

Testimony in Support of HB-7319
Child Care for Child Care Staff Pilot
House Committee on Finance
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The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports Representative Diaz’s HB-7319, which would make the highly successful Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for Child Care Staff Pilot a permanent program and raise the family income limit so that more child care staff can qualify for assistance.

Rhode Island families and children deserve access to high-quality, affordable child care, and our economy cannot run without it. Unfortunately, Rhode Island has been experiencing a staffing crisis (also known as a staffing exodus) in the early education workforce. Early educators do very difficult work for near minimum wages. The early child care workforce primarily consists of working mothers who cannot afford to send their own children to child care programs. Often, when an early educator has their first or second child, they are financially forced to leave the workforce – taking their years of experience with them. Staffing shortages often result in closed classrooms leaving families with longer waitlists.

This pilot program was created to address these workforce and staffing concerns by incentivizing workers and reducing the financial burden of their child care expenses. It has been incredibly successful in retaining and recruiting high quality staff at child care centers. Many centers in Rhode Island have at least one staff member participating in this pilot program, and there are over 500 children benefiting from this pilot.¹ Increasing the income limit would allow more workers to participate in the program. Under the current threshold, many otherwise eligible child care workers do not qualify, and eligibility is effectively limited to staff with very low incomes, such as many single mothers.

Representative Diaz’s HB-7319 creates a sustainable and resilient child care system and expands critical supports for the Rhode Island economy and the parents and workers who make it run. The Economic Progress Institute urges passage.

¹ [Early Learning Staffing Crisis Factsheet, Right from the Start, 2026](#)