



Child Care and Women's Economic Security Get Out the Vote (GOTV) 2022

Childcare and early learning programs are essential for working women and our nation's economic future. Yet the high tuition – which have come close or exceeded the cost of college tuition in many states - and the inability to access quality care has long been a burden for most families. As our country continues to adjust to the new realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, childcare providers – [97 percent of whom are women including 38 percent women of color](#) – also continue to experience workforce shortages and barriers to service. Furthermore, [over half of child care workers](#) participate in a public assistance program and also report significant levels of stress related to earning poverty-level wages. A multi-pronged solution that addresses the systemic barriers and makes long-term investments into high-quality childcare that is affordable, dependable, and accessible is pivotal to sustaining our country's economic growth.

YWCAs see first-hand the importance of these investments. For over 160 years, YWCAs have provided early childcare programs, and traditionally serves over 200,000 kids annually through childcare, Head Start, and Pre-K programs. These programs promote child development and school readiness, while enabling parents to obtain and retain employment. We believe that a parent should never have to choose between their economic security or caring for their child.

CHILDCARE AND WOMEN OF COLOR

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, women of color disproportionately expressed concerns about access to high-quality and affordable childcare at higher rates when compared to their white counterparts. The pandemic exposed economic and racial justice inequities in the childcare system and exacerbated barriers to women's economic participation as well as inequities for women and families of color. Women of color have made clear their need for investments in childcare and believe now is the time for elected officials to take action.

Black Women Deserve Access to High-quality, Affordable Childcare:

- According to YWomenVote, **81 percent of Black women** said passing legislation to expand access to high-quality childcare is the most important or very important things Congress can do.
- YWomenVote also tells us that **79 percent of Black women** said providing robust funding for child care in the federal budget is the most important or very important things Congress can do.
- [Nearly half of Black children](#) are raised by solo mothers, compared to 17 percent of all other children alluding to a higher dependency on child care.
- Black women on average were paid [63 percent of what non-Hispanic white men were paid](#) in 2019 making the rising prices of childcare tuition further out of reach.

AAPL Women Deserve Access to High-quality, Affordable Childcare:

- According to YWomenVote, **72 percent of AAPL women** said passing legislation to expand access to high-quality childcare is one of the most important or very important things Congress can do.
- YWomenVote also tells us that **70 percent of AAPL women** said providing robust funding for child care in the federal budget is the most important or very important things Congress can do.

- [Half of Asian women](#) live in child care deserts or areas where licensed child care supply is too low to effectively serve children and families

AI/AN Women Deserve Access to High-quality, Affordable Childcare:

- According to YWomenVote, **75 percent of AI/AN women** said passing legislation to expand access to high-quality childcare is the most important or very important things Congress can do
- YWomenVote also tells us that **79 percent of AI/AN women** said providing robust funding for child care in the federal budget is the most important or very important things Congress can do
- From 2011 to 2013, only [6 percent of eligible AI/AN children](#) received CCDBG subsidies
- [44,000 AI/AN children and their families](#) are served by Head Start programs. Despite initial success, tribal leaders are in need of additional Head Start funding to meet increasing demands.

Hispanic Women and Latinas Deserve Access to High-quality, Affordable Child care:

- According to YWomenVote, **71 percent of Hispanic Women/Latinas** said it was at least very important or the most important that access to high-quality childcare be expanded
- YWomenVote also tells us that **67 percent of Hispanic women/Latinas** said providing robust funding for child care in the federal budget is the most important or very important things Congress can do
- The Child Care and Development Block Grant, which provides assistance to low-income families, is only serving [6 percent of eligible Latinx children](#)
- Hispanic Women and Latinas make up [one-quarter of the low-age female workforce](#), often putting the high costs of child care tuition out of reach

NOTABLE LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

In March 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan which included significant financial relief for women, families, and the childcare sector. The legislation identified \$14 billion for the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG), \$25 billion in childcare stabilization grants, and \$1 billion for Head Start. An additional \$2.5 billion was divided equally for afterschool and summer programs. In receiving these funds, providers – including YWCAs – were able to provide financial relief to struggling families.

In August 2022, Congress passed the [Inflation Reduction Act \(H.R. 5376\)](#) which failed to include funding for child care and the early education workforce. As families wait patiently for the economy to stabilize, YWCAs continue to face workforce shortages, cite poverty level salaries for provider, and an unyielding mental health crisis among their staff. YWCA remains committed to securing bold investments in childcare and looks forward to working with all legislators to see these goals through.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Lowering costs for families and building an equitable childcare workforce is integral to securing the long-term development and sustainability of the sector. But failure of Congress to appropriate robust funding jeopardizes the long-term economic stability of the early childhood sector and its ability to meet the needs of women, families, and the communities we serve. While initial federal financial support has helped stabilize the child care sector and its workforce, continued prioritization and investments at all levels of government to address our nation's childcare crisis is essential. Guided by the on-the-ground experience and voices of YWCA's child care providers, we urge legislators to:

- Pass legislation that invests in the long-term stabilization of the child care sector and ensures accessible, quality, and affordable child care for all;
- Stabilizes the child care workforce by increasing access to living wages and skills-based training for childcare providers and educators;
- Ensure equitable workplaces for all teachers and childcare staff.