2023 Annual Report
Dear Community and Colleagues,

I’m pleased to share our 2023 Annual Report and hope you will find it as helpful as I have in reflecting back on the past year and all that was accomplished.

As someone who has been engaged with the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative (ECFC) in different capacities for many years prior to joining the Steering Committee and becoming Chair in 2024, it’s astonishing to step back and realize how ECFC has evolved since Shannon Rudisill was hired as Executive Director in 2016.

**ECFC has grown from a small organization with a handful of members to a vibrant membership organization with more than 70 philanthropic organizations actively participating in our work.**

We have a half dozen workgroups underway, have established two pooled funds (the Raising Child Care Fund established in 2019 and the Racial Justice and Equity Fund launching in 2024) and are partnering with other funder groups and the Biden Administration to move forward a broad array of priorities designed to assure that every young child and their family has what they need to be healthy and thriving. This report includes our most recent collaboration with the Administration for Children and Families to support their Tribal Early Learning Initiative, in partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy and our Indigenous Early Childhood Workgroup.

This report also provides an update on the progress we are making on the strategic plan that the membership approved in Fall 2022 and our expectations for continued progress in 2024. All of this takes great staff and resources to keep it moving forward, and we are fortunate to have the outstanding staff team that we do here at ECFC. We know the change in the dues structure for this year was challenging for some and we appreciate your continued support of and commitment to the work of ECFC.

Our Steering Committee is a dedicated group of nine members who represent the wide array of funders in ECFC. On behalf of Vice Chair Eric Buchanan and all of the Steering Committee members, I invite you to reach out to us anytime for a conversation about our work.

We look forward to seeing you at ECFC in-person member meetings and virtual events this year.

Gerry Cobb

Gerry Cobb
Director, Pritzker Children’s Initiative
ECFC Steering Committee Chair
Dear Community and Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to share our 2023 Annual Report with you. I love being a part of ECFC because our community is learning, growing, and committed to improving how philanthropy engages in social change for young children and their families.

Whether working alongside our ECFC members, our Raising Child Care Fund grantee partners, or philanthropic groups like Native Americans in Philanthropy or Economic Opportunity Funders, we find allies in making our communities and our country a place where families with young children can thrive.

In this report, you will recall how we experienced a deep sense of belonging and culturally infused practice with families and neighborhood leaders in Detroit and with the Native early childhood leaders who joined us for this year’s ECFC member meetings. We took a deep look at power-building in a learning series curated by the Raising Child Care Fund team, harnessing their knowledge and experience gained from serving as a philanthropic partner to the child care movement. We advocated for a vision of racial equity and belonging for children, families, and early educators when developmentally appropriate practices were attacked and when affirmative action was threatened.

This was our first year implementing a groundbreaking strategic plan for ECFC—with racial equity and justice at the center and a clear role in creating conditions for policy and narrative change. One of the biggest pillars of the plan is relationships, because ECFC only works in community with others.

On behalf of the amazing team who make this a great place to work, I hope you see something in these pages that piques your curiosity and causes you to engage with us even more in 2024.

With appreciation,

Shannon L. Rudisill
Executive Director

ECFC TEAM

Shannon L. Rudisill
Executive Director

Keami Harris
Chief of Equity and Strategy

Krystal Ivery
Membership Engagement Associate

Rena L. Large
Program Manager

April Luong
Program Associate

Rachel Schumacher
Director, The Raising Child Care Fund

Liliana Velázquez
Manager of Community Partnerships, The Raising Child Care Fund
Our Commitment to Racial Equity and Justice

In a year marked by profound challenges and pivotal moments, ECFC’s commitment to racial equity and justice stands as a beacon guiding our journey. We’ve taken significant strides to embed this commitment into the very fabric of our organization. Our Racial Equity Principles symbolize a foundational shift toward intentional action and thoughtful reflection in every aspect of our work.

ECFC’s Racial Equity & Justice Principles

- **Lifelong Learning**
  We continually challenge personal, organizational, and systemic biases and assumptions through ongoing education.

- **Systems Change**
  We affirm racial equity and justice as fundamental to long-term systems change.

- **Philanthropy’s Complicity**
  We confront the historical role of philanthropy in perpetuating racist policies and systems in early childhood.

- **Amplifying Silenced Voices**
  We uplift marginalized, silenced or excluded voices and center their experiences.

- **Power Sharing**
  We collaborate with field partners, advocates, grantees, and impacted communities most proximate to future solutions to redistribute and share power.

- **Dismantling Disparities**
  We acknowledge, and actively participate in dismantling, disparities and injustices that have uniquely affected Black and Indigenous communities.

- **Asset-Based Approach**
  We recognize and leverage the strengths and assets within these communities to foster thriving, not mere survival, of children in these communities.

- **Intersectional Advocacy**
  We engage in intersectional approaches to advance various forms of justice, including racial, disability, environmental, and economic justice.
Taking Action: Racial Equity and Justice

Side by Side Playbook: Centering and Promoting Equity in Early Education

Philanthropy Sign-On in Support of Inclusive Early Childhood Programs and Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Our Unwavering Commitment to Advancing Racial Equity and Justice

Second National Funders Convening in Mountain View, CA

In September, ECFC explored the impacts of socio-political challenges on children and families, and the critical role of philanthropy in addressing these issues. The urgency for funders to innovate their approaches, courageously support leaders, and understand the unique needs of different communities was evident—reinforcing their part in actively shaping a more equitable and just early childhood system.

Announcing a New Pooled Fund

ECFC is launching the Racial Justice and Equity Fund in 2024, as insights from national organizations and community experts in attendance underscored the need for strategic, empathetic, and bold action.
Our Commitment to Indigenous Early Childhood Approaches

For over two years, ECFC and Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) have co-convened a workgroup of Native partners and more than a dozen funders to provide a forum for centering Indigenous early childhood and exploring funding and philanthropic strategies to support and advance Native and Tribal led early childhood programs. In 2023, our work grew exponentially, exploring grantmaking strategies to support, advance, and amplify Native and Tribal-led early childhood programs.

We’re excited to see ECFC take on issues affecting Indigenous children. All too often philanthropy overlooks certain populations because of a lack of knowledge, false perceptions, or fear of the unknown. We can’t change what we don’t know. And if we don’t know, then shame on us.

Antoinette M. Malveaux
Managing Director, Strategic Engagement & Initiatives
Casey Family Programs
Taking Action: Indigenous Early Childhood

Centering Native Voices: Lessons from Philanthropy and Community

Our IEC workgroup engaged Roanhorse Consulting, LLC, an Indigenous and woman-owned firm, to interview both EC philanthropists working in Native communities and Native community leaders to better understand how to build authentic partnerships. Two reports yielded rich feedback and recommendations for action.

Lessons we are learning from Native community leaders include:

**Language and Culture Matter**
The dominant Western worldview surrounding early childhood high-quality education and care is rooted in a deficit approach that centers on Western culture and the focus is on learning English. Supporting language and culture matters; there are so many strengths in the values and ways of life that Tribes have continued to practice in the face of tremendous pressure and histories. Language and culture have been tools for maintaining strengths.

**Self-Determination Cannot be Compromised**
Because the focus of philanthropic investment is often on “evidence-based” models with some practice-based approaches, most Indigenous communities have to heavily adapt (“indigenize”) existing curricula and models. What if Indigenous communities were given the investment and opportunity to grow their culturally and language-based early childhood programs and systems to create their evidence-based data and stories and focus on what is most meaningful to them?

**Historical Trauma Must Be Acknowledged**
Philanthropy has a responsibility to better understand their own and Native American histories in ways that are justice/equity-oriented and trauma-responsive. There is a need to create more healing approaches. This lack of context, understanding, and acknowledgment among philanthropy results in superficial relationships, mistrust, and disconnection.

We encourage you to read the reports resulting from the interviews with Native leaders and philanthropy which also explore themes around: consensual boundaries and ethics, managing funder expectations and timelines, healthier relationship-based practices, and transparency and mutual accountability.

1 Lessons Learned with Community, April 2023, Updated August 2023, Prepared by: Olivia Roanhorse and Lilly Irvin-Vitela, Roanhorse Consulting.
This was an incredibly moving experience for me. It was inspirational to be immersed in stories of Indigenous approaches to ECE and early relational health from so many insightful leaders engaging in discussions of culture, faith and spirituality, language reclamation, and nurturing. Our leadership team has engaged several presenters from the meeting in the months following and we continue to learn from them and seek guidance to meaningfully support Indigenous communities. Thank you, ECFC, for lifting their voices.

**Toscha Blalock**
Co-Director and Chief Learning and Evaluation Officer,
*Trust for Learning*

The thought leadership offered by ECFC and its partners to support Native children and families has been immensely valuable. This gathering was not only inspiring, but provided actionable insights. We’ve taken these learnings and connections to inform our efforts as we consider the needs and strengths of the thousands of children belonging to the Seneca Nation of Indians—one of several nations in what is now New York State and Southern Ontario, Canada.

**Rachel P. Bonsignore**
Director,
*Liftoff Western New York*

**Key Takeaway**
There is much we don’t know—and more that we need to unlearn—about the history of Indigenous communities in this country and the impact of history, place, and honoring sovereignty and tradition on young children and their families.
Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI) Convening in Albuquerque, NM

Also in November, ECFC and NAP supported the planning and implementation of the Administration for Children and Families’ (ACF) in-person TELI grantee convening to strengthen peer sharing and learning among eight Tribal Nations from six states. This work first took root in Fall of 2022 when ACF, NAP, and ECFC came together to begin a public-private partnership. Our partnership has created a unique learning space for each organization to collaborate, leverage each other’s expertise and knowledge, and learn from one another.

Key Takeaway

Because of federal funding silos, Tribes often struggle to work across early learning and development programs such as the Child Care Development Fund, Head Start, and Tribal Home Visiting. This convening gave space for Tribes to find commonality amongst shared difficulties and to help one another brainstorm strategies and solutions to problems they each face. There is an ongoing need for resources for Tribal communities to build stronger systems to support their youngest and most vulnerable citizens in a seamless and coordinated way.

Themed “Weaving Together the Dream of Your TELI Early Childhood System,” the event was designed to assist TELI grantees in coordinating Tribal early learning and development programs, including child care, Head Start, preschool, home visiting, and other services.
Fostering Conditions for Policy and Narrative Change

By the end of 2023, ECFC’s Raising Child Care Fund (RCCF) secured over $17 million from 14 foundations to help community-based organizations in 16 states and DC demand and create solutions to the ongoing child care crisis. RCCF is growing local and state organizing capacity, which is foundational for including parent and provider voices in state coalitions, building power to access policy leaders, and planning statewide campaigns to transform child care. Read RCCF’s 2023 Reach and Influence Report.

Through many years of deep organizing of child care providers, parents, and teachers, we built strong relationships with elected officials and have held those elected officials accountable for how their legislative decisions affect child care.

Karin Swenson
Kids Count on Us (KCOU)

2 KCOU is a statewide coalition of community-based childcare providers, teachers, and families built by ISAIAH, an RCCF grantee partner since 2019. In May, KCOU secured a big win: $300M in current year funding and $1.3B+ in continuing funding for Minnesota’s child care assistance program; the creation of the new Department for Children, Youth, and Families; and continued ARPA funded stabilization grants.
Taking Action: Policy and Narrative Change

Sessions equipping funders to engage on the proposed regulations to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and submitting comments on proposed federal regulations to improve child care

RCCF hosted conversations with grantee partners about the critical CCDBG regulations proposed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ECFC amplified their input—both about the changes impacting parents and providers and the challenges of engaging busy families and providers in the federal comments process—within the funder community.

Power Building Learning Series

ECFC and RCCF launched this series for foundations to interact directly with organizers, strategists and funders working to transform policies in order to glean shared lessons from their strategy and setbacks.

Taking a Closer Look

Together, we unpacked different strategies for sharing power and engaging those closest to issues in decision-making. For example:

- Winning access to policy decision-making tables for child care educators and caregivers around American Rescue Plan funds
- Ballot initiatives that protect the rights of women or increase revenue for children’s services
- Ensuring that policy wins are implemented with equity by sustaining support to center voices with lived experience

We also looked at first-of-its-kind research conducted in partnership with community-based organizations on how to measure what matters in power-building to inform philanthropic strategy.
State and local leaders continue to organize and win, while progress at the federal level is stalled and federal pandemic-era relief is ending.

A small number of states have taken action to soften the fall from the end of federal Child Care Stabilization funding, including five with RCCF grantee partners who helped increase state expenditures by over $2.4 billion in 2023.

Working in collaboration with California’s child care union and other children’s advocates, Parent Voices helped win $2.9B in the state budget for the next two years. These funds include $100 million a year to eliminate family fees for more families receiving child care assistance.

Minnesot’s state legislature allocated $366 million in 2023 and over $1 billion in continued funding to sustain programs like the Great Start Compensation payment program for early educators.

In Massachusetts, a coalition pushed for and won $475 million to continue initiatives to support providers and compensation.

New Mexico used $100 million of the permanent fund to support early childhood programs for children aged zero to five that was passed by ballot initiative in 2022 for stabilization.

Louisiana’s budget included $52 million, which was the largest investment in child care in the state for almost a decade.
Engaging a Collaborative Community

With 70 members in 30 states, ECFC’s strength is in our community of funders collaborating and aligning their resources and using their voices on behalf of young children and their families. Our members have broad and diverse focus areas (including child care accessibility and quality, early childhood workforce, early relational health, cultural and language-based initiatives) and strategies (including direct service, grassroots organizing, policy and legislative initiatives).

Our member community includes eight state and local funder collaboratives (CT, MA, MN, NY, NM, NY, Western PA and Los Angeles), expanding our reach to state and local funders and bringing a funder collaboration lens to our community. Our programming reflects the many different funder perspectives at our table. We infuse connection and networking strategies into our programming to help members make connections and build partnerships to explore policy and systems change for children and families at all levels.

We’re excited to broaden our network through membership meetings and the unexpected connections that occur during them—so often that is where the kernel of an idea or innovative solution first buds. Nurturing them from that point is where the hard, but good and rewarding, work happens.

Mary Kopp
Operations Director,
LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment
Taking Action: A Collaborative Community

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Spring Member Meeting

in Detroit, MI

In May, ECFC explored Hope Starts Here, a philanthropy-initiated early childhood partnership shaped by direct engagement of more than 18,000 community members (including families, caregivers, child care providers, educators, community advocates, funders and others).

Key Takeaway

We learned that creating places where kids and families feel belonging is more than a building or a service; it’s creating opportunities and environments where kids and families feel valued, heard and trusted.

“Where and how we feel belonging” guided our meeting agenda—from relational experiences for members to make deeper connections with each other to community members and parents engaging with funders to site visits to neighborhood-based programs strengthening systems and services for young children and families.
Creating Momentum for Intersectional Change

In 2023, ECFC continued to build and nurture deeper relationships within and across areas that intersect with early childhood, including climate change, parent leadership, facilities design, and other systems and settings that serve children and families.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Taking Action: Intersectional Change

Third Annual Early Relational Health (ERH) Funders Community Summit in Washington, DC

In November, a growing network of ECFC members and other funders explored different entry points for funders into this “early relationship” space such as doula and community workforce strategies, infant mental health, and maternal and child health—illustrating the many levers that need to work in tandem to effectively advance policies that support children and families.

Building Support for a Robust and Equitable Care Economy Infrastructure

ECFC partnered with five philanthropy support organizations, with support from the Care for All with Respect and Equity (CARE) Fund, on a landscape analysis exploring organizations and initiatives that are bringing together different care narratives under an umbrella of “care infrastructure”—emphasizing the central role that care plays in families, communities, and the economy.
ECFC 2023 Member List

The A.D. Henderson Foundation Vermont Office
Annie E. Casey Foundation Baltimore, MD
Bainum Family Foundation Bethesda, MD
Ballmer Group Bellevue, WA
Bezos Family Foundation Seattle, WA
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Seattle, WA
Birmingham Foundation Pittsburgh, PA
Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation Durham, NC
Brady Education Foundation Chapel Hill, NC
Buell Foundation Denver, CO
Buffett Early Childhood Fund Omaha, NE
The Burke Foundation Princeton, NJ
C.E. and S. Foundation Louisville, KY
Casey Family Programs Seattle, WA
Child Trust Foundation Raleigh, NC
Commonwealth Children’s Fund Boston, MA
Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative Hartford, CT
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Westlake Village, CA
Couch Family Foundation Hanover, NH
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation Los Altos, CA
EC Funder's Alliance of Southwestern Pennsylvania Pittsburgh, PA
Einhorn Collaborative New York, NY
Esther A. and Joseph Klingenstein Fund, Inc. New York, NY

2024 ECFC STEERING COMMITTEE

Committee Chair
Gerry Cobb
J.B. & M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation

Committee Vice Chair
Eric Buchanan
Buffett Early Childhood Fund

Committee Treasurer
Eddie Gale
The A.D. Henderson Foundation

Denise Castillo Dell Isola
Irving Harris Foundation

Anna Marie Garcia
LANL Foundation

Sakinah P. Harrison, MNO
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Mabel Muñoz
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Elizabeth Star
HopeStar Foundation

Nāpua Rosehill
Kamehameha Schools

ECFC STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHOSE TERMS ENDED IN 2023

Rashanda Perryman
Vanguard

Sara Vecchiotti
Foundation for Child Development

Rebecca Gomez
Heising-Simons Foundation
| The Ford Family Foundation | Massachusetts Early Childhood Funders Collaborative | San Diego Foundation |
| Roseburg, OR | Boston, MA | San Diego, CA |
| Foundation for Child Development | Mimi and Peter Haas Fund | Silicon Valley Community Foundation Mountainview, CA |
| New York, NY | San Francisco, CA | |
| Gary Community Investments | The Monarch Foundation | Sisters of Charity Foundation Canton, OH |
| Denver, CO | New York, NY | |
| George Gund Foundation | New Hampshire Early Childhood Funders Collaborative | Stanley H. Durwood Foundation Kansas City, MO |
| Cleveland, OH | Concord, NH | |
| The Grable Foundation | New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group | Start Early Funders Coalition Minneapolis, MN |
| Pittsburgh, PA | Santa Fe, NM | |
| Headwaters Foundation | Oregon Community Foundation | Stranahan Foundation Toledo, OH |
| Missoula, MO | Portland, OR | |
| The Heinz Endowments | Overdeck Foundation | Trust for Learning Washington, DC |
| Pittsburgh, PA | New York, NY | |
| Heising-Simons Foundation | Perigee Fund | Vanguard Philadelphia, PA |
| Los Altos, CA | Seattle, WA | |
| HopeStar Foundation | Philadelphia Health Partnership | Valhalla Foundation Woodside, CA |
| Charlotte, NC | Philadelphia, PA | |
| Imaginable Futures | PNC Grow Up Great | Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Phoenix, AR |
| Red Wood City, CA | Pittsburgh, PA | |
| Irving Harris Foundation | Robert R. McCormick Foundation | Welborn Baptist Foundation Evansville, IN |
| Chicago, IL | Chicago, IL | |
| J.B. & M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation | Robert Wood Johnson Foundation | William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund Hamden, CT |
| Chicago, IL | Princeton, NJ | |
| Kamehameha Schools | Robins Foundation | William Penn Foundation Philadelphia, PA |
| Honolulu, HI | Richmond, VA | |
| The Kresge Foundation | Rodel Foundation of Delaware Wilmington, DE | |
| Troy, MI | | W.K. Kellogg Foundation Battle Creek, MI |
| Liftoff Western New York Syracuse, NY | | |
| Los Angeles Partnership for Early Childhood Investments Los Angeles, CA | | |
| Maher Charitable Foundation Florham Park, NJ | Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation Honolulu, HI | |
| | | The Zanvyl and Isabelle Krieger Fund Baltimore, MD |