



Child Care Boosts Community and Economic Development

Child care and community and economic development have aligned objectives: fostering healthy, thriving communities.

- **\$152 billion**: the amount child care businesses contribute to the economy.
- **2.2 million**: the number of jobs in the child care sector nationwide.
- **\$122 billion**: the cost of the nation's infant-toddler child care crisis in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue every year.

The child care system supports children's growth, development, and educational advancement and creates a positive economic impact for families and communities. When families can find the quality child care they need, that makes everyone stronger.

For community-based organizations, especially those that work on child care and early learning, here are three steps you can take to jump-start your relationships with community and economic development.

1. Understand the landscape of community and economic development and child care in your area.

- Investing time in understanding community and economic development, along with the local child care landscape, will lead to greater success. Each community has unique needs.
- **To do:** Look for your state, region, or area's community or economic development plan. Does it include child care?

Examples of state-level community and/or economic development plans that include child care:

[Alaska](#)

[North Carolina](#)

[Illinois](#)

[Washington, D.C.](#)

[Maine](#)

Examples of regional or local-level community and/or economic development plans that include child care:

[Denver, CO](#)

[Southeastern](#)

[Indianapolis, IN](#)

[Massachusetts](#)

[Minneapolis, MN](#)

[Southwest Tennessee](#)

[Seattle, WA](#)

2. Establish partnerships.

- Partnerships, especially cross-agency and cross-sector partnerships, are vital to the success of community and economic development work that includes and supports child care.
- Sharing data with partners can help provide a common language for better communication and collaboration and align efforts toward shared goals.
- **To do:** [Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies](#) (CCR&R) and [Community Development Financial Institutions](#) (CDFIs) are great places to start.

3. Create a cross-sector data-driven plan.

- Leverage data to pinpoint community needs and uncover new opportunities for growth, innovation, and intervention, ensuring the greatest impact. Consider where your child care system has supply gaps, or if there are opportunities for financial support for new facilities.
- This work requires time. Breaking the work into smaller, more realistic goals can build momentum and sustain motivation toward larger objectives.
- **To do:** Identify a gap you think needs attention with your community and economic development partners, set an achievable goal and a plan to get there.

Bridging the gap between child care and community and economic development involves many factors including understanding the landscape and working collectively to foster positive change. Working together can produce outcomes that strengthen communities while also invoking positive outcomes for families.

For more information, including a detailed roadmap for organizations to work to bridge the gap between child care and community and economic development, visit <https://www.childcareaware.org/bridging-the-gap>.