

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!



Thriving PA Campaign Launched!

[Thriving PA](#) is a non-partisan, statewide campaign that seeks to improve the quality of and increase equitable access to a coordinated system of health supports, including access to comprehensive perinatal health services, children's health insurance, nutrition supports and lead screening and abatement. Thriving PA is part of Pennsylvania's prenatal-to-age-three (PN3) collaborative which seeks to improve access to high-quality services, and also includes the [Start Strong PA](#) child care advocacy campaign and [Childhood Begins at Home](#), the home visiting campaign.



Family Point of View is Always Needed, Especially in May!

Parents have several great opportunities this month to provide input that could help improve Pennsylvania services and supports for families just like yours, especially for WIC and child care services.

If you currently, or have ever in the past, utilized the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition program, you can share your experiences to shape the state plan directing how our state government implements WIC.

Prenatal-to-age-three partner Just Harvest would like to help families and caregivers learn more about this feedback process, what the state has control over, and how you can share your experiences and suggestions.

Just Harvest is holding two informational Zoom meetings for parents, available at two separate times. Register by clicking on the date and time that works for you:

- [Wednesday, May 19th at 3 p.m.](#)
- [Thursday, May 20th at 6:30 p.m.](#)

Families are highly encouraged and welcomed to share their feedback at any of a series of virtual public meetings being hosted in May – more information about when those meetings will take place is available [here](#). If you prefer to submit written comments, Thriving PA advocacy partners are [collecting family comments](#) and will compile them to send to the PA Department of Health.

You may consider framing your comments around the following questions:

1. If your family receives WIC, what has been good about your experience?
 2. If you have stopped using WIC even though you are eligible, explain why you chose to do so. What would make the program work better for your family?
 3. Were there any changes to the WIC service during the pandemic that you hope will continue? Were there any changes you hope will go away?
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Start Strong PA wants to hear from families about child care needs to help shape what the coalition will advocate for additional Federal funding for Child Care

Start Strong PA intends to host seven virtual forums in May to gather feedback from child care providers and the families they serve in order to make recommendations to the Pennsylvania Governor's team about how over \$1 billion of American Rescue Plan funds should be spent. Start Strong wants to gather feedback about how to use these funds to create a stronger child care system and one that meets the needs of Pennsylvania families where all available parents must work.

In addition, Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning is accepting comments on the state plan that guides how federal funds – which are the primary funding source for the Child Care Works subsidy – are spent.

As you decide what is important to highlight from your own child care experiences during any of these meetings or written comment submissions, here are some questions to think about:

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 1. How do you get information about child care options? As you made decisions about child care, what have you tried that worked well, and what did not work well?
 2. What is most important to you as a parent when you are making decisions about care for your children while you are at work?
 3. Is there anything you have been looking for in child care that you have been unable to find? Describe what is missing and why it is important.
 4. If you have received the child care subsidy through the Child Care Works program, describe the impact it had on your family, both positive and negative. Think about access to care, eligibility determination and re-determination, and affordability of child care.

Provide your written comments to OCDEL [here](#), or register to speak at the [virtual public hearing](#) hosted by OCDEL on May 18 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

[Find out how to participate in Start Strong's virtual meetings](#) about federal funding for child care.



Helpful Resources for Parents

- Pennsylvania PN3 partner Public Citizens for Children and Youth has prepared a summary of what parents need to know about benefits you may qualify for under legislation recently passed by Congress and signed into law by the president. [Check out this summary](#) if you need additional services and supports to help sustain your family through the economic impacts of COVID-19.
- Thriving PA has a resource to help parents get health insurance for babies and toddlers! Health insurance helps you make sure your child has access to regular check-ups and care that prevent disease and help you access care to support their healthy development. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania has a large number of children age 0-3 who do not have health care coverage, more than the national average. **Help your kids get a healthy start in life – [learn more about the options available to you to access free or low cost health insurance for your children.](#)**
- May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Taking time to support your own mental health is important for everyone, especially parents and caregivers. Isolation, stress, unemployment, and lack of resources during the COVID-19 pandemic have taken a toll on families across Pennsylvania. [Mental Health America has tips and resources to help you cope and stay mentally healthy.](#)

[Questions about anything you read here?](#) Please contact info@uwp.org