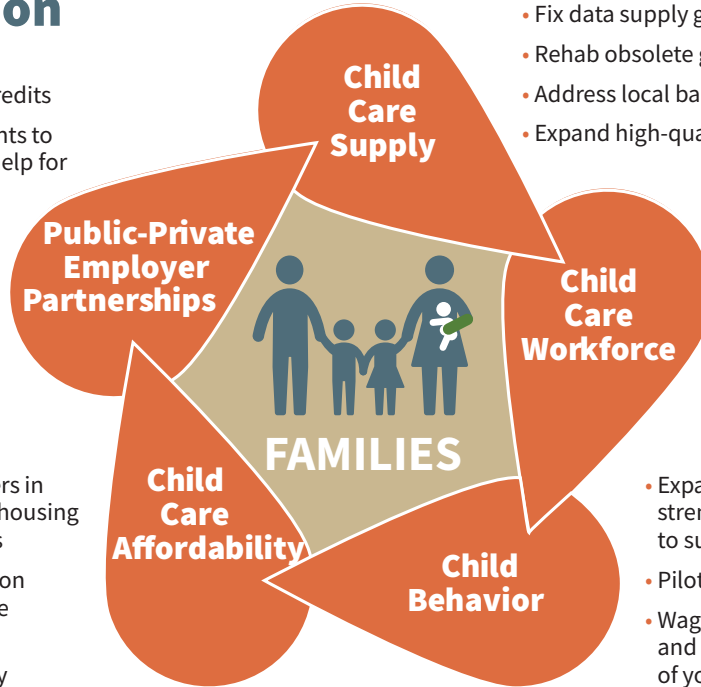


UTAH Childcare Solutions and Workplace Productivity A 5-POINT PLAN

Strategies for Consideration

- Employer child care tax credits
- Matching partnership grants to employers for child care help for employees
- Local Childcare Solution Funds matched by the state (Iowa model)

- Co-locate child care centers in multi-family, low income housing tax credit (LIHTC) projects
- Conduct parent information campaign about child care subsidy availability
- Increase subsidy eligibility



- Fix data supply gaps
- Rehab obsolete government buildings
- Address local barriers
- Expand high-quality preschool

- Early childhood workforce refundable tax credit based on certifications & education
- Recruitment & retention subsidy payments for workforce with young children
- Child care substitute pool pilot

- Expand evidence-based models to strengthen effective teacher interactions to support children
- Pilot models from other states
- Wage parent campaigns to reduce phone and tablet use that affects development of young children

WHO NEEDS CHILD CARE?

Percent of Mothers in Utah who Work



68.8%

with children under six

63.1%

with children under six and school-age children

75.6%

with school-age children

Utah Families

Among 2-parent households working full-time

66%

said they **needed two incomes** to cover household expenses

74%

with children under six said they **needed two incomes** to cover household expenses



24%

said **both parents** desired a full-time career



FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE

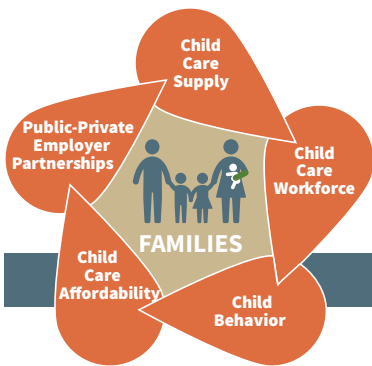


The federal supplemental child care funding has expired

Other options include:

- Unobligated TANF funds could be invested in child care strategies.
- Utilize unobligated U.S. Treasury Federal State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funding (SLFRF), which must be obligated (by contract or MOU) by December 31, 2024. States then have 2 additional years to spend the money.
- Review current programs to prioritize higher category needs.
- Supplement child care funding with state funds.

In 2023, the Utah Legislature approved a recommendation by the Women in the Economy Subcommittee to fund a Childcare Solutions and Workplace Productivity Plan. The goal was to use the most current data and key stakeholder feedback to better understand and address the needs of working parents. The Childcare Solutions and Workplace Productivity Plan includes 33 recommendations for consideration. They are based on data and expenditure analysis, reports from 12 focus groups (conducted between July and October 2024), 85 conversations among key stakeholders (conducted between June and September 2024), and guidance from the Women in the Economy Subcommittee.



Utah Childcare Solutions and Workplace Productivity

A 5-POINT PLAN

Topics to Consider

Child Care Supply

- Licensed settings meet only about 21% of the child care need for children birth–13.
- Licensed and license-exempt settings meet only about 36% of the child care need for children birth–13.
- Data gaps hinder assessments of child care capacity for children under age six.
- Local ordinances impose restrictions that undermine state child care law for family child care homes.
- **Parents prefer licensed care because they equate it with safety. But there is a shortage of licensed care throughout communities. Some counties have none.**
- 49% of low-income parents of children under six work at least some nontraditional hours, when few child care providers are open.



Child Care Workforce

- **The median wage for child care workers in Utah is \$14.61 per hour. Jobs at McDonalds, Staples, Walmart, Kroger, etc. pay more.**
- Recruitment and retention of child care staff is a challenge.
- Turnover is high, undermining training strategies
- Nearly one-third of child care workers work two jobs to make ends meet.

Child Behavior

- **Child behavior challenges, along with workforce recruitment and retention, were the top two issues for child care provider focus groups.**
- The intensity, breadth, and depth of child behaviors has changed drastically since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Young children frequently hit, kick, throw chairs, and melt down on the floor. They often don't know how to get along with peers, listen, or follow directions.
- Focus groups felt that the use of social media in a phone-based generation could be impacting child development. Stressed parents may give a child a phone or tablet to entertain them; parents may be distracted by phones instead of interacting with children.

Child Care Affordability

- **Child care is not affordable.**
- Center-based care for one infant is 14.9% of state median income for a three-person family; 13.2% for a 4-person family.
- Center-based care for two children (an infant and a preschooler) is 25.9% of state median income for a 3-person family; 22.8% for a 4-person family.
- Many focus group families said they didn't know about the state child care subsidy program.
- Head Start has long waiting lists.

Public-Private Employer Partnerships

- **There is growing understanding that recruiting and retaining mothers in the workforce relies on child care.**
- More than half of Utah employers, in local surveys, said they would be likely to utilize a tax credit for child care expenses.
- More than two-thirds of Utah employers in local surveys said they would be likely to offer financial assistance for child care if there were a state match.