



# Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children's Statement on Rendell Final Budget Address** *Child Advocacy Organization Calls Governor's Budget Proposal a Mixed Bag*

HARRISBURG (Feb. 9, 2010) – Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children (PPC) today released its statement on Gov. Ed Rendell's budget proposal for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Of interest to PPC, the governor's \$29 billion spending plan includes an increase of more than \$350 million for basic education, a funding boost for child welfare and level funding for child care services. But the governor's proposed budget also includes reductions of a little more than \$1 million to Pre-K Counts and Head Start which could result in fewer children being served through these critical early education programs.

"While we are pleased with the governor's continued commitment to the school funding formula, it is disappointing that the administration would propose even a small cut to pre-kindergarten," said Joan L. Benso, president and CEO, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. "We also are pleased that the governor's budget continues to increase support for the efforts that safely reduce the number of children living in foster care and increase the likelihood that every child enjoys the benefits of a safe, stable and permanent family. We appreciate these commitments especially in these difficult budgetary times.

"But any cut to Pre-K Counts or Head Start is too big of a cut." Benso noted that Pre-K Counts and the Head Start State Supplemental received level funding when the final 2009-10 budget passed in October. Programs started enrolling children much later than usual due to the late budget passage facilitating approximately \$1 million in state funds for Pre-K Counts and the Head Start State Supplemental being placed into budgetary reserves. The governor's 2010-11 budget proposes to fund these programs at the level after resources were put into budgetary reserve this fiscal year rather than the level initially appropriated by the legislature. If the fiscal year had started on time, the opportunity to put these funds into budgetary reserve would not have been possible.

"There is no doubt that Pre-K Counts and Head Start are proven to help get young children ready for school and on the right track academically. The governor's proposed cuts make it likely that fewer children will be served next year," Benso said. "PPC will not rest until funding is restored to these valuable programs."

For more information, contact Kathy Geller Myers at PPC, 717-236-5680; [kgmyers@papartnerships.org](mailto:kgmyers@papartnerships.org) or visit us at [www.papartnerships.org](http://www.papartnerships.org)

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