



## Choosing a Quality Child Care Program

Selecting a child care program for your child(ren) is an important yet often very difficult decision.

Not all child care programs are the same — and unfortunately, abuse and neglect do happen sometimes while children are in care. Your child will spend a lot of time at this location, so you want to ensure it is a safe environment, free from abuse and neglect. It should also be an environment where your child can grow and thrive — helping your child develop good relationships and skills that prepare them for school by age 5. You

should also feel comfortable with the staff and feel that your concerns are heard, and communication about your child goes both ways between you and the staff.

Selecting such a child care option can feel like a daunting task. Here are some tips and questions to ask when looking at child care options.

**Ensure the child care is licensed by the state.** Whether it is an in-home daycare or a daycare facility, a licensed child care program meets the basic requirements to be open as a provider. This means, at minimum, the staff have their clearances, the physical space is deemed safe, the facility follows staffing requirements to ensure there are enough staff supervising and caring for the children present,

and regular inspections occur to ensure compliance.

**Search for child care and early learning programs near you and find out about each facility's certification history** (to include any licensing violations current or past) by visiting **COMPASS HHS Provider Search Home** ([state.pa.us](https://state.pa.us)).

**Talk to other parents who have children at the child care center.** Obtaining and following up on references for the child care program you are interested in can give you good insight into the experiences of other families.

**Visit the child care center.** Visiting the location and speaking with the director and staff is a helpful step in making a connection and deciding if the environment is right for you and your child. Do you feel comfortable there? Do other children appear happy and cared for? Do children appear to be learning? Do the staff seem knowledgeable and engaged with the children?

**In Pennsylvania, quality providers participate in an accrediting program called Keystone STARS** — the rating tells you where they are in that accrediting program. The more stars a provider has, the closer their program aligns with the accrediting requirements.

**Questions to ask potential centers to help you select the best option for you and your child(ren):**

- ▶ What hours and days are you open?
- ▶ How much does it cost?
- ▶ Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- ▶ What age groups do you serve?
- ▶ Are there openings for my child's age group?
- ▶ Can I come visit with my child?

- ▶ Can I visit my child anytime?
- ▶ How do you handle discipline?
- ▶ Where do the children sleep? If you have an infant — do you ensure that babies sleep on their backs?
- ▶ Are you licensed?
- ▶ Do you participate in the Keystone STARS program?

**When making the decision, ask yourself:**

- ▶ Which child care should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- ▶ Which caregiver can meet any special accommodations for my child?
- ▶ Are the caregiver's values compatible with my family's values?
- ▶ Is the child care available and affordable according to my family's needs and resources?
- ▶ Do I feel good about my decision?

**Selecting a child care provider that is safe and a good fit for your family is well worth the time and effort.**

## Additional Resources

In Pennsylvania, the **Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs)** are your hub for child care information. They are available to answer your child care questions and assist you (if needed) in getting set up with the **Child Care Works** program for subsidized child care.

The Department of Human Services also has a page dedicated to assisting you with selecting a child care provider: **5 Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider** ([pa.gov](https://pa.gov)).

## MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING TRAINER SPOTLIGHT

# Greg Phillips



We recently interviewed Greg, who has been a contracted trainer for PFSA since 2016. Here is what he said about why he is so passionate about training mandated reporters.

### **Why do you care about mandated reporters of child abuse?**

*Each child is precious and deserving of a childhood as it was intended...free from harm. We as mandated reporters have an important responsibility to play our part in ensuring this. It's my hope that each of us has the knowledge and tools to respond when necessary.*

### **Why do you train for PFSA?**

*The vision of PFSA is something I find powerful and aspirational. I also believe in making the right thing to do the easy thing to do. Training for PFSA is one small thing I can do to help ensure the safety of children in our communities.*

**We appreciate the wealth of knowledge Greg brings to each training he provides to mandated reporters. He looks forward to meeting you in his trainings!**



## WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

PFSA is excited to offer opportunities for your agency or community to host a Family Digital Wellness workshop! The workshop(s) can be delivered virtually or in-person, with multiple topics and options available. PFSA will provide necessary content, facilitation, and resources for all workshops, and hosting agencies will be responsible for participant recruitment. Participant groups may include internal staff, professional partners, community members, or a combination of groups.

### **Workshop topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- ▶ Overview of Family Digital Wellness
- ▶ The Digital Diligence Framework
- ▶ The Seven Levels of Digital Diligence
- ▶ Foundations of Family Digital Wellness
- ▶ Common and Emerging Digital Dangers
- ▶ The Role and Impact of Artificial Intelligence

Workshop opportunities are first-come, first-serve and dates are made available upon request. To learn more or to request a workshop, contact PFSA Prevention Services Manager Justin Donofrio at [jdonofrio@pafsa.org](mailto:jdonofrio@pafsa.org).



# UPCOMING PFSA TRAININGS

## Families in Recovery New Facilitator Training

This research-based program is a great resource for parents, guardians, and caretakers recovering from substance use disorder. The program aims to teach healthy coping and parenting skills while balancing the needs of recovery.

New facilitators of the Families in Recovery (FiR) program will be fully prepared to implement the program and provide training after attending a two-day comprehensive session consisting of content, education, and application instruction of the curriculum. FiR facilitators come together to share program implementation experience, ideas, and insights following initial training.

All organizations interested in implementing the Families in Recovery program are required to enter an agreement contract with PFSA and participate in the evaluation requirements of the program. FiR contracts include ongoing technical assistance, program development, facilitator calls, and assistance with data collection procedures.

**Dates:** July 16 & 17, 2024 (virtual)  
October 22 & 23, 2024 (virtual)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
(half-hour lunch break)

**Cost:** Email Justin Donofrio, Prevention Services Manager, at [jdonofrio@pafsa.org](mailto:jdonofrio@pafsa.org) for the paperwork or to ask any questions.

## Mandated Reporter Training

PFSA has several options for mandated reporter training for staff and volunteers. Certificates are provided to the participants, and, upon request, we will upload confirmation of your training to the Departments of State or Education for CE fulfillments under Act 31 and/or Act 48. CLEs are also available for attorneys.

### LIVE IN-PERSON/VIRTUAL

**Cost:** Free

**How to register:** Find and register for a virtual session here: [pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training](https://pafsa.org/mandated-reporter-training)

### INDIVIDUAL ONLINE, ON-DEMAND

**Cost:** \$30

**Take anytime:** [pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training](https://pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training)

### TRAIN-THE-TRAINER

This is an opportunity for organizations to develop their own quality, cost-efficient, in-house training program for employees on child abuse recognition and reporting.

**Dates:** July 25 & 26, 2024 (virtual)  
October 22 & 23, 2024 (virtual)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
(half-hour lunch break)

**Cost:** \$1,000 per trainer, entering into a three-year contract with PFSA. Email Haven Evans, Director of Programs, at [hevans@pafsa.org](mailto:hevans@pafsa.org) for the paperwork or to ask any questions.

Join us!



# PA Child Abuse **PREVENTION** **SYMPOSIUM**



**NOV 7<sup>th</sup>**

**CREDITS**  
ACT 48 | CEUs | CLEs

## Registration Now Open!

Mark your calendar and plan to join us virtually on November 7, 2024, for PFSA's annual PA Child Abuse Prevention Symposium!

## #ProtectPAKids

Help us support the families and communities across Pennsylvania by donating to PFSA today. Your gift will help PFSA continue to deliver successful training, education, and ongoing support to PA families and children.

Visit [pafsa.org](https://pafsa.org) to learn more and to donate!



## Visit Our Blog!

Stay up-to-date on ways to help stop child abuse, learn more about our staff, and gain knowledge on prevention by reading our blog.

[pafsa.org/blog](https://pafsa.org/blog)



## Visit Our Store!

PFSA has educational resources available in our online store. You can find informative materials covering a wide range of topics designed to assist caregivers, parents, and professionals in an effort to protect children.

Please visit [pafsa.org/store](https://pafsa.org/store) to learn more!