

CHILD CARE STRAINS COLORADO'S FAMILIES AND WORKFORCE

A data snapshot on affordability, availability, impacts, & solutions



CHALLENGES

Child care is the work that makes other work possible.
Yet, many Colorado families struggle to find and afford quality child care.

1

LOW AFFORDABILITY

Colorado families pay some of the highest child care prices in the nation.



2

LIMITED AVAILABILITY

There are only enough licensed child care spots to cover 20% of our infants and toddlers.²



infants and toddlers **lack** a licensed child care spot.

3

COLORADO CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCCAP) ON HOLD

As of September 1, 2025, 24 Colorado counties had implemented a CCCAP freeze or waitlist, further reducing access to child care for **6,817 families** with **9,939 children**.

Colorado's child care crisis doesn't just affect families.
It has broad impacts across the state's economy.

IMPACTS

HIGH COSTS SHRINK THE WORKFORCE



More than **one third** (35%) of Colorado parents who stay home with their young children are doing so because the cost of child care is too high.³



THE ANNUAL ECONOMIC TOLL



Colorado's lack of affordable and accessible child care for infants and toddlers results in an estimated **\$2.7 billion loss** to the state economy each year.⁴

SOLUTIONS

To fuel economic growth and opportunity in Colorado, advocacy efforts should prioritize state-level solutions like:



Full funding for CCCAP, **lifting** freezes and waitlists



Increases in the number of child care slots



Limiting child care fees to **<7%** of family income

Sources

¹ Colorado Children's Campaign. 2025. KIDS COUNT in Colorado! Data Book 2025. Denver, CO: Colorado Children's Campaign. Retrieved June 3, 2025

² Freeman Cenegy, Laura. 2024. "The Colorado Child Care Challenge: Capacity for Infants and Toddlers." Denver: Early Milestones Colorado. Retrieved June 2, 2025

³ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. 2025 "Child Care Access in Colorado." Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Retrieved July 2, 2025

⁴ Council for a Strong America. 2024. "\$2.7 Billion: The Growing, Annual Cost of the Infant-Toddler Child Care Crisis in Colorado." Retrieved June 2, 2025