

Early Childcare and Education

**Alexandra L.
Bradley**

Lead Policy Analyst, NASI Study
Panel on Caregiving

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Why include ECCE in a UFC program?

- Preparing for the success and development of our future workers, caregivers, and broader communities.
- ECCE is not currently treated on par with K-12 education
- High developmental value for children
- High cost-benefit value for families + society

The existing patchwork of federal + state ECCE programs is hard to navigate for families and the state alike

- Only very low-income families are eligible for most benefits
- Eligibility requirements are strict and confusing

Context and Considerations - ECCE

Improving quality of care

- High-quality early care and education benefits children
- Time of rapid development for children
- Improvements to educational achievement
- High return on investment socially

Building up the care provider workforce

- Compensation
- Training and workforce development

Improving equity and access to care

- Regional distribution to lessen current regional limitations
- Diversity + cultural competence to lessen achievement gap + disparities in socio-emotional development, which are often in place prior to a child's entry into formal education
- Nonstandard hours

Policy Options for States - ECCE

Comprehensive universal program

- All children eligible
- Essentially an expansion of existing public education
- High up-front public investment

Employment-based contributory program

- Targets resources specifically to working families
- Coverage is not universal – expanded coverage would require additional provisions
- Determining eligibility could be administratively challenging

Universal subsidy program

- All children eligible
- May or may not cover full cost of care, or even a sufficient amount, depending on the generosity of the program
- Greater flexibility for state and families

Tradeoffs of ECCE Policy Options

Programs that are **universal** are better positioned to **improve equity in child development outcomes**

Programs that are **employment-based** focus on labor force participation will **leave many children out** entirely while shifting others in and out of coverage if parent/guardian employment is inconsistent or unstable.

All programs will need to include space for private child care providers

Generosity of benefits will affect who can actually utilize the program

- If the benefit amounts are insufficient to make a meaningful difference for many families, inequality may actually increase as higher-earners are simply getting more subsidized support.