



CAPE COD YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Child Care Policy Position Paper

Child care is a fundamental need for working parents and caregivers to remain and succeed on Cape Cod. Cape-area employers, in turn, need these individuals to sustain and grow their businesses and keep the region's year-round economy vibrant. Unfortunately, finding affordable, high-quality child care is a major challenge for many local families.

- In Massachusetts, the average monthly cost of center-based child care for an infant can meet or exceed the cost of a monthly mortgage or rent payment.
- According to the [Economic Policy Institute](#), Massachusetts is ranked 2nd out of all 50 states and the District of Columbia for most expensive child care, with a statewide average of \$17,062 per year for one child.
- On Cape Cod, particularly in the summer, these costs can be higher still, with full-time summer care programs for school-age children costing as much as \$600 per week, per child.
- A community needs assessment survey of local parents conducted in 2018 by Cape Cod Children's Place found that child care tuition was a hardship for 69% of respondents.
- The majority of Cape Cod's early education (under age 5) child care programs have at least a one year wait list to enroll a child, indicating a shortage of care providers.

Both the high cost of child care and the limited availability of provider options contribute to the state of child care on Cape Cod. Though State child care vouchers can make care more affordable for some families, covering 60% of tuition costs, they do not necessarily make care more accessible due to the low number of providers who accept these vouchers. For local families who do not qualify for vouchers, the cost of child care combined with the high cost of housing creates a clear cost-burden. Further, our region is seeing declining numbers of early education and care programs overall, with providers citing the high cost of providing care, State regulatory standards, and difficulty finding employees, among other challenges. The resulting long wait lists can create a child care emergency for parents who work full-time jobs and cannot find a program to keep their child during the day.

To address the contributing factors to Cape Cod's child care problem, CCYP supports local, state, and national policies that reduce or mitigate the high cost of child care; increase training, development, and funding support for child care professionals; and offer incentives and program models to help employers provide increased child care resources for their employees. Across all solutions, CCYP emphasizes the need for high quality child care options that provide working parents and caregivers to confidently enter, and remain in, the workforce year-round.

Support Local/Town Initiatives

CCYP urges towns to consider child care scholarships or "family funds," year-round resident discounts, and public-private partnership solutions to diminish the cost burden for local families needing child care.

Support Child Care Professionals

The child care profession is an increasingly difficult career choice for Cape Codders. State qualifications are extensive and stringent, and few in the profession earn a living wage. CCYP supports training and certification programs, networks, and professional mentoring to encourage workers and business owners to enter and remain in this field.

Support Employer-Led Benefits

CCYP encourages local businesses to support child care resources for their workers, through the use of employer-provided child care scholarships, on-site care providers, remote work options, and other benefits that provide flexibility and support for working families. State tax incentives and credits for employers should also be considered to make these benefits more economically feasible for employers.

Support Relevant State Policy for Change

There are voices at the State level promoting programs to address the issues affecting child care, its costs and challenges. CCYP will monitor and disseminate information related to this issue, and support solutions that meet the particular needs facing working professionals and their families.