

WORKING FAMILIES AND THE STRUGGLE TO FIND EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

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THE PROBLEMS: AVAILABILITY, COST, AND QUALITY

AVAILABILITY

- In 2017, Kentucky had 196,863 childcare spots in licensed and family childcare homes
- The total number of children under age 6 who potentially need childcare is 203,155.
- The total number of children age 5 to 11 years is 394,759. These children typically need after school and summer care.
- Some counties in Kentucky have no licensed or family home childcare available to working families

COST

- The average salary for Kentucky workers is \$46,575 (2016 Census).
- The average childcare charges \$7,609 per year per child for care (KY Partnership).
- 16% of wages go to paying for childcare.
- The Department of Health and Human Services defines childcare as affordable as long as it costs no more than 10% of family income.

IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY ENVIRONMENTS

- The most important time in a human's life is birth – 5 years
- During this time period, children need consistent, positive, loving relationships and routines.
- The type of childcare is less important than the QUALITY of care.
- Less than 10% of childcare in the US is considered high quality.
- 88% of parents say their childcare is good or excellent.
- Parents choose childcare based on cost and convenience, not quality.
- Children in quality environments have better overall outcomes.

WHAT IS QUALITY CHILDCARE?

- Small groups of children in classrooms
- Low adult/child ratios
- Low staff turnover
- Degreed teachers who talk to children and scaffold learning
- Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum and materials for play
- Safe and consistent environment
- Emotionally supportive environment with positive interactions
- Limited or nonexistent screen time

EXAMPLE:



EXAMPLE:



RECOGNIZING QUALITY

- NAEYC Accreditation is the gold standard for quality in early childhood programs.
- 101 Early Childhood Programs are accredited by NAEYC in Kentucky.
- 50.4% of these are affiliated with Head Start
- 12.9% are affiliated with Military (98% of Military childcare nationwide are accredited)
- 6.9% are affiliated with Universities and Colleges
- The rest are privately owned, or corporate childcare.

ALL STARS AND QUALITY RATING SYSTEMS

- All STARS is Kentucky's quality rating system
- In KY, All STARS is mandatory for public funded preschools (receives local, state or federal) and certified home childcare homes. All programs are encouraged to participate
- All STARS looks at quality indicators: child to caregiver ratios, program curriculum, staff training, regulatory compliance and personnel policies
- Ratings are based on a 1 – 5 STAR scale
- All states have some form of QRS in place

CHILDCARE IS AN INVESTMENT

James Heckman, the Nobel-winning economist, has calculated that, in the best early childhood programs, every dollar that society invests yields between \$7 and \$12 in benefits. When children grow up to become productive members of the workforce, they feed more money into the economy and pay more taxes. They also cost the state less—for trips to the E.R., special education, incarceration, unemployment benefits, and other expenses that have been linked to inadequate nurturing in the earliest years of life. Two federal economists concluded in a report that **“the most efficient means to boost the productivity of the workforce 15 to 20 years down the road is to invest in today’s youngest children”** and that such spending would yield “a much higher return than most government-funded economic development initiatives.” (The New Republic)

THE COST OF QUALITY

- Children who do not have access to quality childcare tend to not do as well in school, and have poor outcomes that follow them through their lives.
- Children who grow up in poverty and who receive quality childcare do better in school, and are more successful.
- ***Quality childcare for all children should be the goal of our society.***

MODEL CORPORATE CHILDCARE

Patagonia

- Offers affordable, on-site childcare to all employees (has since 1980's)
- 96% of workers are proud to work at Patagonia
- 100% of mothers return to work after maternity leave

Campbell's Soup

- Offers 10 weeks of paid maternity leave for primary caregivers and 2 weeks of paid leave for non-primary caregivers
- Offers on-site childcare center with subsidized rates

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYERS

To ensure productive workers and children's welfare, employers must consider:

- Employees need to make enough money to pay for childcare on top of living expenses
- Investment in children is an investment in a strong work force
- Companies who invest in quality childcare show commitment to their employees, and the well being of their families