



**START
STRONG
PA**

State Funding for a Child Care Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiative

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 General Assembly support, at minimum, the Shapiro Administration's proposal to invest in a new and recurring child care teacher recruitment and retention line item in the final 2025-2026 budget. This recommendation was developed in collaboration with the Start Strong PA and Pre-K for PA Provider Advisory Board, and it reflects the collective advocacy of over 5,000 providers and families who signed a petition in the fall of 2024, as well as more than 60 chambers of commerce that supported the initiative through a sign-on letter.

What?

A proposal to invest, at minimum, \$55 million in state funding in a new and recurring line item to implement a child care teacher recruitment and retention initiative. We must ensure the new and recurring line item is a part of the final 2025-2026 budget.

Who?

The Shapiro Administration proposed 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) to be eligible. It is proposed that 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.

Where?

This is a proposed new and recurring line item in the PA Department of Human Services budget titled “Child Care Recruitment and Retention”. If included in the final 2025-2026 budget, this would be a standing line item under the PA Department of Human Services with the opportunity to advocate in future years to increase funding for this line item to continue working to eliminate the staffing crisis.

When?

Start Strong PA will urge the General Assembly to include, at minimum, \$55 million in a new and recurring line item for a recruitment and retention initiative in the final 2025-26 budget. Advocates, early learning professionals, and families are encouraged to join the campaign throughout the budget season to amplify this message from every region.

How?

The Shapiro Administration proposes recruitment and retention bonuses for teachers via grants to child care providers. If included in the final 2025-2026 budget, the administration of the funding in the new and recurring line item will be determined by OCDEL.

What could this mean for your program?

The Shapiro Administration anticipates a similar grant process as was used during ARPA grants distribution, via the ELRCs to the providers, with OCDEL holding the grant agreements.

Reporting requirements are to be determined by OCDEL once the new and recurring line item is included in the final 2025-2026 budget.

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.
