



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

GUIDANCE ON SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR CHILD CARE AND LONG-TERM CARE

This resource is an excerpt from the [U.S. Department of Labor Guidance on Supportive Services for Child Care and Long-Term Care](#).

STAKEHOLDER ROLES AND ACTIONS RELATED TO CARE AS A SUPPORTIVE SERVICE

The following table outlines roles and potential actions for various stakeholders in the care ecosystem – who may receive or benefit from Federal investments – related to providing care as a supportive service for workforce development and employment, along with examples of organizations or programs implementing each approach. The potential actions in the table are a non-exhaustive list, do not include all actions that stakeholders can take, and, for state and local governments, may need to be addressed by legislation.

The Biden-Harris Administration's [Good Jobs Principles](#) outline eight principles that create a framework for job quality for workers, businesses, labor unions, advocates, researchers, state and local governments, and Federal agencies. Work-family benefits such as caregiving supports are a key component of fulfilling the Good Jobs Principles. There are a variety of stakeholders who can play a role in providing workers with supportive services like child care and long-term care services to help boost recruitment and retention of the workforce. These roles are often complementary and can be coordinated to maximize effectiveness. State and local governments can use their own funds and authority, or Federal funds they receive, to boost support to local care providers, encourage employers to invest in care, and provide direct support for workers who need care services. Businesses and employers can take a variety of actions to provide care as a supportive service to workers (see [Best Practices](#) and [Example Strategies](#) below) and partner with care providers to bolster their workforce. Care providers can expand partnerships with businesses, labor unions, and care intermediaries to better understand and meet the care needs of workers and their families. Intermediary organizations and other invested stakeholders, like workforce development organizations or labor unions, can partner with governments, businesses, employers, and care providers to ensure that those looking for care are connected with providers who can meet the care needs of workers and families and are working to bolster and improve job quality for the care workforce.

ROLE	ACTIONS AND EXAMPLES*
State or Local Governments	
Incentivize employers to invest in care needs of workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use public funds to match employer funds (or employer and employee costs) for care offered to employees (e.g., Kentucky Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership, Michigan Tri-Share, and Wisconsin Partner Up) • Expand on tax credits for businesses that invest in care for workers (e.g., New York State Employer-Provided Childcare Credit, Colorado Employer Sponsored Childcare Incentive, and Iowa Employer Child Care Tax Credit)
Provide administrative support to employers seeking to provide care for their workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide location-specific resources for employers looking to provide care to their workforce (e.g., Maine Child Care Toolkit for Employers) • Create or facilitate public-private partnerships and coordination to help employees of participating employers identify and connect with licensed and quality local care providers (e.g., Michigan Tri-Share)
Improve the supply and quality of care providers by targeting financial support in a way that builds business stability and incentivizes program expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create public-private funds that can receive both private and public money to support the creation of care infrastructure (e.g., Oregon CHIPS Childcare Infrastructure Fund) • Support new care providers to navigate state requirements and establish good businesses practices (e.g., City of Boston Office of Early Childhood, FCC Shared Services Licensing Support Services) • Establish workforce development programs for care jobs to help grow capacity for care in areas where care is limited for workers (e.g., Maryland DSP Apprenticeship) • Establish contracts with care providers to ensure the stability of care, help defray the operational costs of providing child care, and reduce the reliance on parent tuition to increase worker compensation (e.g., Massachusetts C3 Grant Program, DC Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, and Johnson County Child Care Wage Enhancement Program) • Subsidize costs for care workers of their own child care needs and other supports (such as providing free credentialing) to ease recruitment and increase their retention (e.g., Kentucky Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP))
Provide financial support to workers to pay for care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide cash assistance for supportive services, including care, directly to workers to help them access state-registered care (e.g., Oregon’s Highway Construction Workforce Development Program) • Establish grants/funds that support care needs for workforce development and training (e.g., California’s Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeship (ERiCA) Grant and Oregon’s Highway Construction Workforce Development Program)

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ROLE	ACTIONS AND EXAMPLES*
Businesses or Employers	
<p>Invest in care as a supportive service to the workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide workers with care as a supportive service using a variety of strategies and factoring in various considerations (see considerations and strategies sections below). (e.g., Knoxville County Child Care Micro-Center Pilot, On-Site for Kids, and Starbucks Backup Care Benefits (Care@Work); and additional examples available in the CHIPS for America Workforce Development Planning Guide) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Cash Assistance/Stipends • Sponsorship • Supporting Pilot Programs/Pooled Funds • Partner with Care Resource and Referral Organizations • Backup/Respite Care • Building new on- or near-site child care capacity • Providing access to long-term care in the home and community • Partner with local businesses to pursue these strategies together to bolster the local supply of care or increase the available workforce in a particular sector • Establish contracts with care providers to support the revenue needed to operate care services and businesses
<p>Partner with entities that understand the needs of working caregivers, the care industries and the care workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with intermediaries and entities to connect with quality care providers (e.g., Micron use of TOOTRIS) • Become familiar with the state and local disability and aging organizations such as Centers for Independent Living, Developmental Disabilities Councils, Protection & Advocacy Agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (see Aging and Disability Networks), State Medicaid Agencies, local Arc Chapters, and other disability and aging provider organizations • Create or support a stakeholder coalition to collectively pursue solutions to workers’ caregiving challenges. (e.g., Best Places for Working Parents, Colorado Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC), and Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education)
<p>Improve employer-provided benefits to help workers manage care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide workers with predictable schedules, paid leave, and flexibility to manage their caregiving responsibilities, tailored to their needs (see Employer-Provided Benefits below) • Provide workers with transportation benefits to help them with commuting to and from work and the care provider

ROLE	ACTIONS AND EXAMPLES*
Care Providers and Provider Networks	
Develop networks of providers who can agree on a coordinated approach to efficiently work with employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use common contracts, budgets and a unified approach across multiple small care providers to help develop a network that can be leveraged when working with large employers or business associations (e.g., National Association for Family Child Care)
Work with labor unions and worker organizations to ensure local provider options are aligned with workers' care needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with unions and local organizations to create a network of care providers that can meet the unique care needs of a particular workforce, such as nonstandard hour care (e.g., Care that Works)
Ensure compliance with all applicable labor standards and protections for care workers, including direct care workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure care workers are properly classified as employees or independent contractors and are receiving legally required protections, compensation, and benefits under all applicable laws • Implement best practices to improve job quality for care workers to strengthen recruitment and retention in the industry
Engage with business and employer networks to provide information about the local care ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop simple messaging and data to help employers understand what type of care is available for workers and their families and the costs of care

ROLE	ACTIONS AND EXAMPLES*
Intermediary or Other Stakeholder Entities	
<p><i>Helping families find care: Entities that help families navigate the landscape and help find the care resources they need.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with quality providers who ensure the workforce is being paid adequate wages and do not charge care providers to be part of listing and referral networks • Use the Aging and Disability Networks to identify supports for older adults and people with disabilities. • Consult your local Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency to identify networks in local, state, territory, or geographic area such as local child care resource and referral networks, worker cooperatives, or other local child care partnerships
<p><i>Helping design and build partnerships across businesses and care networks: Individuals and organizations working to help create partnerships across care providers, labor unions, and employers or design care investments for an employer or group of entities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify state and local partners that can help align employer efforts with public investments in care. • Use the Good Jobs Principles for all workers—including the care workforce—as partnerships are designed and implemented • Ensure that care benefits are extended to all workers and those going through workforce development pipelines (pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship readiness programs) • Use labor contracts (such as Project Labor Agreements or Community Benefits Agreements) to establish care benefits that can meet the specific needs of workers using local provider options (e.g., Care That Works)

BEST PRACTICES FOR PROVIDING CARE AS A SUPPORTIVE SERVICE

The following best practices are intended as guidance to support planning across Federal funding recipients, employers, workforce development entities, intermediaries, and other stakeholders as they consider how best to provide supportive services including child care and long-term care to workers.

By understanding the needs of workers and the available resources in place to build from, a variety of strategies can be used to help workers access affordable, reliable, high-quality care for their loved ones who depend on them while they are working. Regardless of which strategy or combination of strategies are used, every project must budget and plan for supportive services and care supports from the outset in order to meet the needs of workers. This should include a detailed plan for how each project will address access to care and can ensure there is adequate funding for the duration of the project to support workers' care needs.

Consider Care Landscape and Specific Needs of the Workforce

Recipients of Federal funds, employers, intermediary organizations, and other stakeholders should ensure a common understanding of the landscape of care providers in the targeted community and the specific care needs of the workforce when planning care supports. In order to do so, various care supply and demand considerations should be factored into planning – such as the location of the work and care landscape, working conditions, and types of care most needed by workers. These considerations can help ensure that decisions about which suite of strategies to support care for workers are impactful for the specific project, type of employer, and specific caregiving needs of workers.

Evaluating Care Supply

Identifying the landscape of care providers – from location, type and cost, capacity, and quality – are necessary considerations before beginning to meet workers' care needs and proposing care solutions to fill in gaps.

- **Location of Care:** Recipients of Federal funds should consider aspects of the local landscape such as population density and how far people generally travel to get to the work site. Looking at the available infrastructure for employees to use when accessing care can help determine what care will be most impactful for a specific population or job category. Identifying challenges with transportation, for example, may help determine preferred care locations where parents can most easily access child care. Additionally, understanding where most workers with families will be traveling from to get to work can also help target efforts to partner with local care stakeholders and providers. It is important to understand the care infrastructure both where workers live as well as what care is available near the work site to adequately identify what supports will be most impactful to workers.

- **Type and Cost of Care Offered:** The types of care offered and the types of care families might prefer varies greatly from community to community. Identifying the child care services and long-term care support services currently available and used by families can help recipients of Federal funds understand local preferences, trends, and where investments will be most impactful. Evaluations should be done to assess the availability of nannies and home care workers, home-based child care providers, and center-based care. Additionally, assessing the types of care should include the cost of care, which differ by the type of care provided. Many workers may not be able to afford services that are prohibitively expensive without additional funding support.
- **Capacity of Care Landscape:** Much like the types of care offered, the capacity of local care providers varies greatly from community to community.¹ Depending on location and the type of care needed, workers may struggle with finding any available services with open slots. Given that child care demand and availability differ by age group, evaluating the supply of seats available against the population of children who need care is essential for understanding the care landscape and families' needs. For example, there may be slots available for 2-3-year-old children, but no care for infants. Strategies to build or expand local care capacity (including sponsoring capacity expansion and on- or near-site child care, as detailed below) may be necessary to address some needs.
- **Quality Care Options:** Many workers may have difficulty finding the care options that are available to them and meet quality standards. Because care needs are specific to the family situation, finding care options can often be labor intensive and require significant knowledge of the landscape. While care solutions do not need to be tailored to each worker, in many cases, investment to expand support for workers to find local, high-quality care providers can be invaluable to ensure employees know what is already available to them. Intermediary entities, such as Child Care Resource and Referral agencies or enhanced employee assistance programs, can provide the one-on-one support workers may need to understand the resources available to them. In addition, many states and communities have rating systems, licensing and compliance requirements, and certificates in place to help identify care providers that meet certain quality standards which may provide a foundation for employers to build from.

Evaluating Care Demand

Identifying the job expectations of those who may need care in order to work will help determine what types of care supports they will need, in addition to their care preferences, ability to afford care, and other factors beyond their job. Looking at how often workers must be on-site versus working remotely, for example, may determine the location of the care needs individuals will have or even the types of care that they will most likely use. Some considerations include:

- **Hours and Location of Work:** When and where an individual is working may be the most critical determining factor in the type of care they will need. Child care providers, for example, often function on a “typical” work schedule (7am to 6pm) and may require a family to pay for their child’s spot in care every day in order to pay their employees, even if the child is not in attendance because of the family’s nonstandard work hours. Because of this, workers that work nonstandard work hours or those with irregular schedules—especially those with overnight shift schedules—may have difficulty finding a child care provider that can meet their needs or need to coordinate across multiple care arrangements. Additionally, some workers may prefer care options that are close to

their work site, while others may prefer to access care closer to their homes or to the local school system (if they have school-aged children). These preferences will help determine what suite of options provide the best supports for workers with care needs.

- **Needs of Short-Term Workers:** Projects that have a short-term start up component may need to develop a variety of care investment strategies to help accommodate the different needs of families over time. Care needs of short-term workers will be distinctly different from those of workers who will ultimately be permanently working on-site and reliant on local services. For example, a construction site that has specific expertise needed for different phases of the work may have workers on-site for a short period of time until that phase is complete. The needs of workers who contribute to the construction of the physical location may be different than the individuals who ultimately work in the location long-term. Working with labor unions and other trade representative groups can be an effective way to consider innovative solutions for specific short-term care needs such as modular classrooms or partnerships with local providers. By considering the short-term versus long-term care needs of workers, employer investments can ensure appropriate capacity is built to accommodate the specific project goals and plan. Addressing investment calibrated to worker needs can help ensure sustainability for care providers and ensure that providers are not setting up new processes or schedules without the appropriate demand to fulfill the service.
- **Needs of Workers in Training Programs:** Many industries and employers are creating and deepening workforce development partnerships to help build the pipeline of well-trained, highly skilled workers they need. In creating these partnerships, it is vital to think about the care needs of individuals throughout the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship (or other training) process. The needs of workers may look different as they move through the workforce development training process, and the individual may need increased supports during the early phases of training since they may not be earning a family-sustaining wage until they are eligible for full-employment or until they have progressed in their program. Identifying the needs of workers throughout the entire pipeline and investing in care supports that can meet those needs, in partnership with the training provider or union, can greatly increase the success and retention rates for those in workforce development and apprenticeship programs.
- **Care Needs of Workers:** There is no one size fits all for care, and the needs of each family will vary based on a number of factors beyond their job. Needs may vary based on what coverage is available from insurance or other social support programs and educational institutions. Parent preferences for child care, for example, often depend on age and number of children they have, their home language, or the work schedules of other family members available to help with care. One way to understand the greatest needs of workers with care responsibilities is to survey the workers about their care needs and preferences. There are numerous examples of surveys developed to assess the care needs of workers, including the Child Care [Needs Assessment](#), Child Care [Toolkit](#), and [Toward a Working Future Toolkit](#). Including subcontractors and looking to business associations that can aggregate the needs of workers across many businesses can help ensure the investment strategies can effectively impact retention and recruitment. Identifying the challenges workers face, paired with an assessment of the care landscape, can help employers and Federal funding recipients determine the kind of resources it may make sense to invest in and how to design those benefits to be accessible and impactful to as many workers and families as possible (see [Further Resources](#)).

Employer-Provided Benefits

Fundamentally, supporting all workers with their caregiving responsibilities includes providing predictable schedules, benefits, and flexibilities.

- **Predictable schedules** are an essential component for workers to manage their caregiving responsibilities, allowing them to plan child care or long-term care, schedule doctor's appointments, and meet their various care needs. Without predictable schedules, workers may have difficulty hiring a care provider or finding informal care that meets their irregular work hours.
- **Paid leave**, which can include paid sick leave, paid family and medical leave, or paid time off, can allow workers to take time off work to care for a new child, care for a sick family member or family member with a disability, fill emergency care needs (such as a paid caregiver needing to take a sick day, among others), or go to a doctor's appointment. Workers with access to paid leave help boost productivity for their employers and are more likely to stay on the job, reducing the cost of turnover.
- **Flexible work** is also important for workers to reconfigure their work arrangements to manage caring for children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Flexible work may include reduced hours or part-time work, flexible schedules to accommodate appointments and caregiving, or working off site or at a different location.

Designing Care Support for Workers

With an understanding of the care needs and care landscape, recipients of Federal funds should consider what specific care supports will be provided to workers with care needs. While the ways that funding can flow to workers for care supports will often be dictated by the Federal grant award, funding recipients should consider the following strategies when planning their budgets. These strategies are intended to be mutually reinforcing, though not all strategies will apply to every stakeholder or every care need.

Examples of Strategies to Support Care for Workers

- **Direct Cash Assistance/Stipends/Reimbursements:** Care stipends, direct assistance to workers, or reimbursement for care costs is a primary way that care as a supportive service is often provided. Under this approach, individuals going through workforce development training and/or workers are provided stipends, vouchers, subsidies, or other forms of cash assistance to meet the costs of care with existing providers or other care arrangement. Cash assistance, stipends, or reimbursements can be beneficial for those going through workforce development training and workers, if they are sufficient to cover the cost of care in the community, allowing them the flexibility to choose their preferred care provider – such as those closer to home rather than close to their worksite. Often this type of direct assistance is paired with referral agencies or navigation services to help workers identify providers and use the care allowance. Employers should also make employees aware of Dependent Care Assistance Programs (DCAPs) or Dependent Care

Financial Savings Accounts (DCFSAs) which allow employees to save a portion of their paycheck up to a certain amount – and may include employer contributions – in pre-tax benefit accounts that can be used to pay for dependent care expenses.

However, funding recipients should be sure to fully consider the amount of funds going to workers and ensure that these supports do not have tax implications for those receiving this benefit. For example, if the cash assistance, stipend, or reimbursement is given directly to the trainee or worker, it may have the unintended consequence of impacting their tax status and, therefore, pushing them over a benefits cliff and negatively impacting their eligibility for other state and Federal supports. Additionally, a reimbursement strategy may not be preferred if workers have insufficient finances to pay for care up front. Care stipends should also never be used in place of a livable wage or salary. In order to defray this impact, programs should consider paying the care provider directly – be that a center-based care provider, a home-based provider, or a family, friend, or neighbor care provider – so as not to impact the income and benefits eligibility of the worker.

- **Directly Funding Care:** Rather than providing a direct stipend to workers who have care support needs, funding recipients and employers can purchase and sponsor capacity for children of their workers at existing child care facilities, or purchase or subsidize care – both child care and long-term care – through intermediaries. This approach requires establishing partnerships with existing care providers and negotiating the terms of the contract between the funding recipient/employer and care provider. The funding recipient/employer may pay a lump sum to a provider to increase their capacity to provide care or expand their operating hours. Alternatively, the funding recipient/employer may pay the provider for specific slots or number of hours for workers to guarantee capacity and allow workers to access the care at a discount. This option has many benefits to help workers find and access quality care while also helping to bolster the care ecosystem in general by supporting local care providers and increasing the supply of local care, including increasing wages for the care workforce. Attention must be paid to avoid crowding out capacity for existing families in the community by, for example, taking steps to expand overall capacity in the community. Best practices under this approach include partnering with multiple stakeholders in a community, including community centers and in-home providers, to fully meet the needs of a variety of workers at investment levels that account for the cost of delivering care.
- **Supporting Pilot Programs/Pooled Funds:** Depending on the local care ecosystem, funding recipients may also have the option to tap into care programs that help workers fill their care needs by pooling funds and other resources with other employers, unions, or Federal funding recipients who are also working to provide care supports to workers. Similarly, a group can work together to pilot new programs to meet their workforces' needs, such as a program that specifically addresses early or late care hours. This approach is particularly useful for small businesses who may not have the resources independently to invest in local care providers, or local communities seeking to support workers in a specific trade or industry. Piloting programs and pooling funds can ensure that funds have a greater impact on the local workforce.
- **Partner with Care Resource and Referral Organizations (Intermediaries):** Funding recipients can use and partner with resource and referral organizations to help connect their workforce with care providers in the area, manage benefits, or connect with state child care licensing systems. Aging and Disability Resource Centers serve as single points of entry into

the long-term services and supports (LTSS) system for older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, veterans, and families. The National Family Caregiver Support Program provides grants to states to help caregivers access available services, training, and respite care. Employers may also pay for a business or navigation service that acts in this intermediary role to connect workers and their families with care providers. Funding recipients should ensure that the care providers in the network are licensed, high-quality providers and that using the intermediary service does not cost care providers, reduce their revenue, or cost their workforce. It should be noted, however, that without investments in the care infrastructure, these networks have limited utility. Resource and referral only help workers with caregiving needs in areas where care is available.

- **Backup/Respite Care:** Funding recipients can also partner with a program, such as a care provider or navigation service, or provide cash assistance to help workers secure backup or respite care in-home. Many caregivers will need backup or respite care that covers the occasional care needs that can come when regular care is not available due to a last-minute change or to give caregivers a break. For example, if a child care center has a professional development day, an unexpected short-term closure or another interruption of services, workers will need to fill that gap in care so they can continue to work. A family member may need short-term support due to sudden illness or injury. There are a range of backup care options that may be available from a child care center offering drop in care options to supports that allow workers to call an agency and arrange for paid, substitute in-home long-term care if a regularly-schedule care giver is unavailable. Backup care options, which can be used to fill these short-term gaps, make it so workers do not have to use sick or other leave or miss a day of work and pay in order to cover these unexpected care needs. Respite care can also help reduce caregiver burnout, which is linked to physical and psychological impacts that can impact caregivers' ability to remain in the labor force.
- **Building new on- or near-site child care capacity:** In some cases, employers may find it efficient to build capacity and provide child care directly to their workforce.² The on- or near site care can be operated directly by the employer, which gives them more control over the quality of care, job quality for the care staff, and may make employers eligible for certain tax credits. Or employers may hire a contractor to operate care on-site or at a nearby center, which can lower administrative costs for the employer, but gives them less control over the price of that care for their workers or the job quality for child care staff. Child care provided on or near a work location can be an effective tool for some employers, for example, that have irregular schedules for many workers making it hard for each to find reliable care on their own. However, on-site child care may be expensive, depending on the location, and employers should consider it among other options that may fit employee needs.

Before building new on- or near-site child care, employers should ensure it will not undermine resources for the community, compromise capacity for local child care providers, or undermine local wages for the child care workforce. Employers who build this new child care site should ensure the staff at the centers are making adequate wages and the services provided are aligned with quality standards set by the state or territory. Partnering with care providers that have met national early education and care quality standards and have a commitment to ensuring adequate wages for the care workforce can be an effective way to ensure investments can be sustained to meet the needs of employers, families, and children. For more information, see *Why Recipients of Federal Funds Should Consider Child Care Worker Wages*.

Additional Considerations for Contracts Subject to Davis-Bacon and Related Acts

Agencies and funding recipients should be aware that some of the recommended actions and practices could impact the compensation of workers performing construction work on contracts subject to Davis-Bacon and Related Acts (DBRA). To the extent that agencies or funding recipients require or encourage contractors on DBRA projects to provide care support to their workers through programs that may qualify as bona fide fringe benefit plans, DBRA contractors may be able to take credit for the cost of such support towards their fringe benefit obligations. For more information about DBRA fringe benefit requirements, including information regarding whether particular care supports could qualify as bona fide fringe benefits for which contractors could take DBRA credit, agencies and funding recipients can contact the [Wage and Hour Division](#).

FURTHER RESOURCES

- [Child care Resource & Referral agencies \(CCR&Rs\)](#) or other local child care networks
- [Child care Quality Rating and Improvement System \(QRIS\) Resources](#)
- [Disability Information and Access Line \(DIAL\)](#) to connect people with disabilities with local resources
- [Eldercare Locator](#) to connect older adults with local resources
- [National Database of Childcare Prices](#)
- [U.S. Child Care Deserts Interactive Map](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living](#)
 - [Aging and Disability Resource Centers](#)
 - [Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center](#)
 - [National Family Caregiver Support Program](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation – Direct Care Worker Wages resources](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration – Practitioners Guide to Supportive Services \(TEN 12-21\)](#)

APPENDIX

Best Places for Working Parents

This national organization has identified 10 research-based policies that employers can use to benefit parents and positively impact profitability for business. Using these policies, Best Place for Working Parents has an assessment that employers can take to inform priorities for their own employees, as well as a credential that employers can earn to designate themselves as “friendly” to working parents. Best Places for Working Parents also partners with state and local entities to tailor their strategies to a specific landscape, which has included creating location-specific toolkits, promoting the use of the Best Place for Working Parents designation across businesses, and fostering partnerships with business coalitions to align around priority policies.

Key strategies: *public/private partnerships; employer investment strategies*

California’s Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeship (ERiCA) Grant

Administered by California’s Department of Industrial Relations’ Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the Equal Representation in Construction Apprenticeship (ERiCA) grant provides up to \$25 million in funding over more than two years to improve access to training and employment opportunities for women, non-binary and underserved populations within the building and construction trades. Community-based organizations, local education agencies, workforce boards, unions, and other organizations that support equity in the construction industry are eligible to apply for the funds, which can be used to provide supportive resources for child care and outreach and community building to the target populations.

Key strategies: *state incentives; public/private partnerships; direct cash assistance/stipends*

Care That Works

Care That Works is a Massachusetts-based coalition of labor unions and grassroots community groups, that created a nonstandard hour child care pilot program to provide working parents in the construction and hospitality industries with access to early hour child care, opening as early as 5 am. This program was created to assist workers in these industries get and keep good union careers. Care That Works is building a network of licensed Family Child Care Providers to meet early hour child care hours and plans to expand in the future to meet other nonstandard-hour child care needs.

Key strategies: *supporting pilot programs/pooled funds; nonstandard hour child care; community-informed care*

City of Boston Office of Early Childhood, FCC Shared Services Licensing Support Services

The City of Boston has worked to help support Family Child Care (FCC) providers navigate state licensing processes and establish business practices that build sustainable early childhood services in high-need communities. The efforts have been aligned and coordinated with SEIU, who represent FCC providers in Massachusetts, as well as with employers to target areas with potential job growth.

Key strategies: *sponsorship; labor partnerships; child care expansion*

Colorado Employer Sponsored Childcare Incentive

Eligible Colorado employers are entitled to a refundable credit for providing child care or covering the costs of child care for their employees. Employers can receive a credit for 20 percent of the annual child care investments, for not more than two years.

Key strategies: *state incentives*

Colorado Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC)

Colorado Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) is a group of business executives joined together to invest in children, to meet both child care and workforce demands. EPIC was involved with consulting and coordinating a COVID response for child care centers through the Colorado Emergency Child Care Collaborative and the Keep the Lights on Fund. Through this effort, EPIC was able to convene organizations to fund the purchase and distribution of cleaning supplies, as well as provide direct financial assistance to child care centers (including home-based centers and school-age programs).

Key strategies: *sponsorship*

DC Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund

In FY22 and FY23, more than \$80 million was disbursed to more than 4,000 DC early childhood educators through the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund. Starting in FY24, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) ceased making direct payments to early childhood educators through AidKit and began distributing funds to child development facilities through a child development facility (CDF) payroll funding formula.

To receive a CDF payroll funding formula award, a facility must be licensed by OSSE, agree to pay eligible early childhood educators, by role (e.g., staff type) and highest credential, salaries that meet or exceed the minimum salaries established by OSSE and complete the process required to opt-in to the program. Child development facilities are not required to participate in the Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, but it is highly encouraged.

Key strategies: *state incentives*

Iowa Employer Child Care Tax Credit

The Iowa Employer Child Care Tax Credit encourages businesses to address talent recruitment and retention efforts through child care benefits. The program offsets the expenses related to the employer's child care services and projects. The program allows for a maximum of \$150,000 in tax credits per employer and allows for expenditures on child care such as acquisition or construction costs for, operating costs of, or the cost of contracting with qualified child care facilities, as well as contracts for resource and referral services to connect employees with quality child care services.

Key strategies: *sponsorship; direct cash assistance/stipends; public/private partnerships; state incentives*

Johnson County Child Care Wage Enhancement Program

The Johnson County Child Care Coalition (4Cs) established the Child Care Wage Enhancement Program which increases the wages for center-based child care providers, without passing those additional costs to the families. This program is funded by Johnson County (Iowa) ARPA funds, Early Childhood Iowa funds, and through investments from local businesses and employers. Through reimbursements for the wage increase and related payroll taxes, this program has allowed child care programs to increase their providers' wages by \$2.00 an hour (if necessary, the wage enhancement will be adjusted so that an employee's wages do not to exceed the maximum limit of \$19.99 an hour).

Key strategies: *wage enhancement*

Kentucky Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

The Child Care Assistance Program, which assists families with paying for child care, expanded in October 2022 to provide child care subsidies to employees that work in a licensed or certified child care program. This first of its kind program, which designates child care workers (educators, kitchen staff, etc.) as a "protected population," was created as a recruitment and retention effort to provide child care workers fully funded child care, no matter their earned or unearned income.

Key strategies: *state incentives; direct cash assistance/stipends*

Kentucky Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership

The Kentucky Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership is a state-sponsored program designed to support families by incentivizing employers to contribute towards child care costs of their employees. The state has appropriated funding to match employers willing to contribute money to the cost of their employee's tuition to a local child care provider. The percentage of state match is based on the employee's household income compared to the State Median Household Income (SMI). The percentage of the match decreases as the family's income rises above the SMI.

Key strategies: *direct cash assistance/stipends; public/private partnerships; state incentives*

Knoxville County Child Care Micro-Center Pilot

Knox County Schools partnered with United Way of Greater Knoxville and the YMCA of East Tennessee to launch the child care micro-center pilot, to address the issue of child care deserts and provide on-site child care to school faculty and staff. The program is funded through United Way and run by trained YMCA staff in a converted classroom that can accommodate up to four infants and eight toddlers or preschoolers.

Key strategies: *micro-center; employer care investment*

Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education

This coalition was founded by the CEOs and leaders of Massachusetts employers with the aim to make early childhood education more accessible, affordable, and stable for Massachusetts workers, more rewarding for early childhood professionals, and a point of differentiation in attracting and retaining a strong workforce in the Commonwealth. The coalition identifies priority areas for Massachusetts businesses to align around and learn from each other to address the early education needs of their workforce. The coalition focuses on advocacy and partnership with state government, identifying impactful strategies that businesses are using to support early education and care, as well as addressing the inequalities facing the care workforce.

Key strategies: *employer investment strategies; public/private partnership*

Massachusetts C3 Grant Program

The C3 grants are non-competitive and available for eligible Department of Early Education and Care-licensed child care providers that are open and serving families in Massachusetts. C3 funds are in addition to current state funding and do not replace the existing subsidy funding system.

C3 grants can be used for:

- Personnel costs, benefits, stipends, and other supports for recruitment and retention;
- Professional development and other investments to support staff in building educator qualifications;
- Other investments to improve program quality such as supplies, curriculum, screening tools, etc.; and
- Rent or mortgage payments, utilities, facilities maintenance and improvements, or insurance.

Key strategies: *state incentives*

Maine Child Care Toolkit for Employers

This toolkit provides a resource that employers can use to better support the child care needs of their employees across the state. The Best Place for Working Parents, the Office of Child and Family Services at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and Coastal Enterprises, Inc. collaborated to develop this guide that provides concrete options and examples to employers who are ready and eager to meet the child care needs of their employees. Through this collaboration, Maine was able to develop state-specific data and financing options that can help support working parents.

Key strategies: *state incentives; public/private partnerships*

Maryland DSP Apprenticeship

The Maryland Direct Support Professional (DSP) Apprenticeship Program, administered by Humanim, provides apprentices (high school students and adults) with the paid, on-the-job training and certification needed to pursue careers caring for adults diagnosed with a developmental disability. The program creates a pipeline of candidates providing quality care and provides apprentices with the credentials needed to continue into a career as a DSP, and a path to the middle class. Apprentices receive wage increases as they progress in the apprenticeship and can be hired by partner employers upon completion of the program.

Key strategies: *developing care workforce*

Michigan Tri-Share

The Michigan Tri-Share Child Care program is a pilot program that shares the cost of an employee's child care equally among the employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan. The program is administered by the Michigan Women's Commission and coordinated through regional Tri-Share facilitators (also known as hubs). The hubs act as an intermediary between employers, employees, and child care providers; determine eligibility; recruit employers to participate; assist employers with recruiting eligible employees; helps eligible employees find licensed child care providers of their choosing; and collects payments from employers, employees, and the state to pay child care providers.

Key strategies: *public/private partnerships; state incentives*

Micron

Micron Technology (semiconductor manufacturer) has committed to building child care facilities within or near its facilities. In Boise, Idaho, Micron built a child care facility across the street from its headquarters, to address the need for high-quality, affordable child care. The child care center will be run by the Treasure Valley Family YMCA and will offer STEM-based programming. Micron is also making investments in central New York, as a part of New York's Green CHIPs Community Investment Fund. Micron is building an on-site child care center near its upcoming facility in central New York. They have also pledged \$500,000 to the YMCA of Central New York to train local early childhood teachers and other child care providers, to provide child care to approximately 9,000 employees. Micron has also invested in an Early Childhood Career Pathways Program, which will expand home-based child care centers in part through supporting the providers themselves, many of whom are women and people of color. Finally, Micron has also purchased a premium membership with TOOTRiS (an intermediary business) for their workforce to provide workers access to the TOOTRiS platform with a child care network with 200,000+ providers nationwide, access to dedicated support, and the possibility to manage an employer's child care subsidy program.

Key strategies: *on-site child care; private/public partnership; home-based child care*

National Association for Family Child Care

The National Association for Family Child Care is the only national organization that offers accreditation exclusively for home-based child care. The program works with home-based child care providers to encourage accreditation and continued professional development, and with families to provide them with a network of accredited home-based child care providers.

Key strategies: *network of providers; home-based child care*

New York State Employer-Provided Childcare Credit

Eligible New York State employers are entitled to a refundable credit for financially contributing to their employees' child care expenses or child care resources and referrals expenses. Qualified child care expenditures also include funds used to acquire, construct, rehabilitate, or expand childcare facilities in New York State, as well as the costs associated with training and compensating child care facility employees. Employers can receive a credit of 50 percent for qualified child care facility expenditures plus 20 percent for qualified child care resource and referral expenditures accumulated during the year, capped at \$500,000.

Key strategies: *resources and referrals, qualified childcare expenses*

On-Site for Kids

On-Site for Kids is a turnkey solution for businesses to build modular, high quality on-site child care for their workforce. The model is built for the “deskless workforce” with non-traditional hours, limited income, and limited quality care options for their children. Focusing on reducing expensive employee absenteeism and turnover due to lack of access to quality child care, On-Site for Kids provides businesses with an investment mechanism that ensures adequately compensated and supported care workers while meeting the needs of their employees. The model can also be used in conjunction with existing child care programs to help expand facilities’ capacity in high-need areas.

Key strategies: *building new on- or near-site child care capacity; employer investment strategies*

Oregon CHIPS Childcare Infrastructure Fund

The Oregon CHIPS Childcare Infrastructure Fund is a public-private fund that provides child care investments, including financial support and child care subsidies, for Oregon workers in the semiconductor industry located in child care deserts. This funding will be provided by numerous Oregon state agencies, businesses that receive state grants or loans and federal semiconductor financial assistance, and additional public and private sources.

Key strategies: *private/public partnership*

Oregon’s Highway Construction Workforce Development Program

The Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries have partnered for the Highway Construction Workforce Development Program, which provides both financial and non-financial supportive services for apprentices and pre-apprentices, including a number of supports to assist those in the construction trades with access to child care. Pre-apprentices and apprentices in an Oregon registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship program in a heavy highway trade (i.e., operators, carpenters, iron workers, laborers, cement masons or painters) apply to the state program and, if approved, receive financial assistance paid to their child care provider.

Key strategies: *state incentives; direct cash assistance/stipends*

Starbucks Backup Care Benefits (Care@Work)

Starbucks has partnered with Care.com to create Care@Work, which provides employees with an online resource to connect with care workers. Employees receive 10 subsidized backup care days per year (for kid and/or adults). Employees will only be required to pay \$1 per hour for in-home backup child or adult care, and \$5 per day for child care at a center. This program also provides employees with a free Care.com membership and access to free senior care planning services.

Key strategies: *subsidized backup care*

Wisconsin Partner Up

The Wisconsin Partner Up program is a public-private partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) that provides grants to employers (particularly small businesses) that reserve child care spots for their employees with existing regulated child care providers, and grants to child care providers to increase staff compensation or improve the quality of their child care program. This program provides employees with affordable child care, and employers with a recruitment and retention benefit. The program prioritizes businesses and families who do not receive any other child care subsidies, child care providers that are in child care deserts, employers applying to provide child care to low- to middle-income employees, and businesses willing to contribute a minimum percentage of the true cost of care to their employees' child care, as determined by DCF.

Key strategies: *sponsorship; employer care investment*

Endnotes

¹ The Lead Child Care Agency for each state or territory is responsible for overseeing the safety and quality of the child care system, including access to subsidies for low-income working families. Each state has a plan for administering the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) that must be updated every three years and can be found here: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/contact-information/state-and-territory-child-care-and-development-fund-administrators>.

² Employer-provided on- or near-site care is not typical for long-term care for people with disabilities or older adults, so this strategy is specific to child care.