

# WeVision EarlyEd Policy Essentials

*The WeVision EarlyEd initiative is committed to demonstrating that the child- and quality-centered child care system that families and early childhood professionals (what we call “proximity experts”) want is within reach. Public funding and policies must be designed and reengineered to make their ideal real. Below, we are offering a new resource that can guide advocates and policymakers at all levels of government. The WeVision EarlyEd Policy Essentials are five crucial policy considerations that will move us towards child care policies that are intentionally designed to make the ideal child care system real.*

<p><b>01 Funding for child care should support the needs of families and the development of young children birth through age five.</b></p>	<p>This policy essential recognizes that the first five years of life — and particularly the first three — are the most important phase in human development. Early learning lays the foundation for all future learning.</p> <p>This policy essential challenges the notion that only learning experiences that occur when children are old enough to attend school matters.</p>
<p><b>02 Funding for child care should be available to all families who need support, regardless of income, employment, status, employer, race, gender, religious affiliation or geographic location.</b></p>	<p>This policy essential recognizes that the majority of families with young children need some level of child care support.</p> <p>This policy essential challenges the notion that child care supports should only be provided for extreme cases, such as during a public health crisis; if families earn poverty-level wages; or when employment is mandated.</p>
<p><b>03 Funding for child care should support two clear care options: early childhood education programs and trusted caregivers (e.g., stay-at-home parents, family members, nannies, other community members, etc.).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Funding for early childhood education programs should cover the true cost of providing such care.</b></li><li>• <b>Families who choose a trusted caregiver should receive financial support.</b></li></ul>	<p>This policy essential recognizes that child care costs — like cost of playgrounds, libraries, and elementary schools — should not solely be the family’s responsibility or burden. Government funding should support the two main options families want, trusted caregivers and early childhood education programs, which are both valid. And further, government should support the true cost of providing early childhood education (inclusive of facility maintenance, adequate workforce compensation, quality materials, and more).</p> <p>This policy essential challenges the notion that all families want the same type of child care support or one child care option is better than the other.</p>
<p><b>04 Child care governance and accountability should be shared with families, early childhood education professional organizations, and government agencies to reduce undue administrative burden for families and early childhood education programs while maintaining adequate safety and quality (see Policy essential #5).</b></p>	<p>This policy essential recognizes that many parties have a role to play in governing safety and quality regulations, and those roles must be streamlined to be cost-effective and implemented well. It also legitimizes family expectations of care and industry-recognized standards.</p> <p>This policy essential challenges the notion that ignoring safety and quality regulations will reduce cost or that duplicative and conflicting regulations from different agencies will increase safety and quality.</p>
<p><b>05 Accountability for the quality of child care should be appropriate for the two clear and distinct child care options: trusted caregivers and early childhood education programs. Regulations should be right-sized and aligned to industry standards.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>At a baseline, trusted caregivers must meet families’ caregiving expectations and comply with state and federal laws that protect the welfare of children.</b></li><li>• <b>At a baseline, early childhood education programs must meet facility licensing (mostly facility safety) and industry-recognized standards of quality (mostly child experience and early learning).</b></li></ul>	<p>This policy essential recognizes that accountability for government funding matters, but must be appropriate and right-sized for the two clear child care options.</p> <p>This policy essential challenges the notion that accountability for government funding must be unduly burdensome and prescriptive for practitioners and families.</p>