



How Can PA Lawmakers Maximize the Potential of the State's Youngest Residents?

By prioritizing investments in early childhood, PA will improve the outcomes of children & families

From birth to age 5, young children's brains are at their most malleable. At no other time in a human's life will the brain develop at this remarkable speed or with such intricacy. PA's early care and education system helps parents maximize the health, wellbeing and education potential of these first five years. Investing in these systems and services is a direct investment in our children.

PA AAP urges PA legislators to support the following investments in early child learning and development:

Increasing high-quality pre-k line items



Expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to 12 months

Providing pregnant women and young families with home visiting services

Expanding enrollment in DHS' Early Intervention Part C program

Utilizing federal funding to provide a wage increase for teachers and staff



Importance of Investments



According to the National Institute of Child Health & Human Development, only 10% of child care centers provide "high quality care."

With these investments, children can:

- Practice problem-solving
- Improve cognitive and emotional development
- Develop resilience and school readiness

As part of the 2022-23 final state budget,
Pennsylvania policymakers should support:

- Serving an additional 2,308 children and increasing rates for full- and half-day slots by increasing the high-quality pre-k line items by \$70 million. The rate increase is necessary to support the early care and education workforce and address rising costs for providers.
- Accelerating access to high-quality child care for working parents by providing a wage supplement for teachers and staff through \$115 million in sustainable state/federal funding. This investment will provide an increase of \$2 per hour for child care professionals to retain the current workforce, reducing turnover which negatively impacts child development and results in classroom and program closures that disrupt families' ability to work.
- Providing an additional 3,800 pregnant women, young children and their families with evidence-based home visiting services by increasing the Community-Based Family Center line item by \$15 million. We also encourage an increase in the Nurse-Family Partnership line item of \$1.2 million to serve 200 more families in the commonwealth.
- Expanding the postpartum coverage period in Medicaid from 60 days to 12 months by including \$8 million in funding. This funding will ensure individuals have access to insurance before, during and after their baby's birth and can have lasting impacts on health outcomes.
- Serving more infants and toddlers in the Early Intervention Part C program through the Department of Human Services by increasing funding by \$11.5 million, which includes \$1.2 million allocated for children eligible for tracking when their mothers have a positive screen for or diagnosed with postpartum depression or anxiety. This funding will ensure children with developmental delays are identified, referred to and accepted for the services they need to reach their fullest potential.