

# SOUTHWEST REGION STATE OF THE CHILDREN ECONOMIC IMPACT



Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Pacific (South), Skamania, and Wahkiakum Counties

**45,998**  
CHILDREN UNDER SIX



**54%**  
HAVE ALL PARENTS  
IN THE WORKFORCE

**39%**  
DO NOT HAVE ACCESS  
TO EARLY LEARNING

**31%**  
IN LOW-INCOME  
HOUSEHOLDS

**48%**  
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. The average income of a family of four in our region is \$114,716. The typical cost of child care for a family with one infant and one preschooler in center-based care is \$26,670, 23% of their income.



A FAMILY OF FOUR WOULD PAY **23%** 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

**\$13,920**  
INFANTS:  
<1 YR

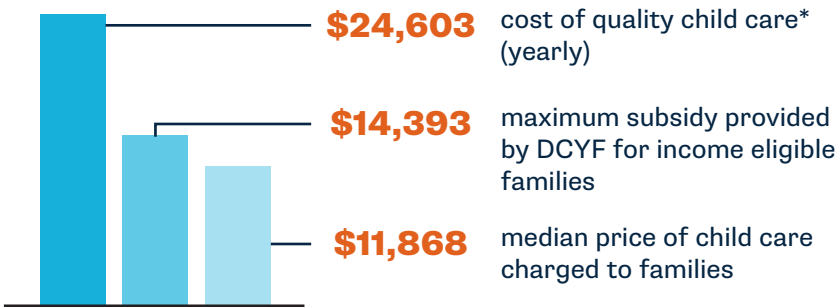
**\$12,408**  
TODDLERS:  
1 - 2 YRS

**\$11,868**  
PRESCHOOLERS:  
3 - 5 YRS

**\$6,912**  
SCHOOL-AGE:  
6 - 12 YRS

## CHILD CARE PROGRAMS AS SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC IMPACT

Estimates show a significant difference between child care costs and the current WCCC subsidy rate, and an even greater gap with what families can pay.



## REGIONAL IMPACT TO EMPLOYERS

**\$169.2M** Annual cost employers incur due to lack of child care.

**5,200** Workers with children under six years old quit a job due to child care issues.

**2,600** Workers with children under six years old fired from work due to child care issues.

## PERCENT OF CHILDREN WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE\*



## GROWING THE WORKFORCE

**2,633**

MORE EARLY  
EDUCATORS  
NEEDED TO  
MEET DEMAND

\*Quality Care defined here as participation in the WA STATE Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System.

# WHAT BUSINESSES SHOULD KNOW

**\$1 ⇒ \$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 \$220K

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 and business leaders and employers across the state to learn more about the issues, 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 State families. These investments will yield returns for children, families, and businesses. And they are the right thing to do!

## RESOURCES

- Email [employerta@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:employerta@commerce.wa.gov) to learn more about Department of Commerce Family Friendly Workplace Technical Assistance Program and updates.
- Learn more about early childhood data at <https://bit.ly/45SmE48>.



### For more information and to get involved contact:

- STEM Network Director: Vickei Hrdina, Career Connect Southwest, [vickei.hrdina@esd112.org](mailto:vickei.hrdina@esd112.org)
- Early Learning Coalition Lead: Debbie Ham, Southwest Washington Early Learning Coalition (SWEL), [debbie.ham@selfwa.org](mailto:debbie.ham@selfwa.org)