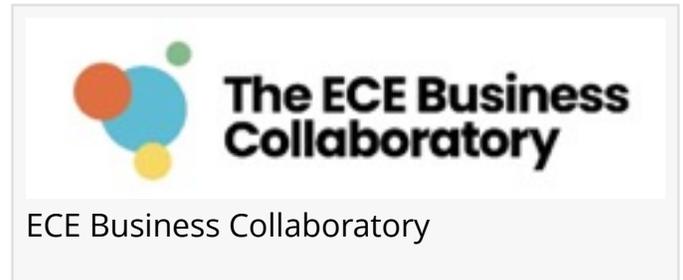


National Collaboration Effort Announced to Address issues Confronting America's Child Care Industry

Project Supports States' Efforts To Ensure Accessible, Sustainable Child Care Businesses

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, USA, November 10, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- National Collaboration Effort Announced to Address Issues Confronting America's [Child Care](#) Industry Project supports states' efforts to strengthen states' abilities to ensure accessible, sustainable child care businesses.



Child care in America is a \$47 billion industry composed of small, independent businesses, franchises, and nonprofits and employing more than two million people. Approximately 12 million children under age five are in some form of child care in the U.S., but the country faces a severe child care shortage. The dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism have further exposed and exacerbated this crisis.

To confront those issues head on, a Minneapolis-based national nonprofit, First Children's Finance, has created an innovative national collaboration to strengthen states' efforts to coordinate their local child care systems. First Children's Finance today officially announced the formation of the ECE Business [Collaboratory](#). (ECE is Early Care and Education.)

Over the next three to five years, the ECE Business Collaboratory (the Collaboratory) will work with cross-sector teams in a dozen states – Alaska, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, South Carolina, and Texas – which were selected through a competitive application process. More state teams will apply for participation in future cohorts.

The Collaboratory will provide learning and convening opportunities, investment, and technical support for state teams of public officials, nonprofits, employers, funders, and child care businesses to work together. This support will allow them to address their states' child care business issues, share best practices and ideas with their counterparts across the country, and implement effective, sustainable strategies to meet unique local needs of child care businesses. "The ECE Business Collaboratory is a multi-pronged strategy to bring together smart people, big

ideas and innovative thinking to improve the child care system,” said Heidi Hagel Braid, Chief Program Officer of First Children’s Finance. “By meeting states where they are in the process of comprehensively funding their child care systems, we’re able to encourage innovation and new thinking at every level of state policy.”

The Collaboratory is built around the “State Child Care Business Ecosystem,” which identifies the essential elements of a strong, sufficient, and sustainable system of high-quality child care. Such a system:

- Meets the practical, educational, and cultural needs of local children and families.
- Provides child care business owners and staff with a viable business model, career pathways, livable wages and valuation of their skills.
- Enhances the local economy, community vitality, and civic life.

The State Child Care Business Ecosystem serves as both an assessment and a planning tool for states, promoting innovation and flexibility to meet local needs. It was developed by First Children’s Finance through its 29 years of providing financial and technical assistance to child care businesses of all types and sizes across the country.

“States have a pivotal role to play in coordinating child care so there’s a sustainable supply,” Hagel Braid explained. “The Collaboratory is making that possible: offering resources, connections, and expertise to help states solve a shared problem in a way that respects each state’s unique needs and approach. There’s never been a more urgent need to address child care in the country. We’re grateful for this opportunity to work together.”

“Learning from other states and national experts about the best options for support and investment in the child care and education industry is vital to our state's future economic and societal well-being,” said Stephanni Renn, Vice President, Early Childhood Programs, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation.

More than half of Americans (51 percent) live in child care deserts. And in one in 12 families with a child under five, someone was forced to quit, forgo, or change a job the previous year because of child care problems. Meanwhile, the past decade saw a 20 percent decline in the number of family child care businesses -- often the least expensive and most flexible care option. Progress has been made to increase affordability and quality, but less attention has been paid to shoring up the child care supply.

The Collaboratory responds to the reality that significant increases in the supply and sustainability of child care and early education aren’t possible without planned, coordinated, sustained and supported efforts for child care businesses at the state and federal levels that result in a dramatic increase in financial resources over time to help families. It also makes economic sense: investment in child care generates a \$16-to-\$1 return and every dollar of federal child care funding creates an additional \$3.80 in state-level economic output.

“There is not another opportunity anywhere in the country that allows states to examine the child care system from a high level, with a focus on innovation that can dramatically impact the sustainability and supply of quality care.” Hagel Braid said. “The Collaboratory is an opportunity for collaboration and experimentation designed to drive real results for state child care

systems.”

ECE Business Collaboratory: The ECE Business Collaboratory is an innovative national collaboration to support state efforts to coordinate their local child care systems.

<https://ececollaboratory.org/>

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