

Talking Points for Making the Case for Child Care

COMMUNICATING THE SCIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- Avoid talking about the “achievement gap,” which many see as divisive and negative. Instead, focus on the positive.
Early childhood programs provide a foundation for educational success for all children.
- Discuss a child’s “growth and success” instead of “school readiness.”
Early childhood education prepares children to learn, grow, and succeed. You only get one chance at childhood. You only get one chance at learning the fundamentals—how to count, how to talk, how to think.
- Discuss programs with flexibility for “every family” in mind.
Child care and early learning programs should help every family.
- Discuss opportunities as “equal” instead of “fair” or “real.”
Every child deserves an equal opportunity at a quality early childhood education.

COMMUNICATING HOW THE MARKET-BASED, MIXED-DELIVERY SYSTEM SUPPORTS PARENTAL CHOICE

- Communicate that parents are ultimately responsible for their child’s upbringing.
Families are the building blocks of society. Parents are their child’s first and most important teacher.
- Discuss the impacts of parental choice and involvement.
Parents know what’s best for their children. That means greater parental leadership in the development of early childhood programs and autonomy in the selection of early child care providers, both of which allow parents maximum choice in deciding what is best for their family.
- Communicate the benefits of child care for children and families.
You only get one chance at childhood. You only get one chance at learning the fundamentals—how to count, how to talk, how to think. And parents get one chance to put their children on the path to success in education, society, and life.

COMMUNICATING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CHILD CARE

- Discuss the positive financial impact on all families.
With options for affordable child care, families have the freedom to stay in or return to the labor force or to seek the education they need to further their careers. This increases the economic and general well-being of families and can help them lift themselves out of poverty.
- Communicate that child care helps America's economy stay competitive in the global market.
By providing high-quality child care, the nation creates higher-quality and more effective workers, making the country better prepared for a competitive global economy.
- Identify economic benefits, particularly local examples, with spillover to additional community benefits and local businesses.
Child care is an entirely local business operation. By investing locally, you can help create stronger and more prosperous communities.
- Communicate that investing in child care helps local economies prosper.
Higher education and wages allow for more spending and help drive local economic and job growth.

COMMUNICATING THE ROLE OF CHILD CARE IN STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

- Clarify that child care programs and initiatives are not a substitute for the parents' involvement but a partnership with them and their children.
Early childhood initiatives are a partnership with the family, rather than a substitute. Child care opens up the opportunity to meet new families and helps provide links to health and financial resources.
- Communicate the benefits of child care for families, including for their employment and long-term economic outcomes.
Access to child care allows parents the freedom to stay in the labor market, increasing overall lifetime wages that aid the entire family. In addition, parents have more time to be with their children and instill the values and skills they view as important.
- Focus on long-term benefits for their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.
Greater accessibility to high-quality early learning and child care will benefit future generations by increasing regional economic growth, providing access to higher-salary jobs, and reducing government welfare dependency.