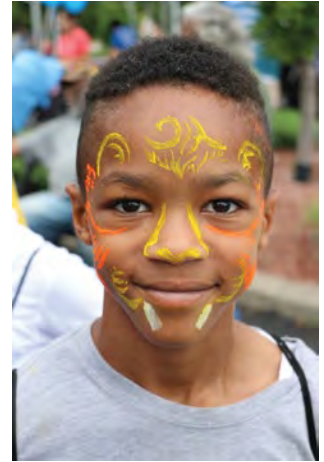


LINC Commission Meeting

June 26, 2023




Caring Communities Day 2023!



MORNINGSTAR'S
Development Company, Inc.



LINCSM
Local Investment Commission
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Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

Our Shared Vision

A caring community that builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, attain their highest potential, and contribute to the public good.

Our Mission

To provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

Our Guiding Principles

1. **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Provide ready access to a full array of effective services.
2. **PREVENTION:** Emphasize “front-end” services that enhance development and prevent problems, rather than “back-end” crisis intervention.
3. **OUTCOMES:** Measure system performance by improved outcomes for children and families, not simply by the number and kind of services delivered.
4. **INTENSITY:** Offering services to the needed degree and in the appropriate time.
5. **PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT:** Use the needs, concerns, and opinions of individuals who use the service delivery system to drive improvements in the operation of the system.
6. **NEIGHBORHOODS:** Decentralize services to the places where people live, wherever appropriate, and utilize services to strengthen neighborhood capacity.
7. **FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS:** Create a delivery system, including programs and reimbursement mechanisms, that are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to respond to the full spectrum of child, family and individual needs.
8. **COLLABORATION:** Connect public, private and community resources to create an integrated service delivery system.
9. **STRONG FAMILIES:** Work to strengthen families, especially the capacity of parents to support and nurture the development of their children.
10. **RESPECT AND DIGNITY:** Treat families, and the staff who work with them, in a respectful and dignified manner.
11. **INTERDEPENDENCE/MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Balance the need for individuals to be accountable and responsible with the obligation of community to enhance the welfare of all citizens.
12. **CULTURAL COMPETENCY:** Demonstrate the belief that diversity in the historical, cultural, religious and spiritual values of different groups is a source of great strength.
13. **CREATIVITY:** Encourage and allow participants and staff to think and act innovatively, to take risks, and to learn from their experiences and mistakes.
14. **COMPASSION:** Display an unconditional regard and a caring, non-judgmental attitude toward, participants that recognizes their strengths and empowers them to meet their own needs.
15. **HONESTY:** Encourage and allow honesty among all people in the system.



Monday, June 26, 2023 | 4 – 5:30 pm
Kauffman Foundation Conference Center

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. May minutes**
 - a. Approval (motion)**
- III. Superintendent Reports**
- IV. Caring Communities Day**
- V. Summer School**
- VI. Ingels Elementary**
- VII. Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA)**
- VIII. Adjournment**



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – MAY 15, 2023

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo. Cochair **Ken Powell** presided. Commissioners attending were

Kiki Curls

David Disney

Shawn Foster

Rob Givens

Matt Haase

Tom Lewin

David Ross

Marj Williams

Powell welcomed new Commissioners **Kiki Curls**, **Shawn Foster**, and **Matt Haase**, who introduced themselves.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2023, LINC Commission meeting was passed unanimously.

Superintendents Reports

- **Rick Chambers** (Director of Communications and Development, Center School District) reported that the district is part of the system design group for the Success Ready Student Network, which has been working to move student learning assessment from a knowledge-based approach to a skills-based one. The group seeks to give teachers more real-time information about student learning.
- **Terry Ward** (School Board Member, North Kansas City School District) reported that the district is holding graduation events this week. The district has chosen Rochel Daniels to succeed Dan Clemens as superintendent when he retires next year; she will begin serving as chief of staff July 1. One third of the district's building-level leadership is turning over and those vacancies are already filled. The district is also hiring for 40 open staff positions. The district is expecting 7,000 students to attend summer school. The district's early college-credit programming saw 22 students earn associate degrees and nine with professional certificates in construction and HVAC.
- **Kevin Foster** (Executive Director, Genesis School) reported that the Missouri Board of Education has voted to revoke Genesis' charter, and the school has filed legal action against the board and the Missouri Charter Public School Commission in Cole County circuit court; a decision is expected in June. Meanwhile the school is preparing for the start of school in the fall, and as of now 211 of 216 are still enrolled. The school will hold its eighth-grade promotion on May 26.
- **Carl Skinner** (Deputy Superintendent, Hickman Mills School District) reported LINC held its final chess tournament of the season May 13 at Smith-Hale Middle School. This summer the district is holding three summer school sessions; LINC will be providing support. The district will host Christmas in July on July 23 with Urban Community Connections, where LINC will be one of several organizations sharing resources and activities. Ingels Elementary will begin its first year as a year-round school on June 12 and LINC will be providing before- and after-programming. The district graduated more than 300 students and 19 of them earned the seal of bi-literacy, meaning they passed an assessment demonstrating reading and speaking in two languages..
- A discussion of staffing challenges followed.

Finance Director **Jeff Hill** reported LINC is launching the Kansas City area's Local Food Purchase Assistance initiative this month. LINC is one of several Community Partnerships to participate in the initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to get fresh produce grown by local farmers into the homes of area low-income families. Food boxes containing produce grown by Moyer Farm will be brought to LINC Caring Communities sites for distribution to families in need of food assistance. Pastor **John Modest Miles** reported the Morning Star Youth & Family Life Center provides food to 700 families each week and prepares hot meals for 400 families a week. Discussion followed.

Executive Vice President **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported LINC has been facing staffing challenges including a shortage of site coordinators and part-time site staff. Because adequate staff is necessary to meet licensing requirements, LINC will need to increase staff pay in order to hire and retain staff necessary to maintain staffing ratios. President **Gayle Hobbs** reported LINC is not alone in facing staff shortages and is developing strategies for recruiting staff, including hiring retirees and increasing staff pay. Discussion followed.

Ken Powell reported that LINC staff met with legislators during Community Partnership Day at the state capitol on April 24. A video of the event was shown. **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported area representatives and senators sought out LINC when they learned staff were visiting, and staff thanked them for their support. **Gayle Hobbs** reported on the creation and funding of Community Partnerships, on their role as a community intermediary, and on the forms they take in different communities.

Ken Powell announced that Caring Communities Day will be held at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center on June 10 and invited everyone to attend.

The meeting was adjourned.

What a day! Triumphant Caring Communities Day shines with joy and love

June 13, 2023

By Joe Roberston, LINC Writer



“This is Kansas City. Everybody coming together.”

You could measure the breadth of Saturday’s second annual Caring Communities Day in sheer numbers.

And they are large ones:

1,300 hamburgers. 800 hotdogs. 500 popcorn bags, 2,000 game prizes. 1,200 free children’s books. Eighteen community partners providing services like legal assistance, voter registration, job and career opportunities, free gun safety locks, medicaid signups — to a crowd that throughout the day totaled more than two thousand people.

You could measure the day in sensations like the raucous dance, drill team drum lines and fitness shows at the main stage, or the imaginative creations of balloon artists and the wild and beautiful face paintings on children . . .

But Sha’a Earle, with three children at her feet and her 11-month-old youngest in a front-strapped baby carrier, measured it by what she felt inside.

“It’s a *good* feeling,” she said, “feeling positive and optimistic about the community. It’s inclusive. The prizes look good. It’s fun. I like the outreach and the employment opportunities.”

And that baby hanging below her smile — little Tyson — “had his first taste of ice cream today,” she said.

Oh yes, another number: 1,500 ice cream treats.

And all of it — *all of it* — for free, in celebration of everything that binds the Caring Communities LINC serves. After all, we’ve been through plenty of hard times together as well, Jackson County Executive Frank White Jr.



Caring Communities Day visitors included, clockwise from the upper left, Kansas City Council Member Ryana Parks-Shaw, Jackson County Executive Frank White Jr., Kansas City Council Member Melissa Robinson with LINC’s Sean Akridge, Missouri Rep. Ashley Bland Manlove, Jackson County Legislator Donna Peyton and Kansas City Police Chief Stacy Graves.

said on the stage at the start of the day, kicking the event off with a proclamation.

“The resilience, love and joy of Caring Communities in hard times and in good is a cause for celebration,” he said. “Now therefore, I, Frank White Jr., Jackson County Executive, do hereby proclaim June 10, 2023 to be LINC Caring Communities Day in Jackson County.”

Other civic leaders joined the crowd outside the Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center at 27th and Prospect Avenue, including Missouri Rep. Ashley Bland Manlove, Kansas City Council Members Melissa Robinson and Ryana Parks-Shaw, Jackson County Legislator Donna Peyton and Kansas City Police Chief Stacy Graves.

“This is Kansas City . . .,” Graves said, addressing the crowd. “Everybody coming together.”

Sade Owens’ four children were clamoring to go four different directions just as she was trying to put more words to her feeling of how “beautiful” it was out here under a benign gray sky that never did more than drizzle.

They’re “so happy,” she said. “I’m happy . . .” And here her kids were, begging to dive back into the crowd, the games, the prizes —

But the beat rocking the main stage came like a wave across the fair ground.

“I want to dance to this song!” she said.

The broad work of LINC Caring Communities has been anchored at more than 50 schools in partnership with several area school districts, but during the pandemic LINC added another site at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church’s Youth and Family Life Center.

The location in the heart of Kansas City’s East Side has become a hub for services — as well as an ideal location for the annual Caring Communities Day celebration.

“We are so grateful you all are here today,” Morning Star’s Rev. John Modest Miles said to the crowd. “It means so much that you are here and we are here, together.”

The list of community partners read like a Kansas City service and entertainment guide.

The Kansas City Fire Department. The Kansas City Police Department. University Health. The Community Action Agency. The Full Employment Council . The League of Women Voters. The Kansas City Zoo.

Justice in the Schools. Grandparents for Gun Safety. KC Digital Drive. Alive and Well Communities.

NickiFit. Techni CAL Media. GreedyMan’s Signature Juices and Ice Cream Co. Hy-Vee. Fitness 4 Ever. Creative Carnival.

And then there were the LINC-provided raffle prizes, including air fryers, indoor grills, Shark vacuums, stand mixers, dutch ovens and Chiefs tailgating sets.

Karinia Mahan had just arrived, registered, tossed ticket into the raffle drum and gotten into the food line when she heard her number broadcast over the PA system.

“I’d literally just got here,” she said. “They called my number and I had to give my husband my plate.”

She grabbed a double air fryer, getting a fabulous start to what she thought was a great day for everyone.

“It really means a lot,” she said, “that everyone can be out and be safe. Kids are able to have fun and you don’t have to worry about anything.”

In the end, as the grill was packed away and the tents came down, the last families and individuals in happy clusters made their way to their cars or their homes, their receding silhouettes marked by hand-held prize bags and the carnival shapes of twisted balloons.

The beginnings of a great Caring Communities summer.



NickiFit and Techni CAL Media led the entertainment on the main stage.



Sha’a Earle with 11-month-old Tyson at Caring Communities Day. It was a good feeling, she said, “feeling positive and optimistic about the community.”

Saying Missouri was ‘unlawful,’ judge rules Kansas City charter school can stay open

By Sarah Ritter

June 21, 2023

Months after the Missouri Board of Education voted to close a Kansas City charter school, a judge on Wednesday reversed the decision, allowing it to stay open this fall.

The state school board in April unanimously agreed to shut down Genesis on Kansas City’s East Side, affirming a state commission’s decision to revoke the school’s charter because of years of low test scores. It’s an almost unheard of move in Missouri to nullify a school’s charter in the middle of its contract.

Genesis sued the state board and its sponsor, the Missouri Charter Public School Commission, arguing that officials violated the law in closing the K-8 school.

A judge in Cole County Court in Jefferson City sided with the school and reinstated its charter, saying the decision to revoke it was “unlawful and arbitrary.”

Genesis Executive Director Kevin Foster told The Star that the school plans to now stay open next school year, and that he is excited to “start calling families and tell them I intend on serving them in the fall.”

“Ultimately, we’re just happy for the families that we serve that call me every day and ask, ‘Mr. Foster, have you heard anything from the judge yet? Is the school going to be open?’” Foster said. “I’m incredibly thankful to the staff and teachers. They can work anywhere right now, but many of them have done their very best to stick with us knowing that we had an opportunity to win and continue to serve.”

Officials with the state education department and charter commission did not immediately return The Star’s requests for comment late Wednesday afternoon.

Genesis’ contract with the charter commission runs through June 2025. After that, Foster said, the school would likely need to find a new sponsor to keep operating.

Genesis has served at-risk students since 1975 and is now one of Missouri’s oldest charter schools. It was first sponsored by the University of Missouri-Kansas City. The University of Missouri-Columbia later took that over and in 2020 renewed the charter, but put the school on probation due to its low academic performance.

But MU later lost the authority to sponsor Genesis and two other charter schools. Last year, the state charter commission took over.

A few months after Genesis signed its performance contract with the new sponsor, the commission notified the school it was not meeting standards. In December, the commission notified the school it intended to revoke its charter.



The Missouri Board of Education voted to close Genesis charter school, on Kansas City’s East Side, after years of low academic performance. Screenshot/Google Maps

Genesis refused to voluntarily relinquish its charter. In January, the commission held a hearing where dozens of families fought for the school to stay open.

In Wednesday's ruling, the judge, S. Cotton Walker, said that Genesis was not in breach of its contract, and that the commission violated the contract by failing to provide Genesis with enough notice or calls for corrective action specified in the agreement.

The charter school commission in February voted 6-1 to revoke the school's charter on June 30, citing 15 years of low academic performance and "broken promises." In the 2021-2022 school year, for example, the commission said only 13 out of 100 students performed at or above grade level in English and math.

Typically, a sponsor decides whether to renew or revoke a school's charter at the end of a contract.

Genesis appealed the decision in March, with the backing of dozens of families who said the school effectively serves some of Kansas City's most at-risk students. School leaders said the state commission's decision to close the school was unlawful and was "not supported by the data," arguing that Genesis has seen student performance improve since the COVID-19 pandemic.

But state school board leaders agreed that the school's educational failings were so severe that it had to close.

Still, ahead of the state board vote, Missouri Education Commissioner Margie Vandeven acknowledged, "There are concerns about how the charter commission proceeded with the revocation." And she said "it is clear" the "process was deficient."

Officials said state statute allows them to revoke the charter mid-contract if there is clear evidence of low scores in the school's annual performance report in three of the last four school years or if there's a violation of the law or the public trust.

The charter commission says Genesis under-performed for each of the three years for which the state could use performance data for accountability. But required state assessments were canceled during the pandemic, and test scores have dropped overall since.

Genesis argued the commission should have relied on the school's annual performance reports from the last four years. Foster said Genesis has seen student performance improve since the pandemic, as students continued to learn in person. The school says 2021 state assessment data shows growth in both English and math, as well as a 15% reduction in the number of students scoring below basic in English.

The judge agreed with the school's interpretation, saying that the most recent years' data should have been used. The ruling said the contract also contains other standards that were not followed, and that the statute does not grant the commission authority to nullify the charter.

"The Commission is required by state statute to adopt a policy related to revocation and it had done so," the judge wrote. "That policy does not include a statutory requirement that the Commission revoke a charter if the charter school's academic performance is below that of the resident district (Kansas City Public Schools) for three of the last four years.

"In fact, nothing in the policy allows the staff to recommend revocation based on any specific number of years of academic performance or for any comparison to the resident school district or otherwise."

The contract allowed the commission to revoke Genesis' charter if it breached the agreement, failed to meet performance measures or failed to adhere to mandated corrective actions.

The judge ruled the state board of education also acted arbitrarily in closing the school, and that board members "did not consider any data" or evidence before making a decision.

Hickman Mills launches year-round school; LINC steps up

June 12, 2023

By Joe Robertson, LINC Writer



Ingels Elementary School families in Hickman Mills sign up for LINC's Caring Communities programming at back-to-school night June 8 ahead of Ingels' new, year-round school schedule that begins June 12.

Since it runs against America's long-standing romance with summer break, Hickman Mills' decision to start a year-round school at Ingels Elementary takes some getting used to . . .

At least for the parents, if not so much the kids.

"At first I was kind of mad," Ingels parent Shelly Luedtke said as she was signing up 8-year-old Karlee for LINC's before- and after-school Caring Communities program at back-to-school night June 8.

"But *she's* excited," Luedtke said, nodding at her daughter whose third grade year begins June 12, barely two weeks after she finished second grade.

LINC is certainly helping with the excitement, which became apparent as LINC Caring Communities Coordinator Mindia Stephenson reviewed with the mother and daughter what's in store in the weeks ahead.

"We'll have Lego League robotics," Stephenson said, "cooking, a garden, fitness . . . , art classes, dance classes . . ."

And that's great, Luedtke said, because Karlee "is very artistic." And Karlee smiled and nodded.

Hickman Mills is experimenting with the year-round school concept, trying it out at Ingels to see if the district can realize some of the academic and social-emotional gains that a stretched-out school year promises.

Studies have long shown that the extended summer break can have a detrimental affect on student progress. But the "summer slide," as it's called, isn't the only concern.

Schools throughout the district, the Kansas City area, the state and the nation are still recovering from the setbacks of lost classroom time during the Covid-19 pandemic.

And schools like Ingels, in districts that served more at-risk populations in Covid, spent more time using virtual classrooms than many other districts.

Ingels' staff is committed to taking advantage of the extra days to inject new learning opportunities, while keeping the adventurous feel of more conventional summer school.

"I think it's a great idea," Ingels Principal Dr. Michelle McDaniel said. "Our students can benefit from all that our school can offer year-round."

The school is boosting its curriculum with a career exploration program called RIASEC, an acronym for the categories of career possibilities — Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional.

"We're going to make sure they have fun activities throughout the summer," McDaniel said, "have field trips and learn about careers."

Having LINC on board for the extended year will help the school in its mission, the principal said.

"LINC continuing to provide services for parents and all its clubs and activities is going to be beneficial for the kids," she said.

LINC shares the district's dedication to helping students grow academically and socially, said LINC Caring Communities Coordinator Martin Jackson.

"It's going to be year-round fun, and year-round growth for kids after school," Jackson said.

"It's an opportunity to assist in closing the achievement gap," he said. "We can assist the district with academic-support programs."

Parents like Luedtke said she can appreciate that. And she sees other benefits to families that need the supports that schools can give, including meals and LINC's free before- and after-school program.

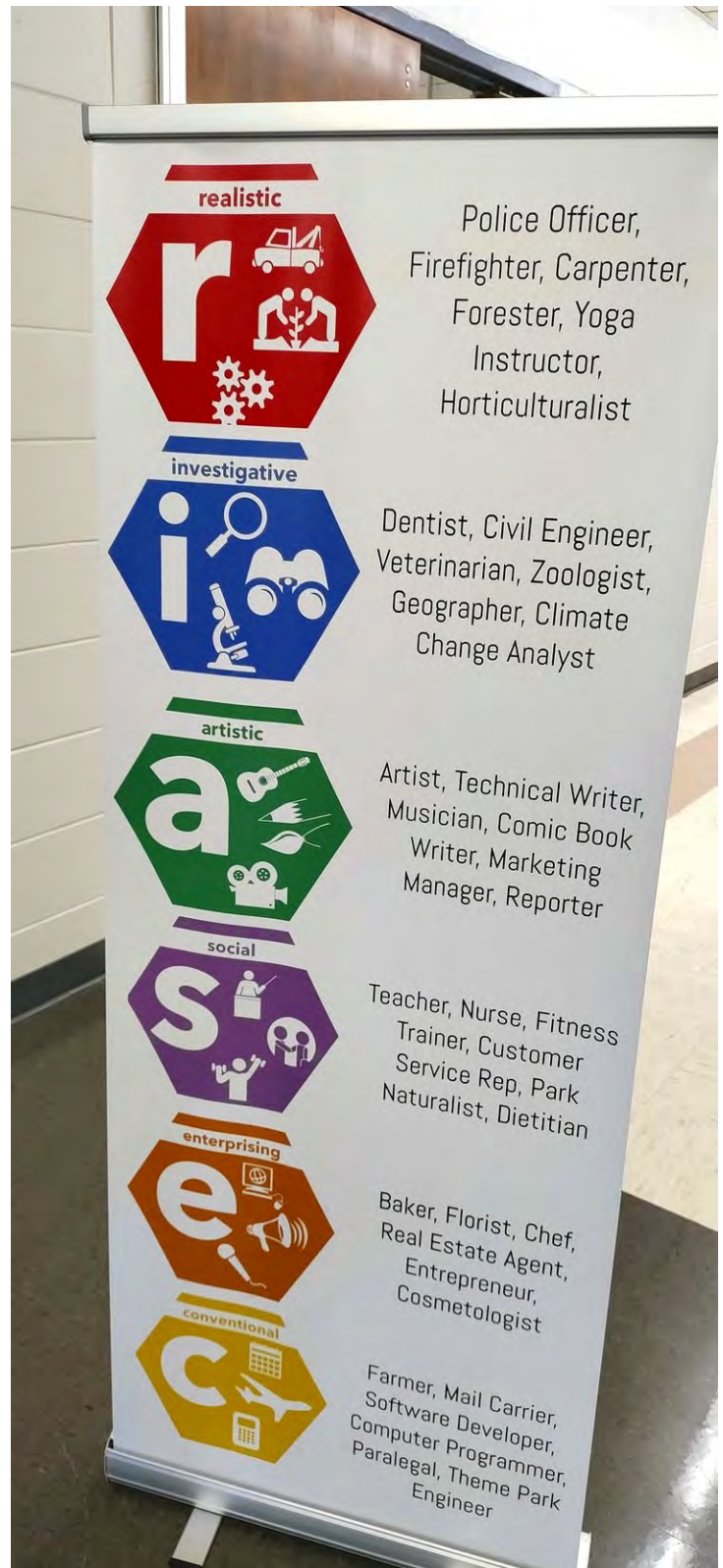
"It'll be good for families to save money on breakfast and lunch," she said, "and on day care."

Breaonna Stacker was another parent who felt some misgivings over the year-round idea, while her child stood by seemingly eager with excitement to be back with friends so soon.

Stacker is trying to like the idea, though she thinks "kids need a break."

Her son Jorden Wilson's enthusiasm is making the transition easier.

"It's good," Jorden, 10, said, all smiles. "I get to see some new friends. I get a new teacher. It's going to be a very fun summer."



A banner promotes Ingels Elementary's career exploration curriculum that will be part of its extended year-round school programming this summer.

Missouri begins distributing summer 2022 food benefits as deadline for 2023 application looms

After months of delay, the state began issuing food benefits designed to cover summer 2022 just last week — as other states gear up to disburse summer 2023 aid

BY: [CLARA BATES](#) - JUNE 15, 2023 1:00 PM

Missouri began distributing pandemic-relief summer food benefits that were [designed to cover summer 2022](#) just last week.

[Since last fall](#), thousands of families have been asking the state if and when they would receive the promised benefits, called summer Pandemic EBT — a federal COVID relief program administered by states.

The summer 2022 benefits were designed to provide a one-time deposit of \$391 per eligible child. Like the regular federal food stamps program, the benefits are accessed via a debit card called electronic benefits transfer and used to purchase food.

Keahna Antrim, a mother of two in West Plains, said she checked her EBT account “every day for months and months.”

Last week brought “massive relief,” she said: She received the \$391 deposit for one of her children on June 9 and for the other on June 10. She has used the benefits so far to purchase groceries for family dinners, including for a taco night.

“Not knowing when we would get it was frustrating,” she said, because “there was no way to incorporate it into your budget.”

“I am disappointed how [the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education] handled the program,” she said. “They didn’t make an effort to keep anyone informed or updated.”

Most states finished dispersing the benefits by the end of 2022. Oklahoma began dispersing the benefits nearly a year before Missouri, in July 2022.

Now Missouri has fallen behind on applying for the final round of summer P-EBT benefits the federal government has approved, to cover summer 2023.

As other states prepare to issue summer 2023 benefits, Missouri is still in the midst of issuing hundreds of thousands of benefits from last year — potentially jeopardizing transferring the summer 2023 federal funds to desperate low-income families.

Missouri is one of only ten states that has not yet submitted a plan to the federal government for dispersing



(Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

summer 2023 benefits, said Jan Rhodes, a spokesperson for the federal agency Food and Nutrition Services. The others are Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Texas. The 2023 benefits would provide \$120 for each school child eligible for free or reduced lunch during the 2022-2023 school year.

“If Missouri does not move quickly to submit its Pandemic EBT plan, 400,000 children will miss out on the food they need when school lets out,” said Crystal FitzSimons, director of School and Out-of-School Time Programs at the Food Research & Action Center Washington, D.C.

Fewer expected to benefit

The state began dispersing summer 2022 benefits last week, on June 6, said Mallory McGowin, spokesperson for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Children who qualified for subsidized school lunches in the 2021-2022 academic year are eligible, along with children under 6 who qualify for the federal food assistance program SNAP.

Missouri appears to be one of the last approved states to begin issuing summer 2022 benefits, if not the last. Two states, South Dakota and Alaska, did [not have approved plans](#) to issue summer P-EBT at all.

The extra benefits can easily double the amount a low-income family receives in standard food assistance. The average amount of benefits per Missouri household on food stamps, called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, [was just under \\$400](#) in March.

In the meantime, [bills have piled up](#) as families diverted much-needed money from things like utilities to cover the inflated cost of food. Some told The Independent they needed to [borrow money](#) from families and friends. [Frustration has grown](#) as families have sought and failed to receive information from the state, devoting hours to trying to find out where the benefits are and sharing information online. The state provided [no timeline](#) for months, after originally estimating the benefits would be dispersed by the end of 2022.

In Missouri’s [plan](#) for dispersing the benefits, they estimated 454,000 school children would qualify. The federal [United States Department of Agriculture’s projections](#) for the year prior also put the figure near Missouri’s estimate, at 456,000.

But McGowin said now they estimate there are “nearly 270,000 Missouri students” who will receive the benefits, based on the number of eligible students that schools submitted to the state. Schools were required to submit data to DESE listing eligible students before the Department of Social Services could issue them.

There are several potential explanations for the discrepancy, McGowin said.

“There’s no way to know in advance exactly how many students’ data will be submitted by districts,” she said.

“A student graduating early, moving out of state, having their household eligibility status changed, or opting not to receive the benefit...are among the factors that could lead to a student’s data not being submitted by their district.”

Around 172,000 students had received benefits as of June 7, McGowin said, more than half of their revised estimate. She did not provide a more recent update.

“Nearly 7,400” kids “have some kind of data issues that DESE and DSS are working to troubleshoot (i.e. missing information),” McGowin said.

For children who do not already have EBT cards (from being part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or previous iterations of P-EBT), McGowin said, they will be mailed a card. She said they “anticipate that all cards will be issued by Monday, July 17.”

The state hasn’t begun issuing benefits for children under age 6, McGowin said, which are for kids on the food stamp program SNAP. The state plan estimated there would be 157,900 children under age six who qualify.

Those will be dispersed after the student-aged population is complete, McGowin said.

One of the main hurdles to getting the benefits out sooner, officials have [said](#), was that the state needed a new data collection portal to track students’ COVID-related absences, for the school-year benefits.

Pandemic EBT includes a more narrowly-targeted benefit for school year 2021-2022 for children who had COVID-related absences — which the state said it needed to administer before the summer benefits and involves more complicated data collection on the part of schools. They began issuing those school year benefits in February, McGowin said, and moved on to the summer program in May.

Summer 2023 uncertainty

Because of those delays, Missouri is still catching up on last year’s benefits while many states are poised to begin doling out summer 2023 benefits in the next few months.

This is the final summer that the federal government will provide Pandemic EBT benefits, and they are only for school-age children.

States have until [July 14](#) to submit a summer 2023 plan. They must disperse the summer 2023 benefits [by Sept. 30](#).

[Oklahoma](#) and [Minnesota](#) plan to begin dispersing summer 2023 benefits next month, in July. Louisiana officials said they will be dispersed in [late summer](#).

Missouri does not have an approved plan for either school year [2022-2023 or summer 2023 P-EBT](#).

McGowin said the state has not decided whether it will participate in the summer 2023 program: “DESE and [DSS] officials are in the process of making this decision.”

The 2023 summer benefit would provide [\\$120 per eligible child](#). At roughly 400,000 eligible children, that could mean the state losing out on roughly \$48 million in federal food aid if it does seek approval and then distribute the aid by the deadlines.

“Summer should be a time of fun and making memories, not a time of hunger,” said Luis Guardia, president of Food Research & Action Center, in a press release.

Beginning next year, states will launch a program called Summer EBT for school-age children, not tied to the pandemic.

A [survey](#) of over 100 parents nationally who received Pandemic EBT conducted by Food Research & Action Center found nearly all of them reported the benefits “allowed them to worry less about having enough food,” and over half said the benefits enabled them to purchase more nutritious food.

“In addition to supporting struggling parents and families,” said FitzSimons, “participating this summer establishes an important bridge between the program currently operating and the permanent Summer EBT program that will begin in summer 2024.”

Debt deal will require some older Missourians to work to keep getting food assistance

BY JONATHAN SHORMAN AND DANIEL DESROCHERS

MAY 31, 2023 2:24 PM

Congress is poised to expand the ranks of older Missouri residents who must work to receive food assistance as part of a bipartisan compromise to keep the United States from defaulting on its debt.

The deal negotiated by Democratic President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy requires able-bodied individuals ages 50 to 54 without children at home to work or receive job training to remain eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps. More than 666,000 Missourians get help paying for groceries under the program and the work rules currently only apply to those 18 to 49.



A grocery cart. Congress is poised to expand work requirements for food assistance to include older adults. File

Food banks and other anti-hunger advocates warn raising the age limit will only serve to harm older middle-age adults at a time in their lives when they may start to feel the health effects of a lifetime of labor and are sometimes called to take care of both young grandchildren and aging parents. The likely changes come as a federal lawsuit alleges Missouri has wrongly denied thousands of low-income residents food assistance because of a dysfunctional call center.

But the compromise legislation also exempts homeless individuals, veterans and young adults who have aged out of foster care from work requirements – a potentially significant help to individuals in those groups who find themselves in precarious financial situations.

Karen Siebert, an advocacy and public policy advisor at Harvesters, a food bank that serves the Kansas City region, said she is very concerned by the debt deal's food assistance provisions, despite the new exemptions. She noted the measure includes no new funding for job training.

"I think what this assumes, foundationally, which I think is an incorrect assumption, is that the only barrier to work is motivation – if you're hungry enough, you will work. Well, that is not the case," Siebert said.

The deal is expected to expand the number of people receiving SNAP benefits nationwide by about 78,000, according to estimates from the Congressional Budget Office. It's not clear whether the measure will result in a net increase or decrease in SNAP enrollment in Missouri.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington-based left-leaning think tank, has previously estimated raising the age limit to 54 could place up to 12,000 Missouri residents at risk of losing benefits. No

public estimates exist for how many Missourians may qualify for benefits under work exemptions for homeless individuals, veterans and those leaving foster care.

The Missouri Department of Social Services, which administers SNAP, doesn't appear to provide exact numbers of individuals enrolled who are between 50 and 54. According to reports on the agency's website, in March 216,714 people between 18 and 49 received benefits, while 84,215 enrollees were over 60.

The impact may be more limited in Kansas, because state lawmakers earlier this year voted to extend work rules for able-bodied adults without children up to age 59. Individuals are also required to work at least 30 hours a week or participate in a job training program.

Siebert argued the new exemptions themselves appear to implicitly acknowledge that some individuals face real challenges to working. "They know how difficult this is going to be for people, or they wouldn't exempt anyone," she said.

The House is set to vote on the bill on Wednesday night. Rep. Cori Bush, a Democrat who represents St. Louis, has offered an amendment with Democratic Rep. Barbara Lee of California to strip out the SNAP changes for older adults from the legislation. Bush has said the changes will "rip food from vulnerable people's mouths."

"That's great," Bush said of the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the legislation will result in more people receiving SNAP benefits. "The issue though with that is it also means the group that will lose benefits disproportionately will be Black people and Black women."

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a Kansas City Democrat, said that while he had committed to voting yes, he was struggling with his decision. He said it is important for the country to avoid default, but that he doesn't believe the legislation is fair to poor people.

He compared the situation to the 2008 financial crisis, when Congress bailed out banks as the economy teetered on the brink of collapse because of fiscally unsound loaning decisions made by some of the country's biggest banks.

"We almost took the economy of the United States down the toilet and nobody went to jail," Cleaver said. "It makes no sense. But when it's poor people, all of a sudden, we're gonna be all over them. We're gonna test you."

Some GOP lawmakers and their allies have praised the expanded work requirements by emphasizing the value of work. Rep. Ann Wagner, a St. Louis County Republican, listed work requirements as one of the reasons she liked the deal negotiated between Biden and McCarthy.

"To the extent that this [deal] is getting things done – and doing something that I still think is both common sense and conservative – is a plus for someone like myself," Wagner said Tuesday.

Kevin Roberts, president of the conservative Heritage Foundation, said in a statement that the work requirements in the bill would have a "modest but real impact in preserving government programs for those who truly need them."

Still, some Republicans have faulted the debt deal for not tightening work rules enough. Rep. Chip Roy, an ultraconservative Texas Republican, called the requirements "weak" and criticized them for not applying to Medicaid participants.

The number of families receiving SNAP in Missouri remains above pre-pandemic levels, but has fallen by tens of thousands since enrollment peaked in the summer of 2020.

In February 2022, two SNAP applicants sued Missouri Department of Social Services Acting Director Robert Knodell, alleging the call center the agency uses to process food assistance applications is so backlogged that low-income residents are being denied benefits. The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri, alleges many applicants can't complete an interview process in the required 30 days, causing them to be denied or lose existing benefits even if they meet the income qualifications.

As of March 2023, the average time to process applications was 14 days – meaning processing times for a significant portion of applicants extend well beyond half a month.

Two additional plaintiffs joined the suit earlier this year. In April, Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey's Office in a court filing denied many of the allegations against DSS. The document also says the two original plaintiffs have successfully enrolled in SNAP.

The Missouri Department of Social Services didn't directly answer questions about the Biden-McCarthy deal's potential effects on SNAP. Instead, a spokesman for the Missouri Office of Administration responded with a written statement.

"The State of Missouri is monitoring the situation closely and working on contingency plans to limit any impacts to the short-term to the greatest extent possible," said Chris Moreland, the spokesman for the Office of Administration.

Despite past attempts by Republican state lawmakers to tighten work requirements, Missouri's work requirements largely reflect federal rules. Able-bodied adults without children can only receive benefits for three months out of every three years unless they work or participate in job training at least 80 hours a month (20 hours a week).

While those requirements kick in once recipients turn 18, child welfare advocates are welcoming a provision in the debt deal to exempt those leaving foster care until they're 25. Several hundred young adults age out of foster care every year in Missouri, though it's not clear how many receive SNAP.

Lori Ross, founder of FosterAdopt Connect and a long-time child advocate in Kansas and Missouri, said in general young people leaving foster care have experienced multiple, complex traumas and have not had a typical upbringing. Because of that, they may not have learned some of the basic skills or have things like professional attire needed to hold a job.

"Getting those young people to be gainfully employed and to maintain employment is a process that requires additional time and attention," Ross said. "Honestly, the exemption that they're putting in place for that population is really a humane and hugely beneficial thing to create a little bit more cushion for those young people."

KIDS COUNT Data 2023: Child care stress pushing parents to breaking point

June 14, 2023

By Joe Robertson, LINC Writer

Too many parents in Missouri either cannot find safe and adequate child care — or they can't afford it when they do.

The consequences, reported in the [2023 KIDS COUNT Data Book](#) released today by the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#), are tearing at families, neighborhoods and the nation's economic health.

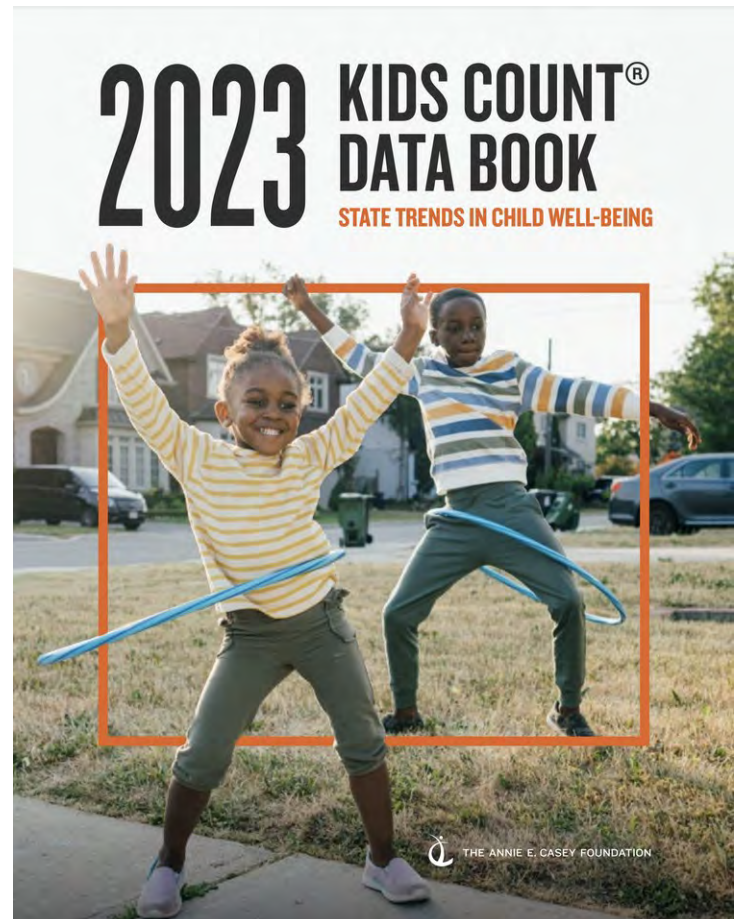
"The high cost of child care is not just a financial burden on families," said Tracy Greever-Rice, program director for [Missouri KIDS COUNT](#). "It is a societal issue that affects our economy, our workforce and the future of children."

The annual KIDS COUNT data report records a wealth of information to gauge the welfare of the nation's children by the state of their health, education, family and community, and economic well-being.

There are many reasons in the latest report to focus on the stress of child care.

- Ten percent of Missouri children birth to 5 years old live in families where someone quit, changed or refused a job because of problems with child care.
- Women are five- to eight-times more likely than men to experience negative employment consequences related to caregiving.
- Missouri's average annual cost of center-based child care for a toddler was \$8,862, which equals one of every 10 dollars earned by an average married couple and nearly three dollars for every 10 dollars earned by a single mother.
- Child care wages on average fell in the bottom 2 percent of all professions with an average pay of \$28,520 or \$13.71 an hour in 2022.
- The impact of the failing child care market cost \$122 billion nationwide in lost earnings, productivity and tax revenue.

While the Covid-19 pandemic worsened the situation, our nation's struggle with child care has gone on far



Download the full report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation at aefc.org.

too long, said Lisa M. Hamilton, the president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

“America has never had a functional child care system,” Hamilton said. “It is past time for our leaders to build one . . . our nation’s future depends on it.”

The report identifies policy action, investment and reforms that are urgently needed, including:

- Investing more in child care at the federal, state and local level, including more funding for public pre-kindergarten and Head Start.
- Maximizing remaining pandemic recovery act dollars and reauthorizing and strengthening the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.
- Working together between public and private leaders to improve infrastructure for home-based child care.
- Expanding the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program in support of student parents.

Overall, the state-by-state report ranked Missouri 28th in the nation in the welfare of its children. By category, Missouri ranked 18th in children’s economic well-being, 22nd in education, 35th in health and 25th regarding family and community factors.

The 2023 Data Book compiles information from 2021 and compares it to the data collected in 2017 to identify trends.

In Missouri, most of the indicators showed some improvement over the four-year span, but Black and Hispanic children continue to be as much as two or three times as likely as white children to live in poverty, be born at low birthweight, suffer preventable hospitalizations or give birth as teenagers. Disparities in academic performance also persist.

The 50-page Data Book like the reports before it provides critical awareness and drives change on behalf of Missouri’s children, said William Dent, the executive director of the [Family and Community Trust](#).

The book “is a critical tool for policymakers, advocates and communities to understand the challenges facing children and families across the country,” Dent said. “We are grateful for this valuable resource that enables us to make informed decisions and take targeted actions to improve the well-being of Missouri’s families.”

The KIDS COUNT 2023 Data Book is available for download at the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) and by going to aecf.org/databook.

FROM LISA M. HAMILTON

President and Chief Executive Officer, The Annie E. Casey Foundation

When families have accessible, affordable, quality child care, kids and parents benefit. Young children can find nurturing support and begin early learning, while their parents and caregivers are able to earn money for food, housing and other essentials. A functional child care system that meets the needs of families would ensure parents have care when and where they need it — at a reasonable cost and with family-supporting pay for child care professionals.

We do not have anything close to such a child care system in America. It has long been characterized by high and rising costs, waitlists and access challenges for families, precarious operating conditions for providers and low wages for workers. The system was broken before COVID-19, but the pandemic made things worse and key temporary federal support for families has expired, lessening many families' ability to afford care.

Too many of those raising children are unable to secure care that is compatible with work schedules and commutes. High costs burden families, yet child care workers themselves, virtually all women and disproportionately women of color, are poorly paid and often unsupported on the job. Parents and workers struggle, as do employers: Valuable contributors leave the workforce because they cannot find child care. And young children themselves — our most precious resource, on whose future America's economy and democracy depend — are missing out on care and early education during a period of important brain development.

The need for a child care system that works for families and providers is urgent. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 34th annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, which assesses child well-being nationally and state by state, presents an opportunity to examine the child care system and to explore ways to improve it.

WHY DOES CHILD CARE MATTER?

Child care matters to the kids who are in care. Young children are born ready to learn and to interact with the world. Research shows the brain develops best in safe settings that are without intense stress. Comforting interactions and stable relationships with responsive adults are the main ways to promote healthy development; that begins with parents, but it can also include child care professionals and early educators.¹

Also, access to early childhood education — preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds — is invaluable in preparing young learners for elementary school, which is why it is one of the 16 indicators that make up the KIDS COUNT index in each year's *Data Book*. Despite gains in recent years, our country is still failing to deliver early childhood education to more than half of its children (54%, a one-point increase over the previous measurement).

Child care also affects parents' ability to support their families. In 2021, 23 million

children ages 5 and younger lived in the United States.² Not all parents need child care, but most people participating in the American workforce have children and many will access child care for a portion of their careers. In 2021, some 53% of working adults ages 25 to 54 were parents, and more than a third of those parents (37%) had young children.³ If you can't find care for your young child, you can't go to work, and that undercuts your family's ability to be self-sufficient.

Beyond individual kids and families, child care affects the current and future health of the American economy. Even adults whose children are grown or who have no children at all have a stake in improving the system. According to one estimate, shortcomings of the child care system cost the U.S. economy \$122 billion a year through lost earnings, productivity and tax revenue.⁴ In the near term, we lose what parents who can't work would be contributing to the economy; in the long term, research indicates children with access to quality care at the earliest ages are more successful in school, giving them a boost in the journey toward employment.⁵

WHY CHILD CARE IS SO HARD TO ACCESS

Access to care is driven largely by the number of child care workers. The already insufficient workforce dropped by more than a third in two months as the pandemic took hold, from nearly 1.1 million workers in February 2020 to 677,000 in April. It had rebounded by April 2023 to 996,000.⁶ Although supplemented by family, friends and neighbors who offer unpaid care, the existing "workforce behind the workforce" cannot deliver the quantity of care the market demands.⁷

Another determining factor is whether care is available where and when it is needed. The

number of working parents and caregivers who said child care problems forced them to miss work in the previous week had never been higher than 60,000 before the pandemic. However, that threshold was eclipsed repeatedly beginning in 2020, hitting a record 104,000 in October 2022.⁸ The National Survey of Children's Health reports that 13% of children birth to age 5 (2.8 million) had a family member who faced work challenges due to child care (see Figure 1). More than half of working parents with infants or toddlers reported having been late to work or leaving early at least once in the previous three months due to child care problems and almost a quarter (23%) have, at some point, been fired for it.⁹

Child or provider illnesses account for some of this missed work, but not all of it. Too often, parents can't access care because it is far away or not reachable by public transit.¹⁰ Moreover, 26 to 38 million adults are shift workers, subject to unpredictable hours, night shifts and last-minute changes that complicate their ability to lock in care.¹¹ Home-based providers are more likely to be open nights and weekends when shift workers, single parents and parents who are students need them.¹²

While child care centers and school readiness programs such as Head Start and Early Head Start are important pieces of the puzzle, most workers caring for the youngest children are working out of homes with varying degrees of regulation. Although 62% of kids ages 5 and younger who were in care in 2019 were in child care centers, that share was only 47% for 1- to 2-year-olds and 32% for children younger than 12 months.¹³ Settings with the youngest children who need the most care are required to have the lowest caregiver-to-child ratios, so although there are more children in centers, less than a third of care professionals work in centers or classrooms.¹⁴

THE BROKEN CHILD CARE MARKET

Even when accessibility is not an issue, affordability is likely to be. Why is child care so expensive? Why can't people afford to work or operate a business in the child care field? The answers to these questions are related. Think of them as two sides of the same extremely pricey coin.

Why Parents Struggle to Pay for Child Care

Simply put, the reason parents have a tough time covering the cost of child care is that it is very expensive — and reflects long-standing inequities.

According to an analysis by the advocacy organization Child Care Aware, the average annual cost of care for one child in America was \$10,600 in 2021 — one-tenth of a couple's average income or more than a third (35%) of a single parent's income.¹⁵ The U.S. Department of Labor estimated that median costs in 2022 ranged from \$5,357 a year for home-based school-age care in rural communities, to \$17,171 for center-based infant care in major population centers.¹⁶ Child Care Aware also has estimated that center-based infant care costs more per year than in-state tuition at a public university in 34 states and the District of Columbia.¹⁷ (See Table 1 for a comparison of prices relative to median household incomes in each state.) Child care costs have risen 220% since the publication of the first *KIDS COUNT Data Book* in 1990, significantly outpacing inflation.¹⁸



**TABLE 1:
CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY AND JOB CHANGES DUE TO CHILD CARE PROBLEMS BY STATE**

LOCATION	CENTER-BASED CHILD CARE FOR TODDLERS			FAMILY- OR HOME-BASED CARE FOR TODDLERS			CHILDREN WHOSE FAMILY HAD JOB CHANGES DUE TO CHILD CARE PROBLEMS*
	ANNUAL COST	COST AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN INCOME		ANNUAL COST	COST AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN INCOME		
		SINGLE MOTHER	MARRIED COUPLE WITH CHILDREN		SINGLE MOTHER	MARRIED COUPLE WITH CHILDREN	
United States	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	13%
Alabama	\$7,501	30%	8%	\$6,053	24%	6%	10%
Alaska	\$13,046	33%	11%	\$8,919	23%	8%	13%
Arizona	\$10,883	31%	11%	\$6,253	18%	6%	16%
Arkansas	\$6,806	25%	8%	\$5,482	20%	6%	15%
California	\$13,408	36%	11%	\$11,607	31%	10%	15%
Colorado	\$16,333	41%	14%	\$11,551	29%	10%	14%
Connecticut	\$18,156	49%	13%	\$11,955	32%	9%	15%
Delaware	\$11,695	34%	10%	\$8,386	24%	7%	13%
District of Columbia	\$24,396	73%	11%	\$19,291	58%	9%	14%
Florida	\$8,678	26%	9%	\$7,555	23%	8%	13%
Georgia	\$8,230	26%	8%	\$6,968	22%	7%	7%
Hawaii	\$13,919	35%	12%	\$9,776	25%	8%	12%
Idaho	\$7,675	25%	9%	\$6,450	21%	7%	10%
Illinois	\$12,470	37%	11%	\$8,943	27%	8%	15%
Indiana	\$7,884	26%	8%	\$7,884	26%	8%	9%
Iowa	\$10,437	33%	10%	\$6,823	21%	6%	14%
Kansas	\$8,074	26%	8%	\$5,706	18%	6%	12%
Kentucky	\$7,162	27%	8%	\$6,362	24%	7%	12%
Louisiana	\$7,306	30%	7%	\$5,454	22%	5%	8%
Maine	\$10,923	32%	10%	\$8,798	26%	8%	15%
Maryland	\$11,090	25%	8%	\$9,551	22%	7%	12%
Massachusetts	\$19,961	53%	13%	\$13,344	35%	9%	12%
Michigan	\$11,309	37%	11%	\$7,496	25%	7%	14%
Minnesota	\$14,607	38%	12%	\$9,081	23%	7%	11%
Mississippi	\$4,382	19%	5%	\$4,030	17%	5%	12%
Missouri	\$8,862	28%	9%	\$6,785	22%	7%	10%
Montana	\$8,680	29%	9%	\$7,093	24%	7%	12%
Nebraska	\$10,422	31%	10%	\$7,505	22%	7%	6%
Nevada	\$13,877	38%	15%	\$10,511	29%	11%	13%
New Hampshire	\$12,496	31%	9%	\$9,940	25%	8%	14%
New Jersey	\$12,694	34%	9%	\$9,786	26%	7%	12%
New Mexico	\$9,156	33%	11%	\$10,284	37%	12%	12%
New York	\$16,551	48%	14%	\$11,778	34%	10%	13%
North Carolina	\$9,916	33%	10%	\$8,316	28%	8%	16%
North Dakota	\$10,090	30%	9%	\$7,580	23%	7%	8%
Ohio	\$11,302	39%	11%	\$8,761	30%	8%	13%
Oklahoma	\$8,339	30%	9%	\$7,253	26%	8%	12%
Oregon	\$13,007	37%	12%	\$7,640	22%	7%	15%
Pennsylvania	\$11,346	35%	10%	\$8,947	28%	8%	12%
Rhode Island	\$13,462	38%	12%	\$10,068	28%	9%	11%
South Carolina	\$8,658	30%	9%	\$6,747	24%	7%	15%
South Dakota	\$7,167	23%	7%	\$5,403	17%	5%	10%
Tennessee	\$7,934	27%	8%	\$6,696	23%	7%	12%
Texas	\$8,718	28%	9%	\$7,933	25%	8%	12%
Utah	\$9,003	24%	9%	\$7,684	20%	8%	13%
Vermont	\$12,959	37%	12%	\$9,879	28%	9%	16%
Virginia	\$11,579	32%	9%	\$8,843	25%	7%	8%
Washington	\$14,355	39%	12%	\$11,620	31%	10%	12%
West Virginia	\$7,955	35%	9%	\$6,251	27%	7%	13%
Wisconsin	\$12,415	36%	11%	\$9,766	29%	9%	9%
Wyoming	\$7,864	25%	8%	\$7,711	24%	7%	10%

Sources: National Database of Childcare Prices, 2022 estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017–2021; and National Survey of Children’s Health, 2020–2021.¹⁹

*Job changes include quitting a job, not taking a job or greatly changing a job in the previous year. N.A.: Not available

Governments do little to help families afford child care. The main federal mechanism for subsidizing care, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, partially offsets costs for only 1.3 million of the more than 12 million kids in child care.²⁰ These payments also are difficult and time-consuming to access for child care businesses and for families: Of children eligible for subsidies under federal rules, only 1 in 6 receives them,²¹ and research indicates providers serving predominantly Black communities face disparities in subsidy amounts.²²

The shortcomings of the child care system disproportionately affect the financial well-being of women, single parents, parents in poverty, families of color and immigrant families.²³ An analysis of 2017 data indicated center-based care for two children absorbed 26% of a white working mother’s median household income, but that figure was 42% for Latino, 51% for American Indian or Alaska Native and 56% for Black working mothers.²⁴

Parents tend to need child care earlier in their career when lower salaries match their limited experience. This hurts young parents balancing school and work, especially the vast majority who receive no subsidies. They spend an average of 14% of their household income on child care, twice the share the federal government recommends.²⁵

Women’s employment has finally returned to pre-pandemic levels, meaning many women forced out of work because of COVID-19 are once again on the job.²⁶ While child care has long been an issue for parents, it’s particularly challenging for women. Researchers estimate women were *five to eight times more likely* than men to experience negative employment consequences related to caregiving in 2022.²⁷ Family economic mobility is sorely restricted when uncertainty surrounds child care.

**FIGURE 1:
U.S. CHILDREN (AGES 5 AND YOUNGER)
WHOSE FAMILY HAD JOB CHANGES DUE
TO CHILD CARE PROBLEMS BY RACE AND
ETHNICITY, FAMILY STRUCTURE AND INCOME:
2020–2021**

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Total	2,830,000	13%

RACE AND ETHNICITY

American Indian	10,000	9%
Asian and Pacific Islander	160,000	14%
Black	490,000	17%
Latino	880,000	16%
White	1,100,000	10%
Two or More Races	200,000	13%

FAMILY STRUCTURE

Two parents	2,050,000	12%
Single parent	700,000	15%
Single mother	600,000	16%
Single father	100,000	11%
Grandparent or other relation	90,000	9%

FAMILY INCOME

Low income (below 200% of poverty)	1,320,000	15%
Higher income (at or above 200% of poverty)	1,510,000	11%

Source: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2020–2021.

NOTES: Figures only include children birth to age 5. Racial and ethnic categories are mutually exclusive. Due to rounding, numbers presented may not add up to the total provided.

Why Running a Child Care Business Costs So Much When Workers Are Paid So Little

The flip side of the affordability coin is the cost of *providing* child care. Labor costs can account for more than 80% of a child care provider's expenses, and caregiver-to-child ratios are mandated by law and implemented for safety, so there is little flexibility on price.²⁸ Child care businesses are already surviving on profit margins that are typically less than 1%.²⁹ And the modest subsidies states pay to family child care providers are lower than those paid to center-based and large group care in all but two states.³⁰ This boxes in existing child care business owners and discourages the entry of new providers into the market, a major concern in a sector that has lost thousands of providers and tens of thousands of workers since the pandemic began.³¹

High costs affect wages, which are woefully low. Child care workers make less than workers in 98% of our nation's other professions, despite the vital role they play in preparing the next generation to thrive.³² The median pay for child care workers, who typically must hold a range of credentials, was \$28,520 per year or \$13.71 an hour in 2022, less than customer service representatives (\$18.16), retail sales positions (\$14.26) and restaurant jobs (\$14) that don't require the same level of education.³³ Given that 1 in every 100 workers in the United States makes a living caring for children, these low wages ripple and create community-wide disparities.³⁴ Ninety-four percent of child care workers are women; 14% are Black and 4% are Asian, and across all races, 24% described their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.³⁵

With wages as low as they are, child care centers battle sluggish hiring and high turnover.³⁶ According to one survey, staffing

shortages have left those within the field "more stressed" (85%) and "exhausted/burnt out" (75%). These shortages were a factor for the more than one-third of owners and operators who said they were considering shutting down.³⁷ The same survey revealed more than 60% of child care providers had difficulty paying their own food and utility bills in the most recent month.³⁸

POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Child care is a policy thicket that has vexed the country for decades. A quarter century ago, the *1998 KIDS COUNT Data Book* focused on this issue, and the same concerns raised then plague the system today. One important difference is that leaders have very recent, clear evidence of approaches that work. According to an analysis of the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, the economic stimulus bill passed in the middle of the pandemic, \$40 billion in funds for families and the child care sector helped head off 75,000 permanent child care center closures, preserving 3 million child care spots.³⁹ Unfortunately, temporary pandemic-era aid has not been converted into permanent solutions.

What is missing on both the supply and demand sides of the child care equation is a long-term commitment to stabilizing this critical infrastructure. As we have seen, an infusion of resources from the federal government had a direct and measurable effect on the health of the sector. The United States is distinct among advanced economies for its paltry support of early childhood care: \$500 per child per year compared to a \$14,000 average across countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development whose data

were available.⁴⁰ The gap is attributable in large part to a lack of guaranteed paid family leave in the United States.

Transitioning from a faltering child care system to a flourishing one will take new thinking and investment at the local, state and national levels. These ideas should be informed by listening to parents and providers themselves to learn which improvements to the system would be most beneficial to them. An executive order issued by President Biden in April 2023, aimed at expanding access, lowering costs and raising wages,⁴¹ could prove to be a helpful framework, but more is needed.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation encourages policymakers to take action:

- **Federal, state and local governments should invest more money in child care.** State and local governments should maximize remaining ARPA dollars to fund needed child care services and capacity, enabling all parents to work. Congress should reauthorize and strengthen the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act and increase funding for public prekindergarten and Head Start. Agencies at every level should streamline and simplify the process of qualifying for and receiving subsidies.
- **Public and private leaders should work together to improve the infrastructure for home-based child care, beginning by increasing access to startup and expansion capital for new providers.** Governments should review regulations to make sure they are not erecting unnecessary obstacles to opening home child care businesses and look for ways to better support those already in operation.⁴² Policymakers can also encourage the development of staffed family child care networks, which bring providers together to reduce isolation, take advantage of

professional development and find help navigating complicated bureaucracies.

- **To help young parents, Congress should expand the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School program, which serves student parents.** Governments also can encourage the higher education and business communities to take steps such as co-locating child care at work and learning sites to reduce transportation challenges.

America has never had a functional child care system. It is past time for our leaders to build one. When child care works, kids can have positive early experiences and parents can pursue family-supporting careers. The millions of businesses that employ the parents of young children — as well as home- and center-based child care operations themselves — can hire, sustain and develop their workforces and grow the economy. Policymakers must take long-overdue steps to make child care in America more accessible, affordable and equitable to give kids and their caregivers — along with child care workers — the best opportunity to thrive. Our nation's future depends on it. ■





2023 Summer Programs

District	Location	Before & After Summer School	Summer Clubs
Center	Boone Elem.	June 5–30 7–8:30am & 1–6pm	
Fort Osage	Blue Hills Elem.		May 30–June 29
	Buckner Elem.		
	Indian Trails Elem.		
Grandview	Belvidere Elem.	June 5–30 7–9am & 4–6pm	
	Conn-West Elem.		
Hickman Mills	Dobbs Elem.	June 6–30 7–9am & 3–6pm	
	Ervin Elem.		
	Ruskin High		
Kansas City	Banneker Elem.	June 5–29 7–9am & 3:30–6pm	
	Foreign Language Acad.		
	Garfield Elem.		
	Gladstone Elem.		
	Holliday Montessori		
	King Elem.		
Wendell Phillips Elem.			
North Kansas City	Topping Elem.	June 5–29 (Mon-Thur.) 7–8:45am & 2:45–6pm	
Charter	Lee A. Tolbert Academy	June 5–July 11 7–8am & 3:30–6pm	

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