



Invest in Child Care for Economic Recovery

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

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

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



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



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



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



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

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

Protect existing investments in WA’s child care system

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

Increase support for low-income families

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

Re-invest in child care recruitment & retention services

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

Increase support for child care small businesses

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

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

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

Note:

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