Research shows that during the earliest years of a child's life:

- Brain development occurs, wiring the foundation for all future learning.
- Genetics plus experiences shape the developing brain.
- Adult interactions support brain development.
- Vocabulary at age 3 can predict 3rd Grade reading achievement.

High-Quality Child Care Programs Depend on a Quality Workforce
Low Wages Undermine Quality

**Minnesota Median Annual Workforce Earnings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Median Annual Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Workers</td>
<td>$24,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Lot Attendants</td>
<td>$24,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool Teachers</td>
<td>$34,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten Teachers</td>
<td>$58,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School Teachers</td>
<td>$61,830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility for a family of three: $27,000

**MN Early Childhood Teachers**
- Child care is the early learning setting for children under age 5 throughout the state.
- High quality programs depend on staff with the education and competencies to promote healthy child development and school readiness.
- Low pay undermines access to higher education, fuels turnover, and makes it difficult to hire quality staff.

**Minnesota Answer: Boost Wages with a Refundable Tax Credit Linked to Education and Certifications**

The reality is that child care programs pay staff based on what they can afford. Operating budgets are tight and parents can’t afford to pay more. The result is that staff are underpaid, stressed, with little incentive for higher education which can better promote healthy child development.

Policymakers can fix this. The workforce that supports all workforces needs it.