



**START  
STRONG  
PA**

# State Funding for a Child Care Teacher Recruitment and Retention Proposal

## Why?

The Start Strong PA campaign is working to alleviate the historic child care staffing crisis that is causing classrooms and entire programs to close. We are recommending that the Shapiro Administration include a recruitment and retention initiative in their 2025-2026 budget proposal. This recommendation was formulated in collaboration with Pennsylvania child care providers.

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## What?

A proposal to invest \$284 million in new and ongoing state funding to implement a child care teacher recruitment and retention initiative.

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## Who?

Certified (licensed) child care centers, family child care homes, and group child care homes with a signed Child Care Works (CCW) subsidy agreement with The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) via the Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs). Providers with this signed agreement would be eligible to receive funds for the purposes of retaining and recruiting their staff who directly supervise children, regardless of how many children they serve who are utilizing CCW.

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## Where?

There is a Child Care Services line item in the PA Department of Human Services budget. This line item supports CCW subsidies for eligible families, as well as child care quality and improvement initiatives. We are asking that \$284 million in new and ongoing funds be added to this line item to support a recruitment and retention initiative in the 2025-2026 state budget, along with legislative language to ensure that the funding is spent for this purpose.

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# When?

Start Strong PA will urge Governor Shapiro to include \$284 million for the recruitment and retention initiative in his 2025-26 budget proposal, which will be released in February 2025. Advocates, early learning professionals, and families are encouraged to join the campaign to amplify this message from every region.

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# How?

Allow child care providers the flexibility to choose from a list of ways to spend the funds, recognizing they are best positioned to understand their program, region, and employees.

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## What could this mean for your program?

Payments would be provided in increments throughout the year based on the number of staff for which programs apply. Child care providers would be given the flexibility to choose from the following list of ways to spend the funds:

- Wage increases and associated payroll taxes
- Hiring bonuses and associated payroll taxes
- Retention bonuses for staff staying for a certain length of time or for staff achieving certain credentials or degrees and associated payroll taxes
- Employer investments in employee benefits, such as health care, retirement, etc.

Note: Home-based family child care owners would be able to increase their wages and cover the associated payroll taxes, or use the funds for any of the other allowable uses.

Programs would be asked to report on how the funds are spent to ensure accountability of the dollars. Reporting will also help demonstrate how the program is helping the child care sector and make the case for continued funding to support our teachers.

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## 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](http://www.startstrongpa.org).