

Arkansas Children's Week - April 2–8, 2022

During the annual celebration of Arkansas Children's Week, the public is urged to consider the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs that meet those needs.

In Arkansas, 2 out of 3 children under age 5 live in homes where [both parents work](#). Many Arkansas children spend about [11,500 hours](#) of their lives in child care in the years before kindergarten. That's more time spent in an early care and education setting than they'll spend in school from kindergarten through 9th grade!

Early educators are engaged in incredibly difficult and complex work—literally shaping children's brains to become Arkansas's future students and professionals. Unfortunately, day-to-day challenges our educators face make delivering high-quality care and education difficult.

[Four in 10 of Arkansas's early childhood educators report being food insecure](#). That means they "ran out of food and didn't have money to buy more" or "cut meal sizes or skipped meals altogether because there wasn't enough money for food". This rate goes up to 50% for infant/toddler teachers.

[Quality of care for children is affected by teachers' compensation](#). When teachers are stressed about paying their bills, it is harder for them to build positive adult-child relationships that are critical to help children learn. However, employers cannot afford to increase teachers' wages without increasing parent fees.

Public investments in high-quality early care and education support our working parents. High-quality programs [strengthen business today](#) while simultaneously building the workforce we'll depend on for decades to come. Since March 2020, there have been multiple rounds of federal funding to help child care providers respond to the challenges of COVID-19. These funds have stabilized child care, for now - but they haven't solved the fundamental crisis. Our congressional leaders need to hear from Arkansans that child care needs permanent federal support to keep our state moving forward!

Arkansas Children's Week aligns with the national Week of the Young Child[®], established in 1971, to raise awareness that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life. The Week of the Young Child[®] is a time to plan how we—as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation—will better meet the needs of all young children and their families.

The [Arkansas Early Childhood Association \(AECA\)](#) is a non-profit organization, comprised of 1,500 early childhood professionals and parents who share a common concern about the well-being of young children and their families. AECA has worked for more than 50 years to promote quality care and education for the children of Arkansas.

Related resources:

Video: [**Why Does Child Care Cost So Much Yet Providers Make So Little?**](#) Child Care Aware of America

Website: [**Where Does Your Child Care Dollar Go?**](#) Center for American Progress
Contact Geania Dickey at geaniadickey@dot2dotconsult.com for members of the ECE workforce from your area who are prepared to be interviewed.