



Washington State Budget 2019-2021 Fast Facts

THE PROBLEM

The child care market is broken. This negatively affects our children, families, communities, the K-12 system and our economy. How?

- Child care is now more expensive than tuition at state universities
- Child care consumes large portions of family incomes, in some cases more than half of family income goes to child care – families cannot afford to pay more
- Less than half of Washington’s five-year-olds enter kindergarten ready to learn¹
- Child care professionals do not earn a living wage – most are paid less than pet groomers – resulting in a 43% turnover rate that disrupts child care programs and children’s early relationships with caregivers
- Children spend, on average, 33 hours/week in child care while 90% of their brains develop, yet not all child care programs are high quality

All industries rely on child care in order to retain productive employees. Without a strong child care system, Washington’s economy suffers.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The availability of high-quality, affordable child care leads to greater employment opportunities, higher incomes and increased economic activity. Child care small businesses have a \$3 billion impact on Washington’s economy (\$2 billion direct; \$1 billion spillover), resulting in \$900 million in earnings (\$560 million direct; \$340 million spillover),² plus earnings made by working families.

Washington’s economy will work for everyone when child care works for every family that needs it. Plus, when young children attend high-quality child care programs they receive the important early education they need to be ready for kindergarten and beyond.

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THE SOLUTION

Public investment is needed to strengthen our child care system, prevent child care programs from closing and ensure that Washington’s five-year-olds are ready for kindergarten when they enter. How should the legislature invest in child care?

- Invest \$166 million into Working Connections Child Care subsidy rates to end years of state underfunding that has resulted in hundreds of child care closures. Increasing these rates will ensure that families have a choice of high-quality programs for their children.
- Invest \$37.4 million into Early Achievers, Washington’s child care quality rating and improvement system, to expand professional development for educators and secure financial incentives for programs that provide quality care
- Invest \$2.2 million into facilitated play and learn groups that provide early brain development activities and resources for Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers
- Invest in child care behavioral consultation for providers serving children and families with special needs

Notes:

¹Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, WA State Report Card, WaKIDS data, 2016-17 school year

²Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board, *Child Care in State Economies: 2019 Update*, and 2016 U.S. Census Bureau Economic Census and County Business Pattern data and non-employer statistics data