



Greater Gallatin
UNITED WAY



EMPLOYER SUPPORTED CHILD CARE TOOLKIT



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This toolkit is modeled after the Family Forward Montana Initiative.



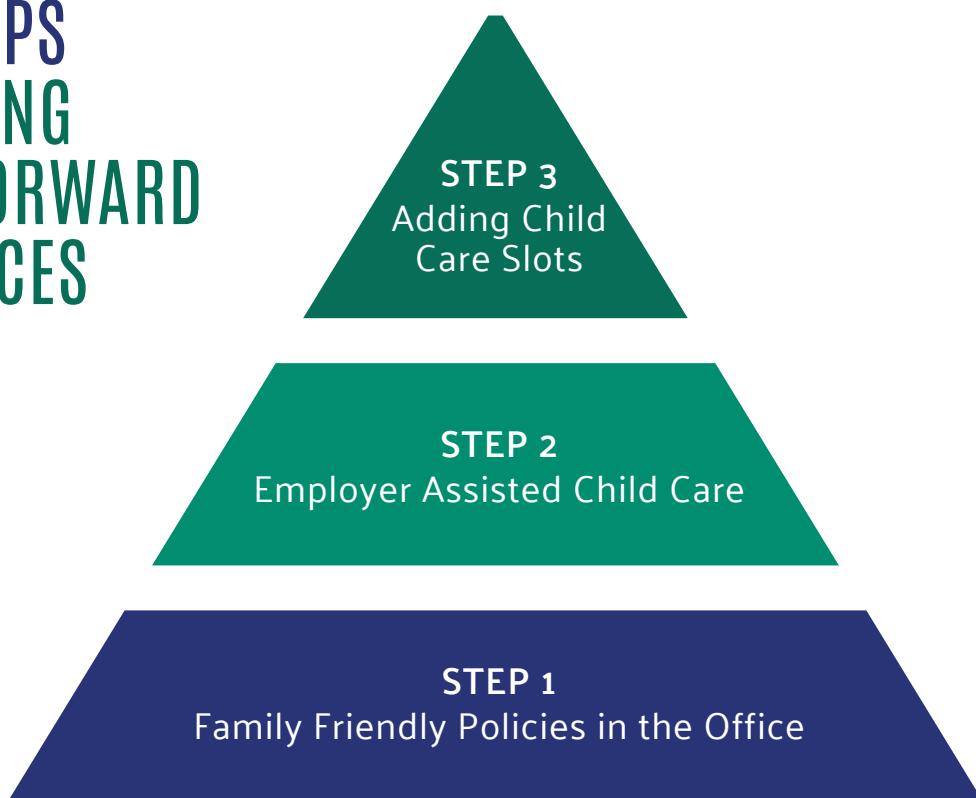
GETTING STARTED

Changes in workplace dynamics, housing costs, and the lack of available affordable child care have converged to create an overwhelming need to work collectively on creative solutions to the shortage of child care options in our region.

Greater Gallatin United Way and the CHILD Task Force are working with local public and private entities to create family forward workplaces that will attract and retain employees. Our efforts focus on three clearly defined steps that businesses implement based on their existing and future child care requirements.

The steps build upon each other, beginning with actionable items that can be instituted with minimal cost and effort.

THREE STEPS TO CREATING FAMILY FORWARD WORKPLACES



GETTING STARTED

Before we dive deeper into the nuances of each step, we will work with your organization to clarify:

- Existing child care needs
- Existing family friendly practices
- Timing, budget, and viability
- Future child care needs

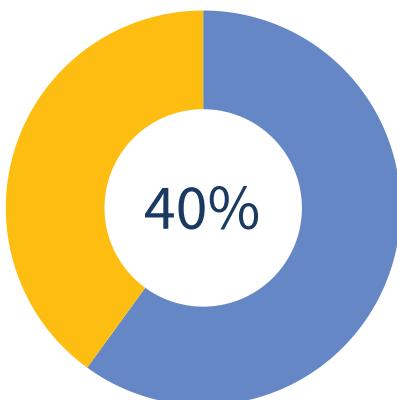


WHY THIS MATTERS

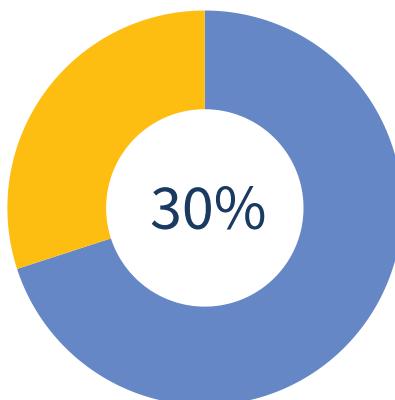
Research estimates an annual economic cost of **\$57 billion in lost earnings**, productivity, and revenue every year in the U.S. due to child care

62% of parents say they missed time from work because of a child care related problem

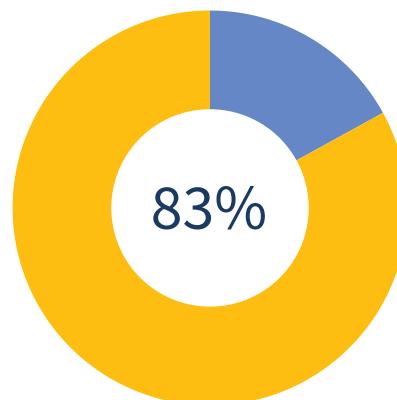
\$907 million- The economic burden of inadequate child care in Montana from 2019 to 2028



40% of Montana businesses report difficulty recruiting or retaining qualified workforce due to lack of child care



30% of Montana businesses say inadequate child care has prevented their company from growing



83% of workers 40 and under would leave their jobs for one with more family-friendly benefits

STEP 1

FAMILY FRIENDLY PRACTICES

We recommend working through the following action items as applicable for your organization.

1. Review your current employee handbook and benefits package
2. Review family friendly policies (see options below) for fit and budget
3. Speak with your advisors and colleagues about their results implementing similar practices
4. Review our family friendly budget models to determine potential cost savings of enacting family friendly practices that attract and retain employees
5. Poll existing workers to identify what is important to them
6. Incorporate your new policies and practices into your employee handbook and benefits package
7. Promote your family friendly workplace that values parents, children, and your community.

CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kids at Work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PTO/Sick/Vacation Time
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family Friendly Events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maternity/Paternity Leave
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employee Choice of Work Hours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Job Sharing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Working from Home/Telecommuting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health Benefits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family Medical Leave	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flex Time

Adding workplace policies and practices that benefit parents reduces employee stress, increases employee productivity, and allows parents to have a more meaningful relationship with their children which results in goodwill towards their employer.

STEP 2

EMPLOYER ASSISTED

CHILD CARE

For organizations with existing child care needs, we recommend the following actions:

1. Child care referrals
 - a. Visit www.greatergallatinunitedway.org/child-connect
 - b. Contact Child Care Resources in Missoula at 406-728-6446 or visit their website at childcareresources.org.
2. Review our family friendly budget models to determine potential cost savings of enacting family friendly practices that attract and retain employees
3. Reserving child care slots for employees at existing child care programs
4. Provide calculated child care reimbursements to employees

CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

- Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP)
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Contribute To A Shared Services Model
- Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)
- Offering Tuition Benefits
- Community Infrastructure Investments
- Connect Employees To Quality Care

Child care referrals, contributing to community infrastructure and/or providing child care subsidies allow new parents to return to work after giving birth, attract potential employees, and aid retention and productivity.

EMPLOYER ASSISTED CHILD CARE EXPLAINED

For organizations with existing child care needs, we recommend the following actions:

Dependent Care Assistance Program

Policy: Provide a DCAP that allows employees to use pre-tax dollars for qualifying dependent care expenses, such as daycare or after-school programs.

Procedures:

- Offer up to \$5,000 in pre-tax benefits per employee.
- Coordinate with FSA administrator for dependent care components.
- Provide annual statements of benefits used.

Compliance: Governed by IRS and Section 129 tax code.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Offering counseling and referral services to help employees navigate personal challenges, mental health issues, or other life events affecting their well-being.

Contribute To Shared Service Model

Participating in shared resources and services for child care providers to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency.

Flex Spending Accounts

Policy: Offer FSAs to allow employees to set aside pre-tax dollars for eligible healthcare and dependent care expenses, reducing taxable income and out-of-pocket costs.

Procedures:

- Set up an FSA through a qualified third-party administrator.
- Educate employees on enrollment periods and eligible expenses.
- Facilitate automatic payroll deductions.

Compliance: Follows IRS Section 125 guidelines.

Community Infrastructure Investments

Investing in a shared fund to support child care infrastructure costs such as increasing community wide child care capacity (like creating a new child care program), expanding shared services that increase provider sustainability, and investing in early care and education workforce programs/services, etc.

STEP 3

ADDING CHILD CARE SLOTS

For organizations that want to minimize variability and increase worker satisfaction and productivity we recommend the following:

1. Invest in existing child care facilities to increase wages, expand services, and/or space
2. Partner with other businesses to create a child care co-op
3. Establish in-house child care solutions via new construction or re-purposing existing space

Resource: [Child Care Business Models](#)

CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

- Reserve Child Care Spaces For Employees
- Child Care Business Cooperative
- Provide Backbone Support To A Local Child Care Business
- Coordinate Back-Up Or Emergency Child Care
- Provide On-site/Near Site Child Care

Investing in child care facilities, building in-house solutions, and/or creating co-op child care with like-minded businesses gives your organization more control over your current and future child care requirements. Adding slots can come in many different forms.

ADDING CHILD CARE SLOTS EXPLAINED

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Reserve Child Care Spaces For Employees

Policy: Partner with local childcare providers to reserve spaces specifically for employees' children, ensuring reliable access to quality childcare.

Procedures:

- Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with licensed childcare centers.
- Subsidize or fully fund reserved slots.
- Allow employees to apply during enrollment windows.

Compliance: Ensure ADA accessibility and licensing standards of childcare partners.

Coordinate Back-Up Emergency Child Care

Establishing arrangements for temporary child care in case of emergencies or unexpected disruptions.

Provide Backbone Support To A Local Child Care Business

Offering various types of assistance or support to local child care providers to help them deliver high-quality services.

Child Care Business Cooperative

Members collectively own and operate the child care facility, sharing responsibilities and profits.



FURTHER THE CAUSE

Influence Policy Makers

Public policy and legislation impact the accessibility and affordability of child care in Montana. Limited access to child care impacts the ways that families can participate in the workforce. Talking to your legislators in an important way to advocate for early childhood issues and support the families that work in your community.

Another step you may consider is persuading business, professional, or trade associations (the Chamber of Commerce, for example) to issue policy statements supporting family friendly practices and policies.

Ultimately you may find that legislative advocacy is the most powerful tool to enact positive community change. Some examples include personal contact with legislators and aides, a full scale legislative campaign, or both. The goal could be a law-such as FMLA- that mandates family-friendly policy, or simply government support and backing for family friendly policies.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

Assess Your Employees' Child Care Needs

Use this [Child Care Needs Assessment Example](#), created by Zero to Five Montana to determine your team's child care needs.

Evaluate Your Current Practices

Are you currently operating as a Family Forward business? Here are some tools to provide insight to your current practices.

- [Family Friendly Policies](#)
- [Family Friendly Human Resources Practices](#)

Calculate the Cost

- [Costofchildcare.org](#)
- [Child Care Cost Model](#)
- [The Hidden Cost of Failing Child Care System](#)

Navigating Child Care Licensing

Experts from [SPARK Montana](#) can help you navigate the child care licensing process, offer technical support, and guidance for what is needed to operate a child care program.

What are other businesses doing?

Learn more about how other organizations are supporting the childcare needs of their staff and how these practices influence productivity, retention, and the bottom line. Watch this recording of the [Employer Supported Child Care Panel \(2024\)](#) where local businesses share what adding child care slots influences:

- Workforce Demographics
- Finances
- Operations

Resources from Family Forward Montana

- Job Accommodation Network provides information on pregnancy accommodations
- The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) has a [Montana Chapter](#) that offers local resources, workshops, and gatherings.
- [Associated Employers](#)
- [Employer Provider Child Care Credit](#)
- [Family Forward Roadmap](#)
- [bestplaceforworkingparents.com](#)

Connect with Greater Gallatin United Way

Learn more or sponsor Child Connect