

# Child Care for Utah's Future:

## *A Call to Action for Elected Officials*

**The undersigned community leaders urge the Utah State Legislature to take bold action on proposals that invest more dollars into Utah's early education and childcare infrastructure.**

Investing in a robust, high-quality childcare system and creating in-state infrastructure, is one of the best investments we can make for our children, and our state.

A well-supported early care and education system supports families by increasing their earning potential so they can get out of, and stay out of, poverty. It also contributes to the success of children in our school systems and as future contributors to our community.

Approximately 77% of Utahns live in a childcare desert, demonstrating that the majority of our state lacks sufficient licensed childcare to meet families' needs (Voices for Utah Children, 2023). This predicament stems from both limited availability of services and the strikingly high cost of quality care. When available, the high cost of care inhibits lower income families from participating in the workforce.

For childcare to be considered affordable, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests that a family should pay no more than 7% of its household income for childcare services. In more than half of Utah's 29 counties, families are burdened with paying between 15% and 20% of their annual income for infant/toddler care at licensed childcare facilities. (Voices for Utah Children, 2023)

The current amount of investment by state government is insufficient to address these needs. Choosing high-quality childcare is out of reach for most families, and is unattainable by most childcare providers because of the labor-intensive nature of the industry.

Without government investment, families are left with low quality options that endanger children, and disincentivize providers. We are calling on the Utah Legislature to invest more dollars into the childcare industry. With cross sector collaboration between business, the philanthropic community, and government entities, we can address this crisis and become a model for the nation.

**This is truly an investment, as the long-term positive outcomes for our state are significant.**

- Utah's economic prosperity is directly tied to the success and stability of its workforce. Currently, Utah's economy loses \$1.36 billion annually due to lack of childcare access. (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2022)
- Investing in our children during the most formative times of their lives staves off costly interventions that come later in life, including in our school systems. (Davis Schoch, 2023).
- The outcomes are proven: Adults who receive early childhood education as children are more likely than their peers to finish high school, have higher lifetime earnings, and avoid involvement in the criminal justice system. (Davis Schoch, 2023)

We urge you to use your influence and position to champion increased prudent investment in our state's childcare system.

*Please, take bold action for our state's future.*

## Letter Signatories

Lisa Eccles, President and COO, George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation

Spencer and Kristine Eccles

Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation

Clark and Christine Ivory Foundation

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Krystal Nielsen, Lil Oaklies Childcare

Ashley Ence, Sunny Kids, LLC

Katie Ricord, Utah Association for the Education of Young Children

Kristy DeGraaf, Childcare Provider, Children's Tylenol National Childcare Teacher of the Year

IJ & Jeanné Wagner Jewish Community Center

Salt Lake Chamber

Neighborhood House

The Children's Center Utah

Utah Non-Profit Association

Utah Afterschool Network

United Way of Salt Lake  
Ogden Contemporary Arts  
YCC Family Crisis Center  
English Skills Learning Center  
Utah Child Care Cooperative  
YWCA Utah  
Holy Cross Ministries  
Early Childhood Alliance  
Utah Care for Kids Network  
Voices for Utah Children

## References

Davis Schoch, A. S. (2023). Children's learning and development benefits from high-quality early care and education: A summary of the evidence. OPRE Report #2023-226. Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce. (2022). Untapped Potential in Utah: How Childcare Impacts Utah's Workforce Productivity and the State Economy. [https://uw.org/wp-content/uploads/UntappedPotential\\_UTAH\\_011223\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://uw.org/wp-content/uploads/UntappedPotential_UTAH_011223_DIGITAL.pdf).

Voices for Utah Children. (2023). Mapping Care for Kids: A County-Level Look at Utah's Crisis in Licensed Child Care. Salt Lake City.