



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Shapiro Administration Celebrates Second Annual Early Childhood Education Equity Champions





Harrisburg, PA – Acting Secretary for the Department of Human Services Dr. Valerie Arkoosh today celebrated the Second Annual Equity in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Champion Award with recipients from across the Commonwealth in the Capitol Rotunda. More than 50 award recipients, including individual professionals and exemplary programs, were recognized for enhancing equitable practices while providing quality services for children and families to promote strong starts and life-long benefits for all children.

“Healthy and safe learning environments give our children a foundation to grow, and every child -- regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background -- should have the opportunity to learn and thrive,” said **Acting Secretary Arkoosh**. “We cannot undersell the impact that diverse and inclusive early childhood education can make in helping a child celebrate their individual identity as well as on an entire family’s trajectory, and I am grateful to these dedicated professionals for their commitment to Pennsylvania’s children and future.”

“The work early childhood education providers do is truly invaluable to the Commonwealth. These innovative professionals embrace every challenge that comes their way, providing equitable and inclusive environments for our youngest

Pennsylvanians to learn, grow, and thrive,” said **Acting Secretary of Education Dr. Khalid N. Mumin**. “Focusing on the needs of young children and their families, these professionals are the backbone of early childhood education. I am so proud of them and the work they do to provide programs dedicated to equity and inclusion.”

“I am so proud of early childhood education providers and professionals throughout Pennsylvania and relish the opportunity to highlight the below programs for going above and beyond in their communities,” said **Deputy Secretary of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Shante’ Brown**. “The work around equity and inclusion is so important and I am excited to recognize and celebrate that work again this year and for hopefully many years to come.”

Pennsylvania’s Equity in ECE Champion Award highlights the equity work being done within Pennsylvania’s early childhood education and afterschool settings. The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is honored to recognize the work of the early childhood education programs and professionals on behalf of Pennsylvania children and their families. Recipients of the award have shown to be equity champions through their work embracing diversity and full inclusion as strengths, upholding fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and working to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities.

The following submissions were selected as GOLD level awards for the 2023 Pennsylvania Equity in Early Childhood Education Champion Awards:

- Beginnings, Inc., Johnstown
- Child Time Learning Daycare Inc., Allentown
- Children's Playhouse (Marshall St.), Philadelphia
- Early Head Start, Pittsburgh Public, Pittsburgh
- Family Service Association of Bucks County Bilingual Nurturing Parenting Program and Facilitator, Langhorne
- Green Trees Early Learning Center, Inc., Milford
- Hanover Area YMCA, Hanover
- Nurse Family Partnership-Erie County Department of Health, Erie
- Raylene Posten of Kiddie City Early Learning Center, Allentown
- Rosanna Matos of First Up, Philadelphia
- Saint Francis ELC, Norristown
- School District of Lancaster's PreK Program, Lancaster
- Schoolhouse Learning Center, Trumbauersville
- Special People in the Northeast (SPIN), Philadelphia
- The Children's Ark at St. George's, Ardmore
- The Growing Garden Child Care Center, LLC, Tarentum
- TIA The Journey, Upper Darby
- Ukrainian Learning Center for Children, Jenkintown
- Widener University's Child Development Center, Chester
- Woodlyn Academy, Woodlyn
- Zakiya Parson, Darby

The following submissions were selected as SILVER level awards for the 2023 Pennsylvania Equity in Early Childhood Education Champion Awards:

- Cedar Tree Child Care, Elkins Park
- Child Care Professionals Network, Springfield
- Clover Montessori School, Philadelphia
- Faith Factory Learning Center, Mount Joy
- First Up, Philadelphia
- Greenway Early Learning Center, LLC, Whitehall
- Kidz Connect Child Care Center LLC, Easton
- Kim Alloway of York County Early Learning Resource Center Region 10, York
- Learning on Laurel, LLC, Pottsville
- Lehigh Valley Children's Centers at Towamensing, Leighton
- Precious One's Child Care Center, Inc., Jenkintown
- The Children's Home of Pittsburgh - Child's Way, Pittsburgh

The following submissions were selected as BRONZE level award for the 2023 Pennsylvania Equity in Early Childhood Education Champion Awards:

- Amanda Serra, Crayon Clubhouse II, Connellsville
- Amber Konopka of Chesterbrook Academy Preschool, Newtown
- Annie's Bubble Care, Erie
- Beautiful Beginnings Childcare Center, Inc., Philadelphia
- Child Care Professionals Network IDEA's Program, Springfield
- Children's Playhouse (Passyunk Ave.), Philadelphia
- Diane Hoffman Family Child Care, Ebensburg
- Different Expectations Educational Services, Philadelphia
- Great Minds Think Alike TWO (Providence Ave.), Chester
- Innovation & Exploration STEM Early Learning Center, Warrington
- Kiddieland Child Care & Learning Center, Tarentum
- Miss Doreen's Playmation Childcare, Barto
- Penny's Daycare LLC, Tioga
- Sholypop Daycare 2 (Kensington Ave.), Philadelphia
- Sunshine Cottage Childcare, Sinking Spring
- The Caring Center, Philadelphia
- Theresa Paludi of Montgomery County Early Learning Resource Center Region 17, Norristown
- Two Hands Are Better Than One Learning Center, Pittsburgh
- We Care Learning and Development Center, Philadelphia

For more information about the Equity in ECE Champion Award visit the Pennsylvania Key website [here](#).

NOTE: Additional photos and video of speakers are available by emailing rapwdhspressoffice@pa.gov.