

Butler County

Early Care & Education

Resource Guide



Compiled by the Butler County Early Care & Education Council
For additional information, please contact the
Council Coordinator at Lifesteps (724) 283-1010



Child Care Subsidy and Referral Services

Child Care Information Services (CCIS)

- Acts as the hub of early care and education information for all families
- Eligible families obtain the financial assistance to supplement the high cost of child care
- Parents receive parent counseling and information on Early Childhood Education (ECE) options and finding high-quality child care
- Families gain the assistance needed to become self-sufficient and the knowledge of the full range of early care and education choices for their child

Who's eligible to receive Child Care Works

Family Size	Maximum Yearly Family Income
2	\$27,380
3	\$34,340
4	\$41,300
5	\$48,260
6	\$55,220
7	\$62,180
8	\$69,140

How to apply for Child Care Works

- Visit your county Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agency to apply

CCIS of Butler County

Bantam Commons

120 Hollywood Drive, Suite 101

Butler PA 16001

(724) 285-9431 or (800) 864-1654

- Find agencies online at www.dpw.state.pa.us
- Beginning January 2008, parents will be able to apply online through the **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Access to Social Services (COMPASS)**.



Pennsylvania's Voluntary Quality Child Care System

Keystone STARS:

- Promotes continuous quality improvement in early learning and school-age environments (voluntary program)
- Is proven to improve the quality of child care programs in PA
- Provides parents with a tool to gauge the quality of care and early education their child will receive

Keystone STARS: How it works

- Builds on the health & safety requirements of PA certification
- Early learning programs apply at "Start with STARS" or STAR level 1-4
- Must meet research-based performance standards for:
 - ▶ Staff qualifications and professional development
 - ▶ Early learning program (child observation, curriculum, classroom environment)
 - ▶ Partnerships with family and community
 - ▶ Leadership and management (business practices)
- Based on subsidy enrollment, may be eligible for support grants, merit awards, and education & retention awards
- Monitoring, accountability, and supports conducted through the PA Early Learning Keys to Quality System

How can child care programs enroll?

- Certified or registered child care programs and Head Start programs may apply for a STARS rating
- Standards and application forms are available on PA Key website: www.pakeys.org/stars
- Submit an application to your Regional Key
- Regional Key info is available at www.pakeys.org.

How can parents locate STARS programs?

- County Child Care Information Services (CCIS) agencies can provide a listing of programs and STAR levels
 - ▶ Find your local CCIS online at www.dpw.state.pa.us
- Search STARS programs by county or zip at <http://www.pakeys.org/stars/centers.aspx>

HEAD START PROGRAM

- **Head Start is a comprehensive preschool program for children from age three through five.** The program was first launched in 1965, and was designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children from low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social health, and psychological needs.

Head Start has four major components:

1. Education
2. Health
3. Parent Involvement
4. Social Services

- **Children attend classes four (4) days a week—for five (5) hours per day.**

The curriculum offers a balance of child-directed and teacher-directed activities including:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| *Art | *Sensory Play | *Outdoor play |
| *Nap/Rest Time | *Music | *Meals |
| *Dramatic Play | *Block Building | *Science |
| *Pre-Reading Tasks | *Story Time | *Language Development |
| *Pre-Math Tasks | *Field Trips | *Physical Developmental |

Who is eligible for Head Start?

- **Head Start is a comprehensive preschool program for children from age three through five.** Preference is given to four and five year olds and to children with special needs.
- **Head Start is free to all.** Ninety percent of the children who are accepted must qualify under the income guidelines. Ten percent of the children may be accepted over the income guidelines when all income eligible children are serviced.
- **Transportation** to and from the classrooms will be available with bus stops as close to families as reasonably possible (door-to-door service is rare). Head Start will also assist families in receiving transportation to medical/dental appointments and parent involvement activities.

Where are the classrooms located?

Head Start operates fifteen classrooms within the Butler County area. Three classrooms are located in Bon Aire, two at the Kid's Count building on West New Castle Street in Butler, one in East Brady at the East Brady Community Center, three located at the Franklin Elementary School in Mt. Chestnut, one in Boyers at the Dassa McKinney Elementary School, one in Chicora at 211 North Main Street, three in Middlesex Elementary School, and one in Oakland Township at the Oakland Township Elementary School.

How can a family apply to enroll their child in Head Start?

Please contact: Butler County Children's Center
131 Homewood Drive
Butler PA 16001
Phone: (724) 287-2761



PA Pre-K Counts: FREE High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education

- High quality pre-kindergarten education for 3 and 4 year olds in Pennsylvania, which is free to families, with a focus on children at risk of academic failure
- Full or half-day pre-kindergarten classes in schools, Head Starts, Keystone STARS child care programs with a STAR 2 level or higher, or nursery schools
- Classrooms are available in most of Pennsylvania's 67 counties

PA Pre-K Counts: Quality standards

- Teachers with an education in early childhood
- Small class size (no more than 20 children per teacher & teacher's aide)
- Curriculum aligns with PA Early Learning Standards
- Child assessment (Work Sampling)
- Program assessment

Who is eligible?

- Families with children between ages three through kindergarten age who are at risk of school failure due to income (300% FPL), language, cultural, or special needs issues are eligible (Currently up to \$61,950 for a family of 4)

How to enroll in PA Pre-K Counts

- A listing of PA Pre-K Counts grantees is available on PDE website, www.pde.state.pa.us
- The lead agencies for each Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts grantee for Butler County are:

Butler County Children's Center (Butler Area and Karns City)
724-287-2761

Lifesteps' Early Education Center (Butler Area)
724-285-2259

SRU/SGA Preschool & Child Care (Slippery Rock and Surrounding Area)
724-738-2102



Early Intervention Services

What are Early Intervention Services?

- ▶ Early intervention provides resources and supports to families so children with special needs can reach their promise.
- ▶ These services assure that all eligible children from birth to five with developmental delays receive services and supports that maximize their development so they are successful in any early education setting.

Who is eligible for Early Intervention services?

- ▶ A child (birth – 5) who has:
 - a significant delay in one or more areas of development
 - known physical or mental conditions which have a high probability for developmental delays
- ▶ Children from birth - 3 may also be eligible if they have a specialist's determination that there is a delay even though it doesn't show up on the assessments (called informed clinical opinion)

Early Intervention services:

- ▶ Build upon the natural learning occurring in the first few years.
- ▶ Promote collaboration between parents, service providers, and others who impact children's lives.
- ▶ Meet the developmental needs of children with a disability and the needs of the family related to enhancing the child's development in one or more of the following areas:
 - Physical development, including vision and hearing
 - Cognitive development
 - Communication development
 - Social or emotional development
 - Adaptive development
- ▶ Are based on the child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP), developed by a team of professionals including the family, **and are delivered at no cost to families.**

How can families access Early Intervention services?

- ▶ **Parents:**
 - Contact the CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288 for local contacts.
 - Butler County: Families of children ages 0 - 3 years, contact the Center for Community Resources at (724) 431-0097;
 - Families of children ages 3 - 5 years, contact the Preschool Coordinator at Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV 724-458-6700.
- ▶ **Early learning programs** that feel a child may need EI Services: Discuss with the parents and have the parents contact the above contacts for services. Programs may also wish to offer *Free Developmental Screenings* to parents on location or refer them to screening sites within their community. This service is available by contacting Lifesteps' Child Check Program at (724)283-1010.
- ▶ Visit www.dpw.state.pa.us for parents' guides and other resources on Early Intervention.



Kids First Initiative of Family Pathways



Pennsylvania's
Children's Trust Fund

KIDS FIRST: An Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative...

The program goals of the Family Pathways' Kids First Program for at risk children and families are as follows:

- To "promote" early childhood social and emotional development.
 - Initiate local activities designed to increase awareness and understanding of early mental health.
 - Integrate social and emotional development activities into existing services.
 - Link with the evolving continuum of care designed to address the mental Health needs of young children.
- To "prevent" mental health disorders and their consequences.
 - Provide mental health consultation to parents and early childhood mental health providers.
 - Expand early identification approaches.
 - Provide family social service supports.
- To "treat" early childhood mental health disorders.
 - Provide services designed to address the distinct mental health needs of young children and their families, who are affected by maltreatment, substance abuse and domestic violence.
 - Expand the number of mental health clinicians trained and specialized treatment supports available to address early childhood mental health.
 - Provide expanded, specialized services for parents presenting with children exhibiting mental health disorders.

Kids First Services are developed along a continuum of care designed to meet the unique mental health needs of children ages:

0 to 3 ● ● ● 3 to 5 ● ● ● 5 to 7

Parents and teachers are keys to promoting the success of program services and positive outcomes for children.

Treatment Services for the family members: individual therapy, play therapy, family therapy, parent training, anger management, behavior coaching, and trauma treatment.

Services available for early childhood educators: (Preschool and elementary school) teacher training, classroom observations, parent consultations, individual behavioral plans, and a host of other resources.

Family Pathways is located at:

Monarch Place 100 Brugh Ave. Butler, PA 16001 Phone: 724-284-9440