

Project Summary / Abstract

Project Title: Raising the Bar, Raising the Floor: Systems Building for the Future of Pennsylvania's Early Care and Education System
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The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is committed to building an equitable and sustainable early care and education (ECE) system in which all children, ECE teachers, and programs thrive. The **Raising the Bar, Raising the Floor: Systems Building for the Future of Pennsylvania's Early Care and Education System Project** couples Pennsylvania's established ECE infrastructure and deep knowledge of strengths, challenges, and needs to apply targeted systems building strategies to reach all of Pennsylvania's vulnerable children (birth to age 5) and the workforce and programs that serve them. This paired approach to system change creates transformative opportunities for the development of policies, strategies, and programs that ensure wide and diverse participation of providers and children in high-quality ECE services and fully support children's transition to kindergarten statewide.

The lack of equitable access to a comprehensive ECE system negatively impacts child and family outcomes, children's ability to successfully transition to kindergarten, and the ECE workforce's preparation to serve young children in a developmentally and culturally responsive way. Despite concerted efforts and on-going systems work, the overarching need to expand into deliberate cross-systems partnerships is pressing; all state agencies, stakeholders, and system partners must be engaged in building and supporting our ECE ecosystem. The need for ECE capacity building to support equitable access to comprehensive, trauma informed, culturally appropriate, and seamless services informs the proposed systems building initiatives and activities reflected in this Preschool Development Grant (PDG).

Pennsylvania is proposing to enhance and/or expand the following initiatives in order to meet the goal of an equitable and sustainable ECE system: Expanded Scope of Services for Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRC), Family Engagement Framework, Expanding Family Knowledge, Choice, and Resources for serving Pennsylvania's families in their home language in the ECE system, Child Care Capacity Understanding, the Shared Service Project, Professional Development Organizations for ECE Workforce, Expansion of Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Project, and Equitable kindergarten transition and support of a continuum of high-quality early learning opportunities from birth-3rd grade.

The priority populations for initiatives funded by the PDG are: infants and toddlers, vulnerable children, children transitioning to kindergarten, migrant families, children with special need, and the ECE workforce.