

A VISION FOR CHILD CARE IN AMERICA

We believe in an America that puts families first.

In an America serious about that value, families would make more than a decent living; they'd have access to a decent life and the essential work for caring for family members would always be valued.

All children, not just those lucky to be born in wealthy families, would have the opportunity to succeed. Families would be free to choose how and where their young children will be cared for and, without exception, every child in America would be cared for in safe, nurturing, educational environments.

Child care and early education would be affordable for working families – giving all children a strong start and every parent the peace of mind that their children are in safe, nurturing learning environments. In this America, all would mean all - no one left behind because of race, sex and gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, different abilities, or geography.

IN THE AMERICA WE ENVISION:

- 1 Every family deserves everything they need to provide the best care for their kids, throughout their lifetimes.
- 2 Every family and their children would have guaranteed access to excellent and culturally appropriate child care.
- 3 Child care workers, no matter where they are taking care of kids, would be treated with dignity and earn a living wage.
- 4 Families would have real choices on how to care for their young children and families who care for their children at home would be supported and valued.
- 5 No community would be denied opportunity.
- 6 Community voices would be at the center of our child care system.
- 7 Good jobs and full access would go hand in hand.

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PROBLEMS THAT WE MUST ADDRESS

- 1 Millions of families, particularly poor families and families of color, cannot afford child care—adding to the daily struggle to make ends meet.
- 2 Child care and early learning providers do essential and difficult work, yet the almost entirely female work force that provides this care is getting paid poverty level wages because women’s work has been historically undervalued.
- 3 The U.S. woefully underfunds our child care and early learning system. So, families—particularly families of color and women—in marginalized communities struggle to afford care and education for their children, and child care and early learning providers struggle to deliver care and education that meets all of the needs of families and children they serve.
- 4 The push to improve the so-called quality of care being delivered by child care and early learning providers too often does not recognize that quality care is linked to quality jobs and does not provide resources to meet so-called quality measures, which is driving essential caregivers and educators out of the industry, leaving many families without access to services and undermining local communities.
- 5 Black and brown children disproportionately experience suspensions, expulsions and other forms of punishment in early learning settings.
- 6 All units of government responsible for funding and implementing the child care and early learning system essentially ignore the voices of most key stakeholders in this system: providers, workers and families.
- 7 The United States has yet to realize a child care and early learning system that helps low-income families, caregivers, and educators thrive. The historical roots of our child care and early learning crisis lay in how our socio-economic system undervalues women (and the work women have traditionally done), particularly women of color, and neglects the needs of low- and middle income families.

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POLICY PRINCIPLES

Guaranteed access to care

Guarantee that everyone—first and foremost, low to middle-income families and marginalized communities of color—can afford and has access to high quality child care and early learning for their kids, ages 0-13.

Living wages and dignity for caregivers

All caregivers and educators are rewarded for their important work with living wages, full benefits, dignity and a voice on the job.

Invest in child care and early learning providers, especially in marginalized communities

Build a system that supports child care and early learning providers, especially in marginalized communities, that takes care of the whole child and serves the diverse needs of families, including culturally-competent care options, informal home-based care, and care during non-standard hours.

Protect kids

End the use of suspensions and expulsions for kids in child care and preschool. Invest in training and other forms of support for caregivers, educators, and families that help all children thrive.

Empower all stakeholders

All stakeholders — parents, workers, providers — have a real voice in shaping our child care and early learning system.

All of us or none of us

We need full access for families and good jobs for caregivers. We will not trade one for the other.