



Preparing and Sustaining the Early Childhood Workforce

Minnesota's workforce support initiatives

***Building
Well-Being
& Connections***

For The Child Care Community



Speakers



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Agenda

- Introduction
- Workforce initiatives
 - Discussion #1
- Advocacy and Equity focus
 - Discussion #2
- Q&A and closing

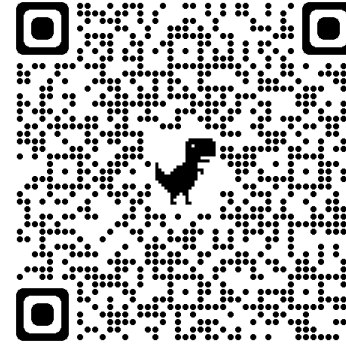


New Workforce Initiatives in Minnesota



How we define our workforce initiatives

- Builds upon our long history in training and professional development advising and financial supports
- Implemented through three avenues:
 - Direct support for early educators (the adults in the room)
 - Support for programs that employ early educators
 - Tied to advocacy efforts to benefit early educators
- Built and implemented through an equity lens



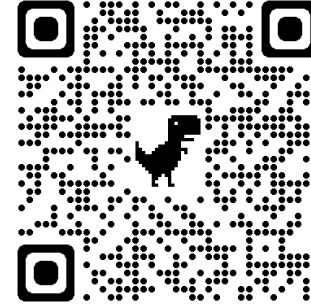
Helping current and aspiring early childhood educators begin, advance, and sustain their career goals in child care

Statewide team of Workforce Advisors who meet with participants one-on-one and provide career and education advising

- Free pre-service training and connections to low- to no-cost early childhood certificate and degree programs
- \$900 in direct payment financial supports
- Job skills training and job placement assistance
- Opportunities to participate in the Empower to Educate Mentorship Program

History

- Addressing early childhood staffing crisis with individualized support and wrap-around resources to recruit and retain educators



A navigation network for starting and growing licensed child care programs.

Our statewide team of Child Care Startup and Retention Navigators

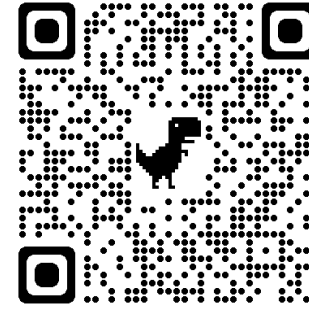
- Assist aspiring child care providers with establishing licensed programs
- Assist current child care providers with sustaining and expanding their programs
- Connect participants with resources to support licensing, business development, funding, and program improvement

Our goal of increasing access to child care requires:

- Recruitment of new educators to the field
- Retention of current educators

History

- An expansion of local programs assisting with startup
- Based on analysis of common obstacles faced by programs
 - Including challenges with educator recruitment and retention



- Began work in June of 2016 in response to the “Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8” report
- A team of state government and external community/advocacy groups meets monthly to identify needs, offer input to other groups, and focus on the ECE workforce.
- Initial plans focused on Higher Education, building infrastructure supports and pathways, data, and [compensation](#)/wage scale efforts
- Have hired a lobbyist for the past four years and moved legislation forward, including creating the [Great Start Task Force for all Minnesota Children](#) (in 2021) and significant investments into the ECE workforce (in 2023).

Discussion

- Introduce yourself
- How does your role connect to workforce development?
- What workforce initiatives are available in your organization or state in addition to training and professional development advising?
- What workforce initiatives do you hope to develop or modify?



Advocacy and Equity

How we approach this work

Advocacy integrated into these workforce initiatives

- All staff are trained to document challenges and barriers
- Documentation of challenges and barriers is used for program improvement
- Administrative advocacy to influence policy development

Equity focus based on an analysis that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color families are more likely to be experiencing inadequate access to child care,

- Services and resources targeted to:
 - Educators most in need
 - Programs in communities with the lowest access to child care

Advocacy and Equity in Our Workforce Initiatives

- Pathways for escalating documented challenges to proposed improvements
- Internal data review
- System-level (administrative and legislative) advocacy efforts

Great Start for all Minnesota's Children Task Force report

The legislation that established the Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force directed it to establish a plan and implementation timeline to address the challenges in today's early care and education system. Embedded within the legislative charge are three key goals:

1. Creating a system in which family costs for early care and education are affordable;
2. Ensuring that a child's access to high-quality early care and education is not determined by the child's race, family income, or zip code; and
3. Ensuring that Minnesota's early childhood educators are qualified, diverse, supported, and equitably compensated regardless of setting.



Compensation legislation passed in 2023:

- ❖ The “Great Start Compensation Support Payments” were established-\$316 million 2024-25; \$259.8 million in 2026-27
- ❖ Funding is explicitly directed for **compensation support** (some flexibility for FCC)
- ❖ Payments can be **increased by 10%** if the program receives Child Care Assistance, Early Learning Scholarships, or is in a child care equity access area
- ❖ Direction to DHS, with support from other agencies, to create an **Early Education Wage Scale** and process for recognizing **comparable competencies**

Discussion

- In what ways are you and your colleagues involved in advocacy for workforce development?
- How do you incorporate a focus on equity into your workforce initiatives?
- What possibilities do you see for expanding your advocacy/equity focus?

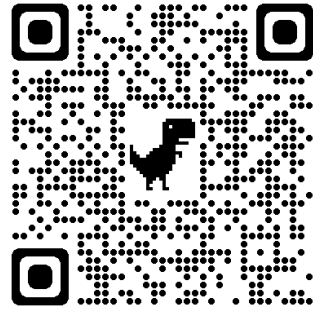


Q&A

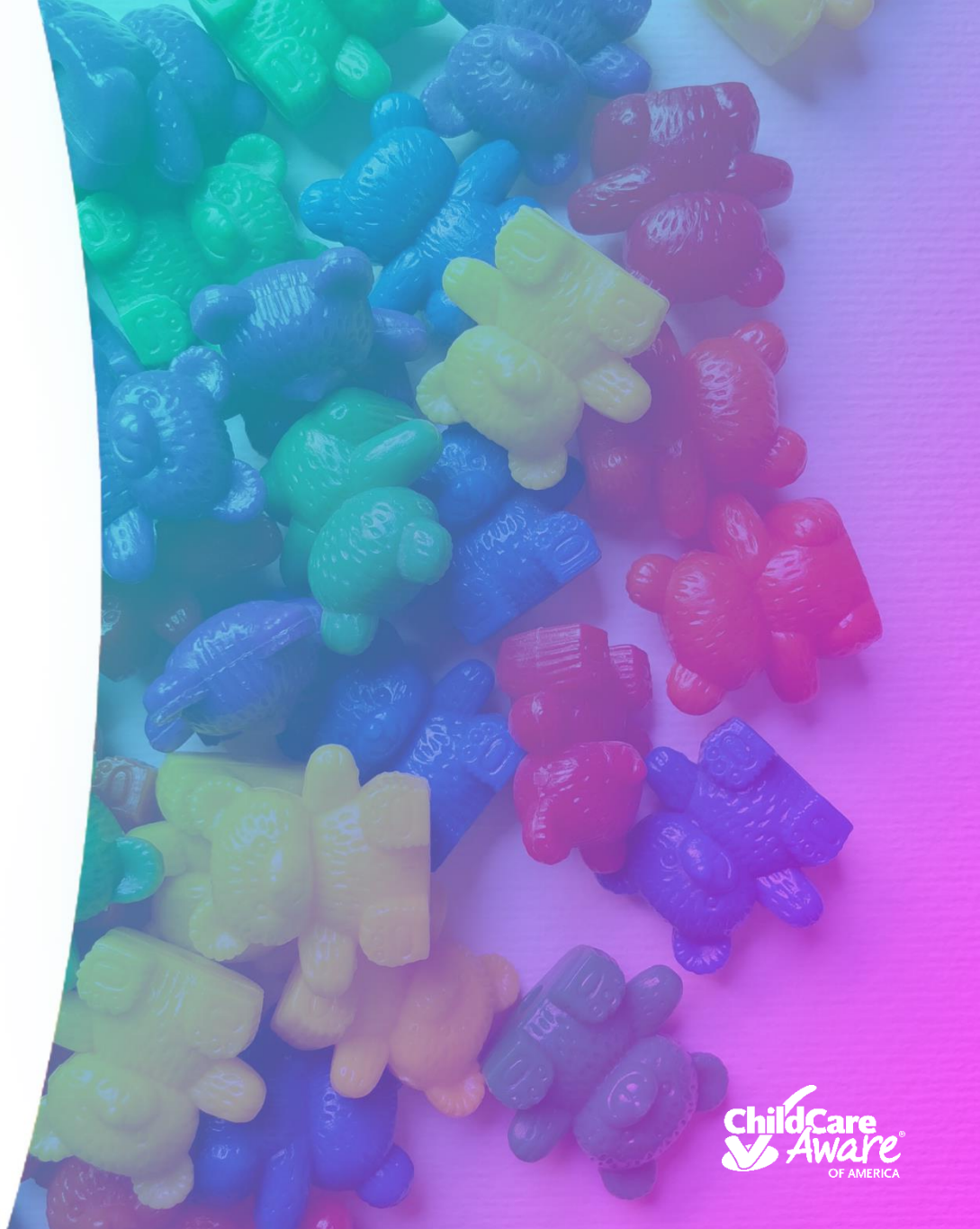


Where to find more info:

- Empower to Educate and Wayfinder [Policy Briefs](#)



- [2023 Legislative Workforce supports blog](#)



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Thank you

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