



Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PENNSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN SAYS KIDS SPARED DAMAGING CUTS IN STATE BUDGET *Basic Ed Increase and Level-Funding of Pre-K Counts are Highlights*

HARRISBURG (Oct. 9, 2009) – PA Partnerships for Children (PPC) today released its statement on the passage of the 2009-10 budget. The \$27.8 billion spending plan includes, among other line items of interest to PPC, a \$300 million increase for basic education with the use of federal stimulus funds, a nearly \$8 million increase for County Child Welfare, and level funding for Pre-K Counts and Head Start.

“Under unprecedented fiscal challenges, we are pleased that a number of children’s programs avoided damaging cuts and some received increased funding,” said Joan L. Benso, President and CEO, PA Partnerships for Children (PPC). “Despite the length of the impasse, legislative leaders and the governor found a way to manage state and federal resources to help Pennsylvania’s children and families. We hope this budget will show that it is possible to compromise and prioritize children.

“The increase for basic education shows a commitment to maintaining progress, for the second year, in closing the Commonwealth’s adequacy gap,” Benso said. “Although enrollment will not grow from last year’s level, Pre-K Counts will continue its impressive track record of helping children who are at risk of education failure be ready for their academic careers.

“In the wake of increased demand for health care coverage, PA demonstrated why it is a leader among states when it comes to children’s health care coverage by increasing CHIP funding to a level that will hopefully avoid the creation of a waiting list. And additional funding was provided for county child welfare to continue protecting our most vulnerable children from abuse and neglect. We are disappointed, however, that child welfare finance reform was not considered with the budget. The reform proposal holds the promise of spending funds in a more

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targeted manner to drive improved outcomes for children.

“During the budget impasse a number of human service providers made sacrifices to continue to help those in need despite a lack of state funding. Child care providers are among this group of dedicated providers,” Benso added. “Unfortunately, some were forced to close but somehow many continued to serve working parents. With the passage of the state budget, the fragile child care infrastructure will receive much needed funding. There are more than 16,000 children on a waiting list for child care. Clearly we have much more work to be done to ensure all children have safe, high-quality child care.”

More information is available online at www.papartnerships.org or by contacting Kathy Geller Myers, PPC Communications Director, at 717-236-5680; 717-903-3716 (cell).

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