



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

The RI Association for the Education of Young Children voices its support for Governor's Budget [Article 5, Section 6](#) and Senate Bill 2238 (Murray).

As the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, RIAEYC represents early childhood educators who are committed to advancing high-quality early learning and promoting the well-being of young children and their families across Rhode Island.

As a membership organization serving professionals who work directly with infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children, we know how economic instability affects children's development. In the mid-2000s, Rhode Island **cut about \$47 million** in state funding, removing thousands of families from the RI Child Care Assistance Program. During this period, the state cut taxes on high earners to attract businesses to the state and boost the economy. Twenty years later, Rhode Island helps less than half the families it used to help pay for child care, has one of the lowest family income cutoffs for child care assistance in the northeast, and pays provider rates below the federal equal access standard. Rhode Island child care educators earn \$16.74/hour on average, among the lowest wages in the state, and lower than wages in many nearby states.

**New State Revenue is Needed to Help Children Access Food, Healthcare, and Child Care** Significant new revenue is needed to ensure all families have access to affordable, high-quality child care and early education programs so parents can work to cover housing costs and other basic needs and children can learn, play, and grow in nurturing environments.

**Policies that reduce poverty and promote equitable tax structures are also directly connected to the health of Rhode Island's early learning system.** When families can better afford child care and related expenses, early education programs are more stable, enrollment is more consistent, and educators can focus on delivering high-quality instruction and care. Furthermore, these efforts contribute to stabilizing and professionalizing the early childhood workforce, as many early childhood educators are parents themselves earning low wages, and they will see the benefit in their own homes.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Hildebrand, M.A.  
Executive Director RIAEYC