



Building Support

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EXCELLENCE

A growing body of research shows that access to quality care and learning in the first years of life is crucial for building a strong foundation that allows children to succeed. Still, a partisan divide has complicated a vital national conversation on increasing child care quality and access.

The Bipartisan Policy Center partnered with Luntz Global to survey conservative and liberal viewpoints on child care and early learning.

One overwhelming conclusion from this research: conservatives and liberals alike recognize that early childhood development is critical to the wellbeing of the nation as a whole and even align on some possible policy approaches.



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The Bipartisan Policy Center and Luntz Global conducted comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research. The nationwide survey of 1,028 respondents was representative of the current population of the U.S. by gender, income, education, ethnicity, vote, region, and age. This included a representative spread of ideology and parenthood to compare and contrast the views of conservatives and liberals, parents and non-parents.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Respondents in the BPC-Luntz survey agreed that many working American families are struggling and need help.

61% CONSERVATIVES

89% LIBERALS

AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT:

“Too many families are struggling. The cost of everyday life - including child care - is too expensive in this country. More moms and dads must work a second or third job just to make ends meet. And that means they're spending less and less time interacting with their kids. Parents need more time with their children to teach fundamental values - not less.”

Conservatives and liberals alike perceive the **cost** as a primary challenge to accessing quality care.

 **TOO EXPENSIVE**
for working parents

was the most frequently cited reason for the lack of quality child care in America among survey respondents.

In every state, the average child care worker qualifies for government assistance. When given this information, all groups—conservative, liberal, urban, and rural—express strong support for assistance programs to ensure that **child care workers** receive a living wage.



78%

of survey respondents support assistance programs that ensure child care workers receive a living wage.

Conservatives and liberals have somewhat different views about why early child care and learning are important.



FOR CONSERVATIVES,
it's more about learning the
values and **social skills**
to become contributing
members of society.



LIBERALS
put more emphasis
on **academic** and
developmental
foundations.

Conservatives and liberals overwhelmingly agree that every child should have a **guaranteed right to certain essentials.**

82% CONSERVATIVES

98% LIBERALS

AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT:

“Every child in America should have a guaranteed right to proper food, clothing, medicine, shelter, and education.”

Survey respondents were divided about whether there is a problem with **access** to quality child care.

“The United States has affordable, high quality child care options for every child, regardless of their family's circumstances.”

DISAGREE 73% LIBERALS

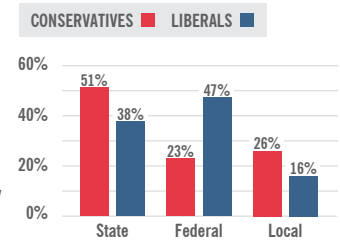
AGREE 47% CONSERVATIVES

(36% of conservatives disagreed and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed)

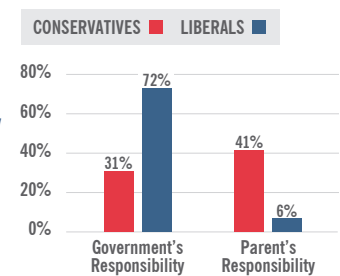
Many Americans, whether liberal or conservative, urban or rural, say they would be willing to pay **higher taxes** to address children's issues, even if their own children wouldn't directly benefit.



Though both groups are split on the issue, conservatives and liberals have different views about which level of government is primarily responsible for funding quality child care programs that help full-time, low-wage workers.



Conservatives and liberals have sharply different views about whether it's the **government's responsibility or parents' responsibility** to ensure that all children have access to quality care.



For many, government is not the answer. Non-profits are far and away the most **trusted entities** to create effective child care solutions for low-income families.

81% CONSERVATIVES

74% LIBERALS

SAY THAT

they trust non-profits to create effective child care solutions that will aid low-income families.

Conservatives and liberals have different concerns about **government involvement** in early child care and learning.

CONSERVATIVES'



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is that government will overstep its role and “teach children values, ideas, and ways of thinking that I don't agree with.”

LIBERALS'



BIGGEST CONCERN

is that government initiatives will be inefficient and ineffective.

Preparing our children for future success should be an American issue, not a partisan issue. BPC is working to bring together voices from both parties to empower and support children and working families.

Learn more about our work at bipartisanpolicy.org/early-childhood