

◆ Overview

2024 will be a short legislative session, meaning that lawmakers only spend 60 days in the office voting on and discussing legislation. This means that as we advance our policy agenda this year, it is important to keep in mind how this year's efforts will build into 2025. This session, our main three focuses are accessibility, affordability, and mental health care.

2023 Session's Wins

Last year, our advocates helped to:

- Increase the Non-Standard Hours Bonus to \$135 per month for providers
- Continue Equity Grants & Complex Needs funds
- Eliminate background check fees for current and future providers

During 2025's extended legislative session, our goal is for lawmakers to fully fund the cost of high-quality child care. This means that providers are paid a thriving wage that reflects the value of their work; all children, families, and providers have access to mental health care; and that every child has access to high-quality care.

The work we do this year will get us one step closer to realizing our mission of nurturing and sustaining child-centered, antiracist early learning communities, and lay the foundation for us to build upon in 2025.

◆ 2024 Agenda

1. Increase investments in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultations

Ask: \$1.75 million investment in the statewide Holding Hope IECMH program.

This will allow for the program to:

- Hire more consultants
- Address growing waitlists
- Ensure high-quality, personalized care for families



2. Make Child Care Available to More Families

Asks:

- Exclude child support, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income Payments from being included in families' gross income when applying for Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)
- Increase infant rate enhancement and non-standard hour bonuses to \$500
- Support stipends for families and providers who participate in related task forces through the Lived Experience Proposal

This will allow for:

- More families to qualify for ECEAP and WCCC
- Better wages for providers without raised costs for families



3. Increase ECEAP Entitlement* Capacity

**"ECEAP Entitlement" refers to the principle that all eligible children are entitled to care and should be able to access it through this program. ECEAP Entitlement was codified into law in 2010, but has not been realized yet due to a lack of state funding.*

Asks:

- Increase School Day Rates by 19%, and Working Day Rates to 28%
- Fund 250 more slots for eligible children
- Fund quality curriculum & assessment tools
- Allocate necessary funding and resources for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families for continued expansion of ECEAP through 2026

This will allow for:

- ECEAP to advance their effort to serve ALL eligible children
- Ensure that ECEAP programs are as high-quality as possible, through funding and staff support

◆ Questions about this year's agenda?

Contact a member of our advocacy team!

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