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.



LOW AFFORDABILITY

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





LEAST AFFORDABLE State for Child Care¹ 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.

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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





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

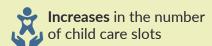
THE ANNUAL ECONOMIC TOLL

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





Limiting child care fees to <7% of family income

Sources

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

⁴Council 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

¹Colorado Children's Campaign. 2025. KIDS COUNT in Colorado! Data Book 2025. Denver, CO: Colorado Children's Campaign. Retrieved June 3, 2025 Freeman Cenegy, Laura. 2024. "The Colorado Child Care Challenge: Capacity for Infants and Toddlers." Denver: Early Milestones Colorado. Retrieved June 2, 2025.