

PN3 Parent's Corner



News You Can Use

Families and caregivers have a lot to think about when it comes to raising their children and trying to give them a good life. You may not realize that every day, government is making policy decisions that can impact your ability to achieve hopes and dreams for your family. That's why it's important for family voices to be represented in these decision-making processes. This newsletter will make it easier for you to know when and how to do that, and to access resources and supports for your family.

To make sure you keep receiving this valuable information, [please sign up to receive our bi-monthly email newsletter](#) direct to your inbox!



Take Action for Parents and Children

The Start Strong PA campaign, part of the PN-3 Collaborative, is offering parents a simple way to [tell your members of Congress that families need a significant and sustained investment in child care](#). The debate continues in Washington on how much public funding to invest in all different types of infrastructure, including roads and bridges, internet access, and child care and pre-k to support young children and their families.

Many working families, even those who live paycheck to paycheck, share the experience of reducing their hours or leaving a job due to a lack of child care. Results from a Start Strong PA survey conducted in September of over 1,100 child care programs indicate that staffing shortages are at a crisis level, with 92% of respondents showing a staffing shortage. Meanwhile, 25,804 children currently sit on respondents' waiting lists, 2,397 of respondents' classrooms closed, and an additional 34,084 children could have child care if programs were fully staffed.

Many parents can't work without child care and the caring staff they trust to help their children learn and develop their skills. Our youngest learners ultimately suffer in the long-term when child care programs cannot maintain their quality due to workforce shortages.

It's so easy to complete this call to action – simply enter your address and the system will look up your members of Congress. Then, you can sign your name to a message asking them to make significant, sustained investments in our nation's child care and pre-k systems so that parents have quality, affordable options. [Take action TODAY](#).

Pennsylvania's Family-Friendly Newsletters

Did you know there are free family-friendly resources that feature resources from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)? Each month, families and early childhood education professionals can receive newsletters: Learning is Everywhere, Kindergarten Here I Come, and Kindergarten Here I Am, OCDEL's popular early learning resources by the same name. The newsletters contain inclusive activities based on the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards, age-appropriate book recommendations, health and safety information, and other valuable resources. [Sign up](#) to receive one, two, or all three newsletters, and share this opportunity with the families you serve.



New Resource Guide for Connecting Children with High Lead Levels to Essential Services!

The [Lead-Free Promise Project](#) just released a comprehensive guide for Pennsylvania health care providers and other child-serving professionals that contains critical follow-up care resources for children poisoned by lead. The guide includes vital information on how to: get free home lead inspections for children with Medicaid and CHIP; connect families with lower incomes to the 22 free programs to get lead paint out of their homes and assist higher-income families with this service as well, and how to access care management staff at the Medicaid and CHIP health plans.

Access the guide at leadfreepa.org/#Resources or by scanning the QR code. As a Lead-Free Promise Project Coalition member, we encourage you to utilize this guide and share it with other providers and organizations.



If you would like to schedule a training on how to use the guide or if you want to learn more about the Lead-Free Promise Project, contact Colleen McCauley at colleenm@childrenfirstpa.org or (215) 298-2027.

Next week, October 24th-30th, is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, a week to bring individuals, providers, parents, state and local governments, and communities together to raise awareness about lead poisoning prevention! It is a great time to share the resource above, speak to your provider about getting your child tested, and encourage your legislators to support lead remediation and universal lead screening for all children across Pennsylvania.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has provided many great resources on lead poisoning that may interest you. You can access them at the links below:

- [Partner Information Kit](#)
- [Flyer](#)
- [Sample Social Media Toolkit](#)

Build Back Better Act Contains Family-Sustaining Resources

The U.S. House and Senate have been working over the past few months to pass the [Build Back Better Act](#), the spending package that can pass with a simple majority vote in the House and Senate. There is no consensus on the size of the final bill, and the current package is valued at \$3.5 trillion. The cost of this proposal is high because it contains multiple provisions that aim to improve the well-being of children and families, including:

- Funding to make high-quality child care affordable for eligible families
- Permanent extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program
- Permanent 12 month continuous eligibility requirement for children in Medicaid
- Permanent extension of Medicaid coverage for moms 12 months after childbirth
- Grants to reduce lead in school drinking water and homes
- Expanded eligibility for free school lunch programs

Congressional Democrats continue to negotiate behind the scenes to determine which programs will be included in the final version of the Build Back Better Act, which leadership aims to pass alongside the [bipartisan infrastructure bill](#) in the next two months.

Helpful Resources for Parents

- [Pandemic Effects May Have Lowered Baby IQs](#)
- [Thriving PA Maternal Depression Factsheet](#)
- [Thriving PA Maternal Mortality Factsheet](#)
- [Thriving PA Perinatal Health Agenda Factsheet](#)

Questions about anything you read here? Please contact Kristen Rotz, info@uwp.org

