



PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL-AGE PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL

The Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is administered by the Pennsylvania Key.

The Pennsylvania Key provides statewide leadership in collaboration with the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) in the development of an integrated coordinated system of program quality improvements and professional development supports.



Contact your Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) for more information.

Find your ELRC at
www.raiseyourstar.org

Funding for the School-Age Professional Credential has been provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Child Development and Early Learning.



Applying for the Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is a big commitment. However, working towards the Credential can be a rewarding experience. It offers staff members an opportunity to:

- Examine their own work in relation to the Pennsylvania School-Age Care Competency Statements
- Get feedback and support from people who have experience working with school-age children and knowledge about school-age services.
- Improve their knowledge and skills in ways that are satisfying for themselves and beneficial for children;
- Plan their educational pathway through the use of the Pennsylvania Keys Career Pathway by identifying where they currently fit on the pathway and by identifying the position they are interested in attaining; and
- Earn a professional credential that is recognized throughout Pennsylvania and the Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement System.



Eligibility

- Must be working in a Department of Human Services certified program working with school-age children (5-12 years-old)
- Must have a minimum of a high school diploma or GED credential
- Must have completed a Professional Development Plan
- Must have worked at least 480 hours with school-age children in the past five years
- Assessment Fee: Individuals are responsible for paying a \$60 non-refundable processing fee

The Process

1. Request credential materials packet from the Pennsylvania Key at www.pakeys.org or 800-284-6031
2. Begin taking required course work equivalent to 120 hours
3. Form and work with a team consisting of an advisor and parent
4. Complete coursework
5. Complete Portfolio and Resource File
6. Apply for credential
7. Have an observational assessment, interview and review of Portfolio and Resource File
8. Upon satisfactory completion of all requirements credential is awarded

The PA School-Age Professional Credential is modeled after the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. These credentials differ from other forms of credentialing in several ways:

- Competence is based on performance. A school-age staff person who wants to earn the Credential is observed several times by members of the Local Assessment Team (Advisor, Parent/Community Representative, the School-Age Credential Assessor) while actually working with a group of children.
- The Candidate is a participant in the Credential Process. The Candidate prepares a personal Portfolio to demonstrate their knowledge and skill; collects a Resource File to be used throughout their career with children; and participates in the Local Assessment Review Meeting.
- A Parent/Community Representative helps evaluate the Candidate's competence. Families (including the school-age children) express their views about the Candidate on a Family Questionnaire. The Parent/Community Representative collects and tallies the questionnaires, observes the Candidate and submits both results as a part of the assessment process.
- The team approach guarantees that judgment of competence will be based on a well-rounded picture of the Candidate's performance drawn from team members' observations, the Portfolio, the Resource Collection, and Family Questionnaires.