

Trying
together



Mission

Trying Together supports high-quality care and education for young children by providing advocacy, community resources, and professional growth opportunities for the needs and rights of children, their families, and the individuals who interact with them. Trying Together works regionally (in Southwestern Pennsylvania) and takes its expertise and models to statewide and national audiences.



**Trying Together
envision's a future
in which all
caregivers feel
valued.**



JEDI Statement

Trying Together envisions a future in which all caregivers of young children feel valued for their work. When we inspire belonging among caregivers, we inspire belonging within them. We encourage everyone to interact compassionately and honor the range of cultures, ideas, and identities that root us.

Guided by the NAEYC Code of Ethics, we have a responsibility to ensure each child, family, and caregiver is safe from harm and has equitable opportunities to thrive.

Care Continuum

Parents are children's first and most important teachers.

- Paid family leave and a strong child care system are complementary investments.
- Families benefit from paid leave immediately after the birth or adoption of a child.
- Then families depend on a stable child care system when they return to work.

Allegheny County Paid Parental Leave

County Council passed paid leave 11-4 on Tuesday!

- Allegheny County businesses with more than 15 employees must offer 12 weeks of paid parental leave for new parents, including birth, foster, or adoption, and for parents who experience a stillbirth.
- Employees are eligible after 180 days (six months) of employment.
- Signed into law on Thursday by County Executive Sara Innamorato.
- Employers have up to one year before they have to comply with the policy, giving them time to strategize financially for the shift.

Family Care Act

SB 906

- Senate Bill 906 proposes a state-run insurance program funded by employee payroll deductions capped at no more than 1% of a worker's wage.
- Bipartisan support including Republican prime sponsor

HB 200

- House Bill 200 mandates that employers cover partial wage replacement for qualified employees, and proposes a grant program to help small businesses offset the costs.
- Bipartisan passage in the House (107-92)

Call to Action

Look up your state legislators

Did your representative vote in favor of [HB 200](#)?

Is your senator signed on as a cosponsor for [SB 906](#)?



CHILD CARE WORKS

HEAD START

PRE-K COUNTS

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND
INTERMEDIATE UNITSPRIVATELY FUNDED
BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN

BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN FUNDING

CHILD CARE CENTER

Certified (or licensed) by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and provides care and education to seven or more children in a commercial setting.

**GROUP CHILD CARE HOME**

Group Child Care Home is certified by DHS and provides care and education for no more than 12 children in a home or commercial setting.

**FAMILY CHILD CARE**

Family Child Care (Home-Based Child Care) is certified by DHS to provide care and education for three to six children who are not related to the caregiver in a home environment.

RELATIVE CARE

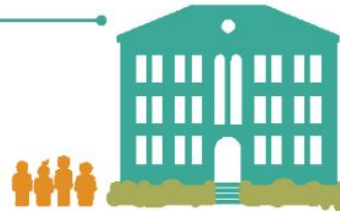
Eligible relatives (18+) can care for up to three related children who reside in another household and may receive CCW subsidy payments.



WHAT DOES
**EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION AND CARE**
LOOK LIKE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public schools are publicly funded and may provide pre-k programming through Head Start, Pre-K Counts, or local partnerships.

**PRIVATE SCHOOL**

Licensed private academic schools may provide educational services from nursery school (age 3) through grade 12.



PUBLICLY FUNDED SUPPORTS

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD
PROGRAM (CACFP)

QUALITY ASSURANCE

HOME VISITING

EARLY INTERVENTION

FAMILY CENTERS

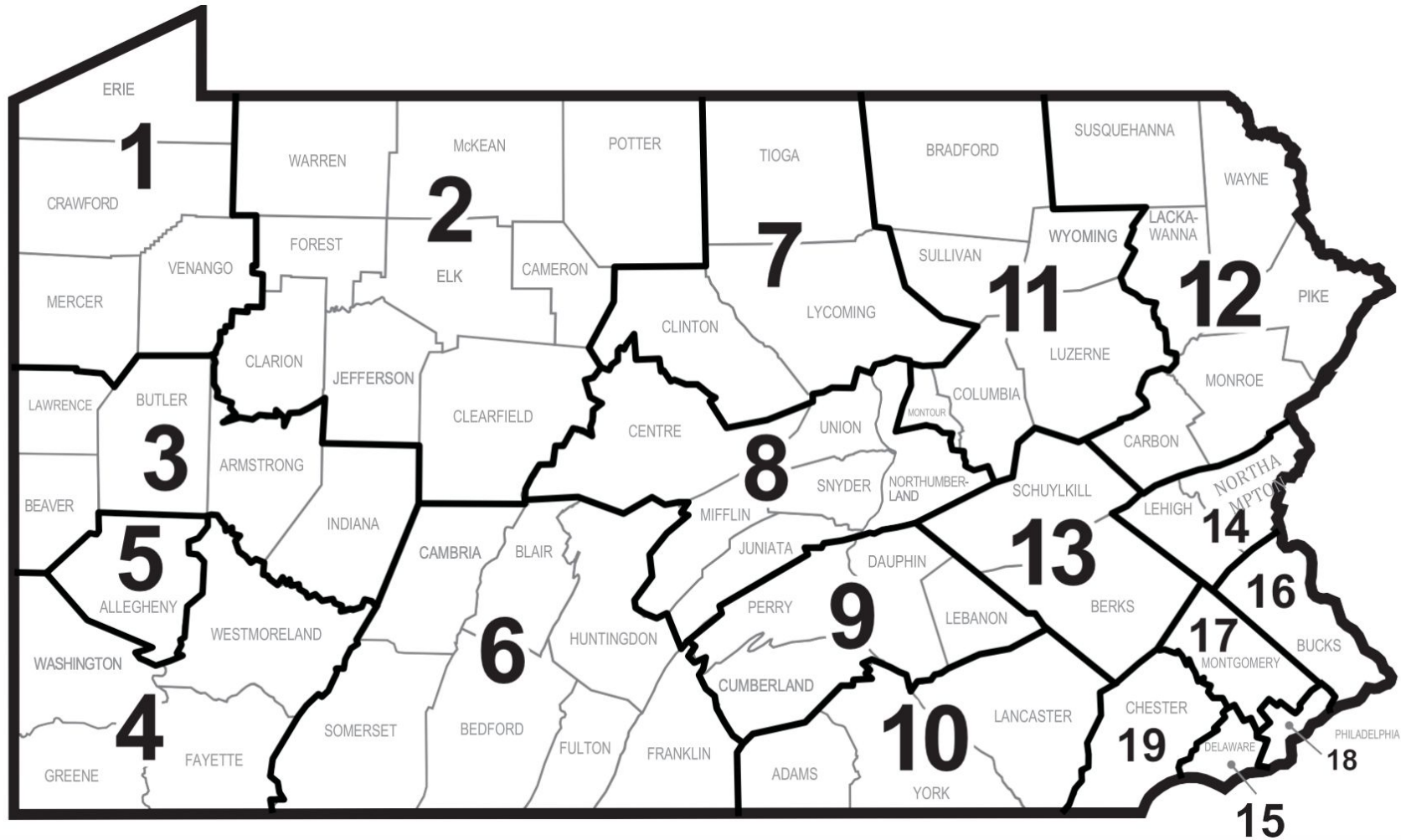
Publicly funded programs and eligibility

Program	Who is served?	Income Eligibility
Child Care Works (federal + state dollars)	Children ages birth to twelve receive a “voucher” to attend a licensed child care program	200% FPL \$66,000 for a family of four
Pre-K Counts (state dollars)	Children ages three and four School day, school year program	300% FPL \$99,000 for a family of four
Head Start (federal + state dollars)	Children ages three and four School day, school year program	100% FPL \$33,000 for a family of four
Early Head Start (federal + state dollars)	Children birth to age two May be in home or at a center based program	Same as above

Publicly funded programs and funding

Program	State Line Item	Federal Funding Stream
Child Care Works (federal + state dollars)	Child Care Services (DHS) Child Care Assistance (DHS)	Child Care Development Block Grant, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Social Services Block Grant
Pre-K Counts (state dollars)	Pre-K Counts (PDE)	—
Head Start (federal + state dollars)	Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (PDE)	Head Start
Early Head Start (federal + state dollars)	Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (PDE)	Head Start

Early Learning Resource Centers



Current Policy Issues

- Child Care Compensation: \$15.23/hour, under \$32,000/year
 - little to no benefits offered
- Child Care Subsidy Reimbursement Rate, 75th percentile
 - based on market rate not cost of quality
 - not advertised
- Many eligible children for public programs are not served
 - not advertised; families unaware
 - not enough public funding to expand slots
 - workforce shortage constraints

Policy win for early childhood workforce

NEW LINE ITEM: Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention

- 2025-26 Pennsylvania state budget established new line item for child care workforce with a \$25 million investment
- 4,358 providers applied
 - 33,688 teachers received retention bonuses of \$645
 - 4,972 new teachers received recruitment bonuses of \$645
- 2026-27 state budget invested an additional \$10 million, bringing program to \$35 million
- Applications for the next round just opened



"Here is a picture of me (Betsy Billie, Executive Director) and Gia Dunfee (Assistant Group Supervisor) when she received her retention award check, which amounted to over \$427 after taxes. She was overcome with emotion over the slightest monetary award, because acknowledging and supporting such a low-paying career really does mean something to so many! I was also just as overwhelmed as they were! It Matters!"

Betsy Billie

Executive Director at West Chester Area Day Care

Start Strong PA and Pre-K for PA Vision 2030

Pennsylvania must advance policies that do two things: help families afford and find early care and education and ensure early education programs have the resources to provide it.

- Raise income eligibility requirements for Child Care Works subsidy and Pre-K Counts program
- Increase the reimbursement rates to child care providers to cover costs for providing high-quality care and learning
- Keep investing in the recruitment and retention program for educators
- Invest more in public outreach for families



Advocate Together

Start Strong PA

Advocate for affordable high-quality child care: startstrongpa.org

Support Our Public Policy Agenda

Receive advocacy alerts right in your inbox: bit.ly/advocacy-alert

Head Start has helped children and families thrive for more than 60 years.

- Head Start provides more than child care. It provides high-quality early learning experiences delivered by skilled educators and health and developmental services from the community for children and families who face the greatest barriers to opportunity.
- The federal government is proposing changes that could affect class sizes, staffing, health and mental health services, workforce qualifications, transportation, and other critical supports.
- As we continue to hear about rising costs and challenges to access child care, these proposed changes are not making things better for families or children.

Public comment period closed on October 6th – 40,000 + comments received!



Why do the Head Start Performance Standards matter?

- The Head Start Performance Standards establish expectations for what families and children experience every day – including how many children are in a classroom, who teaches them, how health and developmental needs are identified, how families have a voice, and how children are kept safe.
- Concerning changes in the proposal include larger class sizes, increased child to adult ratios, less protections for children with disabilities, increased barriers to access, and less comprehensive health standards and services.

**Make the call for
Head Start!**



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NEXT UP

- Midterms
 - Governor, Lt. Governor
 - US Congressional Seats
 - PA House Seats
 - Half of PA Senate Seats (even districts)
- State Budget Address in February
- Federal proposed changes to child care

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