

Governor's Advisory
Commission on Women**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MEDIA CONTACT:Governor's Press Office, ra-qvgovpress@pa.gov**In Honesdale: The Shapiro Administration Touts Bipartisan Support for Governor Shapiro's Proposed Investment to Recruit and Retain Child Care Workers, Expand Access to Affordable Child Care**

Governor Shapiro's 2025-2026 budget proposal invests \$55 million in child care workforce recruitment and retention grants, which would provide approximately \$1,000 more annually per employee working in licensed child care providers in the Child Care Works Program, increasing child care availability for Pennsylvania parents and families.

Since taking office, the Governor has been focused on building safe and healthy communities – his [2025-2026 proposed budget](#) builds on that commitment by making significant investments in the child care workforce and early childhood education.

Honesdale, PA – Today, the **Governor's Advisory Commission on Women** and **Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs** were joined by state legislators, local leaders, and child care advocates at the Tiny Steps Learning Center in Wayne County to discuss **Governor Josh Shapiro's** latest proposed investments to help stabilize the child care workforce.

Governor Shapiro's budget proposal invests \$55 million in workforce recruitment and retention grants to increase child care availability and pay these dedicated workers more. These grants would provide an additional \$1,000 annually per employee working in licensed child care centers in the **Child Care Works (CCW) Program**.

"Ensuring widespread access to high-quality child care requires strong policies, community efforts, and investment," said **Ashley Walkowiak, Executive Director of Governor's Advisory Commission on Women**. "Supporting our child care workforce is not just an investment in individual families – it is a commonsense investment in the well-being of our communities and future generations."

"The Shapiro Administration is making targeted investments that deliver commonsense solution to solve the critical workforce shortage among child care workers. If we want to

help our child care centers attract more workers, then we must make targeted investments that help improve wages and benefits we offer them,” said **Olga Negrón, Executive Director of the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs**. “We have to come together to secure funds that support child care workers – most of whom are women and many of whom are women of color—and ensure equity among workers within the field with wages and benefits that reflect that the importance of child care and early learning work.”

"Investing in affordable, high-quality child care is an investment in Pennsylvania’s future. As a member of the state Senate and the Governor’s Advisory Commission on Women, I am proud to support efforts that strengthen our child care workforce and help families access the care they need,” said **Senator Rosemary Brown**. “By working together in a bipartisan way, we can ensure that every child in Pennsylvania has the opportunity to thrive and that families have the resources they need to succeed.”

“Kids are our future and while the Legislature spends a lot of time talking about pre-K to grade 12 education, we cannot take for granted the role child care centers like Tiny Steps play in our kids’ lives. Alongside parents, of course, child care workers help to lay the foundation for our kids’ social and educational development. For many parents, and small businesses that employ so many, finding quality child care is one of the bigger challenges they face in the early years with their children, so it is important we look for ways to bolster our child care system here and across the Commonwealth,” said **Representative Jeff Olsommer**. “Thank you to all of the child care workers for your commitment to providing a safe, loving and enriching environment to so many children. This is more than just a job for you – it is a passion, and I’m certain the parents of the children you care for are beyond grateful. I look forward to working together to improve accessibility and affordability of this vital service.”

"Child care is top of mind for prospective parents, new parents and employers. It is a very real source of anxiety and I appreciate the Governor and Senator Brown's focus on this issue,” said **Representative Jonathan Fritz**. “Pennsylvanians, especially in the Northeast, are known for being dedicated workers. Undoubtedly, we will see an increase in productivity along with improved quality of life for parents. Investments in our workforce are always worthwhile.”

“Governor Shapiro's budget supports child care professionals. He understands where we are coming as business owners are struggling to find adequate staff in order to properly support the work hours families need in our community,” said **Kristen Mang, Owner/Director of Tiny Steps Learning Center of Cherry Ridge**. “Fixing the child care workforce shortage across Pennsylvania starts with us. Families need a safe, educational, and loving place for their children to attend so parents themselves can get back to work within our communities.”

Too many young parents are forced to exit the workforce because they can’t find affordable, quality child care. There are 3,000 unfilled jobs in child care in Pennsylvania – and it’s because these jobs don’t pay a competitive wage. If these jobs were filled,

25,000 more children could have access to care. This year, **Governor Shapiro** is proposing a significant investment to help recruit and retain child care workers and increase the availability of child care services to Pennsylvania families.

"In rural Wayne County, there is a dire childcare shortage - only 22 waitlisted daycares – but Wayne County is uniting, driven by the needs of parents and the support of employers, to address this crisis," shared **Pantea Shademani, Education Director for Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance**. "The state's investment strengthens our resolve to find innovative ways to expand access to affordable, quality childcare. Our goal is clear: every parent should have options, and every employer should have a workforce ready to thrive."

Governor Shapiro has built a strong record on child care affordability by expanding tax relief for families, investing in subsidized care, and supporting working parents and employers, including:

- **Expanding Tax Relief for Families:** Signing a historic expansion of the [Child and Dependent Care Enhancement Tax Credit](#), delivering **\$136 million** in savings to over 218,000 families.
- **Investing in Access:** Securing nearly **\$93 million** across two budgets for the [CCW](#) program, allowing up to 75,000 low-income families to access subsidized care.
- **Supporting Working Parents and Employers:** Creating a new Employer Child Care Contribution Tax Credit and delivered increased investments in early childhood education, including **\$15 million** more for Pre-K Counts and **\$2.7 million** more for Head Start.

The **Governor's** [2025-2026 proposed budget](#) builds on that commitment and makes significant investments in the child care workforce and early childhood education, including:

- **\$55 million** for recruitment and retention bonuses of at least \$1,000 for child care workers at licensed providers participating in the [Child Care Works \(CCW\)](#) Program.
- **\$10 million** to increase rates for Early Intervention providers, helping more young children access needed developmental services.
- **\$15 million** in additional Pre-K Counts funding to help providers raise wages and strengthen the early childhood workforce.

Read more about [Governor Shapiro's 2025-26 budget proposal](#). Explore the Governor's 2025-26 Budget in Brief [here](#), or visit shapirobudget.pa.gov to learn more.