



EveryChild CALIFORNIA

Standing with the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workforce

EveryChild California acknowledges the contributions of the ECE Workforce and appreciates all those who nurture, educate and care for young children every day; these tasks are inextricably intertwined. We recognize that during the early years, all who care for children are educating them, and all who educate children are caring for them. The ECE Workforce – including early educators, family childcare providers, and other ECE professionals – profoundly impacts our children, and also contributes to long-term positive outcomes for families, the economy, and society.

Our Children: The early years (0-5 years) are widely documented as the most critical time in a child’s development of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Studies have shown that this period is when the most dramatic brain development occurs; 90% of brain development occurs before the age of 5. Developing a strong foundation to support a child’s mental and physical health and behavior throughout their life during the early years is crucial. The professionals who care for and educate young children have a lifelong impact on their future achievement and wellbeing. Recognizing the importance of shaping the future of the children in their care, the ECE Workforce also ensures that children thrive in the present, and can rise to their full potential in the here and now. These professionals plan and implement developmentally-appropriate activities to support children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development. These activities are also responsive to the individual needs of each child, the collective needs of the children in a program, and to the multi-cultural nature of California’s communities.

Families: Honoring parents as their children’s first teachers, ECE professionals partner with families to learn about a child’s individualized needs, mentor and coach families on child development, share strategies to encourage learning at home, and provide parenting resources. According to the National Conference on State Legislatures, 50% of ECE professionals have at least 13 years in the field. This extensive experience, and the accompanying knowledge, skills, and competencies, makes these professionals important partners for all families (<https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/the-early-care-and-education-workforce.aspx>).

The Economy: ECE professionals are the backbone of the mixed delivery childcare system, which is an essential component of a thriving economy. The ECE Workforce recognizes the importance of their own work; ECE professionals continue to dedicate themselves to and emotionally invest in this complex work, despite low wages. Access to ECE programs “increases parents’ participation in the workforce and contributes to overall economic productivity. Conversely, lack

of affordable, reliable childcare takes a major toll on the economy, as working families across the country lose more than \$8 billion in wages annually due to inadequate childcare access” (<https://www.ffyf.org/why-it-matters/economic-impact/>). Furthermore, female labor force participation increases by as much as 10 percentage points with access to high quality ECE programs (<https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/investing-early-care-education-economic-benefits-california/>). In early 2003, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (Bank), published its groundbreaking white paper, “Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return,” in which it suggested a \$1.5 billion investment in quality ECE programs throughout the state of Minnesota as an economic development strategy, positing that such an investment would yield greater economic returns than more conventional economic development strategies. Since then, the Bank has continued to lead economists across the Federal Reserve System and policymakers nationwide on the role of ECE in driving economic development (<https://www.minneapolisfed.org/topic/early-childhood-development>)

Society: The ECE Workforce plays a critical role in facilitating positive impacts on society as a whole. The often-cited 40-year longitudinal Perry Preschool Study demonstrated that for every dollar invested in the program during the 1960s, more than \$8 in benefits to society were returned through a combination of improved school performance, increased wages, decreased crime, decreased welfare payments, and other factors. Equally critical was the Abecedarian Project, which found that providing children from low-income families a full-time, high quality ECE experience from 0-5 resulted in higher academic achievement in both reading and math into young adulthood, the inference being that such achievement would lead to higher paying jobs and lower reliance on public assistance.

In acknowledgement of the critical importance and impact of the ECE Workforce, EveryChild California supports:

- 1. Appropriate compensation levels and benefits for ECE teachers, commensurate with skills, experience, and the outputs and outcomes they produce;**
- 2. Work conditions that facilitate the ability of ECE teachers to adequately meet the needs of the children in their care while allowing for healthy work/life balance; and**
- 3. Meaningful opportunities for career advancement no matter where ECE teachers enter the field.**

EveryChild California, an Association of Leaders Advancing Early Learning, provides leadership and technical assistance to the early education field while working hard to be a steadfast and strong voice for all of California's children and families. We advocate for programs across the state, by supporting the development of the child's social, emotional, and intellectual well-being, all while in a safe and high-quality learning environment.