

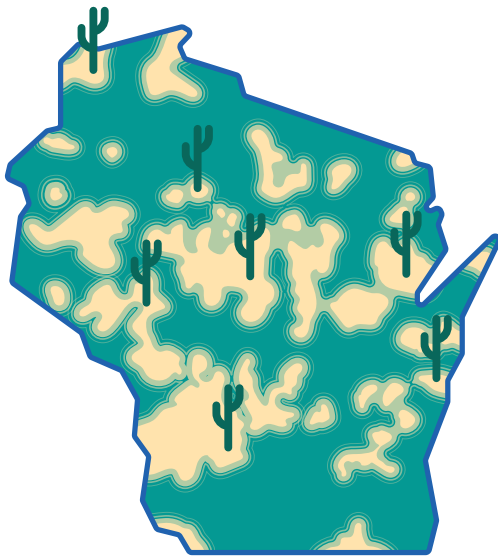
It's hard to find affordable, high-quality child care that meets families' needs in Wisconsin.

Affordable, high-quality child care could add a huge boost to Wisconsin's economy each year. But in 2020, 92% of regional virtual listening session participants called Wisconsin child care inaccessible.¹ Year-long wait lists, fewer licensed child care programs, and rising costs have made it difficult for families to find the child care they need and can afford. For many, added challenges like non-traditional work hours, limited access to transportation, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic can mean even fewer options.



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

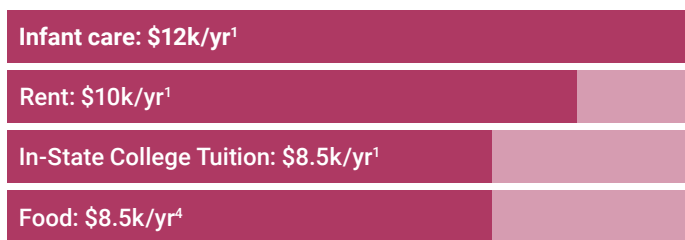
Child care deserts are widespread



54% of Wisconsin residents live in a child care desert where 3+ children compete for every slot²

70% of rural Wisconsin is a child care desert³

Average child care costs exceed other essentials



¹<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/2021-needs-assessment.pdf>

²<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/mapping-americas-child-care-deserts>

³<https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/WECA-Workforce-Recommendations-Brief-2021.pdf>

⁴<https://247wallst.com/state/cost-of-living-in-wisconsin>

Families face lack of choice and significant shortages in:



Year-round, Full Day Child Care



Regulated Child Care Programs in Rural Areas



Quality Infant & Toddler Care



Care for Children with Special Needs



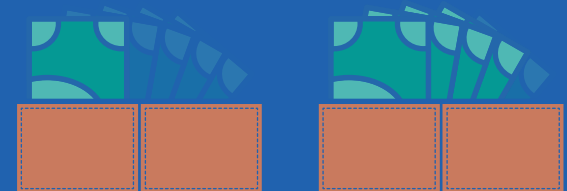
Evening, Overnight, & Weekend Care



Multilingual & Culturally-Responsive Care

Wisconsin family wallets take a big hit to pay for their child care bills

Infant care costs equal:



83% of a 15k estimated minimum wage income¹

18% of a \$68k median family income¹

Wisconsin's child care workers are highly educated and underpaid. They're also leaving the field.

More than 70% of Wisconsin's child care educators have completed college coursework or a degree.¹ But few earn the wages, benefits, or respect that workers with similar credentials in other industries receive, according to participants in a series of 2020 regional virtual listening sessions. For a growing number of educators, the high cost of entry for an early child care career, low wages, and lack of respect are no longer worth it.² Before the COVID-19 pandemic, recruiting and retaining qualified educators was a challenge. Now, most Wisconsin child care programs are struggling to find enough staff to meet local families' needs.



Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Wisconsin child care workers earn a lot less



\$13/hr median wage
for WI child care educators¹

\$19/hr median wage
for WI workers¹

That's \$2k/yr less than the national average for all workers



Educators say their reasons for leaving the field include:⁵



Unlivable Wages



Lacking or Limited Benefits



Stressful Working Conditions



Insufficient Training & Advancement



High Staff Turnover & Retirement

Unlivable wages equal a poorer quality of life

Staffing costs account for 80% of providers' expenses, yet:



1 in 5 Wisconsin child care educators worry their food will run out before they have money to get more³



1 in 2 child care educators nationwide receive at least one form of public assistance⁴



3 in 4 Wisconsin child care educators say it is somewhat or extremely difficult to live on their household income⁵

Wisconsin educators can't bank on benefits

At least **48%** of early child care programs lack health insurance benefits⁵

Only **52%** of early child care workers report access to paid sick leave⁵

Wisconsin's child care programs and educators are disappearing

51%

decline in program capacity¹

50%

of educators plan to leave the field in the next five years³

68%

decline in licensed family programs¹

75%

of child care programs are experiencing staffing shortages³

40%

of staff turn over annually³

¹<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/2021-needs-assessment.pdf>

²<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/listening-session-report.pdf>

³<https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/WECA-Workforce-Recommendations-Brief-2021.pdf>

⁴<https://cscce.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2-Earnings-Economic-Security.pdf>

⁵<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/wi-ece-workforce-teacher-report.pdf>