

# LET'S WORK TOGETHER



How employers can help increase access to child care for the workforce of today and tomorrow.

## THE SITUATION

Walla Walla and Columbia counties are **child care deserts**, meaning there are not enough slots to meet basic demand.

The 2021 Walla Walla Valley Child Care Feasibility Study\* found

**18%** 

of Walla Walla County families and

**96%** 

of Columbia County families **do not have the child care they need.**

In addition, **82%** of 359 Walla Walla Valley families surveyed said child care challenges limited their job performance or career goals.

**Local employers are having difficulty** attracting and retaining employees, increased employee absenteeism, and decreased productivity **due to the need for child care.**



## WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Supporting the local child care system strengthens our community now, helps it thrive in the future, and enables a strong local economy.

Children who receive high-quality early education:



Perform better in school



Are less likely to commit a crime



Are more likely to go to college

For every **\$1** invested in child care, communities see up to a **\$7** return.



\*For the full feasibility study report, including recommendations and the employer guide, please visit <https://www.earlylearningwallawalla.org/research/reports>.



## WE CAN ENSURE WALLA WALLA VALLEY FAMILIES HAVE ACCESS TO THE CHILD CARE THEY NEED BY:

- Increasing the number of licensed child care and early learning slots, especially for infants and toddlers.
- Offering child care and early education at convenient times and locations.
- Increasing qualified staff.
- All sectors playing a unique role to address this crisis.
- Improving affordability by helping families and providers access the supports they are eligible for.

## HOW CAN BUSINESSES AND OTHER EMPLOYERS HELP?



Offer discounted services or supplies to child care providers and preschools.



Offer to support child care providers with necessary services, such as bookkeeping and marketing.



Consider doing service projects for child care providers who operate as small businesses or nonprofits.



Provide space for private child care or preschool programs to operate for a free or reduced price.



Partner with a child care provider by reserving and expanding slots for your employees.



Allow child care providers to advertise in your community space or business.



Give information to your employees about local child care providers, after and before-school programs, summer child care options, recreational opportunities, and supports available in times of need.



Provide employees economic supports like child care tuition assistance, dependent care flexible spending accounts, and information about child care-related tax credits and deductions they may qualify for.



Advocate for public investment in child care and early learning infrastructure at the city, county, and legislative district levels.



Work with your employees and community to understand how the lack of child care options negatively impacts families, workers, employers, and our community as a whole as well as how the problem can be solved.