



Child Care Talking Points

- The Women's Bureau is a federal agency housed within the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Established in 1920, the Women's Bureau is the only federal agency tasked with focusing exclusively on working women.
- The Bureau works to safeguard the interests of working women, advocate for their equality and economic security, and promote quality work environments.
- As part of its work, the Women's Bureau is actively focused on finding innovative solutions to improve working families' access to affordable, quality child care as well as investigating how child care access affects America's workforce, present and future.
- Parents who do return to work after starting a family often face a major financial hurdle, as child care is a significant portion of many household budgets. The average cost of child care is more than college tuition in 33 states and the District of Columbia.¹
- Promoting access to affordable, quality child care is essential for many parents to obtain and retain jobs and for employers to hire and maintain a skilled and productive workforce, creating opportunities for both career advancement, and talent recruitment.

Key Issues Affecting Working Women

- Women's labor force participation increased substantially in the U.S. over the second half of the 20th century, then leveled off. Research suggests that family-friendly policies like quality, affordable child care could help continue to bring and keep more American women in the workforce.
- American families stand to benefit the most from affordable child care. Mothers provide at least half of the family's income in 40.9% of households with children under age 18, as compared to 11.3% in 1960.²
 - ✓ Families struggling to make ends meet especially stand to benefit from improved access to child care, including those who work nonstandard or unpredictable schedules, like those in retail, food, and service industries.
- Businesses can benefit from improved access to child care as well.
 - ✓ A 10% increase in child care costs is associated with a 7.4% decline in labor force participation. Improving access to child care enriches the pool of creative talent available to hire.³
 - ✓ Reliable child care also translates into a reliable workforce. The costs of inadequate child care totaled \$2 billion in 2016 due to employee absences, turnover, and lost workplace productivity.⁴
 - ✓ Research has shown that access to child care can encourage mothers to return to work sooner following maternity leave, reducing replacement costs, and maintaining the employee's technical knowledge.⁵
 - ✓ The costs of replacing an employee—low-skilled or high-skilled—is considerable. One study estimates the costs for replacing a professional employee at 90 to 200% of annual salary.⁶
 - ✓ More women in the workforce means more economic growth. One study projected that closing gender gaps in employment would increase global gross domestic product by 26% by 2025.⁷
- However, access to child care is a complex issue and includes:
 - ✓ Unaffordable costs for parents;
 - ✓ Poor wages for child care providers; and
 - ✓ Low quality or inaccessible child care services in certain areas.
- Examples of actions employers could take, regardless of size, to promote family-friendly work policies include flexible work schedules and workplace options like telework. Larger companies can even consider adding a child care component to their benefit options or partnering with a local child care facility to offer care.
 - ✓ Doing so can help employers attract top-level talent in the competitive atmosphere we have been seeing as a result of the historically low unemployment rate.
 - ✓ Exploring more ways for women to access and thrive in apprenticeship programs;



Women's Bureau Work in Action

- The Women's Bureau is invested in parents' success in the workforce. For this reason, we are researching best practices, innovative ideas, and impactful policies surrounding the issue.
- On March 28, 2018, the Women's Bureau kicked off a series of child care stakeholder engagement sessions at the U.S. Department of Labor with the Secretary of Labor and Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump. Participants included a diverse group of child care/early education specialists, corporate executives, small business owners, researchers, parents, teachers, and others to discuss the challenges and solutions to improving families' access to affordable, high-quality child care, as well as consider the impact that access to child care has on all aspects of the workforce.
- The Women's Bureau held additional stakeholder engagement sessions in 10 cities throughout the country between June and October 2018 focusing on innovative solutions that state officials, community leaders, and businesses are taking to help families access affordable, quality child care.
 - ✓ Advisor to the President Ivanka Trump participated in the final stakeholder engagement session in Gulfport, Mississippi as well as at a meeting hosted by the White House in February 2019.
- We are also working to develop a new project to create a public-use database of child care costs based on local area data that will enable a better understanding of the effects of these costs on women's labor force participation. This is the first data of its kind to be available at this more granular level.

Administration Initiatives

- The Administration believes no family should have to choose between safe, quality child care and providing for their loved ones.
- In his address to a joint session of Congress in 2017, President Trump underscored this, stating that his Administration "wants to work with members of both parties to make child care accessible and affordable, [and] to help ensure new parents have paid family leave."⁸
- In 2018, President Trump signed into law a \$2.4 billion funding increase for the Child Care and Development Fund, providing a total of \$8.1 billion to states to fund child care for low-income families.
- Furthermore, the Administration's 2020 proposed budget includes a one-time, mandatory investment of \$1 billion for a competitive fund aimed at supporting underserved populations and stimulating employer investments in child care for working families.

Talking Point Sources

- ¹ "The Cost of Child Care in the United States. April 2016." Economic Policy Institute, April 2016: <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states>
- ² Liana Christin Landivar, "By the Numbers: Happy Mother's Day." Women's Bureau Blog, U.S. Department of Labor, May 12, 2017: <https://blog.dol.gov/2017/05/12/by-the-numbers-happy-mothers-day>
- ³ Aparna Mathur and Abby McCloskey, "How to Improve Economic Opportunity for Women." American Enterprise Institute, June 27, 2014: <http://www.aei.org/publication/how-to-improve-economic-opportunity-for-women/>
- ⁴ Katharine B. Stevens. "Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The business Case for High-Quality Childcare." U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, June 2017: <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Workforce%20of%20Today%20Workforce%20of%20Tomorrow%20Report.pdf>
- ⁵ "Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare." International Finance Corporation, September 2017: https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/cd79e230-3ee2-46ae-adc5-e54d3d649f31/01817+WB+Childcare+Report_FinalWeb3.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=IXu9vP-
- ⁶ "Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare." International Finance Corporation, September 2017: https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/cd79e230-3ee2-46ae-adc5-e54d3d649f31/01817+WB+Childcare+Report_FinalWeb3.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=IXu9vP-
- ⁷ Susan Green, "The Business Case for Childcare." Institute for Women's Policy Research, November 2, 2017: <https://iwpr.org/business-case-childcare/>
- ⁸ "Remarks by President Trump in Joint Address to Congress." White House, February 28, 2017: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-joint-address-congress/>