JUMPSTART’S 2023 STATE POLICY PRIORITIES

MASSACHUSETTS
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.

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.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about our policy priorities, please contact Kate Warren-Barnes at kate.warren-barnes@jstart.org.