

2026

Iowa Child Care Coalition **LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**



The Iowa Child Care Coalition (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 supporting the stability of the child care workforce across Iowa.

The availability of quality child care strengthens family life and stability. The lack of child care hurts the Iowa family. We must continue to support mixed delivery models for child care across the state to increase accessibility and keep child care affordable for parents. It is also essential that we find ways to bolster and sustain the child care workforce which will require competitive wages and access to benefits.

To achieve these goals, we encourage the Iowa Legislature to:

▶ **Workforce Support**

Establish funding to support recommendations in the 2023 Iowa Child Care Workforce Study, which calls for:

- Ensuring the child care workforce has access to benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement support.
- Strengthening Iowa's system for collecting ongoing data about the needs of the workforce.
- Finding sustainable ways to raise wages for the child care workforce.

Secure state investment in the Child Care Solution Fund, to continue the success of locally driven public-private partnerships.

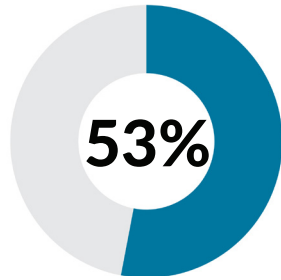
▶ **Child Care Assistance (CCA)**

- Codifying CCA for providers.
- Paying CCA based on enrollment rather than attendance.
- Aligning CCA reimbursement rates for children in foster care with the special needs CCA reimbursement rate.
- Increasing the CCA entrance income limit.

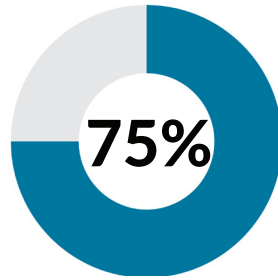
▶ **Tax Strategies**

- Reducing commercial child care property taxes to align with the residential tax rates.
- Implementing income tax strategies to help alleviate economic barriers for child care programs.

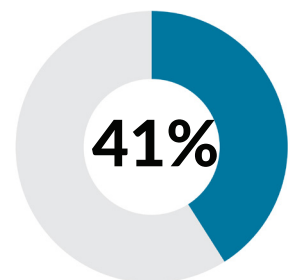
There can be no child care without the child care workforce.



of providers have an annual income under \$20,000 per year, which is less than 200% of the federal poverty level for a family of 3 (average household size for a child care provider)



Iowa has one of the highest rates of both parents of young children in the workforce at 75%



of Iowa's child care programs report a staffing shortage according to a 2024 survey conducted by National Association for the Education of Young Children

Every year Iowa loses an estimated \$1.1 billion due to a lack of high-quality, affordable child care.



Over 50% of child care providers report that they have used at least one public benefit to support their family and over 30% report they are receiving Medicaid. The average hourly wage for a child care worker in Iowa is \$14.00.

More than 53,000 women have left the Iowa workforce since 2020, due to a lack of affordable and accessible child care. Many more women who qualify for jobs cannot seek them due to child care challenges.



Infant care costs a family between 10%-16% of their income. Child care costs often outpace college costs averaging between \$8,500-\$12,600.

Iowa has lost over 1,200 child care home providers over the last 5 years.

Open home providers in Iowa:

July 2020 - 3,193

October 2025 - 1,983

2026 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.

