



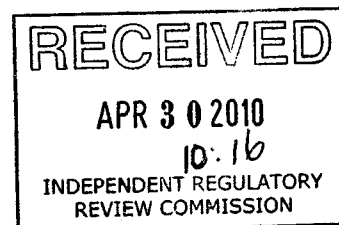
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RE: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts final omitted regulations (#6-319)

Dear Commission members:

I am writing to express my support for the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts final omitted regulations re-submitted to you on April 7, 2010 (#6-319).

The quality expectations of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which are included in the regulations, are essential to gaining positive outcomes for our young children. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is giving our at-risk children, such as those living in low-income families, those with special needs, and English language learners the strong start that research shows can help them overcome these risk factors and enter school ready to learn.

An important piece of these guidelines is promoting inclusive classrooms. As a childcare provider who is also a Pre-K Counts participant I can tell you from experience that the children in our program who were identified either prior to admission or shortly after admission to our program have received a great benefit.

They participate in a high quality inclusive classroom where they have peers to learn from and acceptance of their disabilities. The benefits extend to our other children as well in the respect that they learn at a very young age to be accepting and helpful of someone with a disability or special need. If we continue to teach in this mode we create an environment of acceptance and diversity at a young age and it will allow us to save time and money later in life.

Research has shown many positive effects of including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. The benefits accrue not only to children with disabilities but also to children with typical development, their families, classroom teachers, and the community at large.

- The quality expectations of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which are included in the regulations require approved providers to collaborate with infant/toddler and preschool Early Intervention services to provide a smooth transition for children

entering classrooms, facilitate the Early Intervention services needed for children enrolled in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms, and facilitate identification of children who are not receiving Early Intervention services but are eligible.

- PA Pre-K Counts has been a contributing factor to the increase of EI children in typical settings. Historically, less than 50% of preschool children receiving Early Intervention services received their services in typical early childhood settings. Since the creation of PA Pre-K Counts and targeted efforts to promote inclusion in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms, 15% more preschool children receiving Early Intervention services are enrolled in typical classroom settings.
- Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is serving a proportionate amount of children receiving Early Intervention services. Approximately 4% of Pennsylvania's three and four year olds are participating in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, with 7.5% of those children receiving Early Intervention services. Across Pennsylvania, between 5%-7% of preschool children are receiving Early Intervention Services.

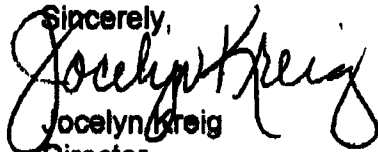
Currently in a classroom of (20) twenty preschoolers through our assessment process that is a part of our program we have identified 4 children who were referred for evaluation by our local Intermediate Unit. Three of those children are now receiving services from the I.U while in our program and we are still awaiting the results of the fourth evaluation. Without the PA Pre-K Counts program these four children would have slipped through the cracks and missed the opportunity for early intervention services before entering school. The longer a child continues to go with unidentified delays the longer and more difficult it is for the child to overcome those delays.

The work we do with children through PA Pre-K Counts is of tremendous value to our entire educational system. The more prepared a child is to enter school the greater his/her chances are of a successful completion of that education. For the children and families we work with, having helped them identify the need for intervention and seek help has given them the support system they needed and a sense of relief as the children improve in the various skills they were lacking.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is working because it is providing high quality pre-kindergarten to our at-risk children in inclusive classrooms.

Please approve these regulations in full.

Sincerely,


Jocelyn Kreig
Director