



Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education

Raise Wages of Early Educators in State-Subsidized Child Care and Preschool Programs and Index to Future Minimum Wage Increases

Early educators are one of the lowest paid groups in the workforce. Many are just a few dollars above minimum wage. Those with young children rely on Care4Kids to pay for their own child care, and many must rely on HUSKY, SNAP and fuel assistance to pay their bills. It is no wonder that there is high turnover in the field. School Readiness preschools and state-funded Child Development Centers are unable to attract or retain staff with the required credentials. Wages and therefore provider payment rates must go up.

Raise Care4Kids Payment Rates to Child Care Providers to the Federally Recommended 75th Percentile of the Market

Center-based child care providers have received one 3% raise since 2002. During that same time the minimum wage went up 50%. For infant/toddler care in greater Hartford, Care4Kids is currently paying at just the 4th percentile of the market, equivalent to roughly \$130 per week less than the federally recommended 75th percentile of market rate. With such low reimbursement rates, it is no wonder that there is a shortage of infant toddler care in our state.

Ensure Parity in Funding Between Various Programs Providing the Same Early Care and Education Services

State-funded Child Development Centers currently receive \$400 less per preschool age child per year than School Readiness programs, despite having to meet all the same requirements.

The Mission of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance is to advocate for comprehensive services and policies for families with young children ages birth to 8 that promote healthy development including child care, early education, home visiting, feeding programs, mental and behavioral services, health care, housing and family economic security.



2019 Priorities

Improve Access to Early Care and Education

- Expand Eligibility for the Care4Kids child care subsidy to families earning up to 75% of the State Median Income
- Allow parents in school or job training programs to get Care4Kids for class and study time
- Provide more supports to homeless families, including child care, so they can get back on their feet and become self sufficient
- Create a Child & Dependent Care tax credit

Support Parents in Raising Thriving Children

- Adopt Paid Family Medical Leave
- Require Predictable Work Schedules (with exceptions for industries with legally required staff to client ratios)
- Fix the Broken Birth to Three Early Intervention Program
- Adopt Two-Generation Strategies to grow the economy & end poverty

Improve the Quality of Early Care and Education

- Raise wages of Early Educators in state-subsidized child care and preschool programs and index them to future increases in the minimum wage.
- Raise Care4Kids payment rates to child care providers to the federally recommended 75th percentile of the market
- Ensure parity in funding between various programs providing the same early care and education services

The Alliance Also Supports

- Fixing the Bond Lock, Volatility & Spending Caps
- Protecting HUSKY eligibility for low-income working parents
- Raising the EITC to 30% of the Federal Credit



Improve Access to Early Care and Education

Expand Eligibility for the Care4Kids Child Care Subsidy to Families Earning Up to 75% of the State Median Income

Child care can easily be a young family's largest expense if they are paying for two children in care. According to the United Way's ALICE report's survival budget in Hartford County, a family of four with two children under five needs to earn \$78,984 annually or \$39.49 per hour to just to pay their bills. The current Care4Kids income limit for a family of four is \$56,275.

Allow Parents in School or Job Training Programs to Get Care4Kids for Class and Study Time.

Currently, only the very few families on TANF cash assistance can get Care4Kids to help with childcare costs while they are in school or a job training program. Allowing parents to use Care4Kids while completing their education is a tangible step toward creating the educated workforce that employers need. As 28 states allow parents to receive child care assistance while earning up to a bachelor's degree, Connecticut must take steps to help non-TANF recipient parents who are working to complete a high school degree, GED, English learning, job training program or college to access Care4Kids.

Provide More Supports to Homeless Families Including Childcare so They Can Get Back on Their Feet and Become Self Sufficient.

One of the most difficult groups to get out of homeless shelters are unemployed families with young children. As we have done more to divert families from entering shelters, the families that do end up in shelters tend to have pretty complicated situations. Without child care, these families can't even look for the job they will need to pay rent so that they can get out of a shelter. A short-term childcare voucher could be a bridge to employment when they would likely qualify for Care4Kids.

Create a Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit

To help families with the costs of caring for a child or other family member, 23 states and the District of Columbia have enacted Child & Dependent Care Tax Credits. Most often, state CDCTCs are a share of the federal credit; while some have strict income eligibility thresholds, others scale with family income, meaning that lower income families receive a higher credit.



Support Parents in Raising Thriving Children

Adopt Paid Family Medical Leave

There is abundant research on the importance of time for babies to bond with their parents, and yet one in four working mothers has to return to work within two weeks of giving birth. While Connecticut's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) offers 12-16 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave, many workers are not covered by, or eligible for FMLA. RI, MA and NY have all passed paid family leave laws, making Connecticut the only state in our region that has stepped up to ensure that no one be forced to choose between the family they love, their own well being and the job they need.

Require Predictable Work Schedules (with exceptions for industries with legally required staff to client ratios)

When work schedules change unexpectedly, working families may struggle to find reliable childcare, navigate transportation, or secure a second part-time job. While these "flexible" or "on-call" scheduling practices may help employers maximize profits, they harm the ability of working parents to provide their children financially, while also meeting caregiving responsibilities. It is time for Connecticut to join forward-thinking legislatures across the country in protecting employees' rights to regular, predictable schedules work and prosper.

Fix the Broken Birth to Three Early Intervention Program

The Birth to Three system provides diagnosis and early intervention to support children with developmental delays. In many cases, these early interventions have eliminated or dramatically reduced the need for costly special education services. However, a change in the way service providers are paid has had very negative consequences. As a result, many children now turn three with a diagnosis, but little or no early intervention services.

Adopt Two-Generation Strategies to Grow the Economy & Reduce Family Poverty

Two-generational strategies enable family opportunity and economic success by providing for parents and children together. This means ensuring that adults can gain the skills and education necessary to obtain family-sustaining employment, while children have access to the high-quality early care and education they need to thrive. Two-generation strategies are more efficient and effective, enabling families to move out of generational poverty and toward prosperity.