

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION
STATE OF THE
CHILDREN
ECONOMIC IMPACT



Kittitas and Yakima Counties

23,459
CHILDREN UNDER SIX



70%
HAVE ALL PARENTS
IN THE WORKFORCE

71%
DO NOT HAVE ACCESS
TO EARLY LEARNING

58%
IN LOW-INCOME
HOUSEHOLDS

41%
KINDERGARTEN
READY

AFFORDABILITY OF CHILD CARE
PERCENT OF INCOME PAID

Child care costs place a tremendous burden on families, impacting work time, productivity, and long-term career outcomes and opportunities. The average income of a family of four in our region is \$123,110. The typical cost of child care for a family with one infant and one preschooler in center-based care is \$26,010, 21% of their average annual income.

**A FAMILY OF FOUR WOULD PAY 21% OF
THEIR INCOME FOR TWO CHILDREN IN
CHILD CARE.**

THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE STATES
CHILD CARE SHOULD COST NO MORE THAN 7% OF INCOME.

PRICE BY AGE GROUP

\$14,178

INFANTS:
<1 YR

\$12,600

TODDLERS:
1 - 2 YRS

\$11,832

PRESCHOOLERS:
3 - 5 YRS

\$5,688

SCHOOL-AGE:
6 - 12 YRS

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS: WHAT'S THE COST?

There is a big difference between the annual cost of providing high-quality child care, state-provided child care subsidies, and what families can afford. Many child care programs subsidize this difference with low salaries and other cuts that hurt their workforce and bottom line.



**ESTIMATED REGIONAL
IMPACT TO EMPLOYERS**

\$140M annual cost employers incur
due to lack of child care.

9,608 workers with children under
six years old **quit** a job due to child care
issues.

6,672 workers with children under
six years old **fired** from work due to child
care issues.

**PERCENT OF CHILDREN WITH
ACCESS TO CHILD CARE**

14% INFANTS:
<1 YR

20% TODDLERS:
1 - 2 YRS

41% PRESCHOOLERS:
3 - 5 YRS

9% SCHOOL-AGE:
6 - 12 YRS

GROWING THE WORKFORCE

1,483 MORE EARLY
EDUCATORS NEEDED
TO INCREASE ACCESS

*According to the 2022 Department of Commerce Cost of
Quality Report.

WHAT BUSINESSES SHOULD KNOW

\$1 \Rightarrow \$3

Invest & Return

Every dollar invested in early childhood development yields a 3X return to the community.



Invest

Each low-income preschool age child in our region needs an investment of ~\$25k per year, over 3 years, in order to receive high-quality early care and education.



Develop

By ensuring the development of the most critical skills in early childhood, children begin school ready to succeed.



Sustain

Strong K-12 and higher education systems and jobs that pay a family wage build on our investments.



GAIN \$225K

Per-child return on investment, students and communities see increased wages; less need for supplemental services; and healthier, more robust local economies.



WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO:

SUPPORT EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO CHILD CARE AND RELATED BENEFITS

- Lower cost options can include informing employees of child care subsidies; connecting employees with child care resource and referral networks; implementing “bring your infant to work”; and other family friendly policies.
- Higher cost options can include providing backup child care; contracting with nearby child care programs; and offering child care vouchers or tuition payments.
- Learn more about [Family Friendly Workplace](#) policies from the Department of Commerce.

CHAMPION POLICIES THAT INCREASE ACCESS FOR ALL WASHINGTON FAMILIES

- Join the conversation! Local [Early Learning Coalitions](#) and [STEM Networks](#) are creating child care access plans. Join them and shape the future of child care in your community. See contact information below.
- Talk to [your legislators](#) about how the lack of affordable child care has impacted you, your employees, and business. Let them know why this issue is important to you and that you want them to act.
- Join Washington STEM as a [Child Care Champion](#). Connect with us, business leaders, and employers across the state to learn more about the issues and solutions, and how to advocate for change.

WHAT IS THE BOTTOM LINE?

Employers have an important opportunity to invest in their workforce by becoming family friendly workplaces. They also have a role in championing policies that increase access to child care for all Washington families. These investments will yield returns for children, families, and businesses. And they are the right thing to do!

LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED.

- Email employerta@commerce.wa.gov to learn more about Department of Commerce Family Friendly Workplace Technical Assistance Program and receive updates.
- Visit the Washington STEM Child Care Champions webpage using the link or QR code: <https://bit.ly/3XTzE5B>.
- Contact your STEM Network Director: Mark Cheney, South Central Washington STEM, Mark.Cheney@esd105.org.
- Contact your Early Learning Coalition Lead: Lindsay Boswell, Investing In Children Coalition, lindsayb@yakimavalleycf.org.



South Central Washington STEM
Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics