



Supporting Access to High-Quality, Affordable Early Learning

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Head Start and State Pre-K are all important programs through which families access high-quality, affordable early learning opportunities for their children.

Words from Our Faith Traditions

- “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” – Proverbs 22:6
- “[Jesus] took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.’” – Mark 9:36-37
- “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.” – Matthew 8:2-6
- “The best gift a parent can give to their child is education and upbringing.” – The Prophet Muhammad (in the collection of al-Tirmidhi)

Facts to Consider

Early learning experiences strongly impact long-term educational outcomes and well-being.

- Research has consistently shown that early learning experiences are foundational. Children who build a strong foundation in the earliest years of life are much more likely to thrive later, in educational settings, and, ultimately, in work and society.¹ However, we consistently underfund these vital educational years, delaying substantial public investment until elementary and secondary school.²

The care and teaching of our state’s youngest children should be adequately-paid work.

- There is a clear benefit to both children and early care and education professionals when this work is respected and funding is adequate to attract and retain skilled early childhood caregivers and educators. Currently, low wages fail to attract and push many committed caregivers and teachers out of the field.³

Equity matters.

- Inadequate state investment results in a two-tiered system. Wealthier families can pay for consistent, high-quality care and educational opportunities, while the parents of poor children compete for a vastly inadequate number of open “spots” in high-quality early learning programs. Many families are left scrambling to make do with stitched-together systems of care that inadequately meet children’s and families’ needs.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Early Childhood Education,” <http://www.cdc.gov/policy/hst/hi5/earlychildhoodeducation/index.html>

² RI KIDS COUNT, Issue Brief: “Investing in the Future: Financing Early Education & Care in Rhode Island,” <http://rikidscount.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Issue%20Briefs/9.16%20RIKC%20Issue%20Brief%20-%20EarlyEducaFinance.pdf>

³ RI KIDS COUNT, Issue Brief: “Investing in the Future: Financing Early Education & Care in Rhode Island,” and Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, “Worthy Work, STILL Unlivable Wages: The Early Childhood Workforce 25 Years after the National Child Care Staffing Study”, <http://csce.berkeley.edu/files/2014/ReportFINAL.pdf>