

**HEAD START** is a federally-funded preschool program for children from low-income families. In Pennsylvania, the program is operated by a variety of local non-profit agencies, including public school systems.

Head Start provides a high quality education program to children and their families. In addition, the program makes sure that children receive the medical services they need. To get more information about a local head start program in your area, call **1-877-4PA-KIDS. (1-877-472-5437)**



– Please Call or Write –

## Mark M. Gillen

State Representative  
128<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

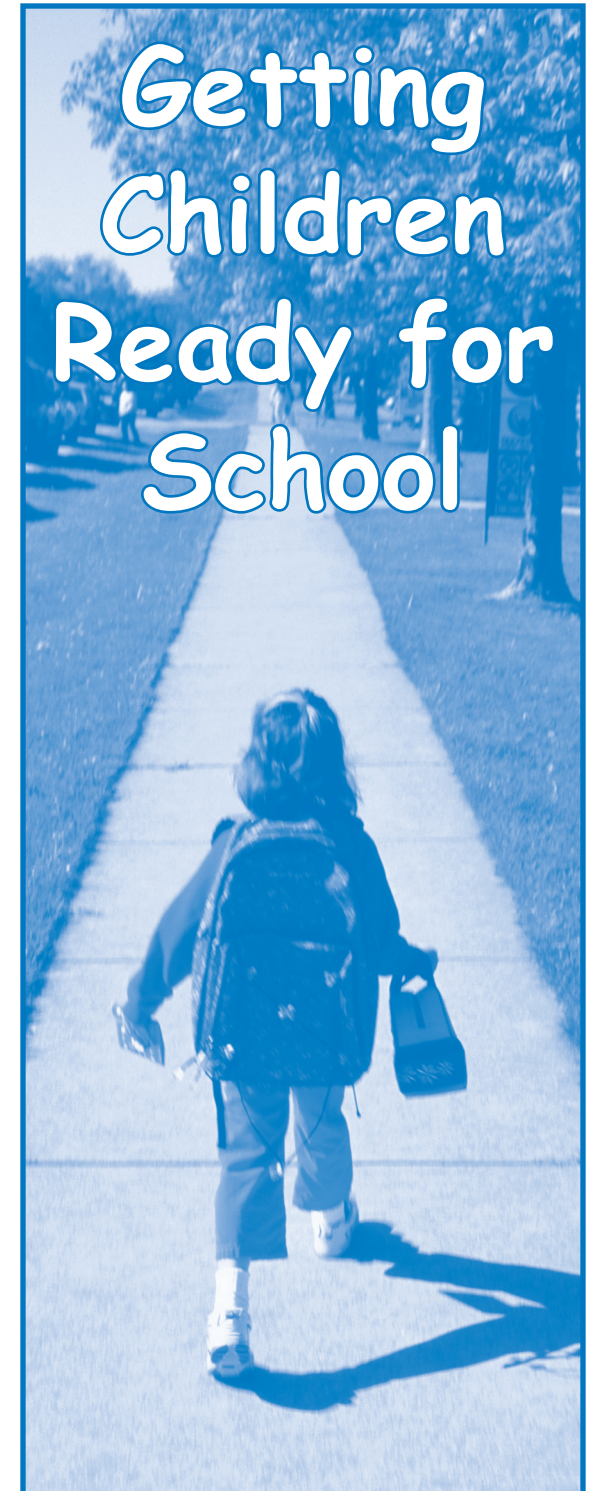
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# SCHOOL READINESS

Children in Pennsylvania deserve to be “ready to learn” when entering kindergarten or first grade. They should have appropriate nutritional and health care, access to quality pre-school and day care programs, parental guidance at home, and instruction on basic skills.

If you are getting ready to send a child off to school, this information may be helpful.

One of the most important ways parents can get their children ready for school is by being their **CHILD’S FIRST TEACHER**. Children are more likely to succeed in school when parents do the following:

- 1) Encourage reading in the home.
- 2) Spend time talking and doing things with your children.
- 3) Teach self reliance in order to build self-confidence and independence.
- 4) Guide children in the development of social skills.
- 5) Monitor your child’s use of the television.

For more information about how you can get your child ready for kindergarten, call **CONNECT** Information Service at **1-800-692-7288**.

Part of getting your child “ready to learn” is making sure they receive the proper **NUTRITION** to keep their bodies healthy and strong. Your preschoolers (between the ages of one and six) learn how to eat right from what you feed them. What your children learn about food when they are young will be important for the rest of their lives. To receive information about good nutrition call the Department of Health’s toll-free number **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

If you have children under 5 years old, live in Pennsylvania and meet income guidelines you could be eligible for the **WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) PROGRAM**. WIC provides healthy foods, health and nutrition information in addition to immunization screenings to those families that qualify. To find out more information about the WIC Program or to find the office nearest you, call **1-800-WIC-WINS (1-800-942-9467)**.

**IMMUNIZATION** is a key requirement in getting children ready to enter school. Before children can start school they need proof that they have had the necessary shots. For more information about receiving childhood immunizations call **1-800-986-KIDS (1-800-986-5437)**.

**REGULAR CHECK-UPS** are important for growing children. All children, even if they are healthy, need regular check-ups. If you can’t afford regular check-ups, they may be free through the Love’em with a Check-up and WIC nutrition program. To see if you are eligible

call **1-800-986-KIDS** or **1-800-WIC-WINS (1-800-942-9467)**.

**PENNSYLVANIA’S CHILDREN’S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (CHIP)** offers working families that do not have health insurance for kids free or reduced cost health insurance.

Call **1-800-986-KIDS (1-800-986-5437)** to find out if your child is eligible for free or subsidized care.

**EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS** help families develop their child’s potential. Parents who have questions about their child’s development or disability should talk with their family physician, school district, intermediate unit, or county mental health/mental retardation office. The **CONNECT Helpline, 1-800-692-7288**, can answer questions about child development and specific disabilities.

The **SPECIAL KIDS NETWORK** has regional offices to link callers to services for children with special health care needs. Examples of services include health care products, training, recreation and leisure, social services, counseling, support and advocacy, and therapy. To reach the Special Kids Network call **1-800-986-4550**.

**QUALITYDAYCARESERVICES** are important to you as a parent. Select a program that meets you and your child’s needs. For more information about the available day cares in your area call the toll-free number **1-877-4PA-KIDS. (1-877-472-5437)**