# *Infant Toddler Contracted Slots (ITCS) Program*

***Request for Application (RFA)***
***Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)***
***September 2019***

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## General

### Where can we find the policy document?

The policy document is available at Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Policy Document.

### Will programs who already have an Infant/Toddler Contracted Slots program running need to submit a full application?

Pilot providers should complete a continuation application with the relevant ELRC to continue the slots and funding from the pilot year. If the provider wishes to apply for additional slots or change the cost per child, then an application for this RFA process should be submitted.

## Applicant Provider Type

### Lead Agency PKC sites that would like to participate need to be DHS licensed?

Providers must meet ALL eligibility requirements to apply. The funds currently used for this program are Child Care Development Funds and therefore, sites must have subsidy provider agreements with ELRCs.

### If you currently have STAR 4 facilities that include Head Start and PA Pre-K Counts but are not licensed can you apply for contracted slots at that facility?

Providers must meet ALL eligibility requirements to apply. The funds currently used for this program are Child Care Development Funds and therefore, sites must have subsidy provider agreements with ELRCs.

### If you have a facility that is STAR 4 that contains Head Start but not PA Pre-K Counts at the same location and is not licensed can you apply?

Providers must meet ALL eligibility requirements to apply. The funds currently used for this program are Child Care Development Funds and therefore, sites must have subsidy provider agreements with ELRCs.

### Are Head Start agencies that receive Pre-K funding and have the capacity to serve Infants and Toddlers, but are not DHS licensed, able to apply for this grant?

Providers must meet ALL eligibility requirements to apply. The funds currently used for this program are Child Care Development Funds and therefore, sites must have subsidy provider agreements with ELRCs.

### Our agency is licensed by DHS in a different facility than where the class would be located - all other criteria is met - does that work?

No, the location serving children must be licensed.

### Are PA Pre-K Counts lead agencies eligible to apply for the ITCS on behalf of their Pre-K Counts partners/providers?

No, each legal entity must apply. A lead agency cannot apply on behalf of a partner agency.

### Is PHL (Philadelphia) PreK eligible? or just PA PKC?

Only PA PKC is eligible.

### Why are only Pre-K Counts sites allowed to apply for the infant/toddler slots?

The ITCS slots is a newly developed program. The program is being built from the infrastructure of the already successful PA PKC program to facilitate the rapid expansion of the program. The program also has a goal of continuity of care for the children enrolled and it is expected that children funded with ITCS will transition into already established PA PKC programs.

### Our program has six (6) separate child care centers which meet the eligibility requirements to apply for ITCS. Would we complete a separate application form for each of the six (6) sites? The application seems to require a site-specific address.

You may apply as a lead agency if the lead agency is the legal entity for all the proposed locations in ONE application. In the application for locations, you should complete the location information for EACH proposed location.

### Can the class be at a different location than our present PA Pre-K Counts class?

Ideally, funding will be awarded to locations which operate PA PKC, however, locations without PA PKC may be reviewed, when other locations with PA PKC are available for transition.

### We are a PKC lead agency. One location we are considering houses a new PKC classroom. The other is an existing private-pay child care center/preschool that is not PKC. Is that location still eligible?

Ideally, funding will be awarded to locations which operate PA PKC, however, locations without PA PKC may be reviewed, when other locations with PA PKC are available for transition.

### If you have centers in 2 counties can you apply in both?

Yes.

### For high quality early learning providers who are expanding (with PreK Counts expansion slots) are there any provisions for acknowledging the provisional license for newly opened sites providing PreK expansion

Not for this rapid expansion year.

### If the goal is to expand capacity for high quality IT Care, are there exceptions for agencies opening new sites, with a provisional license?

Not for this rapid expansion year.

### Are there any geographic restrictions for this project? In other words, are all ELRC's engaged?

All ELRCs are aware of the RFA, however, this does not necessarily mean all ELRCs will have funded providers.

### We serve toddlers (18 Months +) and older, but not infants. Can we apply to serve toddlers and older or would that disqualify us?

Yes, however applications seeking to serve the full range of care levels will be prioritized.

### If as an agency we meet all the criteria, can we rent space in a facility that is licensed by DHS and star 3?

No. The location where children are served must meet all eligibility criteria and be owned by the applying legal entity.

### What will happen if a provider loses its STAR 3/4 status or their full DHS certificate during the program period?

Providers must maintain all eligibility criteria. In cases where eligibility is lost, OCDEL would review the circumstances to determine next steps.

### If we have multiple locations where we operate rooms with a blend of private pay and funded slots, can the slots be portable between the two locations to be responsive the parent needs. For example, we might have 4 slots in each of two locations, but find a need for 6 in one and 2 in the other, can we be flexible and move the slots if they are all under the one grant application or must we get approval before moving them?

The slots will be awarded to a specific location; however, slots can be "portable" if the location meets eligibility requirements and child enrollments are kept current in the PELICAN system.

### What if you are in an area that there is not many CCIS infants/toddlers? How does it work for filling those spots, what is the timeline to get them filled? What if I propose 4 slots and only have one child on the CCIS waiting list to fill one spot, what happens with the other 3 spots? How long do those spots remain open? How is the funding then issued?

Funding awards will be prioritized in areas with high CCW infant-toddler waiting lists. If full enrollment cannot be achieved funding would be re-allocated to higher need areas.

## Family/Child Eligibility

### Who will determine eligibility?

The ELRC determines eligibility for this program.

### Will ELRCs notify parents that are on the waiting list for CCW funding of providers with these slots?

Yes.

### Will ELRC's be referring parents to providers with slots?

Yes.

### Will the ELRC be assisting with filling the slots?

Yes.

### If the family fills out forms at the ELRC, then they get to choose the center they go, how do we know we will be filled?

ELRCs will refer children to slots available when a family is interested in ITCS.

### Can families who are already enrolled in my center and receiving Child Care Works enroll in this program or will I need room for additional children? Ex I have 4 children under 3 years old receiving child care works already enrolled in my center. If I was rewarded 4 slots would those slots automatically go to those 4 families?

CCW eligible children can be transferred to ITCS funding, however, the transition of a CCW funded child to ITCS funding is not automatic. The program should be explained to the families, who have ultimate choice in which funding option they would want to use.

### Are children eligible for Former TANF CCW Funding be eligible for ITCS funding?

Families receiving TANF child care are not eligible to use ITCS funding.

### Are there any provisions like those for Head Start that would make a child categorically eligible (e.g. homeless, foster child)?

All CCW eligibility criteria are applicable.

### Will families have to complete applications for this program? Will it be enough to just complete the CCW Eligibility and the provider application or will there be a separate ITCS application?

The application is the CCW application. ELRCs are instructed how to shift a CCW eligible child to ITCS funding.

### If a child turns 3 after the Pre-K Counts eligibility date for the program year, is the provider expected to maintain enrollment of the child in an infant toddler classroom until the following program year?

Please review policy document p. 5-6 on this issue. The child would continue with ITCS funding until a PK opening became available.

## Ratios/ Group Size

### If the slot is in an infant room 1:4 ratio and the child moves to a one year old room and then a 2 year old room, would each of these classrooms also need to run a 1:4 ratio in the entire classroom?

Yes.

### Is there a limit on number of groups per location?

Limits would be set by DHS licensing.

### If a child needs to stay in the contracted slot beyond age 3 while on the waiting list for CCW or PKC, does the ratio of 1 to 4 still apply and can the older child remain in the same room with infants/toddlers even if there are no age peers?

If a child awaiting a PK enrollment remains in a toddler room, yes. If they transition to a PK classroom, then, no. The decision to transition a child should be determined by the child's developmental level and not by the funding stream.

## Timelines

### When do we have to be ready to serve children, is there a timeline for startup activities with a hard deadline for enrollment?

Startup will depend on the timeliness of ELRC contracting.

### I see that notification is intended to occur on October 7. What is the timeline for implementing the program?

This will depend on each ELRC contracting timeline.

## Fiscal/ Cost per Child

### Page 5 of the Guidance indicates one grant per fiscal year (October 1 through Sept 30), while Page 7 of the guidance indicates funding will be prorated for the first year and then available July 1 through June 30 for subsequent years. Therefore, should we plan that funding for the first year would be from Grant award through June 30?

ELRCs contract with providers through September 30.

### Will families with children in both CCW (subsidy) and infant/toddler paid slots still pay a co-payment as CCW co-pay is based on the family not by child in CCW.

If the family has other children still using CCW funding they would pay the copay.

### Is the payment higher per child then the child receives from the ELRC child subsidy?

Applicants will propose their cost per child, which will be negotiated prior to final awarding.

### Why is the family income based on the subsidy level and not PA PKC income?

The funds currently used for this program are Child Care Development Funds and therefore, CCW eligibility applies.

### Once a family (child) is eligible as an infant, do they need to maintain the Subsidy work/study requirements? Or once they were approved for a slot, it stays with them until they age out of the program?

Once approved for a slot, the child maintains funding. See policy document p. 4-5 for more details on this.

### If we have different private pay rates for infant, young toddlers and older toddlers do we only use the private pay rate for infants to determine the ask amount?

Yes.

### If the provider has different rates for multiple locations, what infant rate do we use in the application?

This is up to the applicant.

### Although the infant/toddler slots do not qualify for STARS add on, will those children still count toward CCW required %?

Yes.

### Will the cost per child be different in various areas of PA?

It is anticipated that each ELRC region will have a specific cost per child.

### Will there be any audit requirements for this program?

Since providers will contract with ELRCs, ELRC procurement and audit requirements would apply.

### Will cost per child be different in the subsequent years since after this year the availability of funds will be based off ELRC's?

The availability of funds is based on the availability of CCDF funding to support this program. As with any grant, the level of funding can change from one grant year to the next.

### If a child requires more than 10 hours of care can a fee for those hours be charged or should we propose a slot rate to cover that?

Fees cannot be charged for children funded with ITCS. Review policy document p. 4 for more details on this topic.

### Assuming the hours of care would be the hours parents are employed (unlike Pre-K Counts). Would it be ok to charge extra fees for hours beyond employment and transportation time?

No, extra fees cannot be charged for children using ITCS funding. In addition, the children are not limited to attendance during the time the family works for ITCS funding.

### Since children will theoretically be eligible for funded program until at least age three, once a slot if filled, we won't be enrolling new children in the slot until that child moves on. Is it anticipated that opportunities to expand slots will continue to be offered (pending funding approval) so we are able to continually enroll additional children at the younger ages as the initial children age through the program?

Yes.

### If a child funded by ITCS but in pk classroom can the opening in the toddler room be filled?

If the PK child is still using ITCS funding while awaiting a PK opening, then, no, an additional ITCS would not be available.

### If a child turns three when PKC is not funded (over the summer) do we still hold on to ITCS until September?

If the child remains enrolled in the program, yes. Please review policy document p. 5-6 on this issue.

### Will ITCS providers be encouraged to develop a point system for enrolling eligible children into this program or will it be first come first serve?

Current subsidy eligibility practices would apply.

### Since this is ELRC money, will this be paid to the provider and allowed to be placed into the general child care fund as we do with all ELRC payments? Or, will there be a stipulation that this money be kept in a separate account as we must do for PKC and utilized only for children allotted a slot in this program.

There is a program assurance in the application which states: "The program will assure segregation of program funds in their fiscal record keeping". The money should be kept in a separate account and used only to support children funded by ITCS.

## Staffing

### What will be considered infant/toddler related regarding education level?

Infant -Toddler CDA, Infant-Toddler credentials, Specific Infant-toddler coursework, ECE AA or ECE BS.

### If they have a bachelor is early childhood do, they need an infant toddler specialty?

If the degree is in early Childhood, no.

### What if you have staff that are in the process of obtaining their CDA in I/T?

Please make note of this in your application. Please provide specifics.

### If you have 3 teachers in one classroom with 8 I/T program kiddos and 4 other kiddos, do all 3 need the I/T credentials?

Please review policy document p. 16 regarding this issue.

### How will staff turnover be addressed after initial eligibility is determined? Will this be monitored?

Staff must be entered into both PELICAN and the PD Registry. Specialists assigned to providers will monitor and assist providers as needed.

### What if you have 4 slots and you have a child that comes 6 am-3pm, one child that comes from 7-4:00, one from 7:30-4:30 and one from 8:00-5:00, is that one teacher that meets the qualifications supposed to work from 6 -5:00 every day (that would be over 40 hours per week) or do you hire 2 teachers to cover but would both need to meet the educational requirements or can it be someone with just the experience/meets DHS requirements?

Ideally all teachers in the classroom would meet qualifications. This is the goal. As we ramp up, it would be enough to schedule the highest qualified teacher for a time period which covers the largest amount of time the children are in care.

### In a classroom of 8 children with one lead teacher and one or more assistant teachers, are ALL the teachers required to have a CDA, at minimum?

This would be the ideal, however, at minimum the lead teacher would be required to have a CDA. Other staff would, at minimum needs to meet the staffing requirements for DHS licensing and STARS 3 or 4.

### If a staff member has the equivalent to a CDA (more than 9 infant-toddler early education college credits) and is enrolled in a 2-year or 4-year degree program, does that staff member qualify as an ITCS lead teacher?

Currently (in the infancy stages of this program), yes. This may be revisited in subsequent years as the program matures.