

Child Care Fact Sheet

118,000 children in Pennsylvania access child care using Child Care Works subsidies; **only 30%** are in high-quality programs.



We support a **\$27 million** state funding expansion of the Child Care Services line item including:

\$10 million
to serve 1,600 children waiting to access child care subsidies

\$3 million
for an infant and toddler high-quality child care pilot program

\$10 million
to increase tiered subsidy reimbursement rates for STAR 2, 3, and 4 child care providers

\$4 million
to continue current programs

A combination of limited availability of high-quality care options, inadequate child care rates, and the lack of support for the workforce demands investment.

Why do we need increased resources?

Families cannot access high-quality

- **At-risk families need more quality options**
As of December 2017, only 30% of children using subsidy were enrolled at a high-quality (STAR 3 or 4) program.
- **High-quality is hard to find**
Only 21% of licensed providers hold a high-quality designation of STAR 3 or 4. In addition, 59% of all PA residents live in a “child care desert” with little or no access to quality care. In rural areas it is 73%.¹
- **High-quality costs money**
The cost for two children in center-based child care exceeds housing costs for many families—by 24.9% for homeowners and 111.9% for renters.²
- **Families must wade through waiting lists**
The waiting list has fluctuated widely in recent years, reaching a high of 13,862 children in May 2017. The average wait time for eligible children and families to receive subsidies was about 25 days as of February 2018.

Rates are insufficient to support quality

- **Base rates sit stagnant**
Frozen since 2007, rates fail to provide financial stability for programs and services.
- **Rates fall below federal recommendations**
Current rates on average are below what 67% of providers charge for private tuition. The federal government recommends being no lower than the top 25% of rates.
- **Cost of high-quality is not supported**
Case studies show gaps of anywhere between \$15–\$35 per child per day. Yearly, this adds up to losses of \$3,900–\$9,100 per child on subsidy.³

Early childhood workforce is suffering

- **Inadequate pay**
A field severely underpaid nationwide is even more so in Pennsylvania. The average hourly pay statewide is \$9.42/hour⁴ ; the national average is \$9.77/hour.⁵
- **Costs to the public**
Approximately 43% of Pennsylvania’s child care professionals receive government assistance (SNAP, TANF, Medicaid).⁶

A \$27 million increase for child care services is a solid and necessary down payment to address access to high-quality for our children, inadequate rates, and an under-compensated workforce.

¹ Center for American Progress, 2017. Mapping America’s Child Care Deserts.

² Child Care Aware of America, 2017. Parents and the High Cost of Child Care, 2017.

³ Research for Action, 2017. Examining Child Care Funding and Finance in Pennsylvania.

⁴ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2016. Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2016.

⁵ United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016. Occupational Employment and Wages.

⁶ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2016. Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2016.