

Mapping Oregon's Child Care Business Ecosystem

Inventory & analysis of strategies for growing a sustainable child care sector

Mapping Oregon's Child Care Business Ecosystem

Why isn't there enough child care to meet the needs of Oregon's children and families?

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Oregon had a severe child care supply shortage. Fewer than one in four children had access to child care, and fewer than one in six infants and toddlers were able to access care. Emerging from the pandemic emergency, expanding child care capacity is a priority of the Office of the Governor, Department of Education, and Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency.

Currently, the U.S. child care sector is a market failure. Supply is unlinked from demand. Families' demand for child care is constrained by issues of affordability, access, and quality. The development of child care supply is also limited by significant barriers. Persistently low wages and a lack of recognition discourage entry and retention in the workforce. Appropriate facilities are scarce, and start-up costs are high.

Addressing child care supply shortages is further complicated because the child care sector is complex and fragmented. Care is provided in a wide array of settings, including relative caregivers, in home providers, child care centers, large nonprofits and national chains, each with unique advantages and challenges to business sustainability and expansion. Similarly, child care is subsidized through a variety of federal, state, and locally funded programs with their own targets and regulations. Yet, the majority of funding for child care comes from the pinched wallets of Oregon's families.

Across Oregon's regions, communities also face unique demands and barriers. Community needs vary, such as for alternative hour care to meet the scheduling demands of the local job market or for care that is responsive to communities' cultural and linguistic makeup. Effective interventions in densely populated urban areas may not replicate successfully in rural areas and vice versa.

Use the Child Care Business Ecosystem Framework to Build Child Care Capacity

First Children's Finance's Child Care Business
Ecosystem (the Ecosystem) framework is designed to
help state administrators and their partners break down
the complex non-system of child care to understand
the policy and programmatic levers within their control
that can build child care supply.

The Ecosystem framework helps administrators look at their programs as part of a comprehensive system that can strengthen or hamper child care business sustainability. It emphasizes the interdependence of business, community, and systems-level interventions that may not frequently be thought of together, such as the connections between business training and access to capital or subsidy participation. Furthermore, it encourages partnering with new collaborators and breaking down siloes to tap into available resources from small business, economic development, and other sectors.

The Ecosystem includes 11 essential elements (see Figure 1). First Children's Finance (FCF) recognizes that there is no one answer to building a diverse and sustainable child care system. However, strategically addressing each of these 11 elements is necessary to creating a holistic ecosystem that meets Oregon's child care needs.

¹ Estimated Supply of Child Care in Oregon 2020 (oregonstate.edu)



About First Children's Finance

Founded in 1991, First Children's Finance addresses the business and finance needs of child care in three different ways: building the financial sustainability of child care entrepreneurs, partnering with communities to preserve and grow their child care supply, and influencing state and federal systems to provide supports and investments needed to sustain child care businesses.

We are unique in working at all three levels: Child Care Businesses, Communities, and Systems – and where they intersect. Our holistic approach ensures policies, practices, planning, and systems are informed by community and child care business owner needs while leveraging national resources, connections, and expertise.

Our Work in Oregon

First Children's Finance is honored to partner with Oregon's Early Learning Division (ELD) to map the state's child care business ecosystem for the very first time. To understand all the policies, programs, and funding streams that impact Oregon's child care businesses, FCF conducted desk research and interviewed over 45 stakeholders.

Stakeholders who were interviewed included representatives from the ELD and Business Oregon, Child Care Resource & Referral agencies from across the state, state-funded start-up initiatives, public funding programs, state licensing, advocacy organizations, shared services, Spark quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), the Oregon Registry, child care unions, and other business support organizations.

The Ecosystem map that FCF developed will be used to make recommendations to ELD to 1) implement new programs that address critical gaps in the ecosystem and 2) align existing business support strategies to redouble their impact.

Using this Ecosystem Map

The Child Care Business Ecosystem categorizes child care business supports into 11 interconnected elements. Within Oregon's Ecosystem map, each element includes a best practice goal and the strategies that exist in Oregon to address it. Statewide initiatives as well as community level innovations are included in the map. An innovative program in Oregon is highlighted for each element as well as strategies from other states that offer inspiration and lessons learned.



Figure 1

It is FCF's hope that stakeholders can use the map to:

- Understand the programs that impact child care businesses within a broader system and recognize opportunities for alignment and connection across the ecosystem;
- 2. Gain inspiration from other regions and organizations;
- 3. Identify new partnerships, including "unlikely suspects."

This version of the map is a point-in-time snapshot of programming available from Spring 2022 to Winter 2023. We are grateful for the many contributors to this ecosystem map from across the state. Please contact Kaity Rhoades at kaitlinr@firstchildrensfinance.org with additions and feedback.





Agencies fund and facilitate access to capital for child care businesses of all program types in the form of grants, loans, forgivable loans, credit guarantees, and/or business technical assistance. Access to capital is available to child care providers regardless of identity.

Summary of Findings

- While Child Care Stabilization Grants provided much-needed assistance to child care business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic, the grants were not designed to address the long-standing challenges that child care business owners face in sustaining their businesses. There is a need in the state to provide child care business owners with ongoing access to capital.
- CDFI lending and Small Business Administration (SBA) loan programs can provide child care business owners with nontraditional loans, but in practice, access appears to be limited to Portland and the surrounding area.

Program Highlight

 The Clatsop Child Care Retention and Expansion Grants offer grant opportunities for child care business owners in Clatsop County. These grants range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and are available for new child care programs or existing programs looking to expand, providing access to funding for child care business owners within their local community. This grant program is funded through a public-private partnership between Clatsop County, Providence Seaside Hospital, and Columbia Memoria Hospital and is administered by the Columbia Pacific Economic Development District.

Approaches from Other States

• The lack of federal funding for the construction or major renovation of child care facilities puts pressure on states and municipalities to find innovative ways to offset the high cost of starting up or expanding child care centers and homes. States such as California, Virginia, and Minnesota have developed revolving loan funds to offer low or no interest loans to child care facilities. Developer impact fees offer an exciting source of local funding in several Californian municipalities. Impact fees are collected based on the likely child care demand that new real estate developments will create. Fees are waived if developers include onsite child care as part of their plans.

Access to Capital OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

State and local governments fund grants	
Clatsop Child Care Retention and Expansion Grants	This grant opportunity is funded through a collaboration of Clatsop County area hospitals and economic development districts. The grants range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and are available to new and existing child care providers in Clatsop County serving families with children from birth to 12 years of age. Grant funds can be used to open new child care programs or expand existing programs.
COVID-19 Child Care Stabilization Grants	Stabilization grants were made to child care businesses to address financial hardships resulting from COVID-19 pandemic. They were designed to stabilize existing child care facilities. Grant money was awarded in two payments, with an additional payment provided via a Spring 2022 grant award increase.
Prosper Portland Small Business Relief Fund	Over \$11 million was disbursed as grants of up to \$25K made to small businesses through selected community partners in Multnomah County. An additional \$2.8 million was allocated as block grants to community partners connected to culturally specific populations to provide access to these funds. Of the grants distributed, there were 172 grants for child care businesses totaling \$1.9 million.
	State & local governments fund financial programs
The Oregon Individual Development Account (IDA) Initiative	State-matched savings account program coupled with financial education to help low-income Oregonians achieve financial goals. These accounts can be used to start a small business or attain homeownership. Several CCR&Rs support family child care providers using Individual Development Accounts to start, sustain, or grow their business.
Loans from	non traditional banking institutions for more favorable loan conditions
7(a) Loans	Fourteen SBA 7(a) loans were made to child care businesses since 2020. Loans range in size from \$15,000 to \$1,630,000, with an average size of \$565,000. 7(a) loans were accessed by child care operators in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, and Columbia Counties.
504 Loans	Thirteen SBA 504 loans were made to Oregon child care businesses since 2010 (6 since 2020) through four Community Development Corporations (CDCs): Cascade Capital Funding in Salem, OR, Evergreen Business Capital and Northwest Business Development of WA, and Mortgage Capital Development Corporation of CA. Loans range in size from \$177,000 to \$2,745,000. Loans were accessed by child care operators in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, and Marion Counties.
CDFI Lending to Child Care Businesses	According to a scan by the National Child Care Facilities Network, CDFI lending to child care businesses in Oregon totaled \$30,000 from 2015-2019 and was limited to Multnomah County.

Statewide Regional





Agencies fund and facilitate efficiencies of scale that result in true cost-savings for child care businesses and meet the needs of providers across settings.

Summary of Findings

- State-funded shared services initiatives, such as
 the statewide substitute pool being developed
 by The Research Institute at Western Oregon
 University, are a forthcoming opportunity to
 provide child care business owners with access
 to resources that support business sustainability.
 Substitute pools provide a reliable and flexible
 system for addressing staff absences, reducing
 the risk of disruptions in operations and ensuring
 consistent quality of care.
- Early learning hubs and focused care networks create coordinated systems and provide opportunities for child care business owners to participate in business cohorts with curriculum on business development and program management.
- State efforts to coordinate data systems, like the subsidy provider payment and family eligibility systems, aim to reduce administrative burden for child care business owners.

Program Highlight

 The Oregon Child Care Alliance (OCCA) is a shared service model that creates a pathway for child care business owners to become licensed and develop their business models. For existing child care business owners, OCCA offers ongoing business courses, teaching financial and business management skills. OCCA provides child care business owners with access to child care management systems to streamline administrative tasks, therefore reducing the administrative burden on child care business owners.

Approaches from Other States

As Oregon plans updated data systems, states
like Colorado offer lessons learned. Colorado
has developed a centralized provider hub
which streamlines the state systems child care
businesses regularly access. Through one portal,
businesses are able to complete tasks related to
the state's quality rating and improvement system,
attendance tracking for publicly funded programs,
licensing and background checks, and the state's
professional development information system. The
state has also been able to use the hub to collect
more frequent updates on the operational status
and capacity of child care businesses.

Business Efficiency OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

State funds and staffs substitute pools **Substitute Pool** Development of a substitute pool of child care workers, to cover openings and promote placement in permanent positions with child care programs; currently in the research and planning phase of development. State coordination of data systems across programs and agencies reduces administrative burden for child care businesses **New Provider** Development of a new provider payment system that will offer portals for both providers and parents, **Payment System** coordinated with family benefits enrollment and the direct pay unit for state-facilitated funding programs; currently in the research and planning phase of development. One Oregon Eligibility Benefits enrollment system that includes coordinated enrollment across state social service programs, including subsidy enrollment for eligible families. **System** State supports staffed and funded licensed family child care businesses networks/hubs **Focused Care** Focused Child Care Networks facilitated by CCR&R for child care centers and homes, including business Networks cohorts with curriculum on business development and program management. State purchases child care management software (CCMS) for child care businesses, audits and addresses barriers to automation Oregon Child Care Members of the Oregon Child Care Alliance (OCCA) receive free membership to Wonderschool, a Alliance provides child care management software program, and ongoing training and support to assist operators in Wonderschool managing the program. OCCA has piloted in Central Region, Southern Region, and Multnomah County with plans to expand to other regions. to participating programs Efficiencies of scale are funded by the state **Oregon QRIS** Online platform containing resource tool kits to address the operational challenges faced by the child **Resources Portal** care sector. Members have access to editable documents and commonly used forms and guides. Portal is managed by Spark and is a customization of the CCA for Social Good platform. **Early Learning Shared** Shared services network in the South Coast Region that allows multiple center and home-based child Services Alliance care programs to pool needs and share resources, including supplies, information, skills, and funds, in order to improve the capacity to provide high quality care.

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Statewide

Regional





Agencies fund personalized start-up, crises, and expansion coaching and consultation, including financial modeling, for child care businesses. This coaching is accessible and is in alignment with a competency framework for businesses used in licensing and professional development.

Summary of Findings

- Business consultation is available to Oregon child care entrepreneurs who participate in businessoriented focused child care networks or the Oregon Shared Service Alliance. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&Rs) in some regions have reported partnerships with the local Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) to offer consulting. Other CCR&Rs have business coaches or navigators who offer consulting services in-house.
- Internal CCR&R capacity and partnerships with business consultation organizations vary across regions, with some regions reporting limited access to business consultation services for child care business owners.

Program Highlight

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
 organizations throughout Oregon have reported
 partnerships with the local Small Business
 Development Centers (SBDC), such as the
 partnership between CCR&R the SBDC in Central
 Oregon. CCR&R makes referrals to SBDC to
 provide start up business coaching to new child
 care business owners, and to provide ongoing
 business support and training. These partnerships
 recognize child care as an important part of the
 local business community and provide child
 care business owners with access to business
 development opportunities.

Approaches from Other States

Generalized small business consulting can at times be alienating and unhelpful for child care entrepreneurs. States like Colorado and Connecticut have funded the creation of child care-specific curriculum and programs to ensure the training and consultation available through SBDCs or Women's Business Development Centers (WBDCs) in their states are relevant and responsive to the needs of child care businesses. Their approach included training SBDC staff on basic child care rules and regulations as well as relevant funding streams. Minnesota, lowa, Michigan, and Vermont have referred child care business owners to organizations such as FCF for industry-specific consulting.

Consultation OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

States offer or fund personalized consultation and coaching, including financial modeling, for child care businesses during start-up, expansion, and as crises intervention

Oregon Child Care Shared Services Alliance Oregon Child Care Alliance (OCCA) partners with CCR&Rs and Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) to deliver ECE Business Start Course, creating a pathway for child care businesses to become licensed and develop their business models. For those already in business, OCCA offers ongoing business courses in-person and online, teaching financial and business management skills. OCCA has piloted in Central Region, Southern Region, and Multnomah County with plans to expand to other regions.

Business Trainings and Coaching Provided by CCR&R Provision of business training and ongoing business coaching by CCR&R staff with historical knowledge of child care program management, dedicated business navigators, and staff trained as trainers of the Strengthening Business Practices curriculum.

States partner with business consultation organizations (e.g., Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women's Business Development Centers (WBDCs)) to ensure their offerings are relevant and responsive to the needs of child care business owners

CCR&R Partnerships with Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) CCR&Rs in some regions have reported partnerships with the local Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). The CCR&R makes referrals to SBDCs to provide start up business coaching to new providers and ongoing business support and training.

States offer or fund business development cohorts that provide a combination of training, consultation, coaching, and technical assistance to peer groups of child care businesses

Focused Child Care Network Business Cohorts Focused Child Care Networks and business cohorts are being facilitated by CCR&Rs in Clatsop, Multnomah, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties and the South Coast region, focusing on business training for providers. Providing ongoing training using the Strengthening Business Practices curriculum or other training curriculums developed by the CCR&R and partner agencies, access to child care management systems, and funding for participating in the cohorts.

Business Oregon Technical Assistance Program Technical assistance program that funds organizations to help historically underrepresented and under-resourced small businesses. TA providers are selected biennially through a competitive process and reflect the program's commitment to ensuring that small business technical assistance is widely available and accessible. One organization specializing in child care business practices participates in the program.

Statewide Regional

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Agencies support the development and maintenance of safe, quality child care facilities, including family child care homes, through planning and design, financing, and health and safety supports or by removing zoning or licensure barriers.

Summary of Findings

Barriers to child care start up and expansion exist
within local zoning regulations, child care licensing,
and the current real estate market. Recent
legislative measures and licensing rule revisions
offer new opportunities to evaluate the effect on
child care business sustainability. By addressing
these barriers and offering innovative solutions,
Oregon can support the development of safe, highquality child care facilities.

Program Highlight

 The Oregon Co-Location Fund was developed in response to severe affordable housing and child care shortages in the state. The goal of the fund is to provide spaces for child care and education programs to serve children and families within or on the grounds of affordable housing developments. By co-locating child care and education programs with affordable housing, Oregon is taking steps to combine public resources to build supply in these sectors.

Approaches from Other States

Local zoning regulations, child care and business licensing, homeowners' association (HOA) rules as well as discrimination from landlords and neighbors can create a complex labyrinth of barriers and fees for child care entrepreneurs looking to site new child care facilities. States such as Colorado and California have begun tackling this issue by introducing legislation to supersede local zoning and business licensing limitations.
 Likewise, municipalities such as San Francisco and Redwood City, CA have created streamlined land use approval processes for child care businesses.

Facilities Planning OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

Technical assistance, testing, or grants are offered to help businesses select, develop, or remediate child care facilities where children can be safe and healthy	
Oregon Kids: Healthy and Safe (OKHS)	An online training and resource that child care and education professionals can use to better understand and implement national health, safety, and nutrition standards and best practices, including facilities improvements that contribute to healthy and safe environments for children.
Child Care Facilities Initiative (CCFI)	An initiative of Social Venture Partners (SVP) Portland, CCFI produced an in-depth 2021 report of the barriers preventing child care facility start-up and expansion in Multnomah County. These barriers included lack of experience or support in developing business plans or financial projections; high cost and limited appropriate space; complex zoning, permitting and licensing processes; limited access to capital; and a lack of staff to support expanded operations.
Business Oregon Grant and Technical Assistance Programs	Business Oregon is the state's economic development agency, providing small business technical assistance referrals to partner agencies. Grants and technical assistance are available though the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Business Oregon is expanding the reach of these programs to include child care businesses.
	Disaster planning is required of all providers and personalized coaching is provided by non-licensing entities
Disaster planning requirements and training	Child care business owners in Oregon are trained on statewide disaster planning requirements. Oregon's 2 Week Ready Campaign was used to assess emergency readiness in child care programs. The Oregon Early Learning Division is responsible for coordinating the provision of resources to child care programs during a state of emergency. Oregon also recently updated emergency background check and emergency child care facility processes.
States facilitate or fund partnerships with transit, housing, or community/rural developmentto co-develop facilities	

Statewide Regional





Business sector, philanthropy, and public entities invest in child care business innovation, research, development, and financing that is aligned with community-identified priorities.

Summary of Findings

 Philanthropic organizations such as the Ford Family Foundation and Oregon Community Foundation have invested in the child care sector though grants and training activities. There are opportunities for increased engagement with the business community.

Program Highlight

 In response to child care staffing shortages and the need for regulated child care slots, Gilliam County has partnered with Community ROCKit in a collaborative process to address child care needs within the county. Community ROCKit is a community-centered recovery model that maps and organizes existing community resources in new ways, to address problems affecting the local community. Through asset mapping and community engagement, this process will identify potential partnerships, assets, community capacity, and action steps to address the child care needs in Gilliam County.

Approaches from Other States

 Employers can be powerful advocates for increased child care investment. Intentional engagement can help the better understand the child care supply issue and what investments can are most impactful Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) in Colorado, Vermont Business Roundtable, and Washington Child Care Collaborative Task Force are just a handful of initiatives that have engaged the business community to increase political will for state-level child care investment and identify opportunities for employer-sponsored care at a community level.

Public-Private Partnerships OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

Philanthropy and state government supports business innovation, research, and development

The Pathways to Securing Rural Federal Funding Toolkit Provides support and resources intended to help rural jurisdictions, non-profits, special districts, and other governmental organizations address the challenges faced in accessing public sector funding streams from federal and state governments.

Southern Oregon Early Learning Professional Development Consortium Project in Southern Oregon that supports cohorts of early educators in obtaining higher education credentials, certificates and degrees through a collaborative partnership among the region's four community colleges, three CCR&Rs, and one university. The CCR&R staff serve as relationship-based navigators and the colleges offer classes that are convenient, affordable, culturally and linguistically responsive, and accessible for the early educators active in the profession.

Gilliam County
Partnership with
Community ROCKit

Partnership between Gilliam County and Community ROCKIt to address the unsustainable child care conditions within the county. Community ROCKit (the Resource Organizer for Communities Kit) is a problem-solving model that uses a positive, asset-based method for mapping and organizing local resources in new ways to address problems in the community.

Child care partnerships are in place: hub partnerships to expand services to children and workforce initiatives for ECE educators

Oregon Early Learning Hubs

The Early Learning Hubs locally leverage philanthropic and business leaders, as well as nonprofit partners, to expand services to children and families and create an aligned, coordinated system of support. The Early Learning Hubs are responsible for identifying priority populations and directing community resources to address the needs of those populations.

State provides tax credit to incentivize individual or corporate contributions to the child care sector

Child Care Contribution Tax Credit This tax credit, which sunset in tax year 2021, funded Education Awards for members of the child care workforce pursuing professional development as well Spark QRIS quality incentives. A participating individual or company received an Oregon state tax credit of 50 cents for each dollar contributed.

Oregon Employer
Child Care Tax Credit

State tax credit given to employers, based upon costs paid or incurred by the employer to build or improve property that will be used for child care. The program can be operated by the employer or an off-site program the employer contracts with to provide child care to its employees. An employer can receive a tax credit of \$2,500 per full time employee who has children in care at the facility, 50% of the cost of acquisition, construction, or improvement of the facility, or \$100,000.

Child care partnerships are in place: business sector invests in child care research, development, and financing

Business Oregon Grant Opportunities Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, provides small business technical assistance referrals to partner agencies. Grants and technical assistance are available through the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Program to develop livable urban communities for persons of low and moderate incomes by expanding economic opportunities and providing housing and suitable living environments.

Statewide Regional



Agencies fund and facilitate access to capital for child care businesses of all program types in the form of grants, loans, forgivable loans, credit guarantees, and/or business technical assistance. Access to capital is available to child care providers regardless of identity.

Summary of Findings

- Oregon has made several family- and child care business-friendly updates to the Employment Related Daycare (ERDC) program in recent years by increasing income eligibility for families to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level and raising subsidy rates to 90% of the market rate. New flexibility around program attendance and advanced billing also support consistent cash flow for participating businesses.
- Oregon offers an array of subsidy and contracted slot options including Preschool Promise, Baby Promise, Head Start, and Oregon Pre-K, allowing child care business owners to participate in multiple state-administered funding programs.

Program Highlight

 Baby Promise is a contracted slot pilot program designed to incentivize the creation and maintenance of infant and toddler slots by funding the difference between ERDC rates and the true cost of providing quality care to infants and toddlers. Participating businesses receive business consultation to ensure they meet compensation targets.

Approaches from Other States

 As Oregon explores new methodology for subsidy rate-setting, lessons can be learned from the growing number of states that have transitioned to using a cost-based approach, including Washington, D.C., New Mexico, and Virginia. Setting rates based on the true cost of providing child care services, including competitive wages for the workforce, rather than what parents can afford (the market rate) typically results in substantial increases in rates. These increases are typically most dramatic for infant and toddler care and for family child care, which the market has historically undervalued.

Subsidy OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

Child care subsidy payment rates reflect the true cost of care, subsidy pays at or above current market rates (at 75% or above)

Employment Related Day Care Program (ERDC) Increases Subsidy Rates Above 75% of Market Rate In 2022, Oregon increased child care subsidy rates to the 2020 market rate survey's 90th percentile. This means that, for approximately 9 out of 10 child care businesses, Oregon's subsidy rate meets their private tuition price. This policy supports family access and choice in selecting child care. It also helps child care businesses generate comparable revenue when serving subsidized and private pay families.

Subsidy policies support methods of reliable, predictable reimbusement payments

ERDC Covers Child Registration Fees In 2022, the state of Oregon began covering registration fees for all licensed provider types, both center and home-based. The funding covers fees required for the child to be enrolled or continue enrollment in a facility. This strategy can increase child care demand by reducing a barrier to care for low-income families and provides an additional revenue source for child care businesses.

ERDC Payment Prior to Service Delivery Oregon pays child care businesses participating in ERDC prior to delivery of service using enrollment and anticipated attendance. This strategy can help child care businesses, especially smaller providers, have the cash flow to support payroll and other expenses as they provided services.

States set differential rates to incentivize targeted supply-building; differential rates are informed by detailed cost of care data

ERDC Non-Traditional Hours Incentive Pay

Child care businesses can apply to receive incentive payments for providing care during nontraditional care hours. This strategy may offset some of the costs of operating for extended, and often hard-to-staff, hours.

Expanded subsidy eligibility, community eligibility policies, or coordinated enrollment help stabilize enrollment for child care businesses

Expansion of ERDC Eligibility

Oregon increased the income eligibility for families entering ERDC from 185% of the federal poverty line (FPL) to 250% FPL. This strategy can increase the demand for child care if it increases family participation in subsidy programs.

Establishment of New Copay Structure for Families

A new copay structure for families went into effect in October 2021. This funding sets copays for families at a lower cost than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Reduced copays reduce a barrier to care for families.

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Statewide Regional

Subsidy OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

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State contracts for slots for infants, toddlers, and children under the age of 5	
Oregon Head Start Pre-Kindergarten (OPK)	Program modeled after Head Start to expand high-quality early learning opportunities for lowest income and highest need preschool children. OPK is free to families with children from zero to five years old and not yet eligible for kindergarten, and who meet income or other eligibility qualifications. Program services include preschool education and early childhood development, child health/mental health and nutrition, parent education, and family support.
Head Start, Early Head Start, & Early Head Start - Child Care Partnerships	This federally administered program provides comprehensive early learning, health, nutrition, and family support services to children and families living in poverty or meeting other qualifications. Head Start grantees may partner with community-based child care centers and homes to provide early learning and care services.
Relief Nurseries Program	Relief Nurseries address the diverse needs of families through individualized case management. Children participate in therapeutic classrooms with low adult-child ratios, and families receive home visits that promote healthy parenting and child development as well as an array of other services to help promote stable and attached families.
Oregon Programs of Quality (OPC)	A precursor to Spark, OPQ served as a foundation for Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System until 2013. Eligible programs contracted directly with the state to secure contracted slots to help ensure low-income families could access quality early learning programs.
Baby Promise	Pilot program to address the child care shortage in Oregon for child under the age of three. Funding formula seeks to directly offset the true cost of care for providers, expands parents' access to the market and to a wider range of care, and maximizes family choice and flexibility to increase infant slots. Eligible for families living in Deschutes, Crook, or Jefferson Counties, or the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs with plans to expand to other regions and tribal nations.
Preschool Promise	State-funded program offering free, high-quality preschool to Oregon families who are living at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, serving children ages three and four. Preschool Promise is offered through a mixed delivery model with diverse grantees including public and charter schools, community-based organizations, Head Start/OPK programs, Early Learning Hubs, Relief Nurseries, and community-based child care programs. As of 2022, 16% of Preschool Promise slots were in private center-based programs and 17% of Preschool Promise slots were in private home-based programs while 33% of slots were offered in public and charter schools.
Lo	ocal funding (scholarships, vouchers, etc.) addresses eligibility gaps
Oregon Student Child Care Grant	Grant program established to assist parents enrolled in postsecondary education obtain safe, dependable care that supports their children's development while allowing completion of the parent's academic programs. Increases access to subsidies for low-income, working families.
Portland Children's Levy Grant	Grant program in Multnomah County that increases accessibility to quality child care for families by awarding additional subsidy for low income working parents. Aims to increase the quality of child care through business technical assistance and early childhood consultation.

Regional

Statewide







Agencies regularly study child care supply and demand and have prioritized supporting the development of specific types of care to address identified community needs. Supply building activities typically bring together strategies in other Essential Elements such as access to capital, facilities planning, and business consultation.

Summary of Findings

- State-funded start-up and expansion grant programs are providing child care business owners with access to new funding opportunities.
- Supply-demand gap analyses, such as the 2020 Child Care Desert Mapping and the Cost of Quality Report, are being used to inform the development of initiatives and policies to support supplybuilding where it is most needed.
- Currently in Oregon, there is a waiver process to allow for child care business owners to operate in spaces that would not otherwise be approved by licensing. Through additional innovative licensing mechanisms, Oregon can be more responsive to the needs of child care business owners in the state.

Program Highlight

 In the 2022 Child Care Investment Package, Oregon allocated \$44 million toward growing new and existing child care programs throughout the state. These funds were distributed to community-based organizations to rebuild child care supply and administer grant programs to child care business owners. Seeding Justice, The Research Institute at Western Oregon University, NeighborImpact, United We Heal Training Trust, and Euvalcree have been selected to create grant programs supporting child care business owners in their local communities and statewide.

Approaches from Other States

States like Minnesota, Maine, and Massachusetts
offer innovative license types, sometimes called
nonresidential small group care, microsites,
or pods to help child care entrepreneurs
develop businesses that are the right fit for their
community's needs. Licensing flexibility can be
especially important to building supply in rural
areas as well as dense, high-cost urban areas.

Supply Building OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

S	State funds grants to incentivize care for priority areas, types, or ages	
Child Care Capacity Building Grant Fund	Grant program administered by Seeding Justice that provides funding to organizations working directly with new and existing providers to start new facilities or expand existing facilities. \$19 million is allocated to grants to culturally specific and other child care providers to become licensed, to expand services, or to start new child care centers; \$3 million is for program management costs, including technical assistance for grantees, data collection, evaluation, and reporting.	
United We Heal Provider Services Fund	Grant program providing multipronged start-up business support to family providers, including: 1) Business training cohorts for providers, 2) Development of a program management tool for providers, and 3) Provision of grants for providers. There will be grants for equipment needs for expanding providers (up to \$1,000 per provider), wage grants to cover pay for secondary staff persons during expansion (half of their wages for first three months, up to \$3,300 per program), and capital expansion grants for facilities to be used for repairs or towards purchase of new location (up to \$14,000 per provider). Currently in the research and planning stage of development.	
Euvalcree Start-Up Initiatives	This grant program will fund the renovation of Euvalcree Center and provide grants for initial operating costs for new, in-home child care providers in the Eastern Region. Euvalcree Center will be a combination child care center and training facility. It will provide slots for up to 30 children and space to train an estimated 10 child care providers at a time in child care program administration. Currently in the research and planning stage of development.	
The Research Institute Child Care Start-Up and Expansion Grants	Funds will be available for individuals and businesses working to open new child care programs or	
Economic development initiatives include partnering with local entities and local dollars		
Early Child Care Business Accelerator Program	This start-up and expansion grant program for child care businesses in Central Oregon will offer three funding tracks: 1) Grants of up to \$550k for certified centers, exempt centers (at schools), or family providers looking to expand to centers; 2) Grants of up to \$300k for facility development; and 3) Grants of up to \$5,000 for family providers after completion of business support training curriculum. Currently in the research and planning stage of development.	

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Supply Building OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

Continues from the previous page

State conducts child care supply-demand gap analysis on state and local levels annually to inform the development of policies and practices	
Child Care For All	CCR&R Clackamas has partnered with the Clackamas Workforce Board and Early Learning Hub to expand publicly funded child care. This collaboration has resulted in a completed landscape and gap analysis that will be used to inform areas of development moving forward. This project is currently in the research and planning phase of development.
Oregon's Child Care Deserts 2020 Mapping	This 2020 study identifies child care deserts at the county-level. This is a follow-up report to the child care desert study first conducted in Oregon in 2018. The study found that as of March 1, 2020 (pre-COVID-19), using the child care desert standard of fewer than 1 slot per 3 children, families with infants and toddlers in every Oregon county live in a child care desert. For families with preschool-age children, families in 25 of 36 counties live in a child care desert. In addition, higher percentages of preschool slots are publicly funded as compared to infant/toddler slots. The majority of Oregon's child care supply is parent-funded (tuition and fees); public funding makes up less than a quarter of slots across the state.
Oregon Market Price Study 2020, 2022	This federally required study explores child care prices and the geographic distribution of these prices across the state. Oregon's Market Price Study includes collecting supply and demand data, pricing modes, and facilities' perceptions of the capacity of families to pay for care. Data gathered from the 2020 survey was used to inform rate-setting and the cost of care models used in 2022 child care investment package start-up initiatives.
Oregon Cost of Quality Report	This 2022 study gathered data on the true cost of providing high quality early childhood education in Oregon. As opposed to the market rate survey, which collects data on tuition rates, the cost of quality study seeks information about actual expenses to better understand what it takes to provide high-quality child care. The results of this study can be used to inform how the state sets the ERDC child care subsidy rates and to understand the current and future investments needed to support a robust early childhood system in the state of Oregon.









Agencies implement a strategic financing plan to align existing local, state, and federal funding streams and identify new funding sources to support an adequate supply of sustainable community-based child care.

Summary of Findings

 The Student Success Act and the Multnomah County Preschool for All ballot measure demonstrate the political will to identify new funding sources and make significant public investment in Oregon's child care ecosystem.

Program Highlight

• The Multnomah County Preschool for All Program is a publicly-funded program that provides children with free, culturally responsive, inclusive preschool experiences through a mixed-delivery model. The program will achieve universal access in 2030. The Preschool for All program is funded through a personal income tax of 1.5% on taxable income over \$125,000 for individuals and \$200,000 for joint filers, and an additional 1.5% on taxable income over \$250,000 for individuals and \$400,000 for joint filers.

Approaches from Other States

· As administrators and advocates look for ways to sustain gains made possible through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the state's 2022 Child Care Investment package funding, they can draw inspiration from diverse financing mechanisms in development across the country. In 2022, Massachusetts' Fair Share Amendment created a four percent tax on household incomes above one million dollars. Among other initiatives, this revenue will fund Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) stabilization grants and workforce supports, maintaining and expanding the operational and compensation supports funded by ARPA. Colorado is currently rolling out at least 10-hours a week of universal preschool funded through a voterapproved nicotine tax. A proposed 0.42% payroll tax would fund paid family leave as well as increasing subsidy rates and funding operational and workforce grants in Vermont.

System Financing OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

Suppo	Support from the state legislature is provided to ECE system on an annual basis	
The Early Childhood Equity Fund	The fund supports organizations that focus on closing opportunity gaps for children and families who have been historically underserved due to factors such as race, income, zip code, or language. Equity Fund grantees are committed to providing early learning services rooted in culture, home language, and lived experience.	
Student Success Act	A gross receipts tax that applies to a variety of corporations, partnerships, and other entities. Businesses that gross more than \$1 million in Oregon sales will pay a 0.57 percent tax, all of which will go toward funding the Student Success Act (SSA). Twenty percent of SSA funds are dedicated to early childhood programs and services through the Early Learning Account. Additional funding in a separate Student Investment Account can also be used by individual school districts to expand access to early learning.	
	Taxes fund the business needs of child care	
Multnomah County Preschool for All	A publicly funded universal preschool measure that connects 3- and 4-year-olds in Multnomah County to free, culturally responsive, and inclusive preschool programs. The program will grow over time, increasing the number of children and families served each year. Preschool for All is funded by a personal income tax of 1.5% on taxable income over \$125,000 for individuals and \$200,000 for joint filers, with an additional 1.5% on taxable income over \$250,000 for individuals and \$400,000 for joint filers.	
Washington County Preschool for All	Establishment of a publicly funded universal preschool measure in Washington County, leveraging learnings and best practices from Multnomah County's Preschool for All effort, with the goal of building to a successful future ballot measure.	
	Strategic coordination of federal funding streams for low-income families supports access to licensed child care	
Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) Grants	At five Oregon community colleges and universities, federal grant funds are used to support or establish campus-based child care programs primarily serving the needs of low-income students. In addition, grants may be used to serve the child care needs of the community served by the institution.	

Statewide Regional





Agencies fund or provide oversight and coordination over the array of programs that impact child care business sustainability, identify opportunities for partnerships and alignment, and address discrepancies or barriers.

Summary of Findings

- The creation of the Department of Early Learning and Care provides a unique opportunity for the coordination of systems that affect child care business owners.
- The merging of state agencies is a complex undertaking. Care is required to ensure the coordination of child care business supports is not sidelined by competing priorities.
- Early Learning Hubs offer local infrastructure to identify community needs and resources and coordinate across programs.

Program Highlight

 Oregon House Bill 3073 established a new early learning agency, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC). This department will consolidate all child care and early education programs into one place. Creating a centralized administration of these programs will allow child care business owners to easily access supports including child care licensing, subsidy, and training.

Approaches from Other States

 Some states, such as New York, have state-level child care financing coordinators tasked with leading and overseeing direct service delivery, systems alignment, and innovation to advance child care business supply and sustainability.

System Reform OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

Backbone organization addressing business issues holds the responsibility of developing and implementing strategies to support the business side of child care

Oregon Early Learning Hub System Evaluation Report published in 2018 analyzed the progress Oregon Learning Hubs made toward meeting legislative mandates. The recommendations from this report directed Early Learning Hubs to clarify roles of the hub system partners and to align and improve data systems across all hubs.

Centralized administration of the programs that impact child care business sustainability

Creation of the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) House Bill 3073 established a new early learning agency, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), that will consolidate all child care programs and early care and education programs in one place. This transition presents an opportunity for improvements for child care business owners, including coordination of systems accessed by child care business owners and expanded access to training and technical assistance opportunities.

Statewide Regional





Agencies fund robust and accessible professional development that addresses the financial and operational management of child care, reflects the needs of all child care settings, and is aligned with a competency framework for businesses.

Summary of Findings

- Technical assistance and professional development opportunities are being offered to child care business owners through existing child care intermediaries, including Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), Small Business Development Centers, the Oregon Child Care Alliance (OCCA), and other community organizations. The internal capacity to provide robust business training varies across organizations and regions.
- Business and administration standards are included in SPARK, the state's current Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and Oregon's Core Knowledge Competencies framework, which guides professional development in the Oregon Registry Online (ORO). More detailed standards could help guide and align an expanded portfolio of business support offerings for child care business owners.

Program Highlight

• The Oregon Registry Online (ORO) is an online platform where child care business owners can access professional development training opportunities. The trainings offered through ORO range from child development and facility health and safety protocol to business and administrative practices. By registering and completing trainings through ORO, child care business owners and staff can meet the professional development requirements set by child care licensing regulations, and are eligible to receive higher pay through the enhanced rate program.

Approaches from Other States

 Some states, such as Texas, offer specific core competencies for child care administrators related to the financial management and operations of their programs. Broken down into beginner, intermediate, and advanced skills, these competency frameworks can create a clear pathway for child care business owners and administrators to advance their skills and implement the practices necessary to successfully meet the administrative requirements of public funding opportunities.

Training & Education OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

Child care business professional development is specific and offered to all child care professionals at least on an annual basis (e.g., offered frequently, in-person and online, and in languages other than English)

Business Training, Technical Assistance, and Start-Up Business Support from CCR&R

CCR&R provides training opportunities, technical assistance, and start-up support for new and existing child care operators in their regions, to promote the use of sustainable business practices among providers.

Licensure process includes processes for child care businesses to develop business models and assess their business management capacities

Online and in-person orientation process for Registered Family Providers Registered family providers are required to attend online and in-person orientation sessions prior to submitting application for licensure. Orientation curriculum includes program management and focuses on child care operators identifying as business owners.

Child care business curriculum includes specific strategies and tools

Strengthening Business Practices Training Program

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance provided training of trainers to Oregon child care partners. Through this series, trainers in the early childhood field are provided tools to deliver business training to center-based and family child care providers. The training content and activities are designed to strengthen providers' foundational knowledge of fiscal management and business operations.

Dollars and Sense Training Program Using this previously implemented curriculum, trainers at CCR&R worked with child care operators to design effective business policies, customize contracts, set prices, keep financial and legal records, and market their businesses. Some focused networks and training cohorts still use these training modules, although the curriculum is no longer being updated.

Director's credential /administrator's credential includes training and opportunities to build business management capacity

Oregon Registry Director Credential The Oregon Registry Director Credential requires a minimum of Step 9 in the Oregon Registry, plus 60 clock hours of training in program management, three years of administrative experience, program assessments, professional contributions, and a portfolio.

Competency framework for businesses is included in licensing and professional development

Spark

Spark is Oregon's Quality Recognition and Improvement System, designed to support and recognize high-quality early childhood care and education programs. Spark has an Administrative and Business practice domain which includes a standard on sound business practices, policies, and procedures that support financial sustainability. With this standard, programs receive 3-star recognition for maintaining income, expense, and tax records. Programs receive 4-star recognition for demonstrating their business practices include planning activities such as business projections, a business plan, or a budget.

Oregon Registry
Online (ORO)

Program management competencies are included in Oregon's Core Knowledge Categories. Program management trainings are included in the professional development offerings provided through the Oregon Registry Online.

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Agencies build the supply of diverse, skilled ECE professionals, such as through recruitment and training initiatives, fair compensation and benefits programs, and career ladders with multiple pathways for advancement.

Summary of Findings

- Oregon has implemented strategies to encourage entry into the child care workforce, including scholarship and apprenticeship programs, and has offered short-term retention incentives for child care workers, such as the Child Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Payments.
- There remains a need in the state to address the low wages of child care workers to create parity with K-12 teachers and attract and retain staff.

Program Highlight

 The Child Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention program provides financial incentives to recruit and retain high-quality child care workers across the state. These payments are designed to combat labor shortages and promote professional development to achieve high-quality care and education. Eligible child care workers can receive two, \$500 direct payments, providing financial relief to existing child care workers and promoting entry into the child care workforce.

Approaches from Other States

 While many states use grants, tax credits, bonuses, or stipends to increase compensation for the child care workforce, the Early Educator Pay Equity Fund in Washington, D.C. is an inspiring approach to achieving equitable, livable wages for the child care sector. Funded through a progressive tax on the District's high-income earners, the fund is anticipated to distribute \$75 million annually to the local ECE workforce by 2025. Currently, the District is providing child care workers direct payments of up to \$14,000 annually to supplement their wages. Eventually, D.C. plans to develop a process for increasing wages by providing operational funds to child care businesses, which must agree to incorporate the Fund's wage requirements into their business model.

Workforce OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

d Care kforce ruitment Retention ments	Provides financial incentives to recruit and retain child care workers across the state. Distributes \$500 direct payments to existing child care providers to combat labor shortages and promote professional development.
	State QRIS incentivizes higher compensation standards
efits Provision ndard in Spark	The Spark quality rating and improvement system includes a standard aiming to incentivize the provision of employee benefits such as health insurance, retirement savings programs, paid time off, discounted child care tuition, and training funds. Programs receive credit toward a 3-star rating for providing one benefit, 4-star for two benefits, and 5-star for three benefits.
rk Provider entive ment	Oregon's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) supports and incentivizes continuous quality improvements for care and education programs and their workforce. By participating in Spark and advancing through the standards, child care operators with 3, 4, and 5 star ratings are eligible for increased compensation through the state subsidy program.
Sale	ary scales create parity (compensation and benefits) with K-12 teachers
ablishment linimum and get Salaries Child Care kers	Establishment of minimum salary requirements for lead preschool teachers and assistant teachers employed in Preschool Promise and Oregon Pre-K classrooms. Established target salary guidelines comparable to lead kindergarten teacher and teacher assistant salaries in public schools.
	Access provided to insurance and retirement benefits
ed Healthcare Ilthiest You health scriptions	One-time funding allocated for the purpose of enrolling child care providers in a telehealth subscription, available to all licensed certified and registered family providers.
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Workforce OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

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		Apprenticeships in place for child care professionals
	South Coast Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship Program	Program to increase the supply of early childhood educators in the South Coast Region. Participants are required to work for Head Start for 30 hours per week while pursuing a degree. Combines paid on-the-job training, related instruction, mentorship, and wage increases; currently in the research and planning phase of development.
	Career pat	thway from certification to B.A. degrees supported with articulation agreements
ANCEMENT	Prekindergarten Trust Fund Higher Education Grant Program	Grant program for higher education institutions to develop high-quality degree programs for early childhood care and education. Designed to ensure that there is an adequate supply of highly qualified early childhood care and education professionals.
PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT	Higher Education Early Childhood Education Consortia	Grant opportunity open to public universities, public colleges, Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, and other governmental agencies, focused on removing barriers and opening access to early childhood education degree completion.
ESSIC		State funds scholarship programs
	Prekindergarten Trust Fund Higher Education Scholarship Program	Scholarships awarded to current and prospective early childhood care and education professionals. Designed to ensure that there is an adequate supply of highly qualified early childhood care and education professionals in this state.
EDUCATIONAL &	Betty Gray Early Childhood Education Endowment Fund	Scholarship program that funds training and education for the family child care, center child care, Head Start, and before/after school program workforce.
	Little Kits Early Childhood Education Career Scholarship	Scholarship program for those interested in or currently working with young children, including a paid apprenticeship program and up to \$12,000 to cover tuition and fees. Offers career advising after completion and placement in a teaching position at a partner child care center.
	Oregon's Family Child Care Professional Development Fund	Professional development scholarship opportunity available for registered family or certified family care operators. Scholarships can be used to pay for college coursework, training, conference participation, CDA credential programs.

Workforce OREGON PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES BY STRATEGY

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	Evaluation efforts of professional development incentives
Professional Development Incentives for Oregon's Early Childhood Education Workforce: A Randomized Study	Study published in 2021 to show the impact of marketing, outreach, and monetary incentives on early childhood training enrollment, career pathways, and workplace retention. Study found that low-touch marketing and outreach, such as emails, did not have a significant impact on training or career lattice sign up; offering monetary incentives made a positive impact on training sign-up, but no detectable impact on career lattice sign-up or workplace retention.
	Child care businesses are unionized
AFSCME Local 132	Child care union represents all Oregon certified and registered family child care providers.
SEIU Local 503	Child care union represents all Oregon license-exempt family child care providers participating in state subsidy programs.
ILWU Local 5	Four individual child care centers in Multnomah County organize under the umbrella of the ILWU Local 5 union.

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