



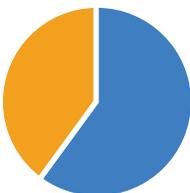
Child Care Aware of WA

Invest in Working Connections Child Care

Child care educators are our most important educators.

“As child care now plays an essential role in children’s early learning and development, it also has a critical impact on the current workforce (many of whom are parents) and on businesses (which employ parents).”¹

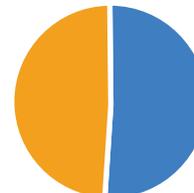
However, Washington’s investment in child care does not reflect this reality.



60% of WA children under age 6 live in homes where all adults work



Child care educators rank in the third percentile for wages, earning less than pet groomers



Child care for an infant in a center consumes more than 51% of the median income for a single mother in WA

With 60% of our state’s children needing child care every day, child care has become the place where most children receive early learning. WA’s child care programs must be high-quality in order to ensure that children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. Eighty-five percent of human brain growth happens during the first three years of life, yet infant care is almost impossible to find and afford. WA families are now paying, on average, more for child care than they are for a year of tuition at state colleges!

How did we get here?

We got here because of a lack of investment in our state’s most important education system – the early learning system. Currently, WA spends 98.15% of our 0-18 education dollars on K-12, 1.06% on state-funded pre-school and just 0.79% on child care and birth to 3 programs, where the return on investment is highest. High-quality child care has proven to:

- Increase graduation rates and adult wages
- Reduce special education costs, teen pregnancy and juvenile crime
- Increase workplace productivity for working parents



WA’s Birth - K12 Education Spending²

Currently WCCC rates are on average 20% less statewide than the private market rate, and are even worse when compared to the cost of providing quality care, which means the state is *underfunding* child care programs that accept children on subsidy. Increasing Working Connections Child Care reimbursement rates will ensure that child care businesses that serve low income, working families can provide the quality care that delivers improved outcomes for children.

Child Care Aware of WA calls on the Legislature and Governor to invest \$32 million into Working Connections Child Care, and prioritize the rates that are farthest from their market rate.

Notes:

1. Katharine Stevens “Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: the Business Case for High-Quality Childcare,” U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017
 2. Katharine Stevens, American Enterprise Institute, Presentation to WA State Early Learning and Human Services Committee, 1/9/18. Data from NASBO State Expenditure Report 2015-17 (<https://www.nasbo.org/mainsite/reports-data/state-expenditure-report>), NIEER’s State Preschool Yearbook 2016 (<http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/yearbook2016>), and ACF 2015 CCDF expenditures report (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/fy-2015-ccdf-table-4a>). Childcare total includes expenditures for children from birth to age 13.