



 **ZEROTOFIVE**
MONTANA

CHILD CARE & THE WORKFORCE

June 2024

Parents, businesses, and children are all impacted when access to quality, affordable child care is limited.

Quality early care and education experiences help children today become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow.

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

- **40%** of Montana businesses say they are unable to find and retain a qualified workforce because of a lack of child care. [i]
- **66,000** parents are not fully participating in the labor force, working part-time instead of full-time, or working less hours because they lack child care. [ii]
- **30%** of Montana businesses say inadequate child care has prevented their company from growing. [iii]
- **\$11,700** a year is the average cost Montana parents are paying for care per child. Some households pay over \$18,000 per year. [iv]
- In 2023, child care expenses accounted for an average of **28%** of a family's household income. [v]
- **62%** of parents say they missed time from work because of a child care related problem. [vi]
- **\$907 million** is the total economic burden of inadequate child care in Montana from 2019 – 2028. [vii]

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.



Citations

[i] [iii] Watson, A. & Montana Dept. of Labor & Industry. (2024). Childcare and the Montana workforce. <https://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/2025-Biennium/MARA/DLI-Childcare-and-the-Montana-Workforce-Jan2024.pdf>

[ii] [v] Watson, A. (2024a). Child Care Deserts: An Analysis of Child Care Supply and Demand Gaps in Montana. Educational Researcher. https://lmi.mt.gov/_docs/Publications/LMI-Pubs/Special-Reports-and-Studies/ChildCareDesertsWhitePaper-FINAL.pdf

[iv] Watson, A. (2024b). Child Care in Montana. Montana Department of Labor and Industry. https://lmi.mt.gov/_docs/Publications/EAG-Articles/EAG-0324_Final.pdf

[vi] Jensen, C. (2022, January 4). Montanans struggle to access affordable child care | Montana Business Quarterly. Montana Business Quarterly. <https://www.montanabusinessquarterly.com/montanans-struggle-to-access-affordable-child-care/#:~:text=62%25%20of%20Montana%20parents%20missed,due%20to%20inadequate%20child%20care>

[vii] Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana—Missoula, Dillon, T., Baldrige, J., Sonora, R., Grunewald, R., Halvorson, S., Shelby, V., & Decker, G. (2020). The impacts of inadequate child care on Montana's families, employers and economy [Report]. <http://www.bber.umt.edu/pubs/health/ChildCare2020.pdf>