

Executive Order
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Governor's Office

Subject: Early Learning Council	Number: 2008-07
 By Direction of: Edward G. Rendell, Governor	Date: September 11, 2008

WHEREAS, the early learning, development and education of young children is of critical importance to Pennsylvania's families, education system, and employers; and

WHEREAS, in the last six years, Pennsylvania has increased its investment in early learning, development, and education programs, and has made steady progress to assure that more children receive quality early learning and development services; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is committed to quality early learning opportunities that intentionally engage and support parents and families in their children's development and strengthen the parent-child bond;

WHEREAS, the Federal Government, in the reauthorization of *Head Start in Public Law 110-134 (Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007)*, has required states to have Advisory Councils dedicated to early education and care issues; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is a national leader in addressing early childhood program governance issues, through the creation of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (hereafter referred to as "OCDEL"); and

WHEREAS, OCDEL has established numerous Advisory Committees to aid its work and to provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage in the process of policy development.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Edward G. Rendell, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by the virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws of the Commonwealth, do hereby establish the **Pennsylvania Early Learning Council** (hereafter referred to as the "Council") and order and direct as follows:

- 1. Purpose.** The purpose of the Council is to plan for the expansion of effective early learning and development services for young children and their families, and make recommendations to ensure the plans are implemented successfully. The Council will be responsible for coordinating the delivery of these Federal and Commonwealth programs designed to serve young children from birth through their entry into school, and to ensure a smooth transition for those children into K-12 education and other programs serving older children.

- 2. Powers and Duties.** The Council will have the following powers and duties, consistent with Federal law:
- a. Conducting periodic needs assessments concerning the quality and availability of early childhood learning and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry;
 - b. Identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federally-funded and Commonwealth-funded child learning, development, and education services, and early childhood programs and services;
 - c. Developing recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, Commonwealth, and Local child care and early childhood learning, education, and development programs;
 - d. Developing recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood learning, education, and development programs and services throughout the Commonwealth;
 - e. Developing recommendations regarding Commonwealth-wide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators;
 - f. Assessing the capacity and effectiveness of 2-year and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth toward supporting the development of early childhood educators;
 - g. Making recommendations for improvements in Commonwealth early learning standards;
 - h. Developing and recommending updates to a multi-year plan for the expansion of effective early learning, education, and development services;
 - i. Recommending policies and procedures that assure the integration of the Early Intervention system as part of the Commonwealth's approach to early childhood learning, education, and development;
 - j. Assuring the development of a sound continuum from and between early childhood programs and traditional public education, starting with kindergarten;
 - k. Ensuring the development of early childhood programs that identify and meet the needs of infants and toddlers and their families;
 - l. Assuring an integrated approach to the design and delivery of early childhood mental health services across the Commonwealth;
 - m. Providing ongoing input and advice to OCDEL about programs under its jurisdiction, including without limitation the development of Early Intervention, Full-Day Kindergarten, Keystone STARS, Nurse-Family Partnership, PA Pre-K Counts, and the Child Care Works Subsidized Child Care Program;

- n. Engaging parents to provide input and make recommendations to strengthen the work of OCDEL, and develop improved communication strategies with families across the Commonwealth regarding the importance of and their role in quality early learning, education, and child development, and the programs of the Commonwealth in support of quality early learning;
 - o. Providing input to assure an adequate supply of, and quality for, the early childhood workforce needed to implement OCDEL's Programs;
 - p. Advising OCDEL in the creation of a comprehensive professional development system that applies to practitioners in all early learning settings, with the goal of increasing the number of highly qualified early childhood professionals;
 - q. Providing ongoing input to the development of the Early Learning Network, focusing on discussion of technical as well as communication and outreach needs, to support the sound development of the Network across OCDEL programs;
 - r. Ensuring that children with special needs are properly supported by the state's early learning programs;
 - s. Considering the overall early learning needs of young children, and evaluating how those needs are or are not met by OCDEL's services; and
 - t. Advocating for services that fulfill the early learning needs of young children, particularly services provided through OCDEL.
- 3. Composition.** The Council will consist of the following members appointed by the Governor, who collectively will be diverse and representative of the Commonwealth's population:
- a. Deputy Secretary for the OCDEL;
 - b. A representative of local educational agencies;
 - c. A representative of institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth;
 - d. A representative of local providers of early childhood education and development services;
 - e. A representative from Head Start agencies located in the Commonwealth, including migrant and seasonal Head Start programs and Indian Head Start Programs;
 - f. The Commonwealth Director of Head Start collaboration;
 - g. A representative of the Commonwealth agency responsible for health or mental health care.
 - h. A Co-Chair of the Early Learning Investment Commission, or the Co-Chair's designee;
 - i. The Chair of the Commonwealth's State Interagency Coordinating Council;
 - j. The Director of the Pennsylvania Key;
 - k. The Director of Early Intervention Technical Assistance;
 - l. Individuals representing families;

- m. Individuals representing advocacy organizations;
- n. Individuals representing business and industry;
- o. Individuals representing intermediate units;
- p. Individuals representing local governments;
- q. Individuals representing public school community;
- r. Individuals representing research institutions;
- s. Individuals representing state corrections or law enforcement;
- t. Individuals representing the child care community;
- u. Individuals representing the child welfare community;
- v. Individuals representing the children's health community;
- w. Individuals representing the early childhood mental health community;
- x. Individuals representing media;
- y. Individuals representing the philanthropic community;
- z. Individuals representing the professional development community that services early learning programs and practitioners;
- aa. Individuals representing the United Way; and
- bb. Any other individual who can assist the Council with the purposes outlined in this Executive Order including, but not limited to, a Representative from all the Committees of the Council.

4. Chair, Co-Chair and Terms.

- a. The Deputy Secretary for the OCDEL shall serve as Co-Chair of the Council. In addition, the Governor shall appoint a member to serve as Co-Chair of the Council, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
- b. Council Members appointed by the Governor and not serving by virtue of their official position with the Commonwealth will serve for a term of three years and continue to serve until their successor is appointed.
- c. Members will serve without compensation except for payment of necessary and actual expenses incurred in attending meetings and in performing their duties and responsibilities as Council Members.

5. Operations. Council operations will include the following:

- a. The Council will hold public hearings and provide opportunities for public comment.
- b. The Council will meet at least twice a year.
- c. The Council will submit an annual report of its activities to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, within 30 days of the close of each fiscal year. The report will make reference to the Council's activities in furtherance of the specific powers and duties assigned to it by this Executive Order.

- d. The Council will invite the Governor and members of the legislature to at least one briefing in each fiscal year, where legislators will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Council's leadership about its recommendations and activities.
 - e. The Council will invite the Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families, the Pennsylvania Commission for Women, and other relevant commissions with an interest in the Commonwealth's role in early childhood development to at least one briefing in each fiscal year, where members of these commissions have the opportunity to discuss with the Council its recommendations and activities, and to engage in work of mutual interest.
- 6. Relationship with other agencies.** OCDEL will provide staff and/or data support to the Council. All Commonwealth agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction will cooperate with, provide assistance to, and review the recommendations of the Council with respect to its purpose, powers and duties, as set forth in this Executive Order.
- 7. Effective date.** This Executive Order will take effect immediately.
- 8. Termination Date.** This Executive Order will remain in effect unless revised or rescinded by the Governor.