



Why Do Child Care Programs Need Financial Relief?

Washington’s child care system, like the national child care system, was in crisis long before the coronavirus pandemic. Child care supply did not meet demand and child care professionals did not earn living wages. The pandemic has significantly weakened child care by reducing supply even further and shrinking provider income.

The Washington State Department of Commerce found that the difficulty working families experience in finding affordable, quality child care results in the annual loss of:

- 133,360 potential workers from the economy
- \$14.7 billion in personal earnings for WA workers
- \$34.8 billion in goods & services
- \$1.03 billion in state revenue

Governor Inslee deemed child care providers “essential” at the beginning of the pandemic, yet most are working without healthcare insurance and without enough personal protective equipment (PPE). Public health guidance regarding group sizes, PPE and sanitation have significantly increased the cost of providing care, and providers frequently have trouble finding the essential supplies, like soap and bleach, they need to operate safely.

Currently, investments in child care make up less than 1% of WA’s operating budget, despite the fact that child care is both an essential workforce support and a key part of early learning for most young children. If child care businesses do not receive financial support immediately, a critical mass will close permanently, making it even harder for families to find the care they need to keep working.



Up to 24% of programs have had to close, some permanently



Nearly 30% of child care professionals laid off/ furloughed



Providers have seen an average 41% reduction in enrollment



Over 40% of WA’s child care programs are at risk of permanent closure



Reduced child care supply means fewer parents can work. This will devastate Washington’s economic recovery.

Child Care Aware of Washington calls on the legislature to prevent further damage to Washington’s economy, employers, families and children by providing more financial support for child care businesses and:

- 1 Extend affordable health care coverage to Washington’s child care educators
- 2 Provide financial relief to child care businesses so they can stay open
- 3 Supply child care businesses with PPE
- 4 Protect all existing funding streams for child care