



CONTACT

Primary: **Ann-Sophie Morrissette**, Fenton
213.568.6007, amorrissette@fenton.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2017

Secondary: **Sue McAllister**, SVCF
650.450.5513, sjmcallister@siliconvalleycf.org

Silicon Valley Community Foundation Launches Statewide Campaign to Spotlight Need for Greater Investments In Early Childhood Care and Education

The *Choose Children 2018* campaign will work to ensure California's next governor is a champion for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their families

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA — In the wake of debilitating budget cuts and declining access to early childhood programs over the past 10 years, children's advocates led by Silicon Valley Community Foundation today launched *Choose Children 2018*, a campaign dedicated to ensuring all candidates for California governor publicly commit to making early childhood care and education more accessible, affordable and of higher quality for all children.

"California must elect a governor who chooses children by investing more in the kinds of programs that help our youngest kids thrive," said Emmett Carson, Ph.D., CEO and president of Silicon Valley Community Foundation. "The lasting benefits of early childhood care and education on children, their families and our state are clear. Investing in kids' youngest years gives them the best chance at brighter futures in a growing economy, protects and betters the lives of California's working and middle class families, and improves our diverse communities."

A wide range of research demonstrates the importance and the impact of early childhood programs on the first five years of life – when a child's brain absorbs knowledge like a sponge and develops at its fastest rate. Other studies have repeatedly affirmed that early childhood development helps kids, benefits our economy and makes our communities safer. By not investing more in its youngest residents, California is hampering its long-term economic strength, prosperity and future competitiveness.



“Investing in programs that support young children and their families positively impacts all sectors of California’s economy,” said David Rattray, Executive Vice President, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. “High-quality early childhood programs prepare our workforce for the 21st Century skills they will need to thrive in leading-edge businesses in the years ahead. And today’s workers benefit by knowing their children are in safe, supportive environments that are preparing them to succeed in school, in college, and in life. These investments are a win for us today and in the future.”

Families and voters throughout California recognize the importance of the earliest years, with 87 percent believing the state’s next governor must invest more in early care and education for young children.

“Californians’ support of this issue is unequivocal,” said Ted Lempert, president of Children Now. “California residents understand the struggles their neighbors, families and friends are having to afford childcare and provide their children with the best start in life. They are demanding that our next governor make smart investments in our youngest children’s futures.”

Despite all the evidence that shows the importance of investing in children’s early years, California still fails to provide kids and their families the support and care they need. During the past decade, California cut early education programs by \$1 billion. Reinvestments have been lethargic, leaving 86 percent of eligible babies and toddlers unable to access these life-altering programs. For too many families, these vital programs are simply unaffordable. At more than \$13,000, the average of cost of child care in California is more than 70 percent of the salary of a single, minimum wage worker and more than 20 percent of the state median income for a two-parent family. Exacerbating this problem, in California more than 60 percent of babies are born into low-income households.

“California’s youngest children have not received the attention, funding or urgency they deserve,” said Avo Makdessian, Vice President and Director of the Center for Early Learning at SVCF. “Despite decades of research that clearly demonstrates the importance of the first five years, California lags behind the rest of the nation and the world in supporting our youngest children. For the sake of a stronger California, this must change, and it must change during the next four years.”

The Choose Children 2018 campaign will focus gubernatorial candidates on the need to make early childhood care and education more accessible, affordable and of higher



quality. The campaign intends to hold the gubernatorial candidates accountable for addressing the needs of our youngest residents, and asks they take immediate action during the first 100 days of their administration and beyond to support young children.

##

About Choose Children 2018

Choose Children 2018 is a statewide campaign committed to ensuring California's next governor is a champion for young children who makes early childhood care and education more accessible, affordable, and of higher quality. The initiative is led by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation's Center for Early Learning in partnership with community, business, philanthropic, and educational leaders throughout California. Learn more at www.choosechildren.org.

About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems. As the largest community foundation in the world, we engage donors and corporations from Silicon Valley, across the country and around the globe to make our region and world better for all. Our passion for helping people and organizations achieve their philanthropic dreams has created a global philanthropic enterprise committed to the belief that possibilities start here. Learn more at www.siliconvalleycf.org.