

# SUPPORTING PENNSYLVANIA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is focused on ensuring the early childhood education (ECE) workforce is well equipped to support the growth development of today's youngest children and their families. Efforts include building statewide systems and standards that align with national recommendations by offering access to a unified professional development (PD) system for early childhood educators. OCDEL recognizes that under-resourced programs and under-compensated professionals face challenges that are unique in each region of the state; therefore, expansion of services and regional partnerships are crucial to maximize employment opportunities and ensure services match a broad range of needs.

Professional Development Organizations (PDOs) will drive local degree attainment through clearly articulated career pathways. Equitable, relevant career pathways will be accessible to aspiring early educators and those seeking to increase their qualifications, across settings. While OCDEL is increasing efforts and partnerships to support the preparation of early educators, the office also seeks to build in-service capacity across the state through PD institutes. Collectively, these efforts will have a greater impact on structural quality at programs and build leadership capacity across the field.

## ECE DEGREE ATTAINMENT

- The PDOs will operate regionally but align efforts across Pennsylvania to identify strategies and resources to develop a shared framework for competency attainment, across the 0-8 age span.
- PDOs will organize the collaboration between community-based organizations and institutions of higher education to build an infrastructure that supports the advancement of relevant and equitable career pathways so that early educators can attain skills to meet the needs of our youngest citizens.
- OCDEL and PDOs will implement an easy to navigate, preparation system that ensures low to no cost degree attainment and leads to increased compensation and employment opportunities.
- The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) dollars are funding PDO efforts and specifically focused on enhancing the knowledge and education of child care professionals in Pennsylvania. However, the systems and career pathways that are supported through PDOs are accessible to early childhood educators outside of child care through other funding.

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT STRUCTURAL AND PROCESS QUALITY

- Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs) will support ECE providers by having Quality Coaches engage with early learning programs to increase quality in each program. OCDEL has also implemented the Coach Approach to Adaptive Leadership, to provide the coaching model principles to internal coaching staff from STAR 3 and 4 child care centers interested in developing their own coaching staff.
- The PD Registry will continue to provide access to face-to-face and online PD courses developed in-state and nationally. Courses vary in cost, but many are supplemented or low cost. The PD Registry courses allow ECE program administrators and staff to continue to access high-quality PD that aligns with their established priorities.
- Specialized technical assistance for educators include Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. These in-service supports benefit individuals as well as centers in advancing positive, nurturing relationships as well as understanding the needs of babies and young children and can be coordinated through ELRC's and the Pennsylvania Key. Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) maintains a portal with PD that supports educators in topic areas such as inclusion, the Pyramid Model and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS).
- State-funded Professional Development Institutes (PDI's) are available for leaders and well-prepared early educators to bring back to their communities. These topics are related to educator wellness, building leadership and coaching capacity, trauma informed education, attachment-based relationships and supporting dual language learners. Events include: Mindfulness, Simple Interactions, Strengthening Families and WIDA resources.
- Prenatal -3rd Grade Systems Building Institutes (formerly the Governor's Institutes) offer an opportunity for communities to come together to build a collaborative approach to meeting the needs of children and families as they prepare for transition to elementary school. These are offered through school districts and ELRCs.

OCDEL, The Pennsylvania Key, EITA, PDOs, ELRCs and local initiatives will focus on systems alignment to support ECE programs and individuals in advancing their abilities to meet the needs of families and young children. Through partnership, these programs compliment the work of one another to support the ECE workforce and in collaboration are avoiding duplication of services while maximizing resources, to ensure a well-supported workforce.