

Washington's child care and early learning system is a key part of our state's economy. Washington employers need reliable employees, many of whom are parents. Our child care system allows parents to work and build stable financial futures for their families while laying a strong foundation for the future success of Washington's children.

Thank you for being a voice for high-quality child care and early learning opportunities for all families and employers that need access to child care.

### Why should Washington's business community care about child care?

Washington's businesses need a high-quality workforce. They need talent now and in the future. Businesses thrive when the economy thrives. High-quality child care and early learning delivers all three.

- It allows parents to work and become reliable employees.
- It helps grow our economy by stabilizing and increasing the incomes of all working parents, and by contributing to local economies via their own small business hiring and spending.
- It helps build the workforce of the future by helping young children develop the skills and abilities they need to be successful.



### What is the state of child care and early learning in Washington?

Washington's child care and early learning system is improving the quality of child care through our state's quality rating and improvement framework, called Early Achievers. Early Achievers has brought much support and accountability to child care programs to help improve their practices. Early Achievers has asked a lot of our state's providers and they have stepped up time and again.

At the same time, child care programs, which have been under financial strain for years, are facing even leaner times with the recent minimum wage increase, and the recent state budget cuts to Early Achievers. The minimum wage increase was not tied to the reimbursement rates providers receive for caring for children on Washington's child care assistance program, Working Connections Child Care. This evaporated the thin margins child care programs relied on. Many face closure in the coming months.

Fewer child care programs:

- Shrinks supply
- Reduces parent choice
- Leads to wait lists
- Causes employment difficulties for parents and workforce shortages for employers

### What You Can Do

Become aware of the importance of child care to our state's economy. Next, you can:

- Connect with your legislative representatives in Olympia and tell them you support increased state investment in Working Connections Child Care and Early Achievers.
- Meet with local child care providers and find out what they need to keep their doors open. We can help connect you with providers in your area. Contact us at (866) 416-4321
- Write a letter to the editor or an Op-Ed in your local newspaper about the importance of child care to Washington's economy and to your bottom line. We can help. Visit us online for more information: <http://wa.childcareaware.org/advocacy>.