

Executive Summary

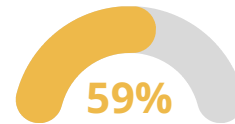
The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, composed of prospective and current child care providers, economic development professionals, policymakers, family representatives, and others, has been working to engage the community to better understand child care challenges facing the region and identify solutions.

Some of the key challenges identified through this work include:

The Care Families Need Is Not Available

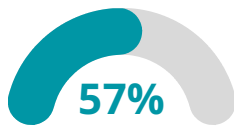
1 to 8

There is one licensed child care slot for every eight children under the age of five.



Approximately three out of five families surveyed said they did not have access to child care that meets their needs. This rate was higher for families making less than \$100,000 a year and nonwhite respondents.

Child Care Is Unaffordable for Families



More than half of families surveyed reported cost as a barrier for finding care.

1st in the state

This region has the most expensive child care in the state, on average, with costs for center-based care for infants and toddlers being approximately \$14,000 a year.

Providers Face Challenges Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Staff

< \$12.50

The average child care worker's wage in the region is less than \$12.50 an hour.

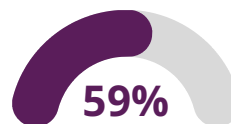
\$39-\$42

The hourly wage considered livable for a household with one adult and one child in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties—more than three times the average hourly rate for child care workers.

Child Care Is Negatively Impacting Area Employers

\$2.8 billion

The economic impact of the lack of child care in Michigan.



A majority of employers surveyed reported the lack of adequate child care for their employees having a negative impact on their business.

Many of these are driven by root causes, such as **market failure and underinvestment**, a **challenging regulatory and business environment for providers**, and a **lack of community coordination and engagement**. The coalition, informed by their community engagement efforts, identified the following action areas and objectives:

Promoting Equitable and Adequate Funding for Child Care to Encourage an Increase in Licensed Child Care Slots

- **Advocate for state-level reform related to child care funding**
- **Bring together local funding partners to support child care providers and families**

Market failure and underinvestment have resulted in an overreliance on family contributions to cover provider costs. However, despite the high rates being charged to families, relying on family contributions alone is not sufficient to adequately pay employees and be sustainable as a business or nonprofit. Immediate and long-term funding are needed to expand the number of available child care slots in the region.

Advocating for Local Policies to Make It Easier for Providers to Open and Expand Programs

- **Advocate for local governments to adopt the coalition's regional action plan and recognize child care as a pressing economic crisis**
- **Advocate for local policy change related to zoning and development**

While working toward long-term structural change, certain short- and medium-term policy changes can promote a friendlier environment for child care providers. These policies will not only improve the current environment, but also better position the region for future investment.

Providing Resources and Supports to Enable Child Care Providers to Thrive as Businesses

- **Develop a regional resource hub to support child care providers**
- **Connect providers with training institutions to address staff capacity issues**

Resources and partnerships can help providers address business-related challenges. Making these resources more accessible and tailored to child care providers can help current providers maintain or expand operations and help new providers establish new centers.

Supporting the Child Care Workforce Through Expanded Training and Increased Resources

- **Increase visibility and public funding for area training programs to increase the number of child care workers**
- **Support expanded resources and partnerships to improve the salaries and benefits provided to child care workers**

Staffing shortages prevent potential child care providers from opening programs and current providers from operating at their full capacity. Increasing training resources, salaries, and benefits will increase satisfaction among current child care workers and encourage prospective workers to see the field as a viable career.

Empowering Area Employers to Be Child Care Champions

- **Develop a certification to recognize area employers that are child care friendly**
- **Foster connections between local employers and child care providers**

Engaging employers is essential to approaching this issue as a critical economic development initiative. Empowering employers to support their employees will position the region as a leader in preventing employees from leaving the workforce due to not having child care that meets their needs.

Fostering an Informed and Engaged Community That Is Ready to Take Action to Support the Child Care Field

- **Develop visionary shared language for increased and improved messaging and outreach**

Having policymakers, businesses, and community members understand the impact of child care—even if they have not personally had to interact with the child care system—is necessary to ensuring the coalition's advocacy efforts are successful.