



## Please co-sponsor legislation on public recreation programs

Representative Bernie O'Neill is now seeking co-sponsors for legislation that would amend the Human Services Code to exempt public preschool recreation programs from certification requirements of preschool child day care center facilities by the Department of Human Services.

*The Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) supports Representative's O'Neill's legislation, and respectfully requests your co-sponsorship of the bill.*

Public recreation agencies provide needed emotional, cognitive, communicative, perceptual-motor, physical and social development of children outside the confines of a "child day care center."

PRPS is the statewide professional association providing industry leadership, training and resources to those who work or volunteer in parks, recreation, athletics, aquatics, playgrounds, therapeutic recreation, trails, greenways, and other healthful indoor and outdoor quality-of-life opportunities and related essential community services.

PRPS and municipal recreation agencies across the state are strongly committed to the safety and security of children enrolled in their day camps, swim lessons, nature play, and other indoor and outdoor recreation programs. This commitment includes strict legal and ethical standards in staff recruitment and training.

However, while the General Assembly passed this section of the Human Services Code to regulate *day care facilities*, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has interpreted the statute to require certification of municipal recreation programs that often take place outside of anything that would be reasonably considered to be a "child day care center facility." This means that it is often impractical or impossible for a municipal recreation program to meet the certification requirements, and could well mean that many such programs cannot be offered, creating a unfilled demand for child services—or face legal consequences.

Local recreation agencies do not operate independently, as do most small business day care centers, but are under the control of municipal governments, and work alongside their local police and fire departments and EMT and ambulance services.

Moreover, on behalf of recreation and park professionals throughout the state, PRPS has created an official [Preschool Protocol](#) standard that addresses the core operational concerns of public preschool recreation programs.

Municipal recreational programs provide opportunities for exercise, learning, growth and discovery for our youth outside the role and ability of traditional child day care facilities. For more information on this issue, please see the [PRPS Position Statement](#) on Child Day Care Center Certification Regulations.

On behalf of our more than 2000 professional member practitioners across the Commonwealth, PRPS appreciates your consideration of our position.