

What Can **YOU** Do...

to make affordable quality child care and a well-compensated child care workforce a reality?



It's a common question. Why do parents spend so much on child care, yet early childhood teachers earn so little? The average cost of child care is out of reach for many families and rivals college tuition, while early educators are among the lowest paid workers in the country. How is this possible?

High-quality early care and education experiences, to which early educators are essential, provide lasting benefits to children, our economy and society, but receive only minimal public investment. [The Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley](#) and [Child Care Aware® of America](#) teamed up to create a new video that explains why parents cannot afford to pay, educators cannot afford to stay and to propose a solution for a better way to support children, their families and early educators.

With just a few steps a week or a month, depending on your schedule, you can make a big difference in getting kids, families, and teachers the public funding they need.

Here's how you can impact the lives of children and families:

- **Talk to friends and family and share on social media.** Don't be afraid to tell people about what you've learned. Whether it's new research in the field, an action alert regarding state or federal legislation, or your own personal experience with child care, the story about affordable child care and a well-compensated workforce needs to be told.
- **Sign on to petitions and action alerts from national and state organizations fighting for the same goals you are.** Subscribe to their newsletters so you're always aware of early education issues on a national and state level.
- **Write a letter to the editor of your local paper.** What's your issue? Talk about gaps in child care access or funding in your state. Respond to an article about lack of parity in child care salaries with an op-ed or letter to the editor. Share the latest research on child care and the child care workforce. Provide perspectives on legislation or candidates who should be focused on early education.
- **Attend city council or county council meetings, and public board meetings and hearings.** Bring up issues of child care cost or availability in your area or state and the need for increased wages for providers in order to recruit and retain a well-qualified workforce.
- **Show up to candidate town halls, roundtables, debates and other events.** These can happen year-round, so be sure to track them. When you talk to candidates, ask about their plans to invest in early care and education including how they plan to help struggling families afford high-quality care and pay providers a living wage.
- **Visit your senator and representatives' district offices.** Share updates about new initiatives in child care funding, data reports on child care/the status of the workforce, and news about child care in your community or state.
- **Join children's coalitions and organizational boards.** Make sure your perspective (whether it's as a provider, CCR&R, or parent) is represented.



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Sample Questions to Ask Legislators in Your State

- Child care is unavailable and unaffordable for many families in my state with costs often exceeding the average price of public college tuition. Do you support legislation to address this crisis and help more families with their child care costs?
- Despite the high costs parents pay, child care teachers earn some of the lowest wages of anyone in the country. Will you support increased public investments to improve child care quality by increasing compensation and workplace supports for early educators, without increasing costs to families?
- My state's funding for child care assistance is insufficient to cover all children eligible for subsidies and to support high-quality child care including adequate salaries for child care teachers. Would you support increasing funding in the state budget to expand access to all eligible children and to raise reimbursement rates so that they cover the true cost of quality care?
- Only 6 percent of low income workers, such as child care providers, receive paid family leave benefits. Would you support legislation to provide benefits such as health care and paid sick leave for child care providers?
- The United States spends a lower percentage of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on early child care than almost any other industrialized nation. Would you support increased investments in early care and education to improve our system, increase pay for teachers, and make quality care more accessible and affordable for all families?
- What will you do to help more families afford high-quality child care?
- What will you do to ensure a living wage for child care providers?
- How will you make sure no family pays more than seven percent of their income to child care?
- How do you plan to make early care and education a priority in your administration?



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