

The Investor's Case: Child Care Access & Quality



What Science and Research Tell Us...

- Children's brains grow explosively in the first 3 years of life, forming more than [1 million new neural connections](#) per second. Safe, stimulating early environments are essential to promoting healthy development in these crucial years.
- As the percentage of [working mothers](#) has risen to 70% in recent decades, the time that children under 5 spend in child care has increased in tandem. More than 40% of children of working mothers spend [35+ hours/week](#) in child care.
- And yet, according to the National Institutes of Health, a [mere 10%](#) of child care settings meet the definition of "high-quality." Quality tends to be [lowest for children under 2](#)—precisely when it matters most.
- The U.S. ranks [dead last](#) among developed nations on childcare affordability. In 24 states, the average full-time infant daycare costs more than average monthly rent.

Why It Matters...

- Lack of access to quality, affordable child care inhibits parents' careers and undermines families' economic security, [costing the U.S. an estimated \\$57 billion](#) in lost earnings, productivity, and tax revenues every year.
- This status quo also disadvantages the 2 million child care industry employees, many of whom are women of color. These workers are among the least likely to make [a living wage](#); in 2018, a full 53% were on at least 1 public assistance program.
- Conversely, improved child care has the potential to enhance educational equity. Children in high-quality programs consistently show [better cognitive function](#), language development, and kindergarten readiness relative to their peers in lesser settings.

What "Good" Would Look Like...

- Our goal is to optimize children's development and bolster families' and providers' economic well-being. To do so, we must improve:
 - *Quality:* [key features](#) of high-quality child care include small adult-to-child ratios, formal training for providers, and positive caregiving practices like [serve and return](#) and regular book reading.
 - *Access & affordability:* according to Brookings, affordable childcare should not exceed [7% of family income](#).
 - *Workforce development:* all child care providers should receive pre- and in-service training, as well as improved pay and benefits.

Strategies for Scaled Impact...

Advocacy to boost public support for paid parental leave, child care benefits, and improved provider compensation

Tech-enabled platforms that increase families' knowledge of and access to affordable care options

Innovative approaches that deliver high-quality professional development to diverse care providers

Dig Deeper: Child Care Access & Quality

Key Terms:

- **Family, Friend, & Neighbor Care (FFN):** care provided in the child's or caregiver's home by a person who is a relative, friend, neighbor, or babysitter
- **Family Child Care Homes:** care provided for small groups of children in a residential setting, usually by one or two child care workers
- **Child Care Centers:** care provided for larger groups of children, often grouped by age, in a non-residential, commercial building by a larger staff

Key Research Studies

- The national crisis in child care affordability
- How child care quality in early life predicts cognitive / academic outcomes in adolescence
- Lasting positive effects of subsidized child care in Norway
- How child care can help reduce socioeconomic inequalities

Field Leaders

- Child Care Aware of America works with 400+ state and local child care resource and referral agencies nationwide
- Council for a Strong America promotes bipartisan solutions to the national child care crisis

Promising Innovators

- All Our Kin transforms family child care supply, quality, and sustainability through professional learning and support
- MyVillage supports a high-quality, nationally standardized family home childcare network through business supports, mentorship, and peer connections
- Visit our Venture Index for more innovators in this space!

Key Funders

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Ms. Foundation for Women
- The Administration for Children and Families' Child Care and Development Fund
- *To learn more, check out this national database of early child care funders!*

Sample Metrics & Tools

METRICS

- Program structure and skill-building activities
- Relationships and interactions between children and providers
- Physical space and resources

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Child Care Quality Rating System (QRS)
- Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale, Revised (FCCERS-R)

Want to learn more? Check out Promise's full resource library!
Feedback on our materials? Share your thoughts with us!