

POLICY PRIORITIES

Iowa Child Care Coalition | 2024

About the Iowa Child Care Coalition (ICCC)

ICCC was formed to more strategically address Iowa's child care crisis. The Coalition, through nonpartisan legislative recommendations, seeks to increase access, affordability, and quality of child care while increasing the stability of the child care workforce across Iowa.







Child care continues to face significant challenges in Iowa – families need care for their children, but it is hard to find and hard to afford. Child care businesses are doing their best, but they continue to confront severe staffing shortages due to high turnover rates and low compensation. We need to implement data-driven solutions that help recruit and retain high-quality child care providers so that Iowa's youngest children have the care they need while their families are working.

To create a truly stable child care workforce, both competitive pay and benefits are needed. Raising wages will reduce reliance on public assistance programs for child care workers and increase retention in the field. These, in turn, create better access to quality learning environments for children.

There can be no child care without the child care workforce.

2024 Legislative Recommendations

The 2024 ICCC policy priorities seek to expand on recommendations included in the Governor's Child Care Task Force Report and advance strategies implemented with federal funding from the ARPA Stabilization Grants.

-  Continue to allow child care providers to automatically qualify for Child Care Assistance (CCA).
-  Establish a child care workforce state matching grants program to fund innovative strategies that support the recommendations in the [2023 Iowa Child Care Workforce Study](#).
-  Increase the CCA reimbursement rates to 75th percentile of the most recent market rate survey. Consider moving to cost of care information rather than market rate to inform CCA reimbursement rates.
-  Increase the CCA entrance income limit from 160% FPL to 185% FPL.
-  Increase the number of absence days allowed for CCA. Consider paying for enrollment rather than attendance.
-  Implement tax initiatives and strategies.
 - State income tax exemptions for child care providers.
 - Address property tax valuation for child care centers to reduce overhead.

We also urge Iowa to sustain funding for intervention and prevention services for birth to 5 year-olds.

Key:  CCA  Taxes  Public-Private Partnerships

Critical solutions require quality data to inform decision-making. ICCC and statewide partners have and will continue to use the results of the 2023 Iowa Child Care Workforce Study and the recommendations from the [Governor's Child Care Task Force Report](#) to guide our priorities and identify solutions for Iowa's child care workforce, as we would encourage policymakers to do, as well.

The five recommendations from the 2023 Iowa Child Care Workforce Study that the coalition believes could be expanded or extended are reflected in the 2024 Legislative Recommendations:

- We need to find sustainable ways to raise the wages of our child care workers.
- The child care workforce needs access to benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement supports.
- Ensure members of the child care workforce have a good work environment.
- Ensure Iowa has a robust system for collecting ongoing data about the needs of the workforce.
- Clarify misunderstandings about current programs that exist in Iowa to support child care businesses.

It is crucial for us to continue to address the issues facing Iowa's child care in order to make quality care more accessible and affordable for parents. We must find ways to increase and sustain the child care workforce, which is facing critical shortages amidst low wages and lack of benefits, while increasing accessibility and keeping child care affordable for parents.

2024 ICCC Member Organizations

The coalition members, along with our statewide partners, collectively support these recommendations to create a more accessible, affordable, high quality child care system sustained by a professional, competitive, and compensated workforce.

