



## Invest in Child Care for Economic Recovery

Child care is essential to Washington’s economic recovery and to the well-being of its children and families. Our child care system was only able to meet about half of the demand for child care before the pandemic. Now, with K-12 schools and many summer programs closed and parts of the state are reopening, the remaining supply of child care will not meet demand.

Since Governor Inslee issued his stay-at-home order on March 23, Child Care Aware of Washington’s data show:

**24% of WA’s licensed child care programs have temporarily closed**



**44% of the child care workforce has been laid off or furloughed**



**64% of child care programs have experienced at least a 50% decrease in income resulting in business instability**



**200% increase in calls seeking child care after K-12 schools were closed**



Washington’s child care system was in crisis before the COVID-19 pandemic. **Employers in our state lost \$6.5 billion in 2017 in direct and opportunity costs due to employees’ lack of stable child care.**<sup>1</sup>

**In order to stabilize the availability of child care in support of Washington’s economic recovery, we urge lawmakers to:**

### Protect existing investments in WA’s child care system

- Working Connections Child Care rate increases
- Provider supports in Early Achievers
- Mental health supports for caregivers and families
- Working Connections Child Care Homeless Grace Period

### Increase support for low-income families

- Continue coronavirus subsidy co-pay waivers
- Expand subsidy eligibility for low-income workers
- Increase support for Family Friend and Neighbor caregivers
- Continue the operations of the Coronavirus Child Care Family Resource Center

### Re-invest in child care recruitment & retention services

- Support programs in navigating new DOH child care guidance
- Recruit new providers in “child care deserts”
- Provide pre-licensing technical assistance to potential providers
- Targeted operations support for struggling child care programs

### Increase support for child care small businesses

- Flexible financial support for child care small businesses struggling to stay open
- Support access to PPE/supplies
- Expand “Shared Services” to reduce child care small business costs and increase savings
- Waive costly regulations for programs where possible

**Child Care Aware of Washington urges state policymakers to take immediate steps to preserve this essential economic support for Washington’s employers and working families. Options include**

- Realizing savings where possible
- Using the Budget Stabilization Account
- Raising progressive revenue

Note:

1. 2019 Report – “The Mounting Costs of Child Care” by the Washington State Child Care Collaborative Task Force