

# Making things better for babies and toddlers will make things better for everyone in LA County.

## Persistent Patterns



### Parents struggle to find care for their babies and toddlers.

Despite calls to action and recommendations to improve the system of care for babies and toddlers, parents continue to experience difficulties in finding and paying for high-quality care.



**Teachers receive unfairly low wages and minimal, if any, benefits. They also suffer stressful working conditions.** Teachers need competitive wages, health care and retirement benefits, high-quality professional development focused specifically on infants and toddlers.



**Caregivers and parents need resources tailored to the needs of infants and toddlers.** Care providers need equipment, books, educational materials, funding to expand their facilities, and comprehensive training developed especially around the development of children aged 0 to 3. Parents need educational materials to understand the stages and milestones of their infants' and toddlers' development and their needs at each stage.

### A step towards addressing these patterns

**Mindsets and public perceptions must shift** to more complete and nuanced understandings of what parents, teachers, providers, and leaders do on a daily basis to care for infants and toddlers. There is much work to be done to shift mental models and change persistent narratives.

In 2023, we interviewed 65 Los Angeles County parents, early care providers (including FCC owners, center directors, and teachers), and leaders in early care and education (ECE) about the system of care for infants and toddlers. We wanted to learn about conditions in ECE, and solutions to the problems that persist in this critical field.

## Only 14%

of infants and toddlers who qualify for subsidies receive them

## \$13.43

average salary of ECE educators per hour

## 42%

of FCC providers rely on public assistance

### Adriana A Provider's Story

*One of the greatest challenges Adriana has faced in her career as an FCC provider is accessing health care insurance. She relies on subsidy payments as her primary source of income.*

*When you are sick you have to keep working because we do not have health insurance. ... It's too expensive so all we can do is take a pill and show our best face."*

## Momentum is Building

**LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis put forward a motion** to fortify the infant and toddler care system asserting that "Low infant-toddler child care capacity has far-reaching consequences, as the struggle to find care requires parents and caregivers to decide between reducing their working hours or leaving the labor force entirely, impacting not only their own family but also the overall economy."

The motion directs the LA County Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education to create a blueprint for improving the system by spring 2024. [Read more.](#)

**Other efforts to improve conditions for infants and toddlers include...**

[Ready2Teach](#), a program funded by the Hilton Foundation to recruit, train, and place new teachers with providers in LA;

A Birth to Age Three Child Care Communications Campaign funded by the [Stein Early Childhood Development Fund](#);

A report on [The True Cost of Early Care and Education](#) by Prenatal to 5 Fiscal Strategies; and

The Office of Head Start's prioritization of a [total compensation package including salary and benefits](#).

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