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**High Quality Child Care**

Continued from page 7

Commonwealth's jobs skills gap; helping individuals enter and stay in the workforce; breaking the cycle of poverty; and better preparing and educating the next generation," said Gene Barr, PA Chamber President and CEO and a member of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission.

As we begin another budget season, with the current '19-'20 budget having cut \$36 million of state funds from child care, Start Strong PA partners want to remind both Pennsylvania and federal policymakers that they have the power to increase funding so more children can access high-quality child care. State funding should eliminate the waitlist and ensure all eligible children and families can access a subsidy in order to work or attend school. Pennsylvania's share of additional federal funds should address rates, educator compensation, and training and degree opportunities for professionals in the field.

"High-quality infant and toddler care must be made a priority today and everyday: Pennsylvania's children, families, and workforce depend on it. Children deserve early learning experiences where they grow, learn, and succeed while families productively work and our economy booms." Diane Barber, Executive Director, PA Child Care Association.

NOTE TO WORKING PRESS: To learn more, listen to a 12-minute recorded question and answer session with the principals of Start Strong PA at this link (audio begins at 00:00:24 seconds in).

Start Strong PA principals on the call (in order of participation) include: • Kristen Rotz, President, United Way of PA

- Kari King, Executive Director, PA Partnerships for Children
- Cara Ciminillo, Executive Director, Trying Together
- Jen DeBell, Interim Executive Director, PA Association for the Education of Young Children
- Bruce Clash, Assistant Director, ReadyNation Pennsylvania
- Diane Barber, Executive Director, PA Child Care Association
- Carol Austin, Executive Director, First Up
- Donna Cooper, Executive Director, Public Citizens for Children and Youth

Any questions or requests for interviews should be directed to Maria Pisano at Trying Together [maria@tryingtogether.org](mailto:maria@tryingtogether.org) or 412-421-3734. Start Strong PA is an initiative of Early Learning PA. Through a statewide collaboration of partners, Start Strong PA aims to support healthy child development, working families, and the economy by increasing access to and affordability of high-quality child care programs for young children. Learn more at [www.start-strongpa.org](http://www.start-strongpa.org).

Start Strong PA | Partner Organizations

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids | First Up | Mission: Readiness | Pennsylvania Association for The Education of Young Children | Pennsylvania Child Care Association | Pennsylvania Head Start Association | Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children | Public Citizens for Children and Youth | Trying Together | United Way of Pennsylvania

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