



*Prepared by
Legislative Policy and
Research Office*

Joint Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care

Report
pursuant to House Bill 2346 (2019)

December 2020

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Legislative Branch Appointees (nonvoting)

Senate

1. Kathleen Taylor, State Senator, Oregon Legislature
2. Tim Knopp, State Senator, Oregon Legislature

House

1. Cedric Hayden, State Representative, Oregon Legislature
2. Karin Power, State Representative, Oregon Legislature

Executive Branch Appointees (voting)

1. Regan Gray, Child Care Policy Advisor, Family Forward
2. Swati Adarkar, Cofounder, President and Chief Executive Officer, Children's Institute; replaced by Dana Hepper, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Children's Institute, effective by August 11, 2020 meeting
3. Jenny Lee, Deputy Director, Coalition of Communities of Color
4. Ron Herndon, Director, Albina Head Start
5. Elanna Yalow, Chief Academic Officer, KinderCare Education
6. Josie Emmrich, Owner and Child Care Provider, Loving Beginnings Certified Family Child Care
7. Natalie Jackson, Owner and Child Care Provider, Bear Bear Regulated Subsidy Child Care
8. Yolanda Morales, Parent, Refugee Welcome Center
9. Parent vacancy; Celese Williams effective by September 8, 2020 meeting
10. Brenda Comini, Director, Early Learning Hub of Central Oregon
11. Marie Simonds, Program Manager, Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
12. Miriam Calderon, Early Learning System Director, Oregon Early Learning Division
13. Dan Haun, Self Sufficiency Programs Director, Oregon Department of Human Services

TASK FORCE STAFF

Amie Fender-Sosa, Counsel
Legislative Policy and Research Office

C. Ross, Counsel
Legislative Policy and Research Office

Samantha Koopman, Assistant
Legislative Policy and Research Office

The Legislative Policy and Research Office provides nonpartisan research, issue analysis, and staffing services for the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Policy and Research Office does not provide legal advice. This document is current as of the date of publication; subsequent action by the legislative, executive, or judicial branches may impact accuracy.

Co-Chairs:

Rep. Karin Power
Sen. Kathleen Taylor

Staff:

Amie FenderSosa, LPRO Analyst
C. Ross, Counsel
Samantha Koopman, Sr. Committee Assistant



Members:

Rep. Cedric Hayden
Sen. Tim Knopp
Miriam Calderon
Brenda Comini
Josie Emmrich
Regan Gray
Dan Haun
Dana Hepper
Ron Herndon
Natalie Jackson
Jenny Lee
Yolanda Morales
Marie Simonds
Celese Williams

80th LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
JOINT TASK FORCE ON ACCESS TO QUALITY AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

State Capitol
900 Court St. NE, Rm. 453
Salem OR 97301
503-986-1813

Executive Summary

[recommendations will be summarized here once finalized – two page limit]

The Joint Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care (the Task Force) was established by [House Bill 2346 \(2019\)](#).

The Task Force recommends the following to increase eligible families' use of child care subsidies, as required by House Bill 2346:

-
-
-

The Task Force also recommends the following, to expand access to high-quality, subsidized child care for families that are not currently eligible for subsidized child care who cannot otherwise afford or access child care, as required by House Bill 2346:

-
-
-

The Task Force volunteers the following additional recommendations, not required by House Bill 2346:

-
-
-

Members of the Legislative Assembly may obtain a copy of the report from the
Legislative Policy and Research Office's website: [\[insert URL\]](#).

Representative Karin Power, Chair

Senator Kathleen Taylor, Chair

DRAFT

[insert internal hyperlinks]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND#

PROCESS.....#

ACTIVITY#

FINDINGS#

RECOMMENDATIONS.....#

CONCLUSION#

APPENDICES

DRAFT

BACKGROUND

Creation

The Joint Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care (the Task Force) was established pursuant to House Bill 2346, which was enacted during the 2019 regular legislative session. Given the large number of participants required by the measure, the appointments took some time to complete. Task Force formation was also delayed by the occurrence of the 2020 regular legislative session, and the ongoing worldwide pandemic outbreak of COVID-19.

The Task Force convened its first meeting on April 29, 2020. Its members organized themselves, committed to an every-other-week regular meeting schedule, and immediately began the first of many discussions probing the relevancy of the originating legislation and its specific directives in light of the pandemic. The members met a total of 16 times over the course of eight months, but never in person.

Mandate

House Bill 2346 directed the Task Force to make recommendations to the legislature by December 31, 2020, to achieve the following:

- to increase eligible families' use of child care subsidies; and,
- to expand access to high-quality, subsidized child care for families that are not currently eligible for subsidized child care who cannot otherwise afford or access child care.

The measure further required specific consideration of the following items as the Task Force developed its recommendations:

- Availability of high-quality child care providers that meet the needs of families, including culturally specific care and workable hours of operation.
- Copayments.
- Burdensome administrative practices and requirements.
- Reimbursement rates.
- Economic stability of families receiving child care subsidies.
- Access to professional development and quality supports.
- Access to child care that allows parents to work and provides positive development opportunities for children.

[\[links and roadmap here\]](#)

PROCESS

The Task Force agreed to free itself from blind adherence to the directives contained in the originating legislation as appropriate to accommodate pandemic-related discussions, participant's spontaneous suggestions, and other ad hoc changes in emphasis or direction. A loose and flexible work plan was developed to that end; COVID-19 updates were incorporated at the beginning of every meeting; and the Task Force sought feedback from both the Governor's office and Legislative branch leadership regarding its utility, best use, and potential shift in focus. The Task Force also extended the deadline for receipt of a report on child care supply/demand and barriers to subsidies, from June 30th (as required by the originating legislation) to September 30th. A small library of reference materials accumulated [Appendix ___], and the Legislative Fiscal Office was asked to survey materials relevant to economic recovery and economic development.

ACTIVITY

The Task Force moved through a wide variety of presentations and information, including: overviews of the general child care landscape in Oregon and other states, both pre-pandemic and ongoing; receipt of a December 2019 report on existing child care subsidy programs required by the originating legislation; the economics of child care; Oregon's revenue forecasts; the merits of developing a problem statement, and / or guiding principles, and / or short and long-term plans; proposed investments to meet immediate child care needs; provider experiences and perspectives; parent perspectives; the needs of vulnerable populations; equity considerations; governance models in other states; subsidy administration in other states; regional collaborations within Oregon; receipt of a September 2020 report on the supply of and demand for child care and on the barriers to accessing existing child care subsidies; [add as appropriate from October, November, December; insert links].

FINDINGS

The System. Oregon's child care system is failing. It is chronically underfunded. Quality care is not uniformly available or affordable. Oregon's children, parents, providers, and communities – particularly those that are already marginalized or disadvantaged – as well as Oregon's employers, economy and education system are all adversely impacted. [Statement acknowledging complexity.]

Children. A child's early years are critical to their physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development. Yet, *affordable* quality child care (that does not exceed seven percent of a household's income) *does not exist* for most families unless/until substantial public investment begins (when school starts for children at age 5). Access is also starkly inequitable: Black and Latinx communities, parents of children with disabilities, low-income families, and those living in rural areas have even greater difficulty obtaining care for their young ones. Failing to support early childhood development at the *front* end deprives children of equal opportunity, *at minimum*, and at

worst: deprives them of their own future, their own potential, while substantially increasing societal costs on the *back* end.

Providers. Oregon’s system of child care is also decentralized. Governance is bifurcated, inefficient, and confusing for parents and providers. There are significant barriers for providers to start-up or sustain operations – it is a month-to-month struggle with no operating capital to spare, no ability to flexible in support of children and parents, and no cushion to weather setbacks or difficulty of any kind.

Workers. Child care workers have no clear career path or professional progression and are paid poverty wages. Child care workers are required to deliver numerous services that parents cannot afford to pay for.

Parents. Parents suffer lost wages, damaged or delayed career paths, inhibited earning potential over time, affecting potential financial security and stability at retirement, as a result of unavailable, deficient, or unstable child care, that disproportionately impacts those who are already marginalized or disadvantaged, the worst.

Employers and the Economy. Child care is a *linchpin* – it is *necessary* – for economic recovery and economic growth. Oregon employers and Oregon’s economy suffer from lost productivity and job disruption that results from unavailable, deficient, or unstable child care. Failing to adequately support early childhood development at the *front* end, operates as a long-term drag on the economy, from the weight of substantially increased societal costs on the *back* end.

COVID-19. The current worldwide pandemic has exacerbated the child care crisis. Without access to a sufficient supply of safe, affordable, quality child care, Oregonians will not be able to return to work; economic recovery will stall, worsen, or fail; and the future, the potential, of more and more children, will be deprived or damaged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritize the neediest, the most critical, the most vulnerable children and families first.

Conduct a thorough review of regulations from the perspective of a self-supporting preschool to identify where there is room for relaxation or slack, particularly around hiring mothers in small communities, and the unworkability of age cutoffs. Consider relaxing or gradually relaxing regulations based on size. Consider allowing classrooms to combine. Consider a statewide pool of substitutes.

Have local, centralized, child care regulation experts available to connect parents and providers, navigate licensing and other regulatory matters, and facilitate relationships.

Eliminate or significantly reduce delays in the receipt of subsidies. Eliminate or significantly reduce all administrative waiting periods – for subsidy payments, for paperwork – delays and waiting periods are financially detrimental.

Make child care available at all other times for all other ages – not just K-12 age, during school hours, during academic years: off hours, before and after school hours, summer months,

Make “211” appear at the top of any results generated by any internet search engine when individuals search for “child care.”

Implement a “no wrong door” policy so that, to the extent possible, every time a parent interacts with a public entity – such as health care providers, schools, state agencies like the Department of Transportation or the Department of Human Services – there is a link to “211” or a question on an intake form that connects the parent with child care information.

Use existing public buildings to provide child care for the most vulnerable families, especially on weekends and after hours.

Require school districts to be more proactive on behalf of 5-12 year olds.

CONCLUSION

DRAFT