



READY LOUISIANA COALITION

Early Care and Education Candidate Platform Plank

for Louisiana Candidates for Governor, the Legislature, and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education - Elections 2019

DID YOU KNOW?

62%

of likely Louisiana voters support increasing state funding for child care for working parents, i.e. 50% of conservatives, 70% of moderates, 86% of liberals

2 out of 3

young children have both parents or their single parent in the workforce, yet child care costs more than \$7,500 a year

\$816 million

is lost to Louisiana employers due to child care issues of their employees and results in a \$1.1 billion loss to the economy

Over 3,000

families in Louisiana are currently on a waitlist for Child Care Assistance

35%

of Louisiana kindergartners start school behind due to lack of quality care - and those who start behind are more likely to stay behind

WHAT SHOULD CANDIDATES DO?

We ask all candidates to include a plank in their platforms to substantially increase access to quality early care and education for Louisiana's working families, especially for children under age four.

In 2012, Louisiana mandated a complete overhaul of our Early Care and Education System (**Act 3**). Today, we are ranked **8th in the nation** for the **effectiveness and efficiency of our accountability system** for these programs, including Pre-K, Head Start and Child Care.

Though we now have a strong accountability system and higher quality programs, **Act 3 was an unfunded mandate** and over the last decade, the state has **significantly cut funding for early care and education**, especially for **children under age four**.

Quality early care and education ensures **students begin school** on grade-level, **enables families to be productive** in the workforce, and serves as an **economic engine** for local communities.

A **comprehensive approach** to increasing access to quality early care and education is required, including:



Support the bipartisan Louisiana Early Childhood Care & Education Commission's LA B to 3 plan to make quality child care more affordable for working families by investing \$86 million in new funding annually to increase access from 22,000 to 177,000 children under age four over the next decade.



Further increase infant and toddler child care reimbursement rates to reflect the true cost of quality care.



Increase pay for early childhood educators in child care centers, who currently earn a median wage of \$8.95 an hour, through mechanisms such as the School Readiness Tax Credit for teachers.



Review existing dedicated funds and identify opportunities to redirect them to quality early care and education.



Commit to early care and education as a top priority for any new or expanded revenue.