

**Cradle & Career:
What Can Workforce Development Learn From
Early Childhood Development & Care?**

Panelists

- Moderator - Tony Miller, Former Deputy Secretary & COO, U.S. Department of Education
- Kelsey Clark, Partner, BCG
- Madhuri Kommareddi, Director of Workforce Development, Office of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
- Katharine Stevens, Resident Scholar, Education Policy Studies, AEI

Summary of the Discussion

This is a multi-sector issue

- There is corporate concern over the skill development of the future workforce.
- There is philanthropic interest, evidenced by the growth in workforce development investments/grants.
- There is government interest, demonstrated by increased investment in early care and education, particularly pre-k programs, especially at the city and state levels.
- There is research interest, with a growth in studies investigating the ROI of early care and education.

This is a multi-generation issue, and we need to think about the two-generation impact

- Parents need the support of reliable, quality early care and education to maintain stable employment.
- Children need parents to be employed to ensure household and economic stability.

We need to get Early Education and Care investments on par with K-12

- The scale of K-12 interest and funding is currently much larger, we need to extend the understanding of the pipeline of the future workforce to include the youngest children (early childhood education is where workforce development begins, so there is a strong business case for early childhood investments).
- The achievement gap is present before children get to K-12, so we need to “swim upstream” to attack the problem before kids get to kindergarten.
- Home environment and child care/early education quality is what drives child development.

We also need to invest in Early Education and Care as a large-scale employer

- Do we need to professionalize the job to drive better outcomes for children and families?

- Some argue for higher credentials for early education teachers, and others argue for higher pay (without the credentials as a barrier to entry); however, higher salaries presents challenges as the economics of child care are already broken, so increasing salaries would even further complicate the equation.
- Need to keep in mind that the skillset required for early education teachers and child care providers is very different than K-12 (“you cannot scale nurture”).

We need to pursue better access and quality early childhood education and care despite any mixed research findings

- “Fade out” is often due to sub-par K-12 settings; need quality in both early childhood education and care and K-12 to sustain outcomes.
- Also need to recognize that studies of impact often do not account for improvements in social and emotional learning, executive functioning, etc.
- The workforce/employment case alone should be enough to motivate states and cities to pursue early education and care - regardless of impacts for children (which are still generally positive); early education and care allows parents to work and benefits local economies.

There is a need for more innovative program models

- States and cities are leading the way, which will hopefully pave the way for federal action and funding.
- One example is NY, which just created a new position for workforce development to consider these issues holistically/in tandem, and with a flexible funding model.
- We need to determine workforce development and early education and care models that work first on a smaller scale, and then seek public funding to expand.