

## 2023 Issue Paper: Children and Families

### Position Statement

The LWVUS has long recognized that child-care programs are a key supportive service for poor families. The 1988 LWVUS Convention separated the childcare position within the Social Policy position and adopted the following position: LWVUS supports programs, services, and policies at all level of governments to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment, and to prevent and reduce poverty.

The LWVWA addressed children's issues early in its existence. In the 20's they looked at child labor laws while the 40's found the LWVWA focused on adoption procedures. The 80's and 90's saw studies of the effectiveness of services for at-risk children and child custody and support laws. As a result, the LWVWA supports "stable and adequate funding for children at risk" and "vigorous, efficient, and innovative child enforcement methods". Expanding the LWVUS emphasis on childcare, the LWVWA endorses "action to provide for the general welfare of children in daycare" as well as "action to support sufficient staff to provide a creative, challenging, and caring environment"

### Recent History of Behavioral Health Legislation

Recent bills that LWVWA supported that were passed and signed into law:

- **SHB 2068** Imagination Library which send books to children from birth to 5 at no cost
- **SB 5237** Fair Start for Kids Act which expands accessible affordable childcare and early childhood development programs

### Summary of Issues for the 2023 Legislative Session

Important issues concerning children and families include:

- Addressing the early learning workforce crisis which impacts child wellbeing and the ability of workers across all industries to continue working.
- Expanding accessible affordable childcare and early childhood development programs
- Transitional kindergarten
- Development of a continuum of income maintenance programs and family support services sufficient to meet individual and family needs for food, housing, and clothing

Support of specific legislation will depend on the bills introduced during the session.

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