



Statement before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
On Opportunities for State Leadership of Early Childhood Programs

Promoting State Leadership

A Federal Strategy for Advancing High-Quality
Care and Education for Young Children

Katharine B. Stevens, Ph.D.

Resident Scholar, Education Policy Studies

July 13, 2017

Chairman Rokita, Ranking Member Polis, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for convening today's hearing on opportunities for state leadership of early childhood programs.

My name is Katharine Stevens, and I am a resident scholar in Education Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where I lead AEI's early childhood program. My research is focused on the science of brain development and its implications for early care and education policy, especially the role of early learning in expanding opportunity for low-income Americans. The views I offer today are mine alone.

Before my current position at AEI, I worked for nine years in higher education followed by 15 years in K-12 school reform. And having worked at every level of the education continuum, I have come to believe that early childhood is perhaps the most exciting and crucial area of US domestic policy. So it is a special honor for me to testify before the subcommittee today on opportunities for state leadership of early childhood programs.

Early childhood is a unique area of education policy for two reasons. First, it targets the very foundation of educational opportunity: aiming to help children get a strong start rather than trying to fix ever-worsening problems down the line. Second, I know of no other area of policy, in education or otherwise, that has such a robust body of scientific knowledge that so clearly points us in specific policy directions.

I am here today to make two key points: the first on the science of early development and the second on the policy implications of that science. I suggest that the science of early development strongly indicates that early childhood is a truly critical area of domestic policy—and, in the long run, may be the most important area of education policy. I also suggest that the federal government has a crucial role in advancing better early care and education, especially for the most vulnerable children.

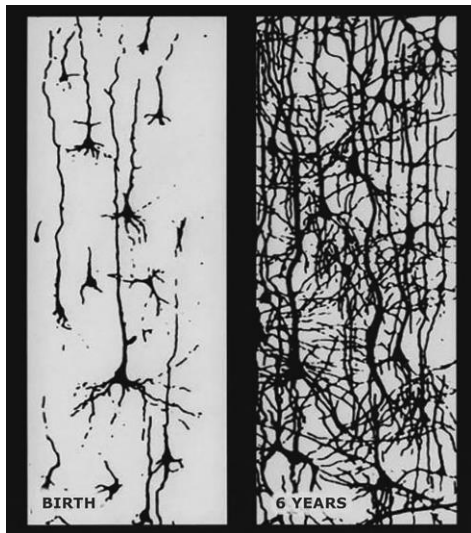
Because it is such a critical area, though, the most important federal role now is to promote *state* leadership. We must find new ways to promote and leverage growing state commitment to early childhood, to incentivize state innovation, and to highlight strategies and activities of currently leading states, particularly around supporting lower-income families by improving access to high-quality childcare.

The Lifelong Importance of Children's Earliest Years

A growing body of scientific research has established that a solid early foundation, constructed in the first years of life, is crucial to everything that follows. Extraordinary development occurs from birth to age five, forming the bedrock for lifelong health, intellectual ability, emotional well-being, and social functioning. In just the first 1,000 days after birth, a child grows from a helpless infant to a running, jumping, climbing preschooler. And children's early cognitive, social, and emotional development is equally rapid, mirroring this dramatic physical growth.

A child's brain isn't born fully built; it is constructed through the interactive influences of his or her genes and early experiences. The infant brain has about 100 billion cells at birth—roughly the same number as an adult brain—but with many fewer connections between cells. In the first months of life, the brain's neural network expands exponentially, from around 2,500 connections per neuron at birth to about 15,000 connections between ages two and three, with rapid growth continuing into the early elementary school years. Those connections—called synapses—“wire” the structure of a young child's brain in response to his or her environment and cumulative experiences.

Figure 1. Development of Synapses in the Human Brain Between Birth and Age Six



Source: J. LeRoy Conel, *The Postnatal Development of the Human Cerebral Cortex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

The developing brain is an integrated organ: Cognitive, social, and emotional capacities are interconnected and interdependent. Healthy development at any stage depends on healthy development in previous stages, as more complex neural connections and skills build on earlier ones. And while children's physical development is fostered by adequate nutrition and physical freedom, their brain development is driven almost entirely by time- and attention-intensive adult nurture and care. Just as a plant's growth depends on sufficient water and light, children's development depends on hour-to-hour, day-to-day interactions with caring, responsive adults.

Starting at birth, ongoing, reciprocal, “serve-and-return” communication in the context of secure, loving relationships with adult caregivers literally builds the architecture of children's brains. As neuroscientists from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child explain, those early interactions “determine whether a child's developing brain architecture provides a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.”¹

The bottom line is that the early experiences of babies and young children have a profound, lasting impact on the rest of their lives. And when children's early environments are unsupportive or even damaging,

the repercussions persist for decades, compromising their development and limiting their capacity for success in school, work, and life.

Gaps Emerge Early and Schools Do Not Close Them

Like all human development, the education process is cumulative: Each stage builds on the prior one. Success in postsecondary education depends on a strong high school education. Success in high school, in turn, depends on a strong education in elementary school. And, success in elementary school depends on the strength of the foundation laid in early life.²

A broad set of socially and economically valuable skills start developing in children's first months, build over time, and are critical determinants of academic and economic achievement. Although a sturdy base of early skill and ability is not alone sufficient for children's long-term success, without it, the effectiveness of later investments in their education are substantially reduced.³

Yet research shows that developmental gaps between higher- and lower-income children emerge among children as young as nine months old.⁴ By 18 months, toddlers from low-income families can already be several months behind their more advantaged peers in language development.⁵ One widely cited study found that by age three, children with college-educated parents had vocabularies as much as three times larger than those of children whose parents did not complete high school—a gap so big, researchers concluded, that even the best intervention programs could at most keep the less-advantaged children from falling still further behind.⁶

In other words, many children enter school unprepared to succeed, and schooling largely cannot close initial gaps.⁷ Fewer than half of low-income five-year-olds enter school ready to learn, and some are up to two years behind their peers.⁸ Achievement gaps between economically advantaged and disadvantaged children widen as they progress through school, resulting in poor academic performance, grade repetition, expensive remedial services, and high rates of school dropout.⁹ The long-run economic impact of this ongoing school failure is, as a McKinsey report put it, the “equivalent of a permanent recession.”¹⁰

Children Have Not Changed—But Childhood Has

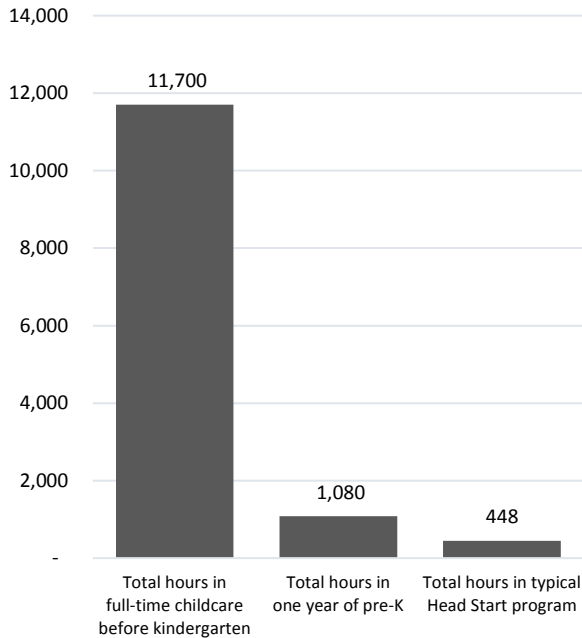
Early childhood has always been the most critical developmental period of the life cycle. Yet for most of history, that essential early foundation for all subsequent learning and development was laid in the home, largely through full-time maternal care. Today, though, an unprecedented number of American mothers are in the workforce.

Almost two-thirds of mothers with children under six are working outside the home, compared with fewer than one in 10 in 1940—a sevenfold increase.¹¹ Nearly three in 10 mothers now return to work within two months of their baby's birth, and almost 40 percent of those with an infant under a year old are employed full time.¹²

As the American workforce—and mothers' work—has been transformed, so has early childhood. More than three out of five children under age six have all residential parents in the workforce. Almost 11 million

American children under five are in nonparental care for an average of 33 hours a week.¹³ Indeed, millions of children are now spending thousands of hours in paid childcare—often 10 times more hours than a year of full-day pre-K and up to 20 times more than a year of Head Start—before they enter kindergarten, meaning that childcare has a far greater impact on their development and learning. So while parents are still by far the most important influence on children’s development, childcare also now plays a key role in raising young children.

Figure 2. Total Hours in Childcare Versus Pre-K and Head Start



Source: Author’s calculations.¹⁴

Current Federal Programs Are Inadequate

Improving the well-being of America’s youngest, most vulnerable children is crucial to both their life chances and our nation’s future. Yet even as a growing body of science underscores the importance of early childhood, federal policy has lagged behind. Current federal programs are inadequate to advance the healthy development of young children and ensure that children have a chance to start kindergarten ready to learn and succeed—giving them a fair shot at success and avoiding expensive problems down the line.

Since 1935, the federal government has supported early care and education for poor children. But the policymaking legacy of the past 80 years is a haphazard array of uncoordinated programs, shaped by outdated science and entrenched political interests, and long driven by addressing unintended consequences of previous policies rather than core goals.¹⁵

While the federal government now funds dozens of small programs providing services to children from birth through age five, the preponderance of federal funds is spent on Head Start, the Child Care

Development Fund (CCDF), and childcare expenditures from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). All three programs fund poor children's participation in early care and education, and all originated decades ago in initiatives to promote children's healthy development.¹⁶ Yet federal early childhood policy faces two core problems today.

The first problem is that integrating disparate federal funding streams—each constrained by its own administration, rules, and monitoring frameworks—to best serve children and families at the state and local levels is difficult at best and often impossible. The well-respected early childhood advocacy organization, the Ounce, recently described this problem:

Because no single federal or state funding source adequately addresses [the needs of children and families], individual early care and education programs have sought to foster healthy child development and promote families' economic self-sufficiency by combining existing funding streams through "blending" and "braiding" funds. . . . At the individual program level, these financing strategies are inefficient and costly because significant staff time and resources are necessary to manage the different, and often conflicting, program eligibility requirements, quality standards, and funding mechanisms required by each funding stream. . . .

. . . Each government agency administering a categorical funding stream typically requires that its funds be tracked separately . . . requir[ing] skilled staff, a high degree of record keeping, a good management information system, and a strong cost accounting system to track expenditures by funding source, often at the child level, in order to properly allocate and report them. Many providers of early care and education are small centers or family-based homes that do not have the administrative capacity to manage the requirements of multiple funding sources.¹⁷

In addition, as the Ounce notes, this "create[s] disincentives for many providers to serve the highest need children who depend on public funding to access the early learning experiences they need before kindergarten entry."¹⁸

The second problem with current federal programs is that they incorporate the commonly made but false distinction between the "care" and "education" of children, reflecting a fundamental misunderstanding of early learning and development. Research has established that young children are continuously and rapidly learning, wherever they are and from whomever they are with, starting at birth. So while we have long thought of "school" as where children learn, the reality is that every environment—whether home, school, or childcare—is a learning environment for young children.

This has crucial implications for federal policy. Head Start has long been emphasized as the federal government's major early education program, and more recently, pre-K for four-year-olds has been the primary focus of new early education initiatives. But because children often spend many more hours in childcare, starting much earlier in their lives, it has a much greater impact on their development. In other words, childcare *is* early education, regardless of the building in which it occurs or what we call it. The question is only whether it is promoting or impeding children's learning.

In fact, childcare is unique among early childhood programs precisely because it serves multiple purposes. By promoting the complementary aims of adult responsibility and self-sufficiency on the one hand, and healthy child development on the other, childcare offers a valuable strategy for two-generation human capital development in America's most disadvantaged communities. Yet Head Start, CCDF, and TANF all fall short of realizing the significant potential of this dual-generation approach to help children and their parents move ahead at the same time.

Head Start. Head Start has dominated the federal early childhood landscape for decades as the federal government's preschool program for poor children. Founded in 1965 as a centerpiece of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, it remains the largest and most visible federal early childhood program.

By establishing Head Start more than half a century ago, the federal government played a crucial leadership role in what we have increasingly recognized as an extremely important policy area. Yet while science has borne out Head Start's long-standing focus on the importance of early childhood development, when it was founded in 1965 the world was very different in two important ways. First, Head Start was designed as a part-time enrichment program, targeted at mothers on welfare who at the time were not expected to work. Second, few states in the mid-1960s were focused on the healthy development of young, low-income children.

But neither of these conditions are true today. Today, mothers of young children are expected to be self-sufficient, rather than receive welfare, and the most critical challenge facing today's lower-income families is how they can support young children's financial well-being without compromising their foundational early development. And while not all states have prioritized early childhood, a significant number of states are not only far ahead of where they were in 1965—they are far ahead of where the federal government is today.

Child Care Development Fund and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. CCDF and TANF are the major federal childcare subsidy programs, aimed primarily at supporting low-income adults' participation in the labor market by helping them pay for childcare. Although CCDF and TANF are now focused on promoting adult work, they grew out of an early-20th-century effort to advance the development of disadvantaged children.¹⁹

The initial iteration of these programs, Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), was the federal government's first early childhood program, enacted in 1935. ADC's goal was to allow poor mothers to exit the workforce and care for their young children at home, aiming to ensure children's "health in mind and body," in President Herbert Hoover's words, and thus open "the door of opportunity" for every child.²⁰

As the 20th century wore on, however, ADC evolved into Aid to Families with Dependent Children, expanding its scope to explicitly include support for adults. Adult welfare rolls exploded, and policy focus gradually shifted from children's early development to the financial self-sufficiency of adults. Through welfare reform passed in 1996, today's CCDF and TANF programs were established, framing childcare as a work support for adults while deemphasizing its role in children's early development.²¹

Yet science has advanced a great deal since 1996, and these programs, too, have become outdated. We now know that while childcare is a necessary support for working parents, it also has a significant impact on children during the most consequential phase of human development. Promoting families' economic self-sufficiency can unintentionally harm children, families, and society if it means that disadvantaged children are spending a large proportion of their most important developmental years in inadequate, counterproductive settings. While parents' work outside the home improves children's financial security and helps adults move ahead, the gaps left for children's early development must also be addressed to advance the ultimate aim of giving every child a fair chance at a successful life.

Family and child well-being are inextricably linked. Today's federal care and education programs for children from birth through age four must have two purposes: supporting parents' work in a 24/7 economy and advancing children's healthy growth and learning during the most crucial period of human development. But current policy fails to recognize that those two aims are complementary, equally important strategies for building human capital in our nation's most disadvantaged communities.

Moving Forward: A Better Approach

Over the past 20 years, efforts to strengthen federal early childhood policy have largely been confined to tinkering with these three major funding streams: Head Start, CCDF, and TANF. Some useful improvements have been made, but current, long-established programs do not provide the best means for accomplishing our fundamental goals.²² We need new thinking to make substantial headway in improving the lives and life chances of low-income children.

The best path forward for federal early childhood programs is to realign them around a childcare focus, strengthening whole families by simultaneously supporting children's healthy development and adult work. Empowering parents to further their children's developmental and financial well-being simultaneously honors the dignity of parenthood—promoting self-sufficiency while helping parents lay the early groundwork that enables their children to have a better future than their own. Done correctly, high-quality childcare advances whole families, helping two generations at the same time and amplifying the impact on each.

A Crucial Role for Federal Leadership

Unlike K–12, early childhood care and education largely remains a decentralized, market-based sector, making it an ideal arena for innovation. The federal government plays a large role in public spending on care and education programs for children under five and is well positioned to provide forward-looking leadership at this pivotal moment for the field.

The context for federal early childhood policy has changed enormously since the major federal programs were first put into place. Over the past 80 years, the federal government has led much of the nation's efforts to protect and advance the well-being of low-income young children. Today, however, the strongest leadership is emerging from states. Policymakers across the country, both Democrat and Republican, are heeding the growing research underscoring the importance of early childhood and are prioritizing investment in the earliest years of learning and development.

The American public, too, overwhelmingly now understands the importance of early care and learning programs in today's changing world. Almost three-quarters of respondents in a 2016 bipartisan poll identified the period from birth to age five as the most significant for developing a child's capacity to learn. A full 82 percent of Republicans, 86 percent of independents, and 98 percent of Democrats said that "making early education and childcare more affordable for working parents to give children a strong start" is important for our country. And almost 80 percent of respondents said that public investment should be made equally or more heavily in early childhood than in higher education.²³

The most promising path forward is to advance the work of leading, innovative states, building on growing state and local momentum in early childhood. Indeed, recent federal action has significantly strengthened state capacity toward this end:

- The 2007 reauthorization of Head Start required that every state governor establish a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education (SAC) to improve the quality, availability, and coordination of the state's programs and services for children from birth through age four. SACs are now in place in every state, providing valuable infrastructure for ongoing state activity.²⁴
- The Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge competition was launched in 2011, jointly administered by the US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The program funded the efforts of 20 winning states to design and implement an integrated system to improve the quality of early learning and development services and to close the achievement gap for children with high needs. Several of those states are now national leaders in early childhood policy and practice.²⁵
- The Preschool Development Grants competition, also jointly administered by the US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, was launched in 2014. The program helps states build their infrastructure to provide high-quality preschool programs for low- and moderate-income families, expand high-quality programs in high-needs communities, and create sustainable programs by coordinating existing early learning funds. Grants were awarded to states that are demonstrating a strong commitment to building and enhancing their early learning systems, and the 18 winning states are intended to serve as national models.²⁶
- The Early Head Start—Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CC) were launched in 2014, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. EHS-CC partnerships aimed to incentivize integration of federal funding streams to expand access to high-quality early care and education for low-income children and families.²⁷
- In 2014, Congress reauthorized the CCDF program for the first time in 18 years. The bipartisan reauthorization—passed in the Senate with an overwhelming majority of 88 to 1—promotes state leadership in providing young children with high-quality learning opportunities while simultaneously supporting their working parents.²⁸

Using the important groundwork laid by these federal initiatives, the federal government now needs to:

(1) Leverage federal spending to incentivize and support forward-looking states to better serve larger numbers of children from birth through age four, especially children in lower-income working families;

and (2) Promote rigorous research and innovation that increases our knowledge about what works best for children and families.

Conclusion

The first 60 months are the most crucial developmental period of a child's life. The cognitive, social, and emotional growth that occurs from birth to age five lays the essential groundwork for all future learning and success. And too many children enter kindergarten so far behind that they can never catch up. Improving the well-being of America's youngest, most vulnerable children is crucial to both their life chances and the success of our country as a whole.

Federal early childhood programs play a key role in addressing inequality of opportunity and lack of economic mobility for disadvantaged children. Targeting investment to children's earliest years is sensible policy because it aims to build a strong foundation in the first place rather than trying to fix expensive, preventable problems down the line. Too often, though, our thinking is limited by what currently exists, not driven by what we are actually trying to accomplish. We need new strategies to accomplish our core aim: promoting the well-being of lower-income children so they can grow into healthy, happy, productive citizens.

The best path forward is to identify, support, and highlight the work of leading, innovative states, focused on advancing whole families through a two-generation human capital development strategy that simultaneously enables adult work and supports young children's learning and development. Our goal should be to amplify the impact of currently siloed programs, aiming to build states' capacity to support low-income families and give America's least-advantaged children a fair chance at a good life.

¹ Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children*, August 2007, <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/a-science-based-framework-for-early-childhood-policy/>.

² Flavio Cunha et al., "Interpreting the Evidence on Life Cycle Skill Formation," *Handbook of the Economics of Education 1* (2006): 697–812, http://jenni.uchicago.edu/papers/Cunha_Heckman_etal_2006_HEE_v1_ch12.pdf; Flavio Cunha, James Heckman, and Susanne Schennach, "Estimating the Technology of Cognitive and Noncognitive Skill Formation," Institute for the Study of Labor, January 2010, <http://ftp.iza.org/dp4702.pdf>; and James J. Heckman and Tim Kautz, "Hard Evidence on Soft Skills," *Labour Economics* 19, no. 4 (August 1, 2012): 451–64, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3612993/>.

³ James J. Heckman and Dimitriy V. Masterov, "The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children," *Review of Agricultural Economics* 29, no. 3 (2007): 446–93.

⁴ Tamara Halle et al., "Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)," *Child Trends*, June 2009, www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2009-52DisparitiesELExecSumm.pdf.

⁵ Anne Fernald, Virginia A. Marchman, and Adriana Weisleder, "SES Differences in Language Processing Skill and Vocabulary Are Evident at 18 Months," *Developmental Science* 16, no. 2 (2013): 234–48.

⁶ Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3," *American Educator* 27, no. 1 (2003): 4–9, <http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>. Vocabulary at age three predicts reading skills in third grade. In turn, third-grade reading skills are a strong predictor of long-term school and life outcomes. A 2009 study, for example, found that about 16 percent of children who were not reading proficiently by the end of third grade failed to complete high school—a dropout rate four times higher than that of proficient readers. Among children who were not reading proficiently at the end of third grade and were poor for at least one year, 26

percent failed to graduate from high school. In contrast, 89 percent of poor children who were reading on grade level by third grade graduated by age 19. Donald J. Hernandez, *Double Jeopardy: How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, April 2011, <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf>. Similarly, failure to complete high school strongly predicts unemployment, incarceration, and single motherhood. More than half (54 percent) of all high school dropouts and more than two-thirds (69 percent) of African American dropouts age 16 to 24 were unemployed in 2008. Nearly 1 in 10 male dropouts and one in four African American male dropouts age 16 to 24 were incarcerated on any given day in 2006–07. Female dropouts of that age were six times as likely to have given birth as peers who were college students or four-year-college graduates. Almost 23 percent were single mothers. Andrew Sum et al., *The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Joblessness and Jailing for High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers*, Center for Labor Market Statistics, October 1, 2009, http://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/The_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School.pdf.

⁷ David M. Quinn, “Kindergarten Black–White Test Score Gaps: Re-Examining the Roles of Socioeconomic Status and School Quality with New Data,” *Sociology of Education* 88, no. 2 (2015): 120–39, <http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/journals/soe/Apr15SOEFeature.pdf>; and Lisa G. Klein and Jane Knitzer, *Promoting Effective Early Learning: What Every Policymaker and Educator Should Know*, National Center for Children in Poverty, January 2007, http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_695.html.

⁸ Julia B. Isaacs, *Starting School at a Disadvantage: The School Readiness of Poor Children*, Brookings Institution, March 19, 2012, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/starting-school-at-a-disadvantage-the-school-readiness-of-poor-children/>.

⁹ John K. McNamara, Mary Scissons, and Naomi Gutknecht, “A Longitudinal Study of Kindergarten Children at Risk for Reading Disabilities,” *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 44, no. 5 (September/October 2011): 421–30; and Sean F. Reardon, “The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor,” *Community Investments* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 19–39, http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/CI_Summer2012_Reardon.pdf.

¹⁰ McKinsey & Company, “The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America’s Schools,” April 2009, http://mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/achievement_gap_report.pdf.

¹¹ US Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Women in the Labor Force: A Databook,” December 2014, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-databook/archive/women-in-the-labor-force-a-databook-2014.pdf>.

¹² Ajay Chaudry and Jane Waldfogel, “A 10-Year Strategy of Increased Coordination & Comprehensive Investments in Early Child Development,” *Behavioral Science & Policy* 2 (2016): 47–55, <https://behavioralpolicy.org/articles/a-10-year-strategy-of-increased-coordination-comprehensive-investments-in-early-child-development/>; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Women in the Labor Force: A Databook”; and US Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Table 6. Employment Status of Mothers with Own Children Under 3 Years Old by Single Year of Age of Youngest Child and Marital Status, 2015-2016 Annual Averages,” April 20, 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.t06.htm>.

¹³ Child Care Aware of America, “Parents and the High Cost of Childcare,” 2015, <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/reports-and-research/costofcare/>; and Lynda Laughlin, “Who’s Minding the Kids? Childcare Arrangements: Spring 2011,” US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, April 2013, <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-135.pdf>.

¹⁴ Total hours of childcare are calculated at 40 hours per week from birth through age four. Total hours for pre-K are calculated based on a full year of a typical, full-day program: six hours per day for 180 regular school days. Most Head Start programs run just three and a half hours per day for 128 days per year. Only 9 percent of center-based slots provide services for a full workday, year-round. See US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Head Start Program Facts Fiscal Year 2015,” August 24, 2016, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/data-ongoing-monitoring/article/head-start-program-facts-fiscal-year-2015>.

¹⁵ Katharine B. Stevens, *Renewing Childhood’s Promise: The History and Future of Federal Early Care and Education Policy*, American Enterprise Institute, November 2, 2015, <http://www.aei.org/publication/renewing-childhoods-promise-the-history-and-future-of-federal-early-care-and-education-policy/>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Margie Wallen and Angela Hubbard, “Blending and Braiding Early Childhood Program Funding Streams Toolkit: Enhancing Financing for High-Quality Early Learning Programs,” The Ounce, November 2013, <https://www.theounce.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NPT-Blended-Funding-Toolkit.pdf>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ For a history of CCDF, TANF, and Head Start, see Stevens, *Renewing Childhood’s Promise*.

²⁰ Herbert Hoover, “Address to the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection” (speech, Constitution Hall, Washington, DC, November 19, 1930), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=22442>.

²¹ Both programs were established through federal welfare reform—the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)—passed in 1996. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was replaced by TANF and administered as a block grant that gives states great flexibility in determining how funds are spent. At the same time, four preexisting childcare funding streams—the AFDC Child Care Guarantee, Transitional Child Care, At-Risk Child Care, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)—were consolidated into the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), also referred to as CCDBG, aimed primarily to support working parents.

²² In 2014, for example, CCDBG was reauthorized with strongly bipartisan support (passing in the Senate by 88 to 1), expanding its focus to not only assist parents as a work support but also support the healthy development of children by increasing the percentage of low-income children in high-quality care. The 2014 bill stresses child development and learning (neither “development” nor “learning” were mentioned in the earlier bills), setting out new standards for program design, safety, licensing, oversight, and reporting, and requiring that states define program quality and develop plans for improving it.

²³ First Five Years Fund, “2016 National Poll,” <http://ffyf.org/2016-poll/>.

²⁴ See US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Early Childhood Development, “State Advisory Councils,” www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils.

²⁵ See US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Early Childhood Development, “Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge,” www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/race-to-the-top.

²⁶ See US Department of Education, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Early Learning, “Preschool Development Grants,” www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html.

²⁷ See US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Early Childhood Development, “Early Head Start—Child Care Partnerships,” <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/early-learning/ehs-cc-partnerships>.

²⁸ See US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Care, “CCDF Reauthorization,” www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/ccdf-reauthorization.