

2024-2025 Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund and Strengthening Families™ ANNUAL REPORT



Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund

The purpose of the Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund (CTF) is to prevent child abuse and neglect. The CTF Board awards grants to local communities to support development of programs and solutions for children and families aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect. This grant funding recognizes that every family and community have unique needs. The funding can support innovative community-based practices or evidence-based and research-informed primary and secondary prevention programs dedicated to preventing abuse before it occurs.

The CTF Board believes that:

- Children have the right to be safe, nurtured, and protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children have the right to grow up in a supportive, stable, and permanent family.
- Children should be given the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Families and communities should be meaningfully engaged, trusted and supported to make decisions regarding the identification of needs and services.
- The social, economic, cultural, and racial diversity of communities should be acknowledged and respected.

The Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund (CTF) was established in December 1988 by Act 1988-151 [11 P.S. §§ 2231-2238] and is supported by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The CTF board funds programs with three-year grants to implement evidence-based or evidence-informed and promising practice programs. These are primary or secondary child abuse and neglect prevention programs based in home- and community-based settings that are designed to promote child and family well-being. The funded programs ensure families have resources and information they need to provide enriching and nurturing environments for their children. Grantees are asked to collaborate in their community, intentionally integrate the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors (SFPF) Framework into the work and create a plan to sustain their programs after CTF funds have expired.



In the year 2024-2025, the CTF Board held two listening sessions to learn more about past and current grantees' experience and to explore needs for funding in local communities.



Since its inception, CTF has invested more than \$43 million through 338 grants. A full list of former grantees, including the counties served, can be found on the Children's Trust Fund website at www.pactf.org.

Children's Trust Fund Board

CTF operates under the administration of the 15-member CTF Board, which is composed of legislators appointed by the House and Senate and citizens appointed by the Governor. The Deputy Secretary of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) serves as CTF's Executive Director and carries out the duties and responsibilities assigned by the board through OCDEL's Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports.

Board Members

- Norrell Atkinson, Public Member
- Paul DiLorenzo, Public Member
- Bruce Erb, Public Member
- Philip Falvo, Public Member
- Ann Flood, Representative, Pennsylvania State House District 138
- Jennie Hagerty, Public Member
- Art Haywood, Senator, Pennsylvania State Senate District 4
- Nacole Hough, Public Member
- Lindy Keefe, Public Member
- Daniel Laughlin, Senator, Pennsylvania State Senate District 49
- Jeanne McNeill, Representative, Pennsylvania State House District 133
- Lindsay Powell, Representative, Pennsylvania State House District 21
- Judy Ward, Senator, Pennsylvania State Senate District 30
- Kristi Lyons, Public Member
- Cathleen Palm, Public Member

Active Children's Trust Fund Grantees

Cohort 30 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2025)

- Community Connections for Children Inc. (Formerly Child Care Consultants)
- Columbia County Commissioners
- Family Service Association of Bucks County
- Jim Thorpe Area School District
- Maternal and Child Health Consortium
- National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
- The Learning Lamp

Cohort 31 (October 1, 2023-September 30, 2026)

- Family Service of Chester County
- Philadelphia Health Management Corporation

Cohort 32 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2027)

- Helping Hands Ministries, Inc*
- * Relinquished March 31, 2025

Evidence-based, Evidence-informed, and Promising Practice Programs Offered by CTF Grantees

- 24/7 Fatherhood Initiative Program
- Exchange Club Parent Aide Model
- Nursing-Legal Partnership
- Nurturing Parenting Program
- ParentChild+
- Parenting Wisely: Teen Edition
- Parents as Teachers
- Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)



Impact Statements

Through participation in the Exchange Club Parent Aide model, parents identify their needs and advocate for their family. One example was a mother who reflected that her caregivers were often absent when she was a child. She wants to provide something different for her child. She has become an advocate for her child at school to ensure they receive the services they need.

~ Family Service of Chester County

Over time, caregivers in the program reached out proactively for support when challenges occurred to learn how they could avoid a crisis. They expressed that they wanted to build skills to develop self-sufficiency. Aligned with supporting self-sufficiency and self-advocacy, resource navigation staff created tools to help families access services. An example was a checklist for caregivers to gather needed information and documentation to submit a complete application for child care assistance to avoid lengthy processing time due to missing information or errors.

~ National Nurse-Led Care Consortium

A first-time mother enrolled in the CTF-funded program improved her relationship with her child and learned developmentally appropriate expectations. She was frustrated that her 14-month-old baby was not potty trained and viewed his squirming and not sitting on the toilet as defiance or stubbornness. With the help of her parent educator, the mother, she stopped pushing him to be potty trained and was visibly less frustrated.

~ The Learning Lamp

Funds for CTF are generated from a surcharge on all applications for marriage licenses and divorce complaints, private donations, a state income tax check-off option, and online vehicle registration and driver's license renewal options that are paid into a special non-lapsing fund.

Send your contributions to:

Children's Trust Fund

Department of Human Services
Office of Child Development and Early Learning
607 South Drive
4th Floor Rotunda
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Professional Development and Learning Communities

All grantees were invited to participate in quarterly Learning Communities focused on the promotion of family well-being and the prevention of child maltreatment and provided networking opportunities to share best practices and resources. Topics in the 2024-2025 year included recruitment of families, using the Pennsylvania Family Support Data Collection System, strategies for creating and sustaining supportive teams, and engaging communities in child maltreatment prevention efforts.

Grantees had the opportunity to attend other learning opportunities related to Be Strong Parent Cafés, the expanded definitions of the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors, supporting fathers, and trauma-informed approaches to social and emotional competence for children and adults.

At the April 4, 2025, CTF Grantee Annual Meeting, grantees, CTF Board members, OCDEL, and Center for Schools and Communities (CSC) staff had the opportunity to network and discuss program successes and community collaboration.

Children's Trust Fund Fiscal Report

Based on state fiscal year:

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Beginning Balance	\$1,229,258
Total Revenue	\$1,450,980
• Marriage/Divorce Fees	\$1,039,934
• PennDOT Donations	\$314,572
• Investment Income	\$71,902
• Donations	\$24,572
Total Funds Available	\$2,680,239
Total Expenditures	\$851,176
• Grant Payments	\$590,689
• Contracted Technical Assistance	\$260,488
Ending Balance	\$1,829,062



Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Leadership Team

Pennsylvania Strengthening Families Leadership Team (SFLT) activities are supported in part by the CTF Board, which contracts with CSC to facilitate this work. SFLT works to promote the inclusion of the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework into policies, programs, and practices in multiple family service systems throughout the Commonwealth. The team consists of leaders in various systems and communities. CSC coordinated four SFLT meetings in 2024-2025, focused on effectively embedding the Strengthening Families™ approach in organizations and systems, developing materials about the Protective Factors, and promoting family engagement and leadership.

Strengthening Families™ is a strengths-based approach to prevention of child abuse and neglect that promotes the development of protective factors within families. Center for the Study of Social Policy identified five research-informed protective factors that support caregivers to create nurturing and safe environments for their children. Family support programs can use the protective factors framework to guide their work with families and their child abuse and neglect prevention efforts in their communities. The approach provides a shared language that can guide collaboration and advocacy efforts.

CTF grantees and family support professionals from around the Commonwealth deepened their understanding of the protective factors at the 2025 Strengthening Families Conference: Social Connections That Strengthen Us. Through engaging workshops and inspiring keynote speakers, attendees explored building relationships with families, communication strategies, forging community partnerships, and ensuring equity. Michael Huesca, CEO of Paternal Opportunities Programs and Services (POPS), delivered a powerful lunchtime keynote about the importance of creating father-friendly programs and how kindness builds connection. Dr. Argie Allen Wilson, Co-founder of Connections Matter, LLC, closed the conference with a heartfelt and inspiring talk on the power of human connection, moving from judgment to empathy, and the need for self-care—so we can show up fully for others and ourselves.

Additional professional learning opportunities included webinars, listening sessions, learning communities, and workshops. Through Be Strong Parent Café Training Institutes, teams of parents and staff learned to offer Parent Cafés in their local communities. Cafés create safe spaces for guests to engage in peer-to-peer learning and conversation about parenting and the Strengthening Families Protective Factors.

792 people

participated in professional learning experiences aimed at promoting child and family well-being and child abuse and neglect prevention in 2024-2025



64 participants attended the Cohort 32 Orientation and four Children's Trust Fund Learning Communities.



31 participants attended the CTF board-hosted listening session.



172 participants attended three Children's Trust Fund-focused Family Support Webinars.



49 participants attended three Parent Café Training Institutes.



72 participants attended four Parent Café Learning Communities.



27 participants attended three Hosting Meaningful Café Conversations Workshops.



127 participants attended four listening sessions to support family support professionals with changes in the field.



250 participants attended the 2025 Strengthening Families Conference held in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.