



Kentucky can...



Ensure high-quality child care environments to support working families and early childhood learning

Kentucky families need affordable, high-quality child care to support workforce participation and the future prospects of our children. Working families are making tough decisions about staying in the workforce while paying exorbitant child care costs or quitting their jobs to stay home with their children.

Over the last several years, Kentucky has worked diligently to increase child care subsidies and help child care programs remain open during an unsure financial climate. In order to maintain the current level of child care support, kept afloat by temporary federal aid, Kentucky will need a significant investment in the state biennium budget.



Enhance the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to Boost Workforce Participation

By broadening child care access, Kentucky parents can go to work knowing their child is safe, cared for, and learning.



Address Child Care Workforce Shortages and Promote Collaboration

Kentucky can have a more robust child care infrastructure by mitigating child care teacher shortages, promoting the development and success of family child care homes, and supporting the early childhood workforce.

- Over 20% of Kentucky child care providers risk closure post-federal pandemic relief.
- 23% of child care programs could accommodate 50+ more children with full staffing.
- 21% of child care programs could serve 21-50 more children each.
- 79 of Kentucky's 120 counties are child care deserts, where families have limited or no access to care.

40% of working mothers are negatively impacted by unreliable child care, many resigning from their jobs as a result.

When parents leave their jobs, that often leads to:

- unstable housing
- food insecurity
- unreliable transportation
- enrollment in other family support programs to meet basic needs

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Policy Solutions:

- Maintain CCAP eligibility at 85% of State Median Income and the federally-recommended reimbursement rate.
- Base program reimbursement payments on enrollment rather than attendance, to align with new federal guidance.
- Protect CCAP access for all child care center employees to ensure a stable child care workforce.
- Implement a limited co-pay structure paired with maintaining a six-month transition period so that families can retain more income and still access benefits as they receive slight wage increases.
- Support early childhood educators by maintaining scholarships, continuing to cover costs of mandatory background checks, and persisting with the successful Family Child Care Home grant program.
- Establish the Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership (ECCAP) permanently.
- Propose amendments to child care zoning regulations to boost access to family child care homes.