labor shortage in the early care and education sector matters to all of us.

The statewide Pre-K for PA and Start Strong PA campaigns are calling on Governor Shapiro and the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to invest in the workforce behind the workforce by:

- Investing in Pre-K Counts
- Investing in the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program
- Boost funding for the child care workforce by increasing the child care services line item

### ***About Pre-K for PA***

*Pre-K for PA is an issue campaign supported by individuals and organizations across Pennsylvania who believe that investing in our children is the right choice and an urgent necessity. Our vision is that every 3-and 4-year-old in Pennsylvania will have access to high-quality pre-k. For more information [www.prekforpa.org](http://www.prekforpa.org).*

***About Start Strong PA***

*Start Strong PA launched in 2019 to support healthy child development, working families, and the economy by increasing access to and affordability of high-quality child care programs for young children. Learn more at [www.startstrongpa.org](http://www.startstrongpa.org)*

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