Vision
Every family in the United States has access to a high quality, affordable child care system.

Mission
We advance a child care system that effectively serves all children and families.

Who We Are
We are a national nonprofit membership and policy organization whose core mission is to ensure that every family in the United States has access to high quality, affordable child care.

Our work is focused on three strategic pillars:

- Public policy and advocacy
- Membership
- Family and community engagement

Our Public Policy and Advocacy initiatives are focused on conducting and publishing evidence-based research to influence decision-makers to develop child care systems that meet the needs of children and families—and by creating and activating a strong advocacy network at the community, state, and national level to guide the formation of new and improved policies.

Our work is strengthened by a national network of child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies, and a diverse network of members and partners. We foster coordinated national networks that develop and expand child and family-focused leadership as key components of the child care system. We are committed to opportunities for increased professionalism of the workforce to improve the quality of child care in every community.

Families are children’s most important teachers, and we promote family and community engagement as an essential part of children’s development and long-term success. We strive to be the leading source of information for how families select and find quality, affordable, and accessible child care. We promote the role of child care as a key element of communities, industries, and systems that support the developing child and families.
Who We Serve

We serve children and families by supporting the development of child care systems with highly skilled professionals who create high-quality, nurturing environments that allow children to fulfill their greatest potential.

More than 160,000 military families have relied on Child Care Aware® of America to administer a referral and subsidy fee assistance program to support their child care needs, through which we have been able to connect families to a network of more than 10,000 licensed child care practitioners. And our Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Respite Care program provides much needed support to families who have children with special needs.

Each year, we make thousands of connections between parents and child care practitioners through our Child Care Aware® program, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Our national hotline and website serves as a trusted source for consumer information on a wide range of topics regarding the selection of affordable, quality child care.

We work with more than 500 child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs) across the country through the provision of national advocacy, policy analysis, training, resources, technical support, best practice guidance, and national partnership opportunities in the areas of child care and early learning.

What We Do

Public Policy and Advocacy

Child Care Aware® of America is the “nation’s leading voice for child care” – a position we’ve held for 30 years! With more than 11 million children of working parents in some form of child care for an average of 36 hours each week, child care continues to place a financial burden on families and our economy as a whole. Families rely on child care in order to work, yet when child care is not affordable or available, there’s a huge impact on business.

Our policy team actively engages on Capitol Hill to promote policies that ensure access to quality child care and early learning services for all children, and collaborates with online policy action networks comprised of 125,000 online advocates from across the country to support states in their child care policy initiatives. In 2016, we launched the Child Care Works movement designed to mobilize individuals at the local, state, and federal level to make child care a priority through legislative victories, and by shifting public opinion about the urgent need for improved child care. Child Care Works is working in partnership with states on local child care advocacy efforts by supporting their grassroots and digital advocacy strategies.

Child Care Aware® of America’s Family Advocacy network is more than 32,000 members strong, all of whom have committed to take action to support the need for quality, affordable child care for all families. And, more than 250 parents have participated in our Family Advocacy Summit and Day on Hill to share their personal stories with decision-makers.
Our emergency preparedness program focuses on training CCR&R agency staff and child care providers, providing technical assistance, developing resources, engaging with key stakeholders and advancing the national dialogue on the important role of child care before, during, and after emergencies. In addition, we support the new emergency preparedness requirements, mandated through the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014.

Thanks to a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Child Care Aware® of America provides technical assistance activities in targeted states emphasizing health, nutrition, and obesity prevention, key components of CCDBG implementation.

Research
Child Care Aware® of America is the source of comprehensive and definitive reports on the child care system. We believe that the people making child care decisions affecting child care services, policies, and funding must have access to clear, credible data and solid research to inform their choices. Our research team publishes annual studies, including State Fact Sheets, which provide community leaders and policymakers with important data regarding the state of quality child care and early learning in their respective states, and the highly visible Parents and High Cost of Child Care report that examines the cost and affordability of child care across states. Also, the team explores such issues as the scarcity of child care (child care deserts), the supply of quality child care for vulnerable families, health and wellness, and the availability of child care for those who need coverage for Non-Traditional Hours (NTH) of care.

Professional Development
There is a growing demand for high quality training, not only for those that work directly with children and youth, but those that support them such as coaches/TA providers and other quality improvement roles. Child Care Aware® of America is proud to be a partner in the federal early childhood training and technical assistance (T/TA) program that supports high-quality services for children and families. We work in conjunction with partner organizations to ensure that all children, especially children who experience poverty and other challenging circumstances, have early childhood experiences that build the foundation for their success in school life.

Since October 2015, we have been engaged in the following centers:

- National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning
- National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
- National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

We also work in partnership with ZERO TO THREE in the operation of the National Center on Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. The national centers work to ensure a consistently high level of practice in areas that cut across all centers, such as culturally and linguistically responsive services; data use and continuous improvement; and supports for children with disabilities and their families.
Family and Community Engagement

We believe families are children’s most important teachers and relationships throughout a child’s life from home, school and community are integral to their wellbeing, academic and lifelong success. We work to strengthen the role of child care as a key element of communities that support families and children’s development. Quality, affordable, safe and healthy child care is of value to all and particularly important to vulnerable children. Our team is harnessing family voices from across the nation to guide the development of resources that help families make quality child care choices. Our Family and Community Engagement team also works with national and state partners and families to raise awareness surrounding family engagement and jointly develop a family and community engagement agenda around shared priorities.

Through a partnership engagement with Bezos Family Foundation, and in collaboration with our CCR&Rs across the country, we encourage family engagement through the Vroom program. Vroom is a national initiative that empowers parents to turn everyday activities into brain building moments for their children. Launched in 2015, the Vroom initiative has rolled out through Child Care Aware® of America’s nationwide CCR&R network reaching hundreds of thousands of parents with brain building messages and nurturing parent-child interaction with new tools.

How We Help Make Child Care Work

Referral and Subsidy Fee Administration for Military, Government, and Commercial Sectors

Child Care Aware® of America is proud to support the military and other government agencies with referral and fee assistance administration services. Our custom fee assistance portal has processed fee assistance applications for more than 160,000 families in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force and coordinates referrals for parents who are service members with licensed child care providers. The security protocols, quality and internal controls, and automated capabilities in calculating payments and generating reports makes our fee administration program a solution for both government and commercial customers.

National Data System (NDS)

Child Care Aware® of America’s proprietary National Data System (NDS) was developed specifically for the child care field to allow stakeholders at the local, state and federal level to capture important data in order to better understand the child care landscape. Agencies in 36 states utilize NDS to map child care programs, provide referrals to parents, manage training and technical assistance, maintain tracking registries, and generate data around program quality. More than 5,000 CCR&Rs and government staff use NDS to support parent referrals and professional development, and over 6.5 million child care referrals are offered to families through NDS annually. NDS serves as a valuable tool for policy change and systems planning and continues to evolve to the growing demand for child care data.
National Training Academy™

Professional development for the child care workforce is one of the cornerstones of Child Care Aware® of America’s Strategic Plan. Our online training portal provides more than 300 courses for center-based and family child care practitioners. The program meets the 120-hour Child Care Development Associate (CDA) credential and 45-hour CDA renewal training requirements, along with continuing education units. In keeping with the evolving child care landscape and our commitment to providing the highest quality professional development opportunities, we will be strengthening our professional development systems with tools such as training quality assurance and coaching and technical assistance tools. Each year, thousands of child care practitioners log on to our Training Academy portal to acquire and maintain their credentials and enhance their skills.

How We Measure Our Success

Our work will not be complete until every family in the United States has access to quality, affordable child care. In the meantime, here are some of the ways we are making a positive impact:

- Over 160,000 Military families and 200,000 children have received Child Care Subsidy services since program inception, and we have processed almost 15 million payments
- More than 551,000 visitors came to the Child Care Aware® website and viewed more than 1,305,000 pages
- More than 51,000 calls from parents and child care practitioners were answered by our hotline in 2016
- More than 124,000 used the Child Care Aware® child care search tool on our web site
- More than 32,000 Family Advocates have signed-on to take action through our online advocacy platform
- More than 860,000 families each year find child care solutions through CCR&Rs
- More than 125,000 online advocates support our Public Policy initiatives
- More than 3000 courses were taken on Training Academy in 2016
- Over 4 million media impressions were received on our 2016 Families and the High Cost of Cost of Child Care report
How We’re Funded

Child Care Aware® of America relies on the generosity of public and private support from government agencies, foundations, corporations, and individuals to carry out our mission of ensuring that every family in the United States has access to high quality, affordable child care. Our work with military families is supported through various contracts with the United States Department of Defense, with additional support from the United States Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Child Care.

Private philanthropic support underwrites research, policy development, and quality improvement initiatives.

To learn more about how you can make a donation or become a philanthropic partner, email us at giving@usa.childcareaware.org or call 571-303-2341.