

Here's a comprehensive summary of the Roosevelt Institute's June 2025 report titled **"Whole Child, Whole Day, Whole Year: Assembling a Comprehensive Child Development System for America"** by Kathryn Anne Edwards:

Executive Summary

The report proposes a **universal, federally supported Child Development System (CDS)** to address the mismatch between school schedules and parents' work hours. It aims to provide **safe, enriching environments for children** from birth through adolescence during early childhood, after-school, and summer hours. The system would build on existing public and private infrastructure, using a **reimbursement model** to fund providers and ensure equitable access.

Key Themes and Proposals

1. The Problem: A Patchwork System

- The current system is fragmented, underfunded, and inaccessible to many families.
- Parents struggle to find care before age 5, after 3 PM, and during summers.
- Existing programs (e.g., Head Start, Child Care Development Fund, Title I) serve only a fraction of eligible children.

2. The Vision: A Comprehensive Child Development System

- **Universal access** to early childhood, after-school, and summer programs.
- **Reimbursement-based funding** for providers, covering labor and capital costs.
- **Enrichment-focused programming** that complements academic instruction with social-emotional learning and child-led exploration.

3. Implementation Models

Three options for administering the CDS Fund:

- **State System:** Funds flow to states, leveraging existing infrastructure.
- **Federal System:** Funds go directly to providers via federal regional offices.
- **Local System:** Funds are distributed through local coordinating agencies, blending state and federal strengths.

4. Role of Head Start

- Head Start should be **expanded and integrated** into the CDS as a high-quality, federally funded intervention program for children of all ages, not just preschoolers.

- It would serve children with additional needs, including those eligible under IDEA.

5. Development Across Ages

- **Early Childhood:** Full-day, full-year care from birth to kindergarten eligibility.
- **After-School:** Enrichment programs that support social-emotional growth and exploration.
- **Summer:** Structured camps and programs to ensure continuity of care and development.

6. Addressing Key Challenges

- **Affordability:** Ideally free; if fees are charged, they should be flat and minimal.
 - **Access:** Prioritize underserved areas and populations during rollout.
 - **Provider Inclusion:** Exclude private equity-owned providers; allow nonprofits and capped-profit entities.
 - **Workforce:** Improve wages, offer training, and create career pathways.
 - **Accountability:** Clear oversight mechanisms at all levels.
 - **Public School Impact:** Designed to complement, not compete with, K–12 education.
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Conclusion

The report argues that a **Child Development System is not a luxury but a necessity**. It would address systemic inequities, support working families, and promote holistic child development. The infrastructure largely exists—it just needs to be **assembled, expanded, and adequately funded**.

Would you like a shorter version of this summary, a slide deck, or a visual infographic to accompany it?