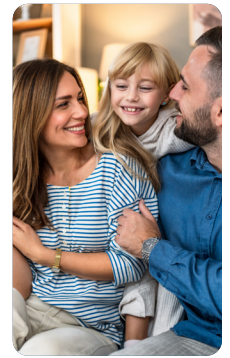




10-YEAR STRATEGIC VISION

A nation where quality child care ignites opportunity for every child, family, and community.



Our mission and role:
**With our national network, we
 make child care strong—and
 that makes everyone stronger.**



Three Fundamental Truths About Child Care in America

1
It allows families to work, supports children's healthy development, and underpins our local, state, and national economies.

2
Americans across the political spectrum believe families should be able to choose affordable, quality child care—no matter where they live.

3
The system is in crisis.

Right now, America's child care system is holding our country back and hurting everyone—children, families, child care providers, communities, employers, and our military.

Child Care Aware® of America is not content to tinker around the edges. We are committing ourselves to bigger thinking and real solutions. That's why we are launching a 10-year strategic framework: to make child care work now and build what comes next.

As the only national organization with an on-the-ground network that supports every part of the child care system, we know what is needed to make child care work for children, families, providers, and communities. Every day our network is working to turn a patchwork of resources into a system that helps families work, supports children's healthy development and learning, and keeps our economy growing.

The change we seek is ambitious and complex. It will take staying power. This framework sets a decisive, long-term direction so that we can finally say America is child care strong—and that makes everyone stronger.

The brain develops faster and is most adaptable in the first few years of life. As a result, quality **child care has positive long-term effect** on school, health, and life outcomes.

70% of young children live in households **where all parents are working.**

85% of primary caregivers say problems with child care **hurt their efforts at or time commitment to work.**

The average annual cost of child care for one child is \$13,128—**10% of a married couple's median income** and 35% of a single parents.

Lack of available child care costs an estimated \$216.4 — **\$329.4 billion** in lost household earnings, business productivity, and tax revenue, long term.

Power an on-the-ground network building quality child care that every family can count on in every community.

- 1. Set the standard for high-quality services.** With our on-the-ground network and state leaders, define core services, best practices, and performance measures for state and community organizations that help families find and afford child care, expand the supply of quality child care, and advance policy solutions.
- 2. Know where we are strong and where there are gaps.** Map who is delivering core services in communities and states, what outcomes they are achieving, and where there are gaps.
- 3. Help states and communities employ best practices and meet our performance measures.** Provide tools, training, technology, and consultation that make services more consistent and effective.
- 4. Show progress and results.** Track and report coverage, performance, and outcomes with transparent measures, so we learn, improve, and stay accountable to families and communities.
- 5. Drive investment to sustain a strong national network.** Mobilize public and private resources to help organizations working in states and communities meet standards, expand reach, and deliver high-quality services and serve as a collective national network for the country.

Drive policy action through trusted data, breakthrough research, and powerful advocacy.

- 1. Build the best, most reliable picture of child care in America.** Use technology and linked data to deliver timely, easy-to-use research on child care affordability, access, and quality.
- 2. Turn evidence into actionable policy solutions.** Pair data with real-world experience to shape policy recommendations that lower costs for families, expand supply, strengthen the child care workforce, and increase quality.
- 3. Mobilize our national network to win policy change.** Activate state and community partners around shared priorities and aligned strategies that move policy forward.
- 4. Keep leaders focused on results.** Produce easy-to-understand updates on national and state progress toward affordability, access, quality, and workforce measures.
- 5. Activate public demand.** Use compelling stories, earned media, and strategic communication to transform broad support into sustained pressure on decision-makers.

Deliver solutions that make child care work everywhere.

1. **Scale solutions that meet family and community needs.**

Leverage our on-the-ground network to design and scale proven approaches that serve all children, meet families' needs, strengthen and expand child care businesses, and improve pay, benefits, training, and career growth for child care workers.

2. **Partner with employers to support working families.** Provide tools, guidance, and direct services that help businesses support reliable, affordable child care for their employees.

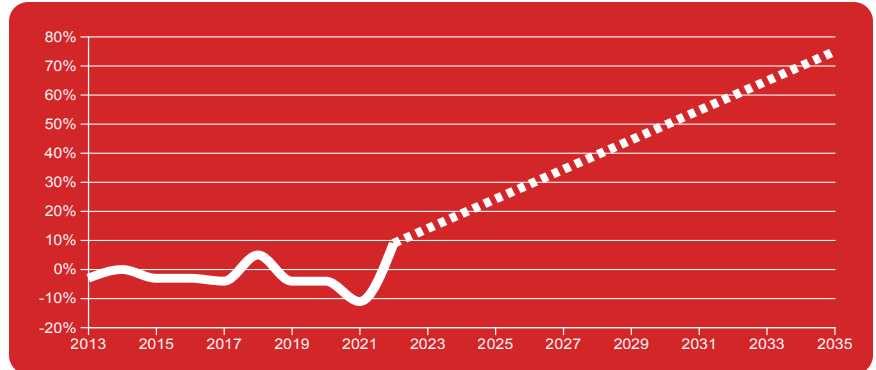
3. **Work with public leaders to grow sustainable child care systems.** Promote financing and delivery models that make quality child care affordable and accessible for families in every type of community.

Build the future of child care.

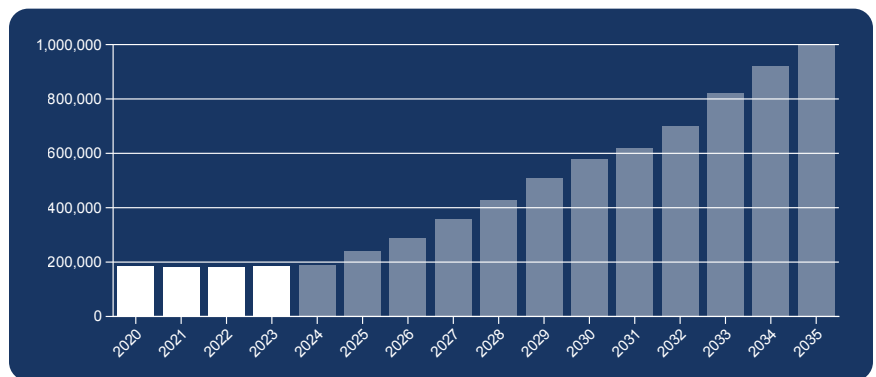
- 1. Lead a national effort to design child care's future and how to get there.** Bring together leading experts, practitioners, and partners to create a shared national blueprint grounded in research, state innovation, and real-world experience for how America funds, organizes, and sustains quality child care.
- 2. Build support and commitments to act.** Convene policymakers, families, providers, businesses, philanthropy, and researchers to agree on priorities and secure policy, funding, and implementation commitments.
- 3. Set targets, track progress, and keep focus.** Establish clear milestones, measure state progress, and share public updates to keep momentum and make progress.

What success looks like by 2035.

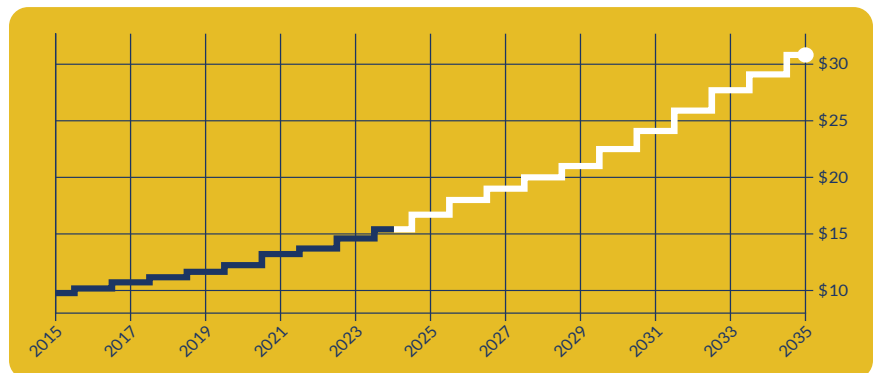
Families with low and moderate incomes can afford quality child care. 75% more families receive help covering the cost of child care.¹



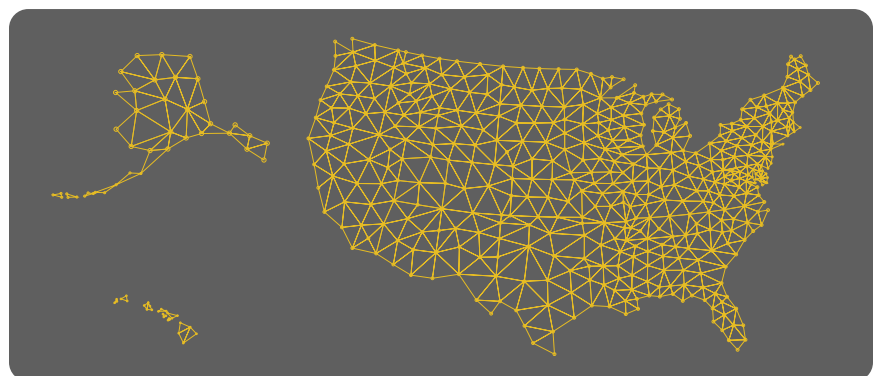
Communities across the country have the child care they need. 1 million new child care spaces are available nationwide to serve children—reducing unmet need by 25%.²



Early childhood teachers are paid as skilled professionals. Average hourly pay doubles to \$30.³ 75% of classrooms are led by teachers with nationally recognized, competency-based credentials.⁴



Every state has a strong on-the-ground network of organizations that families, providers, employers, and policymakers rely on to find, grow, and sustain quality child care.





There is a national roadmap for reimagining child care so it works for

**everyone,
everywhere**

—and progress is being made.

Footnotes:

¹ Between 2012 and 2022 (the last year federal government released data), the number of families receiving help for child care cost decreased by 3.35%.

² The number of families who have child care needs is far higher than the number of child care spaces available, and in some communities, child care is nonexistent.

³ The national hourly wage for a child care worker in 2024 was \$15.41 – so low that 43 percent of child care workers need public support to meet their basic needs.

⁴ Baseline to be determined.