

# Early childhood 2020: What do you see? <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access blog post online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

The New Year, with its metaphor of clear vision, calls out to all of us to think about the future; to envision a better world for children, youth, and families. While we can't predict what the decade will bring, we can use what we have learned over the years—and our common sense—to set some goals and move forward. Here is what I see and hope for in a new year, in a new decade.

1. **Caring communities.** Across the United States and around the world there is a new movement to establish a more systemic approach to supporting young children and their families. In the world of 2020, every family needs a network of support to assure their children thrive. Community members are coming together to set goals to assure strong families, healthy pregnancies, and happy and successful children from birth through the primary grades. Moving from a single program to a more holistic and continuous system of support is an important part of the future.
2. **Equity as a core goal.** A core goal of our work in early childhood is to assure more economic and racial equity. Efforts continue to promote equal access to early opportunities, address and prevent the achievement gap, track the data, and step up the dialogue about the history that brought us here. But we have a long way to go. The early childhood field has a critical role to play in this work, both in the classrooms with children, and in the hearing and board rooms with policymakers.
3. **Supported relationships.** The science of child development continues to reinforce the importance of relationships in the lives of children. Parent/child relationships are essential for healthy child development. Relationships teach, relationships build trust, and relationships sustain us when times are tough. The importance of early relationships between children and parents and other caregivers is the reason we must continue to empower and support the adults in their lives: to listen to them, to support them, and to enable their caregiving role.
4. **A financed future.** The true cost of care is finally being talked about, estimated, and planned for. The numbers may surprise some, but it is time to be clear that we need significant new resources if child care and other early childhood programs are to be affordable and if caregivers are to receive decent compensation and improved working conditions. We are at a critical juncture, we cannot deliver on the promise without facing the reality of what it costs to provide quality early childhood services.
5. **New leaders.** A new year calls for new leadership: more diverse leadership, leadership from different perspectives, leaders who understand the importance of a round table. New leaders can have a fresh take on an old issue. They can dream of what can be and of what should be. Those of us who have been around for some time can mentor and learn. Leadership is about moving forward and letting go; walking along side others, inspiring, and being inspired.
6. **A kinder and greener world.** Can we imagine a kinder world, and a country that stands for kindness? This new decade can kick off a new way of living and a new way of governing; a new era where each of us, and our political leaders, listen to each other, respect each other, and serve as role models for the children we want to teach. It will take all of us to make the connections that lead to empathy and understanding. This change starts with listening, with taking care of ourselves and the environment, with reconnecting to each other, and with respecting the earth that we want to leave behind.

## Related link:

**Region:** International <sup>[3]</sup>

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