



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

Contact: ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov

Governor and First Lady Shapiro Host Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Governor's Residence, Highlight Importance of Investing in Early Childhood Education Across the Commonwealth



Harrisburg, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **First Lady Lori Shapiro** were joined by [Pre-K for PA](#) to host pre-school classes from across Pennsylvania for the annual Easter Egg Hunt at the [Pennsylvania Governor's Residence](#) – the first of the Shapiro Administration.

Governor and First Lady Shapiro welcomed pre-k students, educators, and advocates to the Residence and highlighted the need for high-quality early-learning programs for students across the Commonwealth as part of the Shapiro Administration's commitment to creating better schools, healthier families, and safer communities.

"Safe and strong communities are built on the foundation of an adequate and equitable education, from pre-K through college – and we must invest in early education so that every child in Pennsylvania can get the best possible start in life," said **Governor Shapiro**. "Strong early childhood education programs set students up for success, both inside and outside of the classroom, and that's why budget invests over \$30 million in Head Start and Pre-K Counts to help us recruit more preschool teachers and serve more students. Lori and I are thrilled to welcome preschool students and teachers to the Residence, and we're committed to working just as hard for all Pennsylvania children as we do for ours."

"When our children have access to high-quality pre-K from dedicated and hard-working educators, the entire Commonwealth thrives," said **First Lady Shapiro**. "Josh and I are excited to join students, educators, and advocates from across the Commonwealth today to bring attention to this important issue. We are committed to doing our part to ensure that every Pennsylvania child has the support and resources they need to thrive, and we extend our gratitude to the hardworking educators who provide quality education to children across the Commonwealth every day."

One of the Shapiro Administration's top priorities is ensuring every Pennsylvania child receives a quality education. In his [first budget address](#), Governor Shapiro proposed a \$30 million increase in Pre-K Counts funding and \$2.7 million in funding for the Head Start Supplemental Program to help address staffing shortages in early childhood education programs.

The Shapiro Administration is dedicated to creating better schools and supporting teachers across all of Pennsylvania – and his budget address invests in education at every level, including:

- An increase of \$567.4 million, or 7.8 percent, for basic education funding.
- An increase of \$30 million for the Pre-K Counts program.
- \$2.7 million in funding for the Head Start Supplemental Program
- \$38.5 million for universal free breakfast for all Pennsylvania students.
- \$500 million over the next 5 years to reduce and remediate environmental hazards in schools.
- \$500 million over the next 5 years so that schools can fund mental health counselors and services.

This is Governor and First Lady Shapiro's first Easter Egg Hunt in partnership with Pre-K for PA, which annually welcomes pre-K classrooms from across Pennsylvania to the Pennsylvania Governor's Residence to participate in an Easter egg hunt and celebrate the importance of high-quality, accessible early learning programs.

"Today, only 43 percent of eligible children in Pennsylvania benefit from the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend high-quality, publicly funded pre-k," said **Kari King, President and CEO of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children**. "Our coalition is energized to be working with Governor Shapiro to continue to advance the expansion of pre-k in Pennsylvania. His ongoing commitment helps ensure this valuable early learning experience will continue to become available to more and more children."

###