Advocacy for Child Care
The Washington Experience
10/28/19
Child Care: The Broken Market

• 61% of WA’s young children live in households where all available parents are currently working
  • Approximately 300k children under the age of 6 need child care
  • State has a total licensed capacity for 175,000 children

- The annual cost of one infant in a WA licensed center is more than the annual cost of tuition at WA’s public universities
  - 51.5% of a single parent’s income is spent on one infant in a center;
  - 99.5% of a married family’s income at the poverty line for two children

- The median wage in 2017 for WA’s child care workers ranked in the 3rd percentile of all occupational wages
  - Child care lead teachers turnover at over a 40% rate
Early Learning Action Alliance

• Coalition of dozens of organizations statewide that advocate for expanded access to high quality early learning opportunities

• All major players in the field are part of the coalition: SEIU, Washington Child Care Center Association, Association of ECEAP and Head Start programs, MomsRising, etc.

• Formed from a recognition that we would only move the field forward with a united, streamlined front
ELAA achievements

• ECEAP entitlement
• Early Start Act
• Paid Family Leave
• Compensation Technical Work Group
• Child Care Collaborative Task Force
• WA CAN Act
Next Steps for ELAA

• **Access**
  - Despite demand for child care being at its peak, we continue to lose programs
  - We need to invest into facilities and business operations support, like we do for the rest of the education continuum.

• **Affordability**
  - Child care for an infant in WA takes up 55% of the millennial median income
  - Child care for an infant and a 4 year old takes up 96% of the millennial median income

• **Workforce**
  - Child care educators in WA make less than pet groomers and parking lot attendants
  - Massive turnover results in the loss of programs and reduced quality
Business Leaders as Messengers for Early Childhood

• In 2017, we received the tool we needed:
  • Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The Business Case for High Quality Child Care
    • U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
    • Katharine Stevens, American Enterprise Institute

  ▪ Key takeaways:
    ▪ The US is experiencing a massive shortage of skilled workers, and the skills that are needed for the jobs of the future are skills that are developed in the earliest years.
    ▪ We spend more money on education than any other nation in the world, but hardly any of it is spent on the most important part of the education continuum: the first five years.
    ▪ An unprecedented amount of mothers now need to be in the workforce, resulting in most children spending most of their brain development time in child care.
    ▪ Researchers are finding that accessing quality child care is the biggest barrier to entering and staying in the workforce, limiting economic growth.
Business Engagement Has Yielded Results

• **HB 2367: Establishing the Child Care Collaborative Task Force**
  • Created an employer-heavy task force that would develop recommendations for how to incentivize businesses to support their employees’ child care needs
  • Asks the task force to consider ideas like on-site child care, baby at work policies, and more
  • Asks the task force to conduct research on gaps in the child care industry
  • Task force includes Association of Washington Business (State Chamber), the WA Business Roundtable, and smaller employers who have started to address this issue

• **HB 1344: The WA Childcare Access Now (CAN) Act**
  • Put out a vision for WA’s children, families, and child care educators by 2025:
    • Capped child care expenses for families
    • Compensation on par with kindergarten teachers for educators
    • Increased school readiness for kids
  • Re-vamped task force will develop reforms and funding streams (public/private partnership)
Opportunities Ahead

• **Expansion of our business engagement**
  • Employer toolkit: [https://childcareawarewa.org/employers/](https://childcareawarewa.org/employers/)
  • Empowering child care providers to leverage their existence as small business owners
    • Industry’s revenues and collections are on par with waste management and advertising
    • Industry provides better economic growth to communities than transportation, construction, manufacturing, and retail

• **Philanthropic interest**
  • Retired politicians are partnering with the Gates and Ballmer Foundations to develop a robust early childhood education plan
  • Bezos Foundation wants to prioritize high quality child care
    • No Small Matter: [https://www.nosmallmatter.com/](https://www.nosmallmatter.com/)

• **1344 Task Force**
  • Finalize research
  • Develop necessary state policy reforms
  • Develop proposed funding streams
  • Advocate for it!
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