

**Building Bridges
Creating Strong
Partnerships for
Early Childhood
Education**



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION

Thank You For Supporting Working Parents and Children

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide and for your interest in creating successful partnerships, identifying solutions, and working with new partners. Whether you're an advocate or member of the business community, we hope this will be a valuable resource for building and sustaining partnerships between those focused on supporting early childhood education and those focused on supporting their workforce.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT
EDUCATION@USCHAMBER.COM

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At the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, we are dedicated to strengthening America's long-term competitiveness. It is clear that high-quality, affordable, and accessible childcare plays a significant role in ensuring our companies and our country remain competitive and contribute to our overall economic growth and development. Therefore, we are committed to improving and expanding access to early childhood education programs in every community and believe that businesses have a key part to play in achieving this goal.

Our work on this topic began by making the business case for early childhood education and care to business leaders. We published reports that make the connection between early childhood education and economic growth and identified multiple paths to action that are available for the business community.

Today, many business leaders understand the connection between seeking ways to recruit and retain skilled employees to build a strong workforce, and an employee's ability to find and afford childcare. Many leaders also recognize the impact of high-quality early education on our future workforce and are focused on ensuring the economic sustainability of their city, state, or region for years to come.

The importance of early childhood education for economic success is clear. Now, to create sustainable change, early childhood education advocates and the business community must work together to continue that momentum.

As leading experts on, and close partners with, the business community, we understand the conditions necessary for businesses and communities to thrive. From our experience working with business leaders, we have seen that success and great impact are achieved when business leaders and early childhood education advocates work closely together to find shared solutions.

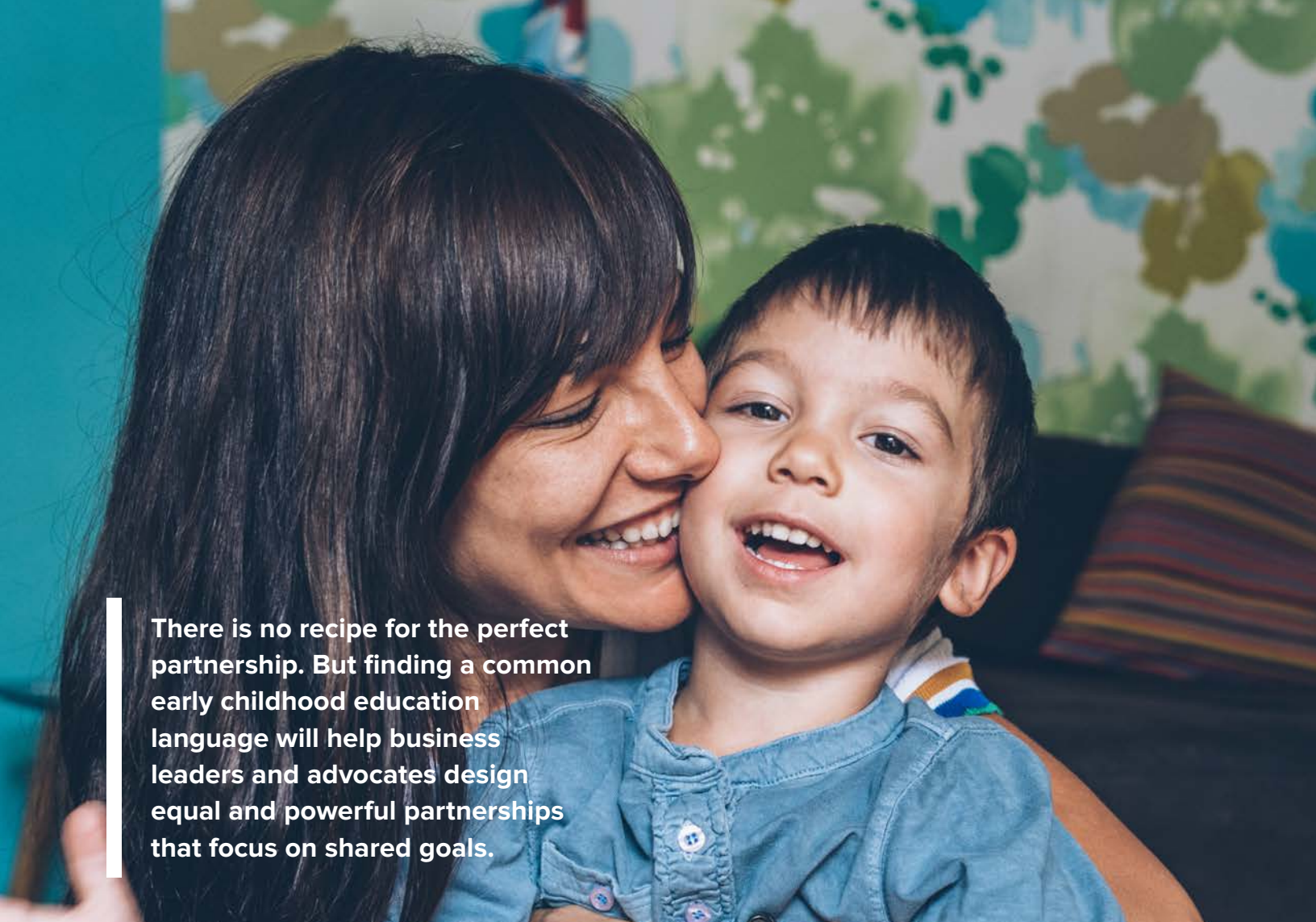


Each side is an asset to the other, bringing unique perspectives and ideas for how to fix the problem. Early education advocates have deep knowledge and expertise on this topic and are a resource for business leaders. At the same time, business leaders are solutions-oriented innovators and important voices for change in their communities. We have seen encouraging results from these partnerships and are working hard to bring more people together to see more successes.

This report brings together data, research, and lessons learned to guide the development of successful and lasting partnerships between the business and early childhood education communities. Our recommendations are grounded in qualitative and quantitative research conducted for this effort.

In a survey, we asked over 150 business leaders and early education advocates about what compels them to action. We listened, through focus groups and one-on-one interviews, to individuals who have created successful partnerships to understand what approaches worked well and what insights they have for others.

Research Methodology: Through June and July 2019, interviews were conducted with 16 business chamber leaders and 14 education advocates. Surveys were fielded and completed by 124 business chamber leaders and 31 education advocates.



There is no recipe for the perfect partnership. But finding a common early childhood education language will help business leaders and advocates design equal and powerful partnerships that focus on shared goals.

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Key Insights

01. TERMINOLOGY MATTERS

- **“Early childhood education” and “childcare”**
Data suggests that the business community perceives these two terms differently.
- **“High-quality”**
Used to create the comparison between low-quality programs that don’t meet the needs of parents or children. The definition of “high-quality programs” can vary significantly across states and organizations and the term can be misconstrued as “expensive.”
- **“High-quality early education”**
The majority of business leaders define as:

Whether it takes place in a home, a childcare center, or with friends, family, or neighbors, high-quality early education should provide developmental experiences that are interactive and stimulating to help young children build the strong foundation that they need for future success in school and the workforce.
- **“Birth to Five”**
50% of business leaders understand early childhood education as supporting children ages birth to five, including infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. This range varies across states and organizations. Use this understanding as a starting point for conversation.

02. UNDERSTAND THE AUDIENCE

Business leaders are looking for partners who understand their interests and needs.

- Large and small businesses think about the benefits of early childhood education differently.
- An early education advocate has a different agenda than a business leader. When developing a partnership, it is important to consider the interests and resources that each partner brings.
- Businesses are looking for specific examples of what they can do to support working parents, including low- and no-cost options, and each business differs in the steps they are able and willing to take. For those examples, business leaders are interested in data, facts, and case studies that are relevant to their geographic area and industry.

03. FOCUS MESSAGES

Business leaders are compelled by messages that connect investments to benefits related to employee recruitment and retention.

- Overly technical terms, nuances, and insider jargon, such as complex terms about children’s brain development, are not necessary for a business leader to understand how best to support their employees.
- Business leaders are looking for direct instruction on how they can take specific steps to support their workforce.
- Businesses do not want to feel like they are solely responsible for solutions. It is important to help a business leader understand it is not on them to solve the problem alone and that resources exist to support their efforts.



Discussion Guide



Across the country, parents with young children struggle to balance work with raising their families. To solve this growing issue, communities are coming together to support families and make our economy stronger. Parents, advocates, governments, and the business community each have a role to play in ensuring that all working parents have access to safe, stimulating care for their children.

For many employers, supporting early childhood education is unfamiliar territory, and they approach the issue with a unique perspective and set of interests. Business leaders seek opportunities to build their organizations, support their employees, and contribute to their communities. They are looking for partners with new ideas and compelling solutions to accomplish these goals.

When it comes to early childhood education, businesses are persuaded by the positive business and economic outcomes that these programs offer. With a direct and tailored approach, advocates can meet business leaders where they are to garner support for this pressing issue.

FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

Business leaders are interested in finding partners to help them understand their options and get involved in a way that best aligns with their interests. Early childhood advocates or members of the business community already supporting early childhood education efforts are excellent resources in this effort.

To build a partnership with a business leader, consider:

What makes this company unique?

Understand the company's audience, as well as early education data and statistics relevant to it based on its geographic location, size, and industry.

- Information about a company's culture and organizational structure can be found on its website and in leadership bios. If the company has a social media presence, consider reading existing online conversations and recent announcements as well as reviewing past participation in community events.
- Consider the family-friendly programs like-minded or competitor companies have that can serve as examples for your potential partner.
- Map out the company's regional or state early childhood education landscape. As its partner, consider how to help connect it with existing active initiatives that best match the company's interests.

What would this company be excited to accomplish?

Understand the company's goals and available resources to help determine the actions it can pursue.

- Large and small businesses weigh the benefits of early childhood education differently, have varying amounts of resources to dedicate to this issue, and are interested in different types of solutions.
- Large businesses likely have more resources to invest outwardly in initiatives at the local, state, or national level while a small business may prefer to focus on making its own work environment supportive to parents with young children.
- These differences don't always break down between urban and rural lines. Large businesses may be in rural areas and small businesses may be in urban areas.



Gather Data and Facts from Trusted Resources

Here are some of our go-to resources:

[Committee for Economic Development's Report on Child Care in State Economies \(2019 Update\)](#)

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The Business Case for High-Quality Childcare Report](#)

[Center for American Progress' Report on America's Child Care Deserts in 2018](#)

[Center for American Progress' Child Care Supply by Congressional District Report](#)

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Leading the Way Toolkit: A Guide for Business Engagement in Early Education](#)

Communicating Successfully

Our research shows that partners interested in engaging with business leaders should maintain:

A positive message.

- Avoid messages that place blame on working parents or place the responsibility of implementing childcare solutions solely on the business community. Business leaders are interested in being a part of a solution that paints a positive vision for the future, including benefits to employee recruitment, retention, productivity, and overall employee happiness.
- Larger businesses are more receptive to positive messages around long-term benefits of developing a high-quality, strong workforce for the future. Both large and small businesses are interested in the positive short-term effects that supporting working parents can have on their organization.

A compelling case.

Provide definitions to commonly used terms. For example, the term “high-quality early childhood education” can mean different things to different groups. Business leaders could associate the term “high-quality” with higher costs. Although high-quality programs may be more expensive, a firm understanding of the definition of high-quality helps to highlight the benefits of those options, including the return on investment.

A clear understanding of age range.

Many business leaders may assume that the term early childhood education is referring to Pre-K or kindergarten, which usually starts around age four or five. It is important to explain the benefits of supporting children and their families starting at birth, especially during the critical infant and toddler years before age three.

A specific call to action.

Businesses want to hear a clear call-to-action with specific, concrete examples and a range of realistic options for what they can do. Call-to-actions, including some that are low- and no-cost, could include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting an internal survey to understand the needs of employees with young children.
- Offering employees with young children flexible schedules.
- Learning about and supporting local, state, or national policies and programs that make early childhood education more effective and affordable.
- Forming partnerships with other businesses to increase early childhood education options in their community.
- Subsidizing childcare options as an employee benefit by providing on-site care, offsetting the cost of nearby care, or helping families afford backup care.
- Continuing to work with early childhood advocates and using them as a resource over time for data, policy updates, or general understanding of the issue.

A library of resources.

Whether as a source for more information, a connection to a larger network or coalition, or something else, it’s important for members of the business community to know that they are not expected to do this alone and have an equal and resource-rich partner working with them to achieve shared goals.

Nurturing Relationships Over Time

There are many issue advocates that ask for support from the business community. Early childhood advocates have an opportunity to set themselves apart by pursuing ongoing partnerships with employers to support them over time and keep them moving forward on the path to change.

Engaging with the business community requires a long-term mindset and thoughtful actions that sustain partnerships beyond just receiving support for a particular campaign or policy.

Consider the following:

- **Be a resource-rich partner**, providing fact sheets, data points, and case studies that support the goals of the business and aid in decision-making moments.
- **Follow up to build relationships and include businesses in planning and strategy discussions.** Businesses have many competing priorities and interests. The more they are involved in planning and strategy discussions from the beginning, the more they will feel that their unique perspective is heard, that their goals align with early childhood education goals, and that they can take action to support working parents.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS

01. Business leaders want to know that they aren't being asked to solve the problem alone, and that there are many ways to take action. This is a large problem to solve with no easy answers, and businesses do not want to feel like they are the only ones responsible for solutions.

- Businesses are open to being educated by local and/or state organizations working in the space about what those partnerships may look like. That includes hearing from advocacy organizations, health and social services agencies, and chambers of commerce. For these conversations, businesses appreciate direct communication about the most relevant challenges and specific options available for taking action.
- Businesses need help understanding that they can advocate for change at the micro-level (within their own company) and/or the macro-level (county, state, or national). Small businesses may be more open to acting within their own company than at the county, state, or national level.
- Businesses appreciate learning about real-world examples of the work that is already being done to support families in their community and state and need help understanding the important role their unique voice can play.

02. Employers are motivated when they understand the direct benefits that their actions can have on their employees.

While it is true that lapses in childcare can have serious consequences for a working parent, businesses would rather focus on the positive returns their employees will see because of their actions.

University of Chicago professor James Heckman found that investments in high-quality programs that support disadvantaged children starting at birth deliver a 13% annual return—significantly higher than the 7-10% return delivered by preschool alone—in education, health, social, and economic outcomes.

03. Business leaders appreciate simple language and clarity around early education terms.

- Businesses relate more to the term “early childhood education” as opposed to “childcare” when referring to high-quality learning environments for young children.
- When many business leaders hear “high-quality” they hear “expensive,” but in the early education environment, high-quality programs provide a clear return on investment over time. Employers need to understand this connection between high-quality programs and the return on investment.
- Businesses typically can’t relate to early childhood education jargon and technical terms and appreciate discussing the topic in more straightforward language. For example, information about children’s brain development and the importance of building social and emotional skills early are important but aren’t going to be the main focal points for a business.
- It can be hard for an employer to connect the term “college ready” with early education achievement goals, especially in rural areas where there may be more students going directly to technical or vocational programs after high school. Some businesses are more interested in helping kids become “career ready” after high school.

04. Using data that is relevant to a businesses’ location and industry will have the greatest impact. National data and statistics are helpful to provide context, but every business is different, and every region and state in the country has a unique early childhood education landscape.

The cost of childcare is high, and it’s an important data point for businesses to understand. However, drawing comparisons between the cost of childcare and the cost of college tuition or a home mortgage can be a distraction. Employers can handle the raw numbers without the analogy.





Shared Key Messages



Building strong partnerships in support of working parents requires unified and consistent shared language between education advocates and the business community. That's why the Chamber Foundation commissioned research to uncover the most effective messages among both groups. The following key messages can be used to guide in-person discussions and develop informational materials and leave-behinds for the business community. Messages can be adapted to fit the unique local context.

When tailoring key messages to use with the business community consider the following:

- What is the role of the individual who will receive the message? Are they a business leader, in an HR division, or another department?
- Is the company large (500+ employees) or small (1-500 employees)?
- Are there related data or case studies available for the community(ies) or state(s) of interest?
- Are there personal anecdotes or stories available that may resonate with this audience?
- Is the call-to-action achievable?
- Is the audience familiar with the terms used in conversations and materials or are definitions required?
- Does the audience understand the age range of children being discussed?

Recommended definition based on research:

HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION

Whether it takes place in a home, a childcare center, or with friends, family, or neighbors, high-quality early education should provide developmental experiences that are interactive and stimulating to help young children build the strong foundation that they need for future success in school and the workforce.

Among the business community surveyed, the majority (71%) agreed that the following messages make the most compelling case to bring business leaders into the conversation and garner support for working parents.

	LARGE BUSINESS	SMALL BUSINESS
Businesses depend on a strong, skilled workforce, today and in the future, to compete and succeed globally. Economic losses could be economic gains if high-quality childcare is available.	●	
Businesses depend on a strong, skilled workforce, today and in the future, to compete and succeed in their community. Economic losses could be economic gains if high-quality childcare is available.		●
Almost 13 million Americans in their prime working years have children under the age of six. ^{i,iv}	●	●
A 2018 report shows the U.S. economy loses an astounding \$57 billion per year in revenue, wages, and productivity as a result of issues related to childcare. ^{ii,v}	●	●
Now more than ever, providing support for working parents with young children is key to attracting and retaining high-quality employees. Parents, when making the decision to enter, re-enter, or stay in the workforce, need a trusted, safe, stimulating learning environment for their children.	●	●
70% of nonworking Americans who live below the poverty line and have young children cite “taking care of home/family” as the reason they’re not in the workforce. ^{iii,vi}	●	●
To remain productive and engaged at work, parents need peace of mind knowing that their children are in a safe and stimulating environment.	●	●
High-quality early childhood education increases employees’ productivity in the workplace and supports the success of the future workforce.	●	
High-quality early childhood education supports the success of the future workforce.		●
Businesses that invest in high-quality early education programs are both supporting the needs of the workforce today and strengthening the workforce of tomorrow.	●	
Businesses that invest in high-quality early education programs are both supporting the needs of the workforce of today.		●
Providing employees with options for high-quality early education is a significant factor in the recruitment, retention, and productivity of your current workforce.	●	●
Young children need responsive relationships and positive experiences to support their rapid brain development and build the foundation for success later in school and the workplace.	●	
Business leaders have the power to bring much needed attention to this issue. There are many ways to make a difference, such as working to understand the needs of employees who have children, offering more flexible work hours for parents, and talking to other business leaders and policymakers about why they should support parents and families.	●	

Tough Questions & Answers

The business community asks some good, yet often tough, questions when presented with an opportunity to engage with a partner in early childhood education. Here are some of the top questions asked by business leaders and some recommended responses

01.

High-quality early childhood education is expensive. Why should businesses be responsible for investing in these programs?

The return on investment of high-quality programs can be seen in increased workplace productivity for your employees today, especially working mothers, and a reduced need for expensive interventions for children later in life. Research shows that every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education for disadvantaged children ages zero to five delivers a 13% annual return on investment through better education, health, social, and economic outcomes.

02.

Why do children need learning support before they enter kindergarten?

Although children begin kindergarten at age five in most U.S. states, children start learning from birth, so every environment is a learning environment for them. More than one million new neural connections form in an infant's brain every second, which is why healthy development in the first few years of life prepare children for success when they reach kindergarten.

For this healthy development to occur, young children need stable, caring, interactive relationships with their parents and with caretakers in a high-quality early education environment when their parents are at work.

03.

My business is small and local, so I don't think I have the resources to support this effort.

Business leaders don't need to solve early childhood education challenges alone. In fact, we have seen more success for businesses who partner with early education advocates. There are many advocates and experts available who are eager to explore a wide range of solutions and find the right opportunities that match your business's needs and resources.

To get started, consider using an internal survey to better understand the needs of your employees. Once you know the results, look for a partner, such as a local early childhood education advocacy organization or your local department of education and early learning, and begin to explore options for how your workplace can respond to your employees' needs.

You can also connect with your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency to learn more about childcare in your area and

how you can support efforts to build and sustain programs.

As you connect with organizations in your area, remember, there are several low-resource options to consider, including offering flexible hours for working parents and providing your employees with a list of available early childhood education programs in your community.

04.

Parents are the most important caregivers in a child's life. Businesses and/or government shouldn't be involved in children's lives before kindergarten.

Parents are a child's most important caregivers and play the lead role in their child's healthy development. Ensuring nurturing and supportive childcare is part of parents' role.

At the same time, many working families with young children are stretched for time and resources—especially first-time parents, families with both parents in the labor force, single parents, and those with lower incomes. Communities and governments can provide families with the support they need to ensure parents are able to remain focused and productive at work while their children are in safe and stimulating environments.



Fact Sheet



These facts support the most common and compelling arguments for why businesses should support high-quality early childhood education, including the benefits to employee recruitment, retention, and productivity, the return on investment in communities over time, and the importance of supporting the workforce of tomorrow. Business leaders are interested in understanding both the short- and long-term benefits for their businesses and broader communities.

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & PRODUCTIVITY

- A 2018 report shows the U.S. economy loses an astounding \$57 billion per year in revenue, wages, and productivity as a result of issues related to childcare.^{vii}
- Almost 13 million Americans in their prime working years have children under the age of six.^{viii}
- Employee engagement and retention is the number one human resource problem according to Deloitte's 2015 Global Human Capital Trends report, which shows that 87% of business leaders believe that employee engagement and retention is "important."^{ix}
- Over three-quarters of mothers and half of fathers, in a 2015 Washington Post survey, said they had passed up work opportunities, switched jobs, or quit to take care of their children.^x
- The cost to replace a lost employee is roughly 20% of an entry-level annual salary, at a minimum, and often much larger when lost productivity is considered.^{xi}
- In a 2016 Care.com survey, 74% of working parents said their jobs had been affected by childcare problems, including falling behind on work, missing work, and losing pay because of absences.^{xii}
- Working families across the country lose \$8.2 billion in wages annually due to inadequate childcare access.^{xiii}
- Among nonworking Americans living below the poverty line who have young children, 70% cite "taking care of home/family" as the reason they're not in the workforce.^{xiv}

RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY & SOCIETY

- Research shows that investments in high-quality programs for disadvantaged children deliver a 13% annual return to their communities measured through better education, health, social, and economic outcomes.^{xv}
- The return on investment for early childhood programs is also shown to be significantly higher than “down the talent pipeline” investments like post-school job trainings, which can be prohibitively expensive.^{xvi}
- The Perry Preschool Study, which spanned 40 years, shows that for every \$1 spent on early childhood education, society gains as much as \$16 in long-term savings.^{xvii}
- In Louisiana alone, a study estimated that the cost of inadequate or unavailable childcare totaled \$2 billion in 2016 due to employee absence and turnover, lost workplace productivity, and other effects.^{xviii}
 - And in Washington, a 2019 report estimates that the direct costs from turnover and missed work due to childcare issues is \$2.08 billion.^{xix}
 - Similarly, a 2019 study in Tennessee showed that the state loses \$1.34 billion annually in lost earnings and revenue.^{xx}

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

- Early positive and negative interactions with children “determine whether a child’s developing brain architecture provides a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.”^{xxi}
 - The hour-to-hour, day-to-day early experiences of young children have a profound, lasting impact on the rest of their lives.
 - The skills children develop at the earliest stages of life enable higher skill development in later stages of life. Investing in children early provides great economic returns in the future.^{xxii}
- Research shows that supporting growth in cognitive skills for children early in life can affect a child’s future academic ability, and these skills are already largely developed by the time children enter the traditional K-12 system in kindergarten.^{xxiii} A student with less developed cognitive skills formed early in life is likely to fall behind early in school and have a much harder time trying to catch up to his/her peers.
- Soft skills, like team work, problem-solving, critical thinking, reasoning and other social-emotional skills, develop at a young age. A recent study found a strong correlation between early social-emotional skills and future success. With each one-point increase in the study’s rating of children’s social-emotional skills, a child was 46% more likely to hold a full-time job at age 25.^{xxiv}
- A 2016 survey found that eight out of ten employers listed “ability to work in a team” as a critical skill for new hires, followed by other soft skills like problem-solving, communication, and work ethic.^{xxv}
- The World Economic Forum predicts that by 2020, one in three occupations will require high-demand social skills.^{xxvi}
- A *Wall Street Journal* survey of executives found that around 90% said soft skills were equally or more important than technical skills, and that they were having trouble finding employees with these necessary attributes.^{xxvii}

Key Data Points

For business leaders, the most compelling arguments are those supported by relevant data. National data points provide helpful context and comparisons, but local data, relevant to a business leader's specific industry and geographic location, underscores the real business and community need for high-quality early childhood education. Business leaders across the country found the following national and state data points to be the most compelling.

WHY IS HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESSES?



It can take **an average of 8 months** for a new employee to become **onboarded and fully productive**.



Almost 13 million Americans in their prime working years have children under the age of six.



The cost to replace a lost employee is roughly **20% of an entry-level salary**, at a minimum.



83% of millennials, who represent **more than 1/3 of the workforce** and are the primary generation with young children, say that they would leave their job for one with more family-friendly benefits.



A 2018 report shows the U.S. economy **loses an astounding \$57 billion per year in revenue, wages, and productivity** as a result of issues related to childcare.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN WORKING PARENTS?



Investments in high-quality programs that support disadvantaged young children starting at birth **deliver a 13% annual return in education, health, social, and economic outcomes**—significantly higher than the 7-10% return delivered by preschool alone.



By 2020, **more than 1/3 of occupations will require social skills**, such as the ability to work in a team, problem-solve, and communicate well, that are not considered crucial for jobs today.



The U.S. is facing a skills gap crisis with more jobs available than qualified candidates. Between 2018 and 2028, there will be an estimated **2.4 million vacant positions** in the manufacturing industry **that could result in a loss of economic output around \$2.5 trillion**.



Childcare Data by State

Find childcare data by state and by congressional district by visiting the [Center for American Progress' Child Care Supply tool](#). Available data includes the population of children under age six, the percentage of those children with both parents in the workforce, the number of licensed childcare providers available, and the corresponding share of children the state's childcare market can serve.

Additional Resources

[Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow](#)

The Chamber Foundation's 2017 report makes an in-depth, researched case for business investment in high-quality childcare. The corresponding [toolkit](#) is another great resource for data points and case studies.

[Early Learning in the United States: 2019](#)

This series of fact sheets by the Center for American Progress details state-specific snapshots of the childcare and early childhood education landscape in each state.

[The Heckman Equation](#)

This website presents Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman's work on the long-term benefits of investing in high-quality early childhood education.

[Child Care in State Economies](#)

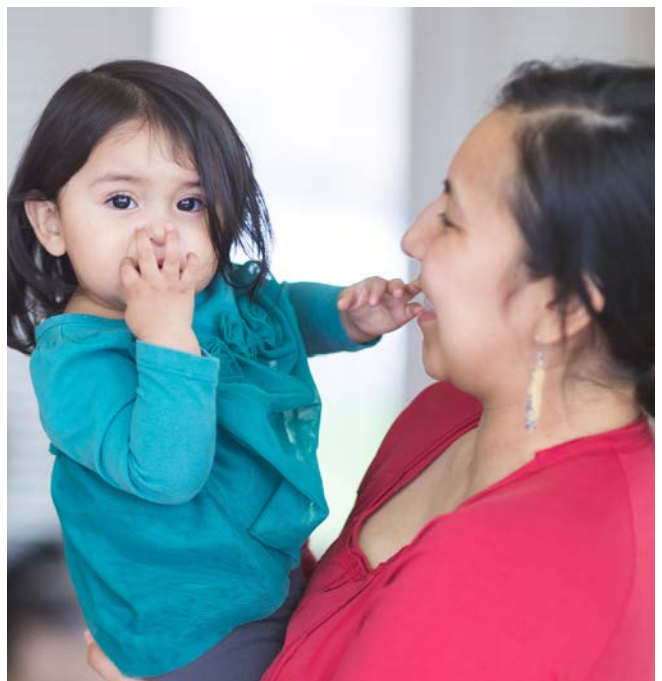
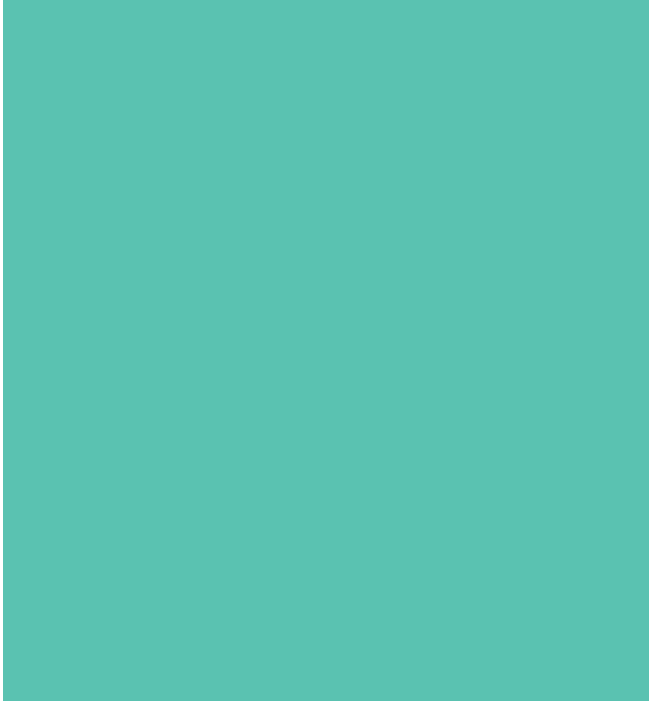
The Committee for Economic Development provides detailed economic data points for childcare in each state, including data on childcare organizations, demand, the role of the childcare industry in the economy, and childcare and economic growth.

[National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers](#)

The Assess Where You Live tool on the homepage of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers' website provides data at the national, state, and county levels that shows a snapshot of how young children and families are doing in specific geographic areas.

[Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#)

The Center on the Developing Child provides compelling scientific research on the benefits of investing in early childhood development and the full potential of the workforce of tomorrow.



Case Studies

Key messages, facts, and data points are important building blocks for effective conversations about early childhood education solutions that can lead to successful partnerships between advocates and the business community. During conversations, it can also be helpful to reference real-world examples to show how business leaders are supporting parents by meeting their need for high-quality early childhood education.

The following case studies offer a range of examples of both large and small businesses, different types of partnerships, and various geographic locations.



Shared Services Alliances



This case study provides examples of:

- How a business in a low-income area can contribute to a community solution to help childcare providers keep their doors open
- A partnership that includes philanthropic and corporate grants
- How business leaders can provide their insights and expertise to help establish or improve shared services alliances

SUMMARY

A Shared Services Alliance is a partnership of childcare providers working together to share costs and deliver services in a streamlined and efficient way. This case study examines the different ways businesses can contribute to Shared Services Alliances and help alleviate the financial burden so providers can focus on what they do best—provide high-quality care.

Shared Services Alliances allow both center and family childcare providers, especially in low-income communities, to share some portion of the financial burden of operating a high-quality program. Providers pool resources to support hiring centralized staff for operations and business support, accounting, and maintenance across multiple sites among other functions.

These models are often funded through philanthropic and corporate grants and partnerships. Businesses can support alliances through sustained funding or one-time donations, by offering space, championing better policy solutions, and/or offering their skills and business expertise to help alliances establish long-term, collaborative systems.

Read the full case study [here](#).

PNC: Investing in Early Childhood Education



This case study provides examples of:

- The impact that large businesses can have through their corporate-social responsibility initiatives
- A successful model that can be replicated by businesses looking to commit to a long-term, comprehensive approach to addressing this societal issue
- An effort to support the workforce of tomorrow
- An initiative strongly backed by research

SUMMARY

To help build a foundation for lifelong learning and improve social mobility for underserved children, PNC launched PNC **Grow Up Great** and PNC **Crezca con Exito**. This investment seeks to instill within young children a passion for learning and is supported by extensive research on early childhood education, which shows that for every \$1 spent on high-quality early education, society reaps as much as \$16 in long-term savings. PNC partnered with leading nonprofit organizations and established an advisory council consisting of respected early childhood experts to guide the development of their programs and resources.

Key partnerships contributed to the program's success, which has now served more than four million young children. PNC's resources are free and available for use, so businesses can consider promoting these materials in their own programs to save costs or sharing them directly with employees.

- **Lesson Center:** Free, high-quality arts and science lesson plans to support learning in the early childhood classroom.
- **Sesame Street Learning Resources:** Developed in partnership with Sesame Workshop, bilingual resources that include digital storybooks and podcasts for young children.
- **Everyday Learning Tips:** Tips for parents to use throughout the day—bedtime, mealtime, or when doing errands—on how to provide learning opportunities for their children.

Read the full case study [here](#).

Business Advocates for Childcare in Louisiana

This case study provides examples of:

- How a business can successfully partner with advocates, policymakers, and communities to improve childcare systems
- The connection between local actions and state-wide policies
- How business leaders can have a powerful voice in advocacy efforts and lend their support to efforts already underway

SUMMARY

In Louisiana, many families are forced to choose between leaving the workforce or placing their children in unregulated care to stay in the workforce. Recognizing that childcare issues pose a threat to the workforce of today and the workforce of tomorrow, business leaders across the state came together and championed a movement for high-quality, regulated childcare, making it top of mind for policymakers and the public.

Chambers of commerce lead the way in many areas, including in the city of Natchitoches, Louisiana, where a growing number of children were entering school at a disadvantage compared to their peers. The Natchitoches Chamber led a movement to increase awareness of the importance of high-quality childcare and found that by focusing on the start of the education pipeline, they were able to

reduce the achievement gap later on. They partnered with local organizations to increase awareness of the need for high-quality early education, highlighting that this issue is critical for both the current and future workforce.

At the state-level, the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children hosted early childhood education roundtables with business leaders, many of whom then went on to act as champions for childcare across the state. In 2017, these efforts helped push the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the state's largest business organization, to make access to high-quality childcare a top policy priority.

Read the full case study [here](#).



Collins Aerospace Day Academy in Iowa

This case study provides examples of:

- A group of small businesses coming together to create an early childhood education program for their employees' children and the greater community
- An example of how an original childcare model evolved as Collins Aerospace expanded and the needs of their workforce grew
- A strong partnership between the local business community and the local school district as well as state and national partners
- The different options businesses have for getting involved and supporting working parents

SUMMARY

When faced with a serious childcare shortage for their employees, one that affects the whole state of Iowa, Collins Aerospace partnered with a small group of employers to develop a childcare solution that would allow each company to benefit from the in-demand services while sharing the costs. The group worked together, in partnership with Cedar Rapids Community School District, Aramark Quality Food Service, State of Iowa DHS, National Association for the Education of Young Children, and Linn Mar School District-State Wide Preschool, to launch the Collins Aerospace Day Academy.

This comprehensive and high-quality early education program supports the needs of employee families, including grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and children with special needs. In addition, whenever possible, the facility is open to the general public and for drop-in childcare.

Today, Collins Aerospace operates the Day Academy, their own stand-alone childcare program, with an enrollment of over 300 children and more than 100 children on the waiting list. They have continued to work with the same partners and recently invested resources into developing a new building.

Read the full case study [here](#).

Private-Sector Childcare Engagement in Minnesota



This case study provides examples of:

- The benefits of long-term public-private partnerships to support working parents and the workforce of tomorrow
- How private funds can catalyze public initiatives
- How businesses can be part of a broad early childhood education coalition

SUMMARY

Over the past 15 years, business leaders in Minnesota have partnered with advocacy groups and the public sector to develop strategies to close the achievement gap by improving the accessibility, affordability, and quality of childcare in Minnesota. The business community has catalyzed improvements to the childcare system and garnering increased public attention and investment.

When the public and private sectors come together, it is clear that:

- There is strength in cross-sector collaboration. Effective coalitions are built when businesses are willing to reach out to other businesses to join a cause they care about. Using relationships is a powerful way to help support an issue.

- The private sector was smart to partner with advocates to draw on their expertise on issues around early childhood education and then eventually find a way for their work to dovetail into a public sector initiative, making it more sustainable in the long run.
- Business leaders have the power to use their social capital to take an otherwise under the radar issue and make it a public priority, garner private sector investment, and generate public sector support and funding.

Read the full case study [here](#).



Developing a Statewide Coalition in Georgia

This case study provides examples of:

- How a chamber of commerce (or other business coalition) can lead early childhood education advocacy initiatives
- Building lasting partnership between businesses and government

SUMMARY

Georgia loses around \$100 million in revenue due to employee absences and turnover related to lapses in childcare according to a 2018 report. To address this serious issue, the Metro Atlanta Chamber created a model to convene and unite local businesses, childcare providers, school administrators, and other community leaders to identify what works for their community, increase the state's focus on early childhood education as an economic issue, and advocate with one voice for the right solutions.

As a result of this work, Georgia has seen an increased focus on early education at the state policy level. State lawmakers know and speak publicly about businesses that are interested in, and supportive of, strong quality childcare policies.

In addition, the partnerships that have been established, such as between the Metro Atlanta Chamber and Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS), have created an increased interest in, and capacity for, continuing data collection and reporting on these issues across the state.

Under this model, the Metro Atlanta Chamber:

- Shares data
- Actively participates in broad coalitions supporting early education
- Meets regularly with state agencies
- Provides the voice of the business community in education campaigns for state policymakers and legislators on the importance of high-quality early education to industry and the state's economy

Read the full case study [here](#).

Multi-Sector Approach to Infrastructure in San Mateo



This case study provides examples of:

- Diverse stakeholders coming together—early education advocates, local government, the chamber of commerce, school districts, faith-based organizations, and philanthropists—to find a solution to a pressing community need
- The different options businesses have for getting involved and supporting working parents
- The connection between economic growth and early childhood education programs

SUMMARY

In 2015, San Mateo County identified a serious shortage of high-quality early learning facilities, a deficit of about 3,000 spaces for children under the age of two, which was impacting children and families of all ages and income levels. To address this challenge, Build Up for San Mateo County's Children was established to bring together diverse stakeholders, including elected officials and business leaders, and identify how childcare opportunities can be included in ongoing economic development initiatives across the county.

Build Up SMC's model ensured that the business community was part of the solution from day one by elevating the clear connection between high-quality early education and economic success for the county. Businesses' involvement ranges from working to provide childcare facilities on-site for

their employees and implementing policies that help meet working parents' needs to championing the issue with other business leaders in the area.

Build Up SMC is working towards the goal of developing 3,000 new childcare spaces by 2020, and they are well on their way to achieving success. More than 1,500 childcare spaces have either been completed or are currently in the development pipeline, and their cross-sector partnerships continue to grow.

Read the full case study [here](#).

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