

## Michigan AEYC Policy Agenda

Michigan AEYC is a resource for current research and practices related to early childhood education (ages prenatal through eight) and supports continued improvement in policy. Michigan AEYC drafts or revises an annual policy agenda. These points are intertwined, evolving, and used to guide work with members, the community, legislature and other stakeholders on a state and local level. From October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022, Michigan AEYC has chosen to focus on the following agenda items:

### **Early Care and Education Is Essential**

When there is a local, state, or national crisis, we urge policymakers to launch an immediate response prioritizing the needs of young children, families, and early care and education providers. In recognition of both the short-term and long-term individual and collective impact of crises, policies reflect economic relevance of sustaining high quality early care and education. We support additional investments in early childhood and policies elevating the increased needs during a crisis.

### **Affordable and Accessible High Quality Early Learning**

Research demonstrates the positive impact that high quality early learning has on young children. Current brain research has informed us that 80% of a child's brain is developed by age 3, causing an increased focus on the care and education of infants and toddlers. Michigan has supported a focus on quality with the Great Start to Quality System. We look forward to improving the affordability and accessibility to high quality early learning for all young children through a variety of innovative, bipartisan funding models.

### **Early Language and Literacy Development**

Providing children with language and literacy-rich environments and interactions strengthen children's potential to become proficient readers and writers. Developmentally appropriate activities support children's literacy knowledge and skills in the early years, which predict later literacy achievement. We support the efforts in Michigan that are underway related to research-based essential literacy practices.

### **Social-Emotional Competence of Young Children and Staff**

We recognize the necessity of supporting social-emotional competence in both children and professionals working with young children as a key indicator to later school success. Beyond general social-emotional competence, studies on Adverse Childhood Experiences make evident the impact of stress and trauma on young children and the role educators can play to reduce that stress. To be successful, educators need resources to support the increasing need for their own mental health and well-being. We support initiatives that address the ecological, social-emotional needs of children, families, professionals, and community members.

### **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging for Children and Early Childhood Professionals**

Equitability ensures resources are distributed based on need so that all can participate fairly. All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society, which includes diverse educators. Professionals deserve affordable education and compensation equitable to the work to make a strong, positive impact at a critical time in a child's development. We support initiatives that embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities.