Pennsylvania

Professional Development System Framework for Early Care and Education

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OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Pennsylvania Early Learning
Keys to Quality

Pennsylvania Professional Development System Framework for Early Care and Education

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Pennsylvania Professional Development System Framework for Early Care and Education

This document provides a description of the progress Pennsylvania has made in developing a professional development system framework for early learning and school-age practitioners. The description is structured based on the professional development system elements defined in the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center (NCCIC) Professional Development Systems Framework. Additionally, National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) Conceptual Framework for Professional Development guides Pennsylvania in ensuring a cross-sector planning and delivery approach.

Introduction

The Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality is the State's comprehensive, cross-sector quality improvement program, which encourages and supports all early learning practitioners to improve child outcomes. The three main components of this program are the PA Keys to Professional Development System (coordinated through the PA Key and six Regional Keys), Keystone STARS Pennsylvania's quality rating system (QRIS), and Community Outreach.

The PA Keys to Professional Development System is a comprehensive statewide framework for professionals serving children and families in all early childhood and school-age settings, including child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, early intervention, public school, private academic school, and school-age. It provides a continuum of professional development opportunities and ongoing support to practitioners to improve outcomes for children in early childhood and school-age programs. It is a clearly articulated framework that defines pathways that are linked to certification, leading to qualifications and credentials, and addresses the needs of individuals and adult learners. The system includes a core body of knowledge, professional development record, career lattice, early learning standards, credentials, PA Quality Assurance System (an approval system for instructors and technical assistance consultants), education supports, and links to the Keystone STARS QRIS. In partnership with the PA Department of Education's Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, this system has worked to strengthen teacher certification guidelines and requirements.

The impetus for the current PA Keys to Professional Development System began during development of the QRIS in 2001. The QRIS planning group was Pennsylvania's first attempt to address early childhood quality issues comprehensively. Representatives from Head Start, child care, early intervention programs, and advocates were involved.

This cross-sector approach was adopted not only by Keystone STARS, but also was integrated into other service delivery strategies. For example, the Deputy Secretary of OCDEL is the person who oversees early childhood programs in both the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Public Welfare.

With input from community stakeholders, OCDEL, and the PA Key, work collaboratively with six Regional Keys to set and implement priorities. State partners ensure funding; set guidelines, such as requiring credential- and credit-based professional development activities and developing standards for instructors; and support specific initiatives such as the State's early childhood mental health program.

The Regional Keys are responsible for local planning, coordinating, and implementing regional professional development activities. The system's philosophy emphasizes local professional development plans, formation of local cadres of experienced instructors and professional development organizations, and collaborative decision making with local partners, including institutions of higher education.

Pennsylvania's Local Education and Resource Network (LEARN) Teams work in each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties to build support networks for organizations and individuals interested in quality early education. They also work with school districts and community-based early learning programs to develop ways to make smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten for children, parents, and teachers.

Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

The following mission and guiding principles for the Pennsylvania Key are central to guiding the work related to professional and workforce development.

Vision

All Pennsylvania families will have access to high quality care and education for their children, fostering successful futures in school and in life.

Mission

The Pennsylvania Key is committed to providing quality learning opportunities for Pennsylvania's children and their families by creating an integrated system of outreach, support and resources for early childhood and school-age educators and their programs.

Values

A Great Early Childhood Workforce System:

- Supports early childhood professionals at all levels, progress along diverse career pathways as defined by the career lattice
- Strengthens the capacity of early childhood professionals to support children's development and learning through high quality, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate instruction that is child-centered, inclusive, family-focused, and built on the foundation of the Core Body of Knowledge

- Is comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive to the diverse needs of early childhood professionals serving all children and their families
- Uses data to inform practice

Professional development:
- Is accessible through a variety of formats, locations, times, and accommodates the learning needs of the profession, including individual learning abilities, technology usage, and geography
- Aligns with standards and evidence-based practice; supports the application of theory and professional philosophy to practice; promotes lifelong learning

Definition

Professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are transactional, collaborative and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, ethics/values and dispositions as well as the application of this knowledge in practice to benefit all children and families.

Guiding principles

The *guiding principles* reflect the essential components of a quality improvement system designed to improve child outcomes.

1. **Leadership** of the system must be connected to both the Department of Education and the Department of Public Welfare. Leadership needs to be strong at all levels of the system including the Pennsylvania Key and Regional Keys. Local and regional leadership will be nurtured and supported.

2. **State, Regional and Local Coordination** and cooperation are essential elements.

3. **Commitment to Quality Content:** Content for quality improvement for programs, and professional development for practitioners, must be research-based, incorporating state and national research and best practices, and must build upon current standards such as the Early Learning Performance Standards, Keystone STARS Program Standards and the Core Body of Knowledge.

4. **All Practitioners and Programs** should be encouraged to participate in quality improvement activities, including program and practitioner improvement.

5. **Focus on Credentials and Professionalism:** A career lattice that will assist programs and practitioners to set milestones for professional development that encourages workforce development, allows practitioners to move smoothly between child care, Head Start, early intervention, schools, and other early learning programs, and recognizes the role of compensation is essential. All practitioners should be encouraged to increase their educational attainment, focusing on early childhood degrees and credentials. Professional development opportunities need to be offered in a variety of formats to support both rural and urban providers. To the maximum extent possible, all professional development and technical assistance should be aligned with and support STARS.

6. **Systems Coordination, Integration and Accountability:** Communication and collaboration with the higher education community, with schools, and with Head Start in order to assure

appropriate support and continuity is essential. There must be a single unified approach that brings together the core elements of Keystone STARS for programs with the core elements of practitioner-based professional development. The system must be transparent, outcome based with monitoring, evaluation and have clear accountability and cost responsibility.

7. **Compensation, Funding and Financing:** Supports for program and practitioner quality improvement require adequate and sustained funding that can assure access and participation by individuals and programs in rural, suburban and urban areas. Compensation for practitioners poses an ongoing challenge, and a variety of financial supports including public/private partnerships and rewards for the achievement of credentials, degrees and quality programs are necessary. The research based educational investments in Early Childhood Development, which the literature is clear, is yielding the highest public returns, and must continue to be explored as an economic development issue.

8. **Public, Stakeholder and Community Outreach:** Parents, families, stakeholders and community members should understand the importance of a quality early learning system. Parents should be encouraged to enroll their children in quality programs. All are partners in the development of a well-articulated quality system that serves the children and families of Pennsylvania. Public outreach and publicity about Keystone STARS is an essential component to the success of the quality initiative.

9. **Leveraging Resources:** Based on greater visibility, community outreach, and coordination, the system should create opportunities to access additional public and private funding streams, increase resources and develop innovative initiatives.

10. **Regional Planning:** Comprehensive regional planning with significant stakeholder involvement must serve as the cornerstone of the development and implementation of the PA Early Learning Keys to Quality system. Based on the input of diverse representation, the planning process must assess current capacity and gaps in services, as well as research demographic trends to determine future needs.

Core Knowledge

Core knowledge

Pennsylvania Core Body of Knowledge for Early Childhood and School-Age Practitioners (CBK) represents a set of core knowledge statements along with what a practitioner should be able to do with the knowledge at three different levels of competence. Seven knowledge areas are identified as being important in Pennsylvania to early childhood professional development and competence: Child Growth & Development; Curriculum and Learning Experiences; Families, Schools and Community Collaboration and Partnerships; Child Assessment; Communication; Professionalism and Leadership; Health, Safety & Nutrition. Additionally, a separate section addresses the specific knowledge and skills that directors should know and be able to do across all knowledge areas.

For nearly ten years Pennsylvania has had a core body of knowledge. During that time it has gone through several revisions. The 2011 revised draft has been an extensive multi-year endeavor to align the CBK with existing state and national standards. These include the *Pennsylvania Department of Education Teacher Certification Guidelines (Chapter 49-*2), Pennsylvania Learning Standards (Infants

and Toddlers, Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2), Pennsylvania Child Day Care Regulations Chapter 3270, *NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs,* and *NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria.* Additionally, this version more fully describes competence related to family engagement, cultural diversity, inclusive practices, and positive social emotional development.

The revisions are designed to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of all educators s to effectively use data to guide instruction and program improvement for diverse learners. The revisions were informed by stakeholders and educators representing infancy through higher education; Early Intervention, and Head Start; Environment Rating Scale Assessors; and professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) consultants, and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

In the fall of 2011, Pennsylvania began the process of introducing the revisions and soliciting feedback from multiple stakeholder groups. Intended next steps are to combine the core body of knowledge and professional development record into a writeable PDF and eventually integrate it as a part of the online registry. This will facilitate a completely online professional development record aligned to the CBK.

Professional Development Record (PDR) is a tool to track individual professional growth and development. The PDR is aligned to the CBK and includes the following information:

- Employment history that includes the agencies and organizations of employment, time period of employment, position or title, and salary
- Educational degrees and certifications, awards and achievements, and any clearances
- A self-assessment aligned to the "core knowledge areas" of the CBK. Individuals assess themselves at Beginning, Developing or Mastery. An annual professional development plan that evaluates accomplishments and areas where additional professional development is needed. This is completed through self reflection and discussion with a supervisor.

Information about the CBK and PDR can be found on the PA Keys website, *click here*.

Core competencies

Core Competencies have been developed for each of the groups listed below. Each set of competencies addresses content, skills, knowledge and attitudes that lay the foundation for continuous quality improvement. These tools are designed to be used across systems for individual professional development planning and by supervisors in supporting individual and organizational needs. Statewide data collection occurs online for instructors, technical assistance consultants and STARS Managers to assist in planning and implementation of professional development and resource for these groups across the Commonwealth. To view these competencies, *click here*.

- **Pennsylvania Core Competencies for Instructors** Requirement of the Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System in approving and maintaining qualified Professional Development Instructors. This document contains core competencies that are essential for all effective professional development strategies.

- **Pennsylvania General Core Competencies for Relationship-Based Technical Assistance** Requirement of the Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System in approving and maintaining qualified Technical Assistance Consultants. This document contains general core

competencies that are essential for all effective relationship-based technical assistance strategies.

- ***Pennsylvania Core Competencies for STARS Managers.*** This document contains general core competencies that are essential for STAR Managers/Specialists in their work of supporting programs to function at higher levels of quality and improve outcomes for children. Each Regional Key determines how the Self-Assessment checklist and planning for professional development integrates with the agency evaluation processes.

The following chart identifies the content areas of these competencies. Cultural competence is woven throughout the content areas.

Content Area	Instructor	TA Consultant	STAR Manager
Content Expertise	✓		
Professionalism	✓	✓	✓
Principles of Adult Learning	✓	✓	✓
Building Relationships	✓	✓	✓
Communication	✓	✓	✓
Change Process	✓	✓	✓
Evaluation, Assessment and Planning	✓		
Assessment and Planning		✓	
Administration, Assessment and Planning			✓

Additional competencies to support the existing director credential and school-age credential described in the Credential section of this document are listed below.

- ***Director Credential Knowledge Area Competencies Learning Objectives***. Used by institutions of higher education when developing or revising director credential course work for approval by the Pennsylvania Key. To view, *click here*.

- ***Pennsylvania School Age Professional Credential Competencies and Indicators***. Used by practitioners, instructors and assessors for the Pennsylvania School Age Professional Credential. To view, *click here.*

Access and Outreach

Online databases of training and educational opportunities

Registry System

Pennsylvania has had a registry data system for nearly ten years. The Pennsylvania Keys to Quality system includes three registries: the **professional development registry, instructor registry and workforce registry**.

The **professional development registry** is a database of professional development opportunities offered by instructors approved through the Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS). Individuals register for a professional development event and, once attendance is verified, information is entered into a personal professional development history. In 2010-11 over 5,300 events were posted to the registry.

The **instructor registry** contains a listing of over 2,000 approved instructors. Instructor approval is aligned with the CBK. Only approved instructors are permitted to post professional development events to the professional development registry.

The current **workforce registry** is a voluntary system. Unlike other registries targeting early learning educators this registry is not restricted to individuals participating in a particular initiative, but rather is accessible to anyone and includes persons from across sectors. Current data elements of the workforce registry are aligned with the National Registry Alliance best practices; however there are a number of data elements currently not included or not required and all data are self-reported with no verification process.

Future enhancements to the registry system will result in a comprehensive workforce registry that contains all workforce data in one central location and can easily communicate this information to regional and state administrators as well as partners and early learning programs. These enhancements include updating the entire registry system to include the Core Body of Knowledge revisions, enhancements will also include linkages to other existing early learning data systems in which child assessment and program level data is collected. We will soon institute the use of a learning management system in order to consolidate professional development initiatives on a scalable web-based platform which will allow the analysis of early educator workforce data, including assessment of early educators' learning, movement along the Career Lattice, retention in the field, and Core Body of Knowledge self-assessments.

Directory of College Degree Programs

Pennsylvania provides a list of higher education institutions offering degrees and certification in early childhood education on the PA Keys website. The list includes contact information and the type of degree and or certification offered. To view, *click here*.

Career development advising

In September of 2010 a Career Advising workgroup was formed to begin to develop tools and resources to support the many entities providing career advising supports throughout the state. This work was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Workforce Development Goal: In collaboration with essential cross-sector partners, create and promote a comprehensive and integrated continuum of high quality educational opportunities,

experiences, and resources to ensure continuous professional growth and success of individuals who work with children and families.

Accomplishments to date include:

- Development of a 6 hour Career Advising professional development opportunity for Professional Development Instructors, Technical Assistance Consultants, Directors and Higher Education Faculty
- An Instructor Institute to introduce two career advising modules. One module is designed specifically for Child Care Center Directors and one is for individual practitioners exploring the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice.

Work in progress includes:

- An online Career Advising toolkit that can be accessed by Instructors, Technical Assistance Consultants and Directors to download current forms, resources and supports. Pennsylvania Career Resource Guide is slated for distribution in the summer of 2012. Proposed sections of this document include: Careers in Early Childhood and School Age, Salaries and Compensation, Investigating Your Career Pathway and Goals, Career Lattice and Teacher Quality, Choosing an Accredited College or University, Educational Requirements in Pennsylvania and Financial Resources.

Continuum of individual and group supports

Facility Professional Development Plan Survey is an annual assessment of professional development and technical assistance needs of all Early Childhood and School Age practitioners using an online survey. This survey aligns with the core body of knowledge and various program standards, and collects program type, knowledge areas and competency levels needed by age group served. In addition to the STARS Core Series, Regional Keys are responsible for delivering needs based professional development in their region. Each region offers several low or no cost options for obtaining varying professional development hours required by different programs within the state. These options include Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) hours; hours offered by PQAS approved Instructors; Act 48 hours, required by the Department of Education for certified teachers; and Continuing Education Units (CEU), required by the CDA Council for renewal. Credit-bearing options are also available.

Pennsylvania Keys to Professional Development Hotline assists practitioners in navigating the registry and professional development systems in Pennsylvania. Annually the hotline receives over 12,000 calls and surveys conducted twice a year show a very high level of satisfaction with the customer service provided by the hotline staff.

The ***Early Childhood Executive Leadership (ECEL) Institute*** is a five-day leadership development program designed primarily for superintendents and assistant superintendents, principals and assistant principals, and early childhood development center/facility directors. Communities of participants come from the same service area or network so that members of the development and education system(s) can engage, integrate, and implement key concepts and approaches—and thereby ensure smooth transitions across the elements. It focuses on what early childhood leaders and educators need to know and be able to do in order to understand and connect the variety of systems serving children (Birth to Grade 3) and to ensure instructional improvements that will lead to student growth in cognitive, social, emotional areas. *Click here*.

Supports to Higher Education

OCDEL's collaboration and partnership with institutions of higher education has helped improve access to colleges and universities for early learning and school-age care professionals; making it easier for higher education institutions in Pennsylvania to offer early childhood education degrees and certification and for early learning professionals to earn those degrees. This partnership has also helped improve institutions of higher education community's understanding and knowledge of and connection to Pennsylvania Professional Development System and resources.

Higher Education Institute on Diversity, a collaboration with OCDEL, the Department of Education, Pennsylvania Key, and the BUILD Initiative, provides supports to the higher education community in the form of high-level professional development focusing on cultural, linguistic, ability and socio-economic diversity in higher education course offerings, practica and program practices in meeting the requirements of Pennsylvania's PreK-Grade 4 Guidelines for teacher preparation. Approximately 250 participants have attended each Higher Education Institute on Diversity from 2007 through 2011.

Regional Keys' Higher Education Committees engage the higher education community and share information on OCDEL's programs and early childhood (ECE) initiatives as well as solicit feedback from the higher education community. Committees meet on a quarterly basis and information shared include Core Body of Knowledge (CBK), Career Advising project, Career Development, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) project, the Director Credential program, Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS), professional development activities and need in the region, practitioner support, articulation and transfer. Through this medium information, materials and resources are shared at each committee meeting that help foster an understanding and knowledge by the higher education community of OCDEL's and Pennsylvania's Early Learning Professional Development System.

Multiple professional development delivery methods

In additional to a wide variety of **face to face** options in every county in Pennsylvania, professional development opportunities occur in several modalities across the Commonwealth. The PA Key supports Regional Keys in offering **online** synchronous and asynchronous opportunities. **Video** opportunities and other distance learning opportunities, including online and **mail based** options, **on-demand self-learning** modules, and **hybrid** options are available to practitioners at every level of the career lattice.

Technical Assistance:

Pennsylvania has a comprehensive system of technical assistance supports for programs participating in a variety of early childhood initiatives. These include Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Head Start State Supplemental.

Technical assistance:

1. Is a comprehensive, coordinated, professional development service for practitioners serving children and families.

2. Supports positive change, is relationship-based, culturally sensitive, and uses a strength-based approach that focuses on the individual needs of the practitioner and/or program.

3. Maximizes resources by collaborating with, but not duplicating, the services of other partners.

4. Values a collaborative model of service delivery.

5. Acknowledges and builds on the diversity and commonalities of all practitioners.

6. Recognizes the context, resource, and unique nature of meaningful community outreach.

7. Promotes a cross-system network that allows each partner to make referrals and communicate throughout the system effectively.

8. Uses research and evidence-based practice.

9. Partners establish consistent data collection procedures to assess their program and inform decision-making and program improvement. Additionally, the data enables Pennsylvania to measure the details and effectiveness of services.

One on one support is available from the following resources:

Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Consultation is designed to assist early care and education programs in meeting the social and emotional needs of children who exhibit challenging behaviors in the classroom. Any program participating in STARS may request this assistance. To learn more, *click here.*

Project Goals:

- Reduce the number of children expelled from early care and education settings due to behavioral issues
- Increase understanding of social and emotional development and its impact on educational success
- Link and bridge systems and services on behalf of a child, family and program

Infant Toddler Technical Assistance is an individualized technical assistance targeted to infant-toddler providers within STAR 2 facilities to enhance the provision of high quality services to very young children and their families with particular emphasis on relationship-based practices. Services occur through coordination with other technical assistance initiatives and ultimately result in improved outcomes for children and enhanced professional development of infant-toddler practitioners. To learn more, *click here.*

STARS Technical Assistance is a specialized consultation service available to support any program participating in Keystone STARS to achieve higher STARS levels. Technical assistance may take many forms, including individualized and on-site assistance to facilities aimed at helping them achieve a specified knowledge area of performance expectation of the Keystone STARS Performance Standards. To learn more, *click here*.

School Age Child Care Technical Assistance consists of regionally based school-age child care organizations and specialists to provide specialized professional development and technical assistance. A primary emphasis of their services focuses on professional development and technical assistance to support SACC providers participating in Keystone STARS. SACC PD/TA employ research-based methods for improving program quality, and impacting positive outcomes for children. Regional SACC-PD/TA also facilitates partnerships with community stakeholders to promote the development and expansion of out-of-school programming. To learn more, *click here*.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and Head Start State Supplemental Assistance Program (HSSAP)
Preschool program specialists provide technical assistance or make referrals to all PKC and HSSAP programs. This can include staff at all levels, partners and community collaboration partners

depending on the issues.   Programs can phone, email or request a sight visit.   Specialists also provide TA resulting from concerns identified during monitoring visits or with implementation of new policy. All Head Start grantees also have access to federal TA. Click here for more information about *Head Start* and *PA Pre-K Counts*.

Public engagement efforts/initiatives

Pennsylvania's Promise for Children is a coordinated statewide campaign to raise awareness about the value of quality early learning and to build responsibility among every Pennsylvanian for the early learning of the children in their lives. It is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Build Initiative, Heinz Endowments, The Grable Foundation, William Penn Foundation, and the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). To learn more, *click here*.

Pennsylvania's **Local Education and Resource Network (LEARN) Teams** build support networks in every county for organizations and individuals interested in quality early education. LEARN Teams bring together early childhood programs, parents, school districts, and child-serving organizations to assess what quality early learning programs are currently available in the community and to develop ways to encourage quality early learning. They also work with school districts and community-based early learning programs to develop ways to make smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten for children, parents, and teachers. To learn more, *click here*.

Qualifications, Credentials, and Pathways

Pre-service requirements

Persons who wish to open a child care center, group child care home or family child care home are required to participate in an orientation training session prior to opening a facility. The orientation curriculum focuses on topics relating to opening and operating a child care facility including the child care facility regulations, the application process, requirements relating to child abuse and criminal history background checks, obtaining and submitting required business papers, obtaining a certificate of occupancy for the facility building, staffing requirements, recognizing health and safety hazards, and information about child care subsidy, the Keystone STARS QRIS and Early Intervention services for children with special needs.

Due to the diversity of program needs in Pennsylvania, careful consideration has been placed on making professional development available that assists all practitioners across sectors in moving up the career lattice within their current organization.

The following charts describe the types of requirements individuals are required to have to assume various positions. Keystone STARS requirements build on minimum requirements defined in Child Day Care regulation.

KEYSTONE STARS	
Position	**Current Requirement**
Lead Teachers, Group Supervisors STAR 3	100% must have an Associate's (AA) or Associate's of Applied Science (AAS) degree with 60/65 credits including 18 ECE credits, at Level V or above on the Career Lattice.
Assistant Teachers, Assistant Group Supervisors STAR 3	25% must have at least 30 credits including 12 ECE credits, at Level IV or above on the Career Lattice. 75% must have a credential, diploma, certificate or 6 ECE credits. at Level III or above on the Career Lattice.
Aides STAR 3	25% must have at least 45 Hours or 3 ECE credits, at Level II or above on the Career Lattice.
Lead Teachers, Group Supervisors STAR 4	100% must have an Associate's/AAS degree with 60 /65 credits including 18 ECE credits, at Level V or above on the Career Lattice; 50% must have bachelor's degree including 30 ECE credits, at Level VI or above on the Career Lattice.
Assistant Teachers, Assistant Group Supervisors STAR 4	50% must have 30 credits including 12 ECE credits, at Level IV or above on the Career Lattice; 25% must have an Associate's/AAS degree with 60 /65 credits including 18 ECE credits, at Level V or above on the Career Lattice.
Aides STAR 4	50% must have at least 45 Hours or 3 ECE credits, at Level II or above on the Career Lattice.

PENNSYLVANIA PRE-K COUNTS		
Position/Role	**Current Requirement**	**Future Requirement**
Lead Teachers	Effective December 2011, all lead teachers are required to have a Bachelor's degree and certification in ECE.	
Teachers Aides	Teacher aides must complete at least 2 years of postsecondary study or demonstrate knowledge and ability through a formal state or local academic assessment or possession of a Child Development Associate's (CDA) credential.	

HEAD START		
Position/Role	**Current Requirement**	**Future Requirement**
Education Coordinator	CDA credential, State Awarded Certificate, Associate's degree in ECE or a degree in a related field with experience teaching preschool children and a state awarded certificate to teach preschool aged children.	**As of September 2013:** Bachelor's (BA/BS) degree in ECE specific credits or related degree with course work equating to a major in ECE and experience teaching preschool aged children.
Lead Teachers	Associate's degree in ECE, a BA/BS in a related field with coursework equating to a major in ECE with experience teaching preschool aged children, enrolled with a BA in Teach for America and passed an exam such as the Praxis II.	**As of September 2013:** 50% teachers nationwide, Bachelor's (BA/BS) degree in ECE, or a related degree with coursework equating to a major in ECE and experience teaching preschool aged children.
Teachers Aides	High School equivalency.	**As of September 2013:** A CDA credential or enrolled in program for CDA credential to be completed within 2 years or Associate's degree (AA) or Associate's of Applied Science degree (AAS
Early Head Start Center based Teachers	Early Head Start teachers must have, at a minimum, a CDA credential and have been trained (or have equivalent coursework) in early childhood development.	As of September 30, 2012 all Early Head Start teachers must meet the prior requirement and be trained (or have equivalent coursework) in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

Continuing education requirements

Child day care regulations require programs complete six hours of professional development annually. Keystone STARS Performance Standards define Staff Qualifications and Professional Development: standards in this area establish the educational qualifications required for Early Childhood Educators and program directors at each STAR level and details the amount and type of annual continuing education For instance, teachers in programs at STAR 4 must complete 24 hours of professional development annually, directors must complete 27 hours. At least a portion of the professional development must address content such as observation, assessment, curriculum and orientation. At STAR 3 directors must complete the Director Credential. Effective July 1, 2009, Relative/Neighbor (unregulated) providers must complete 12 hours of training over a two year period if they wish to be paid for caring for children in the subsidized child care program.

Early Childhood Certified teachers in Pennsylvania must follow Act 48 and Head Start staff follow the Head Start Federal Performance Standards.

Career lattice

Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality Career Lattice defines multiple pathways for professional growth and development for early childhood education and school-age care practitioners, Head Start, Public School Districts, Private Academic Schools, Technical Assistance

Consultants and Trainers, and Higher Education Faculty. It identifies qualifications, education and certification. The goal of Pennsylvania Keys to Quality Early Learning Career Lattice is to ensure that children in Pennsylvania are educated by professionals who have achieved adequate levels of education that are consistent across the state. The Career Lattice is organized in eight levels and includes a continuum of professional development from entry level training through credit-bearing coursework and degree attainment.

Early Childhood Teacher Quality: Recognizing High Quality Content in Pennsylvania document provides guidance in the calculation of Early Childhood Education core content credits specifically to verify credentials and determine placement on the Career Lattice. This document is used in the verification process for Keystone STARS and professional development/ technical assistance consultant approval.

For more information about Career Lattice requirements, *click here*.

Credentials

Child Development Associate, a national credential administered by the Council for Professional Recognition, is recognized in Pennsylvania at Career Lattice Level III. A credential can be earned based on setting type: center, family child care or home visitor. Individuals can also earn an age level endorsement for infants and toddlers or preschool.

Pennsylvania Director Core Credential provides a standard by which to measure program and fiscal management and leadership abilities of early childhood and school age directors and administrators. It is a requirement of Keystone STARS QRIS at the STAR three level. Thirty-six post secondary institutions have been approved to offer the Director Credential program resulting in nine college credits for individuals.

Pennsylvania School-Age Professional Credential is a competency based program modeled after the Child Development Associate (CDA). This credential was developed to support school-age practitioners participating in Keystone STARS. It is recognized on the career lattice in the same way the CDA is recognized (Career Lattice Level III). This credential can be taken for college credit. It is recognized in child care regulations as equivalent to 9 credit hours from an accredited college or university in elementary education or child development and 1 year experience with children. (Same as CDA). To support an individual's ability to obtain the appropriate content, a series of 34 modules have been created. Each module is aligned with the credential Competency Goals and Functional Areas and the Core Body of Knowledge.

For more information about credentials, *click here.*

Pathways leading to qualifications, degrees, and credentials

Program to Program Articulation efforts began in 2008 when the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, the Pennsylvania Key, and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education joined together to provide an opportunity for two and four year institutions of higher education which offer degrees in early childhood education or child development, to work on developing early childhood education program-to-program articulation agreements. The initiative facilitates articulation pathways and improved

transfer opportunities for students and their academic credits. Articulation agreements are based on the accreditation standards for program quality as set forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the PA Chapter 49-2 Guidelines for Pre-K to Grade 4. There are currently 56 early childhood program-to-program articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions.

Gate Openers Initiative The Gate Opener initiative is a joint project of the Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL), Pennsylvania Key, Grable Foundation, Heinz Endowments and William Penn Foundation. The initiative focuses on sustainable projects that will support early learning and school-age practitioners as they juggle full time employment and returning to higher education institutions for a Bachelors degree or ECE certification.

Alternative Pathways-Career Lattice: Professionals come to a career from many different pathways. The alternative pathway to the Career Lattice recognizes the education and content knowledge that an early childhood or school-age professional possesses beyond the traditional pathway of an ECE or Education degree. It also incorporates demonstration of competency through an objective outside assessment (Praxis Exam).

Alternative Pathways-Director Qualifications: These alternative pathways allow a director to demonstrate a combination of Early Childhood Education Credits, Management Credits and years of experience in order to achieve the Director's Credential.

Credit for Prior Learning and Transfer Credit: OCDEL recognizes that adult students returning to college bring with them a level of experience, knowledge and skills from a variety of sources. Credit for prior learning (CPL) offers students the opportunity to apply relevant college-level knowledge, skills and competencies gained from work and life experiences, continuing education, self-instruction and independent study, informal or formal course work and others towards an academic degree or certificate. Transferring relevant prior learning knowledge, competencies and skills into college academic credits help save substantial time and money for students as they access colleges and universities for four year degree and/or certification completion. Institutional assessment for prior learning can include portfolio documentation, competency testing, or a combination of these and other sources of mastery evidence of content knowledge, skill or competency.

Many institutions of higher education in Pennsylvania participate in the College Level Exam Program (CLEP) which offers adult students the opportunity to demonstrate what they've already mastered and obtain college credits. As part of OCDEL's program-to-program articulation agreement initiative, early childhood practitioners are able to transfer and articulate credits earned for one level of credential, certificate or degree work to another, so that courses with similar core content are not repeated. Through the articulation project, participating four year colleges and universities accept up to sixty academic credits from prior learning experience at the two year level towards early childhood education baccalaureate degree. Students must document evidence of knowledge, skills and competencies gained from prior learning experience through submission of a portfolio to the receiving institution.

Six to nine college academic credits can be awarded for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential earned in a community-based setting towards an Associate or a Bachelor's degree. Also,

early childhood and school-age program directors can document prior knowledge, skills and competencies and obtain a Director Credential certificate by submitting a portfolio for evaluation.

Training Series

Pennsylvania has created numerous professional development series to support early learning and school-age educators. Series support individuals meeting required standards for example, observation, linking observation, assessment, curriculum and learning standards, and new staff orientation. Examples of additional series illustrating our work to support diverse populations can be found under the section *Cross Systems and Supports to High Risk Populations*. Each Regional Key has certified trainers available to provide professional development in these series. To learn more about how to participate, visit the PA Keys website or contact the Regional Key. *Click here*.

New Staff Orientation series have been developed to address the needs of center-based providers, school-age providers and family child care providers. All series are designed as self-learning modules and are 15 hours in length. In all instances, modules are designed to help individuals become familiar with their new program, become familiar with certification regulations, supervision and safety, child development, guiding behavior, curriculum and environment, professionalism and partnering and communicating with families. Modules in this series meet the requirements for Career Lattice Level I and Keystone STARS requirements for new staff.

Pennsylvania's Child Observation Modules is a set of seven, two- hour modules beginning with an introductory workshop that deals with the various elements of doing observation in family, group or center care settings. Topics include: reasons for observing, planning and preparing to observe, and an introduction to four observation methods. Other modules help teachers learn how to use observations to learn about and support children's individual development; how to use observations to continually observe the program, evaluate its effectiveness, and make changes based on the observations; using observation to share or communicate observations in a positive way with parents, team members, or school-age children. Two modules are designed specifically for educators working in school-age child care programs. Modules in this series meet the STAR 2 annual Staff Development requirement for Keystone STARS.

Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Series consists of an ERS Foundations course that provides an overview of the structure and scoring of the ERS tools, and is a prerequisite for the tool-specific courses (Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, and School Age Care Environment Rating Scale). Family and Group Childcare programs may access a combined course (Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale). The Foundations course meets the STAR 1 Staff Development requirement for Keystone STARS and the tool-specific courses are a requirement for STAR 2 in all programs. For additional information and resources related to the Environment Rating Scales, *click here*.

 Pennsylvania recently added professional development on other tools directors can use in continuous quality improvement efforts such as Classroom Assessment Scoring System© (CLASS) and the Program Administration Tool (PAS).

Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood curriculum consists of 9 units based on Pennsylvania's Learning Standards for Early Childhood. The units follow the titles for the Key Learning Areas for Pre-Kindergarten. Infants-Toddlers and Kindergarten are referenced throughout all nine

units. Each unit is designed to help participants become familiar with the Learning Standards for Early Childhood. They will help participants see how the standards are connected to curriculum and assessment. Emphasis is placed on how the standards provide the framework that guides our expectations for children. Each unit is divided into three one-hour segments that can be taught together or at three separate professional development meetings. For more information about these standards and for additional tools and resource, *click here*.

Links to Learning is a parallel series to the Learning Standards for Early Childhood, this series is designed for school-age care providers. A series of 26 hours of professional development modules, developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), to support practitioner understanding of the role of afterschool in providing complementary supports to ensure developmental progress of children. Participants learn how to guide curriculum planning in afterschool and how to link activities to learning standards and quality standards. The content of the modules also explores theme- and project-based learning, coordinating and communicating with schools and family engagement.

Links to Learning Foundations (4 modules, 6 hours) meets STAR 2 Director Qualifications Core Series requirement for learning standards for school-age programs participating in Keystone STARS. Other modules meet STAR 3 annual Staff Development requirement in the area of curriculum and learning standards and supports Partnerships with Family and Community. For additional information about resources and professional development to support school-age and afterschool programs, *click here*.

Mind in the Making (MITM) created by the nationally recognized Families and Work Institute is a 12-part series designed to bridge the gap between research and teaching practice. The Learning Modules are designed to complement existing early childhood teaching curricula, with a focus on helping teachers (defined as an adult who teaches and cares for young children) in schools, centers and home-based early childhood settings become more *reflective and intentional* in their work with young children and families.

Although the research referenced in the Learning Modules focuses on birth through school-entry, states and communities have also used the Modules for teachers in the early elementary years. In addition, the Modules have been and can be used to teach students in community colleges, colleges and universities.

Pennsylvania's unique implementation plan links completion of the modules with mentoring in the content of the modules and delivery strategies, a train the trainer methodology, and a strategy to sustain the effort in the context of the system of quality improvements now available to Pennsylvania's early learning programs and practitioners. This project:
- Encourages responsive and reflective teaching and learning based on the importance of relationships and integrating young children's social, emotional and intellectual (SEI) development
- Brings credible research in Early Childhood Education to early learning practitioners
- Engages practitioners as learners
- Builds and strengthens the training, facilitation and technical expertise available in the state
- Creates multiple layers of learning teams to enhance practice and assimilation

According to a University of Pittsburgh study evaluating the Mind in the Making Learning Modules for Early Childhood Teachers in Pennsylvania, teachers who completed the MITM learning modules "contributed to positive, meaningful changes in classroom practices that promote children's social, emotional and intellectual development." Furthermore, teachers with different educational levels,

and years of experience of teaching and from programs of different levels of quality were equally likely to improve.

Over 600 early learning facilities have participated in the initiative since its inception in 2004.

Step up to Supervision consists of eight director instructor-led sessions, designed to be offered in 60 minute staff enhancement meetings. Director Instructor module includes step-by-step Instructor's Manual, camera-ready handouts and activity pages, and instructional DVD. Topics will use Regulations for Child Day Care Centers to examine regulatory requirements on supervision of children in early care settings. Topics focus on:

- why staff-child ratios are necessary and application of ratio requirements throughout the daily schedule;
- assessment of risk to children key points to consider when choosing positions for optimum supervision of children;
- the importance of counting children, examine working as a team to properly supervise children, especially during difficult transition times;
- playground safety, developing universal playground rules, and choosing key supervisory positions
- identifying supervision considerations when moving children from one place to another, including taking children on outdoor walks and transporting them in a vehicle;
- analyzing the center's written supervision policy to determine if changes are necessary.

Strengthening Families Pennsylvania is a strength based approach to strengthening families and preventing abuse and neglect. This framework uses a set of strategies and tools that involve program staff working with families to build protective factors. With support from the National Alliance of Children's Trust Funds and the Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund, OCDEL aligned the Strengthening Families Protective Factors with the Keystone STARS Quality Rating system. Optional Tools and Tip Sheets that reflect the Strengthening Families Protective Factors were created and can be found on the PA Key website. Each Regional Key in Pennsylvania has certified trainers available to provide professional development on the Strengthening Families Protective Factors to staff in the early learning system. To learn more about this initiative, *click here*.

Keystone Kids Go! (KKG) is an initiative in Pennsylvania focused on improving young children's nutrition and physical activity. Keystone Kids Go! was created by the Pennsylvania Departments of Health, Education, and Public Welfare, in partnership with Tuscarora Intermediate Unit , Penn State Cooperative Extension , Family Literacy Programs, Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network and Head Start State Collaboration Office. This initiative is targeted towards early childhood practitioners from childcare, Head Start, early intervention, family literacy, and pre-kindergarten programs. The focus areas of KKG are to engage families and improve the health of children, families and practitioners. Each Regional Key has certified trainers available to provide professional development on Keystone Color Me Healthy, a program for early childhood practitioners which provides resources and materials to teach preschoolers that healthy eating and movement are fun. For more information about this initiative, *click here*.

I Am Moving I Am Learning (IMIL) is a proactive approach for addressing childhood obesity while enhancing school readiness in young children birth to five within Early Care and Education settings. IMIL is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Departments of Education and Welfare, the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning, the Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the

Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start. IMIL has 3 overall goals for building lifelong healthy preferences in young children:

1. Increase the quantity of time spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity within daily routines to meet national guidelines (a total of 120 minutes daily for preschool children)
2. Improve the quality of movement experiences intentionally planned and facilitated by informed and participating adults, including teachers and parents
3. Promote healthy food choices every day for children, teachers, and parents

The focus areas for IMIL are Administrative Competencies, Best Practice in Teaching and Learning, Engaging Families , Healthy Children/Families/Practitioner, science, technology, math, and the arts. Each Regional Key has certified trainers available to provide professional development on IMIL. To learn more about how to participate in this program, visit the PA Keys professional development calendar or contact the Regional Key.

Funding

Financial aid and scholarships

PA Keys to Professional Development Refund Voucher Program provides support for early childhood educators to obtain credits and credentials that support participation at higher levels of quality to meet Keystone STARS standards and improve outcomes for high need high risk children. To learn more about this program, *click here*.

Compensation/retention incentives

The **Keystone STARS Education & Retention Award** assists providers in establishing a stable workforce as they work towards higher levels of quality. In order to reduce turnover and improve the education of early childhood and school-age professionals, the Keystone STARS program includes the STARS Education & Retention Awards as annual financial awards to eligible staff employed by the provider. To be eligible, a facility must meet site-specific requirements as well as staff-specific requirements. Awards are determined by number of hours worked/week, position (director or teaching staff) and educational attainment.

Program quality awards

The **STARS Merit Award** is available to early learning and school-age providers serving high-risk/high need children to support continuous quality improvement as they achieve a STAR 2 or higher. In order to be eligible for these grant funds, a facility must meet all the STARS Performance Standards associated with the STAR designation. Merit awards may be requested for 1) equipment and supplies/materials; 2) training/professional development; 3) accreditation costs; 4) staff compensation. An award justification explaining how the award will support Continuous Quality Improvement and improved outcomes for children is a required part of each Merit Award application.

The intent of the **STARS Support Grant** is to assist Start with STARS and STAR 1 designated providers serving high-risk/high need children in achieving a higher STAR designation through

continuous quality improvement. The grant covers two categories of supports including Training/Professional Development and Site Supports. Grant funds may be used to meet the needs identified in one or both of these categories.

Basic eligibility for Support Grants, Merit Awards, and the Education and Retention Award includes (1) holding a full DPW Certificate of Compliance (Centers and Group Homes) or valid Certificate of Registration (Family Homes) and (2) having a minimum of 5% of enrolled children receiving Child Care Works subsidy or having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). For Family Child Care Homes only, eligibility can also be established by being enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and being identified as eligible for Tier 1 CACFP reimbursement rates.

Tiered reimbursement

Child care programs participating in Keystone STARS at the STAR 2 level or above receive an add-on, or tiered reimbursement for each child they serve who is enrolled in the Child Care Works subsidy program. The tiered reimbursement increases with each STAR level and is applied to the daily subsidized child care rate.

For more information about the funding resources above, *click here.*

Quality Assurance

Approval Processes

Pennsylvania Quality Assurance Program (PQAS) is designed as a means to ensure quality professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) provided to early childhood and school-age practitioners in Pennsylvania. This system is designed so that individual instructors or TA consultants rather than individual professional development activities are reviewed and approved. Approved instructors and TA consultants are required to meet and maintain established qualifications, including educational achievements and professional development experience. All instructors or technical assistance consultants who work with practitioners and want to be eligible to participate in Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL) funded initiatives are required to be approved by the PQAS. The level and type of qualifications will in part determine the type of approval. For example faculty, director or specialty discipline. Instructors may only provide professional development in approved topic areas. To learn more about PQAS, *click here*.

Evaluation processes

Professional Development is evaluated in several ways. The obvious way is through both a participant and instructor evaluation at the completion of each professional development event. These evaluations are used to determine, in part, the quality of the professional development offered.

Additionally, the Regional Keys and PA Key have access to reports from the professional development registry. Reports can be used to determine, for instance where professional development is being offered in the state, region or county. It can be evaluated based on the number of providers in that particular locale. Data can be used to analyze trends related to cancellations and attendance, as well as a number of other criteria.

Technical Assistance Accountability Plan (TAAPS) defines expectations for accountability and quality for STARS Technical Assistance. This system of benchmarks was developed to focus on three key categories:

- Measurable Impact on Provider
- Qualifications, Professional Development and Professionalism
- Reporting Obligations

The STARS-TAAP establishes the expectation that Technical Assistance will have a measurable effect on the program and that to be effective; consultants must be appropriately qualified and deliver services in a timely, consistent manner. It further defines what is to be measured in each category, the data sources to be used, how to collect the data, and benchmarks for each indicator.

PELICAN Keys to Quality for Technical Assistance aligns Action Plan goals to specific STARS standards and allows the TA contractors and Regional Keys to evaluate if goals in an Action Plan have been Met or Not Met. The implementation of goals in an Action Plan can be more closely correlated to the effectiveness of Technical Assistance than STAR movement and can be applied equally to all STAR levels. Thus, with the ability to assess goal achievement, this benchmark will be a primary indicator for assessing the effectiveness of technical assistance.

To further assess the effectiveness of TA, Keystone STARS has introduced the "sticky factor" to determine how well a childcare facility has retained the knowledge and skills provided by the consultant. Sticky factor is the measure of the change that remains three to six months or longer after the TA consultant has completed services and closed the plan. The Regional Key TA Manager collects this information by conducting a follow-up survey to the program that has received services to determine if each goal continues to be met/not met at that point in time. Goals marked as "Met" are considered achieved or "sticking" and goals marked as "Not Met" are considered not sticking. Fifty percent or more of all Action Plan goals must be met in order for the action plan to be considered "sticky." To read a research brief about the effectiveness of STARS Technical Assistance, *click here*.

Good, Better, Best **is a tool to support continuous quality improvement.** The "Good/Better/Best" documents (one for Center/Group programs and one for Family Child Care) were developed from experience in managing the Keystone STARS program, analysis of current research, and insights/suggestions practitioners have shared. These tools assist practitioners in assessing program strengths as well as help identify next steps for improvement. Thoughtful assessment using a variety of sources of evidence can lead to the development of a meaningful continuous quality improvement (CQI) plan. This optional tool supports programs in meeting the targeted standards and understanding the more subtle continuum of quality contained within a standard. The tools allow programs not able to move up to a higher STAR level to consider making incremental improvements within a STAR level or standard. It also allows programs to identify areas where the minimum standard is exceeded and can be used to determine at what point in the spectrum a standard is being met. Understanding the quality continuum of a standard will enable programs to be more focused and specific in quality improvement efforts. The newest iteration of both tools reflect best practices in dealing with the diverse needs of families. Each standard now reflects what is "Better" and "Best" for working with all families in a program. To view these tools visit the Forms and Tools section of the PA Keys website, *click here*.

Monitoring processes

Monitoring occurs in several ways. The monitoring of staff qualifications for regulated providers occurs during the certification inspection visit. Staff qualifications for Keystone STARS participating facilities are also verified during the designation process. Additionally, other programs, such as Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts will have staff qualifications verified during their program monitoring visits.

Annually, each of the six Regional Keys executes and monitors contracts with a number of Professional Development and Technical Assistance organizations. Monitoring responsibilities include on-site observations and evaluations of at least 10% of the instructors and consultants that are actively providing services funded by the Regional Key that year.

Accreditation

Keystone STARS requires accredited programs to demonstrate not only verification of their current accreditation status but show evidence that the program meets additional specific Keystone STAR standards. Once recognized, an accreditation is allowed to be used to assist in achieving a STAR Level 4 in the QRIS.

Accrediting organizations wishing to be recognized in Keystone STARS must apply to be recognized and demonstrate Fiscal and Administrative Capability for Administering an Accrediting Process**,** Administrative Policies and System Evaluation Procedures**,** describe the Accreditation Process, demonstrate that the Institution's Standards for Early Learning Programs or School-Age/Afterschool Programs are research-based and crosswalk them with the Keystone STARS Standards.

Examples: Cross-Systems and Supports to High Risk Populations

Cross-systems

NPDCI/SpecialQuest Pennsylvania State Leadership Teams goals are to: increase access to and participation in leadership opportunities for families of young children with and without disabilities; develop a regional cross-sector professional development system to support increased opportunities for high quality inclusion; increase the emphasis in pre-service education (coursework and field experiences) on children with disabilities and inclusion.

Since 2007 the National Professional Development Centers for Inclusion (NPDCI) has worked with state and regional leaders to develop, implement and monitor a statewide plan for professional development that crosses traditional boundaries. The state leadership team includes representatives from child care, higher education, the state library system, Head Start, Early Intervention, OCDEL, Department of Health, and family advocacy groups.

In January 2008 Pennsylvania introduced SpecialQuest professional development approach and curriculum to promote quality inclusive practices for children with disabilities and their families in community programs. This relationship- and team-based approach enhances and sustains inclusive services, family leadership skills, and integrated, collaborative service delivery.

Infant Toddler Specialist Network includes representatives from various state systems, such as early intervention, Keystone STARS, Early Childhood Mental Health and Health Consultation, Family

Support, Infant-Toddler and STARS technical assistance, Early Head Start and institutes of higher education. All of these representatives provide technical assistance, consultation and/or professional development to early childhood professionals and families who support the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Specialists received professional development in Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) from WestEd, Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), Strengthening Families, Mind in the Making, Reflective Practice and Center for Early Literacy and Learning (CELL).

The overall goal of the Network is to create a coordinated system of infant-toddler supports, both statewide and regionally, from which programs and families can access resources that are specific to their individual needs.

Early Intervention Technical Assistance system (EITA) provides statewide training and technical assistance on behalf of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Pennsylvania Departments of Public Welfare and Education. The primary recipients of EITA training and technical assistance are the local Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention agencies that provide supports and services to children birth to school age with developmental disabilities and their families. EITA is part of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN). To learn more, *click here.*

Cross-system TA
The overall premise for the cross-systems work is three-fold:
- To create a seamless system of technical assistance that is easy to navigate by those who use it
- To better use available resources so as not to duplicate services
- To ensure that the technical assistance being offered is of a high quality

To accomplish this work, a cross-system TA work group meets quarterly and includes representatives from Head Start, Family Literacy, STARS Technical Assistance, Pre-K Counts, Early Intervention, School Age Technical Assistance, Early Childhood Mental Health, Home Visiting, Office of Child Development and Early Learning and the PA Key.

Additionally, this group is instrumental in planning webinars designed for knowledge mediators each year. These webinars are delivered by various experts in the field on topics identified by surveying Technical Assistance Consultants each summer. Webinars generally occur the first Friday of each month.

The Art and Science of Technical Assistance for Continuous Quality Improvement is a professional development series designed specifically for technical assistance consultants. These recorded webinars may be taken individually, but are designed to be taken as a series as the highly relevant themes of Hard to Reach: Hard to Serve Programs, Sustaining Change and Cultural Competence are woven through the entire series, connecting topics and increasing participant understandings. The webinar titles follow:

1. Working Together to Share Common Understanding about Children
2. Development, Learning and Outcomes: DAP and Implications for Quality Enhancement Part 1
3. Development, Learning and Outcomes: DAP and Implications for Quality Enhancement Part 2

4. Development, Learning and Outcomes: The Preschool Years: 3- 5 year olds
5. Development, Learning and Outcomes: School Agers – 5-12 year olds
6. Building a Common Vision: Strategies for Sustaining Change
7. Not By Chance: Connecting Learning to Child Outcomes
8. CQI: Keeping the Focus, Supporting the Progress

Future work includes expanding this community of practice (COP) approach to include Keystone STARS managers and program directors.

Additional supports at all levels to support at-risk populations

In an effort to promote racial and cultural equity in all programs, Pennsylvania, in partnership with the PA Build Initiative and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, implemented a strategy to better evaluate racial equity and diversity among OCDEL's programs and the broader early childhood community. Using the Casey Foundation's **Race Matters** Toolkit, OCDEL examined to what extent our programs, policies, practices, and communications were effectively serving all of Pennsylvania's children and families; if there were discrepancies among various racial or cultural groups; and ways in which we could address those discrepancies. OCDEL encouraged its partners and programs to implement racial equity tools as they examined the makeup of their organizations and leadership, access to services, communications, etc. The goal is to integrate the examination of racial equity into all of our work by training LEARN Teams, providers of OCDEL services, and OCDEL leadership staff on how to use these tools in their work.

Additionally, two professional development series have been created to support early childhood educators' effectiveness in working with children and families at the classroom level. These series specifically address race, culture and English and dual language learners. A description of each series follows:

Supporting Conversations about Race and Culture in Early Childhood Settings is a series of four professional development modules (12 hours) related to racial equity and tolerance in the early childhood education classroom. These modules identify specific strategies to address race and culture and the impact on classroom behaviors and environment. Content includes an historical perspective of race; how young children develop racial identity, awareness and attitudes and the impact on their learning and development. Additionally, content addresses strategies for having substantial conversations with peers, families and children about race to support respect and equality. Participants will create an action plan to support family-teacher interactions, communication and diverse children and families. Directors with PQAS approval and who have attended the sessions are able to deliver this content to their staff.

Module 1: Beginning the Conversation
Module 2: Historic Perspectives and White Privilege
Module 3: Planning Supportive Environments for Children and Families (Part 1)
Module 4: Planning Supportive Environments for Children and Families (Part 2)

Supporting English Language Learners (ELLs) and Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in Early Childhood Classroom Settings is a series to increase knowledge about the ways in which evidence-based practices targeting dual language learners can be applied in all program settings.

Module 1: Culture, Language and Learning: Teacher Perspectives, Family Perceptions and Children's Knowledge and Understanding

Module 2: Developmental Framework for Second Language Acquisition

Module 3: Integrating Best Practices in the Early Childhood Classroom of English Language Learners

Module 4: Creating Family and Community partnerships to Facilitate Successes for English Language Learners

Module 5: Unpacking Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Processes

Deepening Our Understanding of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) builds on the model used with technical assistance consultants. This professional development series is designed to provide CQI training and resources that build on PA's Core Competencies for STARS Managers Survey Results. To begin in 2011, this professional development will facilitate development of Regional communities of practice (CoP's) by providing resources and strategies that best address current issues for STARS Managers, with emphasis on working with hard to reach and hard to serve providers.