



HOUSE BILL 499: EMPLOYEE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP (REP. HEAVRIN)

Child Care is a Critical Workforce Issue in Kentucky

- Kentucky has one of the **lowest workforce participation rates in the nation**.
- A major barrier to work for many Kentucky families is the cost of high-quality child care, with average costs in Kentucky ranging from **\$6,300 to \$11,300** per year for an infant.
- These costs force too many working parents and guardians to **leave the workforce**.
- Employers throughout Kentucky continue to struggle to attract workers, with almost **50 percent of small businesses** reporting that they were **unable to fill open positions**.
- Addressing Kentucky’s child care crisis and workforce challenges will require multiple bold policy proposals, but **private sector engagement and investment** must be part of the solution.

HB499 offers an innovative approach to tackling these challenges by encouraging employers to assist employees with the cost of child care.

- Encourage non-profit and for-profit employers to offer child care assistance as a benefit of employment by matching employer contributions with state dollars.
- Support workforce participation for working families by helping alleviate the financial burden of child care and making it more financially feasible for them to remain in the workforce.
- Help employers – especially small businesses and nonprofits – attract and retain talent by allowing them to double the size of a critical employer benefit.
- Ensure more Kentucky children have access to high-quality early learning opportunities.
- Provide a lifeline of vital financial stability for the child care sector, which has been one of the hardest-hit sectors by the pandemic.

