

# For our kids and the economy, Pa. needs to invest in quality childcare: Michael Hanes



By **PennLive Op-Ed**

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## By Michael Hanes

As an executive with many years of experience in education and non-profit administration, I have often dealt with diminished employee productivity and absenteeism due to unpredictable and unreliable child care arrangements.

In fact, I know first-hand from our staff that finding safe, reliable care for their children is at the top of the list of considerations for young working families.

An American Business Collaboration report, however, states that 63 percent of member employees reported improved productivity while using quality dependent care.

More than half of employers responding to the survey reported that child care services had a positive impact on employee absenteeism reducing missed workdays by as much as 30 percent.

In tough economic times, access to high quality child care is crucial to the financial stability of working families.



## High quality childcare and preschool need to be budget priorities: PennLive letters

Research has shown that families with access to child care assistance are up to 15 percent more likely to be employed, stay off welfare and have higher earnings.

In addition to contributing to financial stability of families, these outcomes also strengthen the tax base.

When families are not able to access child care assistance, they may go into debt, return to public assistance, choose lower quality and less stable child care, or face untenable choices in their household budgets.

Child care costs are an extraordinarily high percentage of the household income for working, low-income families – comparable to their housing costs.



## Legislature, Wolf should act responsibly on funding for pre-k programs: Editorial

Subsidized child care programs such as Pennsylvania's Child Care Works can be the difference between self-sufficiency and improving a family's quality of life or depending on public assistance just to make ends meet.

Through the Child Care Works partnership, eligible families (under 200 percent of the federal poverty level) are responsible for a co-payment to the child care program and Child Care Works provides a state subsidy directly to the program.

Pennsylvania families can apply for [\*\*Child Care Works online through the COMPASS website.\*\*](#)

Participating in Child Care Works is a win-win-win situation. Parents win because they have peace of mind knowing that their children are receiving quality care.

In turn, employers benefit because parents become more productive employees.

And children win because they are in nurturing programs preparing them to enter school ready to learn and to succeed later in life.

For these reasons, I strongly support Gov. Tom Wolf's proposal to increase funding for Child Care Works in the state budget.

Wolf's proposal will allow 2,300 children to move from the program's waiting list to a quality care program and, at the same time, help their parents to get back to work.

Please join me in voicing your support for Child Care Works to your state legislators. Helping more families to access Child Care Works will provide better support for the workforce.

It will stimulate our local economy, making the Harrisburg region a better place to live.

**Michael Hanes is President & CEO of the Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts in Harrisburg. He serves on Pennsylvania's Early Learning Investment Commission.**

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