



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2022

[View Online](#)

Gov. Wolf Visits Allentown's Volunteers of America Children's Center to Highlight Major Investments in Early Childhood Education, Child Care

Allentown, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today joined childhood advocates and state lawmakers to highlight his accomplishments in increased funding for early childhood education during a visit to the Volunteers of America Children's Center in Allentown. In this year's budget alone, the [Wolf Administration has secured a \\$79 million increase in early childhood education](#), providing more children and families in Pennsylvania with access to high-quality early learning programs through Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP).

"Early childhood learning programs are good for children, but they're also good for families and our economy, too," said Gov. Wolf. "Think about it - parents and caregivers rely on affordable, accessible childcare so they can go to work. When we ensure that high-quality early learning programs are available for children, we are making a direct investment in our communities and our commonwealth's economy. At a time of record inflation and families feeling the pinch of soaring costs for childcare, these investments are even more critically important."

Over his two terms in office, Gov. Wolf has helped to increase early childhood funding by \$254 million, which has allowed more than 21,000 new slots to open up for Pennsylvania children in Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental Assistance programs across the commonwealth.

Studies show that children who learn in high-quality Pre-K programs perform better in school and are more likely to graduate, while high-quality early learning programs also help students develop the social and emotional skills they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

"Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children and the Pre-K for PA campaign deeply appreciate the bipartisan support for pre-k programs in the state, including the leadership of Governor Wolf, Senator Browne, Representative Schlossberg and Representative Schweyer," said Kari King, President and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. "Their support shows that policymakers understand these programs' value and efficacy. A recent study of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts showed enrolled children outperformed their kindergarten peers who did not have

access. It's clear that high-quality, publicly funded pre-k pays dividends and is a smart return on investment.”

“Early educational opportunities are such an important piece of future success in school. Thank you, Governor Wolf, for continually recognizing the value of investing in our children’s future,” said Rep. Peter Schweyer. “I am proud to support both the Governor and the increases in this budget.”

“Pennsylvania’s economic success requires high-quality, early childcare. It’s critical for working families in Parkland and Allentown, who need assurance that their kids will be safe and loved during the workday,” said Rep. Mike Schlossberg. “Most importantly, it’s critical for our kids, because today’s three-year-old Volunteers of America could be teaching my grandkids or working on the next big medical breakthrough in thirty years. Their success now will be our success in the future.”

“For our youngest Pennsylvanians, an early childhood education experience is an investment in their educational, social, and emotional development that will continue to benefit them throughout their lives,” said Office of Child Development and Early Learning Deputy Secretary Tracey Campanini. “When we invest in early learning programs and the dedicated child care providers and teachers who help build this foundation, we are giving more children and families the opportunity to get the strong start they deserve.”

“Access to childcare services helps working parents maintain their jobs, provide for their families and contribute to the commonwealth’s economy,” Senator Pat Browne said. “The best way to prepare a child for their future is to couple high-quality childcare with exceptional early education opportunities. I am proud of the work the General Assembly has done with the Governor to increase funding to historic levels and provide access to these opportunities for children across the commonwealth.”

Over the last eight years under Gov. Wolf:

- Pre-K Counts enrollment has increased by more than 18,100 slots
 - funding has increased \$205 million (211%)
- Head Start Supplemental enrollment has increased by more than 3,400 slots
 - funding has increased an estimated 125%
- Child Care Works enrollment has increased to just under 120,000 in 2022-2023, up from 105,600 in 2014-2015
 - funding increases from \$744 million to more than \$1.25 billion in 2022-23

MEDIA CONTACT: Elizabeth Rementer, ra-gv.govpress@pa.gov, 717-783-1116