



Early Years

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Earlier this year we were asked by two ECD NPOs how we go about raising the funds that we need and what our funding strategy is. In the interest of sharing knowledge and skills, I said that we would write about it, so here goes.

As we near the end of one financial year (2019/20), we get ready to transition into 2020/21 and beyond. By January each year all organisations should know exactly which programmes are being offered in that year and what the associated costs will be. This is best done at the end of the previous programme year, around October. This enables a budget to be constructed. Once we know how much funding the organisation needs we can commence with raising the necessary funds. It is obviously best to have secured funds in the year prior to programmes beginning but in reality this does not always happen.

Late last year we established the programmes that we will provide in 2020 and beyond. We then costed this for the next five years. Because we know in advance how much we have secured to date we can then calculate how much we need to raise over the next five years to deliver on what we wish to do. Let us assume that it is R 50 million. How will we go about this?

The approach we have taken is to go to our extensive data base of 1,800 funders that we have developed over many years. From this we select about 300 to focus on over the next five years. These consist firstly, of current donors – always the most likely to fund the organisation. Then we look at past funders with whom we still have contact but who are not currently funding us. These are the next least costly funds to raise. Finally, we look at new donors whom we have not previously approached or been in contact with. Then the hard work starts – getting to meet with them. Mailing cold proposals generally does not work. Let me repeat this – mailing cold proposals generally does not work.

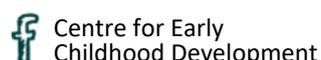
We then visit the donor, taking up as little of their time as is reasonable. Lorenzo Davids at the Western Cape Community Chest tells us to limit visit requests to 10 minutes. These are wise words – unless during the visit the prospective donor asks you to stay longer. Tell the donor who you are, why you do what you do and how the donor can come on board – succinctly. The lesson here is to respect your host's time.

Over the first five working weeks of this year we have visited and spoken with 13 existing donors who have committed to funding us for 2020/21. We have also met with or renewed contact with 43 of our past donors of whom four speedily agreed to fund us and six are considering support. Of the balance of 244 donors, 70 do not fund ECD or in South Africa and we will be meeting with/approaching another 28. So out of 300 potential donors focussed on, we will be able to get funded by/meet/speak with 84. Seventy will not fund ECD leaving 146 to be followed up over the rest of this year. This is hard work but will set us up for the next five years. Now go out there and, as the Nike strap line says – 'Just do it'.

All the best for 2020 and beyond.

Enjoy this edition of EARLY YEARS. Just do it.

ERIC ATMORE
Director



WE ARE FAILING OUR CHILDREN, SAYS CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

~ *Nomahlubi Jordaan*

President Cyril Ramaphosa says the lives of children who have died could have been saved if measures had been taken to keep them out of harm's way.

"All of those young lives, and the lives of many others, need never have been lost. It seems to me that, as a society, we are failing our children," he said.



His message comes after the death of Parktown Boys' High School pupil Enock Mpianzi, who drowned during a school orientation camp last month.

"Too many children find themselves in dangerous situations, whether it is on a makeshift raft on a river or being left alone in a shack with a paraffin lamp. When contractors leave excavations unprotected or school infrastructure is not maintained or school transport is overcrowded, the lives of children are put at risk.

"But there is more than negligence and neglect at work. Many children are targeted by sexual predators, criminal gangs and drug sellers precisely because they are vulnerable. As a society, we need to be more diligent and more active in protecting our children from these and other dangers," said the president.

He said South Africans needed to build a culture of responsibility.

"We need to be responsible for ourselves, for our children and for others. Just as we need to ensure that children are able to grow up in a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment, so too must we feel a duty to protect and care for all those who we know and interact with.

"We must feel this duty of care on the road. While we welcome the drop in road fatalities over this past festive season, the grim reality is that over 1,600 people died on our roads in just a month and a half. It is disturbing that over 9,000 motorists were arrested for offences including drunk driving, speeding, and reckless and negligent driving. A culture of responsibility means that we should all drive safely and respect the rights of pedestrians and other road users."

A culture of responsibility, Ramaphosa said, meant fathers needed to be present in the lives of their children.

"Too many women have to raise children on their own, which often limits their prospects and those of their children.

"A culture of responsibility also means that we should practise safe sex and not expose ourselves or others to HIV. We should not abuse alcohol or use drugs. We should seek to live healthy lives so that we avoid diseases that are largely preventable."

He said elected officials and public servants should ensure there was adequate and safe infrastructure in schools and act "quickly" when there was an interruption to water supply in communities or when faulty street lights were reported.

"They must ensure that health and safety regulations are enforced and that the rule of law is maintained. In response to the deaths and injury caused by children falling into pit latrines, we launched the SAFE initiative to accelerate the provision of appropriate toilets to all schools in the country. We deployed the South African National Defence Force to parts of Cape Town to support the police in their efforts to reduce gang violence. More recently, we have, with civil society, embarked on an emergency response plan to end violence against women and children," said Ramaphosa.

Article available at

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2020-01-27-we-are-failing-our-children-says-cyril-ramaphosa>

WHY AREN'T WE PAYING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS WHAT THEY'RE WORTH?

~ *Rhian Evans Allvin*

In 2015, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) had just embarked on its first research project

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to understand the attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of likely voters about early childhood education, and specifically the role of early childhood educators.

As part of the project, we conducted a series of focus groups with current educators and individuals interested in entering the field. Sitting behind a two-way mirror during one of these focus groups, I observed our facilitator skilfully engaging 12 panellists who had been identified as potential recruits to the early childhood education field. The panellists were animatedly explaining why they would love to be early childhood educators. "I would get the opportunity to shape the minds and hearts of young kids."

"The chance to watch kids learn and grow."

"Starting so little, I actually have a shot at helping them to prepare them for school."

Midway through the session, the facilitator shared that, on average, early childhood educators earn \$10.72 per hour (in the US). That is less than most people earn working at a fast food restaurant. It was as though someone had driven a truck through the room. Participants stammered and cleared their throats.

"Well, I could do that just after college. But once I got serious about my career I would have to move on," said one participant. Another chimed in, "My wife and I want to start a family. There is no way we could make ends meet on that kind of pay." Their idealism and enthusiasm swiftly washed away.

That, in a microcosm, explains the child care crisis currently raging in America, and other parts of the world. Parents can't pay more and early childhood educators can't earn less.



For more than 20 years, neuroscience has provided clear evidence of the value of early childhood education. The most rapid period of brain growth occurs in the first five years of life, setting the foundation for all future development and learning.

The economic benefits are great too. By investing in these early years, there can be as much as 13 percent return on investment

year-over-year. Children are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to earn post-secondary degrees, stay out of the criminal system and own assets. High-quality child care benefits children, but it's also critical for parents. When children are situated and safe in early childhood programs, their parents can go to work, contributing substantially to the overall growth of the country's economy.

While there is greater awareness about the value of high-quality early learning environments and, in many instances, increased investments, early childhood educators are still unable to make ends meet. In America, well over 40 percent of ECD educators qualify for public assistance. Those in the field with bachelor's degrees are the lowest-paid college graduates. These conditions contribute to high turnover, which is the exact opposite of what is necessary for the type of consistency and bonding that needs to occur for children to thrive in the earliest stages of life.

The Results Are In. The Problem Isn't Public Perception.

Throughout the past two decades of my career, I've seen firsthand that likely voters understand the value of early childhood education and would support substantially more investment in it. However, NAEYC set out specifically to understand what it will take to convince likely voters to invest in early childhood educators, including recruiting and retaining the most talented workforce.

The results of our 2015 polls indicate that likely voters revere early childhood educators and value their role at the same level they value other everyday heroes such as nurses and firefighters. They reject the notion that early childhood educators are babysitters or that they have easy jobs, and they understand the relationship between well-educated, well-paid early childhood educators and the quality of an early childhood learning environment.

Voters also recognize the compensation issues - in fact, 61 percent of voters believe that early childhood educators are paid too little and they would support increased funding being tied directly to salaries and wages for early childhood educators. In fact, they would be more likely to support the legislation.

These findings cut across all demographics and they represent a dramatic shift in public perception from 20 years ago, when likely voters didn't yet fully understand the emerging neuroscience on early learning and were indifferent to the plight of early childhood educators.

How Can We Make Progress?

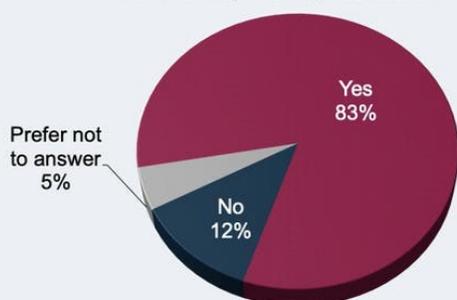
As NAEYC's CEO, I have spent a lot of time with early childhood educators and they are passionate about their work. In our research, we've found that many would love to remain in the field for their entire career, but the lack of adequate pay and

benefits often drive them out. Many also believe, despite the polls and often based on their daily experiences, that the public doesn't value their contributions.

There is room to change that perception with increased competency requirements as we make the case that early childhood educators must meet the field's professional preparation requirements. Early childhood educators, working in all early learning settings, are by and large supportive of that move if and when there are comprehensive scholarships to support their access to higher education and comparable compensation boosts during and after they increase their educational attainment.

Educators are very open to the concept of increased requirements...

The government may increase funding for early childhood education, including increasing pay for educators. Do you think it is fair to require current and future early childhood educators to meet a baseline set of qualifications in order to receive this higher salary and benefits?



But there are very real barriers to doing so. Early childhood educators of colour, in particular, are clear-eyed about the ways in which the higher education deck can be stacked against their equitable access and career advancement.

In 2019, we published a report that shared the perspectives of early childhood educators of colour on increasing qualifications. During our interviews one educator shared, "If we have to go back to school to get [an] associate or bachelor's degree, give us an incentive to do it. Help us pay for it. A lot of us cannot afford it." Another unpacked the challenges of balancing a career, continuing education and parenting: "It was very, very difficult for me to do," she shared, noting that she was late to class because she couldn't leave the classroom early and that there was an expectation that her course work would be done at home. "I don't have time to do that at home, because I have little ones I have to take care of," she explained.

Although this research was specific to educators of colour, across our work, we've heard anecdotally that these kinds of barriers also impact educators working in rural communities, educators who speak a language other than English and educators working in family child care settings.

Yet despite the barriers, educators share the goal of being recognized for their complex, demanding and valuable work.

The data is clear and the public is convinced, so how do we make progress?

Following our initial round of research, in 2015, we launched "Power to the Profession," an initiative spearheaded by 15 national early childhood organizations. Our vision is that from birth, every child has the opportunity to benefit from high-quality early childhood education delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared and well-compensated workforce. The initiative was designed to reach consensus on a unifying framework designed to create a professional field of practice for early childhood educators.

It's been three years of work through Power to the Profession. We've had thousands of early childhood educators weigh in on decisions for different aspects of the framework, and we're still collecting public feedback on our working draft. In March, we will collectively release a "Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Education Profession" that defines in detail a professional field of practice for early childhood educators. As a result, we no longer have to be subject to different standards, criteria, competency or salary requirements in every area, program type, age group or setting. Rather, there is a straight forward and aligned path to unify and professionalize, creating cohesive messages and policy, and uniting around expectations for increased compensation.

This is the same path nurses took to becoming recognized as core members of the medical team. Or how speech pathologists and audiologists claimed their space in the world of clinical therapy. We've studied the progression of these and other professions and we have learned a lot about how they have propelled their field forward and what changes they would make if they had it to do all over again.

Sometimes this work feels like rolling a boulder up a hill - at any moment it can roll back down. But, after nearly 25 years, I have observed and participated in dramatic moments of progress. Today, there are unprecedented spikes in funding and increased awareness of and attention to the economics of early learning - not just the societal value of our work but the actual dollar impact that allows our country to assert its place in a global economy.

This awareness still must translate to substantial financial gains for early childhood educators. The investment in compensation for early childhood educators will attract and retain top talent and create the best possible opportunities for young children and their families. The field must stay united, and we must be buoyed by the clear evidence that the public is with us.

Article available at

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-02-14-why-arent-t-we-paying-early-childhood-educators>

