

# KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON STATE OF THE CHILDREN EARLY LEARNING & CARE



King County, Washington

## 151,528

CHILDREN UNDER SIX IN THE REGION



**32,362 (21%)** OF CHILDREN UNDER SIX  
IN LOW-INCOME\* HOUSEHOLDS

**Spanish, Chinese**  
(including Mandarin & Cantonese)

MOST COMMON LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT  
HOME OTHER THAN ENGLISH

**58%** (87,578)

CHILDREN OF COLOR

## CHILD CARE ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY AFFECTS US ALL

Lack of access to **child care costs employers an estimated \$637.2M** due to employee absenteeism, turnover, and lost productivity. **38% of children do not have access to a licensed child care.** For those that do, the average cost of child care for two children is \$39,960, **29% of the average family's income.**

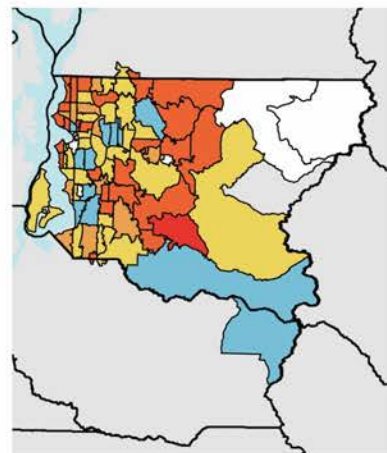
### ECEAP AND HEAD START

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Head Start preschool programs specialize in inclusive and high-quality care for low-income families and children with disabilities. Right now, these critical programs only serve half of the 10,004 children in our region who need them.

**44%**  
(4,397)

OF CHILDREN WHO NEED  
AN ECEAP/HS SLOT HAVE A  
SPACE AVAILABLE TO THEM

### PERCENT OF CHILD CARE DEMAND MET\*\*



- More than 75% need met
- Between 50 - 74% need met
- Between 25 - 49% need met
- Less than 25% need met
- No Child Care
- Not Enough Data

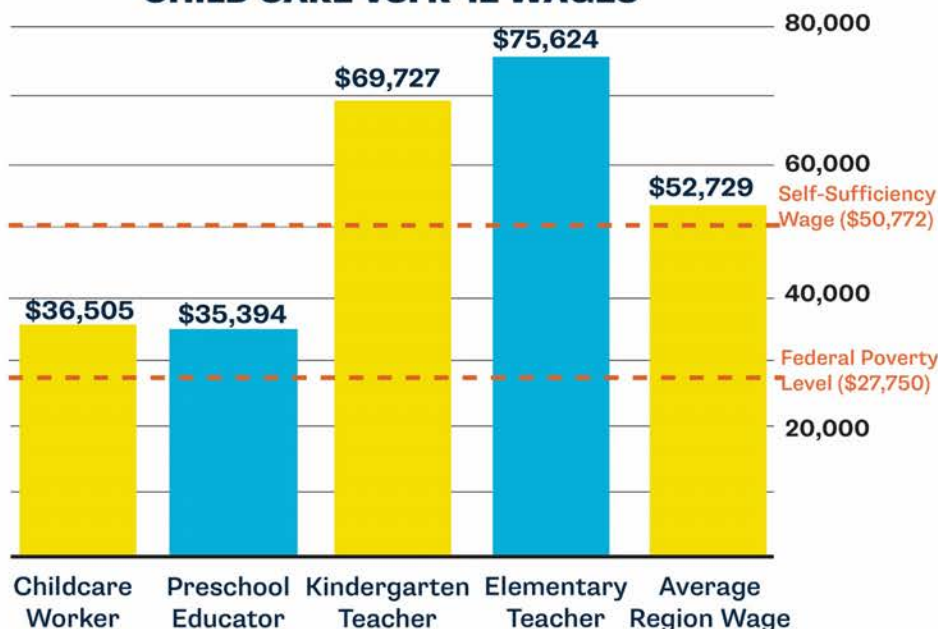
## EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

Our early learning and care system currently depends on **6,851 early learning and child care professionals** in King County, of whom **more than half are people of color** and more than 80% are female. While providing an essential service, most child care providers make near poverty wages and **50% with one dependent would qualify for some form of government assistance.**

\*We define low-income as 200 percent of the federal poverty line, which is \$52,400 for a family of four.

\*\*Visual of 2020 data. Capacity includes Child Care Centers and Family Homes

### CHILD CARE VS. K-12 WAGES





## CHALLENGES TO PROVIDING CARE AND EDUCATION

"When you are an immigrant with my appearance and skin color, we are often seen as an ignorant person with an inability to learn a different culture, language and system. Some people at educational and health institutions made me feel like a financial burden to them. I saw their frustration in dealing with my Spanish language and my daughter's mental and language disabilities. In my Latino community, parents of young children find strength through the community. It educates us about a complex system that is almost inaccessible to many because of an immigration status that limits access. Over time, families, friends and neighbors have established a network using social media to learn about the system, support us in our needs, and generate solutions with the information provided by the participants. We are currently working to motivate and create parent leaders to promote education and self-advocacy among parents, families, caregivers and the community in general." **--Iris Rosas, King County parent**



## CHALLENGES TO ACCESSING CARE AND EDUCATION

"I'm an Asian immigrant with an American husband, decent English, a model minority advantage and a PhD. When we moved here in 2018, we learned that our 1.5-year-old Johnny didn't meet age milestones. It took almost two years to get him correctly diagnosed with autism. Then no child care wanted to enroll Johnny, my 3-year-old sweet boy with significant delays, so I tried to teach him at home. I got us enrolled in a 12-week Stanford study and I saw a dramatic change in his abilities. He was now fully verbal, potty trained and not aggressive, but still no child care would take him with his diagnosis. I had to give up my career to support Johnny, learn the system and talk to many people who dismissed me. Now in kindergarten, Johnny is considered a gifted child with special needs. The CDC says 1 in 44 kids in the US have autism, but families like mine feel invisible. Finding child care is difficult, and even harder for BIPOC or immigrant families with a special needs child. Without my advantages, there are even less options. We just want our kids to be supported." **—Danna Summers, King County parent**

### IMPACT OF THE FAIR START FOR KIDS ACT

Passed in 2021, the Fair Start for Kids Act made historic investments that were intended to accomplish the following:

- Make child care more affordable for low-income families
- Expand early intervention and behavioral health services for young children and caregivers.

While these investments are a good start, the majority of child care providers continue to make near poverty wages, child care deserts persist, and children with disabilities are often unable to access inclusive care. Continued and increased support for our early childhood systems is necessary to create true access and equity for all Washington's children and caregivers.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO GET INVOLVED

For Washington state, time is of the essence. Children, families, and educators need and deserve a fully funded system that supports them. Please join us in advocating with them for:

- Sustained funding for partners like Washington Communities for Children
- Inclusive, accessible, and affordable early care
- Household sustaining wages and professional supports for early care and education providers
- Aligning systems across early learning, K-12, health, and mental health to connect and coordinate supports for families.

For more information contact Alexis Joshua, Coalition Coordinator, [kcelc@childcare.org](mailto:kcelc@childcare.org)