

Michigan AEYC 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. Early care and education is a nonpartisan issue, as everyone benefits when the system is strong. 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, 2025 through September 30, 2026, 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 2025 NAEYC report, [51%](#) of respondents reported experiencing staffing shortages, leading to fewer children being served. 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. A [livable wage](#) and access to equitable benefits are essential for early educators. Without this, we risk losing dedicated professionals at a critical time in a child's development, undermining the potential of a strong, positive impact. 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, in addition, special attention and significant investment must provide for infants, toddlers, 3-year-old, home-based, and other tuition-based child care programs to support Michigan's mixed delivery system and parent choice. 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 ($\frac{1}{4}$) 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. It is crucial to identify the true need for services. For children ages 0-3, services are more easily accessible, however only [4%](#) of Michigan's children are receiving those services, yet many more children would potentially qualify, given that [15%](#) of children in K-12 schools receive special education services. For children aged 3-5 with these needs, finding accessible services can be even more difficult. Funding must be increased for early intervention and related 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. Michigan must also invest in social-emotional supports that equip teachers and families to strengthen children's emotional and behavioral health and reduce expulsions. Intentional support is necessary to foster inclusion in a way that meets the varying needs of students.

Creating Learning Communities Where All Children and Early Childhood Professionals Thrive

All children have the right to meaningful and safe learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Early childhood professionals require ongoing training and support to ensure practices are respected and welcoming. We support initiatives that recognize individual and cultural strengths and promote teaching that aligns with NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice.