

CHILD CARE & THE WORKFORCE

A lack of access to child care has a significant impact on Montana's economy, affecting hardworking parents and employers alike. Investments in child care result in increased economic stability for Montana's families and small businesses.



IMPACT ON MONTANA'S WORKFORCE & ECONOMY

Parents, businesses, and children are all impacted when access to quality, affordable child care is limited. Plus, quality early care and education helps children today become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.



40%

of Montana businesses say they are unable to find and retain a qualified workforce because of a lack of child care.¹



70,000 PARENTS

are not in the labor force, working part time instead of full time, or working less hours because they lack child care.²



30%

of Montana businesses say inadequate child care has prevented their company from growing.¹



ROUGHLY \$9,000

a year is the average cost parents are paying for care per child. Some households pay \$15,000 per year.²



62%

of parents say they missed time from work because of a child care related problem.³



\$907 MILLION

total economic burden of inadequate child care in Montana from 2019 to 2028.³



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

"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

"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 to 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

"Providing reliable and excellent care for the future workforce helps address our challenge on multiple fronts. In order to do so, we need to collaborate as communities to ensure we have a professional and economically thriving early childhood development and educational industry supported by employers."

- Karen B., St. John's United, Yellowstone County

"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 health care 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 MONTANA'S FUTURE.

Zero to Five Montana is 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 policymakers 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.