

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 13, 2025

Contact: Kirstin Alvanitakis, kirstinalv@pa.gov

Lt. Gov. Austin Davis and Second Lady Call Highlight Need for More Child Care Workers in Pennsylvania's Rural Communities

Shapiro-Davis budget proposal invests \$55M to provide \$1,000 recruitment and retention bonuses for child care workers in Pennsylvania

APOLLO, PA – As working parents with a toddler, **Lt. Gov. Austin Davis** and **Second Lady Blayre Holmes Davis** understand the need for significant investments in Pennsylvania's child care workforce and shared how the proposed Shapiro-Davis budget will boost the availability of quality child care services during a roundtable conversation today in Armstrong County.

"This issue is personal for us – and it's personal for families across the Commonwealth, in cities like Pittsburgh and in more rural communities, as well," said **Lt. Gov. Davis**, who is co-chair of the **Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC)**, a public-private partnership that brings together leaders to make recommendations and policy for early learning. "Having affordable and accessible child care is essential for working families, and it's essential for the business community."

Advocating for Pennsylvania's child care system isn't new for the Lieutenant Governor and Second Lady. Earlier this year they highlighted the issue at events in [Blair County](#) and [Allegheny County](#). Today they joined representatives from ELIC, the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs and Advisory Commission on Women, as well as members of the local business community and child care providers at Grandma's House in Apollo to highlight the [Shapiro-Davis Administration's 2025-26 proposed budget](#), which continues vital investments in child care and early learning and includes a new proposal to address shortages in the child care workforce.

"We're passionate about the issue of child care because we know firsthand how important it is," said **Second Lady Holmes Davis**. "Our daughter, Harper, is the most precious thing in the world to us, and we are incredibly fortunate to have access to affordable, high-quality child care. However, we know that's not the case in every community and for every family, and that's why we're pushing for more state investments to help recruit and retain more child care workers."

The 2025-26 budget proposal builds on the Administration's first two budgets with a \$55 million investment in retention and recruitment bonuses of up to \$1,000 to increase child care availability. This proposed investment would help the thousands of employees working in licensed child care centers in **Pennsylvania's Child Care Works (CCW)** program.

In Pennsylvania, 3,000 unfilled child care positions are leaving an estimated 25,000 children without access to care – and their parents without access to options, impacting their ability to work. Last year, [ELIC and the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry released a report](#) that found 8 in 10 employers they surveyed have had moderate or significant recruitment and retention issues related to child care.

“The shortage of affordable child care in Pennsylvania isn’t just a family issue, it’s a workforce issue,” said **Alle Kiski Strong Chamber President Lynda Pozzuto**. “Without reliable, low-cost options, parents are being forced to leave jobs or turn down employment altogether. We can’t solve our labor shortage without first supporting the working families who power our communities.”

Other investments in the Shapiro-Davis proposed budget aimed at improving the child care workforce include:

- **\$15 million** in additional funding for the Pre-K Counts program to help providers raise wages and stabilize the early educator workforce; and
- **\$10 million** to increase Early Intervention (EI) provider rates, ensuring all Pennsylvania children have access to needed support and resources.

#