



## **MA Families Need Affordable, High-Quality Early Education and Child Care**

In order to provide children with an equal start in life, strengthen our economy in a way that also reduces racial, gender, and income inequality in our state, and meet the needs of working parents and the 21st century workforce; **Massachusetts families need affordable, accessible, high-quality early education and child care.**

**Massachusetts needs urgent action to address the multifaceted child care crisis.** Tens of thousands of women in Massachusetts have left the workforce due to the lack of affordable child care. Many early education and child care providers already have closed their doors, and others are on the verge of going out of business. Early childhood educators are leaving their jobs because of low pay; they can't afford to work in the field they love. Employers across the state are suffering due to their employees' struggles with child care. The state's Legislative Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission found that **immediate public funding is needed now**, as well as in the long term, to ensure that providers can keep their programs open and pay wages sufficient to keep educators in their classrooms.

Failure to address the child care crisis now will take its toll on the next generation: when denied access to high-quality early education and child care, vulnerable children miss out on the learning environments, structure, and stability that help set them up for **education success, optimal earnings, and long-term health and wellbeing.** Ensuring that all children have access to high quality early education and care is how we prevent achievement gaps from widening and health disparities from worsening.

During the immediate recovery from the pandemic and over the long term, **access to affordable, high-quality early education and child care is critical to building a stronger, more equal and just Massachusetts.** The Common Start Coalition is committed to making this vision a reality.

### **About the Common Start Coalition**

The **Common Start Coalition** is a statewide partnership of organizations, providers, parents, early educators and advocates working together to make high-quality early education and child care affordable and accessible to all Massachusetts families. Our goal is to ensure that all families have the care solutions they need and that all children in our Commonwealth have the same, strong start and enter school on a level playing field. We are a diverse coalition including community, faith-based, labor, business, and early education and child care organizations, as well as early educators, parents, individuals, and direct service organizations.

### **Get Involved**

If you're a parent, an early educator, a provider, an employer, or an advocate — we need your voice. Sign up for updates, find a local chapter, and get involved at [commonstartma.org](http://commonstartma.org).

## H.4795/S.2883 & The Common Start Framework

In early 2021, the Common Start Coalition drafted legislation, originally filed by Reps. Gordon & Madaro and Senators Lewis & Moran, that would **establish a framework for delivering increased access to affordable, high-quality early education and child care** to Massachusetts families, over the course of several years. On May 18, the Legislature's Education Committee approved a landmark bill, H.4795/S.2883, titled *An Act to Expand Access to High-Quality, Affordable Early Education and Care*. Major sections of the Education Committee's legislation are heavily based on the Common Start bill, and we are thrilled that it strongly reflects many of our coalition's core principles and proposed solutions to the childcare crisis.

The bill **provides a framework to increase the scope of public investment in early education and child care** with an incremental roll-out over several years that prioritizes the lowest-income, highest-need families. Programs would be available in early education and child care centers, private homes, and schools – the same settings where early education and child care is provided now.

H.4795/S.2883 would **dramatically increase the affordability and quality of early education and child care** for all Massachusetts families. The bill's framework uses a combination of direct-to-provider operational funding and ongoing family financial assistance to reduce costs to families while compensating providers for the true cost of providing quality care.

- **Operational Funding:** The legislation would create a new direct-to-provider funding allocation based on provider enrollment (not daily attendance) that directly offsets provider's operating costs, including higher educator pay.
- **Family Subsidy:** Once fully implemented, families with annual incomes up to 125% of statewide median income (125% of SMI today is \$164,065 for a family of four, or \$111,565 for a single parent with one child) would be able to access public subsidies to lower the cost of care.

### What Does This Mean For...

#### Families:

- Financial assistance to the majority of families to significantly lower the cost of care
- Enhanced earning opportunities, financial security, and long-term wellbeing

#### Children:

- Participation in high-quality early education and care programs
- Access to comprehensive wraparound services
- Increased education attainment and life-time earnings and longer-term health benefits, including improvements to children's brain development

#### Providers:

- Public investments in providers raised to help meet the true cost of providing high-quality care
- Direct-to-provider operational funding provides stable source of funding and promotes delivery of higher quality care

#### Educators:

- Higher salaries and expanded professional development opportunities
- Support for higher credential and/or degree attainment

#### Businesses:

- Critical support to labor pool
- Benefits talent recruitment, retention, and productivity

Learn more and get involved at [commonstartma.org](http://commonstartma.org)