

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Testimony for Innovations for Economic Recovery: Childcare and College Students
Tracey Campanini,
Deputy Secretary Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Thursday, April 28, 2022

Thank you for inviting me here today to share information from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) as it relates to the intersection of child care and college students. We are passionately supportive of your attention to the two ends of this educational continuum. I would like to share five promising approaches to supporting students who are parents of young children as they pursue postsecondary education.

OCDEL is responsible for licensing of child care centers, group child care and family child care homes. We further support child care providers as they participate in quality building activities through Keystone STARS. As part of this support, our office partners with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and the Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) to deliver credit bearing professional development to support early childhood educators in advancing their own qualifications. Through these partnerships, we connect with more than 30 institutions of higher education focusing on future Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals' development.

OCDEL also oversees the implementation of Pennsylvania's subsidized child care program, Child Care Works (CCW). CCW blends federal Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) and Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) to support low-income working parents. Eligibility for CCW is two-pronged. First, family income cannot exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines at initial application, and at redetermination, cannot exceed 235 percent. The second is that families must meet the 20 hours of work requirement, or a combination of 10 hours of work and 10 hours of an approved training or educational program.

To support enrolled parents and staff, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) or other training programs have several options to address child care needs. An IHE or other training program can choose to

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become a licensed provider at one or more of their campus locations. Another option is to make space available at one of more of their campus locations and invite a community-based provider to become licensed to operate a child care program on campus. The final option is to connect student-parents or staff to the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) or www.findchildcare.pa.gov which can help parents identify child care programs operating off-campus.

Pennsylvania is currently utilizing five promising approaches to support and facilitate student-parent educational and professional development. The *first* promising approach was the creation and distribution of a resource, [“Opening a Child Care Facility in Pennsylvania.”](#) This document, available on the Department of Human Services website, assists entities working through the process of becoming a licensed child care provider. It is the most comprehensive support document for all the requirements and resources available to child care providers. The location of child care in proximity to the location of postsecondary enrolled activities is important to most families. We do not specifically track IHEs offering child care onsite, but a quick review of only the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education schools shows that six, or slightly less than half, have child care on campus. Similarly, many state-affiliated and private IHEs have child care on their campus. Locating a child care on campus is a win all around. It supports student-parents and staff child care needs. It also offers opportunity for enrolled students to have a rewarding work experience as an employment opportunity or valuable educational opportunity to satisfy a lab requirement for a professional preparation program.

The *second* promising approach is a model to support employers. OCDEL’s partner, the Pennsylvania Key, has developed a targeted technical advisory model which connects an employer with an individual who can assist the employer as they navigate child care supports for their employees. This individual will partner with employers to conduct a needs analysis of their employees as it relates to child care, offer

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educational supports for employees, make connections with local child care providers for potential purchasing of slots, and if there is interest and capacity, start-up supports for an employer-based child care facility. This is a new initiative, first being implemented with a Berks County mushroom grower and a Dauphin County nursing home. Any postsecondary training organizations or IHE can contact Dr. Marnie Aylesworth marayl@pakeys.org for further guidance on this approach.

As an employer, the Commonwealth serves as an example of a model employer. Currently, through a [management directive](#), the Governor has made onsite child care an option at three locations within state office buildings. Services are procured from an external child care provider. In the current model, the Commonwealth supports each location through cost sharing of space and utilities, helping to reduce the tuition cost for employees with enrolled children. As part of the 2022-23 proposed Executive Budget, the Governor is striving to expand on this initiative to attract and retain workforce by looking for new ways to ease the child care burden on employees.

The *third* promising approach in supporting low-income student-parents and employees is pending expansion of eligibility for Child Care Works. In OCDEL's final form regulations, OCDEL has proposed to expand eligibility for low-income student-parents attending a postsecondary training program to allow for 20 hours of an approved training program to meet the eligibility requirement for care. It is anticipated that these regulations will be final in December 2022.

As a *fourth* promising approach to support student-parents, I'd like to highlight the pilot work the Department of Human Services is engaged in called the PA Parent Pathways Learning Network (PPLN). The Department of Human Services is partnering with The Hope Center for College, Community and Justice at Temple University to provide a membership opportunity, funded in part by the Aspen Institute's Ascend Program, for colleges, universities, and community organizations to improve their

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impact on the success of student-parents. This effort is aimed at improving access to, and success in, higher education among Pennsylvanians who are raising children with the goal of boosting economic self-sufficiency.

The PPLN offers participants an opportunity to be a part of a national movement to successfully serve this essential population of post-secondary learners who are parenting young children, with unique challenges and opportunities. Seven institutions of higher education and community organizations were invited to be part of this innovative network through December 2022 – including Montgomery County Community College. Members will receive training and technical assistance from parenting student experts, coaching from Hope Center staff and PA agency affiliates, and peer-learning engagements provided via remote web-based platforms. The end goal is to create implementation plans to establish or advance systemic support for student-parents' success. As exciting as this opportunity is, the pilot funding will expire in December 2022 and there are no other funds identified to maintain or expand this effort.

Finally, the US Department of Education regularly offers Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program (CCAMPIS) grants. Funds are used to support or establish campus-based child care programs primarily serving the needs of low-income students enrolled in IHEs. Grants may be used for before and after school services. In addition, grants may be used to serve the child care needs of the community served by the institution. An IHE is eligible to receive a grant under this program if the total amount of all Federal Pell grant funds awarded to students enrolled at the institution of higher education for the preceding fiscal year equals or exceeds \$350,000. This activity is facilitated directly by the federal government. Currently ten Pennsylvania IHEs have CCAMPIS Awards.

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In addition to the strategies outlined here, the Governor's \$1.7 billion proposal for Pennsylvania's \$2 billion in federal ARPA dollars calls for \$500 million for the PA Opportunity Program. This program would provide direct payments of up to \$2,000 for Pennsylvania households with an income of \$80,000 or less, and the payments can be spent on childcare costs.

To conclude, OCDEL is a dual deputate bridging the Departments of Education and Human Services. This important conversation combines both agencies' visions. For PDE it is "Pennsylvania learners will be prepared for meaningful engagement in postsecondary education; in workforce training; in career pathways; and to be responsible, involved citizens." For DHS it is "Our vision is that all Pennsylvanians live safe, healthy, and independent lives, free of discrimination and inequity." As you continue to consider ways to support student-parents and their children, we would like to provide any assistance and information we can to advance this important work.

Thank you for your time and invitation to join you today.