



Child Care That Works. For Every Family.

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means
From: Child Care for Oregon
Date: May 3, 2023
RE: Invest in Child Care

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, members of the committee:

On behalf of the [Child Care for Oregon](#) coalition and the thousands of parents and providers experiencing the child care crisis first hand, we urge you to make child care investments a top priority in the state budget in lieu of adding more funding to already flush reserves.

Our entire economy is dependent on equitable access to early learning and child care. Like roads and bridges, affordable, high-quality child care is necessary infrastructure. Parents need affordable child care that provides peace of mind that their children are learning and loved. Employers need their employees to have access to reliable, affordable child care so they can return to work.

Fifty-eight percent of Oregon children under age three are in some form of non-parental child care, with 42 percent of those children in informal care with family, friends or neighbors (FFN care), and 16 percent in organized child care (centers, family child care homes, other organized care).¹ Access to this care affects our children's ability to feel secure and to establish the bonds they need to grow and thrive - not just while in care, but well into the future. It also affects the economic stability and workforce participation of parents, especially mothers:

- Turnover because of lack of child care costs businesses 20% of an hourly employee's salary and up to 150% of a manager's salary.²
- When employees have stable access to child care, employee absences can decrease by 30% and job turnover can decline by 60%.³
- 42% of mothers say they would increase their earnings and seek new job opportunities if they had better access to child care.⁴

¹ Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division. (2018, March). Oregon's infant toddler state self-assessment toolkit https://oregonearlylearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/OregonInfToddAssessmentTool_03302018-3.pdf

² <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/early-childhood-education/the-business-case>

³ <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/early-childhood-education/the-business-case>

⁴ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>

- For women of color, one study suggests that child care access could have an even greater effect on employment and wages. More than half of Black mothers, and 48% of Latinx mothers reported that they would look for a higher-paying job if they had better child care access.⁵

Child care is the work that makes all other work possible and is part of our state’s essential infrastructure. A comprehensive child care system would not only provide high-quality, accessible, culturally relevant, inclusive, and affordable care for families, it also creates greater workforce stability by providing care in a variety of settings that meet different family needs, whether it’s outside of traditional working hours, in a language other than English, or offered in different settings.

The 2023-2025 biennium budget presents a vital opportunity to protect progress we have made in the last couple of years to address Oregon’s child care crisis, while moving strategic conversations forward to create and propose future solutions to issues still plaguing this industry. We urge lawmakers to pass a budget that prioritizes :

Affordability & Access: We need to continue progress to fund quality and access across early learning and care. Decrease barriers to Oregon’s child care subsidy program so that more families are served.

Department of Early Learning and Care Budget (Policy Option Packages 102 and 101), HB 2683, HB 3027

Workforce Development & Support: Workforce needs accessible, equitable workforce pathways, increased compensation, and stabilization of the field.

HB 2504, HB 2991, continue to increase child care provider subsidy rates and compensation for the child care workforce

Child Care Infrastructure: Expand quality early learning and care facilities. Create an Early Learning & Care Facilities Fund, create rental protections for providers operating in rental homes, address zoning regulations and building codes that impact expansion of child care facilities.

SB 599, HB 2727, HB 3005 (including renewed funding for the Oregon Child Care Capacity Fund)

⁵ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>

While our state has made significant strides in the last few years in addressing the child care crisis, we still have much work to do. Child care is in a crisis and it needs state investment now. We strongly urge lawmakers to prioritize child care in the state budget.

