



## **News for Immediate Release**

**Feb. 8, 2013**

### **Governor Corbett Highlights \$3 Million Proposal to Support Quality Early Child Care and Education**

**Harrisburg** – Governor Tom Corbett today highlighted his \$3 million budget proposal to fund the Rising STARS initiative, which targets resources to support quality early child care and learning, specifically for at-risk children.

The event was held at Crispus Attucks Early Learning Center, a Keystone STARS 4-star rated child care facility in York.

“We must invest in early child care education that focuses on quality programs, encourages positive behaviors and helps children prepare for success in school,” Corbett said. “Efforts to ensure higher quality standards in early childhood learning centers across the state will help our children grow into successful adults.”

The Keystone STARS program increases the quality of child care programs throughout Pennsylvania. Child care and Head Start programs that participate in Keystone STARS earn a STAR 1 to STAR 4 rating by meeting evidence-based standards for teacher quality, classroom environment, partnering with families, and solid business practices.

The Rising STARS initiative promotes greater access for at-risk children to higher quality child care to better prepare them for kindergarten success. It gives incentives to providers through tiered reimbursement to adopt quality practices and targets resources for STAR 1 child care providers to encourage them to increase their quality rating on the STARS scale.

“Last year, we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Keystone STARS, one of the largest and most robust quality rating and improvement systems in the nation,” Corbett said. “As we determine the most effective use of public funding, we need to consider ways to provide these children greater access to higher quality care, while encouraging providers to continue to move up the STARS ladder.”

He continued, “Today we are joined with members from the military, police, business and local communities to stress our commitment to building upon programs that help Pennsylvania’s children reach their full potential.”

Governor Corbett was joined by Lieutenant General (Ret.) Dennis Benchoff, York City Police Chief Wesley Kahley, and Michael Smeltzer, executive director of the Manufacturers’ Association of South Central PA. The three spoke on behalf of

Mission: Readiness, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, and the Early Learning Investment Commission, and thanked the Governor for his proposal and commitment to early childhood learning, emphasizing its impact in the military, law enforcement and business communities.

Corbett was also joined by Department of Public Welfare Secretary Gary D. Alexander, Rep. Stan Saylor (R-York), Rep. Ron Miller (R-York), Rep. Keith Gillespie (R-York) and Rep. Seth Grove (R-York).

The Department of Public Welfare launched the Keystone STARS initiative in 2002 as a pilot program for early education in hopes of improving quality learning environments for more than 167,000 children at approximately 4,150 child care facilities statewide. It has been recognized nationally as one of the first and most comprehensive tiered quality rating systems, and it continues to be a driver toward quality early care and learning.

For more information, visit [www.pa.gov](http://www.pa.gov).

**Media contact:** Christine Cronkright, Governor's Office, 717-783-1116  
Carey Miller, DPW, 717-364-6671

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