



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON CONCERNED WITH GOVERNOR and LEGISLATURE'S  
LACK OF SUPPORT FOR CHILD CARE**

TACOMA, WA – April 12, 2017 – The Governor and both houses in the state legislature have released their 2017 – 2019 budget proposals. The news is not good for Washington's child care system. None of the proposed budgets address the difficulties Washington's child care providers are facing. Years of extremely low state child care assistance reimbursement rates combined with WA's recent minimum wage increase have left many child care programs struggling to stay open.

Washington already is one of the least affordable states for child care, ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> least affordable in the nation for care of an infant in a family child care home and 6<sup>th</sup> least affordable for care of an infant in a center. Approximately 60% of WA's children under age six reside in homes where all adults work<sup>1</sup>, making child care a major expense for most of WA's young families. Child care even costs more than tuition at state colleges! For single parents the burden is greatest. Child care for an infant in a center consumes 50.3% of the state median income for a single mother in WA.<sup>2</sup> Parents simply cannot afford to pay more to subsidize the low reimbursement rates the state pays to child care centers.

"Our child care system is in crisis. We urge state lawmakers to address the systemic underpayment of child care centers and prevent the closure of programs across the state. Without a healthy child care system, many Washington parents will be unable to stay in, and/or join, the workforce," said Robin Lester, chief executive officer of Child Care Aware of Washington.

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Here is a quick summary of the proposed budgets' impacts on child care:

Governor	Senate	House
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does not increase the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) base rate</li> <li>▪ Increases tiered reimbursement (reimbursement rate bonuses to incentivize high quality care)</li> <li>▪ Funds the SEIU collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for family child care providers</li> <li>▪ Reduces Early Achievers (WA's framework for increasing the quality of child care) funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only a 1% increase in the WCCC base rate</li> <li>▪ Reduces family access to WCCC</li> <li>▪ Eliminates 12-month authorizations for WCCC families</li> <li>▪ Does not fully fund the SEIU CBA</li> <li>▪ Reduces ECE scholarships by 50%</li> <li>▪ Reduces quality improvement awards by 33%</li> <li>▪ Reduces need-based grants by 50%</li> <li>▪ Reduces early learning coaching by 40%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only a 2% increase in the WCCC base rate</li> <li>▪ Increases tiered reimbursement</li> <li>▪ Fully funds the SEIU CBA</li> <li>▪ Requires the Department of Early Learning to work with partners to create a plan to stabilize the child care workforce</li> <li>▪ Expands the ECEAP Pathways pilot to allow licensed child care programs to administer ECEAP slots</li> </ul>

All three proposals fall far short of what's needed to adequately fund WA's child care system. The Senate proposal would do the most harm, by severely restricting access to child care for low income workers on the verge of self-sustainment, reducing continuity of care for the children who need it most and eliminating all of the momentum the state has made improving the quality of care through Early Achievers.

"WA's licensed child care businesses provide an essential service and are vital to our state's economy. They also are the early learning programs for well over 100,000 children in WA. Programs have only one option to keep their doors open, and that is raising the rates of private-pay families. This is not sustainable, as family income has not nearly kept pace with the rate of increases. Washington State can and must do more for our children," said Ryan Pricco, director of policy and advocacy at CCA of WA.

**CCA of WA calls on the legislature to:**

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- Invest at least \$40 million into the WCCC base rate
- Ensure eligible families can always access WCCC as soon as they get a job, and children benefit from continuity of care with 12-month authorizations
- Require DEL to work with partners to create a plan for stabilizing the child care workforce
- Expand the ECEAP Pathways pilot so licensed programs can participate in ECEAP
- Protect Early Achievers supports

Child Care Aware of Washington is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to connecting families to local, high-quality, licensed child care and early learning programs, and to supporting providers who deliver high-quality care. As a statewide network of six regional agencies, we work side-by-side with child care providers, offering professional development services and higher education scholarships to help them integrate research-based, best practices into their programs. We are committed to ensuring that each and every child in Washington has access to the quality care and education they need to succeed in school and life. For more information, please visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org> and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/> and on Twitter @childcarewa.

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1. Child Care Aware of Washington [2017 Child Care Data Reports](#)
2. Child Care Aware of America report: [Parents and the High Cost of Child Care 2016](#)