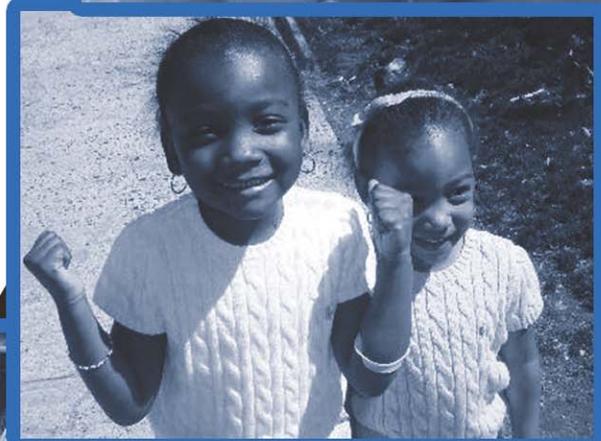




**pennsylvania**  
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
AND EARLY LEARNING

**Annual Report**  
**2008 - 2009**

Pennsylvania Departments of Education  
and Public Welfare  
Office of Child Development and Early Learning



Keystone STARS moves from a pilot program to statewide implementation 6/03	Work begins to change the scope of the teaching certificates for early childhood education, elementary education, and special education and to strengthen the teacher preparation program approval guidelines 8/04	Task Force recommends reformed Special Education Guidelines for institutions of higher education 5/05	PA Early Learning Keys to Quality, a regional approach that combines practitioner professional development and the Keystone STARS quality improvement programs, is created 7/05
Pennsylvania becomes a BUILD Initiative state partner 8/03	More than 2,000 early learning practitioners participate in early childhood-specific summer professional development 8/04	State-wide Infant-Toddler Strategy created 5/05	Pennsylvania awards first MAWA Performance Grants for Inclusive Practices, a competitive grant, for Preschool Early Intervention Programs to increase the number of children with developmental delays/disabilities included in typical early childhood programs 7/05
PA legislature approves two new funding streams for early childhood education: Head Start Supplemental Assistance to serve 2,484 children in 04-05; and Accountability Block Grant to fund programs that will enhance students' academic achievement and school readiness in school districts and includes three early childhood options: pre-kindergarten, full-day kindergarten, and reduced class size in grades K-3, serve over 54,000 children in ABG-funded full day kindergarten and 3,000 children in ABG-funded pre-kindergarten 7/04	Office of Child Development established 9/04	Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership for Educational Success, a public-private initiative, begins funding districts, Head Start, child care and Early Intervention teams to create high quality pre-kindergarten programs. Lead funding provided by Heinz Endowments, the Grable Foundation and the William Penn Foundation 6/05	Early Childhood Capital Investment Fund, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania State Public School Building Authority, launched a \$5 million revolving low-interest loan fund to help school districts invest more fully in early childhood education 7/05
PA legislature approves funding for 04-05 to serve: Over 100,000 children (monthly average) through Child Care Works Over 63,000 children through Early Intervention (birth-5) Over 62,000 children through school-funded Full Day Kindergarten Over 132,000 children through Keystone STARS Nearly 3,700 children through Nurse-Family Partnership 1,400 children through Parent-Child Home Program 7/04	Children's Trust Fund awards \$1,795,976 in grants to 13 community-based agencies to implement child abuse and neglect prevention programs. 11/04	PA legislature approves funding for 05-06 to serve approximately: Over 118,000 children (monthly average) through Child Care Works; Over 66,000 children through Early Intervention (birth-5); Over 54,000 children through ABG-funded full day kindergarten; Over 68,000 children through school-funded full day kindergarten; Nearly 4,800 children through Head Start State Supplemental; Nearly 154,000 children through Keystone STARS; Nearly 3,800 children through Nurse-Family Partnership; Over 1,000 children through Parent-Child Home Program; Nearly 3,700 children through ABG-funded pre-kindergarten; Over 8,000 children through school-funded pre-k and K4 7/05	Child Care Works eligibility regulations revised and new rules remove barriers and increase access for low-income families 7/05
Two Governor's Institutes are offered for early childhood practitioners focusing on literacy 7/04	Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten published 12/04	Task Force recommends reformed Early Childhood Education Guidelines for institutions of higher education 12/04	Work begins on developing a single, unified subsidy system to serve all families eligible for subsidized child care 7/05
Keystone STARS is opened to family child care providers 7/04	Director Credential created for early childhood and school-age program directors and administrators 12/04	Task Force recommends reformed Elementary Education Guidelines for institutions of higher education 3/05	Child outcomes reporting is piloted among select Early Intervention programs 7/05
			Early Childhood Education Partnership Conference held with US Department of Health and Human Services, Region III 9/05

Department of Welfare and Department of Education hold joint Annual Early Childhood Education conference 10/05	Pennsylvania initiates statewide annual "One Book, Every Young Child" campaign 4/06	New pre-certification orientation video introduced for prospective child care centers and group child care homes 7/06	Pennsylvania OCDEL is created in the Departments of Education and Public Welfare which includes the programs of Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention 1/07
Support received from The Heinz Endowments for the Color Me Healthy (child nutrition) program and for a pilot infant/toddler mental health consultation program in western Pennsylvania 11/05	Parents are provided information on Keystone STARS as part of their parent Resource & Referral services at CCIS agencies 5/06	Keystone STARS is open to Head Start programs 9/06	First "Program Reach and County Risk Assessment" report is published 1/07
Infant/Toddler Mental Health Initiative Consultation implemented in three Regional Keys 1/06	Early Childhood Career Lattice is released 5/06	Director Credential and Portfolio Policies and Procedures, and Portfolio Submission Option created 11/06	"Friends of Children's Trust Fund" nonprofit organization created to accept/solicit private and federal investments in the Children's Trust Fund program 3/07
PA Department of Education launches the campaign for career and technical education facilities, promoting student preparation for CDA certification 2/06	"Partnering for Success: Pre-kindergarten Programs in Pennsylvania" a guide book to promote pre-kindergarten partnerships is published 6/06	"Evaluation of Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS Quality Rating System in Child Care Settings" published - finds Keystone STARS is improving quality of child care and reversing the negative trend of declining quality over the past decade 12/06	Pennsylvania's Promise for Children campaign launched 4/07
Development of a common set of child outcomes assessments for all early care and education programs in Pennsylvania begins 2/06	Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is created 6/06	TANF child care regulations revised to allow for the creation of a single, unified child care subsidy system 12/06	Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership for Educational Success holds inaugural Executive Leadership Council meeting, co-chaired by PNC CEO Jim Rohr and Governor Ed Rendell 4/07
First-ever pre-kindergarten regulations for public schools established by the State Board of Education 3/06	PA legislature approves funding for 06-07 to serve: Over 122,000 children (monthly average) through Child Care Works; Nearly 70,000 children through Early Intervention (birth-5); Over 55,000 children through ABG-funded full day kindergarten; Nearly 70,000 children through school-funded full day kindergarten;	State Board of Education regulations regarding pre-kindergarten programs (Title 22, Ch 4, 11, 12) go into effect 12/06	Planning phase for the Early Learning Network begins 5/07
Parent Handbook developed for all Child Care Works families that are eligible for child care subsidy 3/06	Nearly 6,000 children through Head Start State Supplemental; Over 138,000 children through Keystone STARS; Nearly 4,000 children through Nurse-FamilyPartnership; Over 4,000 children through ABG-funded pre-kindergarten; Over 10,000 children through school-funded pre-k and K4 7/06	Pennsylvania convenes early childhood and K-12 communities to facilitate the development of kindergarten transition planning based on the nationally-recognized framework by Dr Robert Pianta 12/06	Unification of Child Care Works subsidy program for all parents under Child Care Information Services agencies completed 6/07
"Kindergarten, Here I Come", an activity guide for families, is published, which provides monthly parenting information and at-home experiences that are linked to Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten 4/06		OCDEL receives grant from US Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to develop a common system of measuring child progress across state early childhood programs including Early Intervention 12/06	PA Learning Standards for Infants and Toddlers are published 5/07



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December 14, 2009

With the economic downturn, the past year was a difficult one for Pennsylvania and its citizens. We were all forced to closely examine and prioritize our investments. As we weather this storm, quality early education continues to shine as a beacon of hope for a brighter economic future.

We are pleased to present the Office of Child Development and Early Learning's annual report for 2008-2009. As you will read, Pennsylvania has made some impressive progress over the course of this year. For example:

- Quality design was improved through initiatives such as the revision of child care regulations for the first time in 16 years; the first comprehensive evaluation of Learning Standards for Early Childhood to ensure alignment from birth through third grade; and the creation of the new credential in Early Intervention Language Special Instruction.
- Accountability and documentation of positive outcomes was deepened with the development of the Keystone STARS Technical Assistance Quality Assurance and Accountability System and continued development of the PELICAN (Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks) and Early Learning Network systems.
- Leadership to champion quality early education as a priority for Pennsylvania grew through the new Early Learning Council and Early Learning Investment Commission.

Pennsylvania has become a leader in early education, achieving many firsts among states and the nation. This progress sets the stage for a new chapter in state governance to deepen our investment to serve more children well, complete our work to support effective accountability and documentation, and increase access for infants and toddlers to quality early education.

When our young children reach their promise through quality early education, we all benefit. I invite you to join in celebrating our achievements over the past year and supporting our future success for our young children.

Sincerely,

Estelle B. Richman  
Secretary of Public Welfare

Gerald L. Zahorchak, D.Ed.  
Secretary of Education

Enclosure



## 2008-2009 Annual Report

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<b>I.</b>	<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Keeping Pennsylvania’s Momentum .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>Building a Quality Early Education Continuum .....</b>	<b>9</b>
	Strive for higher quality and reach all children and families that can benefit .....	9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher quality and career development supports</li> <li>• Program quality and supports</li> <li>• Alignment of programs</li> <li>• Meeting the diverse needs of families</li> </ul>	
	Refine accountability and document positive outcomes for children .....	23
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring and continuous quality improvement among all programs</li> <li>• Environment Rating Scales (ERS) Assessments</li> <li>• PELICAN</li> <li>• Early Learning Network</li> </ul>	
	Build leadership in our communities and among state decisionmakers to champion quality early education as a priority for Pennsylvania .....	26
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Learning Council and subcommittees</li> <li>• Early Learning Investment Commission and business development</li> <li>• Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups</li> <li>• Pennsylvania’s Promise for Children</li> <li>• OCDEL Listservs</li> </ul>	
<b>IV</b>	<b>Profiles of OCDEL Programs .....</b>	<b>29</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability Block Grant</li> <li>• Child Care Certification</li> <li>• Child Care Works</li> <li>• Children’s Trust Fund</li> <li>• Early Intervention</li> <li>• Full Day Kindergarten</li> <li>• Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program</li> <li>• Keystone STARS/ Early Learning Keys to Quality</li> <li>• Parent-Child Home Program</li> <li>• Pennsylvania Nurse-Family Partnership</li> <li>• Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts</li> <li>• Public-Private Partnerships</li> </ul>	
<b>V.</b>	<b>Vision for Tomorrow .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>VI</b>	<b>Early Childhood Education County profiles .....</b>	<b>49</b>

## I. Executive Summary

Not in recent history has our nation's economy been in such distress as it was in 2008-2009. The economic crisis has forced policymakers and citizens to examine funding at every level. Investing in early education is one strategy that should rise to the top when looking to support today's economy and build a stronger future.

A recent Cornell University study showed that Pennsylvania's early childhood education sector has a higher multiplier effect on our economy than any other sector. For every dollar Pennsylvania invests in early childhood programs, more than two dollars is circulated throughout our local economies through employment and purchasing of goods and services.<sup>1</sup> In addition, today's working parents—and their employers—rely on access to early education programs to continue to work, be more productive at work and have less absenteeism.

*My grandson started in Sonrise Christian Day School when he was 18 months old. From the beginning it was a great experience for him as well as us. The school is part of the Keystone STARS system and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. My grandson is now four years old and will be attending kindergarten next fall. I am confident he will do very well in school because of the strong foundation he received from Sonrise. The staff is highly trained and compassionate. He enjoys going to school and is learning by leaps and bounds. My daughter receives help from the state for his tuition and it has been a true blessing.*

Wendy VanCleve, Grandmother, Delaware County

These immediate benefits pale in comparison to the long-term economic benefits of providing quality early education. Quality early education saves tax dollars on special education, remediation, prisons, and public assistance. It also provides kids who would otherwise struggle or fail in school the strong start they need to graduate high school, attend college, get good jobs, own homes, and pay taxes.

Since 2003, Pennsylvania has worked to build a quality early education continuum that serves the diverse needs of families with children from birth to age five through school-age. To build this system, Pennsylvania continues to:

- **Strive for higher quality and reach all children and families that can benefit:** Quality standards and programs that produce the positive child outcomes documented by 40 years of research and align well with each other.
- **Refine accountability and document positive outcomes for children:** Systems to monitor performance of local programs and provide technical assistance to address concerns and continue to improve quality. By documenting how children are doing, Pennsylvania can refine the system to better serve future generations.
- **Build leadership in our communities and among state decisionmakers to champion quality early education as a priority for Pennsylvania:** Promoting early learning in young children involves all Pennsylvanians. Community involvement is vital to reaching vulnerable children and making effective local investments.

The work of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and its partners throughout the commonwealth has created a culture of continuous quality improvement among early learning programs, greater participation among school districts in early education, and more quality early learning opportunities for young children.

For example, since 2003:

- the percentage of child care centers participating in Keystone STARS has more than doubled (from 32% in 2002-2003 to 75% in 2008-2009);
- the percentage of school districts offering pre-kindergarten programs has quadrupled (from 6% in 2003-2004 to 26% in 2008-2009); and
- the percentage of Pennsylvania's three and four year olds participating in high quality early education programs has doubled (from 18% in 2002-2003 to 35% in 2008-2009).

## Highlights from 2008-2009

In 2008-2009 OCDEL focused on creating more quality early learning opportunities for children, assuring strong implementation and coordination among programs, building accountability into the system, and beginning development of a system to document positive outcomes for children. Here are some highlights from the year:

### Strive for higher quality and reach all children and families that can benefit

- Pennsylvania revised its child care regulations for the first time in 16 years.
- OCDEL completed a nine-part series of training videos on the Learning Standards for Early Childhood to help early learning directors, teachers and staff make the most of this resource. New parent companion guides to the learning standards were also released, including *Learning Is Everywhere*, a birth-five activity guide that provides activities for families to do together in various learning locations and *Kindergarten, Here I Am*, a 15-month activity guide that supports skill-building activities before, during and after kindergarten.
- OCDEL published its second Program Reach and Risk Assessment Report, including information on risk and reach for each county and Pennsylvania's 27 largest cities.
- OCDEL published its English Language Learner Toolkit to help early education providers increase their cultural competence and provide higher quality experiences to English Language Learners and their families.
- OCDEL's Braiding Preschool Funding Task Force provided tools and professional development to early learning programs for making most efficient use of the various state and federal funding streams available for pre-kindergarten.
- OCDEL and Early Intervention Technical Assistance piloted a new professional development series that results in a credential in Early Intervention Language Special Instruction.
- In 2008, Pennsylvania was one of seven states invited to develop a plan to integrate the Strengthening Families approach into its programs.

### RESULTS:

- Overall, the alignment study of Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood found the standards and assessments are strong and show good alignment across grade levels.
- Nearly one-third (32%) of Keystone STARS programs moved up at least one STAR level in 2008-2009. There was a 30% increase in the number of STAR 3 and 4 programs between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.
- Environment Rating Scale scores have increased among Keystone STARS programs for 2008-2009. The overall average score for STAR 3 sites was 5.23 in 2008-2009, which is

*One of my children I taught in Early Intervention from about 16 years ago just completed the Para educator academy at our IU and we hired her as an assistant teacher in one of our classrooms. I am so proud of her and her accomplishments, and she got her start in our program!*

Cheri L. Woyurka, M. ED,  
Berks County Intermediate Unit, Berks County

an increase from 2007-2008 when the average score was 5.06. STAR 4 sites scored an overall average of 5.48 in 2008-2009, which is an increase from 2007-2008 when the average score was 5.31.

- More families accessing Child Care Works subsidy using regulated care than ever before, with 70% of TANF children receiving child care assistance are using regulated child care in 2008-2009, a 38% increase since Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies began providing child care services to TANF families in 2006-2007.
- Nearly all (95%) children in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms were affected by at least one risk factor for academic failure, such as living in low income families, learning English as a second language, or having disabilities or developmental delays. Most (77%) were affected by two or more risk factors, making them more likely to struggle in school.
- 60% more bachelor's degree scholarships were awarded through T.E.A.C.H. than in 2007-2008.
- There was a 76% increase in the number of Director's Credentials awarded between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.
- Over the past two years, OCDEL has observed a nearly 15% increase in the number of children included in typical early childhood programs, resulting in a total of 63% of all children in preschool Early Intervention receiving their services in these settings (e.g. child care, Head Start, preschool) in 2008-2009.

### **Refine accountability and document positive outcomes for children**

- In 2008 – 2009 Pennsylvania developed the Keystone STARS Technical Assistance Quality Assurance and Accountability System to support consistency and quality in technical assistance across the commonwealth.
- OCDEL continued development of Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks (PELICAN) In 2008-2009, PELICAN Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts entered phase two. PELICAN Infant/Toddler Early Intervention was piloted in four counties and preparation began for development of PELICAN Preschool Early Intervention.
- The next phase of Pennsylvania's Early Learning Network began with Early Intervention programs and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs reporting child outcomes online through the Ounce and Work Sampling online reporting tools.

### **RESULTS:**

- In 2008-2009, ERS assessors conducted approximately 1680 classroom assessments, a 75% increase from 2007-2008.
- Nearly every child (99 percent) showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and social skills after attending the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program.
- 57% of the preschool children who entered Early Intervention after July 1, 2008 and exited Early Intervention prior to June 30, 2009 actually function within age expectations.
- 75% of children receiving Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services demonstrated that their original issues had ceased or had significantly decreased or that had been successfully referred to other support services.

### **Build leadership in our communities and among state decisionmakers to champion quality early education as a priority for Pennsylvania**

- Governor Rendell created by Executive Order the Pennsylvania Early Learning Council and Early Learning Investment Commission as avenues to include the early education and business communities in policy development and outreach.
- Expanded Pennsylvania's Promise for Children campaign with upgraded Pennsylvania's Promise for Children website to include "Early Education in My County" and Tell Your Story sections.

- Community Engagement Groups reported that over 1.6 million children, parents and community members throughout the commonwealth were involved in events such as recognition events, legislative meetings, Week of the Young Child events, or community fairs.

## RESULTS:

- Between July 2008 - June 2009, the number of PA Promise declarations more than doubled from 4,303 to 9,887 declarations.
- Between July 2008-June 2009, the number of Build News subscribers more than doubled from 3,403 to 8,045 subscribers.

## Vision for tomorrow

Building a quality early education continuum is a marathon, not a sprint. Each year Pennsylvania has refined its system through continuous quality improvement and serving more children.

In 2009-2010, Pennsylvania will continue its work to create a more seamless pathway of professional development for early childhood educators at all levels; increase accountability and documenting positive outcomes; align the early education system with the full education continuum; and build leadership at all levels.

### **Ruby Alblasy, Amber and Logan Chester County**

I am the mother of two children: Amber (11 years) and Logan (7 years). I first became pregnant when I was 16. It was then that I enrolled in CAT Pickering Vocational school to pursue their child care program so that I could learn how to take care of my child while obtaining a real job skill. Their Young Parents Program became a major support for me. They encouraged me to stay in school and gave me an awareness and practical expectations as a mother to be and beyond. It was there that I began to develop parent and life skills that are still with me today.

After I had my daughter I was able to receive Child Care Works assistance. Child Care Works allowed me to continue school, work and adequately provide for my family. I was able to go to school part-time and work part-time at the child care center my child attended. It was crucial to me that my child had the chance to attend a quality program. With this peace of mind I was able to finish high school, graduating in the top of my class After 10 years, I was able to finish my associate's degree with a 3.66 GPA and have started working towards my bachelor's degree.

This year I am hoping for funding to send my children to Warwick Child Care Center where I currently work and can attest to their STAR 4 quality of care. Warwick accepts Child Care Works, takes pride as a STAR 4 center, has a great Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classroom and participates in the T.E.A.C.H. program. You can see the direct benefits in the children enrolled and their families, as well as in their valued employees, surrounding communities and outreach efforts. I am a product of these programs and I could never have done this without all the support.



## II. Keeping Pennsylvania's Momentum

As Pennsylvania moves to the end of an Administration, now is the time to review progress made to educate our youngest citizens, identify gaps, and set a path for continuous quality improvement for the future.

### Pennsylvania's Progress since 2003

Since 2003, Pennsylvania has moved from one of nine states to offer no publicly-funded pre-kindergarten to one of the nation's leaders in early education. Pennsylvania has committed to building an early education system with a culture of continuous quality improvement that works for families. By focusing on quality standards and program design; supports to meet standards; monitoring and accountability; financial supports; and community engagement and outreach, Pennsylvania has built the foundation for a system that offers more quality early education options for families.

#### Pennsylvania is one of the first states to:

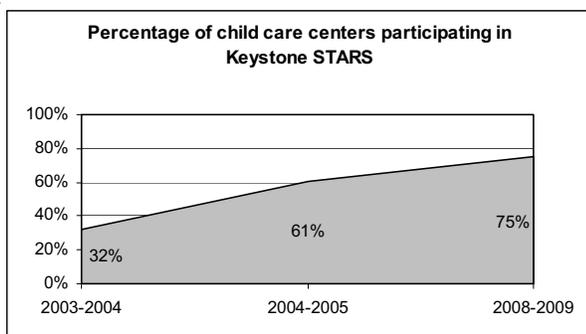
- Establish learning standards for early childhood from birth through third grade and commission an independent study to ensure alignment of all standards;
- Establish a state-funded quality pre-kindergarten system that includes both school-based and community-based early education programs (Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts);
- Create a cohesive Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) that brings together the resources and expertise for early education, spanning across state agencies; and
- Develop a common set of child outcomes assessments for all state-funded early learning programs and a system to report outcomes (Early Learning Network).

#### Since 2003, Pennsylvania has also:

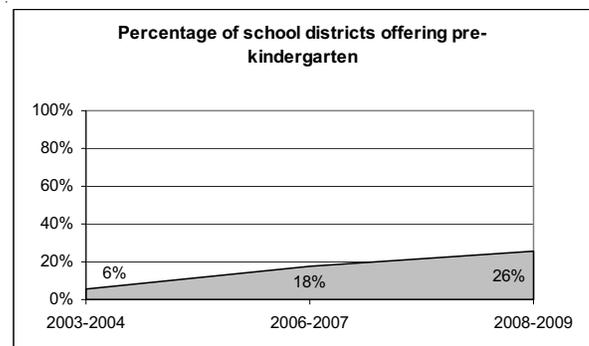
- Created an Early Childhood Education Career Lattice and established three professional credentials for early childhood teachers and directors;
- Brought to full implementation or created four new early childhood programs – Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental, and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation;
- Increased early education programs' capacity to serve children from diverse backgrounds through the Race Matters Initiative, Higher Education Institute on Diversity, and English Language Learners Toolkit; and
- Successfully partnered with leading private foundations to build pre-kindergarten partnerships, increase public awareness for the value of early education, recruit business leaders as spokespeople for investment in early education, and create a more seamless system for early childhood professionals to increase their education.

As a result of these efforts to build a quality early education continuum:

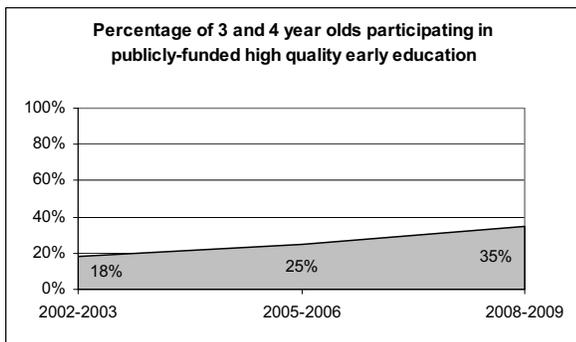
the percentage of child care centers participating in Keystone STARS has more than doubled;



the percentage of school districts offering pre-kindergarten programs has quadrupled; and



the percentage of Pennsylvania's three and four year olds participating in high quality early education programs has nearly doubled.



*Child Care Works allows me to provide my son with stimulation and education a growing child needs. Without this program, we would both lose out on the opportunity to grow.*

Parent, Northampton County

## Recommended Next Steps for a Brighter Future

Pennsylvania's progress, though impressive, requires additional leadership and investment for an early education continuum that serves all the families who can benefit.

### The need is clear:

According to OCDEL's Program Reach and Risk Assessment for 2008-2009:

- Of the 67 counties, children in 51 (76%) counties are at moderate-high or high risk of school failure; of the 27 largest cities, children in 24 (89%) are at moderate-high or high risk of school failure. Every community has children affected by risk factors for school failure. For example, approximately one-third of children in Pennsylvania (37%) under age five are living in low-income families; each county has at least 15% of its children under age five living in low-income families. In 20 of our 27 largest cities, more than half of the children under age five live in low-income families.
- Approximately one-third (36%) of Pennsylvania's children from birth to age five participate in publicly-funded quality early childhood programs, with thousands more children who could benefit from these programs that do not have access to them in every county in Pennsylvania.

### Likewise, the demand from Pennsylvania families is clear:

- Waiting lists for OCDEL programs are rapidly multiplying:
  - Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Child Care Works have doubled the waiting lists they had a year ago:
    - More than 7,800 eligible children are on waiting lists for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts for the 2009-2010 school year. This is more than twice the waiting lists that programs had at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.
    - 16,000 eligible children are on waiting lists for Child Care Works in April 2009, more than double the number of children who were on waiting lists April 2008.
  - At least 2,000 eligible children are on waiting lists for Head Start throughout the commonwealth.
  - Nearly 100 expectant mothers are on waiting lists for Nurse-Family Partnership, although most NFP programs do not maintain waiting lists but refer clients to other services. Expectant mothers in 30 of Pennsylvania's counties do not have access to NFP – 12 of those counties have actively expressed interest in implementing the program.

As Pennsylvania looks to a new chapter, it is essential to continue its momentum to provide a quality education for all of Pennsylvania's children. Three action steps include:

**1. Deepen the investment to serve more children well.** Pennsylvania has seen a positive trend of more early learning programs and school districts offering quality early education. In order for that trend to continue, Pennsylvania will need to deepen its investment in signature initiatives such as Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Keystone STARS, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parent Child Home Program.

For example, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts has demonstrated positive outcomes for our most at-risk children yet only about four percent (4%) of Pennsylvania's three and four year olds have access to the program. By serving more children in this high quality program, we can improve children's readiness for school and cut special education and remediation services. More investment is needed to expand this program to more children who can benefit.

Another example is Keystone STARS. Approximately 75% of child care centers participate in Keystone STARS, yet only 17% of these participating centers are at the STAR 3 or 4 level. There has been a positive trend of Keystone STARS programs moving up the STARS ladder; as they do so, Pennsylvania will see better outcomes for children enrolled in those programs. But a deepened investment in Keystone STARS will be necessary to support continued quality improvement in these programs and improved child outcomes. At the same time, ongoing support for Child Care Works subsidy is necessary to make quality early education programs financially accessible to our most vulnerable children and to provide the added supports necessary to programs to participate in quality improvement through Keystone STARS.

Several new teacher educational requirements also come into effect in the next few years. Thousands of early childhood professionals are earning credits and working towards CDAs, credentials and college degrees. These professionals, and the next generation of early childhood professionals, need access to colleges and coursework to move up the career lattice and be the best teachers, directors, and administrators they can be.

**2. Complete the work to support effective accountability and documentation.** Accurate data on children enrolled in OCDEL programs and their progress from birth through graduation is essential to effective program and financial management and a quality education for each child. As the PELICAN and Early Learning Network systems are implemented, Pennsylvania will have the most accurate information possible to make quality decisions at the child, classroom, program, regional and state levels. Our commonwealth and our nation need quality data to steer our early education continuum on the right course.

**3. Increase access to quality early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers.** Less than one-fifth (19%) of Pennsylvania's infants and toddlers participate in quality early education programs. Pennsylvania does not yet invest enough in its proven family support programs such as Nurse-Family Partnership and Parent-Child Home Program to meet need. And it lacks a major initiative, on par with Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, to meet the needs of infants and toddlers for quality early childhood services in a group setting.

2008-2009 proved to be a year when Pennsylvania took a close look at the value of early education to the commonwealth's citizens and recognized that when our young children receive a quality early education, everyone in our communities benefit.



### III. Building a quality early education continuum

Effectively serving Pennsylvania's children and families so that our young children enter school ready to learn and to succeed requires a quality early education continuum that can serve all children from birth to five. In building this system, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has focused on three key objectives:

- Strive for higher quality and reach all children and families that can benefit;
- Refine accountability and document positive outcomes for children; and
- Build leadership among our communities and state decisionmakers to champion quality early education as a priority for Pennsylvania.

Several supports that OCDEL offers in building its system serve multiple early childhood programs. Those supports are described below.

#### Strive for higher quality and reach all children and families that can benefit

In order for Pennsylvania's early education continuum to produce results for our children and families, it needs to continue to improve quality while providing more children with access to these programs. Pennsylvania has made a commitment to move forward on both fronts with remarkable results.

Pennsylvania's efforts to improve quality while expanding access include:

- Teacher quality and career development supports;
- Program quality and supports;
- Alignment of programs; and
- Meeting the diverse needs of families.

#### Teacher quality and career development supports

Teacher quality is critical to the success of an early learning program. Qualified teachers keep children engaged, promote positive development, address concerns, and work with parents to create learning experiences both in school and at home. Several studies have found that the presence of teachers with a bachelor's degree specialized in early childhood education leads to better outcomes for young children.<sup>2</sup> The 2006 independent study of Keystone STARS programs also found that classrooms with teachers who had at least an associate's degree had significantly higher Environment Rating Scale scores.<sup>3</sup> As with any profession, continuing professional development is necessary to refine skills and gain updated knowledge.

Because of new educational requirements slated to come into effect in 2010-2013, both early childhood education professionals and programs have increased their demand for access to higher education.

*Although we always felt we provided quality, educational care, the Keystone STARS program has had us examine all aspects of our program and helped us to elevate our standards even higher. Our staff have achieved professional gains and we strive to continue to further their education and keep our goals elevated. All children, regardless of family income, deserve the best start possible. OCDEL's programs make this possible by helping a non-profit provider like us, make quality early education a reality to all.*

Carol Martin, Jenkintown Day Nursery, Montgomery County

**Teacher Certification (Ch. 49-2).** In August 2007, changes were approved to the structure of teaching certificates in Pennsylvania beginning January 2013. Key aspects of the changes:

- By January 1, 2011, all teacher education programs must include nine credits or 270 hours of instruction and field experience in accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting, including instruction in literacy skills development and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities. At least three credits or 90 additional hours must address the instructional needs of English language learners.
- January 1, 2013 is the effective date for issuing the new certificates – Early Childhood Education (PK-Grade 4); Elementary/Middle (Grades 4-8); Special Education (PK-Grade 8) with a dual in Early Childhood Education, Elementary/Middle, or Reading Specialist; Special Education (Grades 7-12) with a dual in Secondary Education or Reading Specialist.
- Community providers providing pre-kindergarten services on behalf of school districts must also use teachers who have an Early Childhood Education certificate, within five years of the effective date of the regulations (September 1, 2007) or within five years of the date of the contract.

Current Structure		Structure as of January 1, 2013	
Early Childhood Education	Nursery Kindergarten Grades 1 – 3 or Ages 3 - 8	Early Childhood Education	Pre-kindergarten Kindergarten Grades 1 – 4 or Ages 3 - 9
Elementary Education	Kindergarten Grades 1 – 6 or Ages 3 – 11	Elementary/Middle Education	Grades 4 – 8 or Ages 9 through 14
Special Education	Nursery through grade 12 Up to age 21	Special Education PK – Grade 8	Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grades 1 - 8 or Ages 3 - 14 with dual in Early Childhood Education, Elementary/Middle Education or Reading Specialist
		Special Education Grades 7-12	Grades 7 - 12 or Ages 11 through 21 with dual in Secondary Education or Reading Specialist

*My son, Steven's, spoken English has improved tremendously and he has become more open and talkative after joining the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program. My husband and I are very excited about his impressive progress in language and social ability.*  
Yanhua Wang, Parent  
Centre County

Individual early education programs in Pennsylvania also have higher educational requirements coming into effect in the next few years. For example:

In Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts:

- By 2011, all lead teachers in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms must have their teacher certification in early childhood education (currently, only school district classrooms require certified lead teachers).
- By July 2009, all teacher aides must have a Child Development Associate credential or two years of post-secondary study (in 08-09, there were no educational requirements).
- By July 2009, all child care programs participating in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts must have a STAR 3 rating or higher (in 08-09, programs needed a STAR 2 or higher. STAR 3 has higher education requirements for staff.)

In Head Start:

- By 2013, the Education Coordinator must have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field (currently, they may have an associate's degree).
- By 2013, half of lead teachers must have their bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field (currently, they may have an associate's degree or CDA).
- By 2013, Teachers aides must have a CDA or associate's degree (currently, they must have a high school equivalency).

Also, as of 2010, Keystone STAR 4 programs will be required to have a higher percentage (50%) of lead teachers with bachelor's degrees in early childhood education or related field.

These new challenges for teachers are creating even greater demand for career development opportunities and supports. To help professionals meet these demands, Pennsylvania offers a number of supports including:

- Setting a career path in early education through the ECE Career Lattice;
- Improving access to higher education for early childhood professionals;
- Professional Credential programs for early childhood education;
- Education and Retention Awards;
- Early Intervention Technical Assistance;
- Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS); and
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program.

**Setting a career path in early education: Early Childhood Education Career Lattice.** The Early Childhood Education Career Lattice outlines the career options available for individuals interested in working in early education. It helps those who are new and veteran to the field make smart education and professional development choices that can help advance their career.

The Career Lattice<sup>4</sup> is organized in eight levels that indicate the level of education that is required for positions in child care/ school-age care, Early Head Start/Head Start, Early Intervention, public schools, private academic schools, consultants/mentors/trainers, and higher education faculty.

**Improving access to higher education for early childhood professionals.** Staff who have college credits from credential programs or associate's degrees are increasingly returning to school to earn bachelor's degrees and teacher certification in Early Childhood Education. OCDEL's collaboration with the higher education and foundation communities is making it easier for higher education institutions to offer early childhood education degrees and for early childhood staff to earn those degrees.

**Innovation Grant – Gate Opener Project.** OCDEL in collaboration with the PA Key and the Grable Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and the William Penn Foundation issued its first grants to nine higher education institutions which will support early childhood professionals to earn the degrees and certifications necessary for careers in early childhood education. These projects will assist teachers working in Keystone STARS programs; Head Start; and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts to earn bachelor's degrees and certification in early childhood education. The grant period is FY 2009-2010.

Grantees will develop strategies to address seven barriers identified by approximately 650 early education professionals and 40 higher education institution representatives across the commonwealth. The barriers identified by students and programs include: student teaching requirements; accessibility to degree programs; upfront payment of tuition; PRAXIS I test; only needing the ECE Certification; experience not counting toward credits; and the fear/anxiety going back to school.

Higher Education Articulation Project. In 2007-2008, OCDEL in partnership with the State System of Higher Education began working with two and four year higher education institutions to develop a seamless program-to-program early childhood education (ECE) articulation and make it easier for early childhood students to transfer all associate's degree credits into a four year program. In 2008-2009, a total of 38 higher education institutions joined four program-to-program ECE articulation project teams led by Bloomsburg, West Chester, Shippensburg and Slippery Rock Universities. The four teams comprise of all the 13 community colleges, six private two-year institutions, nine state four year institutions and 10 private four-year colleges and universities.



The focus of the projects is to develop ECE program-to-program articulation agreements between two-year and four-year ECE programs based on core competencies in NAEYC Standards and PreK-4 Guidelines for teacher preparation. Two year institutions are redesigning their curriculum to meet both NAEYC Standards and PreK-4 Guidelines. The first three teams funded for the pilot project, under the leadership of Bloomsburg, West Chester and Shippensburg Universities, have begun drafting program-to-program ECE articulation agreements between two and four year institutions. The articulation agreements will be in effect upon PDE approval of the new PreK-4 curriculum of the four-year institutions that are articulation pilot team members.

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships. T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) works with child care and Head Start programs, early childhood staff and higher education institutions to offer scholarship programs and supports that improve the education and compensation of early childhood staff. Scholarships are offered for Child Development Associate (CDA) credential coursework and assessment; Pennsylvania Director Credential; associate's and bachelor's degree programs and teacher certification.

In 2008-2009, approximately 3,357 individuals received T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to attend 48 colleges and universities throughout the commonwealth. Sixty percent (60%) more bachelor's degree scholarships were awarded in 2008-2009 than in 2007-2008. Four new higher education institutions signed agreements to collaborate with T.E.A.C.H. in 2008-2009.

Additionally 184 scholarship recipients graduated with a degree or credential in 2008-2009:

- 32 recipients earned a CDA Credential (through the Assessment Scholarship);
- 35 recipients completed CDA Coursework;
- 79 recipients earned an associate's degree;
- 20 recipients earned a bachelor's degree;
- 13 recipients earned a Director's Credential;
- 4 recipients earned a Master's Degree with Certification in ECE; and
- 1 recipient earned ECE Certification.

In 2008-2009 Pennsylvania was selected as one of three states to participate in a national initiative to pilot a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship for afterschool and youth work professionals. Implementation of the scholarship is accomplished through a partnership between the Pennsylvania Key, Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA), Pennsylvania Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN), the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST). The new T.E.A.C.H. Afterschool and

*I do not believe without Nurse-Family Partnership I would have been able to achieve the confidence and success I feel as a mother and a provider.*

Shaniqua Gerard, Parent, Monroe County

Youth Work Scholarship provides financial assistance and other supports for 25 staff to earn college coursework toward a Pennsylvania School Age Professional Credential, Youth Work Certificate or Associate's degree. The initiative is funded by Cornerstones for Kids, OCDEL and United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Voucher Program. PA Keys to Professional Development Refund Voucher Program offers reimbursement to teachers working in STAR 1 or above child care programs and working in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms for courses that earn college credits (including CDA coursework) and payment for the CDA assessment. In 2008-2009, approximately 3,030 vouchers were awarded to professionals for their coursework.

**Professional Credential programs for early childhood education.** Professional credentials are an important step on the career development ladder for early childhood education professionals. In addition to providing financial assistance to earn the CDA credential<sup>5</sup>, OCDEL developed the following credentials:

- Pennsylvania Director's Credential –The Pennsylvania Director's Credential provides a standard by which to measure program management, fiscal and leadership abilities of directors and administrators of early childhood and school-age programs. The Pennsylvania Director Credential is one of 17 States' director credential programs approved by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Directors can earn the credential through coursework at 37 higher education institutions or through portfolio submission. There was a 76% increase in the number of Director's Credentials awarded in 2008-2009 than in 2007-2008.
- Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential – Modeled after the CDA credential, the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential (SAPC) promotes quality services for children and families by providing specific standards, professional development, and evaluation of school-age practitioners. In 2008-09 the focus was on increasing access through increased online and credit-bearing options as well as a bilingual offering. Looking to the future the goal is to implement a "Second Setting" option for individuals working in school-age programs and currently holding a CDA. Approximately 125 individuals completed their coursework for the credential in 2008-2009, which is half of all professionals completing coursework since the credential was piloted in 2006-2007.
- Early Intervention Language Special Instruction Credential - In 2008-2009, OCDEL and Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) piloted a new professional development series that results in a credential in Early Intervention Language Special Instruction. The credential is a series of four courses that upon demonstration of competency will improve teachers and special instructor's skills to support language and communication development. Eligible participants are teachers or special instructors working with infants, toddlers or preschoolers in Early Intervention. Each course has required documentation of competency. The courses are designed to provide participants with the skills and knowledge to facilitate children's language and communication skills. In 2008-2009, approximately 80 professionals participated in coursework. EITA plans to take this pilot course to scale statewide.

In 2008-2009, 1,683 credentials were awarded to directors, school-age and early childhood professionals, a 12% increase from 2007-2008.

**Education and Retention Awards.** The Keystone STARS Education & Retention Award (ERA) provides financial awards to highly qualified directors and/or teaching staff who have attained specialized degrees, credentials, or relevant credit-based coursework. Child care programs participating in STARS that meet eligibility requirements may apply each year for these awards for their qualified staff. The ERA helps STARS programs retain qualified staff and encourage other staff to pursue higher education, which improves the overall quality of their programs. In 2008-2009, approximately 4,762 early education professionals received Education and Retention Awards, a 22% increase from 2007-2008.

**Early Intervention Technical Assistance.** Early Intervention (EI) professionals have continuing education requirements to meet in their field:

- Teachers, speech and language therapists and supervisors who have PDE instructional certification must complete 180 hours of Act 48 continuing education credits every five years;
- EI professionals working with infants and toddlers must complete 24 hours of training each year.

Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA), Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) provides specialized professional development opportunities for Early Intervention professionals through credit-bearing coursework, workshops, professional development instructors institutes, leadership meetings, and online courses/distance learning.

In addition, EITA/PaTTAN offers a video conference-based professional development series that result in a Credential of Competency for Special Education Paraprofessionals. In 2008-2009 EITA piloted the Early Intervention Language Special Instructor Credential. This EITA/OCDEL credential consists of four competency-based courses which include videos demonstrating competencies with families.

**Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS).** The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) certifies instructors who provide professional development workshops to early childhood and school-age professionals in Pennsylvania. The PQAS System maintains a registry of approved Instructors to help ensure that professional development activities meet quality standards. Pennsylvania also offers PQAS Instructor Institutes to help build skills and knowledge. In 2008-2009, there were approximately 1,700 Professional Development Instructors included in the registry, conducting approximately 3,770 workshops. In 2008-2009, faculty from higher education institutions have been encouraged to become PQAS approved in order to provide their students the opportunity for some of the required professional development within their college class setting. Of the 562 new PQAS approved instructors, 31 higher education faculty received PQAS-approval.

**Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program.** Children who are emotionally healthy have a significantly greater chance of achieving success in school than those with emotional difficulties. Relationships that children form with trusted adults in the home, in an early learning program, and in other parts of their life play a major role in their overall development.<sup>6</sup> Scientific research demonstrates that helping children address social/emotional issues in their early years can improve their ability to learn for life and improve their quality of life and those of their families.<sup>7</sup>

The Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) program provides child specific consultation services to early learning programs to address social/emotional concerns of young children in order to reduce expulsions and promote healthy

*I am so impressed with how knowledgeable and helpful my daughter's Early Intervention specialists are. They are fabulous and do a great job teaching me how to assist my daughter with using the hearing she has and with coping with and overcoming her challenges. What a fantastic program.*

Heidi, Parent, Allegheny County

development. ECMHC services are offered within the framework of the “The Pyramid Model” introduced by The Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Learning<sup>8</sup> ECMHC provides both prevention and intervention services to minimize the child’s need for more intensive services in the future and to increase early childhood practitioner’s confidence and competence in dealing with children with challenging behaviors. ECMHC Consultants work closely with teachers and staff in early learning programs, helping to develop goals and strategies to enhance the development of positive relationships and create a learning environment which promotes positive behaviors. A synthesis of 26 studies concluded ECMHC consultation helped increase staff confidence and competence in dealing with children with challenging behaviors, lower stress, and provide a higher quality of service.<sup>9</sup>



The final report of the project’s pilot phase, from 2006-2008, written by the University of Pittsburgh, noted “the pilot project was very successful in building a solid foundation for the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Programs.”<sup>10</sup>

During the pilot phase the project provided services in three of the six Regional Keys and served children ages birth to three. At the end of the pilot the project expanded services across the commonwealth to all six Regional Keys and to children under age five.

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, 434 children in 48 counties received individualized ECMHC consultation services. Nearly 75% of children demonstrated that their original issues had ceased or had significantly decreased, or they had been successfully referred to other support services.

In program feedback surveys completed by early learning program staff more than 75% of respondents noted improvement in their ability to foster healthy social and emotional development of all children.

### **Program quality and supports**

Qualified teachers require a solid program to provide the best early learning opportunities possible for young children. Strong programs combine qualified teachers, research-based curriculum, observation, assessment and cooperation with the family to create the best possible learning environment for the child.

In order for young children to learn, they need stable relationships with trusted adults and learning environments that stimulate exploration and creativity. Recent research has reinforced that high quality teacher-child interactions correlate as strongly with children’s learning and behavior as teacher education and small class sizes.<sup>11</sup>

Pennsylvania helps all of its early education programs continue to improve their quality through:

- Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood;
- Curriculum and child observation guidance that promotes child development; and
- Sound program management.

**Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood.** OCDEL developed Learning Standards for Early Childhood<sup>12</sup> that apply to infants through second grade to establish a common language for quality, regardless of the type of early learning environment (home, school, community-based program). The standards for Infant –Toddler; Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade establish Pennsylvania’s age-appropriate

*Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts has established consistent standards throughout the Commonwealth. credentialing requirements for teachers, standards for the curriculum used in classrooms, and uniform assessment and measurement of both classroom quality and child performance ensure that the program is high quality and that it results in the intended outcomes for children. The uniformity of these standards and tools across sites promotes this level of quality statewide. Truly, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is having a strong and positive impact on Pennsylvania's children. We at Cen-Clear Child Services are proud to participate in this groundbreaking early childhood education initiative.*

Eugene M. Kephart, D.Ed., Executive Director, Cen-Clear Child Services, Clearfield and Centre Counties

expectations for children's skill development, regardless of the type of early learning environment (home, school, community-based program). All OCDEL early education programs use the Learning Standards for Early Childhood to guide instructional practice.

Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood outline the approaches to learning, communications, (emerging) literacy and numeracy, creative expression, social, and physical skills that a child should be able to know and do and provides guidance for activities to support this development in the learning environment. They are not a curriculum or assessment tool and should be used to guide teachers as they design appropriate learning activities for young children and work with families to engage them in supporting their children's growth and development.

In 2008-09, OCDEL completed a nine-part series of training videos on the Learning Standards for Early Childhood to help early learning directors, teachers and staff make the most of this resource.<sup>13</sup> New parent companion guides to the learning standards were also released, including *Learning Is Everywhere*, a birth-five activity guide that provides activities for families to do together in various learning locations and *Kindergarten, Here I Am*, a 15-month activity guide that supports skill-building activities before, during and after the kindergarten year.

**Curriculum and child observation that promotes child development.** A quality, research-based curriculum guides a teacher to provide learning activities that help every child in the classroom develop. There is no one magic curriculum that is best for every classroom and every child, but a quality curriculum offers activities that are developmentally appropriate. Curriculum includes both the carefully planned environments and activities in the classroom, such as recurring story telling at circle time, and unplanned and spontaneous learning, such as learning about climate and weather during the first snowfall or developing self-regulation skills while waiting for a turn on the slide. No matter what model is used, curriculum "affects students by initiating learning and by exposing students to experiences designed to help all children to attain skills and knowledge and to change values and feelings."<sup>14</sup> OCDEL programs, such as Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental are required to use one or more curricula that align with the PA Early Learning Standards.

In early childhood, a young child's progress cannot be measured by a series of tests; it requires ongoing observations by teachers and parents, collection of the child's work, and the use of a valid and reliable assessment tool. Regular child assessments guide teachers and parents as they work together to support the child's early learning and development. Child assessments are also a valuable tool when evaluating and refining program design and implementation.

Several of OCDEL's early education programs require observation and periodic assessment of a child's progress:

- Pennsylvania's child care certification regulations enacted September 2008 require providers to share information on the child's growth and development with parents as part of their service agreement.
- Pennsylvania selected the Ages and Stages and Ages and Stages: Social and Emotional screening tools for use with children & youth agencies and early learning programs. Ages and Stages have been distributed to children and youth agencies through the Office of Children, Youth and Families to OCDEL programs participating in Keystone STARS.
- Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts grantees are required to assess children three times a year and report those outcomes through Work Sampling Online which are then entered into the Early Learning Network.
- Early Intervention requires programs to assess children at the time of entry into the program, and again when they exit, report those outcomes through Work Sampling Online which are then entered into the Early Learning Network. Beginning July 2009, programs will report child outcomes annually.
- Keystone STARS programs at STAR 2 level and above complete two-three assessments per year, depending on the STAR level. In July 2009, Keystone STAR 3 & 4 programs will begin reporting those outcomes through Work Sampling Online and Ounce Scale which are entered into the Early Learning Network.
- The Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program grantees are required to assess children three times a year. In July 2009 these grantees will begin reporting outcomes through Work Sampling Online which are entered into the Early Learning Network.
- The Parent-Child Home Program assesses children twice a year using Ages & Stages<sup>15</sup>, Parent and Child Together (PACT) and the Child Behavior Traits (CBT).

For more information on OCDEL's plans to collect and track child outcomes, please see the Early Learning Network discussion on page 25.

**Sound Program Management.** OCDEL recognizes the importance of solid business practices in providing quality early education and integrates performance and fiscal standards into its program design. The creation of Keystone STARS, Early Intervention, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, and Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies performance standards provide early learning programs with quality expectations for staff qualifications and professional development, learning activities, working with parents and the community, and best business practices.

For example:

- Keystone STARS include performance standards for Leadership and Management that address the business practices of the early learning program (budgets, policies, staff benefits, etc.)
- Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts grantees must show that their organization provides sound program management in their application and must meet guidelines for fiscal reporting, staff compensation, and program operation.
- Head Start programs follow comprehensive federal Head Start performance standards. Programs participating in the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program also meet fiscal guidelines.
- Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies must meet 12 performance standards that address accuracy and parent satisfaction.
- Early Intervention programs must meet performance indicators such as timeliness of services and providing services in the most inclusive settings possible.

## **Alignment of Programs**

As Pennsylvania's early education system grows, part of OCDEL's continuous quality improvement is making sure that each program aligns with quality standards, with each other and the full education continuum. This alignment means that children and families can receive consistent services, which are important to children's early learning, and Pennsylvania can maximize its public resources. OCDEL's alignment initiatives include:

- Alignment of Learning Standards for Early Childhood;
- Braiding Preschool Funding Task Force;
- Cross Systems Technical Assistance;
- PILS Educational Leadership Training;
- Aligning the Professional Development Record (PDR) with new Teacher Certification requirements; and
- Title I Transition to Kindergarten Grants.

**Alignment of Learning Standards for Early Childhood.** In 2007-2008, Pennsylvania commissioned an independent evaluation of its Learning Standards for Early Childhood to make sure that they aligned with each other and our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade standards. Overall, the alignment study of Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood found the standards and assessments are strong and show good alignment across grade levels. Based upon the recommendations, revisions to the Infant-Toddler, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten standards have been initiated in response to the recommendations from the Alignment Study completed by researchers Lynn Kagan from Columbia and Yale and Catherine Scott Little, University of North Carolina (Greensboro). In addition to providing more fully aligned standards along a continuum of learning, birth through grade three, the revised documents will be aligned with Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned Systems (SAS).

**Braiding Preschool Funding Task Force.** Under the Rendell Administration, multiple new preschool funding streams were established to promote the early education agenda and prepare the commonwealth's young children for school success. As a result of the new funding streams, the OCDEL convened the Braiding Preschool Funding Task Force with the goal of assisting early education programs to utilize the funds appropriately and efficiently. The Task Force looked to assist providers in understanding the fiscal requirements of the different programs, how these requirements worked in relationship with each other, and how to braid the funding to achieve the next level of best practice in fiscal accounting.

A task force of approximately 35 people from Head Start, Child Care, School Districts, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Intermediate Units and OCDEL met over the course of six months in late 2008 to develop training and tools for all early learning programs accessing public funding. Approximately 200 people attended regional training conducted in March 2009; additional training is available locally through the Regional Keys as needed. Several fiscal responsibility and cost allocation tools, including a sample budget, financial statement, and Braiding Allocation Workbook were provided to attendees and are available on the PA Key website.<sup>16</sup>

*This community lacked a quality preschool program until the Montgomery Area School District began to offer Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. My child is learning skills that he otherwise would not have gained had he not had the opportunity to attend.*

Parent, Lycoming County

**Cross Systems Technical Assistance.** Most OCDEL programs have technical assistance support available, such as Preschool Program Specialists for Head Start Supplemental and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs, and STARS technical assistance for Keystone STARS programs. Although each program offers technical assistance support to address the unique requirements of the program, it is important that the technical assistance be aligned across common areas of support. The cross systems technical assistance workgroup is comprised of representatives from agencies within OCDEL that provide technical assistance and

other external agencies. The goal of this group is to explore ways to work together to ensure services are not duplicated and technical assistance is delivered to clients in a consistent way. Cross systems technical assistance work has continued with the development of competencies for technical assistance consultants and professional development for consultants.

**PILS Educational Leadership Training.** As Pennsylvania develops its early education continuum and aligns more closely with the K-12 school system, strong leadership across the education spectrum with understanding of the importance of early education is vital to student achievement. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has begun work to integrate early childhood education concepts and leaders into existing leadership training for educators. Preparation began in 2008-2009 with piloting to begin in 2009-2010.

- **Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Program:** The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) Program is an initiative of the Department of Education that provides standards-based continuing professional education for school and system leaders throughout the Commonwealth. Since 2006, more than 2,000 school leaders have completed the coursework. Pennsylvania is working with the creators of PIL to integrate early childhood concepts into the leadership coursework.
- **Early Childhood Executive Leadership Institute:** The Early Childhood Executive Leadership (ECEL) Institute focuses on what early childhood leaders and educators need to know and be able to do in order to understand and connect the variety of systems serving children (Birth to Grade 3) and to ensure instructional improvements that will lead to student growth in cognitive, social, emotional, and attentional areas. The five-day ECEL Institute has been designed primarily for superintendents and assistant superintendents, principals and assistant principals, and early childhood development center/facility directors. Two pilot institutes are scheduled for 2009-2010.

**Aligning the Professional Development Record (PDR) with new Teacher Certification requirements.**

Keystone STARS requires early childhood education staff to develop a Professional Development Record (PDR) that includes the continuing education they have received and identifies areas in which they need further professional development. As more early education professionals begin moving towards ECE Certification, it is evident that all of our early childhood education professional development should align. The creation of new teacher certifications is the perfect opportunity to provide guidance to the higher education community to meet the new certification requirements and to begin work to align the PDR with the educational requirements for ECE certification, as well as to extend the use of the PDR beyond Keystone STARS to all OCDEL programs.

In 2008-2009 guidelines for Early Childhood Education Teacher Certification (Chapter 49-2 Pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade) were completed and higher education institutions submitted revised curricula to the Department of Education for approval. In order to create a more seamless system for practitioners' education and professional development as they move through the career lattice, OCDEL began work to revise the Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) and Professional Development Record (PDR) to more clearly align with Chapter 49 and the National Association for the Education of Young Children's teacher preparation framework. With some additions, Chapter 49-2 will basically serve as the Core Body of Knowledge in order to assure the same content and approach through the early childhood professional development preparation and support processes. The revisions of both documents will be completed by June 2010. New documents and related professional development will begin in July 2010 with full implementation scheduled for January 2011.

**Title I Transition to Kindergarten Grants.** In December 2008, 23 Community Engagement Groups were awarded grants to develop or further expand comprehensive transition to kindergarten plans with early learning programs and Title I elementary schools. Through partnerships with 136 schools in 70 school districts and hundreds of early childhood providers, over 25,000 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children and their

families were impacted through a variety of activities such as Kindergarten registrations, Kindergarten classroom visits, literacy events, Kindergarten summer camps, and school and community based transition events. Community Engagement Transition teams also designed, produced and distribute many innovative tools of kindergarten transition, such as Welcome to Kindergarten DVDs, kindergarten back packs, introduction booklets, rising K summer workbooks, rising K calendars, and Family Resource Guides. Through their involvement with the Transition teams, several school districts elected to implement their own transition plans as part of their outreach efforts to incoming students.

### **Meeting the Diverse Needs of Families**

In order for Pennsylvania to fully benefit from quality early education, our early learning programs and professionals need to be adequately prepared to serve the diverse needs of Pennsylvania's families. OCDEL has introduced several initiatives to help understand and meet these diverse needs, including:

- OCDEL Reach and Risk Assessment Report;
- Race Matters Initiative;
- Strengthening Families Initiative;
- Higher Education Institute on Diversity;
- English Language Learners (ELL) Strategy and Toolkit; and
- Early Intervention Inclusion Initiative.



**OCDEL Reach and Risk Assessment Report.** In order to support sound programmatic and investment decisions regarding the distribution of early education services, OCDEL annually compiles the Program Reach and Risk Report. This report provides county and city specific information on the level of risk for school failure for children (based on seven risk factors) and the availability, or reach, of most OCDEL programs to children in each county and in the 27 largest cities in Pennsylvania.

Research consistently demonstrates that children at risk of school failure benefit from quality early learning opportunities, with economic and educational benefits which extend to our families, communities, and the commonwealth. This report provides information about how well the commonwealth is reaching its young children with quality early learning services, with special attention to at-risk children for Fiscal Year End 2007-2008. The report:

- compiles information on the number of children served through OCDEL programs;
- shows the funding levels for early childhood programs supported by state and federal investments;
- includes an analysis of educational and family risk factors; and
- identifies counties and cities most likely to benefit from early childhood investments, based on these risk factors.

This data can be used to: 1) track progress in reaching all children; 2) help communities better understand their early childhood programming needs, particularly in counties where there are high risks; and 3) inform future decisions regarding early education investments. This information is also used to inform OCDEL's policies and practices. Data from the 2008-2009 Reach and Risk Report is included in the State and County Profiles section.

**Race Matters Initiative.** In partnership with the Pennsylvania Build Initiative, OCDEL continues to implement strategies to better evaluate racial equity and diversity among OCDEL's programs and the broader early childhood community. Using the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race Matters* Toolkit, OCDEL began work to

examine to what extent its programs, policies, practices, and communications are effectively serving all of Pennsylvania's children and families, identify discrepancies among various racial or cultural groups, and ways in which the commonwealth can address those discrepancies.

OCDEL encourages its partners and programs to implement racial equity tools as they examine the makeup of their organizations, leadership, and access to services; analyze and collect data; and communicate needs. The goal is to integrate the examination of racial equity into all of the early childhood community's work by training Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups, providers of OCDEL services and OCDEL leadership staff on how to use these tools as program practices and policies are developed or revised tools are used. The racial equity lens is currently being applied to revisions of the Core Body of Knowledge for Early Childhood and School-Age Practitioners and the Professional Development Record.

Building on efforts started in 2007- 2008 the initiative continues to include Race Matters orientation workshops, including the development of a 12-hour series of professional development modules related to racial equity and tolerance in the classroom. In 2008-2009 a variety of professional development opportunities were offered for more than 300 participants from OCDEL, Regional Keys, national BUILD initiative, cross system technical assistance organizations and faculty from higher education institutions. Programs impacted include Keystone STARS, Pre-K Counts, Early Intervention, Early Childhood Mental Health, Head Start, Subsidy, Children's Trust Fund and Certification.

*This is our first experience with Head Start and we could not be happier with this program. In the month that she has been in the pre-school we have noticed a definite difference in Annora. She counts everything that she can. She spells out loud. Her manners have been excellent and her interaction with her younger brother has been improved. This opportunity has been fantastic. We are very impressed and grateful to this program. This program is needed for those of us who can not afford pre-school to allow our precious children the tools they will need for a better future.*

Eric Wesch, Parent, Beaver County

**Strengthening Families Initiative.** When families are vulnerable, children are less likely to succeed. Brain research has shown that abuse or neglect can limit a child's brain development, impeding their learning for life. Young children need a safe and stable family and home life in order to grow. By helping parents cope with challenges, build support networks and understand their child's development, early learning programs can help families and children thrive. To help prevent child abuse and neglect from occurring, Pennsylvania has joined with the national Strengthening Families<sup>17</sup> approach to help early learning programs build Protective Factors around all families.

By using the Strengthening Families Protective Factors approach, early learning programs can help parents feel valued and supported, with opportunities to build social connections readily available, and staff can be trained to recognize signs of family stress that might precede abuse or neglect and then offer appropriate support in a positive fashion. Through training, program staff gains the tools, strategies, and support they need to build caring and trusting relationships with families.

In October 2008, Pennsylvania was one of seven states invited to develop a plan to integrate the Strengthening Families approach into its programs. For example, Pennsylvania is embedding the Strengthening Families/ Protective Factors approach and language into the best practice guides and tools for Keystone STARS. Also,

various professional development opportunities are being offered for early childhood professionals to promote the use of the Strengthening Families approach and to integrate Protective Factors language into their work.

**Higher Education Institute on Diversity.** OCDEL recognizes the critical importance of teachers who are sensitive to the cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and ability diversity of the children and families they serve.

Beginning in 2007-2008, OCDEL has hosted the Higher Education Institute on Diversity, a professional development opportunity for higher education faculty involved in pre-service teacher preparation programs and professional development for early education professionals.

The purpose of the Institute is to provide faculty, administrators, and other professional development providers with methods, research, and instructional strategies associated with meeting the unique educational needs of children who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse and their families. Among the many benefits of attending the Institute are the opportunities to experience high-quality professional development workshops, learn in-depth content on the various workshop tracks and specific research-based best practice strategies as well network and interact with international, national and local experts on the subject. More than 250 faculty and professional development instructors have attended the conference each year.

**English Language Learners (ELL) Strategy and Toolkit.** It is estimated that one out of every five children in grades K-12 today is either a child who has newly arrived in the U.S. or is a child with at least one parent who has immigrated.<sup>18</sup> The number of children who speak English as a Second Language continues to increase in Pennsylvania communities, creating unique challenges and opportunities for early learning programs. In 2009, the OCDEL commissioned Dr. Lisa C. Buenaventura to create the ECE English Language Learner Research Brief and Toolkit to help early learning programs to address the needs of infants, toddlers, and Pre K-3 English Language Learners (ELLs) from immigrant, refugee, and migrant families within the commonwealth.

The ELL Tool Kit has been developed to provide research-based information, guidelines, and principles for early learning professionals to promote culturally competent practice. While it provides a broad range of information about young ELLs and their families, its primary purposes are:

- To define cultural competence and proficiency;
- To describe second language acquisition;
- To unpack myths and realities about ELLs;
- To highlight research and best practices for educating and supporting young ELLs and their families; and
- To outline strategies to build and sustain culturally competent and proficient early learning professionals and organizations.

All programs and services served by OCDEL will be using resources contained in the ELL Toolkit such as the Cultural Competence Models and studying Guidelines for Culturally Competent Educational Practices.

**Early Intervention Inclusion Initiative.** When children with developmental delays participate in typical classrooms, all children benefit. Children with developmental delays and disabilities learn age-appropriate communication and social behaviors, while typically developing children learn to understand and accept differences.

*We feel extremely fortunate to have reaped the benefits of Early Intervention. Our son would not have been ready for elementary school had it not been for the expertise and care of the itinerant teachers provided for his behavioral support in preschool.*

Jeff and Tara Gense, Parents, Lancaster County

Historically in Pennsylvania, less than 50% of children in Preschool Early Intervention with developmental delays or disabilities received their services in typical early childhood settings. In 2007-2008, OCDEL began a concerted effort to accommodate as many children with developmental delays or disabilities in typical early childhood settings such as child care, Head Start, or preschool. Strategies included 1) outreach to Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs to ensure these new classrooms were inclusive of typically developing children and children with developmental delays or disabilities; 2) targeted technical assistance to help Preschool Early Intervention programs with the lowest numbers of children in inclusive settings increase the number of children served in typical settings; 3) aggressively monitoring classroom and enrollment data and severely limiting new early childhood special education classes and (4) participating in two national inclusion grant programs.

As a result, over the past two years, OCDEL has observed a nearly 15% increase in the number of children of preschool age included in typical early childhood programs, resulting in a total of 63% of all children in Early Intervention receiving their services in these settings (e.g. child care, Head Start, preschool) in 2008-2009.

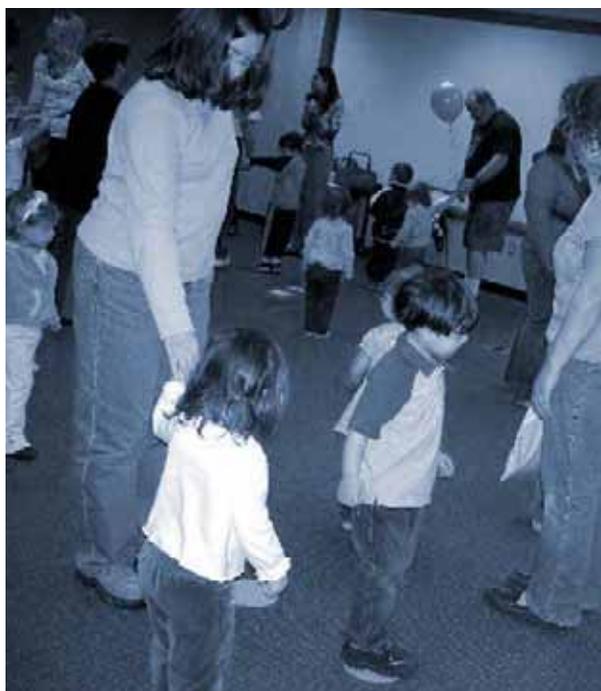
## **Refine accountability and document positive outcomes for children**

A comprehensive accountability system that can document positive outcomes for children helps keep early childhood programs, professional and the continuum as a whole focused on a common goal – providing the best possible early education for Pennsylvania’s young children. Pennsylvania continues to refine its accountability and documenting results through:

- Monitoring and continuous quality improvement among all programs;
- Environment Rating Scales Assessments
- Pennsylvania’s Enterprise to Link Information Across Networks (PELICAN); and
- The Early Learning Network (ELN).

## **Monitoring and continuous quality improvement among all programs**

In order to make best use of public resources that produce positive outcomes for our young children, OCDEL



continues to develop a system of accountability among all programs. Through data review and site visits, OCDEL staff monitor adherence to performance standards and fiscal requirements. Regional specialists such as STARS specialists, Preschool Program Specialists, Early Intervention Advisors, and Subsidy Coordinators conduct site visits to monitor programs and provide technical assistance and supports for programs to continue to improve their quality. If programs are not meeting the requirements, they work with their specialist or OCDEL staff to develop a corrective action plan which is then monitored until fully implemented. OCDEL also collects customer satisfaction surveys from both parents and providers.

Accountability measures for individual programs are included in each program description; however, three initiatives that cross many programs are the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) Assessments, Pennsylvania’s Enterprise to Link Information Across Networks (PELICAN), and the Early Learning Network (ELN).

## **Environment Rating Scales Assessments**

Pennsylvania has implemented the nationally-recognized Environment Rating Scales (ERS) as a standard tool to assess the quality of early learning programs participating in Keystone STARS, Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. Independent ERS assessors visit classrooms in child care programs, Head Start programs, licensed nursery schools and pre-kindergarten classrooms in public schools. Programs are assessed every two years to promote continuous quality improvement. Assessors may visit a number of classrooms in one program, depending on the ages of children served and size of program, in order to better evaluate the quality of the classroom settings for each age group.

*My child participates in a Keystone STAR 4 child care program at Little People Country Club. The girls at this center work extremely hard for this accreditation and it shows in my son. My son has autism and this program has helped my son improve tremendously. I would not be able to send my son here if it wasn't for child care subsidy through Child Care Works/CCIS.*

Parent, Northampton County

Classrooms must earn certain ratings on the 7-point ERS scale based on the quality standards of the applicable OCDEL program. For example, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms must earn a 5.5 rating on the Early Childhood Environment rating Scales. Keystone STAR 3 programs must meet an overall facility score of 4.25.

If programs do not earn the necessary ERS ratings, must work with their specialist to develop and implement an improvement plan that includes goals, improvement strategies, responsible person(s), and target dates for completion. If they do not meet the goals of that plan, the facility could lose their STAR level or be removed from Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.

With the advent of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and a continuing expansion of child care programs participating in Keystone STARS, there has been a substantial increase in the number of ERS classroom assessments conducted. In 2008-2009, ERS assessors conducted approximately 1680 classroom assessments, a 75% increase from 2007-2008.

## **Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information Across Networks (PELICAN).**

A key to creating a quality early education continuum is the seamless transfer of information between programs and the ability to analyze comprehensive data on all of OCDEL's programs. The goal of Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks (PELICAN) is to have a single integrated information system that will allow OCDEL to track how Pennsylvania children and families use OCDEL programs and, with a focus on quality, to provide easily accessible information for Pennsylvania parents about early learning programs and services. PELICAN supports:

- Child Care Works for subsidized child care services, including online client access to apply for services;
- Provider Certification for licensing of child care providers, including public access to a facility's operating history, complaint and enforcement management, and online provider access to update information;
- Early Learning Services for quality initiatives including Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Keystone STARS;
- Early Intervention, for management of these services; and
- Early Learning Network for child demographics, assessments and outcomes; classroom quality, and teacher experience;

In 2007-2008 OCDEL launched PELICAN Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, and PELICAN Provider Certification. In 2008-2009, PELICAN Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts entered Phase Two. PELICAN Infant/Toddler Early Intervention was piloted in four counties and preparation began for development of PELICAN Preschool Early Intervention and PELICAN Keys to Quality.

By centralizing demographic and enrollment information for children, teachers, and families, PELICAN will streamline data management across OCDEL programs. The coordination of this information will also provide unprecedented aggregate data on children and families served throughout the commonwealth.

Over time, PELICAN will help Pennsylvania measure program, service, and provider performance as it relates to progress and outcomes of children participating in early childhood programs.

## **Early Learning Network**

Pennsylvania's Early Learning Network (ELN) will provide unprecedented information to help analyze how well Pennsylvania's early education programs are serving our young children.

The Early Learning Network is:

- One reporting system reflecting results of authentic assessment used across programs, aligning with Pennsylvania's early learning standards;
- A standard system to be used by and coordinated among all of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) programs (e.g., Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Early Intervention, Head Start, Keystone STARS); and
- A comprehensive data system designed to integrate financial, program, teacher, family and child information.

Supporting the PELICAN system, the ELN tracks outcomes for children who participate in OCDEL early learning programs. Because the ELN is a comprehensive system coordinating outcomes from OCDEL programs for children from birth until they enter kindergarten, OCDEL can document how Pennsylvania's quality early learning system is contributing to positive outcomes for children. Plans include the ability to link the information about children's participation in, and outcomes from, their early learning programs to their school-age participation and outcomes, such as PSSA scores.



In addition to providing fiscal and outcomes data for OCDEL administration, parents and teachers will have access to information about their children's progress, which will help guide curriculum and supporting the child's progress at home and in school. ELN will also track teacher educational levels and experience and provide information on how teacher education affects child outcomes.

This is a relatively new concept in early childhood education, although K-12 programs have already developed similar longitudinal data systems to respond to accountability demands imposed by No Child Left Behind.

In 2008-2009, Early Intervention programs and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs began reporting child outcomes online through the Ounce and Work Sampling online reporting tools, and work continued to integrate data. The Early Learning Network is made possible in part through grants from the Grable Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and William Penn Foundation.

## **Build leadership in our communities and among state decisionmakers to champion quality early education as a priority for Pennsylvania**

To be effective, OCDEL needs diverse input, opinions and resources to make a quality early education continuum possible and sustainable for Pennsylvania's children. Everyone makes a contribution, from the policymakers who consistently vote for early childhood education to the teacher who works day in and day out to help every child reach their promise. Through advisory committees, business and community engagement and Pennsylvania's Promise for Children, OCDEL is dedicated to building leadership at every level.

### **Early Learning Council and committees**

An important component to the refinement of OCDEL's policies, procedures, and vision is the involvement of the Early Learning Council and its advisory committees. The Council and committees provide feedback on the successes and challenges of OCDEL programs in the field and recommendations for new directions in early education.

Early Learning Council

#### **Program Committees:**

Child Care Works  
Full Day Kindergarten  
Keystone STARS  
Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts  
State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

Early Learning Investment Commission

#### **Cross Sector Committees:**

Communications Advisory Committee  
Early Childhood Mental Health  
Early Learning Career Preparation & Development  
Early Learning Network  
Infant Toddler Systems  
Parent Council

### **Engaging business leaders through the Early Learning Investment Commission**

More businesses are recognizing that quality early education opportunities directly impact their workforce. Today's employees are more productive at work when they have access to reliable, quality early education for their children. Tomorrow's employees have the reading, writing, mathematical and social skills to succeed in a competitive workforce when those skills are nurtured in their early years. By the age of five, the foundation for the skills that employers seek, such as communications, critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork are almost fully developed.

Recognizing a need to form new and broader coalitions in support of children's issues that include business leaders, OCDEL created the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission. Through the Commission, business, higher education and civic leaders have shown a keen interest in the role that quality early education plays in workforce development and have added their support to others in the community for continued public and private investment.

Some of their activities included: signing letters to the editor and opinion editorials; inserting information about early childhood development in organizational newsletters; educating legislators and other policy makers about the importance of investing in early education and presenting to community groups such as Community Economic Development Boards, Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary Clubs and United Ways.

In April 2009, nearly 170 business, civic and educational leaders attended the 2009 Annual Economic Summit for Early Childhood Investment in Harrisburg. Speakers included Rob Grunewald, Associate's Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; Lydia Miles Logan, Vice President and Executive Director, Institute for a Competitive Workforce, US Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Jack Shonkoff, Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University; and Robert Dugger, Ph.D., managing partner of Hanover Investment Group.

*Pennsylvania's business and law enforcement leaders recognize that today's children are tomorrow's employees, customers, neighbors, and community leaders. Unfortunately, some will also be tomorrow's juvenile delinquents and adult criminals. We need to invest in their early education to help kids stay on the right track so they can fill our jobs, open their own businesses, buy products and services, and become productive members of our community.*

Philip A. Peterson, FSA Senior Vice President, Aon Consulting and Chief John M. Eller, Brookhaven Police Department, Published in the Delaware County Times, July 6, 2009

## **Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups**

Local public awareness and support is critical to providing our young children with access to quality early education. When communities value early education, more families become aware of available services and decision makers recognize quality early education is a priority for public investment.

Pennsylvania's Early Childhood Community Engagement Groups (CEG) build support networks in every county for organizations and individuals interested in quality early education. CEGs bring together early childhood programs, parents, school districts and child-serving organizations to assess what quality early learning programs are currently available in the community and to develop ways to encourage quality early learning. They also work with school districts and community-based early learning programs to develop ways to make smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten for child, parents and teachers.

In their efforts to engage various members within their communities in 2008-2009, CEGs reported that over 1.6 million children, parents and community members throughout the commonwealth were involved in events such as recognition events, legislative meetings, Week of the Young Child events, or community fairs.

Working with their partnering school districts, Community Engagement Groups reported engaging nearly 500 schools in the commonwealth in kindergarten transition activities. Over \$1 million in cash and nearly \$800,000 of in-kind value was raised through contributions from foundations, businesses, volunteers, fees and other sources.

## **Pennsylvania's Promise for Children**

Pennsylvania's Promise for Children is a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of providing Pennsylvania's young children with access to quality early learning opportunities. By creating the base of broad public support for quality early learning, we can better reach families who can benefit and more effectively build support for individual early education initiatives.

Pennsylvania's Promise for Children campaign offers easy-to-understand information on the benefits of quality early learning opportunities at home and in programs, tips for parents on helping their children learn, and ways for everyone to get involved and tell their story. Pennsylvanians can also sign PA's Promise for Children declaration to add their name to the thousands of others who value quality early education for Pennsylvania's young children.

By June 2009, more than 9,800 individuals and organizations in Pennsylvania had signed the Pennsylvania Promise for Children declaration, more than twice the number of declarations in June 2008. In 2008-2009, Pennsylvania's Promise for Children produced three "quick break" five-minute videos on brain development and early learning, school readiness, and the economic impact of quality early education. The videos are available online at <http://paprom.convio.net/videos>.

The campaign is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Build Initiative, Grable Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, William Penn Foundation and the Pennsylvania Key in cooperation with OCDEL.

## OCDEL Listservs

OCDEL has created two electronic information resources for early education programs and those interested in early education.

- **Build Early Childhood Education E-News.** Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning and the Pennsylvania Build Initiative, the Build Early Childhood E-News is a biweekly e-newsletter to inform early learning professionals, the early childhood community, policymakers, community leaders and the public on developments in early childhood education in Pennsylvania. The newsletter is free and available to anyone. In June 2009, there were 8,045 subscribers to the listserv, a 130% increase from June 2008.
- **OCDEL Community Education Listserv.** The OCDEL Communications and Community Education Listserv is designed to support programs providing OCDEL services as they tell their story and conduct outreach in their communities. Subscribers to this special listserv include organizations that provide a program supported by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and members of an OCDEL advisory committee. As of June 2009, there were approximately 4,150 subscribers to the listserv, a 34% increase from June 2008.

### **Sharee McFadden & Josiah, York County**

I found out I was pregnant when I was 19 years-old. I was a young, college student with a bright future. A couple months into my pregnancy, a friend of mine told me about a program called the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), where you have a nurse who visits with you as often as you'd like, offers resources and helps guide you through your pregnancy and the early years of parenthood. My nurse's name was Missi. She was one of the sweetest women I had ever met and made me feel comfortable instantly. She would listen about my relationship problems, let me know ways to relieve stress and most importantly, she helped me build my confidence as a woman and as a soon-to-be mom.

With the help of the NFP, I was able to look at my future as a parent and a woman with certainty and confidence.

Once I had Josiah, Missi really helped me understand and adjust to my role as a mother and our new life together as mother and son. Even though we've been out of the program for two years, I still carry the lessons I learned from Missi and the NFP with me.

Josiah, now four is enrolled at the YWCA Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program and I have been very impressed with his success. He's a very bright little man, there's no doubt about that, and there were many people who felt he didn't need to go to pre-school. However, as his mom, I knew he could only get brighter and smarter. For the past year, it has been the highlight of our day to come home and talk about what he learned in school—Alligators, sharing, strangers or worms. I never realized how much I would love seeing the world from his point of view until he began going to Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. It gives me peace of mind knowing that he's actually learning at pre-school instead of just finger painting and taking walks. They learn about nature, letter sounds, numbers, concepts, respect and a lot of other things that normally aren't introduced until kindergarten.

These programs have been blessings to my family and have had tremendous benefits on our success. I've graduated college and he's excited about learning and going to school. Please help us and other families continue to be blessed and benefited from these programs.



## IV. Profiles of OCDEL Programs

Through the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Pennsylvania offers a variety of early childhood programs for children from birth to age five and their families. Pennsylvania serves more than 300,000 young children through these early childhood initiatives.

### Accountability Block Grant

Although Pennsylvania's school districts share the common goal of preparing our children for success in life, each district has unique needs. In order to help school districts implement strategies known to improve academic performance, Pennsylvania created the Accountability Block Grant (ABG). Started in 2004, the Accountability Block Grant provides funding to school districts toward 10 proven strategies to improve student achievement. Of these options for districts, one focuses on three areas of early childhood.

**DESIGN:** Using ABG funds, school districts are able to support early learning to: 1) establish, maintain, or expand pre-kindergarten; 2) establish, maintain or expand full day kindergarten; or 3) reduce class size in kindergarten through third grade to 17 or fewer students per classroom.

In December 2006, the State Board of Education approved regulations<sup>19</sup> that established standards for public school-based pre-kindergarten programs and community-based pre-kindergarten programs partnering with public schools. Some elements of the regulations include development of a strategic plan, use of academic standards, and teacher education requirements for community-based partners. These standards apply to all pre-kindergarten programs in Pennsylvania including those programs funded through the Accountability Block Grant.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Districts provide a mid-year and end-of-year report on program implementation and outcomes. OCDEL staff conduct targeted site visits to districts to assess the use of early childhood best practices. If districts are not meeting best practices, OCDEL staff provide guidance and resources for improvement.

**RESULTS:** School districts have shown a strong commitment to early childhood by investing three-quarters of ABG funding to these three early childhood options.

### Child Care Certification

Child care facilities provide care to Pennsylvania's youngest citizens. The majority of children in child care are from birth to age five. For many children the majority of their awake hours are spent in the care of someone other than their parents. It is essential that these facilities provide a safe and healthy environment for our children.

**DESIGN:** Pennsylvania regulates and enforces the minimum health and safety standards for child care programs to protect the health, safety and rights of children and to reduce risks to children in these settings. Pennsylvania revised its regulations for the first time in 16 years in September 2008.

Each type of child care facility (child care centers, group child care homes, and family child day care homes) has its own set of regulations for operation. Child care centers and group homes must receive a certificate of compliance to operate, while family child care homes receive a certificate of registration. These regulations are

developed by drawing upon expert resources such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, US Centers for Disease Control, and the US Consumer Products Safety Commission. Input is sought from providers, consumers, advocates and experts in determining the minimum standard, with consideration for what will protect children, but will not impose undue costs on child care facilities.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** In order for individuals to open a child care center, group home, or family child care home, they must complete a comprehensive application. A child care center and group child care home is inspected before a certificate of compliance is issued and the facility may open.<sup>20</sup> Starting in October 2008, prospective child care providers are now required to attend orientation training in order to open a child care facility. This full day session provides persons seeking to operate a child care facility with information required to open a child care facility including the laws impacting on facility operation, issues to consider regarding operating a facility, choosing a facility location, how to apply for a certificate of compliance or registration and various types of programs that impact child care.

Each of the more than 5,000 child care centers and group child care homes is inspected by a certification representative at least once a year. Certification representatives also conduct unannounced inspections and complaint investigations at child care centers and group child care homes.

As of June 2009	Number of Facilities
Child care centers	4,186
Group child care homes	855
Family child care homes	3,536
Total	8,577

Certification representatives conduct random sample inspections at 15% of all registered family child care homes. In addition, the Department investigates complaints regarding alleged regulatory violations at family child care homes.

If the certification representative observes that a facility is not meeting a regulatory requirement, the certification representative asks for a plan of correction and verifies that the plan is implemented and the violation is corrected.

As of March 2009, Pennsylvania centralized and streamlined its information on regulated child care facilities into the PELICAN Provider Certification database. FY 2009-2010 will be the first full fiscal year of ongoing use of PELICAN Provider Certification that will reflect new applications, facility openings and facility closings.

**RESULTS:** In 2008-2009, 2400 prospective child care facility operators attended precertification orientation training across the commonwealth.

The revised regulations are available on the Pennsylvania Code website at [www.pacode.com](http://www.pacode.com).

## Child Care Works

Research has shown that families with access to child care assistance are up to 15 percent more likely to be employed, stay off welfare, and have higher earnings.<sup>21</sup> When families are not able to access child care assistance, they may go into debt, return to public assistance, choose lower quality, less stable child care, or face untenable choices in their household budgets.<sup>22</sup> Child care costs are extraordinarily high for working, low-income families - comparable with their housing costs. Child Care Works can be the difference between self-sufficiency and improving a family's quality of life or depending on public assistance and supports just to make ends meet. In 2008-2009, waiting lists for Child Care Works soared to more than 15,000 children due to the economic downturn.

**DESIGN:** Child Care Works makes it possible for low-income families to find reliable child care near their home or work and provides financial assistance to help them afford it. Through Child Care Works, families have access to quality early learning programs – including Keystone STARS programs – that may have been out of their reach financially.

Through the Child Care Works partnership, eligible parents<sup>23</sup> make a co-payment to the child care program in addition to the state subsidy that Child Care Works provides. Through a network of 59 Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies serving every county in the commonwealth, families receive information on nearby child care programs participating in Child Care Works as well as other quality early learning opportunities so they can make the best choices for their family.

In March 2008, Pennsylvania made it possible for parents to apply for Child Care Works online through the COMPASS website.<sup>24</sup> Parents can also search for child care programs online using a number of search criteria such as location, ages of children served, availability of transportation to local schools, etc.

In order to make it possible for Keystone STARS programs to serve more children receiving Child Care Works, OCDEL began offering a “subsidy add-on” rate for child care programs participating in Keystone STARS in 2007-2008. These programs receive an additional subsidy add-on amount to the daily rate for each child they serve that is participating in Child Care Works. This add-on rate was increased in 2008-2009 and helps to cover the additional costs of providing higher quality early education.

*When I started to receive Child Care Works, my life began to flourish. I selected a quality child care program and I put my school-age child in an excellent after-school program. There is no way that I would have been able to pay for these programs on my own.*

Ericka Gains, Parent  
Philadelphia County

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** In order to receive Child Care Works, parents must submit proof of employment (or a combination of employment and training) and verification of income. Parents are asked to verify employment and income during a “re-determination” process conducted every six months. Child care programs that participate in Child Care Works submit monthly statements of children’s attendance to avoid overpayment.

OCDEL staff conduct an annual evaluation of CCIS agencies on 12 performance standards that address accuracy and parent satisfaction. If the CCIS is deficient in any area, it creates a Corrective Implementation Plan and OCDEL conducts follow-up monitoring to make sure the plan is implemented.

**RESULTS:** More families accessing Child Care Works subsidy are using regulated care than ever before:

- Approximately 72% of all children enrolled in Child Care Works use regulated child care;
- Approximately 70% of TANF children receiving child care assistance are using regulated child care in 2008-2009, a 38% increase since Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies began providing child care services to TANF families in 2006-2007; and
- Approximately 45% of Child Care Works children in regulated child care are enrolled with Keystone STARS providers.

Between March 2008 and May 2009, more than 18,350 online applications for Child Care Works were received, and more than 25,800 searches for child care providers were completed online.

According to the parent survey completed by parents when they enroll in Child Care Works, 98% responded that they were very happy with the service they received at their CCIS agency, and 96% responded that they had learned a lot about other OCDEL programs, including Keystone STARS, Head Start and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.

## Children's Trust Fund

Brain research has shown that abuse or neglect can limit a child's brain development, impeding their learning for life.<sup>25</sup> When families are vulnerable, children are less likely to succeed. Young children need a safe and stable family and home life in order to grow. A vital piece of early learning is the engagement of the parents.

**DESIGN:** Pennsylvania's Children's Trust Fund (CTF) teaches parents and early education providers ways to strengthen families and build protective factors (such as parenting skills and resilience in times of stress, social connections and support network, and knowledge of child development) in an effort to prevent child abuse and neglect before it begins. Grants are awarded to community-based programs that are embedding the Strengthening Families protective factors framework developed by the Center for Study of Social Policy within their services to families and early learning providers.<sup>26</sup> A 15-member board comprised of public and legislative members appointed by the Governor administers CTF with support from OCDEL. Funds are generated from a \$10 surcharge on applications for marriage licenses and divorce complaints. Friends of the Children's Trust Fund was established in 2008 to raise additional funds for CTF.



In the 2007-2008 grant year, 29 CTF grantees served approximately 3,556 families and 1,799 early childhood education programs. Although the 2008-2009 grant year for the Children's Trust Fund did not complete until October 2009, it is anticipated that the number of families and practitioners served will be similar. Final figures will be available by January 2010.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Each grantee develops an action plan that tracks program and community level outcomes and submits quarterly progress reports to OCDEL. OCDEL staff also conduct annual site visits to each grantee.

**RESULTS:** All grantees are meeting their stated outcomes.

## Early Intervention

All children learn best in the most inclusive setting possible, where typically developing children and those with disabilities or developmental delays can grow and learn together. Early Intervention provides services to help maximize the potential of eligible young children with disabilities or developmental delays with services to help maximize their potential so they are successful in any early education setting.

National longitudinal studies<sup>27</sup> indicate that with Early Intervention services

- Families are more confident about parenting issues and helping their child grow; and
- Children show increased development, with significantly high percentages of infants and toddlers showing mastery of the appropriate developmental milestones after receiving Early Intervention services for one year; and the majority of preschoolers performing similarly to their typical peers on standardized tests and behavior scales.

**DESIGN:** Early Intervention offers individualized services and supports designed to help families with children who have disabilities or developmental delays. These supports and services may include special instruction, developmental therapies parent education, and other support services to meet the unique needs of children

who have developmental delays, as well as their families. Early Intervention builds upon the natural learning occurring in those first five years.

Early Intervention:

- Enhances the families' capacity and confidence to meet the developmental needs of their child in the settings where children would be if they did not have a disability;
- Helps prevent the need for more and costly intervention in the future by improving child outcomes in the early years;
- Embeds supports and services within learning opportunities that exist in the child's typical routines and within the home and community activities and/or early education programs; and
- Builds on existing supports and services in the family, community, and early education resources.

*Before Early Intervention services, my little boy had no words, Autism stole the few he had. With the help and devotion of dedicated Early Intervention providers he has reclaimed his words, and has even found his voice. There aren't enough words that could express a mother's appreciation for a gift like that.*

Diane, Parent

Montgomery County

In 2008-2009, smooth transitions and better outcomes children and their parents continued to be provided through the joint efforts of both Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention programs across the Commonwealth.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** OCDEL monitors the performance of local Early Intervention programs and assesses parent satisfaction, and analyzes child outcome data to ensure that families are receiving quality services.

Monitoring and continuous quality improvement of programs. Local Early Intervention programs submit performance data on a monthly basis, which is reviewed and analyzed by OCDEL staff. In addition, local Early Intervention programs are reviewed by OCDEL every two years through onsite management verification reviews. As a result of this verification process, each local program, in collaboration with OCDEL, develops an Improvement Plan to increase program compliance with federal and state regulations and improve fiscal management. Once the Improvement Plan has been approved by OCDEL, OCDEL staff provide oversight to ensure progress is made in implementing the plan. Within one year of the issuance of verification findings, the local program is then validated for program compliance and successful implementation. The results of the statewide verifications are reported to State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC).

In 2008-2009, OCDEL completed management verification reviews with 41 Early Intervention programs throughout the state.

Parent surveys. Annual surveys are sent statewide to all Pennsylvania families currently enrolled in both the Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention programs.

Child outcomes reporting. Early Intervention programs report child outcome information to OCDEL on all children receiving services as they enter and exit Early Intervention.

**RESULTS:**

Parent satisfaction. More than 8,000 families responded to the annual Family Survey in 2008, 1,000 more than in 2007. The results showed that most families agreed Early Intervention has empowered them to make the best choices for their children.

**Positive child outcomes.** Child assessment data from infants, toddlers and preschoolers who entered Early Intervention after July 1, 2008 and exited Early Intervention prior to June 30, 2009 shows that nearly every child (99%) made progress from entry to exit. In addition

- 78% of those children who entered the program below age expectations in development substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.
- 57% of the preschool children who exited the program during that time period actually function within age expectations.

	Infant/Toddler Program Agreed, Strongly Agreed, Very Strongly Agreed	Preschool Program Infant/Toddler Program Agreed, Strongly Agreed, Very Strongly Agreed
El services that my family received helped me communicate more effectively with the people who work with my child and family	95%	86%
El services helped me understand my child's special needs.	95%	89%
El staff explained what options parents have if they disagree with a decision made by EI personnel.	89%	84%
El services helped me know about my child's and family's rights concerning EI services (such as: filing a complaint, requesting mediation, due process).	87%	82%

## Full Day Kindergarten

Children attending full day kindergarten programs develop better socialization skills, demonstrate independent learning skills, are more productive in peer group projects and are reflective about their experiences and learning. In full day kindergarten, teachers have more time for direct interaction with children, to provide a variety of experiences and to implement screening and assessment. The benefits are significant for all children but are exceptional for at-risk children.

Attendance in full day kindergarten programs, although not mandated in Pennsylvania, has been increasing over the last thirty years.<sup>28</sup> In Pennsylvania, 78% of public school districts offer full day kindergarten.

**DESIGN:** In 2008-2009, school districts could supplement funding for full day kindergarten through the Accountability Block Grant and the ABG Full Day K Supplemental Fund.

Each school district receives a rubric outlining Early Childhood Best Practices based on research, the Accountability Block Grant Guidelines, and the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Kindergarten. These best practices include small class size<sup>29</sup>; student work displayed at the eye level of the child; and class schedule posted and organized to provide a balance of appropriate activities. Each district has the authority to design its program according to its own policies and needs.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** OCDEL staff conduct site visits to districts using ABG funds in their first or second year. These visits include interviews, observations and data review to determine where districts fall on the Best Practices rubric, their use of the Learning Standards for Kindergarten, and the types of professional development opportunities provided to teachers.

**RESULTS:** School districts are encouraged to collect longitudinal data related to the impact of full day kindergarten in their district and provide that data to OCDEL to examine the long-term impact of full day kindergarten vs. half day kindergarten in Pennsylvania.

## Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP)

Head Start began at the national level in 1965 to break the cycle of poverty by providing comprehensive early learning and family support services to young children living in poverty and their families. The comprehensive approach of Head Start addresses the nutrition, health, and early learning of the child while helping parents become more engaged in their child's development.

In 2004, Pennsylvania made it possible for more children to participate in this nationally-recognized program through the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP). HSSAP is based on the federal model of Head Start targets providing services to three and four year olds and their families living up to 130% of the federal poverty guidelines.<sup>30</sup>

**DESIGN:** HSSAP provides supplemental funding to existing Head Start programs to expand the number of children and families served by Head Start or to extend the length of day or program year for children currently receiving services or to serve additional children.

NIEER Quality Standard	NIEER Benchmark	Pennsylvania HSSAP Standards
Early Learning Standards	Comprehensive	Comprehensive
Teacher degree	Bachelor's degree	Minimum of CDA **
Teacher specialized training	Specializing in pre-k	Specializing in child development
Assistant teacher degree	Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or equivalent	High School Equivalency
Teacher in-service	At least 15 hours a year	At least 15 hours a year
Maximum class size	20 or less	3 year olds 15 -17 or less 4 year olds 17-20 or less
Staff-child ratio	1 staff per 10 children (1:10)	3 year olds- 2: 17 or less (classrooms must always have 2 paid staff) 4 year olds 2:20 (classrooms must always have 2 paid staff)
Required screening/referral and support services	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	Programs required to develop collaborations with early intervention service providers to be able to provide support services/referrals; develop parent engagement strategies to support parents' involvement in child's early learning; and support the smooth transition of children into the preschool program and on to kindergarten
Meals	At least 1 a day	For full day - one meal and one snack; for half day - one snack
Required monitoring	Site visits	Site visits by preschool program specialists; ECERS-R ratings in select classrooms; voluntary participation in Keystone STARS; child outcomes reporting; monthly and quarterly program and fiscal reporting

\*\* Head Start requirements state that 50 percent of teachers must have an AA in ECE. If teachers are employed by a school district, ECE certification is required.

Both federally-funded and state-funded Head Start programs must follow comprehensive federal Head Start Performance Standards. Services are comprehensive in nature, providing for child development, health/safety/nutrition, parent engagement, and family/community partnerships. Through professional development opportunities, Head Start Staff participate in ongoing professional development in an effort to constantly improve the overall quality of the Head Start classroom. In December 2007, legislation was approved requiring programs to meet higher standards of teacher qualifications by 2011 and 2013.

The quality components of Pennsylvania HSSAP meet or exceed eight of the quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) for a quality pre-kindergarten program that will prepare children for school.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** HSSAP programs submit quarterly reports containing enrollment and fiscal information. Preschool Program Specialists conduct site visits of programs. A federal team of peer reviewers conduct site visits every three years for a comprehensive review based on the Performance Standards. Additionally, HSSAP programs submit aggregate child outcomes information three times a year to OCDEL. Beginning in 2009-2010, HSSAP grantees will submit program and child outcomes data into the Early Learning Network.

### **Kurt Kondrich, Margie (mom), Nolan and Chloe Allegheny County**

On May 16, 2003 my beautiful daughter Chloe entered this world, and shortly after her birth my wife and I were advised that she had Down syndrome. We were overcome with many emotions, (fear, anxiety, etc.), and we immediately decided we would do all we could to get the best possible supports and services for Chloe. Shortly after we left the hospital we were connected to the world of Early Intervention through the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers in Allegheny County. The Early Intervention professionals who entered our life for the critical first three years of Chloe's life provided us with support, education, hope and optimism that formed a solid foundation for our precious daughter.



When Chloe turned three we entered the early childhood education world through Pittsburgh Public School system. Chloe entered an inclusive classroom which incorporated children from Head Start, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, and children who were able to attend preschool because their families had access to the Child Care Works program. Chloe thrived and excelled in this top quality pre-k classroom and the educators and therapists who worked with Chloe are some of the finest and most dedicated individuals I have met. The two years Chloe spent in pre-k provided her with incredible social, academic, speech and motor skills and it created a stronger foundation to prepare Chloe for kindergarten in her neighborhood elementary school in an inclusive classroom with typical peers.

On Chloe's first day of kindergarten we received numerous compliments from staff at how well prepared she was for this transition, and Chloe is totally accepted and embraced by her peers and other students at her school. The brain development children experience in their first five years of life is astronomical, and the investment in Early Intervention and early childhood education is priceless and yields a positive return for generations to come.

**RESULTS:** The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), which publishes longitudinal data on a periodic basis on the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of Head Start children and families, shows that that Head Start: narrows the gaps between disadvantaged children and all children in vocabulary and writing skills during the Head Start year; improves the social skills of Head Start children; and leads to continued improvements in word knowledge, letter recognition, math skills and writing skills by Head Start children relative to other children during the kindergarten year.<sup>31</sup>

## Research on the benefits of quality early education

Numerous studies have shown that quality early education can prepare children for success in school and in life.

**Quality early education is essential to healthy brain development.** The circuits for key functions such as vision/hearing, language, and higher cognitive function develop most in the first five years of life. The creation of these circuits is affected by a child's early learning environment. Bad experiences actually chew away at brain connections, while good quality experiences spur healthy development. After age five, the number of new connections slows, making it more difficult to build the necessary cognitive and social skills. (Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University)

**Improves academic skills.** The Abecedarian Project, a carefully controlled study of at risk children randomly assigned to participate in either a high quality early education program or a non-treated control group, found that children who received high quality early education:

- Earned higher cognitive test scores from the toddler years to age 21.
- Had higher academic achievement in both reading and math from the primary grades through young adulthood.
- Completed more years of education and were more likely to attend a four-year college. (Source: Abecedarian Project, [www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/))

**Benefits child, family and community.** Studies of several early childhood interventions, including the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program, Abecedarian Project, Chicago Child-Parent Centers, and Parent Child Development Centers, show that children who participate in a quality early childhood education experience benefit in ways that go beyond the positive outcomes commonly emphasized. These studies also suggest that pre-kindergarten can:

- Strengthen commitment and attitude toward school.
- Lead participants to take better care of their health throughout their lives.
- Start children on the path to financial stability and independence.
- Increase the likelihood that mothers of participating children get good jobs.
- Enhance the parenting skills of participants' parents.
- Produce positive effects that extend into future generations.

(Overlooked Benefits of Pre-kindergarten, March 2005, <http://nieer.org/resources/policyreports/report6.pdf> )

**Reduces crime.** "Providing high-quality Head Start or other pre-kindergarten program to all eligible at-risk Pennsylvania children could prevent as many as 1,700 kids from committing crimes when they grow up." ("Head Start and Quality Pre-Kindergarten Could Prevent 1,700 Kids From Becoming Criminals Every Year in Pennsylvania," Fight Crime Invest in Kids PA, June 2006)

**Stimulates today's economy.** For every dollar Pennsylvania invests in early childhood programs, more than two dollars is circulated throughout our local economies through employment and purchasing of goods and services.

(Source: Zhilin Liu, Rosaria Ribeiro & Mildred Warner. "Comparing Child Care Multipliers in the Regional Economy: Analysis from 50 States," 2004 <http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/reports/childcare/reports.asp>)

**Contributes to long-term economic growth.** A key factor in economic growth is the quality of the workforce. Children who attend quality pre-kindergarten are more likely to be employed and have higher earnings, thus positively contributing to the tax base. Annual rates of return on preschool investments are estimated at 10 percent or higher each year over the students' lifetimes, exceeding the 6 to 7 percent average rate of return typically expected of government programs and the stock market ("The Economic Promise of Investing in High Quality Preschool," Committee for Economic Development, 2006)

## Keystone STARS/ Early Learning Keys to Quality

Early learning programs in Pennsylvania, such as child care and Head Start, serve more than 300,000 children each year. The quality of these programs affects our children's early learning and preparation for school. Started as a pilot program in 2002, Keystone STARS has been proven to improve the quality of child care across the state and has reversed a 10-year trend of declining quality in child care.<sup>32</sup>

*I cannot say enough about the quality of education my daughter received in her Keystone STAR 4 facility. I have seen her transform and grow socially, cognitively, and emotionally.*

Joy Blasick, Parent, Columbia County

**DESIGN:** Keystone STARS/ Early Learning Keys to Quality supports child care, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Head Start programs that are committed to continuous quality improvement and offers families a valuable tool to gauge quality in early learning programs.

Keystone STARS improves quality in early learning programs through:

- **Standards:** Programs may enter Keystone STARS at Start with STARS and earn a STAR 1 through STAR 4 level based on research-based standards for quality, such as staff qualifications and professional development, the learning environment, partnerships with family and community, and business management. Programs must also earn certain scores on their Environment Rating Scales (ERS) assessments based on their STAR levels.
- **Training - Professional Development:** Keystone STARS standards require higher educational levels for staff as programs move up the quality ladder while offering financial assistance and professional development opportunities. For example, child care, and Head Start programs participating in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts are eligible for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships to earn the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or college degrees while continuing to work full-time. Early learning professionals also have access to issue-specific professional development workshops or professional credentials.<sup>33</sup> Program directors are required to take a Core Series of professional development workshops. The workshops are spread across STAR levels and are designed to provide the skills and information needed to advance in STAR levels.
- **Assistance:** Through six Regional Keys located throughout the commonwealth, programs participating in Keystone STARS may receive technical assistance on meeting the requirements for higher STARS levels.
- **Resources and Support:** Keystone STARS programs may be eligible for support grants, merit awards, and Education and Retention Awards to help continue to improve quality in their programs. Keystone STARS programs serving children who receive Child Care Works subsidy also receive a STARS add-on rate to supplement this subsidy.

As STARS programs continue to improve quality and move up the STARS ladder, they can access STARS technical assistance to meet the higher standards and prepare for ERS assessments.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** OCDEL has expanded accountability measures for the Keystone STARS program to include both accountability to programs and technical assistance organizations.

Program accountability. All Keystone STARS programs participate in Environment Rating Scales (ERS) assessments.<sup>34</sup> Each program is required to attend training to learn the Environment Rating Scales and conduct a self-assessment of their classrooms. For STAR 3 and 4 programs, independent evaluators conduct an ERS assessment of one classroom for each age range (Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, School-Age). If programs do not meet the required ERS assessment scores, the assessor, STARS specialist, and program will develop an action plan and provide additional technical assistance to help them meet their goals.

Keystone STARS programs must also submit documentation to show they are meeting the standards for their STAR level. Programs must renew their STAR designation every two years.

Technical assistance. In 2008 – 2009 Pennsylvania developed the Keystone STARS Technical Assistance Quality Assurance and Accountability System to support consistency and quality in technical assistance across the commonwealth. The system consists of the following key performance areas and will be fully implemented in FY 2009 – 2010:

- **Qualifications, Professional Development and Professionalism** requirements of technical assistance consultants to ensure consultants are highly qualified and continue to stay current on trends, research and issues in the field.
- **Reporting Obligations** to include timely, accurate submission of reports, timely follow-up and completion of referrals, records management and targets.
- **Measurable Impact on Provider** establishes the expectation that technical assistance will have some influence on the measurable improvement of a program. Change affected may be in knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviors in the target population resulting in improvement in specific standards, STAR level change and “stickiness” of the improvement.

Provider survey. As part of its work to continue to strengthen and improve the Keystone STARS program, OCDEL conducted a provider survey that focused on provider perception of the most beneficial aspects of STARS and on ease of use of the various STARS resources. Eighty percent of providers report that the processes associated with the Support and Merit Grants, and the Education and Retention Grants were somewhat easy to very easy to use and 75% of the providers found that the STARS Technical Assistance and Professional Development supports were at least good quality and were helpful.

**RESULTS:** In 2008-2009, approximately 32% of child care programs participating in Keystone STARS moved up at least one STAR level, increasing the quality early learning opportunities for children in their programs. The number of STAR 3 and 4 programs increased 30% between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

Environment Rating Scale scores have also increased among Keystone STARS programs for 2008-2009. The overall average score for STAR 3 sites was 5.23 in 2008-2009, which is an increase from 2007-2008 when the average score was 5.06. STAR 4 sites scored an overall average of 5.48 in 2008-2009, which is an increase from 2007-2008 when the average score was 5.31.

#### Providers Participating in Keystone STARS by STAR Level and Provider Type

STAR Level	SWS	STAR 1	STAR 2	STAR 3	STAR 4	STAR 4A	TOTAL
Provider Type	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09
Center	379	1,266	765	353	145	229	3,137
Group	54	271	94	26	5	19	469
Family	439	565	135	30	21	32	1,222
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>2,102</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>4,828</b>

**Estimated Children in Keystone STARS Providers by STAR Level and Provider Type**

STAR Level	SWS	STAR 1	STAR 2	STAR 3	STAR 4	STAR 4A	TOTAL
Provider Type	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09
Center	20,087	67,098	40,545	18,709	7,685	12,137	166,261
Group	594	2,981	1,034	286	55	209	5,159
Family	2,195	2,825	675	150	105	160	6,110
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,876</b>	<b>72,904</b>	<b>42,254</b>	<b>19,145</b>	<b>7,845</b>	<b>12,506</b>	<b>177,530</b>

**Providers Participating in Keystone STARS by STAR Level and Region as of June 30, 2009**

STAR Level	SWS	STAR 1	STAR 2	STAR 3	STAR 4	STAR 4A	TOTAL
Region	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09
Central	54	185	119	51	15	19	443
Northeast	91	296	175	90	27	44	723
Northwest	110	200	93	52	37	19	511
South Central	65	280	197	76	40	47	705
Southeast	388	874	310	94	38	88	1,792
Southwest	164	267	100	46	14	63	654
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>2,102</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>4,828</b>

**Estimated Children in Keystone STARS Providers by STAR Level and Region as of June 30, 2009**

STAR Level	SWS	STAR 1	STAR 2	STAR 3	STAR 4	STAR 4A	TOTAL
Region	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09	Jun-09
Central	1,080	5,887	4,639	2,037	561	959	15,163
Northeast	2,321	11,032	8,015	4,446	1,335	2,284	29,433
Northwest	2,398	5,398	2,829	2,354	1,913	959	15,851
South Central	1,021	9,194	8,941	3,248	1,694	1,933	26,031
Southeast	10,412	31,544	13,622	4,754	1,918	3,416	65,666
Southwest	5,644	9,849	4,208	2,306	424	2,955	25,386
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,876</b>	<b>72,904</b>	<b>42,254</b>	<b>19,145</b>	<b>7,845</b>	<b>12,506</b>	<b>177,530</b>

## Parent-Child Home Program

Parents are a child's first teacher and the interaction between a parent and child has a tremendous effect on that child's early learning. When parents spend time talking, reading and playing with their child in ways that promote their development, it can have great results for children.<sup>35</sup>

**DESIGN:** The Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) is a nationally-replicated, research-based early literacy and home visitation program for families with infants and toddlers. A home visitor models for parents how to read and play with their children to promote positive parent-child interaction, literacy development, and a language-rich home environment. PCHP reinforces the parent's role as their child's first and most important teacher and provides them with the guidance and supports to promote quality early learning opportunities for their children. Home visitors provide half-hour home visits twice a week for two years.

Programs are also required to conduct developmental screenings of children and refer to Early Intervention or other services when appropriate. In 2008-2009, 1,600 children were served through 25 PCHP sites in 25 counties.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** PCHP National Center and OCDEL staff independently conducts site visits, with OCDEL conducting visits every other year. Programs submit semi-annual narrative reports to OCDEL summarizing successes, challenges and anecdotal information. Programs also submit child outcomes to the National Center throughout the year.

**RESULTS:** An independent study by Indiana University of Pennsylvania showed positive gains in all areas being observed in both positive parent-child interactions (Parent and Child Together – PACT) and child behavior traits showing increases in language and literacy development (Child Behavior Traits – CBT)<sup>36</sup>.

In 2008-2009, of the 1,600 children served by PCHP:

- 81 children were referred to Early Intervention Birth to Three
  - 55 followed through with services (68%)
- 64 children were referred to Early Intervention Three to Five
  - 41 followed through with services (64%)

## Pennsylvania Nurse-Family Partnership

High quality in-home parent coaching services that begin when the mother is pregnant, such as Pennsylvania's Nurse-Family Partnership, help mothers deliver healthy babies and can cut cases of child abuse and neglect nearly in half.

The Pennsylvania Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) helps children and families reach their promise by giving first time mothers the supports necessary to provide an excellent start for their children. This research-based, nurse home visiting program helps low-income, first-time parents experience healthy pregnancies, learn how to take good care of their babies, and make plans for the future.

**DESIGN:** Home visits by registered nurses promote the physical, cognitive and social-emotional development of the children and provide general support as well as instructive parenting skills to the parents. Services are

*When I signed up for Nurse-Family Partnership, I didn't expect what we got. I knew I would learn things that would prepare people for parenthood, help them become better moms and dads. But what we got was much more, an imprint on our hearts from the time we spent together. You not only taught us, but you listened. With your guidance, my daughter Cindy has better opportunities. I am grateful for that.*

Sally Snow, Parent, Columbia County

provided to families prenatally until the child reaches two years of age. In 2008-2009, 4,449 families were served through 23 NFP programs in 39 counties.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** A rigorous training and site certification process is conducted through the NFP National Service Office. Grantees report performance and family information to the National Office, and can receive technical assistance.

**RESULTS:** Nurse-Family Partnership prevents nearly half of all cases of abuse or neglect of at-risk children. According to Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, by the time the children in Nurse-Family Partnership had reached 15, both their mothers and the children had about 60% fewer arrests than mothers and children left out of the program.<sup>37</sup>

## Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides children at risk of school failure with a high quality pre-kindergarten experience that prepares them for success in school and in life. Research consistently shows that children with access to quality pre-kindergarten such as Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts can make up delays in development and enter school on par with their peers and ready to learn.

**DESIGN:** The quality components of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts meet or exceed nearly every quality benchmark set by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) for a quality pre-kindergarten program that will prepare children for school. In 2008-2009, 151 Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts grantees with 168 partners served 11,841 children in 62 counties. Children residing in 78% of Pennsylvania’s school districts participated in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.

**Total Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Enrollment by Region, May 2009**

Region	Total Enrollments	Estimated # of 3 year olds Enrolled*	Estimated # of 4 year olds Enrolled*
Central	1,210	345	865
Northeast	1,996	627	1,396
Northwest	1,973	501	1,472
South Central	1,417	433	987
Southeast	3,651	1,544	2,107
Southwest	1,594	572	1,022
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11,841</b>	<b>4,022</b>	<b>7,819</b>

\*Estimated age groups determined by September 1, 2008 cut off date

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Grantees submit monthly and quarterly reports which are monitored and reviewed by OCDEL staff. Preschool Program Specialists conduct site visits and, using a comprehensive review, evaluate each grantee on how it has met program requirements for reporting, communications/interactions, meeting and training attendance, continuous quality improvement, teacher qualifications, funds management, classroom environment, enrollment and attendance of the children, and program review. Independent assessors also evaluate individual classrooms using the nationally recognized Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R).



Grantees also submit periodic reports of each child’s progress. In 2008-2009 grantees began to enter child outcomes data online over three reporting periods.

**RESULTS:** Children affected by risk factors for academic failure benefit greatly from quality pre-kindergarten. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts has a demonstrated track record of targeting its resources to vulnerable children and families. Nearly every (81.5%) classroom is located in a zip code where at least 30% of children under age five live in low-income families. Grantees report that:

- Nearly all (95%) children in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classrooms are affected by at least one risk factor for academic failure, such as living in low income families, learning English as a second language, or having disabilities or developmental delays: and
- Most (77%) are affected by two or more risk factors, making them more likely to struggle in school.

Outcomes for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts children compare favorably to outcomes in other states that have had pre-k programs in place for as long as 20 years. Second year reports demonstrate positive results on children's progress.

NIEER Quality Standard	NIEER Benchmark	Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Standards
Early Learning Standards	Comprehensive	Comprehensive
Teacher degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree + ECE Certification*
Teacher specialized training	Specializing in pre-k	ECE certification*
Assistant teacher degree	Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or equivalent	CDA or equivalent <sup>#</sup>
Teacher in-service	At least 15 hours a year	Meet requirements of Act 48 (180 hours over five years)
Maximum class size	20 or less	20 or less
Staff-child ratio	1 staff per 10 children (1:10)	1 teacher and 1 aide per 20 children (1:10)
Required screening/referral and support services	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	Programs required to develop collaborations with early intervention service providers to be able to provide support services/referrals; develop parent engagement strategies to support parents' involvement in child's early learning; and support the smooth transition of children into the preschool program and on to kindergarten
Meals	At least 1 a day	For full day - one meal and one snack; for half day - one snack
Required monitoring	Site visits	Site visits by preschool program specialists; ECERS-R ratings in select classrooms; child outcomes reporting online; monthly and quarterly program and fiscal online reporting

\*as per the State Board of Education regulations, Private Academic Preschools, Head Start and child care programs have until December 2011 to meet ECE certification requirements, but now must have an associate's degree or higher in early childhood education. Licensed nursery schools must have a BA and private teaching license.

<sup>#</sup> Teacher assistants must complete at least 2 years of postsecondary study, or possess a CDA or associate's degree by 2009-2010

- Nearly every child (99 percent) showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and social skills after attending the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program.
  - Nearly 75 percent of children who attended Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts finished the school year with age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy and social skills. By the end of the year:

- Five times as many children were proficient in Scientific Thinking (from 1,429 children upon entry to 7,686 at end of year)
- More than four times as many children were proficient in Mathematical Thinking (from 1,792 children upon entry to 7,910 at end of year)
- Nearly four times as many children were proficient in Language and Literacy (from 2,164 children upon entry to 8,135 at end of year)
- Nearly three times as many children were proficient in Personal and Social Development (from 2,984 children upon entry to 8,763 at end of year)

*We have observed my son's Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts classroom and have consulted with his teachers and staff and know that the practices of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program have made an impact on our son. We feel this program is invaluable to all.*

The Bobersky Family, Luzerne County

## Public-Private Partnerships

A quality early education continuum requires support and participation of both the public and private sectors. Pennsylvania is fortunate to have a strong and supportive foundation community. OCDEL encourages partnerships with the foundation and research communities to develop pilot projects that may be replicated statewide and conduct research to reinforce the benefits of quality early education.

### Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership for Educational Success

When school districts and community-based early learning programs work together to provide quality early learning opportunities, everyone benefits.

Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership for Educational Success is a public-private initiative created in 2004 that facilitates local pre-kindergarten partnerships among school districts, community-based providers and Early Intervention. In 2008-2009, seven participating communities implemented prekindergarten partnerships with more than 250 partners. Current funders of the Public-Private Partnership include Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Grable Foundation, and The Heinz Endowments.

**DESIGN:** The three primary objectives of the Public-Private Partnership are:

1. Increase the total number of children attending quality pre-kindergarten in Pennsylvania;
2. Develop quality model programs that are characterized by partnerships, professional development, standards of best practice, and community engagement; and
3. Establish a statewide network of early education and care leaders.

Through Pre K Counts coordinators, coach/consultants, and professional development activities, school district and community partners (such as child care, Head Start, Early Intervention) align curriculum to Pennsylvania early learning standards, share professional development opportunities, involve parents in their child's development, and educate business, education, legislative and community leaders about the value of quality early education to their community's future.

This year, the name of the Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership for Educational Success Executive Leadership Council was changed to Partners of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission. Through its steering group, the PA Early Learning Investment Commission, co-chaired by Governor Rendell and James Rohr, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of PNC Financial Services Group, more than 165 business, education and civic leaders attended the first annual Economic Summit on Early Childhood Development Investment and many have become children's champions, expressing their support for quality pre-kindergarten opportunities for every child in Pennsylvania.

Through the Commission more and more business leaders are embracing early childhood education as a top priority issue as they become convinced of its strong connection to employer productivity, workforce development and economic investment.

Through a four year study by the UCLID Center at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh funded by The Heinz Endowments, the Public-Private Partnership will identify components of local pre-kindergarten partnerships that are most successful in preparing children for school and for life.

*"We believe that [The Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership study] is the definitive study in Pennsylvania on the issue of whether quality preschool education has been worth the public and private investments. The answer to that, we can say now based on hard numbers, is a resounding yes."*

Teresa Heinz, Chairman, The Heinz Endowments

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Partnerships submit quarterly performance and fiscal reports to OCDEL. Staff also conducts site visits to partnerships to ensure that they are meeting the grant requirements.

Each Partnership hires Pre K Counts coaches to visit classrooms and provide onsite technical assistance. In this final year of Phase I of Pre K Count the Public Private Partnership, seven communities have participated — Albert Gallatin School District, Aliquippa School District, Bellefonte Area School District, Huntingdon Area School District, New Kensington -Arnold School District, Southern Tioga School District and Wilkes-Barre Area School District. The project had seventeen coaches/coordinators that worked with a total of 128 teachers. The coaches/coordinators provided in class technical assistance, staff development and curriculum materials, and made 2,619 classroom visitations during the year, working with 58 partners. They improved the quality of education for 2,438 students, of whom 432 were special needs children.

**RESULTS:** The successes of the Public-Private Partnership helped to inform the program component of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program.

Pre K Counts commissioned the SPECS Program Evaluation Research Team from Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and the UCLID Center at the University of Pittsburgh to conduct a four year study (2005-2009) of the impact and outcomes for children and participating in Public-Private Partnership programs. The independent SPECS research has been funded by The Heinz Endowments. The interim report<sup>38</sup> published in March 2008 found that children participating in Public-Private Partnership classrooms showed significant progress in acquiring early learning skills during their participation, particularly those who were at risk of school failure. In fact, the length of time the child was enrolled in the program was a good predictor of their progress. The final report will be published in late 2009.

**Public-Private Partnership Phase II.** Building upon the success of the first phase of the Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership for Educational Success, the Grable Foundation, The Heinz Endowments and William Penn Foundation created a combined fund over three years to support the second phase of the partnership. The second phase of the partnership will focus on a) leadership development of the business and

early childhood community; b) quality outcomes for children through systematic measurement and reporting on program quality; and c) building the local capacity of teachers to deliver high quality education by meeting the required early childhood education bachelor's degree and credential requirements.

### **Early Childhood Assessment and Accountability Project**

The William Penn Foundation supported the Office of Child Development's efforts to ensure that Pennsylvania's early childhood education programs promote child development and demonstrate children's progress. This grant helped support the study by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Catherine Scott Little of the horizontal and vertical alignments of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Infant-Toddler, Prekindergarten and Kindergarten; enabled more than 1,000 early childhood education teachers to be trained to conduct child assessments; and funded the Early Learning Network feasibility study, the blueprint for the development of the Early Learning Network.

### **Pennsylvania Build Initiative**

The Build Initiative is a multi-state partnership that helps states construct a coordinated early learning system that responds to the needs of young children from birth to five and their families, so that children are safe, healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed in school. It is supported by an Early Childhood Funders' Collaborative made up of 15 leading philanthropies. Pennsylvania is one of five states selected to participate in this national initiative. Pennsylvania has been a Build partner since 2004.

Build serves as a catalyst for change and a national resource on early learning. As a partner in Build, Pennsylvania receives grant money and technical assistance to support early childhood system building. Since 2007-2008, Pennsylvania Build has supported OCDEL's work to create a quality early education continuum with work in the areas of coordinated leadership, standards and assessment, professional development, and public engagement.

Coordinated Leadership. Through executive order, the PA Build assisted in the creation of The Pennsylvania Early Learning Council and The Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission. These groups serve as vehicles to maintain active involvement of early childhood stakeholders and business leaders. The 75 member PA Early Learning Council will plan for the expansion of effective early learning services for young children and their families, and will make recommendations to ensure the plans are implemented successfully. With the input and assistance of business leaders, the PA Early Learning Investment Commission will increase public investment in early childhood investments by engaging business leaders across the state in education and advocacy, and increasing awareness of the importance of the early years.

Standards and Assessment. PA Build supported the development of first and second grade standards that were completed and mailed to school districts, school-age programs and other partners in June 2008.

Professional Development. Professional development supported by PA Build has focused around inclusive practices and racial equity, as well as support of articulation projects between two and four year higher education institutions.

Public Engagement. In addition to sponsoring research and publications such as the OCDEL annual report and biweekly Build ECE News, the Pennsylvania Build initiative is a co-sponsor (with the Pennsylvania Key) of the "Pennsylvania's Promise for Children" public awareness campaign. Pennsylvania's Promise for Children serves as a public website for parents, organizations, and communities to become involved in promoting early childhood education and learning about its benefits for children, families, and communities.

## V – Vision for tomorrow

Building a quality early education continuum is a marathon, not a sprint. Each year Pennsylvania has refined a system through continuous quality improvement and serving more children.

In 2008-2009, Pennsylvania was able to serve more children in quality early education programs, add greater accountability and coordination of programs, and start the foundation of continuous teacher and program quality improvement.

In 2009-2010, Pennsylvania will continue its work to create a more seamless pathway of professional development for early childhood educators at all levels; increase accountability and documenting positive outcomes; align the early education system with the full education continuum; and build leadership at all levels.

**Create a more seamless pathway of professional development for early childhood educators at all levels.** As education requirements increase for early childhood staff among several programs, OCDEL will continue work to align all professional development for early childhood staff, whether in community-based or school-based settings.

In 2009-2010, Pennsylvania will require non-regulated child care providers (family/relative/neighbor care) receiving Child Care Works subsidy to complete 12 hours of professional development every two years. All Nurse-Family Partnership nurse supervisors and nurse home visitors will be required to document annual professional development hours offered by a PQAS-certified instructor or must meet qualifications to help maintain their nursing credential or as required by the National Service Office.

OCDEL will continue alignment of the Professional Development Record (PDR) with new ECE teacher certification requirements. Pennsylvania will also continue work on integrating early education concepts and leadership in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Program.

**Increase accountability and documenting positive outcomes.** Pennsylvania will continue to develop PELICAN and the Early Learning Network to include Keystone STAR 3 & 4 centers, pre-kindergarten funded through the Accountability Block Grant, and Early Intervention.

**Align the early education system with the full education continuum.** OCDEL will expand its work in providing support to school districts and early education programs in building effective transition plans for children entering pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, which will also strengthen relationships between the early education and K-12 education communities. Pennsylvania will also evaluate the options for expanding the Early Learning Network to include kindergarten.

**Build leadership at all levels.** Pennsylvania, in partnership with leading foundations and nonprofit organizations, will continue to expand the Pennsylvania's Promise for Children campaign and engage more business leaders through the Early Learning Investment Commission.

Pennsylvania's quality early education is building a brighter future for Pennsylvania's children, families and communities.

*When everyone rallies around a child who needs support, the results are amazing. The child arrives at kindergarten ready to succeed, the family learns and feels supported, the early childhood teachers gain new tools, and the community wins.*

Sarah Shoffler, Parent, Bucks County

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Zhilin Liu, Rosaria Ribeiro & Mildred Warner. "Comparing Child Care Multipliers in the Regional Economy: Analysis from 50 States," 2004 <http://government.cce.cornell.edu/doc/reports/childcare/reports.asp>
- <sup>2</sup> (Barnett, 2003a; Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001; Howes & Brown, 2000), [www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/pdf/teacher.pdf](http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/pdf/teacher.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> "Evaluation of Pennsylvania's STARS Quality Rating System in Child Care Settings," (December 2006), available at [http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/ELinPA/STARS\\_2006\\_Evaluation\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.pakeys.org/uploadedContent/Docs/ELinPA/STARS_2006_Evaluation_FINAL.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> You can download the Lattice at [http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career\\_Requirements](http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=Career_Requirements).
- <sup>5</sup> The Child Development Associate credential is a nationally recognized credential for early childhood professionals in center-based, family child care, and home visitor programs. The Child Development Associate (CDA) Competency Standards and Assessment System provide standards for training, evaluation, and recognition of practitioners based on their ability to meet the unique needs of an age group. For more information, visit <http://www.cdacouncil.org/cda.htm>.
- <sup>6</sup> C. Raver, "Young Children's Emotional Development and School Readiness," July 2003
- <sup>7</sup> Karoly, L.A., Kilburn, M.R. & Cannon, J.S. (2005). Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results. Future Promise. Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation
- <sup>8</sup> <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>
- <sup>9</sup> (Brennan, E. M., Bradley, J. R., Allen, M. D., & Perry, D. F. [in press]. The evidence base for mental health consultation in early childhood settings: Research synthesis addressing staff and program outcomes. *Early Education and Development*.)
- <sup>10</sup> Janell Smith-Jones, Ph.D. and Maria Zeglen Townsend, Ph.D., "Evaluation of the Infant/Toddler Systems Building Initiatives: Final Report for the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program." University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, September 2008, <http://www.education.pitt.edu/ocd/publications/ecmh.pdf>.
- <sup>11</sup> "Measures of Classroom Quality in Pre-Kindergarten and Children's Development of Academic, Language and Social Skills," University of Virginia, Mashburn, Andrew J. and Pianta, Robert C., May 2008, <http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=5217>
- <sup>12</sup> Early Learning Standards are available online at [www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us).
- <sup>13</sup> Following attendance at an early learning standards training event, center directors or administrators who are PQAS-certified, can order them through the PA Key.
- <sup>14</sup> Vold, E. B. (2003). Young children's affirmation of differences: Curriculum that is multicultural and developmentally appropriate. In J. P. Isenberg & M. R. Jalongo (Eds.), *Major trends and issues in early childhood education: Challenges, controversies, and insights (Second edition)* (pp. 30-46). New York: Teaches College Press, p. 31.
- <sup>15</sup> <http://www.brookespublishing.com/tools/asq/index.htm>
- <sup>16</sup> [http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=EarlyLearning\\_Tools](http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=EarlyLearning_Tools)
- <sup>17</sup> To learn more about the Strengthening Families initiative, visit <http://strengtheningfamilies.net/>
- <sup>18</sup> Camarota, 2005
- <sup>19</sup> Pennsylvania code Title 22, Chapters 4, 11 and 12
- <sup>20</sup> All persons seeking to operate a child care facility must attend a precertification orientation training prior to opening.
- <sup>21</sup> Tekin, Erdal (2004), *Child Care Subsidy Receipt, Employment, and Child Care Choices of Single Mothers*
- <sup>22</sup> Matthews 2006
- <sup>23</sup> Eligible parents are those earning 200% of the federal poverty level or less that meet the work requirement of 20 hours per week.
- <sup>24</sup> [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us)
- <sup>25</sup> Long-Term Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect", U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long\\_term\\_consequences.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/long_term_consequences.cfm)
- <sup>26</sup> [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)
- <sup>27</sup> The National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS) [www.sri.com/neils/](http://www.sri.com/neils/); *Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study (PEELS)* Available at: [www.peels.org](http://www.peels.org)
- <sup>28</sup> Full-day kindergarten is defined as 5 hours of instruction per day for 180 days.
- <sup>29</sup> class size ratio of 1:17
- <sup>30</sup> With appropriate documentation, beginning in 2008 programs can serve up to 35% of their funded enrollment of families living between 100-130% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- <sup>31</sup> Tarullo, L., Zill, N., Hubell-McKey, R., Resnick, G. (2002) A National Picture of Head Start: the FACES Study. Head Start Bulletin, Issue 74. Pages 40-44. [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HSLIC\\_Search](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HSLIC_Search)
- <sup>32</sup> "Evaluation of Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS Quality Rating System in Child Care Settings," December 2006, available at <http://www.pakeys.org/stars/KeystoneStarsEvaluation.aspx>
- <sup>33</sup> See page 9 for more information on career development in the early childhood workforce.
- <sup>34</sup> Please see page 23 for more information on assessments across OCDEL programs.
- <sup>35</sup> (Bruner 1964, 1966; Vygotsky 1962)
- <sup>36</sup> Parent-Child Home Program: Analysis of Pennsylvania Statewide PACT, CBT and TELD Findings 2005-2006; Center for Educational and Program Evaluation; Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Prepared by Becky A. Knickelbein, Heather Degroot & Shelley Strobel; June 21, 2007.
- <sup>37</sup> "Breaking the cycle of child abuse and reducing crime in Pennsylvania: Coaching parents through intensive home visiting," Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Pennsylvania, 2008, [www.fightcrime.org/reports/PACAN2.pdf](http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/PACAN2.pdf)
- <sup>38</sup> Source: Bagnato, SJ, & Fevola, A. (2007) *The Impact of Early Learning Partnerships: Indicators of Progress for Pre K Counts in Pennsylvania —A Descriptive Study of Child and Program Outcomes (2005-2007)*, Pittsburgh, PA: Early Childhood Partnerships, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC.

## Early Education in Pennsylvania

According to the US Census Bureau, Pennsylvania's 2008 population was 12,448,279, an increase of 1.4% since 2000. 81.9% of the population have earned at least a high school degree, with 22.4% of the population having earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The most frequently reported industry in Pennsylvania counties is Manufacturing, followed by Health Care/Social Services. The median household income in 2007 was \$48,562.

There are 732,956 children from birth to age five living in Pennsylvania County.

**35.7% of children under age five participate in publicly-funded quality early education programs**

### Risk factors affecting children's success in school.

Family and community factors affect how well young children learn, leaving our at-risk children behind. Research has shown that children affected by risk factors such as poverty, family status, or poor school system, are more likely to enter school behind their peers, struggle in school, or drop out altogether. Risk factors like those listed below can hurt a child's chances of doing well in school.

In Pennsylvania:

- 36.9% of children under age five live in low-income families
- 16.5% of births are to mothers with less than a high school education
- 22.3% of third graders scored below proficient on the 2009 PSSA reading test

### Quality early education programs.

Research has also shown that at-risk children who receive quality early education can catch up to their peers in cognitive and social emotional development before they reach kindergarten, so they are ready to succeed in school and in life. These benefits last a lifetime. Pennsylvania's quality early education programs are helping children overcome risk factors and succeed in school.

Of children from birth to age five in Pennsylvania:

- 8.2% participate in Child Care Works
- 10.7% participate in Early Intervention
- 4.2% participate in federal Head Start
- 0.3% participate in Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program
- 14.7% participate in Keystone STARS
- 0.6% participate in Nurse-Family Partnership
- 0.2% participate in Parent-Child Home program
- 1.6% participate in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts
- 0.6% participate in pre-kindergarten funded PA PACT (formerly ABG)
- 2.5% participate in school-based pre-kindergarten

Source: Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning Program Reach and Risk Assessment, State Fiscal Year 2008-2009, [http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=EarlyLearning\\_Reach](http://www.pakeys.org/pages/get.aspx?page=EarlyLearning_Reach).

PA legislature approves funding for 07-08 to serve: Over 132,000 children (monthly average) through Child Care Works; Nearly 74,000 children through Early Intervention (birth-5); Nearly 65,000 children through ABG-funded full day kindergarten; Over 77,000 children through school-funded full day kindergarten; Nearly 6,000 children through Head Start Supplemental; Nearly 179,000 children through Keystone STARS; Over 4,000 children through Nurse-FamilyPartnership; Over 4,000 children through ABG-funded pre-kindergarten; Over 10,000 children through school-funded pre-k and K4; Nearly 11,000 children through PA Pre-K Counts 7/07	The Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) unanimously approved the final form Chapter 49-2 regulations—new teacher-certification rules which develop guidelines for higher education to implement the Early Childhood Education Certificate. 8/07	PA Learning Standards for Kindergarten is published 12/07	OCDEL receives grant from the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) 3/08
Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is created 7/07	New Advisory Committee for the Early Learning Network convened 8/07	Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts begins reporting child outcomes online 12/07	Pennsylvania awarded grant to participate in Harvard Seminar on Early Childhood Science and Policy for Legislative, Business and Foundation Executives 3/08
Full implementation of child outcomes reporting by Early Intervention programs statewide begins 7/07	OCDEL commissions independent evaluation of the alignment of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards 8/07	PA Department of Public Welfare hosts Infant-Toddler Mental Health Symposium 12/07	Pre K Counts Interim Report 2005-2007 by Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and the UCLID Center at the University of Pittsburgh shows that children participating in Pre K Counts Public-Private Partnership classrooms showed significant progress in acquiring early learning skills during their participation, particularly those who were at risk of school failure. In fact, the length of time the child was enrolled in the program was a good predictor of their progress. 3/08
Pennsylvania receives federal grant for early literacy in special education from the US Office of Special Education called CELL (Center for Early Literacy Learning) 7/07	The Preschool and Infant-Toddler monitoring tools for Early Intervention are combined into one streamlined monitoring tool that can be used in both programs 10/07	Pennsylvania's Promise for Children declarations posted online 1/08	OCDEL receives a technical assistance and training grant from SpecialQuest Birth-Five: Head Start/Hilton Foundation Training Program 2/08
Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program moves from pilot to full implementation in all six Regional Keys 8/07	OCDEL partners with Office of Children, Youth and Families to provide Ages & Stages to child care providers 10/07	Governor releases first Performance Report for PA Government that describes the work of 25 state agencies and offices, during the 2006-2007 fiscal year 1/08	OCDEL begins implementing Race Matters Initiative 3/08
	Launch of STARS Advisory Committee statewide Listening Tour to hear from Keystone STARS programs and practitioners 11/07	OCDEL receives first targeted grants to promote pre-k to K transition plans awarded to select Community Engagement Groups 2/08	Pennsylvania's One Book, Every Young Child Campaign kicks off 4/08
	Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Advisory Committee is formed 11/07	Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts mid-year report published 2/08	Pennsylvania begins public awareness media campaign for Keystone STARS and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts 4/08
	Three Program-to-Program Articulation in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Pilot Project Grants Announced 11/07	Early Childhood Mental Health Advisory Committee created 3/08	
	Launch of Pennsylvania's Enterprise to Link Information for Children Across Networks (PELICAN) 11/07	Online self-service for Child Care Works and Child Care Provider Search becomes available on COMPASS, allowing online submission of an application or redetermination for Child Care Works financial assistance, and ability to search for a child care provider 3/08	

Final form Child Care Regulations published which update health and safety requirements to reflect best practices & research; make the regulations easier to read and more accessible to providers and parents; reflect an update of the regulations to include correct reference to other applicable laws; and improve opportunity for facility compliance.  
5/08

OCDEL hosts first Higher Education Institute on Diversity  
5/08

Title 22, Chapter 49-2: Pre-K Through 4th Grade Teacher Preparation Guidelines Published which reflects the best characteristics of early childhood and elementary education.  
5/08

OCDEL partners with Office of Children, Youth and Families to provide Ages & Stages to community providers  
5/08

The Gate Opener Innovation grant announced. Nine institutions of higher education awarded grant money to improve access and opportunity to Bachelor's degree completion for early childhood professionals  
5/08

25% of Keystone STARS programs move up at least one STAR level in 2007-2008  
6/08

Inclusion of preschool children receiving Early Intervention services in typical early education settings increased to 58% (a 9% increase) in 2007-2008  
6/08

Pennsylvania releases first-year outcomes for children in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts: 94% of children showed age-appropriate skills and behaviors or emerging age-appropriate skills and behaviors at end of school year  
6/08

PA legislature approves funding for 08-09 to serve: More than 135,000 families (monthly average) through Child Care Works; Nearly 34,000 infants and toddlers and nearly 44,000 preschoolers through Early Intervention (birth-5); Nearly 70,000 children through 448 school districts in full day kindergarten; Over 5,600 children through Head Start Supplemental; 170,000 children in 5,000 programs through Keystone STARS; 4,200 children through Nurse-Family Partnership; Over 55,000 children in 388 school districts through PA Pact-funded pre-kindergarten; Over 18,000 children through school-funded pre-k and K4; Nearly 12,000 children in 315 programs through PA Pre-K Counts  
7/08

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry renews both Child Care Workers and Pre-School Teachers to the 2008 High Priority Occupations (HPO)  
7/08

OCDEL announces an increase in the tiered reimbursement rate for children who receive Child Care Works subsidy and are enrolled at a STAR 2, 3 or 4 program.  
7/08

Keystone STARS was highlighted as a case study in the presentation by Charles J. Homer M.D., M.P.H., National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality and Harvard School of Public Health on Improving Quality in Early Childhood Programs at the Harvard/NGA National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy Presentations  
7/08

OCDEL receives grants from three foundations totaling \$3,550,000 to support leadership development of the business and early childhood provider community; the Early Learning Network, and the local capacity of teachers to deliver quality by meeting the required early childhood education B.A. degree and credential requirements.  
7/08

Fiscal Year Budget 2008-2009 supports a new Early Learning Facilities Fund (ELFF) to subsidize some of the costs of constructing or renovating early learning centers who are Keystone STAR 2 or above with special consideration to programs participating in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts  
8/08

OCDEL launches its Community Education Listserv  
8/08

The Early Childhood Governor's Institutes embraces the Pennsylvania STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Initiative, designed to develop and deploy statewide strategies and resources to enhance Pennsylvania's education and workforce development efforts targeted at the development of a globally competitive science, technology, engineering and mathematics workforce  
9/08

Release of nine-part video series on the Learning Standards for Early Childhood to support program directors' work with their staff on applying the Learning Standards' to their curriculum and assessment practices  
09/08

Governor Rendell signs Executive Orders creating the Pennsylvania Early Learning Council and the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission  
09/08

2007-2008 Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Year End Report Released - Ninety-four percent of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts children finished the school year with age-appropriate skills and behavior or emerging age-appropriate skills and behavior  
10/08

Early Intervention and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts programs make their first data reports in Work Sampling System/Ounce online  
10/08

Release of University of Pittsburgh's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project Final Evaluation Report, demonstrating the quality of early education young children with social and emotional issues receive in early learning programs across the commonwealth 10/08	Kindergarten Advisory Committee formed 12/08	Communications Advisory Committee formed 5/09	OCDEL Cross Program Family Survey is implemented across Early Intervention Birth-Five, PA Pre-K Counts, and Child Care Works programs 6/09
Creation of the Bureau of Certification Listserv for registered and certified child care programs 10/08	OCDEL Cross-Program Family Survey is piloted. 01/09	Release of new Professional Development requirement for regulation exempt providers in Child Care Works 4/09	OCDEL's Learning Is Everywhere calendar, which provides activities for children from birth – age five based on the Learning Standards for Early Childhood, is published 6/09
Release of the second annual OCDEL Reach and Risk Report 2007-2008 which provides county, as well as city, specific information on the level of risk for school failure for children (based on seven risk factors) and the availability, or reach, of most OCDEL programs to children in each county and in the 27 largest cities in Pennsylvania. 11/08	OCDEL releases Kindergarten Entry Date Recommendations which reviews findings on kindergarten entry dates in the Commonwealth and provides a recommendation to districts about their policies for kindergarten age eligibility. 01/09	170 Pennsylvania business leaders take call to action to invest in early education at the Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment in Harrisburg 4/09	OCDEL hosts second Higher Education Institute on Diversity 6/09
Children's Trust Fund awards \$714,620 in grants to six community-based agencies to implement child abuse and neglect prevention programs. 11/08	OCDEL and Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Issue Joint Announcement of Behavior Supports for Young Children to ensure that young children and their families have the tools to promote good mental health and access to an array of individualized services for more complex behavioral health treatment. 2/09	Child Care Works Waiting List Grows to 16,000 5/09	Nearly one-third (32%) of Keystone STARS programs move up at least one STAR level in 2008-2009; 30% increase in STAR 3 & 4 programs 6/09
Early Learning Council Members are announced 11/08	Pennsylvania Supreme Court issues decision in St. Elizabeth's case upholding the Department of Public Welfare's authority to require Certification of non-profit child care facilities. 2/09	OCDEL releases the handbook: Staffing OCDEL Councils, Committees, Work Groups, and Task Forces 5/09	70% of TANF children receiving child care assistance are using regulated child care in 2008-2009, a 38% increase since Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies began providing child care services to TANF families in 2006-2007 6/09
The Pennsylvania Governor's Forum: Linking Ready Kids to Ready Schools held in Philadelphia, during which leaders from K-12, early childhood, and higher education shared expertise and contributed to the new state policy framework on the transition from early childhood to the early elementary years and the alignment of practices between those systems, including higher education's role. 12/08	Deputy Secretary Dichter testifies before U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood Education on Pennsylvania's Early Education Continuum 3/09	The first phase of the Early Learning Network completed, linking of existing child demographic database, PELICAN, with the child outcome reporting system, Work Sampling and Ounce Scale Online for a more complete analysis of child outcomes 5/09	
		Second year Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts outcomes released: Nearly every child (99 percent) showed age-appropriate or emerging age-appropriate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and social skills after attending the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program	
		Inclusion of preschool children receiving Early Intervention services in typical early education settings increased to 63% in 2008-2009 6/09	

# Quality Early Education Benefits Children, Families and Communities

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts | Keystone STARS | Child Care Works | Early Intervention | Head Start | Nurse-Family Partnership

## Benefits to communities

### Taxpayer savings

Every dollar invested in quality early education saves \$7 in public costs like public assistance and crime control

### Increased tax base

Communities receive more tax revenues as citizens earn more

### Quality workforce

Businesses can hire skilled employees- new industries enter PA with quality jobs

### School savings

Schools save on special education costs

### School readiness

Children come to school with pre-academic and social skills for kindergarten

### School success

Children are more likely to graduate high school, attend college or career training

### Financial Stability

Children are more likely to have higher earnings and own a home as adults

### Quality of life

Children are less likely to commit crimes or need public assistance as adults

**For a brighter future**

## Benefits to children



**Pennsylvania's Promise for Children | [www.papromiseforchildren.com](http://www.papromiseforchildren.com)**



**pennsylvania**

OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
AND EARLY LEARNING

### Office of Child Development and Early Learning

Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Public Welfare

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Harrisburg, PA 17126

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**Build**  
Strong Foundations For  
Pennsylvania's Youngest Children