In addition to the benefits to young children, access to affordable, high-quality child care can increase parental labor force participation and family economic stability. Child care problems, however, adversely affect both state and national economies. As a direct result of child care issues, the national economy loses upward of $57 billion annually in the form of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.14

6.6% of parents make career sacrifices due to child care issues.15

Labor force participation of mothers with children under the age of 5 decreased from 80.1% in 2019 to 68.7% in 2021.16

Nationwide17

The percent of families that reported difficulty finding space in a home- or center-based program increased dramatically from 22% in December 2021 to 58% in January 2022.71% of parents report that difficulty finding child care has impacted their ability to work.
Massachusetts Early Learning and Care Snapshot

Need
- Population Under Six: 427,507
- Under Six Living in Poverty: 13%
- 71.39% of children under six have available parents in the workforce

Access
- 53% of Massachusetts residents live in a “child care desert”
- For rural families and families with low incomes, this percentage is even higher

Affordability
- The average price of child care is $16,590 per year
- The median household income is $139,726

Quality
- Met 5.5/10 of NIEER’s State Preschool Quality Standards

High Price of Care
Too often, the care that is available costs more than families can afford.

Annual Price of Infant Care in Massachusetts

Center-Based $22,577 per year
- Married Parents: 16.2% Percent of Median Income
- Single Parent: 69.2% Percent of Median Income

Home-Based $14,074 per year
- Married Parents: 10.1% Percent of Median Income
- Single Parent: 43.1% Percent of Median Income

Low Compensation for Early Educators
Despite the critical nature of their work, early educators are among the most underpaid workers in the nation.

Child Care Workers Hourly Rate
- $14.11

The Temporary Impact of ARPA Funding
In Massachusetts, 56,203 child care spots were saved by ARPA funds.

Of providers who received stabilization grants:
- 92% said funding helped them stay open.
- 63% of those in family child care homes.
- 46% used funds to pay debts taken on in the course of the pandemic, including
- 75% used funds for compensation but still struggle to provide competitive wages and benefits.

The Federal Minimum Wage
- $15,080

The Poverty Line
- $9,370

Nationally, child care workers make less than 98% of all occupations.