

# CHILD CARE IN LARIMER COUNTY

Recommendations to Address the  
Need for Additional Affordable  
Child Care in Larimer County

January 2019

The logo for Talent 2.0 features the word "TALENT" in a dark teal, sans-serif font. To its right is a white circle containing the number "2.0" in a dark teal, sans-serif font. The "2" is larger and more prominent than the ".0".

TALENT 2.0

A Report by The Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force



## Executive Summary

The 2017 Talent 2.0 Regional Workforce Strategy Report identified three structural barriers to workforce recruitment and retention in Fort Collins-Loveland Metro Area: lack of affordable housing, lack of affordable child care and transportation. The Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force was formed in June 2018 to study the lack of affordable child care in Larimer County and to make recommendations about addressing this barrier.

In Larimer County, an estimated 7,000 young children, based on 2010 census data, do not have access to licensed child care when their parents are working. As our population increases, so does the demand for care. To address this shortage, at least 1,000 additional early childhood teachers are needed. However, childcare providers cannot afford to pay high enough wages to attract and retain the needed workforce. They, too, are facing workforce challenges that prevent them from operating at full capacity.

This task force met six times over eight months to explore these issues and develop recommendations for the Talent 2.0 Leadership Group. The issues are complex, and the task force recognizes that solutions need to be multi-pronged, with engagement from business, community and early childhood leaders.

Recommendations:

- 1. Establish a Larimer County Child Care Work Group, including strategic stakeholders from across the community, to continue the work of the Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force and to implement the recommended strategies.**
- 2. Recruit and retain a highly trained and qualified early care and education (ECE) workforce that is paid a competitive wage.**
- 3. Educate and engage employers around the impact of child care on the workforce.**
- 4. Collect and analyze updated data about the impact of child care on employment and families.**
- 5. Conduct a public education campaign incorporating the results of data collection.**
- 6. Broaden and develop new and diverse funding streams for all aspects of early care and education, including public, private and philanthropic resources.**
- 7. As part of a comprehensive child care solution for children ages 0 – 5, continue to explore the possibility of instituting a universal preschool program across Larimer County utilizing existing providers and space to accommodate all 3 and 4-year-old students.**

## Introduction

Larimer County's workforce is aging at the same time the economy is experiencing a rapidly growing number of jobs. These factors have combined to create a growing labor shortage.

According to Larimer County, over 80% of women and over 95% of men between ages 25 and 44 are employed. Filling empty job positions during this labor shortage will require the recruitment and retention of a newer, younger workforce. The Talent 2.0 Regional Workforce Strategy (2017) identified three barriers that make the recruitment and retention of this workforce extremely challenging in Northern Colorado:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable child care
- The cost of transportation

The Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force was appointed to develop strategies that address the lack of affordable child care, so that parents are available to fill needed jobs.

This document describes the challenge of finding solutions, the task force process, and recommendations.

## The Challenge of Finding Solutions

Child care is a complex issue that seeks to solve three separate but related problems.

### ACCESS

Access is defined as the availability of child care for those who need it when they need it.

According to *A Workforce Strategy and Major Economic Driver: Child Care in Larimer County (2018)* there are an estimated 3339 more children ages 0-2 who need care than there are places for those children to go. There are also an estimated 3343 children ages 2-6 who have no access to available care. This is due to a shortage of licensed child care providers and qualified staff.

Even if more child care facilities could be opened, Larimer County does not currently have enough teachers with the required qualifications to staff them.

Early childhood teachers have specialized education and training, and yet are only paid between \$12 and \$15 per hour. Only about 15% of early childhood teachers receive health insurance benefits through their employer, and less than 10% are covered by a pension plan.<sup>1</sup> About two-thirds of child care teachers with children under the age of 18 qualify for public assistance, such as food stamps.<sup>2</sup> To recruit more people into this career, we must increase pay and benefits, and provide scholarships for education.

Larimer County needs over 1000 additional qualified early childhood teachers and/or family child care home providers to meet the current demand for child care, and anticipates this number will grow as our population continues to increase.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epi.org/publication/child-care-workers-arent-paid-enough-to-make-ends-meet>

<sup>2</sup> <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2014/ReportFINAL.pdf>

## QUALITY

We all want children to be safe and cared for in an enriched and appropriate environment. Research has demonstrated that the experiences during the first five years of life profoundly impact brain development and the ability of a child to enter school ready to learn. Providing stable, quality and enriched experiences starting in infancy puts children on the best trajectory for success.

To ensure this and to make sure children are safe, local, state and federal governments have created many rigorous requirements for the facilities, environment, and caregivers of children.

Requirements include levels of facility cleanliness, a baseline number of adults per child, education and experience qualifications for teachers. Toilets, sinks, furniture and educational materials must meet certain standards.

Meeting these standards requires a high level of capital investment for child care providers. They also prevent other buildings from housing child care centers without extensive remodels.

To be a licensed child care business, an impressive number of standards must be met and maintained. These standards ensure a quality experience for our children. They also raise the cost of entry for those interested in opening a child care business.

## COST

Quality of care is critical to the development of young children. However, higher quality can result in high costs for child care providers as well as high costs for families. Families cannot afford to pay more, while providers must maintain high standards and pay wages that attract and retain qualified staff. Child care providers and families both are squeezed financially.

In Colorado, the cost of child care for one child can be as high, or higher, than college tuition. Parents with young children can expect to pay an average of about \$12,000 per year per child, although the cost per child varies significantly based on age and type of care. Those most in need of care for young children are young parents at the start of their careers, which means they have not yet reached their highest earning potential.

Many companies have lost valued employees due to the birth of a child, especially the birth of a second child simply due to the cost of childcare to the family. While it is difficult to pay for one child's care, most families cannot afford to pay to have two or more children in child care. It is simply not a sound financial decision.

According to *A Workforce Strategy and Major Economic Driver: Child Care in Larimer County (2018)*, "This steep cost is directly correlated with spousal retention in the workforce, as families often reach the conclusion that it makes more economic sense for one parent to stay home while the children are young. Reemployment after time off caring for children can also result in underemployment."

Once these three factors (access, quality, cost) are well understood, it becomes clear how challenging it is to solve the puzzle of affordable, available, quality child care for parents.

Increasing access to care with additional investments in teacher training and salaries raises the cost to parents. Increasing quality, so that children receive the best possible care in order to thrive and enter school ready to learn, also increases costs. Reducing costs to increase affordability will reduce quality and the ability to recruit and retain a child care workforce.

Further complicating the matter of access, quality, and cost is the issue of infant and toddler care. Because of their high needs and young age, state regulations require low teacher/child ratios and more specialized training of staff. This is extremely important to ensure quality care. It also greatly increases the cost of care for our youngest children. To ensure financial viability for child care centers that accept infants and toddlers, those centers typically offset the higher cost of care for infants and toddlers with a higher number of older children (ages 3-5). Older children need fewer caregivers and are thus slightly less expensive for the child care provider. To ensure availability of care for infants and toddlers, the current business model requires that older children remain as part of the financial mix.

Another important consideration is continuity of care for the children. Developmentally, children do better when they are bonded with their caregivers. Research tells us that moving children frequently from one caregiver to another is harmful to their sense of stability, and can actually be detrimental to their development. Therefore, creating solutions that take this into account, and that provide for the stability of childcare arrangements is critical for our children's success.

## The Task Force Process

The Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force was established to study the above issues and develop recommendations to present to the community. The task force included representatives from business, early childhood, governmental and philanthropic organizations. (Please see Appendix I for task force members.)

The task force outlined the following criteria by which to judge ideas and strategy suggestions:

- Supports additional access for infants and toddlers—not just focus on preschoolers
- Is within community's control to implement and adjust
- Is feasible to implement
- Impacts the entire system of child care
- Supports quality of care for all children
- Makes child care more affordable for families
- Increases funding to the entire local child care system
- Increases the child care workforce
- Limits the overall costs to businesses
- Improves overall labor force reliability (decreases absenteeism)
- Increases overall capacity in the child care system to allow for access for more children
- Reduces any unintended consequences

The task force held six meetings between June and November 2018. A facilitator was hired to provide structure and leadership through the process.

**Meeting One:** The first meeting's goal was to educate task force members about the scope and complexity of child care.

- The Early Childhood Council of Larimer Council (ECCLC) and Teaching Tree Early Learning Center presented an overview of the child care industry, and challenges regarding availability and cost. Data included:
  - A sample budget and organizational chart of a nonprofit child care facility
  - Overview of state licensure requirements
  - 2018 Larimer County child care data from ECCLC
  - Colorado's Early Childhood Workforce Survey 2017
- Each participant discussed challenges they have had with the child care industry, either personally within their families, or in their businesses to highlight the pervasiveness and breadth of the concerns.

Meeting Two: The goal of this meeting was to explore possible solutions to the complex issues.

- Larimer Department of Human Services presented on the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program and its limitations.
- The members brainstormed and categorized possible solutions to explore. (Please see Appendix II for a list of all suggested solutions.)
- Subcommittees formed to research and analyze the solutions, potential costs, benefits and drawbacks. (Please see Appendix III for solution categories and Appendix IV for Subcommittee members.)
- Each subcommittee included at least one business and one child care representative.

Meeting Three: The goal of this meeting was to share information about possible solutions.

- Each subcommittee presented their analysis, including rating of each solution against the agreed-upon criteria listed at the beginning of this section.
- The assignment for Meeting Four was that each subcommittee continue to refine their recommendations and identify those that best fit the criteria of the task force.

Meeting Four: At this meeting the group narrowed the possible solutions in order to select the most viable to present to the Talent 2.0 Committee.

- Each subcommittee presented its refined recommendations in a one-two page summary, which included (please see Appendix V for each subcommittee summary):
  - An overview of the challenge they were addressing
  - A summary/description of the recommendation
  - Pros/strengths of the recommendation
  - Cons/weaknesses of the recommendation
  - Challenges
  - Risks
  - How it matched the task force criteria
- Using the established criteria as a guide, the task force then discarded anything that was not considered a strong recommendation.

Meeting 5: During this meeting the task force reviewed the final recommendations that had been compiled into draft form.

Meeting 6: The task force reviewed the final report draft and offered suggestions.

## Recommendations

To take greatest advantage of the current workforce in Larimer County, in 2019 and beyond, early care and education must be available to at least 7000 additional children, ages 0-5. As our population grows, this number will also increase.

The following recommendations were developed by the subcommittees of the Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force. These recommendations are not in any specific order. The task force considers each critical for change to occur on the Early Care and Education system. (Each strategy is discussed in more depth in Appendix V.)

## 1. Recommendation:

**Establish a Larimer County Child Care Work Group, including strategic stakeholders from across the community, to continue the work of the Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force and to implement the recommended strategies.**

Larimer County currently has no multi-sector group that is focused specifically on implementing change and making policy recommendations regarding early care and education. The Larimer County Child Care Work Group will provide cross-sector leadership.

### Strategies:

- 1.1 Hire a group facilitator to provide backbone support as the group works to implement the recommended strategies.** Community groups can lose momentum without an effective facilitator to ensure the work stays on track.
- 1.2 Advocate for changes to regulatory and policy barriers.** Examples of advocacy efforts include addressing local building codes and state child care licensing requirements.
- 1.3 Advocate for municipalities, Larimer County and the public health sector to prioritize quality affordable child care as an economic and public health issue.**

## 2. Recommendation:

**Recruit and retain a highly trained and qualified early care and education (ECE) workforce that is paid a competitive wage.**

There are not enough people working in or entering the early childhood field to meet the demands of parents so they can go to work or school. In order for individuals to perceive the child care field as a viable career option, the status and wages of this workforce must be elevated.

### Strategies:

- 2.1 Elevate the status of working in the child care industry through a public education campaign (see Recommendation 5.1) and explore additional funding models (see Recommendation 6).**
- 2.2 Build on existing efforts to improve the school-to-work pipeline for ECE professionals.** Front Range Community College, school districts, the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County and local ECE programs are in the early stages of implementing an ECE apprenticeship model.
- 2.3 Advocate for changes to state regulations and/or early childhood teacher credentialing rules that create barriers for ECE programs to hire and maintain qualified staff.**



## 3.

### Recommendation:

### Educate and engage employers around the impact of child care on the workforce.

Employers are critical partners in child care because they need a workforce. There are multiple tools that employers can use to assist in providing solutions to the issues their employees face in accessing care for their children.

#### Strategies:

- 3.1 Partner with the Talent 2.0 Trailing Spouse efforts to encourage ECE as a possible career option.** Talent 2.0 has already identified the need to engage and support the “trailing spouse” when families relocate to this area. This group has identified the significant need for early childhood workforce, so there could be an opportunity to connect these two efforts.
- 3.2 Educate employers about the Colorado Child Care Tax Contribution Credit and how their company can benefit.**
- 3.3 Share information with employers about a range of benefits which can be offered to support employee child care needs.**
- 3.4 In partnership with employers, continue to explore new child care business models.**  
Business as usual in the childcare sector is not keeping up with demand, community growth and workforce changes. To continue solely with conventional business models designed for a different era, and hope for different results, will only perpetuate and deepen the childcare crisis in Larimer County. By examining nontraditional, out-of-the-box business models, opportunities may emerge to expand childcare access, affordability and capacity. When implementing innovative business models, it is critical to work to understand the impacts on the entire community, and particularly any negative impacts on vulnerable populations.

## 4.

### Recommendation:

### Collect and analyze updated data about the impact of child care on employment and families.

In order to support our engagement of businesses, we need current, local data from businesses and families about the impact of child care. Early Childhood Council of Larimer County conducted community wide surveys in 2003 and 2010, but those are now outdated.

#### Strategies:

- 4.1 Utilizing the 2003 and 2010 surveys as a guide, collect updated information about Larimer County’s child care situation through the Chambers of Commerce and employers.** Data to be collected includes:
  - Current child care benefits being offered by employers
  - Impact of child care on employee retention/recruitment
  - Survey of employees regarding child care needs and financial impact of child care on their families
- 4.2 Partner with entities that conduct comprehensive planning processes and already collect data (such as the public health sector, city and county and other) to include questions about the impact of childcare on employment and families.** We recommend partnering with them to make sure the information gathered is from as many facets of our community as possible.

## 5.

### Recommendation:

**Conduct a public education campaign incorporating the results of data collection.**

Most people are not aware of the impact of child care on families or the economy unless they have personally been impacted. We recommend getting the word out to a variety of groups through multiple avenues.

#### Strategies:

- 5.1 Hire a public relations firm to develop a strong, compelling education campaign.
- 5.2 Present findings of data gathering effort to community organizations and groups.
- 5.3 Through the campaign, engage additional partners in advocacy efforts.

## 6.

### Recommendation:

**Broaden and develop new and diverse funding streams for all aspects of Early Childhood Education, including public, private and philanthropic resources.**

Families struggle to pay enough for child care to allow child care programs to pay competitive wages to their employees. Our recommendation is to seek out new funding streams to support the child care industry.

#### Strategies:

- 6.1 **Engage entities such as Health District of Northern Larimer County, municipalities, Larimer County, Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, United Way of Larimer County, other foundations, businesses to prioritize identifying funding solutions.** For solutions to work well, the entire community needs to be focused on what they can do to help.
- 6.2 **Create new and diverse funding streams.** Potential areas for funding include scholarships for teachers and children, attraction and retention of workforce, and capital to expand the space available for early care and education.
- 6.3 **Advocate that municipalities designate support for early care and education as a part of their economic development efforts (see also Recommendation 1.3).**
- 6.4 **Advocate that Larimer County fund action items related to early care and education.** Larimer County's 2018-2023 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) includes the goal *Provide access to quality childcare* and its 2018-2023 Strategic Plan includes the goal *By 2023, Larimer County will increase capacity for child care to provide at least one licensed child care spot in family child care homes, child care centers or preschool setting for every 1.5 children in the community.*

# 7.

## Recommendation:

As part of a comprehensive child care solution for children ages 0 – 5, continue to explore the possibility of instituting a universal preschool program across Larimer County utilizing existing providers and space to accommodate all 3 and 4-year-old students.

Some communities have developed funding streams that guarantee universal preschool for 3 1/2 to 4-year-old children in order to support school readiness for all children.

### Strategies:

- 7.1 Explore utilizing available community space.
- 7.2 Consider the Colorado Preschool Program model as a mechanism for distribution of funds.
- 7.3 Evaluate the impact of this strategy on the entire community, including infants and toddlers.

## What is Currently Happening Regarding Recommendations?

Recommendation	What is Currently Being Done?	How Talent 2.0 Can Help?	Suggested Partners
Establish a Larimer County Child Care Working Group, that includes strategic stakeholders from across the community, to continue the work for the Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force and to implement the recommended strategies.		Provide \$10,000 to fund facilitator and administrative costs.	Organizations and entities with influence in the community, including business partners.
Develop and implement a strategy to recruit and retain a highly trained and qualified workforce that is paid a competitive wage.	<p>Implementing an early childhood apprenticeship for high school students (collaborative effort of ECCLC, FRCC, PSD and TSD)</p> <p>Cohort model for developing early childhood teachers (collaborative effort of ECCLC, FRCC, local child care programs)</p> <p>Campaign to recruit family child care homes (ECCLC)</p> <p>Developing career pathways flowchart to help with recruitment (ECCLC)</p>	Support and assist efforts.	Front Range Community College, Thompson School District, Poudre School District, Estes Park School District, Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development, Department of Labor, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance, City of Fort Collins Office of Social Sustainability, Bohemian Foundation, Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, local child care programs

Recommendation	What is Currently Being Done	How Talent 2.0 Can Help	Suggested Partners
<p><b>Educate and engage employers around the impact of child care on the workforce.</b></p>		<p>Provide \$2000 for materials and administrative costs.</p> <p>Provide access to business conversations.</p>	<p>Talent 2.0, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, Front Range Community College, Colorado State University, AIMS Community College, Larimer County Economic &amp; Workforce Development, Chambers of Commerce, Realtors, Larimer County Child Care Working Group, Certified Public Accountants, Northern Colorado Human Resource Association, Workforce Symposium, EPIC</p>
<p><b>Collect and analyze updated data about the impact of child care on employment and families.</b></p>		<p>Fund data collection.</p> <p>Incorporate this topic into business assessment tools.</p>	<p>Chambers of Commerce, Employers, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, Colorado State University, Health District of Northern Larimer County, municipalities, Larimer County, school districts, Regional Data Group, Health District of Northern Larimer County</p>
<p><b>Conduct public education campaign incorporating the results of data collection.</b></p>		<p>Fund public relations firm for development of messages and materials.</p> <p>Lead conversation that this is an economic development issue.</p>	<p>Larimer County Child Care Working Group, Executives Partnering to Invest in Children, the media, public relations firm, legislators, Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance, local elected officials, lobbyists, ECCLC</p>
<p><b>Broaden and develop new and diverse funding streams for all aspects of Early Childhood Education, including public, private and philanthropic resources.</b></p>		<p>Advocate for existing and expanding tax credits that benefit early childhood education.</p>	<p>Health District of Northern Larimer County, municipalities, Larimer County, Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, United Way of Larimer County, other foundations, EPIC, businesses, ECCLC</p>
<p><b>Continue to explore the possibility of instituting a Universal Preschool program across Larimer County utilizing existing providers and expanding space to accommodate all 3 and 4 year old students.</b></p>		<p>Support exploration effort.</p>	<p>Early Childhood educators, school districts, other communities who have successfully done this</p>

# Appendices



A Report by The Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force

# Appendix I. // Task Force Participants

## Talent 2.0 Child Care Task Force

Invited Members as of 05-30-18

Facilitator, Mary Atchison		Yellow Wagon Leadership	mary@yellowwagonleadership.com
Jaime	Cawthron	Aspen Grove Veterinary Care	jaime@aspengrovevet.com
David	Hammond	Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC)	David.Hammond@dgsllaw.com
Mims	Harris	Be Ready Facilitator and ECCLC Board Member	mimsbharris@gmail.com
Ann	Hutchison	Fort Collins Area Chamber	ahutchison@fcchamber.org
Seth	Kelley	BASE Camp	sethk@mybasecampkids.org
Kristy	Klenk	Downtown Development Authority	kklenk@fcgov.com
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Eric	Lea	Robert Half	eric.lea@roberthalf.com
Adam	Molzer	City of Fort Collins	amolzer@fcgov.com
Heather	O'Hayre	Larimer Dept of Human Services	ohayrehj@co.larimer.co.us
Jodie	Riesenberger	Bohemian Foundation	jodie@bohemianfoundation.org
Sylvia	Robinson, Ph.D.	Tolmar	Sylvia.robinson@tolmar.com
Lisa	Sadar	ECCLC	lsadar@ecclc.org
Joyce	Saffel	Columbine Health Systems	joyce.saffel@columbinehealth.com
Deirdre	Sullivan	The Family Center/La Familia	deirdre@thefamilycenterfc.org
Bev	Thurber	ECCLC	bthurber@ecclc.org

### All Suggestions for Solutions

(Brainstorm Meeting 2)

1. Increase college student internship/work experience with child care centers.
2. Market for more students within educational fields—such as business students, to get dual degree with education
3. Increase understanding of needs of employees for child care within companies—how to support their financial need vs. work schedule
4. Fund a CCAP-like system to subsidize wider range of families to be able to afford high quality child care
5. Focus on costs for highest expense care and best investments—Infants and toddlers (NOT universal preschool!)
6. Tax incentives for child care businesses—all types
7. Tax incentives for child care employees
8. Encourage businesses (who benefit from this, by the way) to help fund child care
9. Require businesses to fund child care
10. Incentivize
11. Campaign to increase awareness of critical current and future impact of high quality care and value these professionals
12. Examine unnecessary licensing requirements/staffing—what do other states look like?
13. Tax credits for developers who support non-profit early care and education (ECE)
14. Increase effort to recruit out of High School teachers (High School license)
15. Access to housing
16. Community funding to fully support ECE continuing education
17. Employer supported care in partnership with licensed centers
18. Developer requirements? Zoning for ECE?
19. Look at how other communities are financing ECE with public dollars
20. Facilitate cost sharing options between centers and private sector—non-monetary, etc.
21. Integrate ECE into housing developments and offer housing for staff
22. Collective effort for scholarship fundraising that is centrally housed and distributed across centers—public-private fund
23. Incentives to create new centers
24. Incentives to encourage smaller centers/home-based
25. Regulation reform
26. Charitable fund to pay for child care
27. Coops for business-child care
28. Head Start staffed by local business
29. Encourage Sharing Talent/Sharing Kids program—share job and share care
30. Business Plan issue
31. Don't try to fix it—existing system too big and too broken
32. Women-owned business grants
33. WomenGive
34. Non-profit similar to RFC/business members
35. Private fundraising for budget gaps
36. Public Service marketing plan
37. Organizational structure change
38. Allocate CCAP funding in tiered levels
39. Separate funding source for 'affordability' for those 70% - 100% AMI
40. Tax credit for hosting on site care
41. Full day kindergarten
42. Universal Pre-K
43. FAMLI Act
44. Create hourly require for certification for below 18 years old.
45. Affordable child care in affordable housing
46. County tax to share cost
47. Special tax district like art or health districts
48. Tax (beverage tax type of thing)
49. Property tax
50. Coordinated campaign for system level change/funding
51. Private sector solution (business model for expansion)
52. Educational reimbursements
53. Hold politicians accountable (SCAN)

## All Suggestions for Solutions

54. Public initiatives to support payments complimentary to CCAP
55. Collaborative effort by businesses to establish and operate child care centers—CCTC-qualifying
56. Employer benefit of child care subsidy with co-pay
57. Scholarship fund for parents who are above CCAP level—foundation and CCTC qualifying donation
58. Public initiatives to support development and operation of additional centers
59. Cost-sharing cooperatives
60. Shared services
61. Lobbying for greater CCAP
62. Lobbying for statewide initiative to fund child care, sort of like Colorado Pre-K
63. WorkLife Partnership—funnels dues from business members—grant dollars to increase child care slots
64. Business co-op child care centers—then other providers would have more slots open
65. Business fund non-profits for child care grants
66. Tax credits for education for providers
67. Joint effort to finally address TABOR so there are more funding dollars
68. State level overhaul of licensing--\$ to counties
69. Business subsidize child care funding
70. Database of tradeoff list—employees who can watch other kids
71. “In everything we do in Larimer County, we think of children 0-5”.
72. ‘Build a parking structure—Build a child care center’
73. Include child care center in large housing complex
74. When we talk about education, include 0-5 (not just K-12)
75. CCAP
76. State/county funding formulas
77. City funding formulas
78. Elect public officials who advocate and commit to early care and education—with examples of what they will do to help the situation
79. Collaboration between and among providers
80. Collaboration between FRCC and CSU education programs
81. Pilot programs—try things on for size
82. Comprehensive education program about ECE
83. Local public funding for CCAP
84. Employer engagement—contacting for employee slots, FSA promotion, flex hours/schedules when possible
85. Workforce initiative—look at salary subsidy models across the country
86. Increase use of child care tax credit
87. Workforce recruitment—WIB involvement, connections with high schools, connections with low-income/minority communities
88. Local taxing policy—tax breaks for locating in certain areas (especially with requirements about accepting CCAP), utility breaks
89. Benefits—pooled health insurance and other benefits for child care workers (need to look at regulatory barriers)
90. State waivers around workforce requirements
91. Increase CCAP funding advocacy
92. Child care impact fees for new businesses (like environmental impact fees)
93. Meeting with potential elected officials
94. Review licensing requirements, other policies and regulations impacting feasibility of operating an in-home or center
95. Create/expand day care as FRCC/AIMS as a child care center and workforce recruiting
96. Employer provided centers
97. Renew TABOR/marijuana laws
98. Income tax credits for providers
99. Alternative business model for care provision that aligns with local business/employment sector—MBA project, Innovation Challenge, Start-up Week
100. Co-op employee benefits for ECC educators
101. Pilot on-site ECE at local employer
102. Incentivize and support in-home start-ups
103. Expand PSD programs for increased access
104. Scholarship fund campaign
105. Scale the ECCLC and FRCC project



# Appendix III. // Categorized Solutions

## Possible Solutions to Child Care Issues

### Universal Child Care (5 Votes)

- Universal Pre-K
- Expand PSD ECC Programming

### Employer Supported Care (8 votes)

- Groups of private companies Survey need for daycare onsite vs. offsite service
- Pilots of onsite childcare at local employers
- Employee-supported care in partnership with licensed centers (onsite, offsite/ center-based)
- Businesses co-operate child care centers for employees-open slots in other centers and homes
- Incentivize and enable businesses to develop and support child care centers that would serve their employees (discount rate) and others in a way that allows businesses to claim child care contribution credit
- Financial incentives to create new centers

### Legislation/ Advocacy (10 votes)

- Legislation to provide an independent analysis of child care and provider shortages
- Meeting with Governor candidates before election-discuss administrative changes, TABOR, marijuana tax rules
- Joint effort to finally address TABOR so there is more funding available
- Elect public officials who articulate and commit to support ECE with an explanation of what they will do
- Coordinate advocacy campaign with diverse and influential voices for increased funding and system change
- Develop comprehensive education program about ECE funding
- In everything we do in Larimer County, we think of children 0-5
- Campaign to increase awareness that our investment in young children makes a short and long term difference
- Promote state government level action to increase CCAP and support 0-5 child care similar to Colorado pre-K program

### Local Tax Initiative (4 Votes)

- Separate CCAP or universal subsidy option to expand subsidy to broader range of families and support programs at level to provide quality
- Collective effort for cliff/gap scholarship funding (private/public \$\$) that is centrally housed and distributed in a way that is responsive to family geography
- Separate funding 'locally governed' to offset 70% - 100% AMI. County wide tax
- Sugar beverage tax to fund ECE needs (happening in WA state)
- Local taxing policies—e.g. tax breaks for certain areas, utility tax breaks
- County tax
- Tax initiative
- County level ballot initiative to expand and support high quality, accessible, affordable child care that also supports worker recruitment, training and retention

## Possible Solutions to Child Care Issues

### Workforce Recruitment (7 votes)

- ECE Workforce recruitment
- Increase college student work experience/credits while providing employers workers
- ECE workforce benefits and salary subsidies (research models)
- Tax credits for education for providers
- Promote in home ECE as post-retirement opportunity and lobby state to substitute life experience for specific required coursework
- Utilize apprenticeship models for workforce need
- Educational reimbursement for teachers who stay in field X years
- Provide preschool/ECE certification as part of high school electives so students graduate ready to enter ECE workforce

### New Business Models (8 votes)

- New facility, new business plan. Different sources of funding for budget gap, business membership, business grants (women-owned)
- Start up funding-education via Small Business Development Center (SBDC), resource list
- Business challenge to design alternative ECC start-up business model that directly aligns to business/employer needs
- Private funding-grants, employer benefits, Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)

### Regulatory Reform

- Review child care licensing and other related policies and regulations impacting feasibility/liability for operating child care
- Analyze licensing requirements that lead to higher costs (Comparative to other states) and advocate for change

### Other Ideas

- Survey families for needs and desires
- Job share and kid share
- Cost sharing/shared services
- FAMLI Act
- Barrier to new providers is space/cost of leases, etc. Recruit places like churches to allow programs to start in their space and charge low rent

## Appendix IV. // Subcommittees

### Talent 2.0 Subcommittees:

#### Legislation/Advocacy

David	Hammond	Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC)	David.Hammond@dgsllaw.com
Mims	Harris	Be Ready Facilitator and ECCLC Board Member	mimsbharris@gmail.com
Ann	Hutchison	Fort Collins Area Chamber	ahutchison@fcchamber.org
Heather	O'Hayre	Larimer Dept of Human Services	ohayrehj@co.larimer.co.us
Kristy	Klenk	Downtown Development Authority	kklenk@fcgov.com

#### Employer Supported Care

David	Hammond	Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC)	David.Hammond@dgsllaw.com
Kristy	Klenk	Downtown Development Authority	kklenk@fcgov.com
Heather	O'Hayre	Larimer Dept of Human Services	ohayrehj@co.larimer.co.us
Jodie	Riesenberger	Bohemian Foundation	jodie@bohemianfoundation.org
Bev	Thurber	ECCLC	bthurber@ecclc.org

#### Universal Child Care

Seth	Kelley	BASE Camp	sethk@mybasecampkids.org
Jaime	Cawthron	Aspen Grove Veterinary Care	jaime@aspengrovevet.com

#### Regulatory Reform

Lisa	Sadar	ECCLC	lsadar@ecclc.org
Bev	Thurber	ECCLC	bthurber@ecclc.org

## Talent 2.0 Subcommittees:

### New Business Model

Jaime	Cawthron	Aspen Grove Veterinary Care	jaime@aspengrovevet.com
Eric	Lea	Robert Half	eric.lea@roberthalf.com
Adam	Molzer	City of Fort Collins	amolzer@fcgov.com
Anne	Lance	Teaching Tree	alance@teaching-tree.org

### Workforce Recruitment

Eric	Lea	Robert Half	eric.lea@roberthalf.com
Sylvia	Robinson, Ph.D.	Tolmar	Sylvia.robinson@tolmar.com
Lisa	Sadar	ECCLC	lsadar@ecclc.org
Joyce	Saffel	Columbine Health Systems	joyce.saffel@columbinehealth.com
Deirdre	Sullivan	The Family Center/La Familia	deirdre@thefamilycenterfc.org

### Local Tax Initiative

Ann	Hutchison	Fort Collins Area Chamber	ahutchison@fcchamber.org
Seth	Kelley	BASE Camp	sethk@mybasecampkids.org
Jodie	Rieszenberger	Bohemian Foundation	jodie@bohemianfoundation.org
Deirdre	Sullivan	The Family Center/La Familia	deirdre@thefamilycenterfc.org

## Data Subcommittee Recommendation

### RECOMMENDATION: Collect data around impact of child care on employment

- 1. OVERVIEW:** In order to support our engagement of businesses, we need current, local data from businesses and families about the impact of child care. ECCLC had done community wide surveys in 2003 and 2010, but those are now quite outdated.
- 2. RECOMMENDATION:** To gather data from across the community to better understand impact of child care access/cost on recruitment, retention and productivity, using a multi-tiered strategy:

#### PRIMARY DATA:

- a) EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE DATA COLLECTED THROUGH THE CHAMBERS:**
  - Survey business members (potentially only larger employers – minimum of 50 or 100 employees). Brief survey would ask questions such as:
    - Do you offer childcare benefits as part of your package? If so, what type (provide check list)
    - What messages are most motivating for you to invest in a fund for ECE? Tax credit? Affect bottom line for productivity? Good thing for the community?
  - Employers would be asked to share an external link (3rd party surveyor) with employees to get feedback directly from them about child care issues. As an incentive, this data could be aggregated for larger employers and shared back with them so they get a sense of how their business is directly impacted. Questions would be adapted from previous ECCLC surveys (and would be vetted with employers/families before using). Some possible questions include:
    - What is your childcare need?
    - How many days of work in past 3 months have you missed due to childcare issues?
    - Do you use employer supported benefits? If so, what (provide check list)
    - If you do not use employer supported benefits, why not?
    - One or multiple children—ages and are they in same center/site?
    - Preferred ranking of options
    - Percentage of income spent on childcare
- b) NEW/POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE DATA COLLECTED THROUGH CHAMBERS:**
  - Have button on Chamber websites for people coming to the community to answer questions about child care needs
- c) 2019 COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY THROUGH THE HEALTH DISTRICT:**
  - Insert a couple of questions about child care needs. Could reach people who have left the work force or reduced hours due to child care issues. Sample question: Have you left the workforce due to lack of availability or cost of child care?

#### SECONDARY DATA:

- a) MAPPING Project:**
    - Mapping of population (children 0-5); licensed child care locations; and employers
    - Maybe use CSU students
  - b) Work Life Partnership – do they have data they could provide around need?**
- 3. PROS/STRENGTHS:** Having current data will help us understand need and “sell” this as an issue to employers. In order to build a salient community-wide campaign, we need accurate data.
  - 4. CONS:** Having enough responses to be statistically valid.

**5. CHALLENGES:**

- Need to check with data experts about size of employer needed to ensure anonymity of aggregate data and number of employers needed to be valid.
- Persuading the Health District to add child care questions to their survey.

**6. RISKS:** Data may be skewed by only surveying larger employers.

**7. COSTS:** Potential costs for developing, delivering and analyzing survey, and providing incentives for responding. Strong possibility of using graduate public health students from CSU for project, which would minimize cost.

**8. IDEAL PARTNERS:** Chambers, Talent 2.0 members, Health District, CSU, Health Department/Community Health Improvement Plan, ECCLC

**9. PHASING OF IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Chamber Surveys
- Adding link to chamber website for people moving to community
- Mapping Project
- Health District Survey (2019)

**10. HOW MATCHES CRITERIA:** Analysis not done.

## Business Support Subcommittee Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION #1: Promoting Colorado Child Care Tax Credit (CCTC) and Employee Benefits

1. **OVERVIEW:** Employers are likely unaware of the tax benefit of investing in early care and education via CCTC, or of creative benefits employers can offer to help offset the challenges of securing early care and education for children.
2. **RECOMMENDATION:** Engage employers to invest in their employees through use of tax credit and employee benefits. Succinctly package the information about tax credit, how to use it, what's in it for them, and examples of the benefit package opportunities. Engage HR teams to help with marketing to business CEOs.
3. **PROS/STRENGTHS:** More family-friendly policies contribute to recruitment and retention (according to some data), helps alleviate the cost of recruitment when potential employees are unable to relocate here due to lack of child care.
4. **CONS/WEAKNESSES:** Will increase immediate cost to businesses (either via investment for tax credit or expanded benefit offerings; doesn't address the shortage of care in the community).
5. **CHALLENGES:** Cost of recruitment, productivity and retention related to the child care issues tend to be hidden to employers; often employees aren't transparent with employers about the challenges.
6. **RISKS:**
  - IRS pending regulation to dilute the impact of the CCTC
  - Uncertainty about how the CCTC can be used in CO - lawyers in the Dept of Revenue interpretation
  - CO tax credit could be used so aggressively that State doesn't want to do it anymore.
7. **COSTS:** Business have to invest, up-front cost of outreach/promotion
8. **IDEAL PARTNERS TO IMPLEMENT:** HR managers/directors group, a committed partner in the business sector to be a leading voice, carry a B2B (business to business) message not a child care sector to business sector.
9. **PHASING OF IMPLEMENTATION:**
  - Get clear on the data - what does it say about workforce implications, local trends, etc.
  - Get clear and consistent in messaging what is in it for the employers, ROI, retention value.
  - Get clear on exactly what the benefit opportunities are, their associated cost, pros/cons, etc. (e.g. data and messaging help from Early Milestones of CO, EPIC)
  - Engage willing HR professionals to help craft the message that will resonate with employers.
  - Think about the long-term support system for employers wanting to do this type of employee support. Who could be that resource?
10. **HOW MATCHES CRITERIA:**

Criteria	Score	Criteria	Score
Includes infants/toddlers	1-5?	Increases child care work force	0
Our community controls it	5	More affordable to families	1-5?
Unintended consequences to larger community?	3 (internal to biz)	Funding increase to the system	0
Feasible to accomplish	5	Increases overall cost to business	3
Changes child care system	0	Increases reliability of workers	4
Ensures quality care	0	Increases overall capacity of system	0

**RECOMMENDATION #2: Leverage Talent 2.0 Trailing Spouse Strategy**

- 11. OVERVIEW:** Talent 2.0 has already identified the issue of engaging and supporting the “trailing spouse” when families relocate to this area. This group has identified the significant need for early childhood workforce, so there could be an opportunity to connect these two efforts.
- 12. RECOMMENDATION:** Connect with Talent 2.0 Trailing Spouse work to discuss ways to connect to existing efforts to recruit early childhood work force. Those strategies are multi-pronged, and include recruitment for people to become early childhood teachers in child care centers and to provide in-home child care.
- 13. PROS/STRENGTHS:** The systems for supporting people to enter into the early childhood field are already in place through ECCLC. This mostly requires connecting those efforts to the existing Talent 2.0 Trailing Spouse efforts.
- 14. CONS:** none identified
- 15. CHALLENGES:**
  - This will probably need an extra step before connecting with employers. That step will be connecting with ECCLC to see what the person would need to be qualified under Colorado Child Care Regulations, and then to support the person to meet those qualifications. These systems are in place through ECCLC.
  - Potentially, if this were really successful, the capacity of the existing pipeline systems set up through ECCLC would be stretched. This would be a great challenge to have.
- 16. RISKS:** none identified
- 17. COSTS:** Staff time to participate in network of employers. Potential refinement of existing marketing materials to outline options for trailing spouses. Costs to support interested people to meet Colorado child care requirements.
- 18. IDEAL PARTNERS:** Talent 2.0 partners/employers; ECCLC; child care programs
- 19. PHASING OF IMPLEMENTATION:**
  - Understand and make connection with Increase Access strategy in the Talent 2.0 recommendations, to understand how this could fit in with that plan
  - Once that is figured out, create marketing materials to share and make connections
  - ECCLC support of any spouses interested in entering field
- 20. HOW MATCHES CRITERIA:** Very strong on most items

Criteria	Score	Criteria	Score
Includes infants/toddlers	5	Increases child care work force	5
Our community controls it	5	More affordable to families	0
Unintended consequences to larger community?	5	Funding increase to the system	0
Feasible to accomplish	4	Increases overall cost to business	5
Changes child care system	0	Increases reliability of workers	0
Ensures quality care	0	Increases overall capacity of system	1



**Summary of all group ideas:**

This group originally identified four distinct ideas. Of those, three have been incorporated into the above recommendations:

- Colorado Child Care Tax Credit (CCTC) – part of recommendation #1
- Employee Benefits and Other Employer Strategies – part of recommendation #1
- Leverage Trailing Spouse Strategy in Talent 2.0 recommendation – recommendation #2

The committee believes the remaining strategy, direct financial support for child care by employers, is also important, but did not include it in the top two recommendations due to the cost and potential difficulty of implementation. However, it should be noted that it could be part of the continuum of “employee benefits and other employer strategies” and that the CCTC can be leveraged to support this as well.

The committee also continues to believe that a precursor to all of these strategies needs to be awareness building and engagement with the business community around the access to child care issues.

## Workforce Subcommittee Recommendation

### Lack of Available Child Care related to lack of ECE Workforce

**Overview of the Challenge:** Increase the talent pipeline of Early Care and Education (ECE) workers. We do not have enough people working/entering the field to meet the demands of parents to be able to go to work/school. Need to shift the general public's view about the nature/importance of this work both for its current impact on our economy as well as the future impact on the economy and raise the perceived status of this workforce to a level which people will value the work as a career option and choose to work in the field for a minimum of three to five years, and potentially as a lifelong career.

**Summary of the recommendation:** Focus efforts to support high school (HS) opportunities to have experiences in the field as well as encourage these students to access concurrent enrollment in college courses to access the educational requirements at no/low cost and allow them to enter the field more prepared. Individuals in the age group are more likely able to afford a lower paying job if they are still in HS. Talent 2.0 can help by helping businesses understand the value of having an available child care system to support their own workers to have an ability to work, as well as the value of the work in ECE for the future economy.

#### Pros/Strengths:

- Students can work part time in ECE during HS to complete contact hours requirements while they can still afford to live on lower wages.
- Training in ECE will make these students better parents once they have families of their own, regardless of whether they remain in the field of ECE.
- Attaining the qualifications needed will give HS students the option of working in a childcare center or starting their own home based childcare business with more knowledge about what impact they can make in children's lives while providing a needed service in our community.
- Students can continue their education beyond HS while working in ECE part-time.
- Concurrent enrollment during HS is (mostly) covered by the school district.
- Both Poudre and Thompson school districts have Career and Technical Education Coordinators, many located at each HS to promote this to students.
- School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) at Poudre School District is already looking at how they can connect students, including paid internships, in this field.

#### Cons/Weaknesses:

- Students may not stay in ECE long term.
- Funding will be required for dual enrollment coursework.
- ECE centers will need to provide mentors and offer part-time internships (hopefully paid) to students needing to complete certification requirements.

#### Challenges:

- There will need to be champions at all levels: businesses, the school district, the ECCLC, community colleges and child care centers, parents, etc.
- For non-HS students funding for course work is not sufficient.
- Linking students to courses in ways that meet their needs. A need to address obstacles related to HS student access to courses: students go to college campuses, college instructors go to high schools, on-line access and/or an apprenticeship model all have various policy barriers that are being looked at either through work between the community colleges and HS systems and/or through work at the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County (ECCLC).

**Risks:**

- Students may receive all the training and certification and then change their minds about an ECE career.
- Need for adults in ECE to be trained Mentors as having inexperienced students will require closer guidance and supervision, causing a need to address concerns about liability.
- Without good first experiences, people will walk away from this field.

**Costs Involved/Funding Ideas:**

- Beyond a cohort of up to 15 early childhood teachers being trained as mentors for HS students and adults, we need to identify funding to continue this work in the future as the workforce grows.
- Scholarship funding for education for non-HS students which may include something similar to loan forgiveness if they stay in the field.
- Costs to implement and maintain a federally approved apprenticeship model if chosen. Community child care programs are too small to take this on, school districts will be great partners but cannot be the sponsor, ECCLC is positioned for this work in terms of it being able to be countywide but currently lacks funding for this work. Costs of administering an apprenticeship are a barrier regardless of the sponsor. While this could be ideal, especially for HS students, please note barriers identified under the regulatory committee recommendations.

**Ideal Partners:**

- Front Range Community College
- Poudre and Thompson School Districts, including their early childhood programs
- Community ECE programs
- ECCLC
- Interested Businesses/other funders

**Phasing:**

Much of this work has already begun or has been identified by other Talent 2.0 subcommittees for efforts to be done. Talent 2.0 could be most helpful in identifying Champions to raise the awareness of the importance and value of the ECE workforce in Larimer County.

## Regulatory Subcommittee Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION #1: International Building Codes

**1. OVERVIEW:** Many municipalities have adopted the International Building Codes, which can negatively impact family child care home providers (FCCH). Examples include limits on number of children served below levels allowed by licensing and requirements for in-home sprinkler systems.

**2. RECOMMENDATION:**

- Conduct a landscape analysis/meet with local zoning and planning departments to understand each municipality's building codes and impact on licensed child care.
- Advocate with local municipalities to ensure no code is more restrictive than child care licensing or creates undue burden/barrier to provided licensed child care in the home.

**3. PROS/STRENGTHS:**

- Alignment of regulations across systems
- Low one-time cost
- Immediate positive impact on FCCH by removing barriers, lessening confusion over conflicting requirements, and simplifying process of things to consider when becoming licensed

**4. CONS:** None identified

**5. CHALLENGES:** Number of municipalities that exist in Larimer County that need to address this

**6. RISKS:** None identified

**7. COSTS:** Staff time to

- Analyze IBCs in comparison to FCCH regulations
- Potentially develop template proposal to create code guidelines specific to FCCH
- Analyze application of IBCs in each municipality, if needed
- Develop individualized proposals for each municipality, if needed
- Advocacy

**8. IDEAL PARTNERS:** Child care licensing; planning and zoning; FCCH Association leadership; builders; ECCLC

**9. PHASING OF IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Analyze IBCs in comparison to FCCH regulations
- Explore and potentially develop template proposal to create code guidelines specific to FCCH; analysis of planning and zoning by municipality (identify each entity; contact info; maybe how currently applying IBCs)
- Advocacy to modify local IBC application for FCCH

**10. HOW MATCHES CRITERIA:** Very strong on most items

Criteria	Score	Criteria	Score
Includes infants/toddlers	5	Increases child care work force	3
Our community controls it	5	More affordable to families	3
Unintended consequences to larger community?	None identified	Funding increase to the system	No
Feasible to accomplish	5	Increases overall cost to business	No
Changes child care system	4	Increases reliability of workers	3
Ensures quality care	n/a	Increases overall capacity of system	3

**RECOMMENDATION #2: Formal Mechanism to Engage in Policy Specific Advocacy**

- 1. **OVERVIEW:** Because the child care industry is affected by so many policies and regulations at all levels of government, policies are periodically identified that have a negative impact on child care. Although advocacy comes from the child care industry, in general this is an industry made up of small businesses with little influence. The ability to engage more influential voices in specific advocacy could be extremely beneficial. Many of the issues that fall under this are those that were identified in the previous summary by this group, such as the Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit and restrictions on number of children served by in-home care in the City of Loveland. An additional issue that just came up was the possibility of being able to use the City of Fort Collins CDBG funds to fund capital expansion for child care.
- 2. **RECOMMENDATION:** Identify or develop process to mobilize Talent 2.0 members around advocacy for EC issues as they are identified by community members.
- 3. **PROS/STRENGTHS:** Low investment for potentially high return. Child care industry is low status/ low power. Involving outside advocates who are impacted by the industry and have greater influence would make the advocacy more likely to result in change.
- 4. **CONS:** One more ask of people’s time
- 5. **CHALLENGES:**
  - Need to have employers understand the impact these issues have on their bottom line before they will engage as advocates.
  - Capacity to track and identify issues and organize the advocacy.
- 6. **RISKS:** none identified
- 7. **COSTS:** Limited hard costs. This is primarily a need for people to commit time to this effort.
- 8. **IDEAL PARTNERS:** Talent 2.0 members (large and small employers); policy makers; child care industry; issue-specific other partners
- 9. **PHASING OF IMPLEMENTATION:**
  - Start with employer education and engagement around the need for increased child care
  - Identify/develop advocacy process within Talent 2.0
  - Identify/develop strong process for identifying issues
- 10. **HOW MATCHES CRITERIA:** This is dependent on whatever policy is being identified

Criteria	Score
Includes infants/toddlers	3
Our community controls it	3
Unintended consequences to larger community?	Unknown
Feasible to accomplish	3
Changes child care system	3
Ensures quality care	Depends on issue

Criteria	Score
Increases child care work force	Depends on issue
More affordable to families	Depends on issue
Funding increase to the system	Depends on issue
Increases overall cost to business	No
Increases reliability of workers	2-3
Increases overall capacity of system	2-3

**Additional Thoughts for the Report:**

This group originally identified five distinct policy areas. Of those, one is addressed directly in recommendation #1 and the other indirectly through recommendation #2 above. The other three are still important, but will be handled outside of any recommendations for Talent 2.0. See below for brief synopsis:

<p><b>Universal Building Codes:</b> Conduct a landscape analysis/meet with local zoning and planning departments to address identified barriers (e.g., limits on number of children &amp; requirements for in-home sprinkler systems)</p>	<p>Recommendation #1</p>
<p><b>Child Care Contribution Tax Credit:</b> Need to advocate for regulation clarity around whether employers can use tax credit for helping to support employee child care costs</p>	<p>Need advocacy. This is the type of issue under Recommendation #2</p>
<p><b>Council Waiver Authority:</b> Used to address state Child Care Regulatory barriers as identified by focus groups of Family Child Care Homes and/or Child Care Centers</p>	<p>Will continue to use as appropriate. This must happen through ECCLC, so not included in these recommendations</p>
<p><b>Recognition of experience that counts toward becoming Early Childhood Teacher qualified:</b> Advocacy to change regulations to count experience of high school student under the age of 18 and nanny care</p>	<p>We believe the best avenue to address this challenge is through the Council Waiver process noted above.</p>
<p><b>ECE Classes taught in high school:</b> Identify barriers to having FRCC instructors teach early childhood classes in local high schools</p>	<p>These barriers are twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National accreditation standards for the college requires master’s degree in early childhood to teach EC classes (only one PSD teacher meets this requirement)</li> <li>• Colorado Department of Education Teacher Licensure is required to teach in school buildings (and FRCC instructors don’t have this)</li> </ul> <p>We believe that this will be an on-going dialog with FRCC, local schools and ECCLC to problem solve, and does not make sense to include in above recommendations.</p>

## Advocacy Task Force Recommendations

### **RECOMMENDATION: Collect data around impact of child care on employment**

#### **1. Education of the Public on Issues – Conscious Raising/Building Relationships**

***Develop a comprehensive outreach plan to share insight into issues facing communities, employers and families. Focus on issues education and proposed solutions.***

- a. General Community – Presentations, Emails, Articles, Opinion Pieces, Ads, Editorial Boards
  - i. Service-based organizations:
    1. AAUW - American Association of University Women - both Fort Collins and Loveland
    2. Community Foundation of Northern Colorado
    3. Junior League of Fort Collins
    4. WomenGive
    5. Kiwanis
    6. League of Women Voters
    7. Lions - Fort Collins and Loveland and Berthoud
    8. Rotary - Fort Collins and Loveland
    9. Zonta
  - ii. Advocacy-based organizations:
    1. NCLA (Ann contact)
    2. Fort Collins Area Chamber
    3. Loveland Chamber
    4. NFIB
    5. Denver Metro (CCC) (Ann contact)
    6. CACI
  - iii. Government organizations:
    1. Fort Collins City Council
    2. Loveland City Council
    3. Estes Park Town Board (Frank Lancaster)
    4. Larimer County Commissioners
  - iv. Educational Institutions:
    1. Colorado State University
    2. Front Range Community College
    3. Poudre School District
    4. Thompson School District
  - v. Editorial Boards
    1. BizWest
    2. Loveland Reporter-Herald
    3. Coloradoan
  - vi. State Legislators:
    1. Ginal
    2. Arndt
    3. Kefalas
    4. Buck
    5. McKean
    6. Lundberg

vii. Relationship focus:

1. Early Childhood Leadership Commission
2. Colorado Children's Campaign
3. NCLA
4. CCC – Denver Metro
5. United Way – Larimer County, Denver
6. Early Childhood School Readiness Commission
7. Larimer County Strategic Plan

b) Elections

- i. Questions during candidate forums re: Child Care

**2. Change Efforts – After Local Analysis**

***Create a framework to analyze solutions from a local perspective and then lobby for that change. Create partnerships to lobby at the local and state level on solutions that make sense for Northern Colorado.***

- a. Once change is identified, analyze from a local perspective. This might mean the creation of a local organization to evaluate issues.
- b. Once a local perspective is finalized, begin proactive communication/lobbying on that change utilizing resources already in place (business organizations, Early Childhood Council, Health Directors Association, etc)
- c. Use this same system to identify grant opportunities and to activate to access those resources.

**Pros/Strengths:** Serves as a platform for education – no matter what the ultimate topic is and allows us to make sure insight has a local component.

**Cons/Weaknesses:** People are bombarded with lots of data and information.

**Costs:** Limited relative to cash, would require investment of time.

**Ideal Partners:** See above.

**Phasing:** This effort can be as big or small as desired.

**Criteria:** Allows the local community to control efforts and feasible to accomplish.



## Universal Pre K Subcommittee Recommendation

The issues around Pre K tend to be on funding, space and workforce.

### 1. Space:

- a. Currently the schools in PSD are overcrowded. With the delay of the new bond moving forward this has put more pressure on the elementary schools just to accommodate the current kindergarten through 5th graders.
- b. Also, there is a transition currently happening that will move All Head Start programs to go full day. The current half day model allows for classrooms to be used twice a day. This new regulation will put added pressure on the space available.
- c. Finally, the rank order of who gets priority on using the school space means that students K-5th, children with special needs, and then Head Start get priority. This pushes early childhood and preschool to feel the space pinch more than any other group.
- d. Solutions:
  - i. Utilize community space. Based on licensing regulations we can ensure quality programming at off school site locations. If a program is licensed, they must meet a rigorous standard to operate.

### 2. Quality:

- a. Utilize quality controls on academic programs: Currently PSD offers Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) funding to community partners. Not only do these partners need to meet licensing regulations but must also work in partnership with PSD staff to develop training, equipment and academic standards.
- b. TS Gold: This is a data collection system currently being used by both CPP partners and the school district to track performance and identify needs through regular assessment of preschooler's achievement. By using this system for all Universal Pre K students we can better address needs, resources and ensure kindergarten readiness.

### 3. Funding:

- a. This one pager does not address where the money comes from but instead looks at the mechanism if the funding was made available.
- b. The CPP model is a great mechanism for distribution of funding. If we expand the current model to accommodate more preschool spots and locations we can ensure quality, licensing, and training.
- c. There are approximately 2100 kindergarten students in the district. Assuming there are a similar number of 4 year olds, and the per student allocation is \$8,200, the cost would be \$17,200,000. The difference between CPP and another fund would be the availability of utilizing a sliding fee instead of paying for the whole program. We could stretch the funding and drop the cost by over half.
- d. CPP currently does not reimburse at the \$8,200 and because the cost of a preschooler does not include busing, building, PSD administration, etc, the cost could be much lower when we negotiate the per student allocation.

### 4. Workforce:

- a. This will continually be an issue. But CPP or this new funding mechanism can reimburse the program at a higher rate than the current CCAP does. Which could lead to better salaries for those that work in the field.

### 5. Kindergarten readiness:

- a. This goal is one shared across this community as well as across most of the country.
- b. The only way to ensure high rates of kindergarten readiness, especially in marginalized groups, is Universal Pre K. Universal Pre K overcomes many of the barriers that have prevented us from already achieving the high gains we are aiming for.

6. Finally, every child enrolled in Universal Pre K is one less child utilizing CCAP. Which would increase the budget of funding available for infant and toddler child care.

## New Business Models for Childcare Subcommittee Recommendation

### Overview of the Problem

Business as usual in the childcare sector is not keeping up with demand, community growth and workforce changes.

To continue solely with conventional business models designed for a different era, and hope for different results, will only perpetuate and deepen the childcare crisis in Fort Collins.

By examining nontraditional, out-of-the-box business models, opportunities may emerge to expand childcare access, affordability and capacity.

### Ideas Being Considered

Developing a community survey, with thorough data analysis, will inform business modeling opportunities and provide further direction. A survey should include:

- Data collection from employers - identify their needs and preferences
- Data collection from families - identify their needs and preferences
- Feasibility evaluation of childcare business model ideas and scenarios (below)
- Sound and representative sampling
- Inclusive of the diversity in Fort Collins and a culturally competent methodology
- Analysis of data and prioritization of options

### Brain Swirl Ideas:

- Backup Care Benefit (on-call childcare in employee's home, ex: Family Care Connection)
- Faith community facilities – space rental or run by the faith org.
- Development of in-home care options, incentives and opportunities to expand
- On-site ECE at businesses
- Alternative funding sources
- UBER-ification of ECE - single, licensed facility with multiple classrooms. In-home providers could lease class/play space. Similar to a Real Estate office arrangement. Provider brings the children they are responsible for.

### Criteria Scoring:

Criteria	Score	Criteria	Score
Includes infants/toddlers	4	Increases child care work force	3
Our community controls it	4	More affordable to families	3
Unintended consequences to larger community?	3	Funding increase to the system	3
Feasible to accomplish	3	Increases overall cost to business	3
Changes child care system	3	Increases reliability of workers	3
Ensures quality care	3	Increases overall capacity of system	4

## ECE Local Tax Initiative Subcommittee Report Out

The original intent of this subcommittee was to analyze the potential of a local tax initiative to support early care and education. While other communities have successfully passed such measures, the group determined that timing is not right locally for a tax initiative request to the community, given the other tax initiatives coming up on the ballot. The issue should certainly be revisited in a year or two, but for now the group focused on strategies to help diversify and increase the funding stream for ECE.

Ideas for diversifying the funding stream include the following:

- Engage the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado to consider creating an ECE Fund to which business and individuals could donate. Those donations would be eligible for the CO Child Care Tax credit. An advisory committee could be put in place to determine distribution of funds. The focus would be on scholarships for workforce development, infrastructure, family scholarships for care, etc.
- Work with Women Give to ensure that the funds they collect from members are used in a way that best contributes to solutions. Group members noted some flaws in the current system that should be explored with UWLC team managing Women Give.
- Tapping into the current County Health Improvement Plan priority of increasing access to early care and education and engaging the Health District in funding strategy conversations.

When the time is right for a local tax initiative, the following criteria/considerations for an initiative were noted by the subcommittee:

The tenets of any proposed tax should include:

- A clearly articulated plan for how the funds raised through a tax will be used.
- A timeline/sunset date at which time the sponsors of the tax initiative will come back to report on progress and revisit the need for continued tax.

Ideally a tax to support ECE would be neither entirely regressive nor progressive, rather something in the middle. A property tax would not likely get the support of the business community. If sales tax items on this fall's ballot pass, Larimer County sales tax will be approaching 10%. Some type of hybrid approach would be ideal.

If a local tax revenue stream be put in place, it is recommended that the current Colorado Preschool Program mechanism be used to funnel dollars to service providers, via the school districts.

Examples of local tax initiatives:

- Mesa County -- EPIC has been asked to supplement the work that Mesa is doing... because of this ECE Taskforce, there is discussion of adding Larimer County.
- Boulder County -- human service tax to fund child care, Medicare, SNAP (food stamps). In building support for this initiative, they did a good job of identifying and breaking down the silo and finding opportunities for streamlining and efficiencies in existing systems before going to the public for additional funding.
- San Miguel County (Telluride area) passed a childcare tax through a property tax mill increase. The initiative will increase property taxes by .75 of a mill, or an estimated \$5.40 for every \$100,000 of assessed residential property value in order to help fund county child care services. The tax is estimated to raise approximately \$616,890 per year.  
[https://www.telluridenews.com/news/article\\_b73acc78-c452-11e7-a3a8-bf25269ac1b3.html](https://www.telluridenews.com/news/article_b73acc78-c452-11e7-a3a8-bf25269ac1b3.html)

# A Workforce Strategy and Major Economic Driver: Child Care in Larimer County

A collaboration of



Directing  
Change



January 2018

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Dear Business and Community Leaders,

Our early childhood community has long been aware of the increasing shortage of child care options in Larimer County. Our lack of adequate child care affects employers in all industries across Larimer County, as parents cannot work when they do not have safe and stable care for their children.

Multiple groups have joined efforts to address this child care shortage:

- Be Ready – a county wide initiative formed in 2010 to engage the community and support young children and their families so that children can enter kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.
- Directing Change – a coalition of non-profit organizations formed in 2017 to collectively advocate for issues that affect children and families.
- Early Childhood Council of Larimer County – a non-profit organization whose mission is to bring the community together to work collaboratively to ensure that all young children in Larimer County have the care, support and opportunities necessary to grow, learn and succeed.

We wrote the white paper, *A Workforce Strategy and Major Economic Driver: Child Care in Larimer County*, to provide a brief overview of child care challenges for employers and families in Larimer County. The issues are complex, and solutions will require the joint effort of businesses, governmental agencies, educational institutions, and the early childhood sector.

We thank you in advance for reading this white paper and becoming informed about Larimer County's child care crisis. For additional information, please contact Mims Harris at [mimsbharris@gmail.com](mailto:mimsbharris@gmail.com).



*Talent 2.0 Regional Workforce Strategy* was released in February 2017. This report was the result of the combined efforts of eight organizations: City of Fort Collins, City of Loveland, Larimer County, Larimer County Workforce Center, Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, Loveland Chamber of Commerce, Northern Colorado Economic Alliance, and United Way of Larimer County.

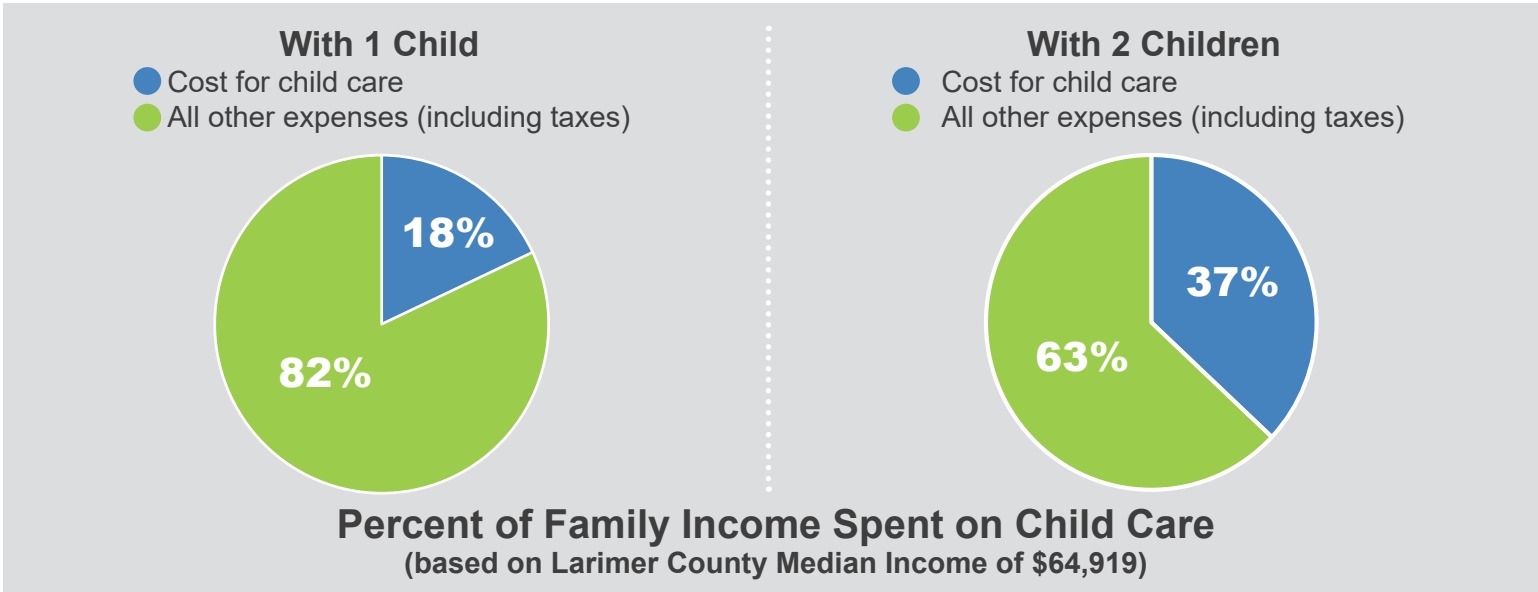
As identified in the Talent 2.0 Regional Workforce Strategy, Larimer County is facing three primary workforce challenges: job growth; current and projected labor shortages; and, the aging of the current workforce. Addressing these challenges requires recruitment of younger employees to move into the market. In Larimer County, over 80% of women and over 95% of men between the ages of 25 and 44 are employed<sup>i</sup>. These employees are the ones most likely to require access to affordable, quality child care as a condition of employment.

**“When we incorporated the cost of childcare into our budget, it turned out that the job offers she had did not offset the cost of childcare.”**  
- Bjorn A.

Yet, as also identified in Talent 2.0, lack of access to child care is one of three key barriers to workforce recruitment and retention in Larimer County. Larimer County has a shortage of quality child care slots for children under the age of 5. Further, the cost of child care is out of reach for many families. We will neither attract nor retain a quality workforce in coming years unless we address the issue of access to affordable, quality child care now.

**Cost of Child Care**

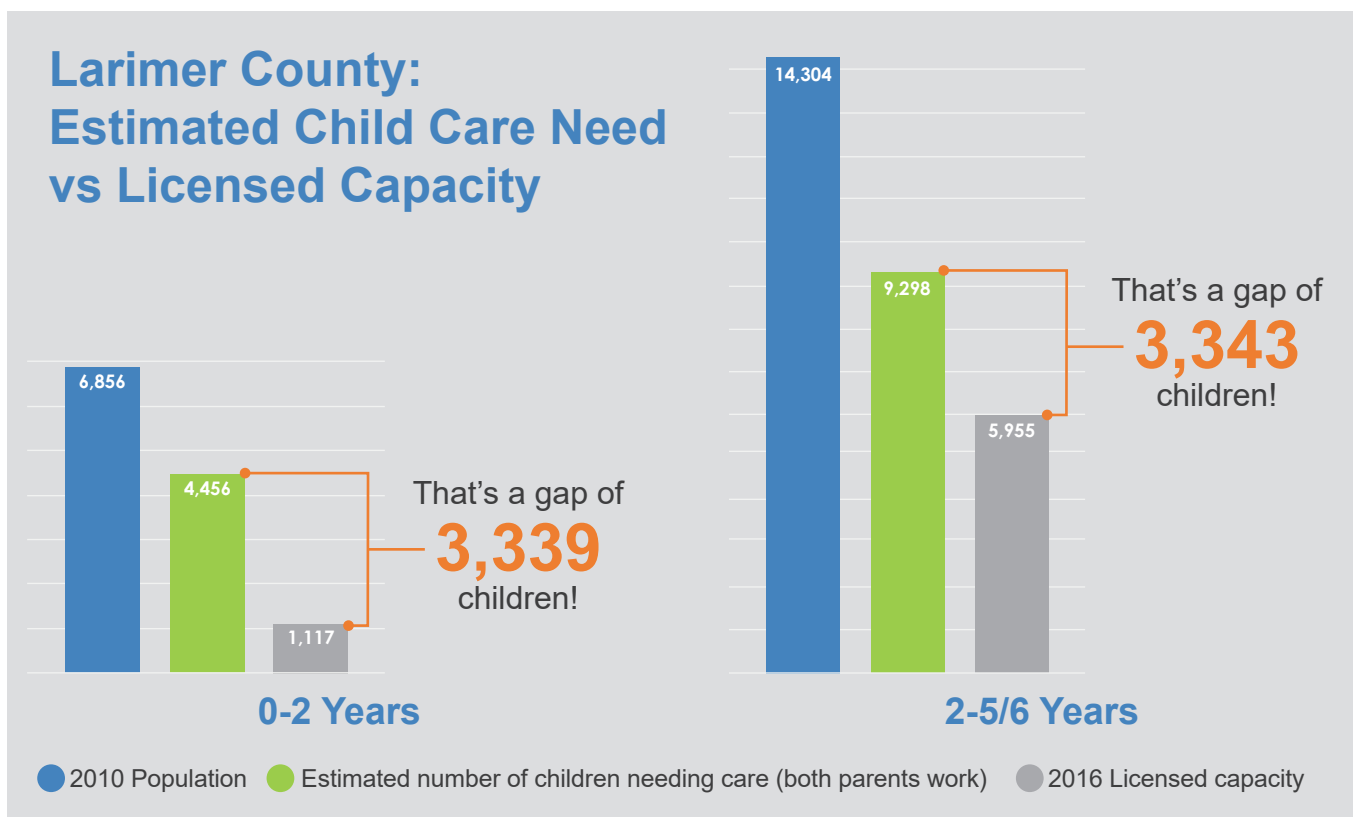
Lack of affordable housing, affordable child care and transportation are identified in Talent 2.0 as structural barriers that impact family budgets. Families in Larimer County can expect to pay approximately \$12,000 per year for each child needing care, although it may vary depending on the age of the child and the type of care chosen<sup>ii</sup>. Families paying for care have less to spend on housing, transportation and the other costs of living. A family with the Larimer County median income of \$64,919<sup>iii</sup> and two children under 5, spends 37% of their pre-tax income to cover child care costs. This steep cost is directly correlated with spousal retention in the workforce, as families often reach the conclusion that it makes more economic sense for one parent to stay home while the children are young. Re-employment after time off caring for children can also result in under-employment.



**Did You Know?** Because 70% of families with young children make less than the median income<sup>iv</sup> the percentage of income spent on child care is often even greater.

## Community Capacity

With the expanding workforce in Larimer County, the gap between demand for and supply of licensed child care is increasing. The shortage is most acute for infant care, with availability estimated at 25% of demand. For preschool age care, availability of licensed care is estimated at 60% of demand. The chart below reflects the estimated 0-5 population<sup>v</sup>, estimated number of children needing care<sup>vi</sup>, and actual supply of licensed child care slots.<sup>vii</sup>



Families in our community, especially families of infants, are often unable to access care, even when they have the capacity to pay for it. No one knows exactly who is caring for the children who are not in licensed care. Parents may leave the workforce, cut back hours or juggle work schedules to cover child care needs. Other parents piece together care using relatives, neighbors, friends, or older siblings. Such care is often inconsistent, impacting both the quality of the child's experiences and the parent's ability to be reliable at work.

**“A 3rd grade teacher in our community was forced to resign mid-semester because she was unable to find care for her infant, leaving a classroom of children without their teacher.”**  
- Nancy A.

## A Failed Market

Child care providers, both profit and non-profit, cannot afford to pay high enough wages to attract and retain a qualified workforce. They, too, are facing workforce challenges that prevent them from operating at full capacity. The high cost of providing quality child care threatens the financial viability and sustainability of providers. The child care industry is considered a “failed market” because those who want the service cannot afford to pay enough for child care providers to afford to supply the desired service.

## Proposal

Just as the issue is multi-faceted, the solutions are also complex. **In response to Talent 2.0’s recommendation to address child care challenges collectively, child care industry leaders propose joining forces with business and economic development leaders, forming an official task force of the Talent 2.0 Strategy to pursue solutions for Larimer County.**

*American business needs a strong workforce, now and in the future, to compete and succeed in the global economy. Yet in the context of global competition for innovation, human talent, and productivity, American businesses are facing a workforce crisis: there are insufficient workers with the skills business needs to fill existing and new job openings. To address this growing skills gap, we must reconsider the entire education pipeline, starting with high-quality early education and care.*

**US Chamber of Commerce  
June 2017**

## This task force would consider, among other things:

- The number of quality, affordable child care slots needed now and in five and ten years;
- The amount that the great majority of Larimer County parents could reasonably afford to pay for child care and the level of assistance that may be required by others;
- The quality of care needed (and measurement of that quality);
- The desired geographic distribution of the additional slots;
- The most readily achievable routes for expanding capacity;
- Strategies for developing and retaining the qualified early childhood workforce necessary to meet demand;
- Preliminary cost models for expanding capacity, achieving necessary geographic distribution, and ensuring affordability for parents and financial sustainability for providers;
- Cost reduction strategies for providers, e.g., sharing kitchen facilities, maintenance services, accounting and payroll services;
- Possible funding for expanding affordable, quality child care capacity, including the funding necessary to develop a definitive plan;
- Regulatory and administrative barriers; and
- Building community support.

**“I was entertaining an offer for a position at CSU and one of my first steps in making the decision was to find child care for my 16 month old daughter. I was shocked to learn how long the waiting lists are in Fort Collins.”**  
**- Jeanine P-G**

Addressing the lack of adequate child care in Larimer County is critical to maintaining a healthy economic environment. Solutions will require the joint efforts of business, policy makers and the early childhood sector.

<sup>i</sup> Economic and Workforce Health Report, Larimer County Workforce Development Board, Spring 2017

<sup>ii</sup> Average Cost of Care Report, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, February 2017

<sup>iii</sup> 2015 Median Income in Larimer County, <https://www.larimer.org/about-larimer-county/vital-statistic-census-information/larimer-county-economy-statistics>

<sup>iv</sup> Study of Projected Demand and Impact of Early Care and Education Services in Larimer County, Colorado, JVA Consulting, LLC, 08/3/2010

<sup>v</sup> <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/>

<sup>vii</sup> Early Childhood Council of Larimer County, 2016