



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT: Brandon Cwalina, ra-pwdhspressoffice@pa.gov

**DHS Secretary Dr. Arkoosh Visits Boyertown Children’s Center,
Highlights Shapiro Administration’s Work to Make Child Care More
Affordable for Pennsylvania’s Working Families**

In the last year, the Shapiro Administration has provided nearly 39,000 child care employees with up to \$645 in retention bonuses.

By investing in Pennsylvania’s child care workers, the Shapiro Administration is working to expand access to quality care and ensure more parents can provide for their families.

Governor’s Shapiro 2026-27 proposed budget invests an additional \$10 million to support employees at licensed child care centers in the federal Child Care Works program, bringing the total investment to \$35 million.



Boyertown, PA – Today, **Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh** visited Montgomery County with community leaders to highlight the Shapiro Administration’s investments in recruiting and retaining Pennsylvania’s child care workers. These investments help Pennsylvania recruit and retain child care workers, expand access to quality care, and ensure more parents can stay in the workforce and provide for their families.

In the 2025-26 budget, **Governor Shapiro** secured a **new \$25 million investment** in recruitment and retention grants, providing nearly **39,000 child care employees** across the Commonwealth with up to **\$645** in retention bonuses. The Governor’s [2026-27 proposed budget](#) builds on this foundation, investing an **additional \$10 million** to support employees at licensed child care centers in the federal [Child Care Works \(CCW\)](#) program, bringing the total investment to **\$35 million**.

“Early learning and child care programs like Boyertown Children's Center are the workforce behind our Commonwealth's workforce – a catalyst for a healthy, vibrant economy while fostering educational and social development for our youngest Pennsylvanians,” said **Secretary Dr. Arkoosh**. “Our dedicated, passionate child care workers are the ones who make that possible. The Shapiro Administration is proud to make these investments to support professionals, strengthen our child care industry, and our overall economy, we must build on this support to continue to strengthen this resource.”

Pennsylvania’s child care industry has **2,600 unfilled jobs** — openings that, if filled, would allow providers to serve **nearly 22,000 more children**. Providers continue to struggle with low wages that make it hard to hire and retain qualified staff, forcing them to close classrooms and turn families away.

Building on the Shapiro Administration’s Record of Child Care Affordability

Governor Shapiro’s [2026-27 proposed budget](#) builds on three years of progress making child care more affordable, accessible, and available, including when his first three budgets:

- **Established a \$25 million Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Program**, providing roughly **\$645 annually per employee** to licensed [CCW](#) providers, supporting nearly **39,000 child care workers** throughout Pennsylvania in FY25-26.
- **Increased investments in early childhood education** in FY25-26, including an additional **\$7.5 million for Pre-K Counts** to help providers raise wages and stabilize the early educator workforce and a **\$10 million increase for Early Intervention** services to support families with children experiencing developmental delays.
- **Expanded the [Child and Dependent Care Enhancement Tax Credit](#)**: In December 2023, Governor Shapiro signed into law a major expansion of the

credit, increasing Pennsylvania's match from 30 percent to 100 percent of the federal credit. The maximum benefit rose from \$630 to \$2,100 per family — and last year, this expansion delivered **\$139 million to nearly 222,000 working families**.

- **Created the [Employer Child Care Contribution Tax Credit](#):** In the FY2024-25 budget, the Governor secured a new credit encouraging employers to contribute to workers' child care expenses. Employers can claim a tax credit for up to 30 percent of eligible contributions, capped at \$500 per employee — helping businesses support working parents and strengthening the workforce.
- **Secured nearly \$117 million across his first two budgets for Child Care Works**, helping up to 80,000 low-income families access subsidized care each year.

"Childcare is not a luxury; it is essential to working families and to our economy. In Montgomery County, we've seen how investments in the childcare workforce keep centers open, support parents, and give children a strong start," said **Montgomery County Commissioner Jamila Winder**. "I thank Governor Shapiro for continuing to prioritize the needs of working families and supporting childcare as the foundation of our economy."

Today's event was held at **Boyertown Children's Center**, a four-star [Keystone STARS](#) child care center serving approximately 63 children year-round and employing up to 18 full-time staff members. The Center's curriculum includes literacy, math, science, art, music, fitness, and social-emotional development integrated throughout the day, utilizing a play-based, child-centered learning model.

"Quality childcare is necessary so that parents are able to work and provide for their families. We have to fight for early childhood education, because it helps build the framework for our children's future. Children learn more skills from birth through five than they do their entire lives — and we are the ones who teach them these skills, but we cannot teach them these skills without quality teachers and staff," said **Angie Miller, Director of Boyertown Children's Center**. "The Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention bonus we received this year helps this become a little more obtainable and retain the teachers and staff who help provide a safe, loving learning environment for our children."

Boyertown Children's Center has received **\$10,320** in staff retention and recruitment bonuses.

"Like many other working families across the Commonwealth, my husband and I need access to safe, reliable, and affordable child care. We also need financial stability to allow for our family to grow and prosper together. Inflation continues to be a challenge, and we seem to have instability and challenges coming at us from all directions," said **Caitlin Williams, a parent from Boyertown Children's Center**. "When I heard that Governor Shapiro was visiting today to speak about programs and ideas to help

alleviate some of the stress for families like mine, I was thrilled. We need Harrisburg to understand both the needs of families, and needs of great facilities like Boyertown Childcare Center. Together as a team of parents, teachers, and elected officials, I know we can find a solution that will help both families and the economy succeed.”

In 2023, **Governor Shapiro** also [signed](#) a historic expansion of the **Child and Dependent Care Enhancement Tax Credit**. This expansion increased the maximum benefit from \$630 to \$2,100 per family and **delivered \$136.5 million to more than 215,000 working families** last year.

The Shapiro Administration is committed to moving Pennsylvania forward as the Governor continues working across the aisle to get stuff done and ensure people across the Commonwealth have the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed.

Read Governor Shapiro’s 2026-27 proposed budget in brief [here](#).

#