# Infant Toddler Contracted Slots (ITCS) Program

Policies, Guidance, and Clarifications

Updated July 1, 2023

### Contents

| Background and Goals   | 3  |
|--|----|
| General Rules  | 4  |
| Policy Statement: Request for Applications                                     | 4  |
| Policy Statement: Contracting with Providers                                   | 4  |
| Policy Statement: Payments   | 5  |
| Policy Statement: Fiscal Reporting   | 7  |
| Policy Statement: Program Monitoring and Evaluation                            | 8  |
| Policy Statement: Communication and Coordination                               | 8  |
| Policy Statement: Eligible Providers   | 9  |
| Policy Statement: Family Co-Payment  | 9  |
| Policy Statement: Rate Differences   | 9  |
| Policy Statement: Charging Fees  | 10 |
| Policy Statement: Policy Exceptions  | 10 |
| Child Eligibility  | 11 |
| Policy Statement: Child Eligibility  | 11 |
| Policy Statement: Redetermining Eligibility at Transition to Prekindergarten   | 12 |
| Policy Statement: Determining Eligibility                                      | 13 |
| Policy Statement: Collaborating with other ELRC Regions                        | 14 |
| Enrollments and Attendance   | 14 |
| Policy Statement: Enrollment   | 14 |
| Policy Statement: Tracking Enrollments   | 15 |
| Policy Statement: Attendance   | 16 |
| Staffing   | 16 |
| Policy Statement: Teacher Qualifications                                       | 16 |
| Policy Statement: Tracking Staff Information                                   | 17 |
| Class Ratios and Class Size  | 17 |
| Policy Statement: Class Ratios and Class Size                                  | 17 |
| Collaboration with Agencies Providing Services to Young Children               | 18 |
| Policy Statement: Early Intervention and Behavioral and Mental Health Agencies | 18 |
| Policy Statement: Early Head Start/ Head Start                                 | 18 |
| Family Communication   | 18 |

| Policy Statement: Written Policies for Families  | 19 |
|--|----|
| Policy Statement: Official Communication with Families                                 | 19 |
| Transition   | 19 |
| Policy Statement: Transition to Prekindergarten  | 19 |
| Appendix A: ITCS Specific PELICAN ELN screen shots (staffing, enrollments, attendance) | 22 |
| PELICAN ELN Training Materials   | 22 |
| Creating new staff in PELICAN ELN  | 24 |
| Entering staff into the Professional Development (PD) Registry                         | 28 |
| Creating ITCS classroom sessions   | 30 |
| Adding a staff member to a classroom session   | 36 |
| Child Enrollments  | 39 |
| End dating an enrollment   | 46 |
| Editing Existing Information (Children, staff, and classroom sessions)                 | 50 |
| Attendance   | 63 |
| Appendix B: Family Recruitment Resources   | 65 |
| Cover Letter for CCW eligible families promoting ITCS                                  | 65 |
| ITCS Family Brochure   | 65 |

#### Background and Goals

In 2018-19, \$2 million of federal funding was utilized to fund a pilot program serving Child Care Works eligible infants and toddlers via contracted slots. The program was expanded in the 2019-20 budget which included an additional \$15 million to serve more eligible children. Continuation grants occurred in FY 2020-2021, FY 2021-2022, FY 2022-2023. Programs will also receive continuation grants for FY 2023-2024.

Contracted slots are an alternative to the traditional voucher system. With the voucher system, the funding follows the child. A parent selects a provider, and the provider is paid based on the CCW enrollment. With contracted slots, the funding for awarded slots remains with a provider. If a child leaves a provider, the provider continues to be paid for the slot and is responsible to fill the slot with a different CCW eligible child.

#### The primary goals are to:

- Establish and study a new fiscal model that supports high-quality care within infant and toddler classrooms.
- Provide fiscal stability for high-quality providers serving CCW eligible infants and toddlers.
- Encourage providers to serve infants and toddlers to meet market demand.
- Establish a continuum of care for ages 0-K in high-quality settings.

Strengthen the link between high-quality childcare and high-quality pre-kindergarten programs.

These goals aim to improve overall quality of available childcare in Pennsylvania.

The Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Program initially built upon the already established infrastructure of the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts (PA PKC) Program model. PA PKC has been in existence since 2007 and provides high quality pre-kindergarten services to eligible children. Building an infant-toddler focused program allows for a continued focus on quality programming while building strong transitions from infant-toddler to pre-kindergarten classrooms. In addition, the program assures continuity of care through two main policies:

- 1. The duration of eligibility for the child(ren) served lasts until the child is eligible to transition into a pre-kindergarten program. Applicants will be asked to coordinate PA PKC prioritization to assure that a child's who remains eligible for PA PKC at their third birthday will transition into the PA PKC program.
- 2. No co-payments or fees of any kind will be charged to families while the child is enrolled in the pilot.

#### **General Rules**

#### Policy Statement: Request for Applications

A centralized Request for Application (RFA) process will be conducted to determine an array of eligible providers. Each ELRC for which eligible provider applications are received will participate in the RFA process by providing information on subsidy waiting lists, as well as pertinent information related to the applying providers.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Each ELRC will provide a Point of Contact (POC) responsible for coordination with the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), The Pennsylvania Key, and awarded providers in their region.

#### Policy Statement: Contracting with Providers

Each ELRC is responsible for generating contracting documentation with awarded providers within their region.

Each ELRC will conduct a continuation of grant process pending availability of funds.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Each ELRC will use their agency's procurement procedures to generate contracting documents for each awarded provider within their region.

Contracts, at minimum, will include the agreed upon cost per slot, overall funding, statement of work, line-item budget, roles and responsibilities of the ELRC and the provider, consequences if responsibilities are not met and language allowing for termination and/or transition of the grant agreement to another ELRC.

ELRCs will contract with awarded providers for a one-year period with options for renewal.

OCDEL will serve as a resource as needed and will assist ELRCs in cases where the ELRC needs clarification on contracting (e.g., approval of expenditures on the line-item budget).

#### Policy Statement: Payments

Payments will be made to the ELRC based upon annual amounts payable per slot.

Slots are defined as full day, full week.

The cost per slot covers a full day, full week, full year of traditional childcare.

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

The provider will assure segregation of program funds in their fiscal record keeping.

#### *Guidance and Clarifications:*

The FY 2023-2024 cost per slot by ELRC region is as follows:

| ELRC | ITCS cost per slot |
|------|--------------------|
| 1    | \$16,000           |
| 2    | \$14,000           |
| 3    | \$19,200           |
| 4    | \$20,000           |
| 5    | \$20,000           |
| 6    | \$14,500           |
| 7    | \$13,000           |
| 8    | No grantees        |
| 9    | \$17,900           |
| 10   | \$16,900           |
| 11   | \$15,400           |
| 12   | \$16,000           |
| 13   | \$18,200           |
| 14   | \$16,800           |
| 15   | \$20,000           |
| 16   | \$20,000           |
| 17   | \$20,000           |
| 18   | \$20,000           |
| 19   | \$20,000           |

A family who is eligible for CCW can be enrolled in the ITCS program for only the traditional childcare portion of the day. The child can use CCW funding for the non-traditional childcare hours (either at the same provider, or at a different provider), however all regular CCW rules would apply for the non-traditional childcare portion of the day, including, but not limited to, the family co-payment.

Full day is defined as up to 12 hours of traditional childcare. Children enrolled in ITCS are eligible for up to 12 hours of care per day (or the maximum traditional care hours the program is opened in cases where it may be less than 12 hours). Program policies limiting the time a child can be enrolled (e.g., 10 hours per day) should not be applied to children funded through the ITCS program. Evening care, weekend care, or overnight care is considered non-traditional childcare and is not eligible for ITCS funding.

Full week is defined as 5 days a week (Monday through Friday).

Full year is defined as the full fiscal year (July 1 through June 30).

To meet the continuity of care goal of this program, it is encouraged that children enroll as full day, full week regardless of a family's work schedule.

Providers have the option to fill a slot with full day and half day enrollments, and with full or part week enrollments, however full day, full week enrollments must be prioritized for ITCS funding. A slot will be considered fully enrolled when the FTE reaches the equivalent of full day/full week.

Successful providers shall be paid 1/12 of total grant award as soon as possible after a provider contract is fully executed and shall be paid 1/12 of the total grant award monthly thereafter based upon an agreed upon time frame between the ELRC and the provider. Providers may request an "early release" of funding equal to 1/12 of total grant award in cases where verified monthly expenses exceed 1/12 of the total grant award. Such requests must be received by the ELRC on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month to be processed in a timely manner. The providers receipt of funding shall not exceed the total grant award. In other words, no additional funding above the total grant award will occur.

Providers shall have 20 days to fill any enrollment vacancies before an ELRC may consider a return of funds.

Awards *cannot* be used for the following:

- Purchase of land, new construction, or major renovations.
- Purchase of gift cards, money orders, gift certificates, travel checks, or any other comparable legal tender.
- Payment of mortgages, utilities, or rental/lease payments for facility operations that are not directly associated with the operation of the ITCS program.
- Purchase of alcohol.
- Purchase of vehicles.
- Payment toward staff entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social
  activities or any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or
  sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) that are not
  professional development related events.
- Purchase of <u>any</u> second hand (used) items, including but not limited to those from individuals, yard sales and auctions.
- Payment of staff bonuses or retention awards.

For any item (minor renovations are considered a single unit cost) that has a **unit cost of \$3000 or more**, a provider shall obtain a **minimum of two (2) written price quotes** to ensure fair and equitable bid practices, as follows:

- The bids must be for identical or comparable merchandise, purchases, and/or work.
- Provider will accept the lowest bid amount.
- If the provider decides to accept the higher bid, the provider is responsible for any amount above the lowest quote using operational or other non-OCDEL/Child Care and Development Block grant funds.

If extenuating circumstances occur where the provider must accept the higher bid, the
provider must contact both the ITCS specialist and the ELRC to discuss the situation prior
to accepting the quote.

The Department of Human Services retains the title to property of any equipment having a useful life of more than one year and an individual cost of more than \$5000 that is purchased with this award. The provider is required to notify their ELRC if they are closing or will be disposing of said equipment. If a grantee permanently closes or sells the business, the ELRC will need to work with the grantee to redistribute (as appropriate) to other grantees, all supplies and equipment purchased using state and federal funds granted by the ELRC.

All purchases made with these funds must comply with the federal 2 CFR § 200 and the Child Care and Development Funds restrictions. Applicants should reach-out to the ELRC to get guidance when it comes to the CFR 200 Restrictions.

As a recipient of infant-toddler contracted slots funding, it is the provider's responsibility to expend funds in a manner that supports the overall goals of the initiative. Goals that directly impact expenditure considerations include increased financial stability at the program level, the ability to hire and retain qualified staff, maintaining or increasing classroom quality, and stable enrollment for children and families. As such all expenditures should be justified in terms of these goals for this program.

The following clarifications are specific to the infant-toddler contracted slots salaries:

- Teacher salaries may be included as an allowable expense when the teacher is directly serving
  the children funded by this program. In classrooms where children are funded by multiple
  funding streams, the teacher's salary must be cost allocated.
- Management Salaries and benefits may ONLY be included IF a strong justification is provided as
  to how these expenses will directly impact the goals listed above. Salaries, raises, and bonuses
  for management staff that do not directly manage or impact the programming will not be
  considered an allowable expense.

#### Policy Statement: Fiscal Reporting

The ELRC is responsible for maintaining and submitting to OCDEL documentation which tracks the following:

• Release (timing and amounts) of funding to providers

The awarded providers are responsible for maintaining and submitting to their assigned Infant-Toddler Specialist (ITS) documentation with tracks the following:

- Quarterly provider program expenses,
- Revisions to originally approved budget

#### *Guidance and Clarifications*

Providers are responsible for submission of a line item budget (template available at <a href="INFANT TODDLER">INFANT TODDLER</a>
<a href="CONTRACTED SLOTS">CONTRACTED SLOTS</a> — THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org)) at time of contracting. OCDEL will serve as a resource as needed and will assist ELRCs in cases where the ELRC needs clarification on program expenditures.

Providers are responsible for submission to their assigned ITS budget revisions which will be approved using the following tiered process:

- Provider submits budget revisions to the ITS
- Once specialist approved, ITS shares with ELRC
- ELRC has five (5) business days to respond to ITS
- Once ELRC has approved, the ITS will follow up with program with the revision approval and a new, revised budget template for expenditure reporting.

Providers are responsible for submission of the "Program Expenditures and Budget Revision Workbook" available at <a href="INFANT TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS - THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org">INFANT TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS - THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org)</a> to assigned ITS, 10 business days after the end of each fiscal quarter. The assigned ITS will compile the "ELRC Quarterly Fiscal Summary" (also available at <a href="INFANT TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS - THE">INFANT TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS - THE</a>
<a href="PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org">PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org)</a>) to the relevant ELRC and to OCDEL no later than the last business day of the month after each quarter ends (or the business day after the last day if the last day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday). Provider reporting to OCDEL should occur as follows:

Quarter 1 (July 1 through September 30); Quarterly expenditures due to the Infant Toddler Specialist (ITS) by October 16, 2023

Quarter 2 (October 1 through December 31); Quarterly expenditures due to ITS by January 15, 2024 Quarter 3 (January 1 through March 31); Quarterly expenditures due to ITS by April 15, 2024 Quarter 4 (April 1 through June 30); Quarterly expenditures due to ITS by July 15, 2024

#### Policy Statement: Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Providers will have a minimum of one formal monitoring visit annually.

Providers will participate in any formal evaluations of the program, which may include a variety of program assessments.

#### Guidance and Clarifications

An Infant-Toddler Specialist (ITS) will be assigned to each ITCS provider. The ITS will conduct at least one annual visit with each provider to assure fidelity to the program requirements. In cases where program requirements are not being fully met, the ITS, in collaboration with the provider, and the ELRC, will develop and implement an improvement plan.

#### Policy Statement: Communication and Coordination

ELRCs, providers, and OCDEL will have an expectation of timely, honest, and supportive communication and collaboration. Established communication protocols should be followed.

There will exist a written plan pf collaboration between the assigned Infant Toddler Specialist, the ELRC(s), and the contracted provider. The <u>ELRC Collaboration Plan Sample</u> may be used for this purpose.

#### *Guidance and Clarifications*

Primary Points of Contact for program and fiscal monitoring are Megan Penson (<a href="mailto:megpen@pakeys.org">megpen@pakeys.org</a>) and Dana Moser (<a href="mailto:danmos@pakeys.org">danmos@pakeys.org</a>). Megan will coordinate program support between OCDEL, ELRC, PA Registry team, and awarded providers; as well as manage a small caseload of providers for monitoring. Dana Moser will monitor the remaining providers. Megan and Dana as Infant-Toddler

Specialists (ITS) should be the first point of contact for the awarded providers, along with their ELRC point of contact.

Primary Points of Contact for contracting issues with receipt of funding and program eligibility are the designated ELRC POC for each region.

The ELN help desk should be used for PELICAN ELN support.

Any changes to contact information should be updated and shared with all relevant parties within 5 business days of the change.

The ELRC and the provider will have a current CCW provider agreement.

#### Policy Statement: Eligible Providers

Eligible providers must meet the following criteria at time of application and throughout the entire grant period:

- Have a regular certificate of compliance issued by the Department of Human Services
- Be a STAR 3 or STAR 4 center or group child care home
- Serve PA Pre-K Counts children at one location minimum, under the awarded legal entity.
   NOTE: For FY 2023-2024 if a current ITCS provider does not maintain a PA PKC contract due to the PA PKC rebid process, the ITCS program may continue at this program. 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.

#### *Guidance and Clarifications*

Throughout the program year, if a program has an issue which results in a provisional certificate and/or loss or drop of STAR designation, to assure continuity of care for children, the Infant Toddler Specialist will review the circumstances of the incident which may result in a policy exception.

Providers granted a policy exception during a program year, must meet all eligibility requirements at time of contract renewal.

#### 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 must be charged.

If the family also qualifies for non-traditional childcare hours under CCW for the child enrolled in ITCS, a co-payment will be charged for the CCW funding covering the non-traditional child care hours.

#### 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.

#### Policy Statement: Policy Exceptions

Exceptions to ITCS policy may be granted by OCDEL upon written request.

#### Guidance and Clarifications

Exceptions to ITCS policy will be limited to situations in which the policy impacts the overall goals of the program or result in undue burden to the children being served. Written requests for policy exceptions should include reference to the specific policy being addressed, justification for the exception with specific details related to either the goals of the program and/or the impact on the children being served, the time frame for which the exception would apply and a plan which details how the policy will be met within the provided time frame.

Requests should be discussed with the assigned ITS before submission to exhaust any potential supports to assist the provider in meeting the policy before a written request for exception is submitted for review.

Written requests should be submitted to OCDEL for review. OCDEL will have 30 days from receipt of the written request to review. The review could result in one of the following: 1) a request for follow up information, 2) denial of the request, or 3) approval of the request. In cases where more information is requested, the provider must respond within 10 business days of the request for follow up information. If follow up information is not received within this timeframe, the exception will automatically be considered denied. When follow up information is received within the designated time frame, OCDEL will have an additional 10 business days to either approve or deny the request.

Providers are expected to meet program policy until requests for policy exception are processed. If providers cannot meet the policy during the exception review period, provider's Program Review Instrument (PRI) may be impacted.

#### 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

The ELRC will establish the family's eligibility for the CCW program.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Families approaching providers who may be eligible for the ITCS program should complete the <u>ITCS</u>
<a href="ITCS">Interest Form</a> which should be shared with the ELRC who will determine final eligibility for the program.

Eligible children needing full day, full week of care will be prioritized for ITCS funding. Children needing only part time, part week care should utilize CCW funding.

Children cannot use both CCW funding and ITCS funding for the same portion of the childcare day (traditional childcare hours). For children already enrolled in a program who currently receive CCW, families have to be informed and agree to participation in the ITCS program, and the ELRC needs to have taken the necessary steps to either close the CCW case or mark child as "not requesting care" before a child can be considered fully enrolled in the ITCS program.

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

Children eligible under "presumptive" eligibility for CCW are eligible for ITCS. Once enrolled in ITCS program, the verification of the work requirement is not necessary.

Children receiving ITCS funding in one ELRC and relocates to another ELRC and needs to attend a new service location, should be prioritized for an open, ITCS slot in the new region.

A family in which a parent or caretaker is receiving funds from the TANF cash assistance program and/or food stamp child care funding is not eligible for ITCS funding since they do not meet eligibility for subsidized childcare under Chapter 3041 Subsidized Child Care Eligibility. "Former TANF" is a funding stream. If families are receiving TANF or are eligible to receive former TANF before enrollment into ITCS they are not eligible for ITCS funding. In cases where a family qualifies for CCW (low income) and is enrolled in ITCS program, then becomes eligible for TANF, the child will remain on ITCS funding to assure continuity of care.

At no time during enrollment in the ITCS program can family income exceed 85% SMI. There are circumstances in which either the ELRC or the ITCS program may determine a family income is exceeding 85% SMI. Regardless of which agency (ELRC or ITCS program) determines family income exceeds 85% SMI, the other agency (ELRC or ITCS program) will be informed. Once determined that family income exceeds 85% SMI, ELRC will follow typical CCW adverse action policies for any non-ITCS children. The ITCS program will be responsible for sending notification of ineligibility related to the enrolled ITCS child

by registered letter. ITCS funding will end 13 days after the notification is sent. Families do have a right to appeal. When an appeal occurs, the ITCS program will notify the ITS and the ELRC. The ELRC will forward the appeal information to Bureau of Hearing and Appeals (BHA).

If at any time after a child has already been enrolled in the ITCS program, it is determined that the family is no longer income eligible (but does not exceed 85% SMI), the ITCS enrollment will not be impacted. An example of this is if a family of a child already enrolled in ITCS has another child and income is being determined for the additional child and, at that time, the family is found to be over-income for CCW. The new child would not be eligible for CCW funding, however, the child already enrolled in ITCS would not be impacted.

#### Policy Statement: Redetermining Eligibility at Transition to Prekindergarten

Eligibility will be reviewed or re-determined for a child receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding based upon the family's interest in using either CCW funding and/or PKC funding when the child becomes eligible for a pre-kindergarten slot.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Families must be aware of the eligibility requirements of both CCW (provided through ELRC) and PKC (provided by PKC providers), and the options for continuing care, at initial enrollment into the Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Program, annually, at least 6 months prior to the child turning 3 years old and, in cases where a child turning 3 will not be eligible to attend PA PKC due to their birthdate falling after the kindergarten cutoff for their school district, at least 6-weeks prior to eligibility for PA PKC.

At least Six months prior to the child turning three and, in cases where a child turning 3 will not be eligible to attend PA PKC due to their birthdate falling after the kindergarten cutoff for their school district, 6-weeks prior to eligibility for PA PKC, the provider will assure the family completes a <a href="https://example.com/Pre-kindergarten Intent Form.">Pre-kindergarten Intent Form.</a> Completed forms should be shared with the ELRC, as well as with the assigned ITS.

For families intending to use only CCW funding for a prekindergarten slot, 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, and the child has been enrolled in ITCS for more than 12 months, re-determination packets for eligibility for CCW funding will be mailed to families at least 6 weeks prior to the child turning 3 years old.
- If the family does not have other children utilizing CCW funding, and the child has been enrolled
  in ITCS for less than 12 months, the child will be considered eligible for CCW under their original
  application and will be re-determined based upon their original application date. For children
  enrolled under "presumptive" eligibility, the work requirement must be met before returning to
  CCW funding.
- If the family is found eligible for CCW funding (at 300% 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 prioritized waiting list. For CCW, an eligible child's <u>original application</u> date will be used to determine CCW placement. If using the date of the <u>original application</u> is not enough to

enroll the child immediately and the child is placed on the wait list, the ELRC will have to check "Pre-K Enrolled" on the child care request screen in order to move the child to the prioritized wait list. Once the child is enrolled "Pre-K Enrolled" can be unchecked. If placed on the CCW prioritized 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 enroll their child into a PA PKC program, the PA PKC provider will be responsible for determining next steps for PA PKC eligibility.

- Providers will first verify whether or not the child is eligible for a PA PKC slot based on the child's birth date and the kindergarten cutoff school entry date in the child's school district of residence.
- 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.
- If the child is eligible, based on the child's birth date and the kindergarten cutoff school entry date in the child's school district of residence, to attend PA PKC, the PA PKC provider 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 PA PKC, an eligible child who is transitioning off Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding should receive priority points in the PA PKC enrollment process.
- If the child who is turning three does not meet the school district's kindergarten cutoff date, the child may remain on ITCS funding until the child is eligible to attend PA PKC. In such cases, the program will assure the family completes a Pre-kindergarten Intent Form again, at least 6-weeks prior to the child's eligibility for PA PKC.

For families intending to use both PKC and CCW funding, the child may remain on ITCS funding while awaiting enrollment in PKC. In these cases, redetermination for CCW funding (wrap around) should occur at least 6 weeks prior to the start of PKC program. Children who remain eligible for CCW funding, can be held in "suspended" until the start of the PKC program. Children who are found ineligible for CCW funding, can remain on ITCS funding until the start of the PKC program.

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 is found not eligible for CCW funding or PKC funding when redetermination occurs, the child will no longer be funded by Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding.

#### Policy Statement: Determining Eligibility

The ELRC will establish the family's eligibility for the CCW 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.

#### *Guidance and Clarifications:*

Families approaching providers who may be eligible for the ITCS program should complete the <u>ITCS</u>

Interest Form which should be shared with the ELRC who will determine final eligibility for the program.

Once the eligibility process is complete and the child's enrollment into the ITCS program is secured at the program level, the ELRC will:

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

**Please note**: Closing the case or marking as "not requesting care" would not apply to a child who uses ITCS funding and CCW funding for non-traditional care.

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

The ELRC will provide verification of CCW eligibility to the provider in a form that can be maintained in the child's file at the provider. The Enrollment Data Template (download from <a href="INFANT TODDLER">INFANT TODDLER</a> CONTRACTED SLOTS — THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org)) may be used for this purpose.

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

Children served through ITCS funding will be counted toward the program's CCW participation percentages. As such, any children served through ITCS funding will be counted in the program's Enrollment Calculation Tool (ECT) under the CCW column.

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

#### Policy Statement: Collaborating with other ELRC Regions

Families meeting subsidy eligibility in another ELRC region but desiring childcare 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:

When a need for cross-ELRC collaboration occurs, the ITS must be included. In addition, both ELRCs, the provider, and the ITS must be included in any communications including, but not limited to, the ELRC Collaboration Plan, the ITCS intent form, and the PK intent form.

#### **Enrollments and Attendance**

#### Policy Statement: Enrollment

Only eligible children will be enrolled into the ITCS program.

Eligible children should be enrolled in the ITCS program within 30 days of eligibility.

Enrollment priority will be applied in the following order:

1. Age eligible children currently enrolled in an awarded provider and currently receiving CCW.

- 2. Age eligible children on the CCW waitlist.
- 3. Age eligible children of families applying for CCW.

The provider will maintain full enrollment, as demonstrated by PELICAN enrollment statistics, after 30 days of contract execution, and throughout the entire grant period.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Once determined eligible for CCW, families have to be informed and agree to participation in the ITCS program, and the ELRC needs to have taken the necessary steps outlined under <u>Determining Eligibility</u> before a child can be considered fully enrolled in the ITCS program.

A child is considered "enrolled" at the program on the first day the child receives care at the program. This is the date that should be used as the enrollment start date within the PELICAN ELN system.

The ELRC must share written proof of CCW eligibility with the provider enrolling the eligible child. The provider must retain a copy of the written proof in the child's file. The Enrollment Data Template (download from <a href="INFANT TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS">INFANT TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS</a> — THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org)) may be used for this purpose, however other forms of written notification such as email may also serve this purpose.

The provider must share written proof to the ELRC of the child's initial enrollment date so that the ELRC can take the necessary steps to either close the CCW case or mark the child as "not requesting care." Signed family agreements, ITCS enrollment forms, email notification may be used for this purpose as long as the child's initial enrollment date is provided.

The ELRC may withhold funds, 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 withholding funding from a contracted provider.

#### Policy Statement: Tracking Enrollments

All enrollments will be tracked using the PELICAN Early Learning Network (ELN) system for children funded through Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Project.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

A child will not be counted by OCDEL as enrolled if the child is not entered in PELICAN ELN.

Providers should have PELICAN ELN data entry up to date by the last day of the month in which a change in classrooms information, staffing information, or child enrollment information occurs. The provider must update classroom data including school year (July 1 through June 30) annually.

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

Providers should reference <u>Appendix A</u> for specifics on how to enter ITCS enrollment information into PELICAN ELN.

#### Policy Statement: Attendance

Providers must monitor attendance and establish a means to maintain attendance information so that it is available upon request. The PELICAN system may be used for this purpose; however, attendance data reporting within the PELICAN system will not be required.

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.

Absences will be tracked based on the child's enrollment schedule.

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. The <a href="Attendance Action Plan">Attendance Action Plan</a> should be used when children have more than 5 consecutive unexcused absences to document action steps and communication with families.

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

When absences in a single year exceed 20, the program and family, together, should develop an Attendance Action Plan.

Providers should communicate with families on an ongoing basis regarding attendance issues. Once a child reaches 40 days absent within a fiscal year, a registered letter should be sent to the family detailing the attendance issue and the date enrollment in the ITCS program will end. Families will be provided 13 days from the date of notice before ITCS ends. A family may return to CCW funding and the ITCS absences would not be counted against that funding stream.

Providers should reference <u>Appendix A</u> for specifics on how to enter attendance information into PELICAN ELN.

#### 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.

The lead teacher must be present in the ITCS classroom for the portion of the program day in which the greatest number of ITCS children are in attendance.

There will be enough lead teachers, assistant teachers, and/or aides assigned to an ITCS classroom to meet the 1:4 teacher to child ratio throughout the entire program day.

#### *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.

Staff verified at a Level A on the Career Pathway within the PA Keys PD Registry also meet lead teacher qualifications for the ITCS program.

#### Policy Statement: Tracking Staff Information

Staff working within classrooms where children funded through Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots Program are being served need to be entered into both 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:

Providers should have PELICAN ELN data entry up to date by the last day of the month in which a change in classrooms information, staffing information, or child enrollment information occurs.

Providers must have staff entered and verified in the PD Registry within 90 days of staff assignment to an ITCS classroom session.

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

Providers should reference <u>Appendix A</u> for specifics on how to enter ITCS enrollment information into PELICAN ELN.

#### 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.

A maximum group size of eight (8) children is preferred, however DHS childcare licensing group sizes are allowable provided the 1:4 teacher to child ratio is maintained.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

The 1:4 ratio applies at all times of the program day including beginning and ending of the program day, and nap times.

In cases where a child funded through ITCS has turned 3-years old and qualifies to remain on ITCS funding; and has transitioned into a prekindergarten classroom, DHS childcare licensing ratios for prekindergarten will apply.

In order to provide high quality settings that enhance positive teacher-to-child and peer-to-peer interactions, the preferred maximum group size, regardless of the age of the children in the group, is

eight (8), however DHS child care licensing group sizes are allowable provided the 1:4 teacher to child ratio is maintained.

Allowable group sizes are:

Infants: group size of 8, ratio 1:4 Young toddlers: group size 10, ratio 1:4 Older toddlers: group size 12, ratio 1:4

Mixed age classrooms: follow group size of youngest enrolled child, ratio 1:4

#### Collaboration with Agencies Providing Services to Young Children

#### Policy Statement: Early Intervention and Behavioral and Mental Health Agencies

Providers will coordinate and collaborate with the local agencies providing Early Intervention services, and/or behavioral and mental health services.

Providers must adhere to the following policies: <u>OCDEL policy statement on Inclusion</u>, and <u>OCDEL policy statement on Suspension and Expulsion</u>.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Coordination with Early Intervention should assure the following:

- A smooth transition for children receiving services,
- Coordination of services received while the child is receiving services within the program, and
- Awareness of and capacity to supply information regarding available services for children enrolled in the program who have not yet been identified as in need of services but who may be eligible for services

#### Policy Statement: Early Head Start/ Head Start

Providers will coordinate and collaborate with Early Head Start and Head Start providers.

Providers must avoid enrolling children into ITCS funding who are already being served in an Early Head Start program or who are eligible to participate in Early Head Start.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Early Head Start and Head Start eligible families may have unique needs that are best supported by a program designed especially to meet those needs and offers a broad array or services, therefore, children enrolled in Early Head Start or who are eligible for Early Head Start should not be enrolled in the ITCS program except in cases where the following has occurred:

- Head Start eligibility was shared with the family,
- The family preferred to enroll the child into the ITCS program, and
- The signature of the family, along with documentation of their understanding of Head Start eligibility, and their request to enroll their child into the ITCS program is obtained and retained

Six months prior to a child turning three, when the family completes a <u>Pre-kindergarten Intent Form</u>, Head Start will also be shared as a viable pre-kindergarten option for eligible families.

#### Family Communication

#### Policy Statement: Written Policies for Families

Providers must share, in writing, policy related to Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Program to families at time of enrollment, annually thereafter, and six months prior to the child turning three years of age. <u>The ITCS Agreement Form Sample</u> may be used for this purpose.

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:

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. The ITCS Agreement Form Sample may be used for this purpose.

#### Policy Statement: Official Communication with Families

Programs who have attempted to contact enrolled families but have not received a response, should use registered letter to assure communication has been received by the family.

#### Guidance and Clarifications:

Examples when communication by registered letter may be necessary include, but are not limited to, the following: issues related to attendance, completion of PK intent form for a child turning 3-years old, families whose income has been determined is over 85% SMI.

#### Transition

#### Policy Statement: Transition to Prekindergarten

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

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 eligibility 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.

#### 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.

Eligibility will be reviewed or re-determined for a child receiving Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding based upon the family's interest in using either CCW funding and/or PKC funding when the child becomes eligible for a pre-kindergarten slot.

Families must be aware of the eligibility requirements of both CCW (provided through ELRC) and PKC (provided by PKC provider), and the options for continuing care, at initial enrollment into the Infant-

Toddler Contracted Slots Program, annually, at least 6 months prior to the child turning 3 years old and, in cases where a child turning 3 will not be eligible to attend PA PKC due to their birthdate falling after the kindergarten cutoff for their school district, at least 6-weeks prior to eligibility for PA PKC.

At least six months prior to the child turning three and, in cases where a child turning 3 will not be eligible to attend PA PKC due to their birthdate falling after the kindergarten cutoff for their school district, at least 6-weeks prior to eligibility for PA PKC, the provider will assure the family completes a <a href="Pre-kindergarten Intent Form">Pre-kindergarten Intent Form</a>. Completed forms should be shared with the ELRC, as well as with the assigned ITS.

For families intending to use only CCW funding for a prekindergarten slot, 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, and the child has been enrolled in ITCS for more than 12 months, re-determination packets for eligibility for CCW funding will be mailed to families at least 6 weeks prior to the child turning 3 years old.
- If the family does not have other children utilizing CCW funding, and the child has been enrolled
  in ITCS for less than 12 months, the child will be considered eligible for CCW under their original
  application and will be re-determined based upon their original application date. For children
  enrolled under "presumptive" eligibility, the work requirement must be met before returning to
  CCW funding.
- If the family is found eligible for CCW funding (at 300% 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 prioritized waiting list. For CCW, an eligible child's <u>original application</u> date will be used to determine CCW placement. If using the date of the <u>original application</u> is not enough to enroll the child immediately and the child is placed on the wait list, the ELRC will have to check "Pre-K Enrolled" on the child care request screen in order to move the child to the prioritized wait list. Once the child is enrolled "Pre-K Enrolled" can be unchecked. If placed on the CCW prioritized 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 enroll their child into a PA PKC program, the PA PKC provider will be responsible for determining next steps for PA PKC eligibility.

- PA PKC providers will first verify whether or not the child is eligible for a PA PKC slot based on the child's birth date and the kindergarten cutoff school entry date in the child's school district of residence.
- 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.
- If the child is eligible, based on the child's birth date and the kindergarten cutoff school entry date in the child's school district of residence, to attend PA PKC, the PA PKC provider 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 PA PKC, an eligible child who is transitioning off Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots funding should receive priority points in the PA PKC enrollment process.
- If the child who is turning three does not meet the school district's kindergarten cutoff date, the child may remain on ITCS funding until the child is eligible to attend PA PKC. In such cases, the program will assure the family completes a Pre-kindergarten Intent Form again, at least 6-weeks prior to the child's eligibility for PA PKC.

For families intending to use both PKC and CCW funding, the child may remain on ITCS funding while awaiting enrollment in PKC. In these cases, redetermination for CCW funding (wrap around) should occur at least 6 weeks prior to the start of PKC program. Children who remain eligible for CCW funding, can be held in "suspended" until the start of the PKC program. Children who are found ineligible for CCW funding, can remain on ITCS funding until the start of the PKC program.

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 is found not eligible for CCW funding or PKC funding when redetermination occurs, 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.

Appendix A: ITCS Specific PELICAN ELN screen shots (staffing, enrollments, attendance) PELICAN ELN Training Materials

Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Systems Webinar



## **PELICAN ELN Materials**

#### **Getting Started**

https://www.pakeys.org/pa-early-learninginitiatives/pelican/pelican-getting-started/

#### Resources

https://www.pakeys.org/pa-early-learning-initiatives/pelican/pelican-resources/



# Steps for Entering Information in PELICAN ELN

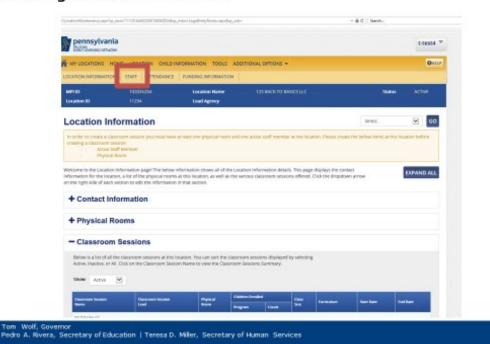
If you are starting from scratch, here are the steps in chronological order to entering all data:

- · Create staff
- Create Classroom Session (Add already created staff to classroom session)
- Create new child
  - Add demographic information
  - Add parent/guardian information
  - Add classroom session enrollment information

#### Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Systems Webinar

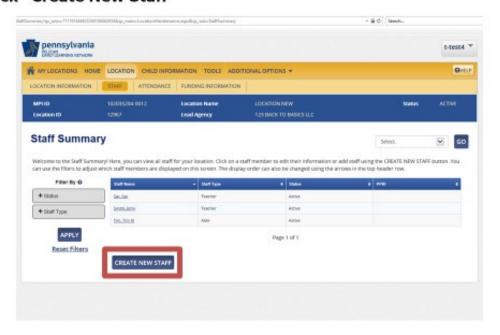


#### Creating new staff in PELICAN



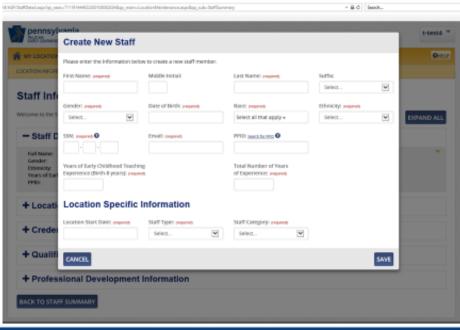


#### Click "Create New Staff"



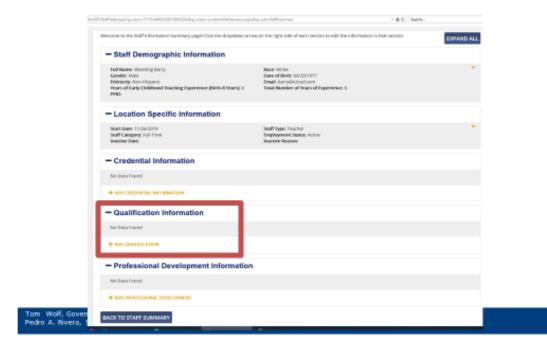


#### Enter all staff demographic information (if applicable)





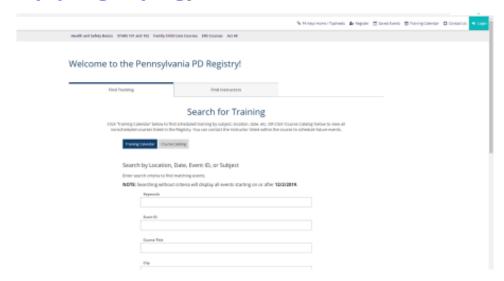
#### Once staff demographic information is entered, you can then enter their qualifications. Make sure you enter qualification information!



Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Systems Webinar



# Staff must also be added to the PD Registry (www.papdregistry.org)





Make sure that staff entered in the PD Registry have a complete profile and have been verified. A complete and verified profile includes:

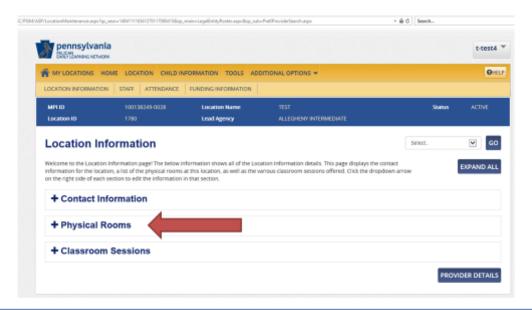
- · Personal Information
  - PPID (if applicable)
  - Address, Phone Number
- Education
  - Transcripts uploaded
- Employment
  - Wage
  - Hours worked per week
  - Position Title



#### Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Data Quality Webinar

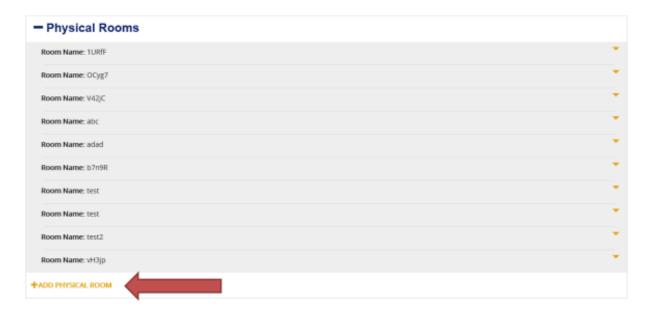


First, you must create a classroom session. To create a classroom session, you must first create a physical room.



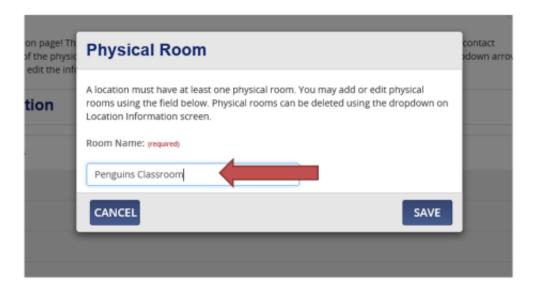


#### Click on physical rooms, then click "Add physical room"



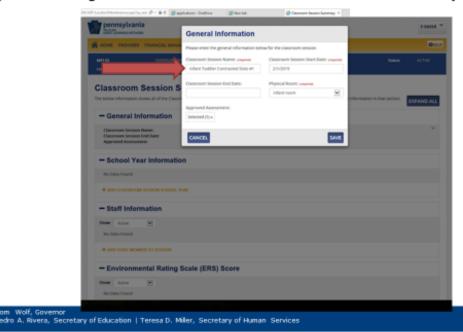


#### Enter your physical room name, and then click save.





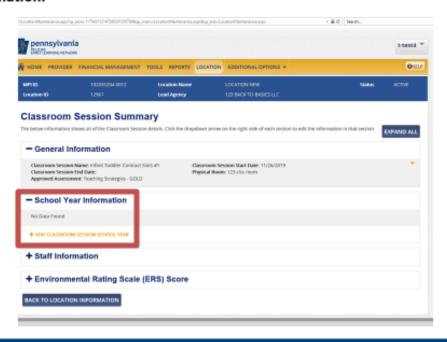
You must then create a classroom session. When creating the classroom session: use the classroom session name: Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots #1 (use ascending numbers if more than one classroom is in a location).



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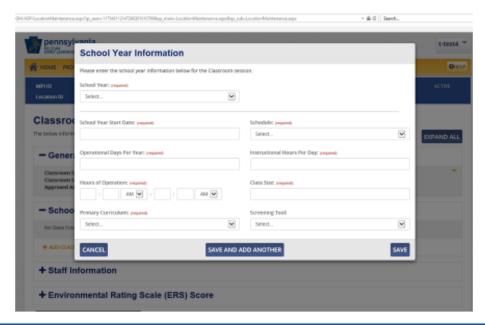


After the classroom session is created, you then need to add school year information.





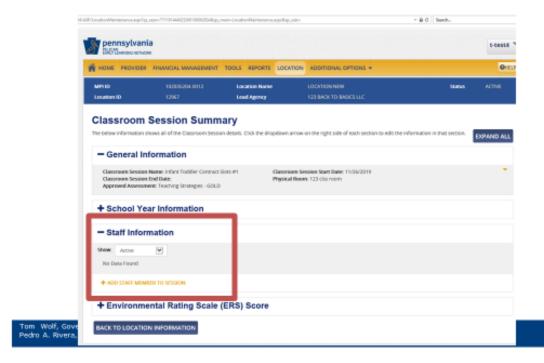
#### Enter all of the required school year information on this screen.



Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Data Quality Webinar

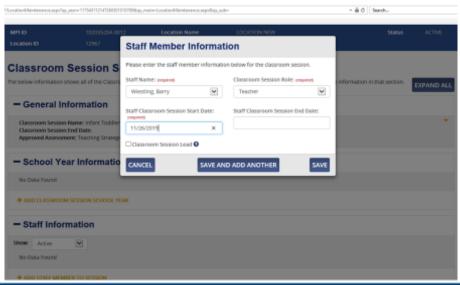


After the classroom session has been created, you need to add a staff member to the classroom session.



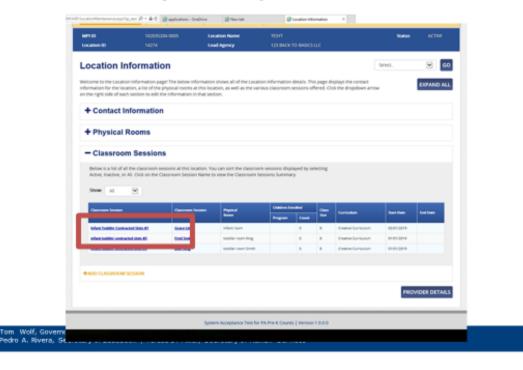


Choose your newly created staff member from the drop down menu. Indicate whether they are a "Teacher" or "Aide"





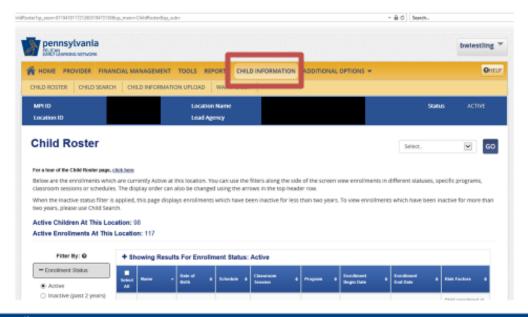
## Once this is all done you will see your classroom session listed.



#### Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Systems Webinar

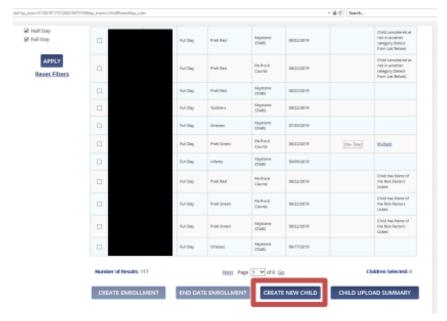


After the classroom session is created and a staff member is attached, you can then enroll a child by clicking "Child Information" to view the child roster.



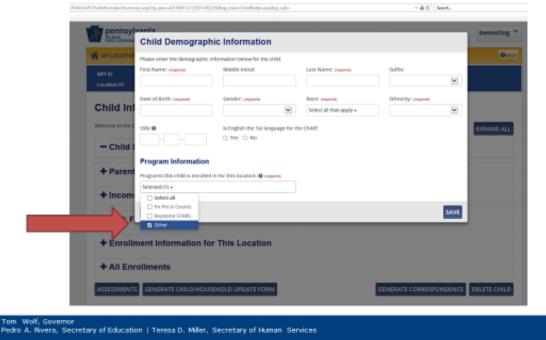


#### Click the "Create New Child" button at the bottom of the screen



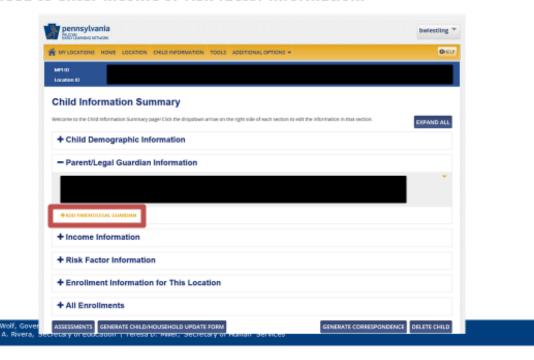


#### You will enter all the child information and select "Other" for program.



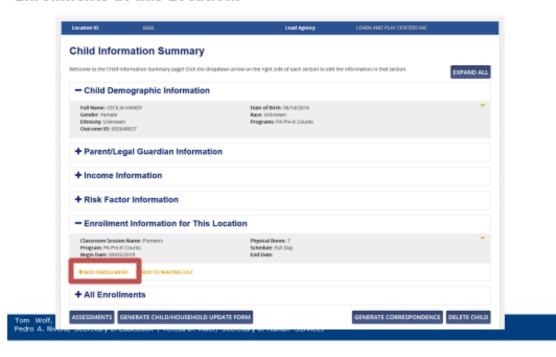


You will then add parent/legal guardian information for the child. You do not need to enter income or risk factor information.



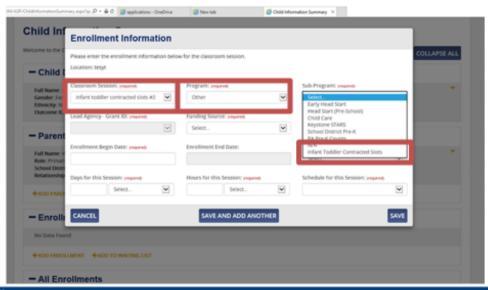


# The next step is to add an enrollment. Click "Add Enrollment" under Enrollments at this Location.



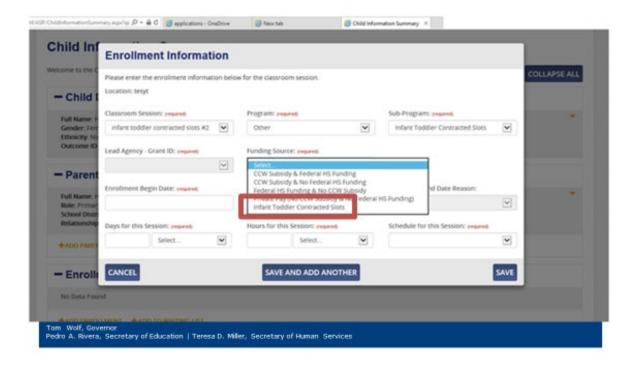


Under Classroom Session, select your Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Classroom Session. Also select Program "Other" and Subprogram "Infant Toddler Contracted Slots"





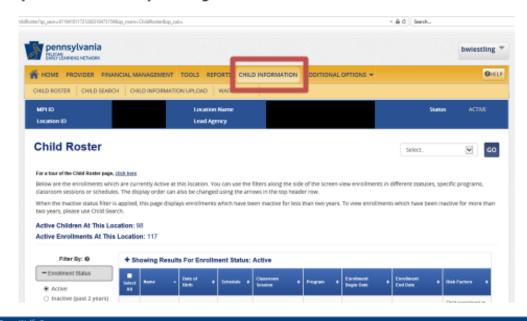
#### For Funding Source, select "Infant Toddler Contracted Slots"



Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Data Quality Webinar

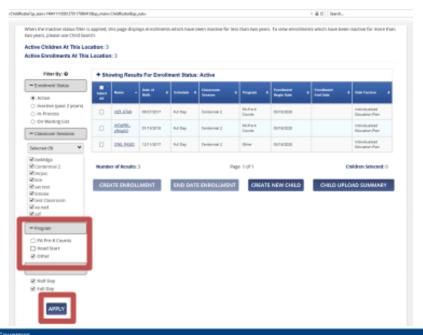


To un-enroll children in ITCSP in PELICAN you must first get them to show up on your child roster by clicking child information.



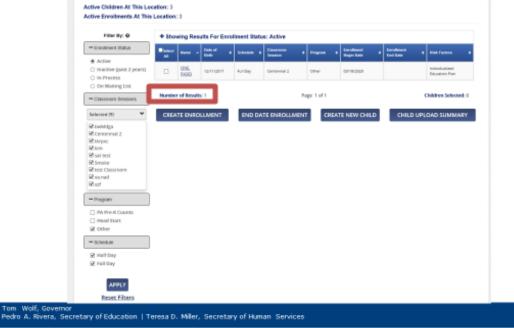


Scroll down on the child roster, and uncheck "Pre-K Counts" and "HSSAP" under Program. Please make sure you leave "Other" checked. Then click "Apply"



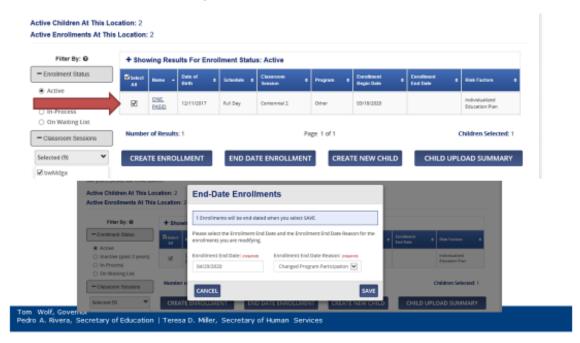


You will then see all your children enrolled in Program "Other" to be able to end date the enrollment.





To end date the enrollment, you can click the selection box next to the child(ren) you wish to end date. You will then click "End Date Enrollment". You can then enter the end date, and end date reason and click save.



Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Data Quality Webinar



# Editing Information in PELICAN ELN

If you already have children entered in PELICAN ELN, along with the staff and Classroom Sessions, you just need to make edits to your current information to reflect how we want the information entered for ITCS. The areas that need updated are:

- Classroom Session Name
- Staff tied to Classroom Sessions
- · Add Program "Other" to a child
- Add ITCS enrollment to child

We will also show you how to make the proper edits if you already have these created in PELICAN ELN.

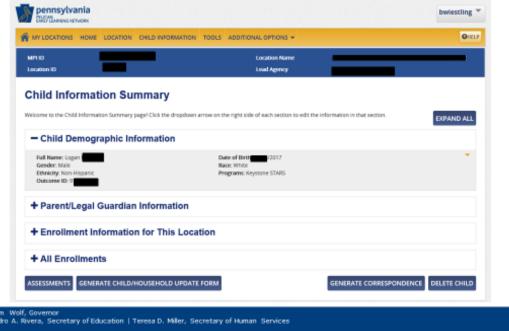


If the child is already enrolled in "Keystone STARS" at your location you can locate them on the "Child Roster" screen.

| Logan | 2017 | Full Day | Infant | Keystone<br>STARS | 10/12/2017 |  |  |
|-------|------|----------|--------|-------------------|------------|--|--|
|       |      |          |        |                   |            |  |  |

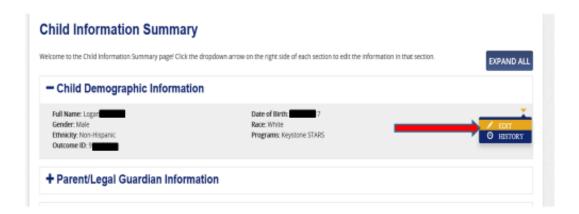


#### Click on the child's name to bring up the Child Information Summary screen



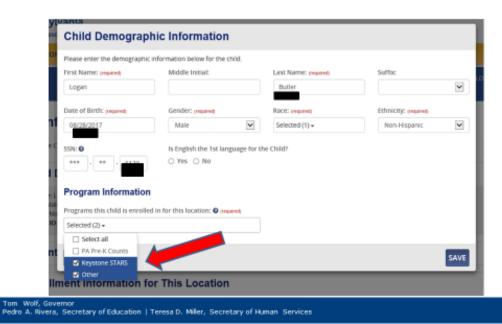


#### Click the Yellow arrow under Child Demographic Information and click "Edit".





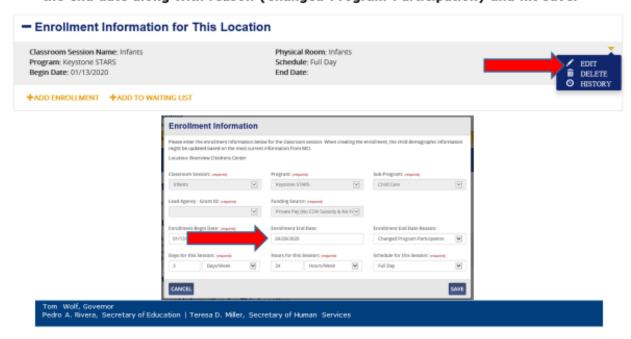
Within the Child Demographic Information screen you will need to add the program "Other" under "Program Information". Please make sure to check "Other" and click save.



#### Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Data Quality Webinar

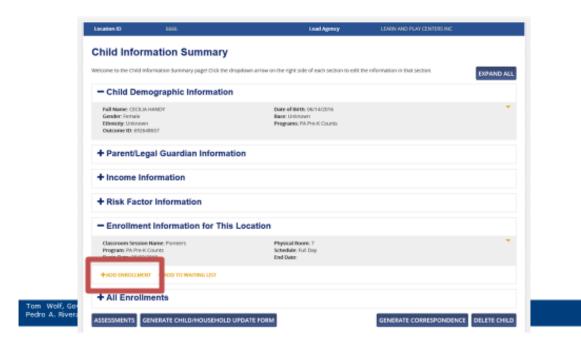


Once the child has the program "Other" attached to them you can then end date the Keystone STARS enrollment. Under the Enrollment Information for this Location you will click the arrow and "Edit" the enrollment. You can then enter the end date along with reason (Changed Program Participation) and hit save.



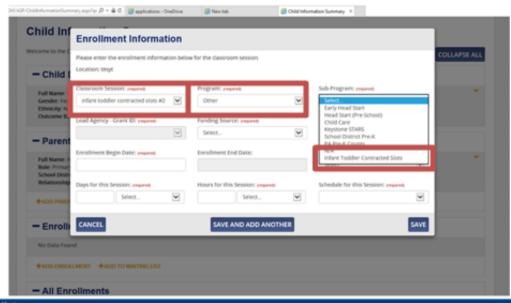


Once you have end dated the Keystone STARS enrollment, you can then add the ITCSP enrollment. Under the Enrollment Information for this Location you will click "Add Enrollment". You can then follow the instructions on the next two slides to add the correct enrollment.



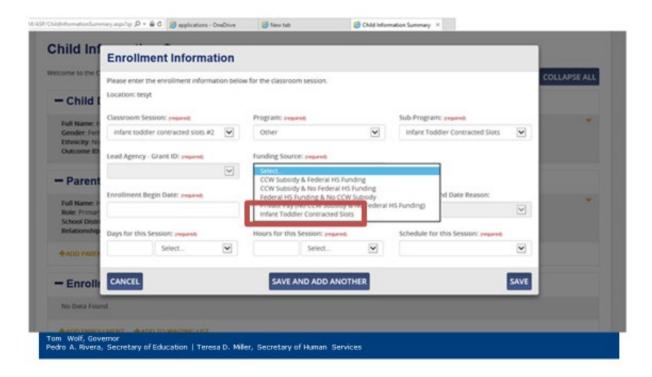


Under Classroom Session, select your Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Classroom Session. Also select Program "Other" and Subprogram "Infant Toddler Contracted Slots"



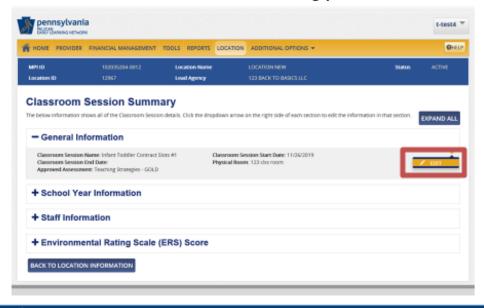


#### For Funding Source, select "Infant Toddler Contracted Slots"



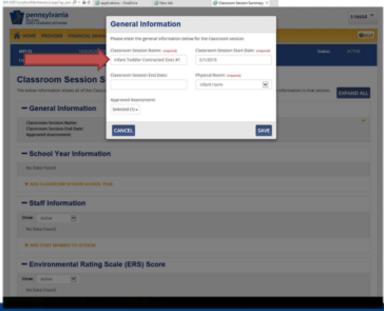


If you are editing an already existing classroom session, you will click on the classroom session and then click "Edit" under General Information. You will need to rename the session use the same naming pattern on the next slide.



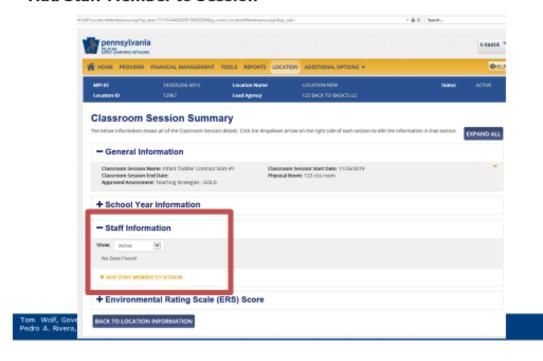


Use the classroom session name: Infant-Toddler Contracted Slots #1 (use ascending numbers if more than one classroom is in a location).



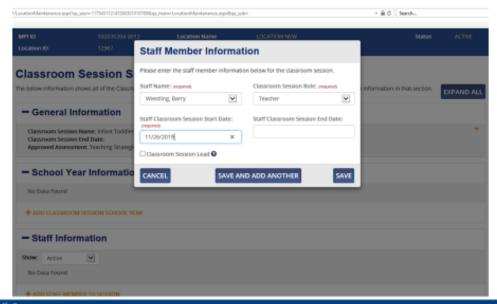


After the classroom session has been edited, you want to make sure you have the correct staff assigned to the classroom. You can click "Add Staff Member to Session"





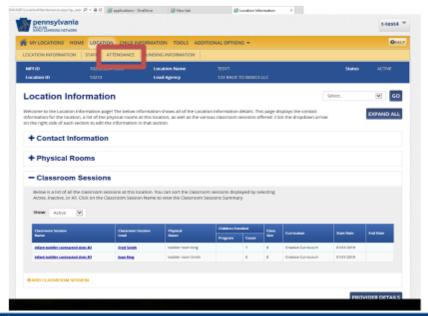
Choose the correct staff member from the drop down. If they are not in the drop down, you will have to create a new staff member.



#### Infant Toddler Contracted Slots: Systems Webinar

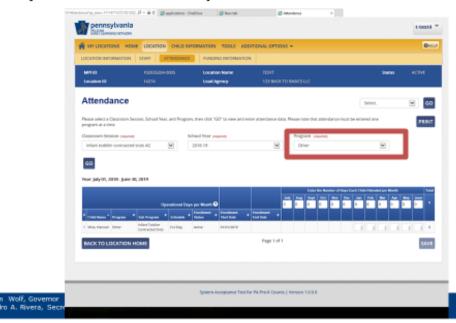


#### Tracking of child attendance is found under "location information."





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.



## Appendix B: Family Recruitment Resources

#### Cover Letter for CCW eligible families promoting ITCS

May be used by ELRC to advertise the ITCS program to current CCW eligible families and provide a listing of currently funded providers.

ELRCs in need of a fillable version of this template, email <a href="mailto:megpan@pakeys.org">megpan@pakeys.org</a>

#### ITCS Family Brochure

May be used by ELRC to advertise ITCS program and provide a listing of currently funded providers. ELRCs may share finalized brochures with approved providers to assist in recruitment.

ELRCs in need of a fillable version of this template, email <a href="mailto:megpan@pakeys.org">megpan@pakeys.org</a>