

Child Care Resources

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Child Care Landscape in Pierce County Pre-COVID

The child care industry in Washington has been deeply underfunded and overburdened for decades, with child care providers making little over minimum wage while the monthly cost of infant care surpasses tuition at our public universities.

- Child care supply has been steadily decreasing in Pierce County;
- Largest reduction seen in Family Home Child Care community;
- 33% decrease in the total number of Family Child Care Home slots from 2013-2019;
- Maintaining Family Child Care Home supply is a critical equity issue.





COVID-19: Acceleration of Child Care Crisis

- In Pierce County, 15% of all Family Child Care Homes have temporarily closed, and 31% of Centers (which includes school aged sites).
- In Tacoma, 15% of FCCs have temporarily closed and 37% of Centers.
- Social distancing means that ratios for groups of children will need to be low. This means higher costs and less reimbursement or revenue for the providers, and a reduced child care capacity overall for families.
- Many child care providers still open are operating in the red right now with rising child care costs during the pandemic. For centers it is 23% higher. And for an in-home provider, it's 19% higher.

Ways to Support Child Care (and Families Access to Child Care) During the Pandemic:

- Investment in child care NOW through grants to help businesses weather the crisis.
- Funding for essential personnel, in line with the Governor's broad identification, to access child care via a subsidy voucher system which follows the child's placement in licensed child care.
- Advocacy to make sure that child care stays high on the radar of state and local policymakers.



Many Families Relying on Family, Friend and Neighbors During the Pandemic:

An estimated 75% of children ages birth to 5 years spend significant time in the care of a grandparent, aunt or uncle, older sibling, good family friend or others who are part of the child's extended family. These caregivers are often referred to Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers.

- Covering longer shifts and non-standard hours for essential workers;
- Filling the gap when preschools, licensed child care, and schools are closed;
- Asking middle- and high school-aged brothers and sisters to tend to their young siblings while parents work – either from home or at their usual workplace.





Ways to support FFN caregivers during the pandemic:

- Ensure that they are receiving information and support applying for assistance from trusted advisors (often family, friends, and cultural community leaders) in the home language on COVID prevention, child development, and caring for children with special needs;
- Enlist trusted advisors to help caregivers navigate and apply for assistance with basic needs, health and mental health care, supplemental income and other resources;
- Provide caregivers with essential cleaning supplies, diapers, wipes, formula, and food;
- Include FFN caregivers in targeted outreach. When doing so, refer to them by how they see themselves: grandparent, auntie, uncle, cousin, brother, sister, family friend taking care of a young child.