



**Advocacy for Child Care
The Washington Experience
10/28/19**



Child Care: The Broken Market

- **61% of WA's young children live in households where all available parents are currently working**
 - Approximately 300k children under the age of 6 need child care
 - State has a total licensed capacity for 175,000 children
- **The annual cost of one infant in a WA licensed center is more than the annual cost of tuition at WA's public universities**
 - 51.5% of a single parent's income is spent on one infant in a center;
 - 99.5% of a married family's income at the poverty line for two children
- **The median wage in 2017 for WA's child care workers ranked in the 3rd percentile of all occupational wages**
 - Child care lead teachers turnover at over a 40% rate

Early Learning Action Alliance



- **Coalition of dozens of organizations statewide that advocate for expanded access to high quality early learning opportunities**
- **All major players in the field are part of the coalition: SEIU, Washington Child Care Center Association, Association of ECEAP and Head Start programs, MomsRising, etc.**
- **Formed from a recognition that we would only move the field forward with a united, streamlined front**

ELAA achievements

- **ECEAP entitlement**
- **Early Start Act**
- **Paid Family Leave**
- **Compensation Technical Work Group**
- **Child Care Collaborative Task Force**
- **WA CAN Act**





Next Steps for ELAA

- **Access**

- Despite demand for child care being at its peak, we continue to lose programs
- We need to invest into facilities and business operations support, like we do for the rest of the education continuum.

- **Affordability**

- Child care for an infant in WA takes up 55% of the millennial median income
- Child care for an infant and a 4 year old takes up 96% of the millennial median income

- **Workforce**

- Child care educators in WA make less than pet groomers and parking lot attendants
- Massive turnover results in the loss of programs and reduced quality

Business Leaders as Messengers for Early Childhood

- In 2017, we received the tool we needed:
 - [Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The Business Case for High Quality Child Care](#)

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- Katharine Stevens, American Enterprise Institute

- **Key takeaways:**

- The US is experiencing a massive shortage of skilled workers, and the skills that are needed for the jobs of the future are skills that are developed in the earliest years.
- We spend more money on education than any other nation in the world, but hardly any of it is spent on the most important part of the education continuum: the first five years.
- An unprecedented amount of mothers now need to be in the workforce, resulting in most children spending most of their brain development time in child care.
- Researchers are finding that accessing quality child care is the biggest barrier to entering and staying in the workforce, limiting economic growth.





Business Engagement Has Yielded Results

- **HB 2367: Establishing the Child Care Collaborative Task Force**
 - Created an employer-heavy task force that would develop recommendations for how to incentivize businesses to support their employees' child care needs
 - Asks the task force to consider ideas like on-site child care, baby at work policies, and more
 - Asks the task force to conduct research on gaps in the child care industry
 - Task force includes Association of Washington Business (State Chamber), the WA Business Roundtable, and smaller employers who have started to address this issue
- **HB 1344: The WA Childcare Access Now (CAN) Act**
 - Put out a vision for WA's children, families, and child care educators by 2025:
 - Capped child care expenses for families
 - Compensation on par with kindergarten teachers for educators
 - Increased school readiness for kids
 - Re-vamped task force will develop reforms and funding streams (public/private partnership)



Opportunities Ahead

- **Expansion of our business engagement**
 - Employer toolkit: <https://childcareawarewa.org/employers/>
 - Empowering child care providers to leverage their existence as small business owners
 - Industry's revenues and collections are on par with waste management and advertising
 - Industry provides better economic growth to communities than transportation, construction, manufacturing, and retail
- **Philanthropic interest**
 - Retired politicians are partnering with the Gates and Ballmer Foundations to develop a robust early childhood education plan
 - Bezos Foundation wants to prioritize high quality child care
 - No Small Matter: <https://www.nosmallmatter.com/>
- **1344 Task Force**
 - Finalize research
 - Develop necessary state policy reforms
 - Develop proposed funding streams
 - Advocate for it!



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