



**Keystone STARS Summer Roundtables 2008
with OCDEL Deputy Secretary Harriet Dichter
Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: Can you please provide us with more information about the new Adam Walsh requirements?

A: The Office of Child Development and Early Learning has been hosting meetings throughout the state providing updated information regarding all certification and regulations changes, including information for providers regarding the federally mandated Adam Walsh requirements.

A Question & Answer document has been prepared concerning regulations specific to Adam Walsh requirements. The document will be updated periodically as new questions are received. The document is in process of being posted to the website and we will share the hyperlink when posting is completed.

Q: How do the TEACH Scholarships and the ERA (Education & Retention Award) work together?

A: The T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) scholarship program provides funding to assist child care staff who work in a regulated early education setting to attain a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, an Associates Degree or a Bachelors Degree in Early Childhood.

The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship model requires a partnership between the scholarship recipient, the sponsoring child care center, and the scholarship management organization (PACCA). Each partner is responsible for a portion of the cost. The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship model has six essential components: tuition, books, travel, release time, compensation, commitment.

To receive additional information regarding the T.E.A.C.H. program and the availability of classes in your area call (717) 657-9000 or access the Web site at www.pacca.org

Q: If I have a teacher who lives in Ohio, can she apply for T.E.A.C.H. in Pennsylvania?

A: While all of those who dedicate their lives to providing high quality early learning for young children are important, unfortunately providers must reside in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to receive T.E.A.C.H. scholarship funds.

For information on T.E.A.C.H. scholarships for Ohio residents, please go to the following website:
<http://www.occcra.org/TEACH.htm>

Q: Where can I find information on Tiered Reimbursement and all of the Grants and Awards offered to the Keystone STAR providers?

A: Tiered Subsidy and Grant & Award information can be obtained from your local Regional Key, or from the Pa Key (www.pakeys.org).

Q: Can a facility have both a business director and an education director? And would it be possible for both to receive STARS ERA incentives?

A: A facility may employ both a Business Director and an Education Director, but ONLY one is eligible for the STARS ERA. ERA grants require the completion of ECE credits; all course content must be in Early childhood Education to be eligible for STARS ERA incentives.

For additional clarification or information, please contact your local Regional Key.

Q: What are ‘Related Fields’ on the Career Lattice?

A: For degrees required for Level V and above: "Related fields include Human Development, Psychology, Sociology, Social Work, Education, Nursing, Home Economics/Family and Consumer Science, Recreation, Child and Family Studies and Business." Regardless of ‘related degree,’ all practitioners at this level are required to have no fewer than 18 credit hours specifically in early childhood education.

Many practitioners within early childhood education and school age care may have degrees in “related fields.” While it is important to keep these practitioners in the field, the lattice helps to reinforce the value of ECE specific content to child outcomes by requiring varying numbers of ECE credits to meet lattice levels.

If you have additional questions regarding degree programs not represented here, please contact your local Regional Key (<http://www.pakeys.org/profdev/CareerLattice.aspx>).

Q: Why does the coursework have to be specifically in Early Childhood Education?

A: The research about outcomes for children when teachers have training in Early Childhood content is compelling. Working with young children is a profession that requires knowledge of how children grow and develop as well as the skills to communicate effectively with children and parents. Research compiled in the last fifteen years underscores two essential findings: that high quality early learning programs are important for good child outcomes, and that practitioner education and training are keys in providing good early learning experiences.

Why do we want to count ECE-specific coursework?

1. To establish placement on the PA Early Childhood Career Lattice
2. To help individuals make a plan for further study, filling educational gaps and gaining additional ECE content knowledge
3. To account for Early Childhood credits for eligibility for ERA awards for highly qualified staff in child care

To assist you in better understanding this, here is some additional information.

Courses related to ECE specific content areas might begin with –

CHD – Child Development

EDUC – Education

ED – Education

EDSP – Special Education

ECH – Early Childhood

EARL – Early Childhood Education

ECED – Early Childhood Education

EDA – Special Education, Education of Differing Abilities

EDR – Literacy

HDFS – Human Development and Family Studies (specific to young children)

SED – Special Education

Courses beginning with other coding might be ECE specific content if the title includes Early Childhood, Young Child, or if the class description indicates content specific to young children:

HDFS 129 – Introduction to Human Development and Family Studies

MUSI – Music for Early Childhood

EDTF – Instructional Media for Early Childhood Education

PSYC – Psychology of Early Childhood

PSY – Child Psychology

HSR – Management and Administration in Human Services

EI - Strategies for Early Intervention

Many practitioners within early childhood education and school age care may have degrees in “related fields.” While it is important to keep these practitioners in the field, the lattice helps to reinforce the value of ECE specific content to child outcomes by requiring varying numbers of ECE credits to meet lattice levels.

For more information, contact your local Regional Key or the Pa Key (<http://www.pakeys.org/profdev/CareerLattice.aspx>).

Q: Why do teachers-in-training get placed in certain settings for student teaching and not others?

A: Student teaching assignments, required by Chapter 49, are at the discretion of the degree-granting institution, or the Institution of Higher Education (IHE). The IHE establishes close partnerships with a variety of community partners in practice and there are no restrictions on student teaching in private or parochial environments (other than they must be a certified and recognized entity). The Office of Child Development and Early Learning has no authority over the placement of student teachers.

To request assistance strengthening partnerships between early child care programs and local IHEs, please contact your local Regional Key or the Pa Key for assistance.

Q: It feels like I’m losing both staff and students to the new Pre K Counts initiative.

A: Pre K Counts provides resources for high quality pre-kindergarten experiences to at- risk children and their families. PA Pre-K Counts funding provides for sufficient funds to pay its teachers professional salaries. While together this may cause a non participating child care provider to have concerns, in reality PA Pre-K Counts is able to serve less than 4% of the eligible population. There are less than 12,000 children enrolled statewide and there are 280,000 children in the age cohort of those that can be enrolled.

Q: Is there a statewide ‘health insurance umbrella’ for child care workers?

A: Although no formal Pennsylvania health insurance program is targeted specifically to early childhood educators, there are many groups and organizations that might help. Here is a list of those.

- Insurance Department, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, <http://www.ins.state.pa.us.rtrk.com/ins/site/default.asp>
- NAEYC, Preferred Members Services, http://www.ftj.com/product_list.php
- PA Department of Public Welfare, Adult Basic, <http://www.ins.state.pa.us.rtrk.com/ins/cwp/view.asp?a=1336&Q=543266&PM=1>
- PA Department of Public Welfare, Healthcare and Medical Assistance, <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/MedicalAssistance/>
- PACCA, Member Services Referral, (717) 657-9000
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- Local and participating employment unions