# Infant Toddler Contracted Slots (ITCS) Program

Policies, Guidance, and Clarifications
Updated August 2019



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# General Rules

# Policy Statement: Payments

Payments will be made to the ELRC based upon annual amounts payable per slot have been determined by averaging the Maximum Child Care Allowances (MCCAs) for Center care for infants, young toddlers, and older toddlers for the counties in the ELRC region. Each ELRC will conduct a request for Application to solicit eligible providers to offer Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots programming.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

The ELRC is responsible for managing the payment of funds to successful providers.

The ELRC is responsible for maintaining documentation which tracks the following:

- Release (timing and amounts) of funding to providers,
- Pilot enrollments
- Quarterly provider program expenses,
- Revisions to originally approved budget

The ELRC may withhold funds for purposes of re-distribution to other providers, in cases where a provider is not meeting the requirement to maintain full enrollment. Providers shall have 20 days to fill any enrollment vacancies before an ELRC may consider a redistribution of funds.

# Policy Statement: Eligible Providers

Eligible providers must meet the following criteria:

- Have a regular certificate of compliance issued by the Department of Human Services
- Be a STAR 3 or STAR 4 center or group home
- Currently serve PA Pre-K Counts funded children at the location where the infant/toddler slots will be served
- Have an established infant/toddler program and be able to serve infants/toddlers at full
  capacity by no later than the date set forth by the Department in the request for Application
  materials

# Policy Statement: Family Co-Payment

A family receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding shall not be charged a co-payment related to the child enrolled in the Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Project.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

If a family receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding has other eligible children enrolled in CCW, a co-payment for those children can be charged.

### Policy Statement: Rate Differences

A family receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding shall not be charged the difference between the provider's published rate and the amount of the contracted slot.



# Guidance and Clarifications:

If a family receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding has other eligible children enrolled in CCW, the difference between the provider's published rate for those children can be charged.

# Policy Statement: Charging Fees

A family receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding shall not be charged fees related to program related services. Families may be charged late pick up fees in cases where the child is not picked up by closing.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

Fees related to program related services include but are not limited to, registration fees, trips, fundraising. Families may be asked to supply meals and snacks, when meals and snacks are not already provided by the provider. Families may not be charged fees for meals and snacks. Policies related to fees should be written, provided to, and acknowledged by families at intake, and reviewed annually.

# Child Eligibility

Policy Statement: Child Eligibility

Eligible children must meet the following criteria:

- Must be between the ages of six weeks and 36 months of age at time of enrollment.
- Family must be eligible for Child Care Works
- Children needing Full Week, Full Time care will be prioritized for ITCS funding.
- Children may be on the waiting list or already receiving subsidized child care services
- Children applying for Child Care Works who meet the age criteria may also be considered for placement

# Policy Statement: Determining Eligibility

The ELRC will establish the family's eligibility for the Child Care Works program. There will be a communication/collaboration plan in place between the ELRC and the contracted provider to manage referrals to and eligibility for the Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

### Policy Statement: Collaborating with other ELRC Regions

Families meeting subsidy eligibility in another ELRC region, but desiring child care enrollment within an ELRC region providing Infant Toddler Contracted Slots funding, are eligible for Infant Toddler Contracted Slots funding. ELRC regions must collaborate when enrolling such families.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

Once the eligibility process is complete and the child's enrollment into the pilot program is secured, the FLRC will:

- Close the case if the infant/toddler is the only child in the family who needs care
- Mark the child as "not requesting care" in a family that has other children who need subsidy services
- o Retain original application date

The ELRC will help providers recruit children by contacting parents with infants and toddlers on the waiting list.



If parents contact the provider directly, the provider will help the parent connect with the ELRC to establish the parent's eligibility for Child Care Works.

Families receiving TANF child care are not eligible to use Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

The intent of infant-toddler contracted slots funding is to assure continuity of care from the earliest enrollment timeframe possible. Therefore, providers should prioritize enrollment of younger children. Children needing Full week, Full time will be prioritized for ITCS funding. Children needing only Part week and/or Part time care should utilize CCW funding.

Children who have turned three years of age are not eligible for initial enrollment in the infant-toddler contracted slots program.

When a child receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding turns 3-years of age, re-determination of eligibility will occur if the family is interested in using either CCW funding and/or PKC funding for a pre-kindergarten slot. The provider and ELRC must assure families are aware of the eligibility requirements of both CCW and PKC, and the options for continuing care, at initial enrollment into the Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Program, annually, and at least 6 months prior to the child turning 3 years old. It is encouraged that the provider participates in face-to-face meetings with families to assure understanding of the eligibility requirements of both CCW and PKC, and the options for continuing care

Six months prior to the child turning three, the provider will assure the family completes a *Pre-kindergarten Intent Form* (Attachment A).

For families intending to use CCW funding, providers will inform the ELRC, who will be responsible for determining next steps for CCW eligibility.

If the family already has other children utilizing CCW funding, the child transitioning from Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding will be covered under the family's original eligibility for CCW funding.

If the family does not have other children utilizing CCW funding, re-determination packets for eligibility for CCW funding will be mailed to families 6 weeks prior to the child turning 3 years old. If the family is found eligible for CCW funding (at 235% FPL, but at no time can family income exceed 85% SMI) the child will either be enrolled (if space is immediately available) or shall be placed on a waiting list. For CCW, an eligible child's original application date will be used to determine CCW placement. A CCW eligible child will be placed on the CCW prioritized waitlist. If placed on the CCW waiting list, the child may continue to be funded through Infant-Toddler Contracted slots funding until the child is taken off the waiting list and enrolled in CCW.

For families intending to use PKC funding, providers will conduct income verification and enrollment procedures following the PKC program's typical recruitment and enrollment timelines associated with the program's PKC school year start date. If the family is determined eligible for PKC funding (at 300% FPL), the child will either be enrolled (if space is immediately available) or shall be placed on a waiting list. For PKC, an eligible child who is transitioning off Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding should receive priority points in the PKC enrollment process. Providers are reminded that a child is eligible for only two years of PKC and should be cognizant of the child's birthdate in relation to the school district's kindergarten cutoff date. A family of a child who is turning three but does not meet the school district's kindergarten cutoff date, should be encouraged to use CCW funding. In such cases, if the family is not



eligible for CCW funding, the child may remain on Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding until their 4-year old birthday.

When the child is eligible for either CCW or PKC, and is placed on a waiting list, the child may continue to be funded using Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding until the child is taken off the waiting list and enrolled in either CCW or PKC.

If the child who has turned three years old is not eligible for CCW funding or PKC funding, the child will no longer be funded by Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

ELRCs and providers are reminded of their responsibilities to inform families of Head Start options.

# Tracking Enrollments and Attendance within PELICAN

Policy Statement: Tracking Enrollments

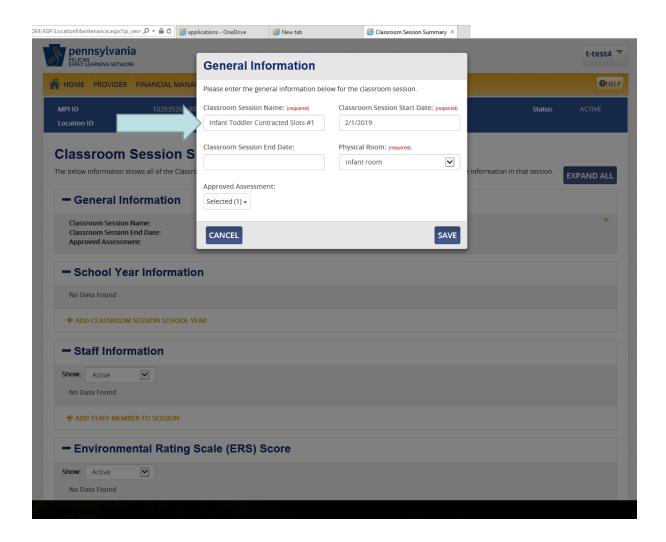
All enrollments will be tracked using the PELICAN system for children funded through Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Project.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

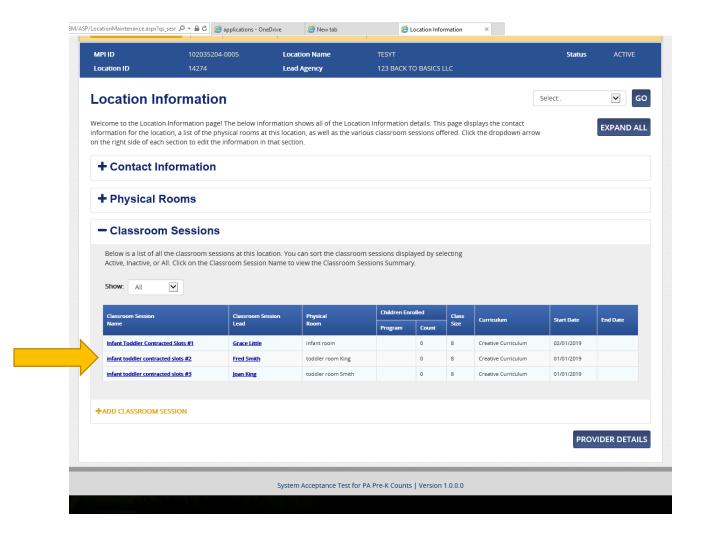
Providers should reference the <u>New Provider Training Guide</u> to understand how to enter data into the PELICAN system.



When creating the classroom session: use the classroom session name: Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots #1 (use ascending numbers if more than one classrooms is in a location).



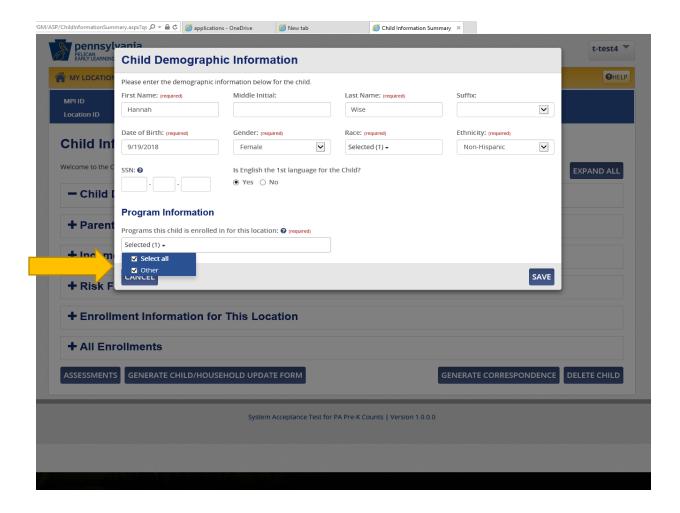




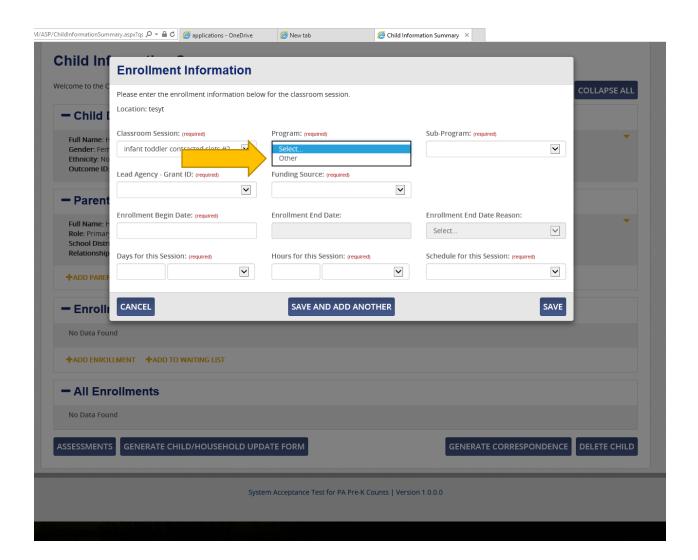


Enrolling Children begins on p. 46 of the guide.

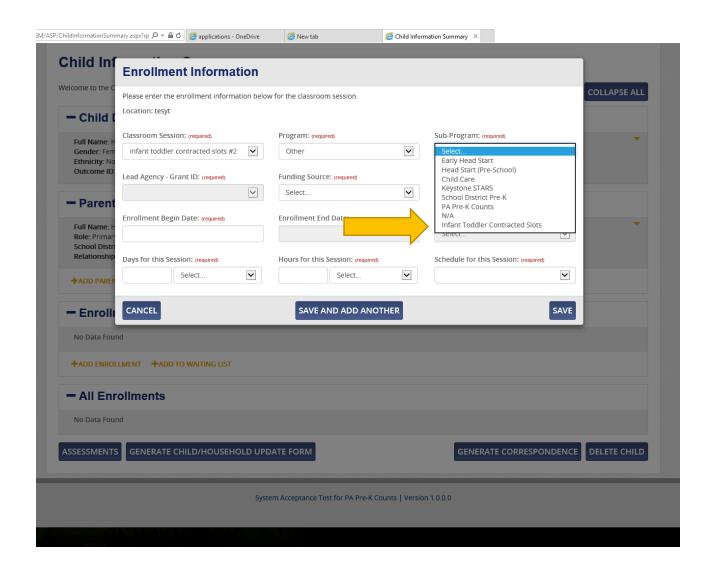
Under Child Information, select "Other" for program, select "Infant Toddler Contracted Slots" for sub program, select "Infant Toddler Contracted Slots" for funding source.



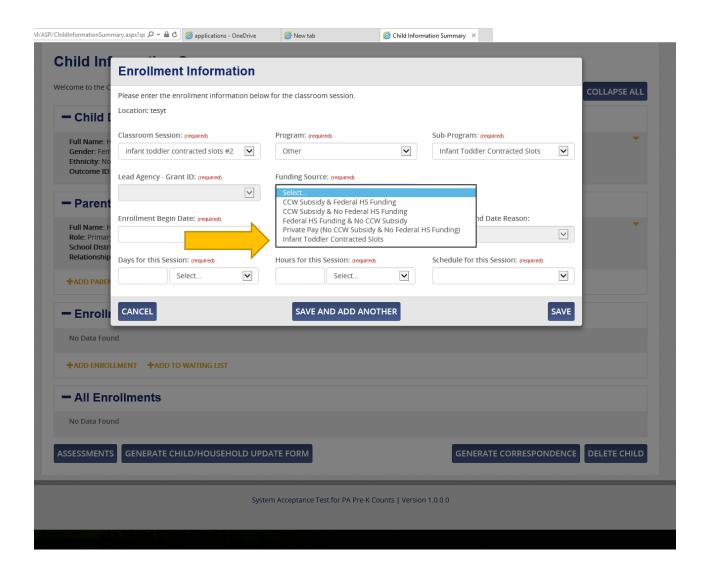














# Policy Statement: Attendance

Attendance will be tracked using the PELICAN system for children funded through Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Project. The maximum number of allowable annual absences for a child funded with Infant Toddler Contracted Slots funding will be 40 days. Consecutive absences should not exceed 5 unless approved by the provider.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

Annual absences will be tracked by fiscal year.

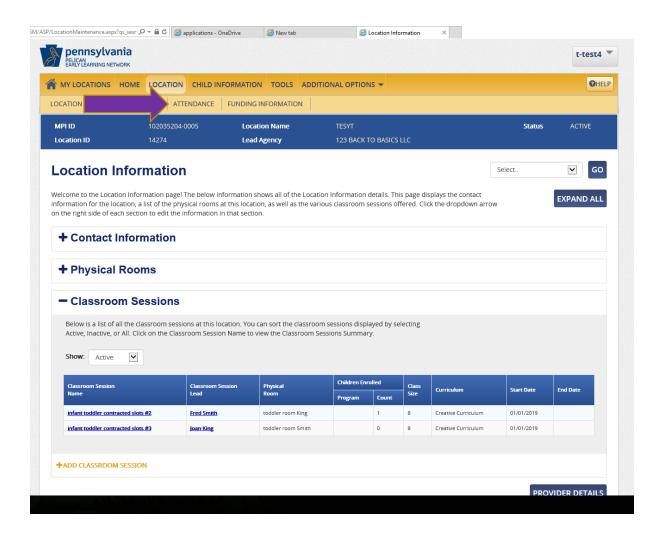
Families must be contacted when children are absent for 3 consecutive days to learn the nature of the absence and offer support, as appropriate.

When children have more than 5 consecutive unexcused absences, the provider and family, together, must discuss the reasons for the absence and determine ways to support the child's attendance in school.

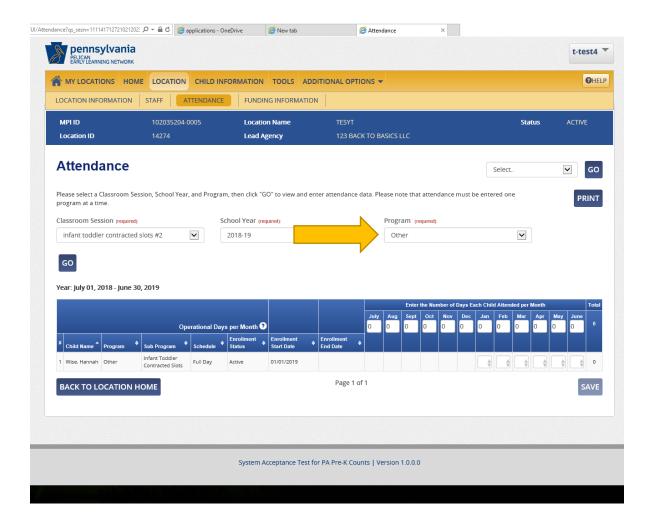
Providers may approve consecutive absences over 5 days for extenuating circumstances, such as families experiencing homelessness, significant child or family illness.



Tracking of child attendance is found under "location information." **Select "other"** as program before entering attendance information. Operational days per month must be entered, as well as the number of days each child attended per month.









# Staffing

Policy Statement: Teacher Qualifications

At minimum, one lead teacher, responsible for oversight of the curriculum planning and assessment of children, will be assigned to each ITCS classroom. The lead teacher will hold a CDA, at minimum.

There will be enough lead teachers, assistant teachers, and/or aides assigned to an ITCS classroom to meet the class ratios discussed below.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

Classrooms should be staffed to provide high-quality learning experiences for infants and toddlers. Agencies with teachers assigned to ITCS classrooms holding an infant-toddler CDA and/or infant-toddler related qualifications higher than a CDA will receive priority points during the application process.

Policy Statement: Tracking Staff Information

Staff working within any classroom where children funded through Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Project are being served need to be entered into <u>both</u> PELICAN and the PD Registry.

For PELICAN the following areas must be completed: assigned to a classroom, staff demographics, location specifics, credential information, and qualifications information.

For the PD Registry the following areas must be completed: personal, education, and employment.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

Creating Staff records begins on page 24. This step needs to occur before children can be enrolled.

# Class ratios and class size

Policy Statement: Class Ratios and Class Size

The teacher-child ratio for the Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Project shall be 1 teacher to every 4 children. The maximum group size shall be eight (8) children funded through the Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Project.

### Guidance and Clarifications:

In cases where the physical space is licensed by DHS for more than eight (8) children, the group size may exceed eight (8), if the program is complying with the DHS licensing capacity for the physical space. The 1:4 teacher-student ratio must be maintained.

# Family Communication

Policy Statement: Written Policies for Families

Providers must provide families specific written communication regarding policies specific to Infant Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

ELRC are responsible for assuring written family communications exist, and are being shared with families at time of eligibility determination, and enrollment in Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

Guidance and Clarifications:



Policies related to Infant Toddler Contracted Slots must be shared, in writing, to families at time of enrollment, annually thereafter, and six months prior to the child turning three years of age.

Families must sign an acknowledgement that they have received, read, and understood the policies related to Infant Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

Information shared with families should include, but is not limited to, the following: relevant funding considerations of enrollment, as well as when child transitions into pre-kindergarten, policies on fees.

### Transition

# Policy Statement: Transition to Prekindergarten

The ELRC and the contracted providers must coordinate with families no later than 6 months prior to the child's third birthday to inform families of preschool/prekindergarten eligible procedures, and options for preschool, prekindergarten transition (CCW, PKC, or private pay in cases where family is longer income eligible for state funding). Coordination for children with an IFSP/IEP shall follow timelines established by IDEA.

Policy Statement: Transition Plans

Providers must develop a transition plan for children aging out of the infant/toddler program.

# Guidance and Clarifications:

The transition plan shall be in writing and must be coordinated with the ELRC (for CCW preschool transition), and the PKC program.

Transition plans for children with an IFSP/IEP shall follow timelines established by IDEA.

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For families intending to use PKC funding, providers will conduct income verification and enrollment procedures following the PKC program's typical recruitment and enrollment timelines associated with the program's PKC school year start date. If the family is determined eligible for PKC funding (at 300% FPL), the child will either be enrolled (if space is immediately available) or shall be placed on a waiting list. For PKC, an eligible child who is transitioning off Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding should receive priority points in the PKC enrollment process. Providers are reminded that a child is eligible for only two years of PKC and should be cognizant of the child's birthdate in relation to the school district's kindergarten cutoff date. A family of a child who is turning three but does not meet the school district's kindergarten cutoff date, should be encouraged to use CCW funding. In such cases, if the family is not eligible for CCW funding, the child may remain on Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding until their 4-year old birthday.

When the child is eligible for either CCW or PKC, and is placed on a waiting list, the child may continue to be funded using Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding until the child is taken off the waiting list and enrolled in either CCW or PKC.

If the child who has turned three years old is not eligible for CCW funding or PKC funding, the child will no longer be funded by Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

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# Attachment A: Pre-kindergarten Intent Form

transition into a pre-kindergarten program, it is important to understand your intent regarding how {child's name} on-going care will be funded.

Please check the statement that applies:

\_\_\_\_ We are ONLY interested in Child Care Subsidy (eligibility will be determined by ELRC). We are not interested in Pennsylvania PreK Counts.

\_\_\_\_ We are ONLY interested in Pennsylvania PreK Counts (eligibility and enrollment will be determined by the PKC program and will occur based on program's school year recruitment timeline). We are not interested in Child Care Subsidy.

\_\_\_\_ We are interested in BOTH Child Care Subsidy (eligibility will be determined by ELRC) AND Pennsylvania PreK Counts (eligibility and enrollment be determined by the PKC program and will occur based on program's school year recruitment timeline).

\_\_\_\_ We are NOT interested in EITHER Child Care Subsidy OR Pennsylvania PreK Counts.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date form completed \_\_\_\_\_

{Child's Name} will be turning three-years old on {child's birthdate}. To prepare for {child's name}

