

MAKING THE  
CONNECTION

# Child Care Works Pennsylvania's Subsidized Child Care Program

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**Presenters:**

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## **Purpose of training:**

1. To introduce staff and agencies working with families to the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC)
2. To introduce staff and agencies to child care options
3. To outline the steps to acquiring child care
4. To share helpful information for child care programs
5. To share need to know information

## Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC)

ELRCs are responsible for management of the subsidized child care program and Pennsylvania's quality rating improvement system, Keystone STARS by:

- Processing child care applications
- Authorizing child care funding
- Establishing agreements with child care providers to serve subsidized families
- Providing resource and referral services for families looking for child care
- Assessing early learning programs and designating STAR levels 1-4 as indicators of quality
  - STAR 1 equals basic licensure requirements

Child Care Works is administered by 22 Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRC) grantees located throughout the commonwealth.

ELRC 18 is the ELRC for Philadelphia County and was formally known as Child Care Information Services (CCIS).

- Pennsylvania's subsidized child care program, Child Care Works, provides financial assistance to low income working families, families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), working families that have transitioned off of TANF (Former TANF) and families that participate in unpaid employment and training activities through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary funding for PA's subsidized child care program, Child Care Works (CCW).

## Child Care Works

- The Child Care Works pays for child care while parents work or attend approved employment and training programs. Working parents must pay a weekly co-payment, which is a portion of the weekly child care cost. The amount of the co-payment is based on the family's size and income.
- TANF families and former TANF families are prioritized and not subject to the waitlist.
- Families qualifying under the low income program are placed on a waitlist if funds are not immediately available.

- The prioritized population consist of:
  - Families experiencing homelessness
  - Teen parents
  - Foster children
  - Pre-K
  - Head Start
  - Siblings *(A new infant sibling of a child currently receiving subsidized care)*

### **If a parent is experiencing homelessness:**

- ✓ The child who needs care must be a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residency.
- ✓ The parent can be granted up to 92 days of eligibility to meet the employment requirement – (This is called “**Presumptive Eligibility**” allowing the parent time to find a job)
- ✓ To receive Former TANF child care, the parent must apply within 183 days of his/her TANF cash assistance end date.

**A family experiencing homelessness** may submit a waiver for the information they cannot submit at application.

Once the family has identified themselves as experiencing homelessness the ELRC must provide the family with a Homelessness Verification Form

A family experiencing homelessness may be granted a waiver for most verification requirements **except for:**

- ✓ Age and citizenship of the child
- ✓ Income Limits
- ✓ Pennsylvania residency
- ✓ Number of paid absences – once enrolled in child care



# A waiver can be granted for

- ✓ Verification requirements
- ✓ Payment of the co-pay



## Homelessness Verification Form

NAME:	CASE NUMBER:
<b>PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.</b> You must complete Block 1 in order to receive additional supportive services. You must complete <b>ONE</b> of the following <b>BLOCKS (2, 3, or 4)</b> . Use Block 2 OR 3 when verification is available. Use Block 4 when verification is not readily available to affirm your family is experiencing homelessness. The ELRC will complete Block 5 and will provide you with a copy of this completed form indicating which additional supportive service(s) you will receive.	
<b>1. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES</b>	
I, _____, request additional supportive services to help my family since we are experiencing homelessness. I am specifically requesting a waiver of the following ELRC program requirements (Specify below): _____	
The ELRC asked me to provide verification to support my claim that my family is experiencing homelessness. I have cooperated in providing verification as indicated below.	
<b>2. RECORDS</b>	
I submit one of the following, if available: <input type="checkbox"/> Social service records <input type="checkbox"/> Medical/treatment records <input type="checkbox"/> School records <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____	
<b>3. AUTHORIZATION / VERIFICATION BY A THIRD PARTY</b>	
I authorize _____ to complete the verification below and to provide it to the Department of Human Services / Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) for the purposes of verifying my request for additional supportive services.	
_____	_____
CLIENT SIGNATURE	DATE
This statement is submitted by: _____ (Name & Title) _____ (Organizational Affiliation) _____ (Address & Telephone Number)	
I am: <input type="checkbox"/> Social service provider <input type="checkbox"/> Medical / psychological service provider <input type="checkbox"/> School representative <input type="checkbox"/> Legal representative <input type="checkbox"/> Friend / relative / acquaintance <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify): _____	
I have knowledge of the client's experience with homelessness and would like to request the additional supportive services checked above. I do not have and am unable to provide evidence to verify homelessness.	
_____	_____
THIRD PARTY SIGNATURE	DATE
<b>4. SELF-AFFIRMATION</b>	
I affirm that my family is experiencing homelessness and would like to request the additional supportive services checked above. I do not have and am unable to provide evidence to verify homelessness.	
_____	_____
CLIENT SIGNATURE	DATE
<b>5. ELRC DECISION</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> ELIGIBLE for supportive services <input type="checkbox"/> NOT ELIGIBLE for supportive services	
_____	_____
ELRC REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE	DATE

- The Homelessness Verification Form allows for a 92-day period of presumptive eligibility
  - The 92-day presumptive eligibility allows a parent/caretaker to be determined eligible, even if they are not meeting work hour requirements
- The parent/caretaker is deemed eligible and placed on a Prioritized Wait List
  - The Prioritized Wait List permits children experiencing homelessness to be enrolled before children on the regular Waiting List
- Co-pay can be as low as \$0 during the 92-days of Presumptive Eligibility

A parent/caretaker experiencing homelessness and receiving the 92-day presumptive eligibility waiver, must meet the work hour requirements by day 92. If the parent/caretaker meets the work hour requirements, the parent/caretaker receives 12 full months of child care subsidy.

On day 93, if the P/C is not meeting work hour requirements, they will be issued an Adverse Action to end care

The Adverse Action allows the P/C 13 additional days to submit verification of work hour requirements

# NON-FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY

- **Age**
  - Subsidized child care is available to eligible children ages birth to 13.
  - Subsidized child care may be available to an otherwise eligible child who is between the ages of 13 and 19 and is incapable of caring for himself. The parent must provide documentation of child's inability to care for himself, signed by a licensed physician or psychologist.
- **Identity**
  - The identity of the parent or caretaker applying for assistance must be verified. The parent must also provide verification of the family size and composition.
- **Citizenship**
  - The child must be a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence or otherwise lawfully and permanently living in the United States.

# Financial Eligibility Criteria

- **Resources**
  - A family may not have assets in excess of \$1 million.
- **Annual Income**
  - At initial application, the family's gross annual income may not exceed **200%** of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines or 85% of State Medium Income) SMI

Family Size	Maximum Yearly Family Income (May 2021)
2	\$34,840
3	\$43,920
4	\$53,000
5	\$62,080
6	\$71,160
7	\$80,240
8	\$89,320

- The family may remain eligible until the family's gross annual income exceeds 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.

## ELRC – Beyond Child Care Subsidy

- ELRC are the hubs for child care information and child care help.
- All ELRCs throughout Pennsylvania work within their communities to help build foundations for successful child care experiences through information sharing and child care funding.

The ELRC will:

## Help create a smooth transition

*As the hub of information for child care, we know that child care has an impact on:*

1. School attendance and school retention
2. Employment
3. Child development
4. School readiness
5. Strengthening of family and community relationships

## The ELRC will:

- Provide one-on-one consultations about child care
- Provide informational materials about quality child care and early learning programs
- Perform child care searches by zip-code, hours of operation, Keystone STARS rating, special needs, etc.
- Direct parents to ELRC staff to resolve enrollment concerns
- Support providers in building capacity for quality child care and moving up the quality ladder



The ELRC will:

Share facts about quality child care and early learning opportunities:

- Low staff to child ratios
- Dedicated and credentialed staff
- Clean and safe environment
- Age appropriate activities
- Healthy snacks and meals
- Low staff turnover
- Keystone STARS
- Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts
- Head Start
- Early Head Start

## The ELRC will:

Encourage parents to ask questions when selecting a child care program:

- **Is this a certified location?** The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) issues Certificates of Compliance to child care centers, group homes and family child care homes. Those child care facilities are inspected yearly by the Bureau of Certification.
- **What education do the teachers have?** Teachers in quality programs have education in child development, such as Child Development Associate (CDA), associate's or bachelor's degree.

QUESTIONS?

## Information to Know

A parent has a child care choice:

These choices include centers, groups and family child care homes.

- **Center:** Child care centers are certified by OCDEL and inspected yearly for compliance with state regulations. Child care centers provide care for seven or more children.
- **Group:** Group homes are certified by OCDEL and inspected yearly for compliance with state regulations. Group homes may care for up to 12 children. A group home may be located in a private residence or other premises.
- **Family:** Family homes are certified by OCDEL and inspected yearly for compliance with state regulations. A family child care provider may care for up to six children that are unrelated to the provider. A family child care home is located in a private residence.

## The staff in a regulated location must:

- Meet educational guidelines
- Participate in ongoing professional development
- Pass a criminal history and child abuse clearance
- Complete an FBI fingerprint check
- Complete mandated reporter training
- Have health assessments completed
- There are additional requirements as specified by certification regulations

## An additional child care choice available to

- A parent can select a related member of his/her family to care for the child:
  - Grandmother
  - Grandfather
  - Great Grandmother
  - Great Grandfather
  - Aunt
  - Uncle
  - Sibling (18 or older)
- The related member cannot live in the same house with the child.
- The related member must complete and pass a criminal history and child abuse clearance.
- The related member must complete an FBI fingerprint check.

In Pennsylvania, there are programs that promote early learning and quality care

- **Keystone STARS** promotes quality in child care and Head Start programs. Certified providers are rated STAR 1 to a STAR 4 level based on quality standards. When families look for a child care provider they are encouraged to ask providers their STAR level—the more STARS, the higher the quality.
- **Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts** provides high quality pre-kindergarten opportunities to three and four year olds at no cost to families. Children from age three until entry for kindergarten may apply. PA Pre-K Counts is targeted to children at risk of school failure, either due to income, language barriers or special issues.

# Early Learning and Quality Care

- **Head Start and Early Head Start** programs are federally funded and provide free high quality services to children of low-income families from birth to five years of age.
  - Head Start focuses on the entire family and supports the mental, social and emotional development of the child.
  - Early Head Start provides services to pregnant women and children from birth to three years of age and Head Start serves children from three to five years old.
  - A parent or soon to be parent can apply for Head Start/Early Head Start in the community closest to where they live.



# Keystone STARS Is Important

## For Families and Family Professionals

- STARS can help you choose high quality child care.
- Learn what to look for and what questions to ask!

## For Child Care Provider

STARS can help you strengthen your child care program and access resources.

# For Child Care Providers

All licensed child care providers are automatically a STAR 1. This includes family, group and centers.

All licensed child care providers have a Quality Coach assigned to work with you on your Keystone STARS journey.

To contact your ELRC 18 Quality Coach:  
215-382-4762 x 2980 or  
[elrc18providers@caringpeoplealliance.org](mailto:elrc18providers@caringpeoplealliance.org)

# Keystone STARS Standards

Child care programs can earn a STAR 2 through a STAR 4 rating by meeting standards in these areas;

- a. Staff Education
- b. Learning Environment
- c. Leadership & Management
- d. Family and Community Partnerships

# Job Hunting

- Many child care programs are hiring right now. Maybe you are the right person for the job!
- Look for a STARS program. Call and ask if they are hiring right now.
- You will need to provide clearances, meet qualifications and enjoy working with young children.
- Some child care programs may offer care for your child a benefit.

# Important Resources

Do your best for every child!

## **Social/ Emotional Support:**

Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMH)  
PAIECMH@pakeys.org

## **Early Intervention:**

CONNECT Helpline 1-800-692-7288

## Information to Know

How can a parent find child care?

It's as easy as **1-2-3**...

Point the parent in the direction of his/her local ELRC

The parent can:

1. Walk-in to a ELRC
2. Telephone the ELRC
3. Use the Internet/COMPASS online services

[www.FindChildCare.pa.gov](http://www.FindChildCare.pa.gov)

# COVID Updates

- **During the 1<sup>st</sup> several months deadlines to meet many requirements were extended.** Deadlines and requirements have now returned to normal.
- **Schedules for school age children were allowed to be full-time due to virtual learning.** Children are now transitioning to summer schedules and are expected to transition back to typical part-time schedules in the fall.
- **ELRC offices were working with limited staff and closed to public.** Many staff have returned and we are working to fill vacancies. We are still closed to the public but are open 8 am to 5 pm for document drop off and phone calls.

# Contact Us

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QUESTIONS?