

LEAP

LEGISLATOR EDUCATION & ACTION PROJECT



A Partnership of Association of Washington Business Institute and Children's Campaign Fund Action

Legislator Education & Action Project: Curriculum Outline

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A downloadable PDF of this document (with links)
is available on the LEAP website: WashingtonLEAP.org

Welcome to LEAP

According to the [Bipartisan Policy Center](https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/examples-of-mixed-delivery-early-care-and-education-systems/) “Child care in the U.S. is in crisis. For working parents, especially those with young children, there isn’t enough affordable quality child care. This impacts their ability to go to work and, ultimately, the country’s economy. Even before the pandemic destabilized the industry, child care providers operated on razor thin margins, often without the ability to invest in wages and recruit more employees to expand services.”

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/examples-of-mixed-delivery-early-care-and-education-systems/>

This is about a system, and society, in crisis – and how YOU can change this story.

Welcome to LEAP

Too many parents and families struggle to afford and find high-quality child care for their children. This crisis has been exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to widespread closures of child care programs and increased economic hardship for families, employers, and communities across the country.

The high cost of child care and low wages for child care workers are major factors contributing to the child care crisis in the United States. The lack of available child care options, especially in rural areas, is also a significant issue. This can make it difficult for families to access the child care they need, especially if they have limited financial resources or live in an area with few or no child care facilities – in fact, over half of all Washingtonians currently live in a child care desert.

The low reimbursement rates from government programs can also be a challenge for child care providers, as they may not be able to cover the costs of operating their business. This can lead to financial struggles and even closures, further exacerbating the shortage of child care options. The high turnover and staff vacancies in the child care industry can also be a problem, as they can lead to inconsistency and a lack of stability for children and their families. This can be particularly challenging for young children, who may benefit from the continuity and consistency of having the same caregivers over time.

The consequences – and costs – of the child care crisis are significant. Many parents are unable to work or are forced to work reduced hours because they cannot find reliable child care for their children. This can lead to financial insecurity for families, and disastrous productivity hits for employers. Additionally, the lack of affordable, high-quality child care can produce a lifetime of negative effects on children's development and overall well-being. Did you know that 90% of a child's brain development occurs before the age of 5? Research has shown that high-quality care helps children thrive, and be prepared for success in school and beyond.

The child care crisis is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach. However, we can take many important and impactful steps to stabilize families and child care programs while creating a strong foundation for a future thriving child care and early learning system. Early learning and child care are fundamental pieces of the infrastructure needed to ensure a stable workforce and make work possible – for employees and employers – and make Washington the best place in the nation to raise a family.

Ensuring you have the resources and tools needed to positively affect policy outcomes is vital to honoring your commitment to Washington's kids, families, and economy.

Welcome to LEAP

Through the Legislator Education and Action Project (LEAP), we'll dive deep into core concepts and foundational topics related to early learning and care – through the leading research, compelling presentations, and accessible educational curriculum – all to empower you, our state's leaders, with tools and resources to help build strong and thriving futures for Washington's kids, families, and workforce. Join the Association for Washington Business, Children's Campaign Fund Action, and your fellow lawmakers today to leap forward into our future together.

To learn more about this dynamic new project and frequently asked questions, click here or visit: www.washingtonleap.org/faq.

Thank You.

We are profoundly grateful for the generous support of Connie Ballmer – a dedicated champion of early learning and child care – and the Ballmer Group for their tremendous investment in this pilot project.

Welcome to LEAP

ABOUT THE PARTNERS: The Association of Washington Business (the oldest and largest statewide business association) and Children's Campaign Fund Action (the new advocacy arm of the state's longest running nonpartisan PAC focused on children's issues) are pleased to present a powerful new initiative that will transform Washington for generations to come. By providing a comprehensive education program and consistent education, LEAP will fill a gap in knowledge among newly elected legislators and other members interested in understanding more about this critical public policy issue. As leaders in our respective arenas, AWB and CCFA will leverage expertise, resources, and relationships across the business, political, and advocacy sectors.



Children's Campaign Fund Action

Formed in 1990, Children's Campaign Fund (CCF) is one of the longest standing nonpartisan PACs focused on children's issues in the country dedicated to electing champions for children, youth, and families, and holding those leaders accountable. Children's Campaign Fund Action (CCFA) is CCF's new political advocacy arm. Launched in 2022 to amplify and expand our movement as a legally separate but affiliated organization, CCFA is dedicated to educating state legislators, agencies, key agency and legislative staff, and other elected officials on policy issues impacting children, youth, and families, including basic needs, child care and early learning, child welfare, intellectual and developmental disabilities, juvenile court reform, youth development, and more. Through the education provided to legislators and other key elected officials and staff, CCFA works to positively affect policy outcomes and state investments that eliminate racial disparities and other inequities impacting children, youth, and families across Washington state.

Association of Washinton Business

Formed in 1904, the Association of Washington Business (AWB) is Washington's oldest and largest statewide business association, and includes nearly 7,000 members representing 700,000 employees. AWB serves as both the state's chamber of commerce and the manufacturing and technology association. AWB also has a longstanding record of working on behalf of companies in many other industries such as retail, wholesale, communications, services, agriculture, transportation, hospitality and construction. While its membership includes major employers like Boeing and Microsoft, more than 90 percent of AWB members employ fewer than 100 people. More than half of AWB's members employ fewer than 10. For the last several years, AWB has been working with early learning/child care advocates, partners and stakeholders to study the industry and develop strategies for developing a strong, safe, affordable and accessible child care industry to support Washington state families.

Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

Child Care & Early Learning: The Ultimate Return on Investment

According to the [First Five Years Fund](https://www.ffyf.org/), “Studies show that early childhood education has at least a 4X-9X return on investment per dollar and not only benefits the health, education, and development of young children and supports parents currently, but also leads to increased earnings, employment, and safety in the future.”

<https://www.ffyf.org/high-quality-early-learning-care-understanding-the-proven-benefits-need-for-investment/>

The benefits of child care and early learning investments are multifaceted, intergenerational, and include positive impacts to:

- A child’s brain development, readiness for school, mental and physical health, future employment and earnings, and decreased chance of involvement with social benefit programs
- A family’s ability to join and stay in the workforce and meet their basic needs
- An employer’s ability to attract and retain a vibrant workforce for generations to come
- Washington state’s ability to support thriving communities and become the best place to raise a family and run a business

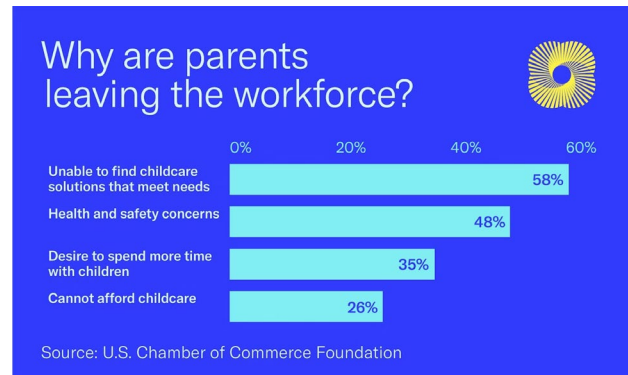
In this section, we’ll explore the many powerful impacts of child care and early learning investments.

Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

Workforce Participation: Child care is a barrier for parents, especially women, to enter or remain in the workforce. In September 2020, 863,000 women dropped out of the workforce compared to just 168,000 men.

**According to a recent
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Report:**

“Both men and women suffered a 3% drop in labor force participation at the height of the pandemic. But more than two years later, men have returned to work at a higher rate than women. Today, women’s labor force participation is still a full percentage point lower than it was pre-pandemic, meaning an estimated one million women are missing from the labor force.”



A [U.S. Chamber of Commerce report](#) conducted in December of 2020 found that 58% of parents who reported leaving workforce were unable to find child care solutions that met their needs – and 32% of women cited the need to be home to care for family members as a barrier to returning to work. The COVID-19 pandemic stressed an already stressed system, as child care providers were forced to reduce capacity and hours in response to the pandemic, while also struggling to hire and retain child care workers. The strain placed on providers and the impact of operating an already difficult business operation during a pandemic has caused further collapse of many providers of all types across all communities.

In December 2020, one in four child care providers were closed, and in September 2020, 67% of school-aged children were enrolled in distance learning or attending school remotely – all while countless child care educators worked tirelessly to accommodate the evolving needs of children of varying ages seemingly overnight. In anticipation of child care disruptions, Congress provided unemployment insurance benefits to parents who were unable to work due to reasons related to COVID-19, one of which was the need to stay home to care for a child. Many parents, and in particular many women, left their jobs to do just that.

<https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/data-deep-dive-a-decline-of-women-in-the-workforce>

Workforce Shortages - A Domino Effect: Workforce shortages in the child care industry have a direct impact on child care access. For example, one toddler teacher shortage in a classroom can lead to at least ten families not having access to care - and therefore being unable to work. Workforce shortages for most other industries are tied directly to current and prospective employees being able to find and afford child care.

Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

The High Cost of Care: Washington ranks third in the nation for least affordable child care for an infant in a family child care program. [Child Care Aware of Washington](https://childcareawarewa.org/advocacy/) reports that the average cost to have an infant in a child care center is 15.4% of median income for a married couple and a daunting 51.5% of median income for a single mother. While median household incomes have increased 5% since 2010, median child care rates have increased between 13-20% for center-based care and 11-31% for family child care.

<https://childcareawarewa.org/advocacy/>

Child care assistance is available for low income working parents through Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). However, many working families who need assistance do not qualify for WCCC; see Section IV for more details and income eligibility.

The [U.S. Chamber foundation Employer Roadmap](https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/ECE%20Employer%20Roadmap_March%202022.pdf) illustrates, “Working parents have long struggled to access the affordable, quality child care that enables them to participate in the workforce, but COVID-19 has made things even worse. The resulting impact on our workforce and organizations of every size and sector is more acute than ever and, for employers, it’s affecting their bottom line.”

https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/ECE%20Employer%20Roadmap_March%202022.pdf

Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

Impact on Employers and the Workforce

- The cost of employee turnover in Washington is estimated to be at least 50-120% of an employee's salary.
- Engaged and supported employees increase retention and create a culture of support and trust while reducing employee turnover and absenteeism; these benefits occur for employees with and without children.
- Employers need workers available to work. For example, when just one preschool classroom cannot be staffed, the result can be up to ten parents not able to go to work or school.
- In a state known for innovation and industry, investments in early learning and child care can help accelerate powerful job growth and attract both people and businesses to our state.
- Child care and early learning programs are community builders. Child care and early learning play a crucial role in supporting families and building strong communities. Access to high-quality child care can help parents balance work and family responsibilities, which can improve their mental health and overall well-being. It can also have positive impacts on children's development, as they have the opportunity to socialize with their peers and engage in age-appropriate activities that support their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Overall creating healthy community members today and into the future.

In addition to these individual benefits, investing in child care has broader economic and social benefits for the community. It can help to increase parents' participation, particularly women, in the workforce, which can boost economic productivity and contribute to the overall prosperity of the community. It can also help to reduce income inequality and improve social mobility, as families have access to affordable and reliable child care that enables them to pursue education and employment opportunities. Families have a central point of access to resources and support for themselves and their children, such as speech therapy, food access and other important community services.



Check out our LEAP video series to hear from leaders of a few of our state's companies which are addressing the child care needs of their employees: www.washingtonleap.org/videos

Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

Impact on the Economy

According to a 2019 U.S. Chamber report - prior to the pandemic - **Washington state employers had already experienced a \$2 billion impact** due to employee turnover and absenteeism directly related to child care. **Washington's economy experienced a \$6.5 billion loss** due to the direct and indirect costs related to the inability of employees to access and keep child care.

A lack of access to child care has significant negative impacts on employers and the overall economy. When parents are unable to access and pay for reliable child care, it can lead to absenteeism, turnover, and reduced productivity at work. This can result in higher hiring and employee absentee costs for employers, as they may have to spend more time and resources recruiting and training new employees or covering for absent workers.

In addition to these costs, a lack of access to child care can also have broader economic consequences. When parents are unable to work due to a lack of child care, they have less disposable income to spend on goods and services, which can lead to reduced economic activity and slower growth. It can also result in lower tax revenues for governments, as parents may have lower incomes and pay less in taxes.

Access to affordable and reliable child care is important for both individual families and the overall economy, as it can help to increase participation in the workforce, boost productivity, and support economic growth.

Child Care Capacity is Declining

The [Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#) reports, "Statewide, DCYF estimates that families of about 305,000 children age birth to 5 not yet in school need child care. Only about 34% of those children are enrolled in licensed child care or preschool."

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/early-learning-dashboards/child-care-need-supply-data>

Due to either lack of openings and/or the high cost of tuition, child care programs and capacity statewide has never been adequate for the number of working families who need or want access. [Child Care Aware of Washington](#) reports that since 2014, overall child care slots have declined by ~5%, despite the increased need and demand – and since 2020, there has been a net loss of nearly 150 providers and around 1,500 slots in Washington state. Nearly 40% of the net loss of providers are center-based, representing 60% of the capacity lost. The ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated this shortage.

<https://childcareawarewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Statewide.pdf>

Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

Child Care Capacity is Declining (continued)

Capacity decline is largely due to rising costs of child care – such as teacher wages and employee costs for such a labor-intensive job – with a simultaneous lack of workforce pipeline. In fact, four out of every five respondents from child care centers in a recent [National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) survey said they had a staffing shortage - and 15% reported a “major shortage” of 6-15 fewer workers than needed. Workers are opting for jobs with higher pay and less stress, particularly as so many have experienced burnout from working throughout the pandemic. [The New York Times](#) estimates that approximately 100,000 individuals left the child care workforce throughout the pandemic, most of whom will not return.

[According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce report Understanding America’s Labor Shortage: The Scarce and Costly Child care Issue](#), “The nationwide worker shortage crisis has also taken a toll on the child care industry. Before the pandemic, there were 920,000 workers in the child care sector. Child care employment plummeted by more than 30% at the height of the pandemic and is still 7% lower today.”

The Bottom Line: If more providers had the resources to hire and retain the child care and early learning workforce, the supply of child care centers and homes would expand to better meet the demand of families statewide. If more families could access affordable, quality care and early learning programs for their children, they could sustainably participate in the workforce and positively contribute to the economy.

<https://www.naeyc.org/about-us/news/press-releases/survey-childcare-centers-understaffed>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/13/us/child-care-worker-shortage.html>

<https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-americas-labor-shortage-the-scarce-and-costly-childcare-issue>

Why is Child Care so Expensive?

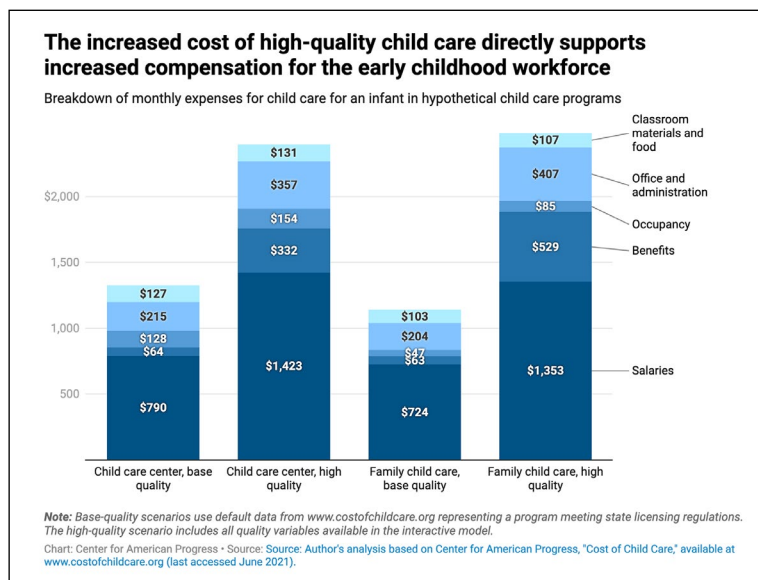
- The primary driver of the cost of child care is the need to pay employees a competitive wage in order to attract and retain qualified staff. High-quality child care often involves low child-to-teacher ratios, which can be expensive to maintain. Additionally, child care providers may need to invest in training and professional development for their staff, as well as in resources and equipment to create a safe and nurturing environment for children. Current workforce shortages in all industries have made hiring and retaining staff even more challenging and costly.
- In addition to the cost of tuition, there may be additional fees for supplies, meals, and other services. Some families may be able to receive assistance with the cost of child care through government programs or employer-provided benefits, but most programs do not subsidize or reimburse enough to cover the full cost of child care and early learning program operations or make it truly affordable for most.

Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

The Child Care Business Model

Child care in the United States and Washington state is a mixed-delivery system, giving parents a range of program types and options to choose from when selecting child care for their family. The [Bipartisan Policy Center](https://bipartisanpolicy.org) identifies the main issue as the lack of capacity and quantity of programs. The cost associated with operating the different program types can vary greatly depending on the setting and operation costs; however, due to the high employee need for all program types, the tuition for all program types remains unaffordable for most families.

https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/BPC_ECI_Cost-Model-Explainer_RV7.pdf



Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

A Closer Look at the Brain Science

90% of all brain development happens by age 3.

The brain science is clear that children are born learning. Whether in their home or community, a rich learning environment filled with adult interactions helps children develop and thrive. Providing families with a variety of early learning and child care options that meet their needs and preferences can positively impact the child, family, and community.

According to Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child:

“Emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities, and together they are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development. The emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community.”

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

The Building Blocks:

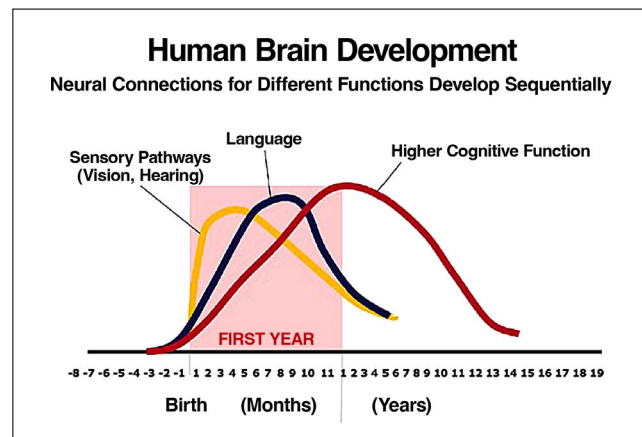
Social emotional skills are the building blocks for critical thinking and collaboration. For children of parents who work or go to school and place their child in care, this means the skills and abilities our schools and employers are looking for are first developed in child care and early learning settings across Washington state.

Scientists have discovered that the experiences children have early in life—and the environments in which they have them—not only shape their brain architecture, but also affect whether, how, and when the developmental instructions carried in their genes are expressed across multiple biological systems.

According to a report by Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child:

“In the first three years after birth, infants and toddlers can start learning to use these core capabilities in basic ways—like learning to focus their attention, responding to limit-setting, and following simple rules. Between ages 3 and 5, most children make huge gains in using these skills through creative play, learning to adjust flexibly to different rules for different contexts, and resisting impulsive behaviors. By later childhood and adolescence, with the benefits of growth-promoting experiences and support, our brains are ready to build on these foundational skills to navigate more complex situations—resisting peer pressure, setting long-term goals and plans, and dealing productively with setbacks”

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes/>



Understanding the Impact: An Overview of Research

A Closer Look at the Brain Science (continued)

The [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) finds “The basic principles of neuroscience indicate that early preventive intervention will be more efficient and produce more favorable outcomes than remediation later in life.”

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/social-and-emotional-development-in-early-learning-settings.aspx>

Responsive Relationships:

Relationships between a child and their caregivers and teachers is a core component to high-quality early learning.

Again, from a report by Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child:

“Responsive relationships early in life are the most important factor in building sturdy brain architecture. Think of building a house: The foundation establishes a base upon which everything else is built. The same is true with developing brains. Brain architecture is comprised of trillions of connections among billions of neurons across different areas of the brain. These connections enable lightning-fast communication among neurons that specialize in different kinds of brain functions.”

The developmental benefits are even higher when a child and family are in a home that reflects their culture and is in their home language. According to the [Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center](#), children who speak home languages other than English account for more than one-third of all Head Start program enrollments nationwide.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-early-childhood-development-principles-improve-child-family-outcomes/>

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/culture-language/article/home-language-support>

Stress and Trauma:

Reducing stress in a child’s life and environment is critical for healthy development and future stability.

A final take away from a report by Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child:

“[Learning to deal with stress](#) is an important part of development, but the unremitting stress experienced by millions of children and families experiencing deep poverty, systemic racism, intergenerational trauma, community violence, interpersonal discrimination, parental substance abuse and/or mental illness can, without treatment, cause long-lasting problems for children and the adults who care for them.”

Children who attend supportive, high-quality early learning programs – which reflect their families and cultures, create strong caregiver-child relationships, support their core skill development, and reduce stress – are more likely than their peers to be successful in school, the workforce, and life. All benefits for children in their early years will ultimately benefit society.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>

Understanding the Government Systems: State

The state entities that oversee and govern the child care/early learning system in Washington state include the Governor's Office, several state agencies, and the state legislative branch. These entities work collaboratively to provide high-quality resources so that Washington's children and families can thrive.

1. Governor's Office

Policy Staff

Human Services/Child Care: Sydney Forester: *Senior Policy Advisor, Human Services*

Education: John Aultman: *Senior Policy Advisor, Higher Education & Workforce Development*
Maddy Thompson: *Senior Policy Advisor, Higher Education & College Access*

Office of Financial Management (OFM): Carly Kujath: *Budget Assistant*

2. Legislative Committees

WA State House of Representatives

The House Appropriations Committee

considers the operating budget bill and related legislation, budget processes, and fiscal issues such as pension policy and compensation. The committee also considers bills with operating budget fiscal impacts.

[Click here to view the members and staff roster](#) or visit www.leg.wa.gov

The House Human Services, Youth & Early Learning Committee: Formerly known as the House Children, Youth & Families Committee, this committee considers a broad array of issues and services affecting children and families, including early learning; child care; child and youth development; child welfare services; children's mental health; at-risk and homeless youth; and juvenile justice.

[Click here to view the members and staff roster](#) or visit www.leg.wa.gov

The House Capital Budget Committee

considers funding requests for capital construction, including early learning facilities.

WA State Senate

The Senate Ways and Means Committee

considers the operating and capital budget bills and related legislation, including the authorization of state debt. The committee also deals with tax policy and other fiscal issues, such as pension policy and compensation, in addition to bills with operating budget fiscal impacts.

[Click here to view the members and staff roster](#) or visit www.leg.wa.gov

The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee considers issues relating to kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) education. The committee also considers issues related to early learning programs, including the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program and Working Connections Program.

[Click here to view the members and staff roster](#) or visit www.leg.wa.gov

Understanding the Government Systems: **State**

3. Agencies and Programs

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/>

DCYF is a cabinet-level agency focused on the well-being of children whose vision is to ensure that “Washington state’s children and youth grow up safe and healthy—thriving physically, emotionally and academically, nurtured by family and community. DCYF administers the following programs:

Working Connections Child Care

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) helps eligible families pay for child care. When a family qualifies for child care subsidy benefits and chooses an eligible provider, the state pays a portion of the cost of child care. Parents may be responsible for a copayment to their provider each month.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-child-care/getting-help/wccc>

Early Achievers

Early Achievers is a quality rating and improvement system for child care and preschool in Washington. Providers must meet quality standards in order to participate in WCCC and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP). Scholarships, coaching, incentive grants and other supports are available to providers participating in Early Achievers.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-child-care/early-achievers/rating-system>

Seasonal Child Care

The Seasonal Child Care program pays child care subsidies for eligible families who: 1) Are seasonally employed in agricultural work; 2) Live in designated counties; and 3) Are not receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families TANF benefits. The program’s purpose is to provide safe, licensed child care while parents work in agricultural settings.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-child-care/getting-help/seasonal-child-care>

Understanding the Government Systems: **State**

3. Agencies and Programs (continued)

Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is Washington's pre-kindergarten program that prepares 3- and 4-year-old children from families furthest from opportunity for success in school and in life. Eligibility for ECEAP was also expanded by the Fair Start for Kids Act.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap>

Strengthening Families Washington

Strengthening Families Washington is a program within DCYF whose main focus is helping families become stronger together through a variety of tactics, including:

- 1) Home visiting: a voluntary, proven program where trained home visitors and parents work together to strengthen and support families in the child's first years of life;
- 2) Community outreach and partnerships;
- 3) Funding opportunities with local organizations.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-development-supports/sfwa>

Understanding the Government Systems: State

Department of Commerce

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/>

The Department of Commerce is the one agency in state government that touches every aspect of community and economic development: planning, infrastructure, energy, public facilities, housing, public safety and crime victims, international trade, business services and more. Commerce works with local governments, tribes, businesses and civic leaders throughout the state to strengthen communities so all residents may thrive and prosper.

Some of the initiatives and grant programs overseen by the Department of Commerce include:

Washington Child Care Collaborative Task Force (C3TF)

The Child Care Collaborative Task Force (C3TF) was created by the Washington State Legislature in 2018 (SHB 2367) to develop policy recommendations to incentivize employer-supported child care and improve child care access and affordability for employees. Legislation passed in 2019 (2SHB 1344) extended the task force and expanded its scope of work, which culminated in a June 2021-December 2022 implementation plan to achieve accessible, affordable child care for all Washington families by 2025.

According to the [Washington State Department of Commerce Report](#):

“The task force strategy built on policy improvements and investments made by the legislature with the Fair Start for Kids Act and state budget. The Fair Start for Kids Act was designed to implement many of the task force’s earlier recommendations, according to remarks made by legislation sponsors and task force members Rep. Tana Senn (D-Mercer Island, 41st Dist.) and Sen. Claire Wilson (D-Auburn, 30th Dist.)”

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/child-care-collaborative-task-force/>

Employer-Supported Child Care Technical Assistance Program

The Employer-Supported Child Care Technical Assistance Program is supported by the Washington State Legislature and Commerce, in partnership with the Association of Washington Businesses (AWB) and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). Through this program, employers are supported in exploring best options for their business environment and employees as they determine how to help in a way that also supports their bottom line for business success.

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/program-index/employer-supported-child-care-technical-assistance-program/>

Understanding the Government Systems: **State**

Department of Commerce (continued)

Child Care Partnership Grants

The Washington State Department of Commerce funded applications to support local partnerships to develop action plans that stabilize and expand child care capacity in communities. The following organizations are eligible to apply on behalf of a collaborative group: Washington nonprofit organizations, federally recognized tribes, and local government entities, including school and educational service districts. Applicants and populations served must be located in the state of Washington.

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/child-care-collaborative-task-force/child-care-partnership-grants/>

Early Learning Facilities Fund (ELF)

The Early Learning Facilities (ELF) program aims to help Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) contractors and Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) providers to expand, remodel, purchase, or construct early learning facilities and classrooms necessary to support early learning opportunities for children from low-income households. ELF funding is open to nonprofits, public entities, K-12 schools and districts, tribes and for-profit businesses.

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/capital-facilities/early-learning-program/>

Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/>

DSHS is tied together by a single mission: to transform lives. Each administration within DSHS has a refined focus on this mission.

DSHS supports children and families with a variety of resources including assistance with child care, food, and other important services.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF provides temporary cash for families in need. Some families participate in the WorkFirst Program. The WorkFirst Program helps participants find and keep jobs, and provides child care to parents. Persons caring for a relative's child, or legal guardians, or are acting in the place of a parent, are also able to apply for TANF benefits on behalf of these children through our [Non-Needy Relative, In Loco Parentis and Legal Guardian Program](#).

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/tanf-and-support-services>

Understanding the Government Systems: **State**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/early-learning-washington-state>

OSPI is committed to inclusive, asset-based policies and practices that increase equitable access to high-quality early learning opportunities within schools and local communities. OSPI has named 'Equitable Access to Strong Foundations' as one of Superintendent Reykdal's Vision and Priorities, with high priority objectives across the PreK-3rd grade continuum.

OSPI is the primary agency charged with overseeing public K–12 education in Washington state. Mission: Transform K–12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities. Some of the OSPI programs impacting children birth to 5 include:

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

CACFP is a federally funded child nutrition program that reimburses nonresidential child and adult care facilities for nutritious meals and snacks served to children and adults who are enrolled in care. The goal is to improve and maintain the health and nutritional status of children and adults in care while promoting the development of good eating habits.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>

Transitional Kindergarten

Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is a kindergarten preparation program for children below the age of five who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten, such as Head Start, ECEAP, or other licensed child care programs. Additionally, they have been deemed by a school district, through a screening process and/or other instrument(s), to be in need of additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten the following year. TK programs are offered by local school districts using state education funding inside elementary school buildings and use specific screening criteria to determine whether a child needs additional preparation to be most successful prior to starting kindergarten the following year.

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/early-learning-washington-state/transitional-kindergarten>

Understanding the Government Systems: **State**

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) (continued)

State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is governed by a nine-member, governor-appointed board responsible for administering the Community and Technical College Act and providing leadership and coordination for Washington state's system of 34 public community and technical colleges. The SBCTC has encouraged and supported the expansion of community college curricula and degrees related to early childhood education.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/about/>

Washington Campus Children's Center Coalition (WCCCC)

The Washington Campus Children's Center Coalition (WCCCC) is the organization of directors and program supervisors of campus child care programs in Washington state.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/about/task-forces-work-groups/wcccc>

Early Achievers Grant

The Early Achievers Grant is a student financial aid program to help employed child care providers and early learning educators complete certificates and associate degrees in early childhood education.

<https://www.sbctc.edu/paying-for-college/early-achievers-student-grant>

Child Care Provider Training Programs

Washington state's community and technical colleges provide training for child care, offering associate degrees as well as state certification, both short and initial. (See appendix for more college/program details.)

Understanding the Government Systems: **State**

4. State Funding Sources

The Fair Start for Kids Act (FSFK):

The Fair Start for Kids Act expanded eligibility for child care and preschool, and created new supports for parents and providers. FSFK is a \$1.1 billion investment for the FY 22/23 biennium to make child care and early learning more affordable for Washington families by expanding access, capping copays, and providing resources to support child care and early learning providers.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/government-affairs/fair-start-for-kids-act>

Child Care Stabilization Grants:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided DCYF with federal funds to help support child care providers during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Applications to receive funds via the Child Care Stabilization Grant opened on October 13, 2021 and closed on September 30, 2022. See the appendix for a breakdown of grant allocations.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/StabilizationGrantFastFacts.pdf>

Understanding the Government Systems: **Federal**

1. White House

Policy Staff

2. Congressional Committees

The U.S. Senate

<https://www.senate.gov/>

The U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The role of the Senate Appropriations Committee is defined by the U.S. Constitution, which requires “appropriations made by law” prior to the expenditure of any money from the Federal treasury. The Committee writes the legislation that allocates federal funds to the numerous government agencies, departments, and organizations on an annual basis.

<https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/>

The U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP)

The Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee is composed of three subcommittees, which have a broad jurisdiction over our country’s health care, education, employment and retirement policies.

<https://www.help.senate.gov/>

The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is composed of seven subcommittees, which together oversee for the vast range of issues under its jurisdiction.

<https://www.commerce.senate.gov/>

The U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget

The Budget Committee’s principal responsibility is to develop a concurrent resolution on the budget to serve as the framework for congressional action on spending, revenue, and debt-limit legislation.

<https://www.budget.senate.gov/>

Understanding the Government Systems: **Federal**

2. Congressional Committees (continued)

The U.S. House of Representatives

<https://www.house.gov/>

The U.S House Committee on Appropriations

The House Committee on Appropriations is responsible for funding the federal government's vital activities to keep the United States safe, strong, and moving forward. Committee members work on behalf of the American people by prioritizing good schools, robust job training, affordable higher education, quality health care, and better infrastructure.

<https://appropriations.house.gov/>

The U.S. House Budget Committee Democratic Caucus Budget

The House Budget Committee Democratic Caucus is fighting for budget priorities that reflect the values of families across the country. We are committed to investing in our country's future, building a strong economy based on broadly shared prosperity, protecting and improving health care and other vital services for American families, and keeping our promises to seniors, veterans and the most vulnerable among us.

<https://democrats-budget.house.gov/>

The U.S. Committee on Energy & Commerce

The Committee on Energy and Commerce is the oldest continuous standing committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. It was originally established in 1795 to regulate interstate and foreign commerce. Today, the Committee has the broadest jurisdiction of any authorizing committee in Congress.

<https://energycommerce.house.gov/>

The U.S. House Committee on Education & Labor

The current U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor was established on January 3, 2019. The Committee's basic jurisdiction is over education and labor matters generally, including oversight over matters related to higher and early education, workforce development and protections, and health, employment, labor, and pensions.

<https://edlabor.house.gov/>

Understanding the Government Systems: **Federal**

3. Agencies

The U.S. Department of Agriculture

<https://www.usda.gov/>

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers. CACFP also provides reimbursements for meals served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs, children residing in emergency shelters, and adults over the age of 60 or living with a disability and enrolled in daycare facilities. CACFP contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children and adults in the United States.

Programs include Team Nutrition (training for child care providers and nutrition education for children and families), the Special Milk Program (provides milk to some children in schools and child care institutions), the Summer Food Service Program (federally-funded and administered by the state to reimburse program operators who serve free healthy meals to low-income children and youth), and more.

Click here for the full list of [Child Nutrition Programs](#) and learn more about each or visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn>

United States Department of Labor (USDOL)

<https://www.dol.gov/>

Understanding the Government Systems: **Federal**

3. Agencies (continued)

United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

<https://www.hhs.gov/>

The mission of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans, by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering sound, sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health, and social services.

Administration for Children & Families

The Administration for Children & Families (ACF), a division of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, youth, individuals and communities with funding, strategic partnerships, guidance, training and technical assistance.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/about>

Early Childhood Development Programs

Office of Head Start (OHS)

OHS Administers the Head Start preschool, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and American Indian and Alaskan Native Head Start programs. Head Start promotes school readiness for children ages birth to 5 who will most benefit from access to early education. Head Start programs are committed to supporting children's growth in positive learning environments through a variety of services, including individualized learning experiences and connections to health services, as well as strengthening parent-child relationships, and engaging families.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs>

Office of Child Care (OCC)

OCC supports low income working families by subsidizing early care and afterschool programs through the administration of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). CCDF also improves the quality of care to promote children's healthy development and learning by supporting child care licensing, quality improvement systems to help programs meet higher standards, and training and education for child care workers.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ>

Understanding the Government Systems: **Federal**

3. Agencies (continued)

Early Childhood Development Programs (continued)

Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five Initiative (PDG B-5)

PDG B-5 provides grants to states to strengthen service delivery in early care and education for children from birth to five. Funds support important initiatives in States and Territories that improve program quality, increase access to programs, support the early childhood workforce, and maximize parental choice and meaningful engagement.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/early-learning/preschool-development-grants>

Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

MIECHV provides resources to strengthen tribal capacity to support and promote the health and well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native families, expand the evidence base around home visiting in, and support cooperation and linkages between programs that serve Native children and their families.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/tribal/tribal-home-visiting>

United States Department of Education (ED)

<https://www.ed.gov/>

ED's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. ED was created in 1980 by combining offices from several federal agencies.

Office of Innovation and Early Learning (IELP)

The Office of Innovation and Early Learning administers discretionary grant programs that support innovations and early learning programs.

<https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-discretionary-grants-support-services/innovation-early-learning/>

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.htm>

Understanding the Government Systems: **Federal**

4. Major Federal Funding Sources

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary source of federal funding for child care subsidies for working families with low incomes and funds to improve child care quality. DCYF is required to submit a CCDF Plan every three years. The CCDF Plan functions as the application for the CCDF grant, so it describes all DCYF's activities funded by the grant and how they comply with federal CCDF law and rules.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/government-affairs/ccdf>

Child Care Stabilization Grant and Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Stabilization Grant

As a result of the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, funds are to be used to stabilize, support, and grow the diverse early learning workforce in a way that rebuilds a stronger child care system and expands access to affordable high-quality care. Funds will be available to child care providers in the form of: 1) Licensed Child Care Stabilization Grant; 2) Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Stabilization Grant. The final payout will be made in September 2023.

<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/state-and-territory-child-care-stabilization-grant-applications/#Washington>

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program supports pregnant people, families, and parents with young children who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and child health outcomes.

<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs-impact/programs/home-visiting/maternal-infant-early-childhood-home-visiting-miechv-program>

Understanding the Government Systems: **Federal**

4. Major Federal Funding Sources (continued)

Early Childhood Education in Washington 2022

State and federal funding enables more than 67,162 children and families in Washington to access high-quality, public and private, early childhood programs.¹

Federal and State Early Childhood Education Funding in Washington

- \$200.8M Head Start and Early Head Start²
- \$171.4M CCDBG and Mandatory Funds³
- \$29.8M CCDBG State Match⁴
- \$853.7M CCDBG COVID-Relief Allocations: CARES⁵ | CRRSA⁶ | ARPA (CCDF + Stabilization)⁷
- \$150.4M State-Funded Pre-K⁸
- \$10.1M MIECHV⁹
- \$15.2M IDEA Part C¹⁰
- \$12.9M IDEA Part B, Sec. 619¹¹
- \$201.9M TANF¹² Early Learning and Care Expenditures¹³
- \$14.5M Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five¹⁴

Washington Quick Facts

<p>7,762 Children Enrolled in Head Start¹⁵</p> <p>14.56% Eligible Children Served by Head Start²⁰</p> <p>4,236 Children Enrolled in Early Head Start²¹</p> <p>8.08% Eligible Children Served by Early Head Start²²</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px dashed #ccc;"/> <p>19,240 Children Under Six Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds²³</p> <p>13.0% Eligible Children Under Six Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds²⁴</p>	<p>15,505 Children Enrolled in State Funded Pre-K²⁵</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px dashed #ccc;"/> <p>1,578 Families Served by MIECHV²⁶</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px dashed #ccc;"/> <p>8,691 Children Served by IDEA Part C²⁷</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px dashed #ccc;"/> <p>10,150 Children Served by IDEA Part B, Sec. 619²⁸</p> <hr style="border: 0.5px dashed #ccc;"/> <p>16.57% Three- and Four-year old Children who Attend Public ECE²⁹</p>
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Early Childhood Education Economic Impact

In addition to the benefits to young children, access to affordable, high-quality child care can increase parental labor force participation and family economic stability. Child care problems, however, adversely affect both state and national economies. As a direct result of child care issues, the national economy loses upward of \$57 billion annually in the form of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.¹⁵

In Washington

9.7%

of parents make career sacrifices due to child care issues.¹⁶

Labor force participation of mothers with children under the age of 5 increased from 60.3% in 2019 to 72.7% in 2021.¹⁷

Nationwide¹⁸

The percent of families that reported difficulty finding space in a home- or center-based program increased dramatically from 22% in December 2021 to 58% in January 2022.

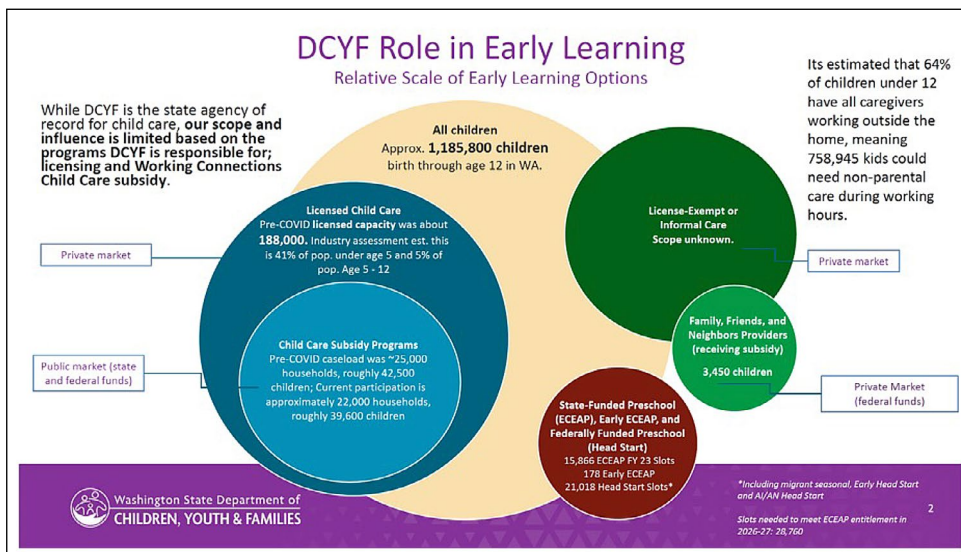
71% of parents report that difficulty finding child care has impacted their ability to work.

1010 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005 • ffyf.org

Understanding Washington’s Programs and Models

Washington state currently has a mixed-delivery system of child care and early learning that offers families access to care that meets their logistical needs and is reflective of their values and culture. Parent choice is one of the underlying principles of Washington state’s early learning system of care. A diversity of providers, including private non-profit agencies, private for profit businesses, public entities including schools and community colleges, private home providers and families, friends and neighbors, all make up the rich network of options available to parents and caregivers seeking care for their children.

Below is a quick glance at the scope of early learning in Washington state (Department of Children, Youth, and Families):



Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Below is an overview of the variety of learning opportunities available during the earliest years of a child's life in Washington – including child care, preschool, family support services, and more – all based on the science of early childhood development.

Early Family Support

Home Visiting Programs: also referred to as voluntary parent support, these are voluntary, family-focused comprehensive support services offered prenatally through the youngest years of a child's life to support early learning opportunities in the home, virtually or in a community setting. In addition, the benefits of voluntary home visiting support services include maternal and infant health, child development, positive parent-child relationships and a connection to local community supports and services, to name a few.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-dev-support-providers/home-visiting>

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT): this program provides screening for developmental delays, and early intervention services for children birth to 3 with developmental delays or disabilities.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-development-supports/esit>

Play and Learn Groups: offered in a variety of community settings, including virtual and bilingual, these groups support parents and other caregivers with the opportunity to develop early learning through play while building relationships with other children. The program also offers resources to parents and caregivers to establish teachable moments with their child at home and through everyday activities.

[To locate a Play and Learn group in your district, visit \[childcare.org\]\(http://childcare.org\).](#)

Crisis Respite Care: this free service provided by the state offers temporary, immediate relief for parents or caregivers experiencing difficult circumstances who do not have access to safe care for their child.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/child-development-supports/esit>

The Bipartisan Policy Center reports, “Mixed delivery systems can strengthen both parental choice and the health of a community’s early care and education market. ... Alongside federal investments in Pre-K, Head Start, and child care, consideration for a seamless implementation of diverse early care and education programs is critical to ensure working parents, young children, and local early care and education programs are best supported.”

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Early Learning and Child Care Programs

Licensed or Certified Center-Based Child Care: this refers to care provided outside the home, typically located in a large structure or facility with multiple classrooms and with more employees than home-based centers.

Licensed or Certified Family Child Care (FCC): also known as In-Home or Home-Based Child Care, this model provides care for children in a private residential building such as a home or apartment rather than in a center. These providers care for a smaller number of children than centers, and often offer more flexible hours. Home based care is frequently one of the only options available to families living in rural communities that do not have enough children to sustain center-based care.

Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN): Unlicensed care is typically referred to as Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care, or FFN providers. FFN providers may include grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings, friends, neighbors, and other community members who support families by providing child care. Both in Washington and nationwide, FFN care is the most common type of child care for infants, toddlers, and school-age children before and after school – representing over half of all non-parental child care in our state. FFN care is also often the most affordable for families. FFN providers are typically exempt from licensing and not regulated by the state. For families who are income eligible, FFN caregivers can receive payments from the state for the care they provide.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-child-care/ffn>

Educational Service Districts (ESD)*: these agencies are regional liaisons between the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), State Board of Education, and the State Legislature that serve over one million students statewide across 295 school districts. Each of Washington's nine ESDs form a network to provide a variety of early learning and care options that deliver essential services to meet the needs of children and families in local communities.

<https://www.waesd.org/about-us/esds/>

To view maps with legislative districts and other information,

<https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/about-school-districts/educational-service-districts>

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Early Learning and Child Care Programs (continued)

Tribal Programs*: these programs honor the rich cultural heritage of Native children, families, and communities. They may include Tribal Head Start, Tribal ECEAP, Tribal Home Visiting, and more – and serve as an important example of a culturally responsive program and learning opportunity. Many programs aim to serve enrolled members of a tribe, Native children or Native descendants of an enrolled member of a federally recognized tribe. They strive to support sovereign nations in implementing high-quality early learning approaches that are reflective of each Nation's culture and values – such as the incorporation of Native words, phrases, songs, dances, child regalia, and traditional celebrations such as an annual Salmon bake - to name just a few. Increased funding and support for tribal early learning programs were created to help support Native children and families heal from historical trauma and provide culturally relevant and responsive resources and opportunities necessary to thrive. Click the following links for more information:

Washington's federally recognized tribes

https://www.washingtontribes.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WATribes_Brochure2019_FlattenedMap.pdf

Tribal ECEAP

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap/tribal-eceap>

Tribal Head Start

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/american-indian-alaska-native-programs>

Tribal Early Learning Initiative

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/tribal/tribal-early-learning-initiative>

NOTE: Tribal Home Visiting is supported through the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) program. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/tribal/tribal-home-visiting>

Before and After School Programs: offered in a variety of locations, including at schools and child care centers and homes, these programs provide services for children up to age 12 to accommodate child care needs outside of the hours schools operate.

Early Learning Facilities Fund (ELFF): this program is a partnership between the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and the Department of Commerce. ELFF provides funding for early learning and care providers to expand, remodel, purchase, or construct early learning facilities and classrooms that support children from low-income households.

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/capital-facilities/early-learning-program/>

* May offer both child care and preschool programs

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Early Learning Preschool Programs

Head Start: Created in 1965, Head Start is a federally funded preschool program designed to prepare children for school readiness, help identify health and nutrition challenges and opportunities, and partner with families to support desired goals and self-sufficiency. Today, these programs are delivered across the country through 1,600 agencies. This free program primarily serves children ages 3 and 4 whose families earn low incomes according to the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Head Start programs are provided through various agencies and are tailored to meet the local needs of children and families in their service area. Some programs within Head Start include:

- Early Head Start: supports pregnant women and children from birth to age 3.
- Migrant and Seasonal Head Start: specifically designed programs to support pregnant women and children birth to age five living in communities with migrant and seasonal workers.
- Tribal Head Start: these programs support Native children birth to age five and their families, typically living on or near tribal reservations.

Visit the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP website to find out more about Head Start programs in our state.

<https://wsaheadstarteceap.com/find-a-head-start-or-eceap-program/>

Visit the DCYF website to learn more about Head Start and state collaborative efforts.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/head-start>

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Early Learning Preschool Programs (continued)

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program: Modeled after the federal Head Start program, The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) was developed in Washington state in 1985 to provide free early learning and care to additional families with similar eligibility requirements. ECEAP was designed to “provide a combination of education, health and nutrition screening and assistance, parent involvement, and family support” for children ages 3 to 5 and funded by the state of Washington. According to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, there are currently 15,697 funded ECEAP slots for 2022-2023; 178 slots are designated for Early ECEAP.

- ECEAP slot availability ranges from part-day, school-day, and working-day; the majority of slots are part day (8,874 slots).
- One of the state's newest programs, Early ECEAP, supports pregnant women and children from birth to age 3. According to DCYF:

“The federal funds are for the program years 2020-2023 and are designed to fund Early ECEAP as a pilot project. The pilot project will provide services to 144 children and families by 10 contractors spread throughout the state. Early ECEAP is one program among many in the PDG B-5, allowing DCYF to bring innovation and increased capacity to the early learning and family support systems in Washington state for infants and toddlers and their families. Early ECEAP is administered in DCYF by the ECEAP team. Early ECEAP will be built on the model and successful outcomes of Early Head Start (EHS) center-based and family child care models. The Early ECEAP standards are based on EHS performance standards. Using the flexibility of a pilot project and the expertise of the ECEAP team, we will use the next 2.5 years on revising and improving these standards, creating the Washington state model.”

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap/early-eceap>

Visit the [DCYF website](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov) to learn more about the eligibility criteria and differences between Head Start and ECEAP; for reference, the 2022 ECEAP eligibility levels are also shown at right.

www.dcyf.wa.gov

The increased cost of high-quality child care directly supports increased compensation for the early childhood workforce

Federal Poverty Level (FPL) – Effective for ECEAP Feb. 1, 2022

Annual Income	Family Size	100% FPL	110% FPL	140% FPL	185% FPL	200% FPL
	1	\$13,590	\$14,949	\$19,026	\$25,142	\$27,180
2	\$18,310	\$20,141	\$25,634	\$33,874	\$36,620	
3	\$23,030	\$25,333	\$32,242	\$42,606	\$46,060	
4	\$27,750	\$30,525	\$38,850	\$51,338	\$55,500	
5	\$32,470	\$35,717	\$45,458	\$60,070	\$64,940	
6	\$37,190	\$40,909	\$52,066	\$68,802	\$74,380	
7	\$41,910	\$46,101	\$58,674	\$77,534	\$83,820	
8	\$46,630	\$51,293	\$65,282	\$86,266	\$93,260	
For each additional family member add:	\$4,720	\$5,192	\$6,608	\$8,732	\$9,440	

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Early Learning Preschool Programs (continued)

Developmental Preschools: these programs provide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, among other special needs, early learning opportunities through their local school district at no cost. They offer certified special education teachers, speech therapists, and other staff to support the success of children with intellectual and developmental needs. Developmental Preschools served approximately 9,565 children in the 2021-22 school year (Department of Children, Youth, and Families).

Outdoor/Nature Based Preschool: DCYF licensed Washington's first outdoor, nature-based preschool program in September of 2019 – making Washington the first state in the country to license an outdoor preschool program.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/news/washington-becomes-first-nation-license-outdoor-nature-based-child-care>.

These preschool programs provide additional beneficial learning opportunities and access to high-quality early learning opportunities in outdoor settings such as parks, forests, and oceanside. To learn more about Washington's outdoor preschool programs, visit:

<https://dcyf.wa.gov/news/dcyf-begins-licensing-outdoor-preschools>

Private Preschools: varying widely in curriculum, tuition and eligibility, private preschools providing four hours or less of instruction a day are not licensed but may be certified with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) or accredited through their unique program approach. Montessori and Waldorf are commonly classified as private preschool programs.

NOTE: Private preschools that operate more than four hours per day are subject to child care licensing and DCYF oversight.

Co-Op Preschools: these programs provide parents the opportunity to help participate in their child's education in a classroom setting. In fact, many community colleges and vocational schools in Washington state house co-op preschools. They offer learning environments to young children paired with educational opportunities for their caregiver – caregivers are involved in all aspects of running the preschool, including co-teaching one day per week.

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Early Learning Preschool Programs (continued)

Seattle Preschool Program (SPP): this is a high-quality, evidence-based preschool program offered by the Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) in partnership with a network of preschool providers throughout the city, including both community-based providers and Seattle Public Schools.

Transitional Kindergarten (TK): this kindergarten preparation program is for children below the age of five who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences prior to kindergarten, such as Head Start, ECEAP, or other licensed child care programs. Additionally, they have been deemed by a school district, through a screening process and/or other instrument(s), to be in need of additional preparation to be successful in kindergarten the following year. TK programs are offered by local school districts using state education funding inside elementary school buildings and use specific screening criteria to determine whether a child needs additional preparation to be most successful prior to starting kindergarten the following year.

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/early-learning-washington-state/transitional-kindergarten>.

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

A Note on Child Care Supply

Nearly two-thirds of all Washingtonians live in what's called a child care desert. A child care desert is any census tract with over 50 children younger than 5 years old that contains "either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots" (childcaredeserts.org).

www.childcaredeserts.org

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/early-learning-dashboards/child-care-need-supply-data>

Subsidies & Reimbursement Rates

Child care in Washington state is primarily funded through private pay from families. Child care for eligible low income families is subsidized through Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). WCCC's current caseload is approximately 26,400 (Department of Children, Youth, and Families). See DCYF's 2022 eligibility chart below for the maximum monthly income limit by household size or visit:

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help/wccc>

Family Size	\$0 Copay (0%-20% SMI)	\$65 Copay (20%-36% SMI)	\$90 Copay (36%-50% SMI)	\$115 Copay (50%-60% SMI)	\$215 Copay (60%-65% SMI)
1	\$0 to \$928	\$929 to \$1,671	\$1,672 to \$2,320	\$2,321 to \$2,784	\$2,785 to \$3,016
2	\$0 to \$1,214	\$1,215 to \$2,185	\$2,186 to \$3,034	\$3,035 to \$3,641	\$3,642 to \$3,944
3	\$0 to \$1,499	\$1,500 to \$2,699	\$2,700 to \$3,748	\$3,749 to \$4,498	\$4,499 to \$4,872
4	\$0 to \$1,785	\$1,786 to \$3,213	\$3,214 to \$4,462	\$4,463 to \$5,354	\$5,355 to \$5,800
5	\$0 to \$2,070	\$2,071 to \$3,727	\$3,728 to \$5,176	\$5,177 to \$6,211	\$6,212 to \$6,729
6	\$0 to \$2,356	\$2,357 to \$4,241	\$4,242 to \$5,890	\$5,891 to \$7,068	\$7,069 to \$7,657
7	\$0 to \$2,409	\$2,410 to \$4,337	\$4,338 to \$6,024	\$6,025 to \$7,228	\$7,229 to \$7,831
8	\$0 to \$2,463	\$2,464 to \$4,433	\$4,434 to \$6,157	\$6,158 to \$7,389	\$7,390 to \$8,005
9	\$0 to \$2,517	\$2,517 to \$4,530	\$4,531 to \$6,291	\$6,292 to \$7,550	\$7,551 to \$8,179
10	\$0 to \$2,570	\$2,571 to \$4,626	\$4,627 to \$6,425	\$6,426 to \$7,710	\$7,711 to \$8,353
11	\$0 to \$2,624	\$2,625 to \$4,722	\$4,723 to \$6,559	\$6,560 to \$7,871	\$7,872 to \$8,527
12	\$0 to \$2,677	\$2,678 to \$4,819	\$4,820 to \$6,693	\$6,694 to \$8,031	\$8,032 to \$8,701
13	\$0 to \$2,731	\$2,732 to \$4,915	\$4,916 to \$6,827	\$6,828 to \$8,192	\$8,193 to \$8,875
14	\$0 to \$2,784	\$2,785 to \$5,012	\$5,013 to \$6,961	\$6,962 to \$8,353	\$8,354 to \$9,049
15	\$0 to \$2,838	\$2,839 to \$5,108	\$5,109 to \$7,094	\$7,095 to \$8,513	\$8,514 to \$9,223
16	\$0 to \$2,891	\$2,892 to \$5,204	\$5,205 to \$7,228	\$7,229 to \$8,674	\$8,675 to \$9,397
17	\$0 to \$2,945	\$2,946 to \$5,301	\$5,302 to \$7,362	\$7,363 to \$8,835	\$8,836 to \$9,571
18	\$0 to \$2,998	\$2,999 to \$5,397	\$5,398 to \$7,496	\$7,497 to \$8,995	\$8,996 to \$9,745
19	\$0 to \$3,052	\$3,053 to \$5,493	\$5,494 to \$7,630	\$7,631 to \$9,156	\$9,157 to \$9,919
20	\$0 to \$3,106	\$3,107 to \$5,590	\$5,591 to \$7,764	\$7,765 to \$9,316	\$9,317 to \$10,093

Looking ahead, the child care subsidy co-pay cap will increase to \$165 in 2023, and the household income eligibility will increase to 75% of the state's median income in 2025 (Department of Children, Youth, and Families).

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Market Rate Survey vs. Cost Modeling

Currently, child care subsidy reimbursement rates in Washington are based on a market rate survey. In its 2022 report, The Child Care Collaborative Task Force is recommending that the legislature establish subsidy rates based on a Cost Model, rather than on a Market Rate Survey.

Market Rate Survey

Federal rules establish the following benchmarks for a market rate survey in order to be eligible for federal funding:

- Include the full priced child care market.
- Contain complete and current data.
- Represent geographic variation.
- Use rigorous data collection procedures.
- Analyze data in a manner that captures market differences.

According to the [Bipartisan Policy Center Report of Market Rate Surveys and Alternative Rate Setting Methodology](#):

“States are responsible for determining the policies related to these components, including how much child care programs are paid for serving children whose families are eligible to receive a child care subsidy. While states are not required to pay child care programs the same amount a program charges a typical private-pay family, states are required to set rates high enough that families receiving a child care subsidy have the same access to comparable child care options as families not receiving a subsidy.

In other words, since a child care program does not have to accept a child care subsidy, the payment rate of the subsidy must be set high enough that most child care programs would be willing to accept it. If the subsidy rate is significantly lower than what a child care program charges private-pay parents, there is no market-driven reason for a child care program to give a slot to a family with a subsidy when other families are willing to pay the full rate.”

The prices child care programs charge often do not reflect the true cost of providing child care. Again, from the [Bipartisan Policy Center Report of Market Rate Surveys and Alternative Rate Setting Methodology](#):

“Market rates represent the tuition and fees that child care programs charge private-pay families. However, the prices child care programs charge often do not reflect the true cost of providing child care that meets regulatory health and safety standards, and never meet the cost of quality child care. For example, cost modeling by the District of Columbia found in most cases a program’s estimated cost of delivering child care services was more than the revenue generally available to the program, and this gap was the largest for small programs that mostly served infants and toddlers. In order to fill slots, programs must charge what families can pay.”

Currently, Washington state’s subsidy covers the ~65th percentile of child care tuition, resulting in fewer programs being able to accept subsidy as a form of payment; Governor Inslee’s proposed budget for 2023 includes an increase to the 85th percentile.

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/the-limitations-of-using-market-rates-for-setting-child-care-subsidy-rates/>

Understanding Washington's Programs and Models

Market Rate Survey vs. Cost Modeling (continued)

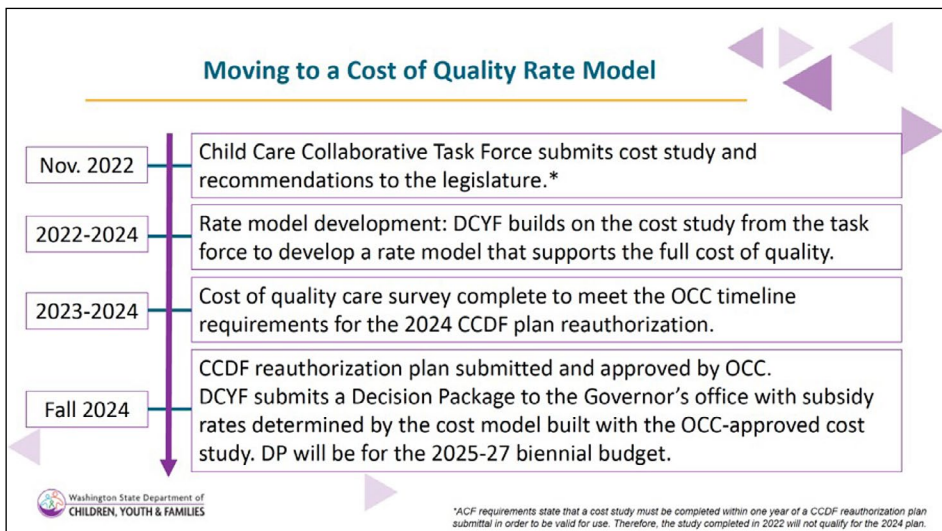
Cost Modeling

A cost estimation model incorporates both available data and certain assumptions to estimate expected costs associated with running a child care business. According to the [Bipartisan Policy Center](#): “The assumptions used in cost estimation models often deal with the structure of the program (such as the number of children, facility size and features, group size, teacher to child ratios) and any other required inputs (such as labor, materials and supplies, food service, administration, transportation), combined with the prices or cost of each of these inputs.”

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/the-limitations-of-using-market-rates-for-setting-child-care-subsidy-rates/>

[Click here for the latest reports and information from the Child Care Collaborative Task Force or visit: https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/child-care-collaborative-task-force/](#)

Here's a look ahead at a timeline moving to the cost of quality (Department of Children, Youth, and Families):



Based on the science of early childhood development, we know that stable and nurturing adult-child relationships, exposure to broad vocabulary, strong social/emotional development, and executive function skills will help build a strong foundation for later learning and offer exponential benefits to society for years to come.

Just imagine what could be possible if every family in Washington could access affordable, high-quality child care and early learning opportunities – and know that YOU can make it possible!

Appendix

Early Learning Certificates/Degrees & Mentorship Programs

Creating and Supporting our Early Learning and Child Care Workforce Pipeline:

[CTE Programs in Early Learning, Child Care and Human Services:](#)

[Centralia High School](#)

[Columbia-Walla Walla High School](#)

[Evergreen School District](#)

[Kennewick School District](#)

[Kent School District](#)

[Moses Lake School District](#)

[Richland School District](#)

[Spokane Schools](#)

[Snohomish School District](#)

[Sumner School District](#)

[Tacoma Public Schools](#)

PACE – Provider Access to a Community Equivalent

(Provider Access to a Community Equivalent) is a community-based training series that meets the licensing staff qualifications for Family Home Licensees, Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers. It is designed to provide content and knowledge equivalent to the WA State Initial and Short Certificates.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/qualifications/child-care-providers/education-equivalents/pace>

IMAGINE U:

Imagine U is a relationship-based mentorship program designed to increase the number of licensed family child care providers who can care for children in Washington state. Imagine U pairs experienced and talented licensed child care providers with those interested in becoming licensed, and offers both the mentor and intern supports to help them grow professionally. This peer-to-peer model honors the knowledge and skill that exists in the field and helps ensure that new providers are able to benefit from their mentor's expertise.

<https://imaginewa.org/imagine-u-mentor-program/>

Appendix

Early Learning Certificates/Degrees and Mentorship Programs

State Short Early Childhood Education Certificate – Family Child Care/School-Age Care/Infant Toddler Care/Child Development

Bellevue College	Olympic College
Big Bend Community College	Peninsula College
Central Washington University/Ellensburg	Pierce College
Centralia College	Renton Technical College
Clark College	Seattle Central College
Columbia Basin College	Skagit Valley College
Edmonds College	South Puget Sound Community College
Everett Community College	Spokane Falls Community College
Grays Harbor College	Tacoma Community College
Green River College	Wenatchee Valley College
Highline College	Yakima Valley College
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	Walla Walla Community College
Lower Columbia College	Whatcom Community College
North Seattle College	

Associate Degree – Early Childhood Education/Child Care/Paraeducator

Bates Technical College	North Seattle College
Bellevue College	Peninsula College
Big Bend Community College	Pierce College
Centralia College	Renton Technical College
Clark College	Spokane Falls Community College
Clover Park Technical College	Skagit Valley College
Columbia Basin College	South Puget Sound Community College
Green River College	Tacoma Community College
Highline College	Walla Walla Community College
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	Wenatchee Valley College
Lower Columbia College	Whatcom Community College

Appendix

Agencies, Coalitions & Organizations

Agencies

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/>

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/tanf-and-support-services>

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

<https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/about-agency>

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>

Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/early-learning-washington-state/transitional-kindergarten>

The Washington Campus Children's Center Coalition (WCCCC)

<https://www.sbctc.edu/about/task-forces-work-groups/wcccc>

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)

<https://www.sbctc.edu/about/>

The U.S. Department of Education (ED)

<https://www.ed.gov/>

The Office of Innovation and Early Learning (IELP)

<https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-discretionary-grants-support-services/innovation-early-learning/>

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>

Appendix

Agencies, Coalitions & Organizations (continued)

Agencies

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

<https://www.hhs.gov/>

The Office of Child Care (OCC)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ>

The Office of Head Start (OHS)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ohs>

The Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five Initiative (PDG B-5)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/early-learning/preschool-development-grants>

Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/tribal/tribal-home-visiting>

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)

<https://www.dol.gov/>

The Administration for Children & Families (ACF)

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/>

The U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP)

<https://www.help.senate.gov/>

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/>

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/government-affairs/ccdf>

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap>

Early Learning Advisory Council

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/about/community-engagement/elac>

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC)

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help/wccc>

Appendix

Agencies, Coalitions & Organizations (continued)

Agencies

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce)

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/>

The Early Learning Facilities (ELF)

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/building-infrastructure/capital-facilities/early-learning-program/>

The Washington Child Care Collaborative Task Force (C3TF)

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/child-care-collaborative-task-force/>

Coalitions

Early Learning Action Alliance facilitated by Children's Alliance

<https://childrensalliance.org/issues/early-learning>

Referenced Organizations

Association of Washington Businesses (AWB)

<https://www.awb.org>

Child Care Aware of Washington

<https://childcareawarewa.org>

Child Care Resources

<https://www.childcare.org>

Washington Association of Head Start & ECEAP

<https://wsaheadstarteceap.com>

Washington Child Care Center Association

<https://wachild.com>

Fair Start for Kids

Final Bill-Session Law

<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5237-S2.SL.pdf?q=20221215114441>

Final Bill Report

<https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/Senate/5237-S2.E%20SBR%20FBR%2021.pdf?q=20221215114441>

Appendix

Child Care Stabilization Grant Allocation

Below is a snapshot of the breakdown of 2022 grant allocations by both provider type and funding type courtesy of [DCYF's Stabilization Grant Fast Facts report](#):

Grants Awarded by Provider Type

License Type	Total Count	Total Amount	License Capacity
Child Care Center	1,586	\$145,138,500	116,695
Licensed Family Home	3,223	\$171,046,000	31,847
Outdoor Preschool	11	\$498,000	228
School-Age Program	555	\$44,514,500	33,461
Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN)	1,477	\$2,158,750	N/A
Total	6,852	\$363,355,750	182,231

*Of these grants, 159 have been awarded to licensed ECEAP providers, totaling \$14,649,000. There are 430 total ECEAP sites, and 174 of them are licensed.

Grants Awarded by Subsidy versus Private Pay

Subsidy Status	Total Count	Total Amount	License Capacity
Subsidy Child Care Centers	1,007	\$97,485,500	76,102
Subsidy Licensed Family Homes	2,155	\$123,370,000	21,508
Subsidy Outdoor Preschool	3	\$141,000	104
Subsidy School-Age Programs	450	\$36,760,500	27,537
Subsidy FFN	1,477	\$2,158,750	N/A
Total Subsidy	5,092	\$259,915,750	125,251
Private Pay Child Care Centers	579	\$47,653,000	40,593
Private Pay Licensed Family Home	1,068	\$47,676,000	10,339
Private Pay Outdoor Preschool	8	\$357,000	124
Private Pay School-Age Programs	105	\$7,754,000	5,924
Total Private Pay	1,760	\$103,440,000	56,980

Appendix

Resources & Reports

[Child Care in Washington State](#)

Child Care Aware of Washington, 2022

[Data Deep Dive: A Decline of Women in the Workforce](#)

U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2022

[Examining the Significant Return on Investment from High-Quality Early Learning & Care](#)

First Five Years Fund/Hannah Guevara, 2022

[Four Big Benefits of Investing in Early Childhood Development](#)

James J. Heckman/The Heckman Equation

[Home Language Support](#)

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center

[“Our Biggest Hurdle” - The Challenge of Child Care for Workers in the Building, Construction, and Manufacturing Trades](#)

Washington State Labor Council and Machinists Institute, et al, 2021

[SURVEY: Four in five child care centers in the U.S. are understaffed](#)

National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2021

[The Child Care for Working Families Act Will Boost Employment and Create Jobs](#)

Center for American Progress, 2017

[The Limitations of Using Market Rates for Setting Child Care Subsidy Rates](#)

Bipartisan Policy Center, 2020

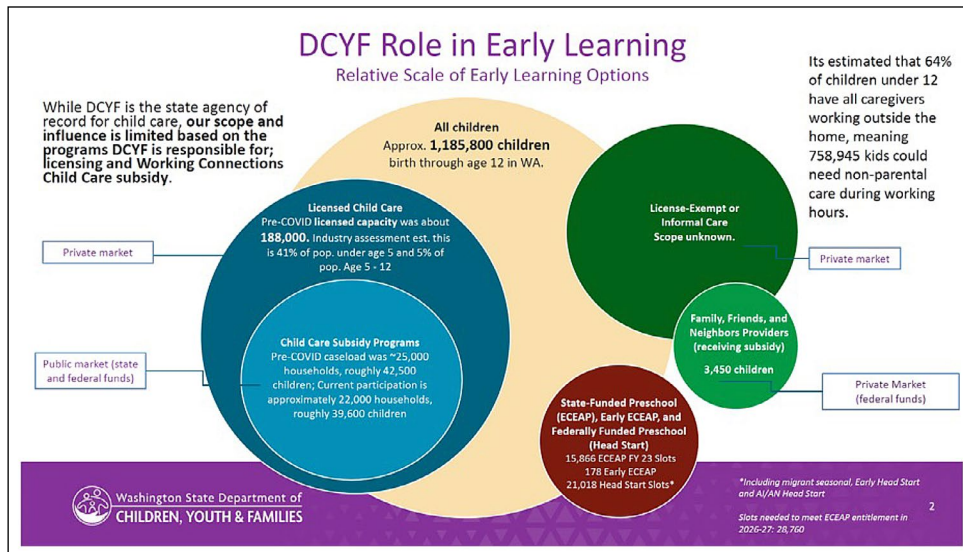
[Washington State Early Learning & Care: Where Historic Underinvestment Meets National Health Crisis](#)

Washington STEM

Appendix

Quick glance at the scope of early learning in Washington state:

Below is a snapshot of the breakdown of 2022 grant allocations by both provider type and funding type courtesy of [DCYF's Stabilization Grant Fast Facts report](#):



- Looking ahead, the child care subsidy co-pay cap will increase to \$165 in 2023, and the household income eligibility will increase to 75% of the state's median income in 2025.
- The approximate capacity for licensed child care sits at 188,000 children.
- WCCC has a caseload of approximately 26,400.
- Transitional Kindergarten served approximately 3,140 children in the 2021-22 school year.
- Developmental Preschool served approximately 9,565 children in the 2021-22 school year.
- ECEAP includes 15,866 slots for the 2022-23 school year. (178 slots are Early ECEAP)
- Slot availability ranges from part-day, school-day, and working-day. The majority of which sit at part-day availability (8,874 slots).

LEAP

LEGISLATOR EDUCATION & ACTION PROJECT



CHILDREN'S
campaign fund
ACTION

AWB  INSTITUTE

A Partnership of Association of Washington Business
and Children's Campaign Fund Action