

Infant Toddler Contracted Slots Policy Overview 10/4/2023

Please know this presentation may be recorded.

Agenda

- Policies effective July 1, 2023
 - Eligible Providers
 - Child Eligibility
 - Determining Eligibility
 - Tracking Enrollments
 - Transition to Prekindergarten
 - Redetermining Eligibility at Transition to Prekindergarten
 - Question & Answer
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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.
- 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.

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.

Policy Statement: Eligible Providers

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 (ITS) 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: 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 ITCS Interest Form 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 child care day (traditional child care 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

Policy Statement: Child Eligibility

Guidance and Clarifications:

- 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 child care 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.

Policy Statement: Child Eligibility

Guidance and Clarifications:

- 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: 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 ITCS 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:
 - 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 INFANT TODDLER CONTRACTED SLOTS – THE PENNSYLVANIA KEY (pakeys.org)) may be used for this purpose.

Policy Statement: Determining Eligibility

Guidance and Clarifications:

- 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: Tracking Enrollment

- 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 New Provider Training Guide to understand how to gain access to and enter data into the PELICAN ELN system.
- Providers should reference Appendix A for specifics on how to enter ITCS enrollment information into PELICAN ELN.

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 no 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.

Policy Statement: Transition to Prekindergarten

Guidance and Clarifications:

- 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 Pre-kindergarten Intent Form. Completed forms should be shared with the ELRC, as well as with the assigned ITS.

Policy Statement: Transition to Prekindergarten-CCW Only

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 **original application** date will be used to determine CCW placement. If using the date of the **original application** 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.

Policy Statement: Transition to Prekindergarten-PKC Only

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 birthdate 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.

Policy Statement: Transition to Prekindergarten-PKC and CCW

- 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.

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 Pre-kindergarten Intent Form. Completed forms should be shared with the ELRC, as well as with the assigned ITS.

Policy Statement: Redetermining Eligibility at Transition to Prekindergarten-CCW Only

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 **original application** date will be used to determine CCW placement. If using the date of the **original application** 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.

Policy Statement: Redetermining Eligibility at Transition to Prekindergarten- PKC Only

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.

Policy Statement: Redetermining Eligibility at Transition to Prekindergarten- PKC and CCW

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.

Pre-K Intent Form

- <https://s35729.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Infant-Toddler-Contracted-Slots-Pre-K-Intent-Form-7.1.2023.pdf>

Questions?

Points of Contact at the Pennsylvania Key:

- Megan Penson, Assistant Director of Early Childhood Education Programs
 - megpen@pakeys.org
 - 717-992-0760
 - Dana Moser, Infant Toddler Coordinator
 - danmos@pakeys.org
 - 570-231-0425
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