Trying Together

Budget Information

An overview of Pennsylvania's investments in early care and education

One of the core elements of Trying Together's policy agenda is advocacy for significant investments to increase access and quality.

In Pennsylvania, there are state and federal funds to support early care and education. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is a dual deputate of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Education (PDE) responsible for implementing ECE programs.

The following charts highlight state budget growth in four program areas. As a principal partner in the Early Learning PA (ELPA) coalition, Trying Together advocates for increased state investments in child care, home visiting, pre-k, and early intervention.

Child Care

The Child Care Services line item provides subsidized child care for low income working families. A portion of the funds are set aside to support Keystone STARS quality improvements for child care programs.

The Child Care Assistance line item provides child care to families receiving TANF.

The 2025–26 budget established a new $25 million recurring line item for the Child Care Recruitment and Retention Program, which provides direct payments to eligible child care teachers to help stabilize the workforce and reduce classroom waitlists.

Our Role: Launched in 2019, Trying Together is a founding member and principal partner of the Start Strong PA campaign.

Fiscal Year	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Governor	Gov. Rendell	Gov. Rendell	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf
House	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Senate	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Child Care Services	$171.7M	$154.3M	$141.4M	$155.7M	$155.7M	$155.7M	$135.7M	$155.7M	$162.5M	$156.5M	$156.5M
Child Care Assistance	$197.1M	$164.4M	$156.7M	$152.6M	$152.6M	$152.6M	$152.6M	$139.9M	$139.9M	$109.9M	$109.9M

Fiscal Year	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27
Governor	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro
House	R	R	D	D	D	D
Senate	R	R	R	R	R	R
Child Care Services	$156.5M	$181.5M*	$271.9M**	$298.1M***	$298.1M	$298.1M
Child Care Assistance	$109.9M	$109.9M	$123.3M**	$123.3M	123.3M	124.4M
Child Care Recruitment and Retention					$25M	$30M

* $25M specifically to serve families currently enrolled in Child Care Works up to 300% of poverty or the state median income (whichever is lower).

The General Assembly allocated $90 million in federal funding to provide one-time child care staff recruitment and retention bonuses in FY 22–23.

** While child care received an increase of nearly $104 million, this state funding was used to maintain the Child Care Works subsidy base rate as one-time federal funding lapses and in order to keep up with inflation.

*** Additional federal funds allocated to increase Child Care Works Subsidy rate to federally recommended reimbursement, which is not reflected in this line item.

Evidence-based Home Visiting

Evidence-based home visiting in Pennsylvania is funded across two line items. There are eight evidence-based home visiting models in Pennsylvania. While Nurse Family Partnership funds go exclusively to that model, the Community Based Family Centers line is for all evidence-based models to apply for in order to expand home visiting services.

Our Role: Launched in 2018, Trying Together is a founding member and principal partner in the Childhood Begins At Home campaign.

Fiscal Year	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
Governor	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Shapiro
House	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	D
Senate	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Community-Based Family Centers	$3.6M	$3.3M	$3.3M	$8.0M	$13.6M	$18.3M	$19.5M	$19.5M	$34.5M	$34.5M
Nurse-Family Partnership	$12.0M	$12.0M	$12.0M	$12.0M	$13.2M	$13.2M	$13.0M	$13.1M	$14.1M	$14.1M*

Fiscal Year	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27
Governor	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro
House	D	D	D
Senate	R	R	R
Community-Based Family Centers	$34.5M	$34.5M	$34.5M
Nurse-Family Partnership	$14.0M	$13.9M**	$13.9M

* Slight increase of $25,000

** *Both home visiting line items have been flat-funded since the 2022-23 state budget. The slight decrease in the NFP line is due to changes in federal funding but did not impact services*

Pre-Kindergarten

Pennsylvania's state pre-k program Pre-K Counts is for families earning under 300% of FPL. School districts, STAR 3 and 4 child care programs, Head Start programs, and private academic nursery schools can offer Pre-K Counts programs.

Head Start Supplemental is additional state funding that federal Head Start grantees may apply for in order to serve more children and/or increase the length of their program's day.

Our Role: Launched in 2014, Trying Together is a founding member and principal partner of the Pre-K for PA campaign.

Fiscal Year	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20
Governor	Gov. Rendell	Gov. Rendell	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Corbett	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf
House	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Senate	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Pre-K Counts	$85.2M	$82.8M	$82.8M	$87.3M	$97.3M	$122.3M	$147.3M	$172.3M	$192.3M	$217.3M
Head Start Supplemental	$38.4M	$37.3M	$37.2M	$39.2M	$39.2M	$44.2M	$49.2M	$54.2M	$59.2	$64.2M

Fiscal Year	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27
Governor	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro
House	R	R	R	D	D	D	D
Senate	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Pre-K Counts	$217.3M	$242.3M	$302.3M	$302.3M	$317.3M	$326.8M	$330.6M
Head Start Supplemental	$64.2M	$69.2M	$88.2M	$88.2M	$90.9M	$90.9M	$91.9M

Early Intervention

Early intervention (EI) provides services to children from birth to five years who have developmental delays or a high probability of having a developmental delay. EI, Part C serves children from birth through age two and is funded through the Department of Human Services. EI, Part B serves children from three through age five and is funded through the Department of Education.

Our role: Launched in 2022 through the Thriving PA, Trying Together is a principal partner in the Early Intervention, Part C advocacy campaign.

Fiscal Year	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26	2026–27
Governor	Gov. Wolf	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro	Gov. Shapiro
House	R	D	D	D	D
Senate	R	R	R	R	R
Early Intervention, Part C	$170.1M	$185.5M	$185.3M	$198.4M	$193.2M*
Early Intervention, Part B	$346.5M	$356.9M	$424.8M	$453.3M	$494.5M

* *The department is using prior-year funds to keep the program whole and maintain the rate increase provided in fiscal year 2025-26.*