JUMPSTART’S 2023 POLICY POSITIONS AND PRIORITIES
Jumpstart is a national nonprofit focused on transforming the early care and education system. Because a child’s early years have lifelong impacts on their future learning, development, and success, we firmly believe that the most effective way to unlock the potential of every child and improve economic outcomes in underserved communities is to ensure that impactful early education, taught by qualified, well-compensated, and effective educators, is available to all.

Jumpstart works with an unwavering commitment to advancing equity through a multipronged approach. Using a research-based curriculum designed to build children’s language, literacy, and social-emotional skills, our program provides individualized support to children and helps college students and aspiring educators build professional skills and qualifications. We do this while operating within an inequitable system that must change, which is why we advocate for policies on a local and national level that benefit young children and the early care and education workforce.

Our Policy Positions on Equitable Access to Early Care and Education; Early Care and Education Workforce; and Equity & Justice follow:

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Jumpstart believes that all children, regardless of race, zip code, or socioeconomic status, should have access to affordable, accessible, and high-quality early education and care. Jumpstart is working towards the day where every child will enter kindergarten prepared to succeed, and a high-quality early education for all is integral to realizing that vision. Realizing this vision requires increased and sustained investment in our system’s infrastructure, particularly federal investments that can support states’ current efforts towards ECE system reform.

Therefore, Jumpstart advocates for a more expansive, equitable, and quality universal early childhood education system for children, families, providers, and educators.

Jumpstart
Children first.
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

The early care and education (ECE) sector has long struggled to attract and retain talented professionals, a challenge that was significantly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A September 2021 report found that a staggering 90 percent of child care centers are experiencing staffing shortages with 40% percent of those centers serving fewer children as a result. The most common barriers for aspiring professionals matriculating into the field—and then remaining beyond the first two years—are low wages, lack of opportunities for training and coaching, and difficulty navigating the path to credentialing and licensure. However, we know that insufficiently low wages both dissuade potential educators from joining the workforce and are a major factor in retention challenges that programs face. Students aspiring to become educators and early care professionals need to be able to enter the profession debt-free. Early care and education workers need a living wage, career pathway support with opportunities for advancement, and professional development. Childcare providers should also be exempt from paying state income taxes on their grant funds, and instead be able to use the funds as they were intended: to support the operational needs of childcare providers.

Jumpstart therefore advocates in favor of policies that increase the compensation of childcare and education workers to wages commensurate with those of public school educators with similar credentials and experience and supports a democratized higher education system that facilitates a pipeline into a more robust early education profession. Jumpstart also advocates for policies that provide a career pathway with opportunities for advancement and professional development.

EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Jumpstart believes in a “whole child” approach to education and learning that affirms the humanity and identity of every child. Jumpstart understands that fostering inclusive school environments that promote students’ social, emotional, and physical wellbeing is critical to cultivating a child’s full personal and academic potential. As Jumpstart supports general increases in investments for the sector, we encourage simultaneously ensuring these investments and additional legislation reach those most impacted by systemic inequity. Jumpstart believes in supporting an individual’s entire well-being by taking timely actions to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Jumpstart also believes that immigration status should not be a barrier to early care and education.

Exclusionary Discipline:
An estimated 67,000 students were suspended or expelled from early education settings in 2016 alone, and Black students are 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their white peers. Studies have found that teachers “may hold different expectations based on the race of the child,” leading to disproportionate and inequitable discipline practices. Jumpstart stands firmly against exclusionary discipline, and advocates for policies that limit or prohibit the inequitable use of such practices and applauds legislative language in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Mental Health bill that requires the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) “develop performance standards necessary for prohibiting or significantly limiting the use of suspension and expulsion in all licensed early education and care programs.” We look to build on this victory in the next legislative session and throughout the country.
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Our Federal Policy Priorities on Equitable Access to Early Care and Education; Early Care and Education Workforce; and Equity & Justice follow:

JUMPSTART’S FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Policy Priorities

- Increased funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start to expand access to high-quality early education and child care for more families.

- Affordability and access strategies like those outlined in Senator Warren’s Child Care for Every Community Act that create a pathway to universal ECE through sustained federal investment.

- Incorporating the following principles in the Federal definition of high-quality care:
  - Prohibition of harsh discipline practices;
  - Positive relationships among all within the early education community;
  - School-family partnerships;
  - Health and nutrition component tied to community programming and services;
  - School commitment to assessments and continuous improvements;
  - Safe, well-resourced environment where learning materials are readily available;
  - Developmentally and culturally appropriate programming; and
  - Internal school policies that are child-serving and promote equitable policies for students, families, and educators alike.
• Increased funding for the Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools (CCAMPIS) program to ensure that every parent pursuing postsecondary education has access to the child care they need.

• Ensuring all families on military bases have access to child care services for their youngest learners.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Policy Priorities

Jumpstart advocates in favor of policies that increase the compensation of child care workers to wages commensurate with those of public-school educators with similar credentials and experience. Jumpstart also advocates for policies that provide a career pathway with opportunities for advancement and professional development including:

• Federal Work Study Community Service Set-Aside Proposal: Jumpstart supports an increase in the community service set-aside for the Federal Work Study (FWS) program from 7%-24% as annual appropriations levels increase. This supports access to career oriented experiences and opportunities in early care and education, helping to address child care staffing shortages and introduce more students to the profession.

• Legislation that would create a loan assistance program devoted to professionals in early education, such as Jumpstart’s proposal in Rep. Katherine Clark’s (D-MA) Child Care is Infrastructure Act.

• The Federal government defining and supporting a thriving wage for early childhood educators, including a focus on early ed pay parity as outlined in the Child Care for Every Community Act.

• High-quality professional development opportunities for early educators.
EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Policy Priorities

• Legislation that promotes a “whole child” approach to teaching and learning, including protections against inequitable discipline in ECE, and increased investment in mental health support for families and educators.

• Opposition to legislative advancements targeting or banning discussions of identity, race, gender, sexual and romantic orientation etc. in children's books, curriculum or in school environments.

• Legislation that increases equity and reduces disparities for children, especially those from marginalized backgrounds.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about our policy priorities, please contact Jasmin Norford at jasmin.norford@jstart.org.
JUMPSTART’S 2023 STATE POLICY PRIORITIES

MASSACHUSETTS
JUMPSTART’S POLICY PRIORITIES: MASSACHUSETTS

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Jumpstart’s Massachusetts State Policy Priorities on Equitable Access to Early Care and Education; Early Care and Education Workforce; and Equity & Justice follow:

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Policy Priorities

- **Early Education Legislation in line with Common Start** (H.489/S.301):
  - Legislation should require the state to cover the full cost of care for families with incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Line
  - Legislation should also provide financial assistance that limits parent fees to 7% of a household’s income to families earning up to 200% of the State Median Income
  - Legislation should permanently codify an operational grant program (similar to Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grants) to be used to support program quality and sustainability

- **$112 million in the FY24 state budget to increase access to income eligible care for children and families under the 85th percentile of State Median Income, prioritizing those under the 50th percentile of State Median Income.**
  - Special Legislative Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission Recommendation #5

- **$20 million in the FY24 state budget fund the child care resource and referral agencies for additional navigational support and outreach to families eligible for state-subsidized early care and education**

- **An Act providing immediate childcare assistance to homeless families** (H.147)
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Policy Priorities

• Early Education Legislation in line with Common Start (H.489/S.301) that:
  • Increases salaries and benefits for educators. Wages for early educators should be commensurate with elementary school educators with similar credentials and experience
  • Establishes an early education and care scholarship program to help cover the cost of tuition, fees, and support diverse learning needs (such as personal child care)
  • Creates a loan forgiveness program for early educators

$20 million in the FY24 state budget to build on FY23 investments for special early education subsidies for the workforce

EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Policy Priorities

• Early Education Legislation in line with Common Start (H.489/S.301) that:
  • Gives preference to early educators who serve in communities that “predominantly serve children and families with high needs” in the loan forgiveness program
  • Adds costs associated with “promoting racial equity” as a consideration in the operational grant funding formula
  • Adds “cultural competency and awareness of implicit bias” as part of the “common and shared body of knowledge” for all those working in the field
• Timely and effective implementation by EEC of the suspension and expulsion limits included in the Mental Health bill

• The collection and transparent sharing of data regarding the use of suspension and expulsion after the new performance standards are implemented

• $5 million in the FY24 state budget for the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Grant program for early childhood mental health consultation services in early education and care programs

• An Act to lift kids out of deep poverty (H.144/S.75)

• An Act enhancing learning in the early school years through a ban on school exclusion in pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade (H.453/S.289)

• An Act relative to educator diversity (H.549/S.311)

JUMPSTART BUDGET REQUEST

Jumpstart has received funding from the Massachusetts Legislature through a budget amendment since 2019 to “provide support to evidence-based early childhood education programs that promote language, literacy, and social emotional skill development for preschool children from underserved communities in the commonwealth.” In FY23, Jumpstart received $350,000, which allowed us to sustain our existing partnerships through the pandemic and expand to two more communities via new partnerships with UMass Dartmouth and Salem State University. In the FY24 budget, we are advocating for $500,000 to support our extensive work throughout the Commonwealth.

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Jumpstart’s New York State Policy Priorities on Equitable Access to Early Care and Education; Early Care and Education Workforce; and Equity & Justice follow:

JUMPSTART’S POLICY PRIORITIES: NEW YORK

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Policy Priorities

• S.3245 Universal Childcare Act

• Empire State Campaign for Children Care (ESCCC) 2023 State Budget Proposal

The early care and education sector in New York is in crisis. With 93% of New York families needing to pay more than 7% of their household income on care, and the workforce being drastically under-compensated with “65% of childcare providers receiv[ing] such low wages that they are eligible for several social safety net programs,” the sector needs immediate transformation.

To mitigate further collapse of the sector, Jumpstart advocates for the Universal Child Care Act, economic investments like the Children and Families Reinvestment Act, and a comprehensive budget proposal outlined in our ESCCC Executive Budget proposal that will expand access to ECE and combat economic exclusion.
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Policy Priorities

• A.186 Child care professionals loan forgiveness incentive program:

Outstanding student loan burden remains a significant factor detracting qualified early educators and service professionals from the sector: “incurring debt increased the odds that students chose “substantially higher-salary jobs” and “reduce[d] the probability that students [chose] low-paid ‘public interest’ jobs.” As we push for a more diverse and inclusive ECE sector, we must address the disproportionate impact of loans on borrowers of color, primarily Black women who hold most of the nation’s student debt.

This incentive program will do the following:
• Provide loan forgiveness awards for applicants who choose a career in early education.
• Encourage an infusion of qualified early educators to remain in-state to offer services to the ECE sector by spreading loan forgiveness over five years.
• Qualified New York state residents with outstanding loans from a higher education institution can receive up to $25,000 in forgiveness, receiving 20% of their award upon each completed year with a qualified early education program.

EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Policy Priorities

• S.4522 Prohibiting limiting childcare services based on proof of immigration status

• ESCCC Fund for Immigrant Families proposal

While realizing a more supportive educational ecosystem for all, we must target unique historical marginalization and disinvestment spaces. Although “roughly 544,000 (49%)” of NYC Department of Education students are from immigrant families, children of immigrant families remain largely under-enrolled in early education settings. We must ensure that immigration status is not a barrier to receiving care by eliminating the requirement for proof of immigration status and establishing a fund for families excluded from subsidized child care as outlined in our ESCCC Fund for Immigrant Families proposal.
Since 2016, Jumpstart New York City has received funding through the City’s First Readers (CFR) initiative sponsored by the New York City Council. Of the $6.5 million CFR received, $438,114 has gone to Jumpstart for our community engagement work. Nearly 2.2 million families, across all 51 council districts, have received free early childhood services, books, and educational materials through the coordinated programs of 17 partner organizations. In 2023, through our annual advocacy with our advocates and coalition partners, we plan to push for our $6.5 million City Council budget ask to support early literacy programming across NYC.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about our policy priorities, please contact Jasmin Norford at jasmin.norford@jstart.org or Adanech Makey at adanech.makey@jstart.org
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Jumpstart’s California State Policy Priorities on Equitable Access to Early Care and Education; Early Care and Education Workforce; and Equity & Justice follow:

**EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

### Policy Priorities

- **AB51: (Bonta) Universal Early Care Act:** This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to create a universal early care and education system, utilizing the existing mixed-delivery system, that promotes equity and access for all families.

- **AB14: (Sanchez):** Income tax: Childcare saving and investment accounts: This bill would state the intention of the Legislature to enact legislation that would establish similar tax-preferred savings and investment accounts for childcare expenses.

- **AB393: (Rivas and Arambula) Childcare: Dual Language Learners:** This bill would similarly require the Director of Social Services to develop procedures for general or migrant childcare and development contractors to identify and report data on dual language learners enrolled in a general childcare and development program or migrant childcare and development program, as specified, and requires the director to develop informal directives and adopt regulations to implement these provisions. The bill would require the Superintendent and the director to coordinate their efforts in developing the procedures for the dual language learner data collection and reporting.
Jumpstart stands with several coalitions in support of their advocacy efforts including:

California Early Care and Education Coalition

The coalition believes that California’s families need a Universal Preschool System that allows them access to community-based mixed delivery programs that offer a variety of settings and hours of care, and a rate system that covers the full cost of care. The new rate system must include the full cost of care, eliminating the need to charge families fees for those making below 75% of the State Median Income (SMI). This change will make a real difference in the lives of working families currently paying fees by putting money directly back into their pockets. Families need continued investment in community-based ECE spaces to ensure that all children, specifically 4-year-old children, and families, have equitable access to numerous ECE options that meet their needs.

The Rate and Quality Stakeholder Working Group report made clear that the current reimbursement rate system’s reliance on a regional market rate survey perpetuates inequalities with our lowest income communities receiving artificially low reimbursement rates that don’t cover the cost of care. Families, children, and early care and education providers will be further marginalized unless we make significant investments to our ECE system in the 2023-24 budget through the following:

- Provide a 25% increase to current rates for immediate relief and adopt an alternative methodology using a cost estimation model and include a timeline for implementation for the actual cost of care based on program enrollment without charging families fees;

- Allocate all 20,000 childcare spaces scheduled to be released in 2023-24. We know thousands of families need access to childcare TODAY, and if the state provides Alternative Payment (AP) Agencies contracts by October of 2023, there should not be a delay in enrolling new families.

- Invest money from general fund in California’s community-based ECE providers to ensure that all children, specifically 4-year-old children, and families have equitable access to a variety of ECE options that meet their needs.

- The ECE Coalition appreciates the administrations and legislature’s long-term vision and continued commitment to ECE with the sustained commitment to provide 200,000 childcare spaces and commitment to move to a single rate structure, but the proposed budget does not address the short-term imperative needs for a rate increase and a variety of ECE options for 4-year-old children.

Black California United for Early Care and Education

- Black families should have options to choose from when determining which setting will work best for their children.
- Black children should be engaged in culturally affirming care and education.
- Black families with varying experiences should be intentionally included in state-level input convenings and working groups.
- Black advisories should be established and adequately funded at the local, county and state level.
Policy Priorities

- **AB26**: (Fong) Federal Student Loan Debt: This bill would exclude from an individual’s gross income, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2022, any amount of qualified student loan debt, as defined, that is discharged under the federal student loan debt relief plan, as specified. The bill would specify that its provisions shall only become operative upon the enactment of legislation that would conform to specified federal law. The bill would also include additional information required for any bill authorizing a new tax expenditure. This bill would take effect immediately as a tax levy.

- **SB25**: (Skinner) Student Loan Debt: This bill would exclude from an individual’s gross income, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2021, and before January 1, 2026, the amount of certain student loans discharged, in whole or in part, after December 31, 2020, and before January 1, 2026, in conformity with federal law.

- **AB25**: (McCarty) Debt free college: This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact future legislation that would establish a debt-free college system.

- **AB238**: (Muratsuchi) CA Student Teacher Support Grant Program: The bill would, contingent upon an appropriation of one-time funding, establish the California Student Teacher Support Grant Program, under the administration of the Student Aid Commission, to award grants of an unspecified amount to teaching credential candidates to compensate the candidates while they perform the required student teaching.

- **AB383**: (Zbur) CA Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program: Leave of Absence for Student Teaching: This bill would expand the definition of “teacher training program” to include out-of-state teacher licensure programs that meet certain criteria, as provided. The bill would add wage replacement as one of the criteria that the commission is required to include in its selection of school districts, charter schools, or county offices of education for the program. The bill would require participating classified employees to be entitled to a leave of absence from a participating local educational agency of up to 600 hours for the purpose of completing a student teaching requirement as required by a teacher training program. The bill would require a participating local educational agency, upon a classified employee participant’s request, to provide the participant with a stipend during a leave of absence for student teaching that is equal to the participant’s regular wages and shall continue to pay for any benefits during the leave. The bill would require a classified employee participant to agree to various terms regarding the stipend, including, among other things, that reimbursement of the stipend is required in certain circumstances and may be withheld from their employee pay, as provided.

- **AB35**: (Ting) Personal Income Tax Law: Exclusion: Student Loan Debt: This bill would exclude from an individual’s gross income, for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2021, and before January 1, 2026, the amount of certain student loans discharged, in whole or in part, after December 31, 2020, and before January 1, 2026, in conformity with federal law.
EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Policy Priorities

- **SB274**: (Skinner) Suspensions and Expulsions: Willful Defiance: This bill would remove disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties from the list of acts for which a pupil, regardless of their grade of enrollment, may be suspended or recommended for expulsion. The bill would extend the prohibition against the suspension of charter school pupils for those acts to all grades, indefinitely. This bill would prohibit a suspension or expulsion from being imposed against a pupil based solely on the fact that they are otherwise absent from school activities.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about our policy priorities, please contact Demnlus Johnson III at demnlus.johnson@jstart.org.