

# HIGH-QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

## CORE MESSAGES

**Solution.** We must increase funding for high-quality child care to ensure affordability and access for all families, including those in greatest need.

**Problem.** Working families, children, early educators, and our economy are all harmed because we do not fund child care as a public good.

**Call to action.** Investing in high-quality, affordable child care now is our chance to make a powerful commitment to our youngest generation and our future workforce.

## MAKING THE CASE

- **Community impact.** The future of our communities depends on our investment in high-quality, affordable, and accessible child care. Strong communities start with strong families. Investing in young children's healthy development pays off for everyone. Babies grow healthier, parents have more opportunities to work, and our economy strengthens.
- **Early childhood development.** Babies and toddlers only get one chance at a strong start in life. The brain develops faster from birth to age three than at any later point in life, and high-quality child care nurtures a growing brain during this period. Early experiences, both positive and negative, lay the foundation for our brain development and mental and physical health throughout adulthood.
- **Affordability.** Most families cannot afford high-quality child care. Currently, funding for high-quality child care is not creating sufficient access for those who need it most. Infant and child care are often a family's largest expense, exceeding the cost of college tuition in 30 states and the District of Columbia. As a result, nearly half of children in families with low incomes (48%) arrive in kindergarten unprepared to succeed.



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- **Accessibility.** Even for families who can afford child care, accessibility remains a significant hurdle. Half of the families seeking child care live in areas designated as child care deserts, where access to quality care is severely limited or nonexistent.
- **Economic ramifications.** Ignoring the child care crisis is bad for families and for the economy. Every year, the economic impacts of our nation's child care crisis result in \$57 billion in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue. Meanwhile, investments in high-quality early childhood programs starting at birth provide taxpayers with a return of \$6.30 for every dollar invested, with compounding benefits annually in the form of better education, health, social, and economic outcomes later in life.
- **Workforce.** Investing in our future workforce requires an investment in care providers today. Average wages for infant and toddler care are at the bottom of the occupational ladder at less than \$11 an hour – less than for individuals caring for and educating older children. Historically, these jobs have been underpaid and undervalued because of who does them. Approximately 45% of early childhood educators are Black, Asian, or Latinx, and half of child care businesses are minority-owned.



**TIP:** As you communicate about this policy area, we encourage you to consider the language that best resonates with your audience. For example, “child care/child care provider” is preferred in some communities, while “early childhood education/educator” resonates better in other communities.

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*NCIT is here to support your advocacy campaign in a variety of ways to help you plan and execute your campaign. We support advocacy campaigns by mobilizing communities, advancing science and research through communications and messaging expertise, and other forms of capacity building for organizations. We offer tools and resources, connections to partner organizations, one-on-one coaching, and training to organizations advocating for policies that impact expectant parents, infants, toddlers, and their families. Each request starts a conversation – you don't have to have all the details ready. We'll get you connected to the right person! [Connect with us here!](#)*