



We strengthen communities

CHILD CARE COLLABORATIVE TASK FORCE | JULY 2020 WASHINGTON STATE CHILD CARE INDUSTRY ASSESSMENT

Child Care Industry Assessment Fact Sheet

The Child Care Collaborative Task Force was established in 2018 to recommend policies to enable the child care system to better meet the needs of families, employers and child care providers in Washington State. In its [initial report](#), the task force developed a broad vision for child care in Washington. In 2020 the Department of Commerce, acting on behalf of the task force, commissioned ICF to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the child care industry. The July 2020 [industry assessment report](#) described Washington's child care supply and demand; shared families' perspectives about their child care needs and preferences; a literature review; and an analysis of the economic and fiscal impacts of child care inaccessibility.

Key Findings

- Although 61% of young children live in households where all parents work, our state has licensed child care capacity for only 41% of young children and 5% of school-age children.
- Before the pandemic, over half a million children in Washington did not have access to licensed child care.
- Inaccessible, unaffordable child care affects parents' job prospects, productivity and career decisions—with impacts varying by income, race/ethnicity, gender and location.
- Nearly one in five (18.3%) parents surveyed turned down a job offer or promotion due to child care issues, more often among Black and Native American parents.
- Nearly half (47%) of unemployed parents found child care issues a barrier to seeking employment—51% among female job-seekers compared to 41% among male job-seekers.

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"The COVID-19 pandemic has added stress and uncertainty to what the industry assessment revealed was already a fragile child care system."

*Task Force Tri-Chair Ryan Pricco,
Child Care Aware of Washington*

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Access is a Challenge

Industry assessment findings revealed barriers to accessing child care that are more pronounced depending on race/ethnicity, income and geography. Washington has licensed child care capacity of approximately 188,000 spaces to serve about 740,000 children under 13 whose parents work.

- 15 counties in Washington are considered a child care desert.
- Washington parents use multiple, part-time child care arrangements.
- 40% of children who use child care spend time in 2 or more child care arrangements.
- An estimated 96,000 children under 5 use informal, non-parental caregivers.
- Nearly 1 in 4 parents seek care outside traditional daytime hours.

Affordability is a Challenge

Affording tuition costs was reported as the greatest barrier to accessing child care. Median-income families seeking full-time child care would need to pay more than the federally recommended 7% of household income to cover median child care tuition. For families in highest-cost counties with an infant and a preschooler, 35% of two-parent household income and 150% of a single parent's income is used to pay tuition.

36% of parents reported they had experienced financial hardship due to child care issues.

Achieving Equitable Racial Outcomes

Research underpinning the industry assessment report depicts an alarming trend where more Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities have less access to quality child care, using the definition of quality outlined in the report. Many BIPOC educators, along with their white peers, receive wages that are low in relation to the life-changing work they do each day. There is an increased urgency to address the history of systemic and structural racism that has impacted children and families. To achieve equitable outcomes, the task force understands the need to remove institutional barriers that keep child care families, and the industry, from achieving equitable outcomes for all children.

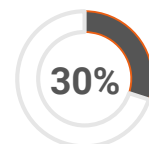
Washington has a Diverse Child Care Workforce



child care educators were in the workforce in 2020



of the child care workforce has a race/ethnicity other than white



of the child care workforce is bilingual or multilingual

Child Care Collaborative Task Force Next Steps

The task force will recommend policies and strategy, timeline, and implementation plan to reach the goal of access to affordable, quality child care for all Washington families by 2025.

