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## Make sure state budget has funds for pre-school

### Editor:

Our children may almost be out of school for the year, but now is time to ask ourselves if their education is a priority for Pennsylvania.

In the next few weeks, huge decisions will be made on funding for early education in Pennsylvania. Our state legislators will begin to deliberate the budget for 2007-2008, and if we don't voice our priorities, they may pick away at programs that are vital to our children's readiness for school and success in life.

I cannot stress enough how important our children's early education is to their future success in school and in life. When children start behind in school, they often stay behind. Children who receive quality early education start school on par with their classmates, and continue to achieve academically. Research has shown the benefits last a lifetime.

As part of his balanced budget proposal, Governor Rendell proposed the creation of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which would bring quality pre-kindergarten to more than 11,000 three and four year olds who are at risk of academic failure. He proposed the expansion of Keystone STARS so that child care programs can continue to improve the quality of early education they provide by meeting research-based standards and earning higher STAR ratings. He also proposed the expansion of Child Care Works to make sure that working families have access to reliable child care so that they can be more productive at work while their children grow.

Every child is Pennsylvania's future. Please voice your support for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, Keystone STARS, and Child Care Works to your legislators. If we don't voice our support, these programs may find themselves on permanent vacation.

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Director of Success By 6

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