

CHILD CARE IMPACTS MONTANA'S ECONOMY & WORKFORCE

While businesses struggle to recruit and retain employees, hardworking parents often cannot find care for their young ones, resulting in missed days at work and increased financial stress. Addressing child care problems cannot be solved alone, which is why a comprehensive understanding of impacts on employers, parents, and providers is necessary to identifying solutions that work for Montana.



MONTANA'S ECONOMY & EMPLOYERS



40%

of Montana businesses have difficulty finding and retaining a qualified workforce due to a lack of child care



30%

of Montana businesses say inadequate child care has prevented their company from growing



\$907 MILLION

total economic burden of inadequate child care in Montana from 2019-2028

PARENTS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN



ONLY 44%

of Montana children under age six with working parents can be served by current licensed child care capacity



62%

of parents say they missed time from work because of a child care related problem



88%

of Montana parents spend more than 7% of their household income on child care

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS



\$10.99

average hourly wage of child care providers in Montana, many do not receive any additional benefits



25%

of early educators in Montana live at or below the poverty line, which is almost double the rate compared to other workers



60%

of Montana counties are considered child care deserts, where less than a third of demand is being met

MONTANA PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD CARE

"It is a common refrain to hear about local service businesses (restaurants, grocery store, etc.) who can't stay staffed during peak child care hours, and families moving out of Fallon County because of the lack of child care. The problem has especially hit our local hospital and schools hard, because recruiting qualified teachers or medical personnel becomes an almost insurmountable task when there is no available, affordable child care."

- Vaughn Z., Eastern Montana Economic Development Authority, Fallon County

"A lack of affordable high quality child care is impacting our businesses immediately by reducing the availability and predictability of our workforce. An even greater toll will be realized in 10-20 years when Montana's children are set out to compete in the world and they are behind their peers. On the other hand, wise investments now can help businesses today and ensure that Montana has the best workforce in the world for generations."

- Grant K., President & CEO, Missoula Economic Partnership

"In Mineral County, child care is a complex problem to solve. It's not just that we don't have enough high-quality care, but also that when we do have new child care facilities open, they often are not able to sustain their business. With many of our families working non-traditional hours and not knowing if a facility will stay open long term, we run into a lot of families not utilizing what we do have. In order to improve the child care system, we first need understand what families really need and identify solutions to improve the current patch-work system we have. We need to build a system that can actually meet the needs of children, families, and our community."

- Jessica S., Mineral County Health Department

"Each child is our future. Being able to provide a safe, nurturing place for them to learn and grow is crucial. When a parent can trust that their child is provided with this care, it makes it possible for them to provide for their own families. Every parent deserves to go to work without worrying if they can access or afford child care. Being able to come together as a community and continue to support our parents and child care providers is pivotal to each child's success!"

- Callie P., Family Engagement Coordinator, Butte 4-C's

"Several employers in critical industries have expressed the need for safe, vetted and, most importantly, affordable child care options in the City of Great Falls. Employers have also expressed frustration with having good candidates applying and interviewing, but not being able to accept offers of employment due to the lack of child care in non-standard hours. That is applicable to many in the professional services industry, as well as healthcare and emergency services. We are currently involved in an initiative to develop a cooperative model child care in downtown Great Falls to serve the business community's interests in this sector of the city, so those employers would be able to offer free child care as a part of their benefits packages."

- Scott W., Director of Workforce Education Coalition and Development, Great Falls Chamber



COMMITTED TO SOLUTIONS.

We are committed to innovative solutions that work for Montana. Across the state, we partner with organizations from the public and private sector to advance our collective goal to see the best outcomes possible for businesses, communities, and families. We are here to serve as a resource for employers, communities, and policy makers as we all work together to address gaps in the early childhood system.

Our promise is to stabilize, innovate, and build the early childhood system so Montana families and communities can thrive.