

# Rebuilding the California Dream

*California's future depends on providing all children with a sound foundation for success that acknowledges their diverse life experiences. To better serve the children of California, the Right Start Commission recommends that we as a state:*

## Commit to Universal Access to High-Quality Early Learning and Care Programs for Children 0-5 Years Old

1. By 2021, ensure that all 4-year-old children have universal access to transitional kindergarten or other high-quality, developmentally appropriate preschool, and ensure that children age 0-3 have access to safe, developmentally appropriate care.

This system of child care, early childhood education, and preschool should be open to all families, regardless of their ability to pay. As with health care, the state should offer a sliding scale based on a family's ability to pay for care, with full subsidies for the lowest-income families.

2. Create a "one-stop shop" online portal that operates in conjunction with physical regional referral centers to provide parents and caregivers with easy identification of and access to all available early childhood services.
3. Foster high-quality early childhood education by adopting an aligned and coherent system of goals and developmentally appropriate practices that runs through child care, preschool, transitional kindergarten, and primary grades. Early childhood professionals are essential to program quality and should receive workforce training aligned to integrated quality standards in a manner that protects workforce diversity and improves compensation.
4. Consolidate and coordinate the state's early learning and care programs to simplify access and delivery of services for children and families.

## Invest in Preventive Health Care

1. Increase the Medi-Cal reimbursement rates for providers to ensure that more than half of the state's kids have access to vital health services.

2. Address the loophole in the Affordable Care Act that denies affordable care to tens of thousands of California children.
3. Bolster health care provider efforts to administer behavioral, developmental, and mental health screenings in accordance with recommended frequency, and add adverse childhood experience (ACE) screenings to existing standards of pediatric practice.

## Support Public Awareness of and Family Education About the Importance of the Early Years

1. Invest in efforts to increase public awareness of, and expand evidence-based support programs that provide information to families about, the consequences of toxic stress and the importance of brain development. Such initiatives would highlight everyday opportunities to encourage early literacy and early math and stress the value of multilingualism in a culturally responsive manner.
2. To do this, the state should enlist a variety of messengers, including leaders of media, cities, counties, hospitals, libraries, business groups, schools, and other community organizations.

*The movement toward a child-centered approach cannot and should not come exclusively from the government. The Right Start Commission recommends the following actions from the business sector:*

## Build a More Responsive Business Community

1. Provide a family-friendly workplace environment through policies that include child care assistance, reliable schedules, and paid family leave, among others, because the majority of parents and caregivers participate in the workforce.
2. Encourage prominent business leaders to leverage their networks and experiences to prompt their peers to invest in every child's pathway to success, maintain California's economic leadership in the 21st century, and support the workplace policies outlined above.