

**Early childhood educators are skilled professionals. Many of these racially and ethnically diverse women have more than 15 years of experience and a college degree.**

Yet they often experience devastating financial insecurity and economic stress. These difficult conditions result in high turnover and teacher shortages, making it harder and more expensive for families to find care for children birth to age five. This situation is not inevitable, but the result of policy choices.



## Early educators' compensation does not reflect their expertise.



**Median Hourly Wage: \$13.07/hr**

- ▶ Ranging from **\$10.60** in **Louisiana** to **\$18.23** in **Washington, D.C.**
- ▶ Wages are even **lower for Black and Latina** early educators.
- ▶ **97% of all other U.S. jobs pay more**—early educators do not earn a living wage.
- ▶ **43%** of early educator families **must rely on public safety net programs** like Medicaid and food stamps to get by.



## State and local leaders have the power to advance policies supporting the early education workforce.

The **District of Columbia** is using a local wealth tax to bring child care workers' wages in line with those of public school teachers.

**Minnesota** and **Illinois** are investing state funds to advance early educator compensation and continue programs started with federal pandemic relief funds.

**California** is the first state to fund a retirement program for early educators, the result of collective bargaining with Child Care Providers United.

## Policy Solutions

### Solution 1

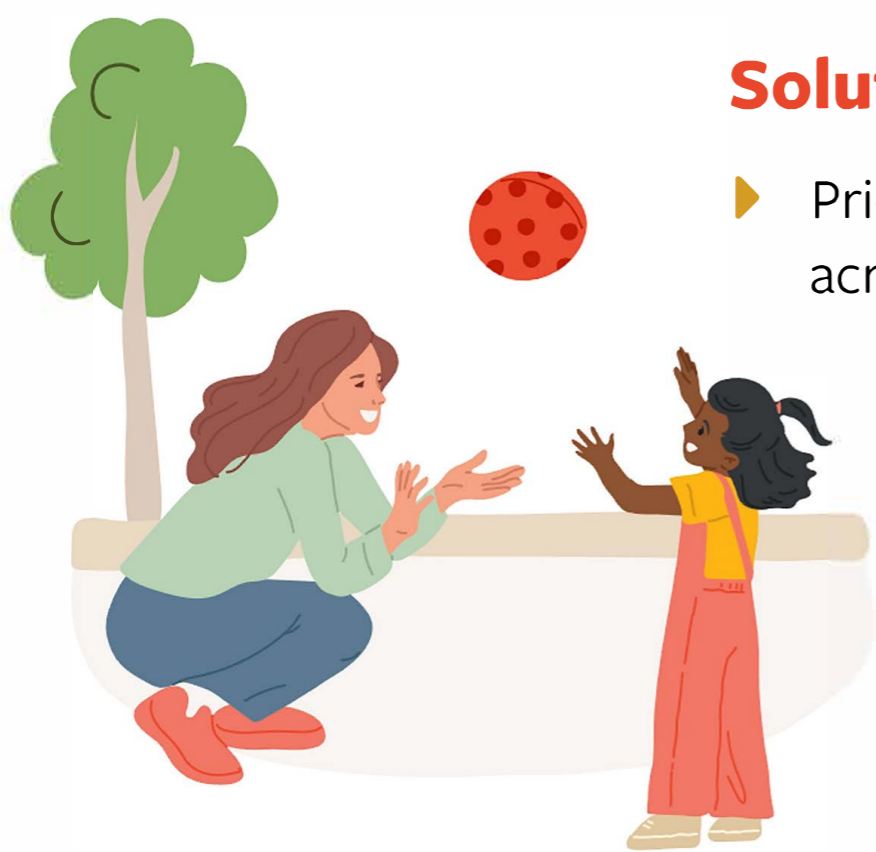
- ▶ Invest in direct **public funding** to early care and education programs to provide early educators with a living wage, health care, and safe, supportive work environments.

### Solution 2

- ▶ Prioritize **compensation standards** and a wage floor across all early care and education settings.

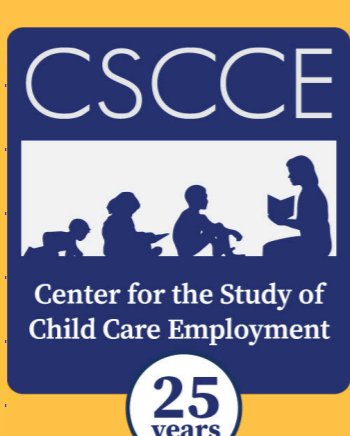
### Solution 3

- ▶ Adopt system-level **workplace standards** like paid planning and professional development time.



If your state isn't prioritizing the child care workforce, use the **2024 Early Childhood Workforce Index** to advocate for change. The *Index* provides data and policy recommendations to improve compensation and working conditions for early educators across the country.

- ▶ Check out the **State Explorer** to compare states' compensation and workforce policies.
- ▶ Go to the **Policy Toolkit** to find concrete ways to uplift early educators in your community.



**It's time to step up, not back, for these skilled educators!**

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