



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT:

Governor's Press Office, ra-gvgovpress@pa.gov

**Governor and First Lady Shapiro Welcome Children, Parents, and the
Easter Bunny for the 2026 Annual Easter Egg Hunt, Highlight
Importance of Investing in Early Childhood Education**

The fourth hosted by the Shapiros, Pennsylvania's Annual Easter Egg Hunt highlights the importance of high-quality, accessible early learning opportunities.

The Governor's [2026-27 proposed budget](#) builds on his commitment to creating better schools, healthier families, and safer communities.



Harrisburg, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** and **First Lady Lori Shapiro** welcomed pre-K students from across the Commonwealth to Pennsylvania's 2026 Annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Governor's Residence. This is the fourth Easter Egg Hunt the Shapiros have hosted to highlight the importance of high-quality, accessible early learning programs to give our youngest Pennsylvanians a step up.

This year's Easter Egg Hunt at the Governor's Residence was hosted in partnership with Pre-K for PA, and featured a photo station with the Easter Bunny, a craft table for kids, a reading corner hosted by the Pennsylvania State Library, and a live animal exhibit with baby goats, provided by the Real Batz Farm in Grantville, PA.

"Every child in Pennsylvania deserves the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed – and that freedom has to start with affordable, accessible, high quality child care and early learning opportunities for Pennsylvania families," said **Governor Shapiro**. "Welcoming these kids to the Residence brings so much light to the work we do each day on their behalf. My Administration is steadfast in our commitment to their success — and we'll continue to fight for the investments we need to fund high quality early childhood education programs."

Today's event also brought together early learning advocates and educators to highlight the importance of investing in accessible, affordable child care and early education.

In addition to expanding the [Pennsylvania Child and Dependent Care Enhancement](#) and [Employer Child Care Contribution](#) Tax Credits during his first term, in the [2025-26 Budget](#) **Governor Shapiro** delivered:

- **A new \$25 million investment** in recruitment and retention grants to provide approximately **55,000 child care employees** with up to **\$630** in retention bonuses.
- An **additional \$7.5 million** investment into the Pre-K Counts program to help providers raise wages and stabilize the early educator workforce.
- **\$10 million** increase for the Student Teacher Stipend Program, helping address educator shortages and make teaching a more accessible and rewarding career path – raising the annual amount available for the initiative to \$30 million.
- Continued funding for the [Child Care Works](#) Program, supporting up to 75,000 low-income families to continue to be enrolled in subsidized childcare with a total investment of **\$421.3 million**.

The Governor's [2026-27 proposed budget](#) builds on this success and continues to invest in child care and early childhood education while maintaining each of the seven tax cuts he has signed into law. The budget proposal includes:

- **\$10 million** to support retention and recruitment grants for employees at child care centers licensed through the federal [Child Care Works](#) program, bringing the **total investment to \$35 million**.

- **\$7.5 million** for the Pre-K Counts program and **\$2 million** for the Head Start State Supplemental program to help providers raise wages and strengthen the early childhood workforce.
- **\$5 million** for student teacher stipends, for a total of **\$35 million annually**, to make it more feasible for aspiring educators to complete their training and pursue careers that will shape the minds of some of our youngest Pennsylvanians.

From day one, **Governor Shapiro** has been committed to creating better schools, healthier families, and safer communities — and in the last three years, his Administration has secured historic investments in early childhood education, while working to address critical workforce shortages.

Read the Governor’s proposed budget in brief [here](#).

###