

Summary of ECE-Related Provisions on Biden-Harris Executive Actions on the Care Economy

On April 18, 2023, President Biden signed an Executive Order that includes more than 50 directives to expand access to affordable, high quality care and provide support for care workers and family caregivers. This includes child care and Head Start, as well as care workers and family caregivers who work with the elderly and disabled. This document is an overview of provisions related to early learning.

The [Executive Order](#) (EO) is a first step in bringing about change in policy through administrative action, and as such, there are many details that are yet to be determined. It is important to note that there is no new funding associated with the EO – Congress must appropriate funds through the legislative process. Thus, the impact of some of the goals outlined by the EO are likely to be limited in impact unless Congress adds funding.

The EO is comprehensive and impacts many agencies across the federal government. Many of the provisions in the EO will also require additional actions taken by agencies. This document highlights provisions that are pertinent to the Head Start community. NHSA will continue to seek clarification and additional details.

Increasing Compensation and Improving Job Quality for Family Caregivers, Early Educators, and Long-Term Care Workers

- A. **Compensation and Benefits:** Section 2(a) outlines a variety of compensation and benefits components that will be examined to determine what administrative steps can be taken to improve pay and benefits for care workers:
 - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shall implement strategies to encourage comparability of compensation and benefits between staff employed by Head Start grant recipients and elementary school teachers;
 - HHS shall expand efforts to improve care workers' access to health insurance;
 - Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grantees will be encouraged to improve quality and workforce compensation; and
 - The Departments of Treasury and Commerce will look into possible federal resources that early childhood staff might benefit from, such as small employer retirement plans.

- B. **Mental Health Support:** HHS will implement strategies to expand mental health support for the care workforce, including early childhood providers supported through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and Head Start.

- C. **Workforce Training Pathways:** The Departments of Labor and Education will encourage expanded opportunities through community colleges, apprenticeships, and other job training.

- E. **Americorps:** Expanded opportunities through Americorps to encourage people to enter the early childhood profession, such as expanded access to loan forgiveness and the Segal education stipend.

- G. **Data:** To improve data and information on the care workforce, the Department of Labor will:
- conduct and publish an analysis of early childhood and home care workers' pay in comparison to the pay of other workers with similar levels of training and skill; and
 - issue guidance to help States and localities conduct their own analyses of comparable pay rates for care workers in their respective jurisdictions.

Making Care More Accessible and Affordable for Families

To increase access to affordable, high quality child care for workers delivering federally assisted projects, agencies shall consider adding requirements that access to quality child care be considered as part of the grant evaluation process. This is similar to the intent behind recent Department of Commerce action in implementing the CHIPS Act of 2022. To lower child care costs for families eligible for Federal programs, HHS will:

- Consider issuing regulations to pursue policies to reduce child care costs for families benefiting from CCDF;
- Identify potential opportunities to reduce barriers to eligibility for Head Start and CCDF;
- Encourage states, through all available avenues, to increase the use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds for basic assistance and work supports for families — including access to child care — and to spend more funds on cash assistance for families; and
- Identify other potential strategies to make child care and Head Start more accessible for those families most in need.

Expanding Options for Families by Building the Supply of Care

To provide families with more options for high-quality early learning services:

- HHS shall issue policies that would support child care providers to give families more options to access high-quality child care providers, and shall update payment practices to improve provider stability and supply;
- The Department of Education (ED) shall update a guide for schools and districts to expand high-quality early learning programming using federal funds so that more preschoolers are fully prepared to succeed in school;
- ED and HHS shall identify and disseminate evidence-based practices for serving children with disabilities and their families in high-quality ECE programs, including Head Start; and
- HHS shall take steps to streamline processes for Tribes to use CCDF and Head Start funding to construct and improve facilities, including facilities that are jointly funded.