

THE ERDC CHILD CARE CONNECTION CRISIS

FACT SHEET | SEPT 2024



THE PROBLEM

Disconnected Families

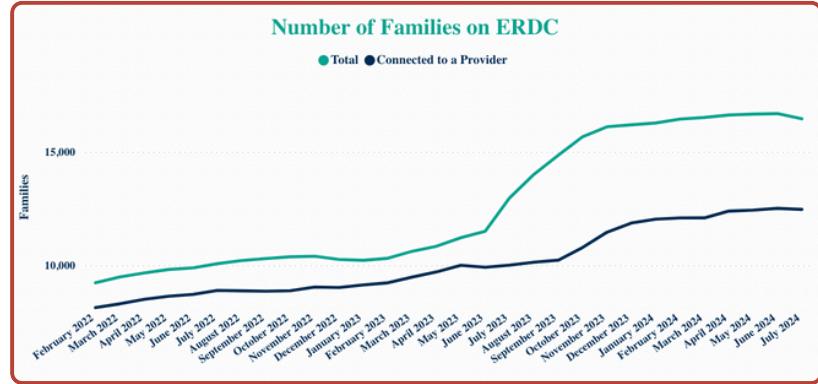
Far too many families enrolled in Oregon's Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) program are unable to make use of their subsidy because they cannot find a provider.

Providers Facing Closure

While families struggle to find care, many child care businesses face low enrollment and financial instability, risking closure.

Ineffective Resources

- 2-1-1: Families receive generic lists of providers, which don't indicate openings or suitability for specific needs.
- Online Search Tools: Websites like findchildcareoregon.com don't show current openings or clearly specify whether a provider accepts ERDC.



The gap between families on ERDC and those connected to a provider.

WHY ARE ERDC FAMILIES AND PROVIDERS STRUGGLING?

A Broken Referral System

The current methods of connecting families with child care (e.g., 2-1-1 and websites) are failing. Under-resourced caseworkers are forced to refer families back to this ineffective system, and families are left calling through lists one-by-one only to hear agencies have no availability or only take certain age groups, for example.

An Abandoned System That Worked Before

Previously, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agencies helped parents find the right care, offered coaching, and matched families with providers who had openings and accepted ERDC. Given CCRR agencies also work with providers, they can further support them in expanding their services to better meet families' needs.

Insufficient Funding

Changes to who qualify for ERDC were made to include students and TANF recipients, and unfortunately the budget was not adjusted to reflect that. Moreover, a budget to meet the increased waitlist has not been allocated.



THE SOLUTIONS

Immediately

ODHS & DELC Action

ODHS and DELC can — and should — immediately provide CCRRs with lists of ERDC families who need child care. CCRRs can then match these families with providers facing imminent closure.

4,000 families —
25% of the ERDC
caseload — have
vouchers but no
child care provider.

In the 2025 Session

Permanently Shift Child Care Referral Services Back to CCRR

Moving away from 2-1-1, family referral services should be shifted back to CCRRs who are better equipped to handle child care connections.

Increase ERDC Funding to Decrease the Ever-Growing Waitlist

Increased funding would lift students and working parents off of the waitlist and continue to help child care businesses with enrollment. It would also address the waitlist's negative repercussions on businesses that received millions of dollars in capacity building grants. The Legislature has smartly invested hundreds of millions of dollars in child care access and capacity building in recent years, but these critical investments are at risk due to continued ERDC under-funding.

BENEFITS OF ADDITIONAL ERDC FUNDING ARE FAR REACHING

- For Kids:** Consistent and reliable child care supports social, emotional, and gross motor skill development.
- For Parents:** Access to reliable child care helps them stay in the workforce.
- For Employers:** Child care access ensures a stable workforce.
- For the Economy:** A strong child care system is essential infrastructure for Oregon's economy. Child care is the work that makes all other work possible.

