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Thousands of Advocates Call on PA General Assembly to Raise Child Care Wages

HARRISBURG (May 19, 2022) – Today, Start Strong PA, delivered a petition containing 4,565 signatures to members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly urging them to “Raise Child Care” by allocating sustainable state and/or federal funds as part of the final state budget to help solve the child care sector’s current workforce crisis. The petition calls for a \$2 per hour wage supplement for child care teachers and staff.

“As Pennsylvania businesses struggle to find employees, tens of thousands of working parents are struggling to find child care,” said Jen DeBell, executive director, Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children. “This is due to a workforce crisis within the child care sector that is resulting in closures of classrooms and entire facilities.”

According to a March 2022 survey of 994 Pennsylvania child care programs, nearly 7,000 child care staffing positions remain open resulting in 48% percent of respondents reporting at least one of their classrooms is closed. The current staffing crisis has created a waiting list in these programs of over 32,500 children.

“The average wage for a child care teacher in Pennsylvania is an unlivable \$11 per hour. Raising child care wages does not only recognize these professionals deserve pay that reflects their important work, it will increase child care programs’ ability to recruit and retain qualified staff,” said Cara Ciminillo, executive director, Trying Together. “This will reduce the staff turnover that negatively impacts children’s development and that has resulted in classroom and program closures currently disrupting working families’ ability to work.”

The Start Strong PA March 2022 survey results depict a deepening crisis in the child care sector that poses a real threat to Pennsylvania’s working families and our overall economic recovery.

About Start Strong PA

Start Strong PA is an initiative of Early Learning PA. Through a statewide collaboration of partners, Start Strong PA aims 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.

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