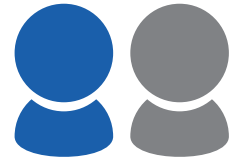


SENATE BILL 1408

# Idahoans Need More Child Care Capacity

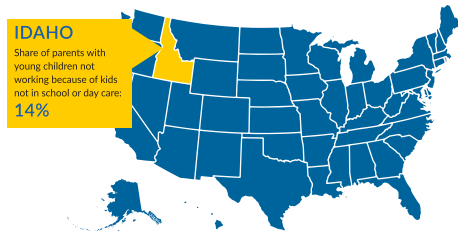
Nearly half of Idaho families live in a child care desert: areas that lack enough child care supply to meet the demand in that given community. Prior to the pandemic, Idaho needed roughly 20,000 child care spaces to meet the demand across the state.<sup>1</sup> This diminished supply impacts rural communities, like Bonneville and Latah counties, the hardest. In 2019, it was estimated that nearly one third of children in Idaho lacked access to quality affordable child care.<sup>2</sup> Under the constraints of a pandemic and record inflation impacting the costs associated with operating a child care facility, quality child care supply has become even more limited – already roughly 200 child care businesses have been forced to close their doors permanently, exacerbating the demands we saw pre-pandemic.



**1 in 2**

Idaho children live in a “child care desert.”

## Lack of Child Care, School Closures Prevent Some Parent From Working



Source: Pew Charitable Trust, 2022

## IDAHO CHILD CARE SUPPLY SHORTAGE

Given the supply shortage of available child care spots across the state, working parents are feeling the strain of limited access to available quality child care. Idaho has seen an estimated 14% of working parents prevented from working due to gaps in child care; the highest rate in the country.<sup>3</sup> Senate Bill 1408 appropriates \$15 million federal relief dollars to create more available child care options for working parents through a project

managed by the Workforce Development Council. This is a good first step toward addressing our state’s serious supply shortage. Child Care Infrastructure Grants could be awarded to both existing licensed child care businesses looking to expand capacity and employers looking to meet the needs of their workforce by creating a quality child care option in their communities.

**By voting “Yes” on Senate Bill 1408 to approve the funds needed for the Workforce Development Council’s Child Care Infrastructure Grants, the Idaho Legislature can take meaningful action in meeting the needs of working parents by trusting existing small businesses and employers to create desperately needed child care options in communities across the state. Idaho will lose smart, hardworking employees with strong family values if they cannot secure quality child care while they go to work to earn a paycheck. Access to child care is critical to the well-being of families and the health of our workforce.**

“My husband and I would absolutely be willing to build another childcare center to meet the growing needs in our community but with inflation and the increasing cost of construction, it’s becoming too cost prohibitive to build a new center to meet demands. If there were some sort of grant assistant to help business owners like us expand our services, we could meet the community need much more effectively.

- Rachel | Ten Mile Academy (Meridian)

“We were able to expand by taking out loans. It absolutely came with financial risks! The decision for us to take that risk is because we felt there was such a demand in the area that we felt it was so desperately needed we didn’t think we’d have a problem filling the center.”

- Jennifer | Storybook Nook (Sandpoint)

1. Idaho’s Early Childhood Care and Education Strategic Plan, Early Childhood Advisory Council  
 2. Child Care Gaps in 2019, Bipartisan Policy Center  
 3. Working Parents Face Continued Chaos Despite Reopened Schools, Pew Trust