

Policy Agenda

Michigan AEYC is a resource for current research and developmentally appropriate practices related to early childhood education (ages prenatal through eight) and supports continued improvement in policy. Michigan AEYC drafts or revises an annual policy agenda. These points are intertwined, evolving, and used to guide work with members, the community, legislature and other stakeholders on a state and local level. From October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025, Michigan AEYC has chosen to focus on the following agenda items:

Early Childhood Workforce

The Early Childhood field is experiencing a workforce crisis which won't end without state investment and support. In a 2022 NAEYC report, two-thirds of respondents reported experiencing staffing shortages, leading to fewer children being served and longer waitlists. Children and families cannot be supported when licensed home providers, child care centers, and other early childhood programs cannot attract and retain staff. Professionals need to have access to comprehensive education training, support, and collaboration with community partners. Professionals require equitable [compensation](#) across the broad range of early childhood work, however the average early childhood professional makes \$11/hour. A [livable wage](#) and equitable benefits will allow them to remain in the field to continue to make a strong, positive impact at a critical time in a child's development. Additional significant sustainable state funding is an essential piece for solving this crisis.

Affordable and Accessible High-Quality Early Learning

Michigan is expanding access to state-funded Pre-K programs, however, special attention and significant investment must be paid to [unintended consequences](#) for infants, toddlers, 3's, home-based, and other tuition-based care. Current subsidy rates do not reflect the [true cost of care](#), while expenses continue to rise for providers, both creating a larger divide between cost and affordability; particularly when implementing quality. Meanwhile, only a small percentage of eligible working families (¼) apply for subsidized programs due to the difficult application process and requirements to maintain eligibility. USDHHS recommends that a family spend no more than [7%](#) of their annual income on child care, yet most families who are able to afford care are spending significantly more. More work needs to be done to improve the affordability and accessibility to high-quality early learning for all young children through a variety of innovative, bipartisan funding models.

Early Intervention and Inclusive Environments

It is critical to assess and support the needs of young children's developmental growth and mental health at an early age. Early intervention for children with developmental, social, and/or emotional delays boosts positive outcomes for later success. Currently, only 3.9% of children ages 0-3 in Michigan are receiving Early On services, yet many more children would potentially qualify, given that 12% of children in K-12 schools receive special education services. It is crucial to identify the true need for services. For children ages 3-5 with these needs, finding accessible services can be even more difficult. Funding must be increased for Early On and traveling support services to strengthen accessibility for children attending community based (both centers and homes) or any other type of licensed program. Investment is necessary to ensure collaboration between early childhood professionals, early interventionists, and families. Intentional support must also be given to early childhood professionals to foster inclusive learning environments that meet the varying needs of students.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging for Children and Early Childhood Professionals

Equitability ensures relevant provided resources are based on need so that all can participate fairly. All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Professionals require ongoing training and support to ensure anti-bias and inclusive practices are being implemented. We support initiatives that embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, promote anti-bias education, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities.

Sources:

www.miaeyc.org

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