SNAPSHOT
CHILD CARE IN WASHINGTON

Child Care is Critical for Washington's Workforce
63% of children under 6 have all available parents in the labor force, up from 60% ten years ago.¹

Child Care is Critical for Reducing Gender and Racial Disparities in Economic Participation
63% of mothers with children under 6 participate in the labor force in WA.²
67% of Black mothers with children under 6 participate in the labor force in WA.³

COVID-19 Poses a New Threat to the Child Care Sector
Capacity is declining in WA
29% of child care slots could be lost. Pre-pandemic in WA there were 3.8 children for every available slot. With COVID closures that number could go as high as 5.3.

Provider costs are increasing in WA
Center-based providers’ costs are estimated to increase by 55%.
Family-based providers’ costs are estimated to increase by 83%.

The Child Care Sector Was Struggling Prior to COVID-19
Child care workers struggled to make ends meet
17% of child care workers in WA lived in poverty.⁶

Costs of providing care were high in WA
$1,390/month for center-based infant care
$990/month for center-based toddler care
$760/month for family-based care

Subsidies were insufficient
Monthly gap between subsidy and cost to provider, per child
$447

Child care is hard to afford
A minimum wage worker in WA spends 52% of their earnings on child care, on average.¹¹

Child Care is Important to the Economy
Yet only 22% of low-income eligible families in WA receive federal subsidies.¹²

For additional state profiles and more on this topic, visit Investing in the Future of Child Care: sffed.us/childcare
SNAPSHOT
CHILD CARE IN WASHINGTON

Endnotes


Author: Bina Patel Shrimali
Acknowledgment: Thanks to Brooke Ada Tran for research assistance, Laurel Gourd for editorial guidance, and the SF Fed Creative Team for graphic design.
Disclaimer: The views expressed here are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco or the Federal Reserve System.