



Childcare Strategic Action Plan

November 2024

Early Childhood Alliance

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About the Early Childhood Alliance

The Early Childhood Alliance is an alliance of community members, local nonprofits, childcare providers, mental and physical health providers, educators, parents, and donors who engage, educate, and support members, children, parents, and the community at large to prioritize accessible, excellent, and equitable outcomes for children in the Wasatch Back from the prenatal stage through age three.

Executive Summary and Priority Actions



This Strategic Plan aims to enhance access and affordability of high-quality childcare in Summit County, focusing on the needs of low to moderate-income families, childcare providers, public policy options, financing, and advocacy.

The Plan recommends steps the Early Childhood Alliance (ECA) partners can take to increase access to affordable, high-quality early childcare opportunities that support families who work or live in Summit County, with support from ECA partners and through new cross-sector partnerships between local businesses, philanthropy and government leaders at the city, school district, county, and state level.

The challenges facing Summit County and Park City families, including the need for affordable early childcare, can't wait on hopes the federal or state government will swoop in with systemic solutions and funding. As "urban obsessive" author Bruce Katz wrote in his 2018 book *The New Localism, How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism*, "For a whole range of domestic activities, cities and counties were going to have to take the lead. Whether it's around infrastructure, whether it's around housing, whether it's around early child education, whether it's around climate, cities and counties for a large extent fund the future because the national government tends to fund the past. That leaves cities and counties—like it or not—to be the innovators, the place where the future will be made in terms of infrastructure, economy, and inclusion while the Federal and State governments continue to deal with issues of the past."

The Strategic Plan seeks to align with the identified needs from local assessments, including the [Summit County Childcare Needs Assessment](#), dated June, 2023, and the [Partially Updated Summit County Childcare Needs Assessment](#) dated October 2024, to create a robust, inclusive and sustainable childcare system in Summit County.

"We are living in an era when national government, and many state governments, have left the building."

*Bruce Katz, The New Localism,
How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism*

The Strategic Plan divides recommendations into the phases below based on opportunities, needs, and stakeholder-driven decision timelines.

Phase 1: Secure additional government financial support to maintain the Scholarship opportunities at current projected levels (through December 2024).

Phase 2: Develop program guidelines and build support for a Tri-Share cost-sharing three-year pilot program that can expand high-quality early childcare affordability and access, establish goals and strategies (2025).

Phase 3: Secure public and private funding to implement the Tri-Share pilot program and advocate for policy changes that support expanded access to early childcare (2025-2026).

Phase 4: Boost Employer Engagement, Assess Progress, and Refine Strategic Insights for Future Actions (2027-2028).

Phase Breakdown and Strategic Actions



Phase 1

Secure additional government financial support to maintain the Scholarship opportunities at current projected levels (through December 2024).

- Secure an additional commitment from Summit County of no less than \$400,000.
- Seek to replace funding that will run out with the expiration of federal funding provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act).
- Continue to refine and improve upon the scholarships currently managed by Upwards.
- Make connecting eligible families with the subsidies available through Utah's Department of Workforce Services a community priority that is reinforced by multiple community partners to help normalize the use of this assistance.

Phase 2

Develop program guidelines and build support for a Tri-Share cost-sharing three-year pilot program that can expand high-quality early childcare affordability and access, establish goals and strategies (2025).

- Identify a facilitator hub to act as an intermediary between the government and the three participants (e.g., employers, families, and childcare providers) to manage the pilot's day-to-day operations.
- Establish capacity goals and timeline.
- Establish new partner relationships.
- Develop funding goals and strategies in relation to capacity goals.
- Secure key stakeholder support from key government and business decision makers.
- Anticipate future trends, opportunities and needs.
- Identify current, and planned, public buildings and publicly supported private developments that could include childcare centers.

Phase 3

Secure public and private funding to implement the Tri-Share pilot program and advocate for policy changes that support expanded access to early childcare (2025-2026).

Phase 4

Boost employer engagement, assess progress, and refine strategic insights for future actions (2027-2028).

This strategic action plan recommends a framework for evaluating incremental progress and milestone achievements to maintain steady progress, key early initiatives that are important to put in place in order to continue to expand affordable access to early childcare in Park City so every child has an equal opportunity to a quality educational foundation that will prepare them to grow, learn, and succeed.

Process and Methodology



In June 2024, the Park City Community Foundation retained McAdams and Crompton to create a strategic action plan to support the Early Childhood Alliance.

- The process for assessing the current status and developing the strategic action plan began by identifying nearly two dozen key stakeholders, including childcare providers, government representatives, and others with experience and knowledge about early childcare opportunities and challenges.
- A review of successful programs and strategies implemented in cities and states across the nation was also conducted.

See **Appendix A** for a summary of research and engagement activities we conducted as part of the development of this Strategic Plan.

Based on those engagements and the input gathered, this document seeks to identify strategic actions, opportunities, and solutions for the Early Childhood Alliance to pursue opportunities to expand access to childcare to support Summit County families.

Success will require not only collaboration among city and county governments but also support from nonprofits, businesses, and residents.

The Park City Community Foundation can foster this collaboration, raise the visibility and public consciousness of this priority and highlight individuals and businesses leading successful efforts, provide support and catalytic investments to spur the creation and growth of critical services, and provide catalytic support and investment to advance initiatives, services, and policies to continue incremental progress toward achieving the final objective.

“Don't wait for perfect conditions. Start where you are with what you have.”

George Bernard Shaw

Current State of Childcare Summary



Numerous studies have highlighted the developmental benefits of high-quality childcare for young children and the foundation it establishes for adult life. Unfortunately, families struggle to access affordable childcare options for their children. Childcare is a critical need for families because of the proportion of families where all available parents work, either by choice or necessity.

Research has also shown that investments in young children reduce societal costs and increase tax revenue, and can also boost future labor force productivity, a key ingredient of economic growth. The skills employers look for — including ability in math and language, working well in teams, critical thinking, self-motivation, and persistence — are shaped during the first few years of life. Several Federal Reserve Banks, particularly the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, have been notable in advocating for early childhood education as a critical investment. The benefits of investment in early childhood extend beyond the children themselves. The community and broader economy benefit from a more educated and productive workforce, reduced crime rates, and less reliance on social services.

Summit County Childcare Needs Assessment

In August 2022, Summit County leadership assigned the Economic Development & Housing Office the task of providing demographic and economic data projections to the Park City Community Foundation, the Early Childhood Alliance, and the Park City Municipal Corporation. These projections aimed to assess the demand for childcare services in Summit County. After reviewing the data, it was clear that understanding both the supply and demand was necessary. Consequently, the partners decided to conduct a community survey to gain insight into current childcare conditions.

The information from the data analysis and the community survey resulted in a report, "**Summit County Childcare Needs Assessment**" and was presented to the County Council on June 28, 2023.

The Report concluded that

"There are not enough childcare options available to meet the need, and the options that are available are too expensive for many of our community members, even with the benefit of significant federal investment that substantially declined in the Fall of 2023 and will no longer be available by the Summer of 2024. This lack of high-quality, affordable childcare options damages these children's future potential as well as the existing workforce, exacerbating inequalities in the community."

Parents and Caregivers Face Challenges

There remains a big disconnect between what families can pay and the resources providers need to provide high-quality care, leading to a shortage of childcare supply. Despite the developmental benefits resulting from high-quality childcare, families struggle to access affordable options for their children. Although they pay high prices, it's typically barely enough for providers to cover their operational, staffing, and facility costs. Center-based infant childcare costs more than in-state public college tuition and even exceeds some families' mortgage payments. Childcare providers struggle with low wages and limited employer benefits. They remain nearly at the bottom of all occupations in Utah when ranked by annual pay.

Parents grapple with the daunting task of securing reliable and nurturing care for their children while striving to maintain a foothold in the workforce. There were over 700 responses to the community survey.

Key findings included:

- ✔ 72% of parents of children over age 2 who want licensed care in Summit County can't find a spot.
- ✔ 65% of parents of children age 5 or younger are paying more than 10% of their income on childcare.
- ✔ 84% of Summit County parents with children age 5 or younger rely on some form of childcare.
- ✔ 90% of Summit County survey respondents said that it is extremely or somewhat difficult to find quality, affordable childcare.
- ✔ 88% of Summit County survey respondents think that the cost of childcare is either extremely or somewhat unaffordable.

The majority of childcare is provided by the private market, which includes both 1) regulated providers including licensed centers, licensed home-based, residential certificate, and DWS-approved family, friends and neighbors and 2) unregulated providers which can include unlicensed home-based providers, nannies, and family(FFN), friend and neighbor care which are not regulated by the state. The childcare business model is fragile. Childcare is very labor intensive, revenue is volatile and state regulations, seeking to provide high-quality care, stipulate the required ratio of children per adult in a classroom.

The enactment of the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Act (CRRSA) provided historic federal funding to the childcare industry. The unprecedented ~\$4.5M in subsidies to Summit County providers in 2022 and 2023 helped to stabilize the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also addressing pre-existing challenges in the market for childcare. The flexibility of the funds helped providers stabilize their businesses during a tumultuous period. They were used to temporarily pay higher wages through bonuses and stipends, support benefits like health insurance, and cover non-labor operating expenses such as rent, mortgage, utilities, and supplies.

The federal stability funding has now ended, leaving the childcare sector in the precarious position it was in before anyone had ever heard of the COVID-19 pandemic. Summit County and local municipalities could help fill, or partially fill, the gap to address the so-called childcare cliff, by investing funds into stabilizing the childcare sector.

Childcare Needs-Based Scholarship Program

To help address affordability, Park City Municipal invested \$1 million in June 2023 to help support families that live and/or work within the municipal limits of Park City. The Childcare Needs-Based Scholarship Program launched in January 2024 and was expanded county-wide in June with additional funding from Summit County. The scholarship **program** administered by Upwards provides financial assistance to families earning less than the median income with children up to kindergarten eligibility age and also offers an incentive up to \$300 per month to regulated child care providers for each child also enrolled in the DWS Childcare Assistance program in Summit County.

Expiration of Federal Childcare Funds

Adding to the childcare financial challenges for providers is the expiration of federal childcare stabilization funds made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA). In total, childcare providers in Summit County received slightly more than \$4.5M over two years (2022 and 2023) to help pay the rent, keep the lights on, and increase wages for childcare workers. The monthly payment amount decreased by 75% in October 2023, and the funds completely disappear in September 2024. Per the State Office of Child Care, the total payment to providers for 2024 will be \$744,629.

The Public Preschool Factor: Benefits and Challenges

The Park City School District (PCSD) has made a significant investment in providing preschool programs to its youngest residents. As the only school district in Utah to fund preschool, the PCSD is a pioneer in early childhood education. In 2021, voters approved a bond that allowed expansion of preschool classrooms. PCSD is expanding preschool next year to include as all day, 5 days per week option on 3 year old children.

The district's commitment to preschool education stems from a combination of factors, including:

- ✔ **Community Support:** The Park City community, known for its affluent demographics and emphasis on education, likely played a pivotal role in advocating for and funding preschool programs.
- ✔ **Research-Based Evidence:** The increasing body of research highlighting the benefits of early childhood education likely influenced the district's decision.
- ✔ **Economic Development:** Investing in early childhood education can be seen as a long-term investment in the community's future workforce and economic development.

In August 2024, the PCSD added two classrooms for 4-year-olds at both McPolin and Jeremy Ranch. The four classrooms will allow 70 more children to be in the preschool program, bringing the total to 225. Currently 160 children are enrolled. It is likely that demand for preschool spots will continue to grow, and PCSD has plans to expand its preschool program to serve an even larger number of children. This will involve increasing the number of preschool classrooms within existing schools and new facilities.

As parents seek more affordable options, they may choose school-based preschools over center-based providers, leading to a decline in enrollment and revenue for the latter.

Increased enrollment in preschool for 4-year olds can have a substantial impact on providers:

- ✔ **Loss of Revenue:** 4-year-olds are typically a significant source of revenue for childcare centers. Their enrollment contributes to overhead costs and supports the care of younger children. When they move to public preschool, centers lose this revenue.
- ✔ **Disruption of Age Distribution:** The ideal age distribution in a childcare center is often a mix of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. This mix helps to balance staffing needs and costs. With fewer 4-year-olds, centers may face staffing challenges and higher costs associated with caring for younger children.
- ✔ **Increased Costs for Younger Children:** Caring for infants and toddlers requires higher staff-to-child ratios, which translates to higher costs. When centers lose revenue from 4-year-olds, they may need to increase rates for younger children to cover these costs.
- ✔ **Increased Competition:** The lower cost of school-based preschools can create increased competition for center-based providers, forcing them to either lower their own fees or find ways to differentiate their services to remain competitive.
- ✔ **Potential for Program Closure:** If the decline in enrollment and revenue becomes severe enough, some center-based childcare providers may be forced to close their businesses.
- ✔ **Need for Differentiation:** The availability of low-cost public preschool can make it more difficult for centers to compete on price which may force them to differentiate their services.

The Tri-Share childcare model described in this strategic plan could mitigate higher costs and be a valuable tool to help families and providers navigate the potential challenges associated with increased preschool enrollment.



Phase 1

Secure additional public and private financial support to maintain Scholarship opportunities at current projected levels (through December 2024)



Park City appropriated funding to support childcare needs for eligible residents and individuals who work in Park City. Similarly, the 2024 Summit County budget included \$130K for a community childcare scholarship program and \$150K to support Summit County employees, and partway through the year, authorized \$53,850 from unused funds in the county's employee childcare benefit budget to cover enrolled children through the end of the year. Summit County scholarships were quickly awarded on a first-come, first-served basis following the June 3, 2024 launch. Enrollments for the Summit County scholarship program are currently at capacity.

1

Secure an additional commitment from Summit County of no less than \$400,000.

Additional county funding is needed to continue childcare scholarships at existing levels. The draft County budget included an appropriation of \$400,000 which is roughly the amount needed to sustain existing scholarships through the next year. Unfortunately, only \$280,000 was recommended by the Budget Committee of which \$60,000 is dedicated to matching employee FSA dependent care contributions, and the remaining \$220,000 is for childcare scholarships for employees and the community combined. This amount will not meet existing requests for childcare assistance and will only add to the waiting list of residents seeking support. Securing funding of at least \$400,000 is critical to maintain a base level of access and provide critical support for childcare providers who are facing shortfalls due to the loss of federal childcare support funding. Without additional funding, 32 families currently receiving scholarships would no longer receive support after this year.

2

Seek to replace funding that will run out with the expiration of federal funding provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA).

Beginning in 2022, the federal government has provided more than \$5 million, cumulatively, in funding to 17 childcare providers in Summit County. When these funds expire in September 2024, families and childcare providers will face challenges. With this loss of revenue for early childcare services, childcare providers may reduce their childcare capacity and increase costs. The availability of childcare services will likely shrink and some of the progress that Summit County has achieved in recent years will be lost. In order to sustain the progress Summit County has achieved in recent years, we endorse efforts to increase current levels of government funding for early childcare above existing levels to an amount that will replace expiring ARPA funds.

Childcare Stabilization Grant Funding		
Year	Amount	Number of Providers
2022	\$2,527,914	18
2023	\$2,000,038	17
2024	\$744,629	17

To secure funding for childcare, we propose a comprehensive strategy that builds strong community engagement, fosters partnerships with key stakeholders, and drives advocacy efforts to influence decision-makers.

3 Build Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders, including local businesses, parent groups, and community organizations, to create a united front advocating for increased childcare funding.

4 Raise Public Awareness and Engagement

Build widespread public support by employing a multi-channel approach to raise awareness about the critical need for enhanced childcare funding:

- ✓ **Media Outreach:** Conduct media interviews, write op-eds, and distribute press releases to bring attention to the childcare funding crisis and its impact on families and communities.
- ✓ **Social Media Campaigns:** Leverage social media platforms to share compelling stories, facts, and statistics about the importance of childcare
- ✓ **Community Events:** Organize town halls, public forums, and community meetings to educate the public, gather feedback and build momentum. purpose and commitment to the issue.

5 Advocacy and Policy Engagement

Focus on advocacy efforts to directly engage policymakers and influence public policy:

- ✓ **Meetings with County Council Members:** Schedule face-to-face meetings with county council members to present a compelling case for increased childcare funding, supported by data, testimonials, and community impact stories.
- ✓ **Provide Testimony:** Have advocates and community members provide testimony at public hearings and meetings, sharing personal experiences and expert insights to underscore the urgent need for funding
- ✓ **Direct Communication with Policymakers:** Organize coordinated efforts to write letters, send postcards and emails, and make phone calls to key decision-makers.

Phase 2

Develop program guidelines and build support for a Tri-Share cost-sharing pilot program that can expand early childcare affordability and access, establish goals and strategies (2025).



Tri-Share: A Public–Private Partnership to Address Childcare Costs

Finding accessible and affordable childcare is essential for working parents of young children. This, in turn, provides economic stability and opportunities for their families. Childcare is also vital for employers, who face difficulties in hiring and retaining workers because of the challenges parents have had in finding and affording childcare.

Tri-Share is a relatively new childcare funding model that addresses affordability, accessibility, and sustainability. It involves a three-way split – the cost of childcare is shared equally between three parties: employers, parents, and the government. Each contributes one-third of the total cost. Michigan was the first state to implement a large-scale **Tri-Share Childcare program** in 2021, and several other states are starting to pilot their own versions. Earlier this year, West Virginia passed **legislation** to pilot a three-year tri-share program.

This program picks up where the childcare subsidy leaves off. It helps those people who make too much to qualify for the childcare subsidy but still struggle to afford childcare. Employers need workers, and families need affordable, accessible childcare. This program solves for both. Childcare centers could also seize the opportunity to rethink the benefits they offer their employees. Offering their employees free childcare is financially unsustainable, but providing Tri-Share slots could make it more affordable for the childcare employer to offer a much needed benefit to childcare workers.

1 Identify a facilitator hub to act as an intermediary between the government and the three participants (e.g., employers, families, and childcare providers) to manage the pilot's day-to-day operations.

Agreeing to a model that allocates the costs of childcare to families, business and government is the easy part. Developing the approach and policies for the program will take time and collaboration. We recommend initiating this process in early 2025 and understand that it will take time and persistence to develop the approach that will work best for the Summit County and Park City communities and build support with key stakeholders to participate in the program.

2 Establish capacity goals and timeline.

As a first step, we recommend setting specific and achievable childcare goals the community hopes to achieve under a Tri-Share pilot. For example, appropriate community goals could entail sustaining existing childcare capacity despite the loss of federal funding, reducing or eliminating existing waitlists for childcare or access to childcare scholarships, or increasing capacity by 50 slots, or by 10%.

3

Establish New Partner Relationships.

Numerous opportunities exist to expand existing early childcare relationships in Park City and Summit County.

- A Neighborhood House.** Neighborhood House is a Salt Lake City-based care provider that offers nationally accredited toddler, preschool, afterschool, and summer programs for children aged 15 months to 12 years old. They also provide day care and support services for adults who need supervised care during the day, allowing more adults to age in place. Neighborhood House is exploring opportunities to expand and add new locations.
- B Intermountain Health.** Intermountain Health is evaluating their approach to early childcare support. They have previously provided on-site childcare and financial support for employees to access childcare. They are considering an approach that is more flexible with regards to specific employee needs which may cover childcare, healthcare and other needs as determined by the individual employee.
- C Early Head Start.** Early Head Start programs provide family-centered services for low-income families with very young children, serving children from birth to age three and expectant mothers. Funding opportunities are listed on the Office of Head Start [website](#) in the Notice of Funding (NOFO) locator page. The information will also be available on [Grants.gov](#) and contain information on applicant eligibility. You can sign up for email notifications regarding new grant opportunities by visiting [Manage Subscriptions](#). The most recent round of funding opportunity closed in May 2024.

4

Justification for Public-Private Investment in Childcare

Public-private partnerships in childcare offer substantial economic benefits, making them a strategic priority for fostering economic growth and social well-being. One of the primary advantages is **increased workforce participation**. Access to high-quality childcare enables parents, particularly mothers, to enter or remain in the workforce, thereby contributing to economic growth and increasing tax revenue. This inclusion strengthens the labor market and supports overall economic stability.

Moreover, such partnerships lead to **improved worker productivity**. Employees who have access to reliable childcare are less stressed and more focused at work, which enhances their productivity and job satisfaction. This, in turn, benefits employers through better performance and lower turnover rates.

Additionally, companies that offer childcare benefits or subsidies gain a competitive edge in **talent attraction and retention**. In industries where competition for top talent is fierce, providing childcare support can be a key differentiator, helping organizations attract and retain skilled employees who prioritize family-friendly benefits.

Finally, investing in high-quality childcare through public-private partnerships can result in **reduced government spending** over the long term. Early childhood education and care can mitigate future costs associated with social programs, including welfare, crime prevention, and juvenile justice. By supporting the development of children from an early age, these partnerships lay the groundwork for a more prosperous and equitable society, with lasting economic benefits for both the public and private sectors.

Beyond the clear economic benefits, public-private partnerships in childcare provide additional advantages that significantly enhance the overall impact of childcare initiatives. One key benefit is the **leveraging of resources**. By combining public funds with private investments, these partnerships can maximize the effectiveness of childcare programs, ensuring that resources are used efficiently to expand access and improve quality.

Another important advantage is the **promotion of innovation**. Public-private collaborations encourage creative approaches to childcare delivery and program design. These partnerships can lead to the development of new models and strategies that better meet the needs of families and adapt to changing societal demands.

Finally, **increased community engagement** is a vital outcome of these partnerships. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, public-private collaborations can foster greater community involvement and support for childcare initiatives. This engagement not only strengthens the programs themselves but also builds a broader base of support for policies that prioritize childcare as a critical component of community well-being. These benefits demonstrate that public-private partnerships in childcare are not just about economic returns but also about creating stronger, more innovative, and more engaged communities.

5 **Develop funding to increase childcare capacity and access.**

Relative to childcare capacity and access goals, the ECA should work with stakeholders to develop specific budget needs and a timeline for achieving childcare objectives and specific financial requests for Tri-Share partners.

6 **Secure key stakeholder support from key government and business decision makers.**

Tailoring a Tri-Share model for Summit County and Park City can't happen without consultation and collaboration with key government, business and community stakeholders and securing their support for the model that is eventually proposed. From the onset, the ECA should secure commitments generally from bellwether participants to bolster broader confidence in the Tri-Share pilot and identify key considerations or concerns to address in the model. **A few considerations raised in our discussions include:**

- ✓ Consider the needs of large business institutions and small businesses separately.
- ✓ Recognize the Tri-Share model may not work for all families and all businesses and be willing to adapt based on lessons learned through the pilot.
- ✓ Design an approach that leverages the PCMC/Summit County and DWS program scholarships to support lower-income families within the Tri-Share context and also expand access for market rate participants.
- ✓ Cultivate support from government partners and develop approaches to secure reliable ongoing funding.
- ✓ Prioritize approaches that deliver reliable funding for families and childcare providers.

7

Anticipate future trends, opportunities and needs.

It is important to recognize that this initiative exists within dynamic and evolving circumstances that will present both opportunities and challenges. For example, the Updated Needs Analysis states: “Based on first-grade attendance between 2018 and 2024, total school enrollment has declined in Summit County since 2019 from 557 to 451 students, and most of this decline is within the Park City School District.” Meet with school district representatives to review school enrollment and projections for future enrollment to determine if there may be extra classrooms in the future that could be used for childcare or addition of blended Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms.

8





Identify current, and planned, public buildings and publicly supported private developments that could include childcare centers.

Early childcare access is an interrelated function of both the costs and availability of services. As public budgets tighten, there is an increasing emphasis on making the most of existing infrastructure. Co-locating childcare centers in underutilized spaces within public buildings is an efficient way to leverage these resources without the need for new construction. For example, PC Tots was able to increase capacity this year because they were awarded space in the Park City Library at a substantially reduced rent for 10 years.

Opportunities exist to co-locate childcare space with current and planned facilities of the Park City School District. Treasure Mountain Middle School is expected to close at the end of the current school year, but could remain open for an additional year in the event of construction delays. This could provide temporary space for childcare. Additionally, the school district has not yet determined what it will do with the middle school after it no longer needs the building for students. The masterplan calls for this facility to become field space, but the district could consider a shared use that includes childcare facilities.

Additionally, resources such as maintenance, utilities, and security can be shared between the childcare center and the host. This approach can help to reduce the costs for childcare providers of delivering services and create opportunities to expand access to care. This can be a long-term tool for expanding access and controlling costs of childcare.

The Tri-Share program in Michigan has shown considerable promise by delivering multiple benefits that address key challenges faced by parents, employers, and the broader economy.

- 
Affordability for Parents: By splitting the cost three ways, the financial burden on parents is significantly reduced. This can make childcare more accessible, especially for low- to middle-income families.
- 
Increased Workforce Participation: For employers, subsidizing childcare can lead to higher employee retention and productivity. Parents, particularly mothers, are more likely to remain in the workforce if affordable childcare is available.
- 
Employer Attraction and Retention: Employers offering childcare support can attract talent, especially in competitive industries. It can also serve as a valuable employee benefit that enhances job satisfaction and loyalty.
- 
Economic Growth: By facilitating parents' return to the workforce, the model can stimulate economic growth. More working parents mean increased consumer spending and higher productivity.



Government Investment in Children's Futures: Government involvement ensures that children have access to quality childcare and early education, which can lead to better educational outcomes and long-term benefits for society.

Tri-Share is not without challenges. Firstly, the implementation of the Tri-Share model is inherently complex. Coordinating the efforts between employers, the government, and childcare providers requires meticulous administrative work and ongoing collaboration. Ensuring that all involved parties are in agreement and contribute equitably is a formidable task that can complicate the program's rollout

Employees working for smaller businesses, self-employed, part-time, and those working for non-participating employers, which may lack the financial resources to participate in the program, could be left without this crucial support. This disparity can lead to inequalities in employee benefits, where only those working for larger, financially stable companies have access to the program.

Government and employer budget constraints also pose a threat to the Tri-Share model. The sustainability of these contributions are contingent upon budget allocations, which are vulnerable to fluctuations due to economic conditions. During economic downturns, the government and employer partners might struggle to maintain their financial commitments, putting the continuity of the program at risk.

Additionally, the financial burden placed on employers, while potentially beneficial in terms of employee retention, can be challenging, particularly for small businesses or those operating on tight budgets. This added responsibility could deter employer participation, further limiting the program's reach.

Finally, the overall success of the Tri-Share model is heavily dependent on employer participation. If employers choose not to engage with the program, their employees miss out on the benefits, significantly reducing the model's overall effectiveness and the breadth of its impact.

Facilitator hubs in Michigan's Tri-Share Childcare plan serve as the backbone of the program, coordinating efforts among all stakeholders, managing operations, and ensuring the program meets its goals of affordability, accessibility, and sustainability. Michigan selected three organizations as hubs for the 2021 pilot program - Goodwill Industries of West Michigan, Saginaw Intermediate School District, and United Way of Northwest Michigan.

Selection of a hub is essential to implement the Tri-Share childcare model. Upwards may be a good candidate given their current role in the Park City/Summit County Scholarship program. The hub should meet certain criteria to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the program.

These criteria include:



Experience and Expertise: The hub should have a proven track record in managing childcare programs, employer partnerships, or other relevant community-based initiatives. Experience in facilitating collaborations between multiple stakeholders (employers, childcare providers, and families) would be valuable.

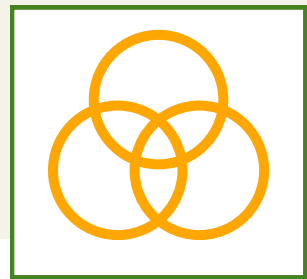


Community Connections: The hub should have established relationships with local employers, childcare providers, and community organizations. These connections would be helpful for promoting the program and ensuring its integration into the community.



Administrative Capability: The ability to efficiently administer the program is crucial. This includes managing funds, facilitating communications among stakeholders, and handling the logistical aspects of coordinating the Tri-Share program.

Creating a Tri-Share Program



The successful implementation of a Tri-Share Child Care model hinges on close collaboration among key stakeholders: the government, employers, employees, childcare providers, and community partners. Each group plays a vital role in making the program accessible, affordable, and sustainable, thereby supporting working families and promoting economic stability.

These are some key elements for development and implementation of Tri-Share:

Government Responsibilities

- ✔ **Policy Development and Oversight:** Develop and enact policies that establish the Tri-Share model. Ensure that legal and regulatory frameworks are in place to support its implementation. Set clear guidelines and eligibility criteria for employers, employees, and childcare providers.
- ✔ **Funding Allocation:** Allocate government funds to cover one-third of childcare costs. Ensure sufficient budgetary resources are dedicated to the program and establish a system for distributing these funds to participating childcare providers.
- ✔ **Program Coordination:** Work closely with the facilitator organization (Hub) that manages the program. Monitor the program's implementation, collect data, and evaluate its effectiveness regularly.
- ✔ **Public Awareness and Outreach:** Promote the Tri-Share program through public awareness campaigns. Provide resources and support to help employers, employees, and childcare providers understand the program's benefits and how to participate.

Employer Responsibilities

- ✔ **Participation and Contribution:** Opt into the Tri-Share program by agreeing to cover one-third of employees' childcare costs. Budget accordingly and manage financial contributions, ensuring timely payments to childcare providers.
- ✔ **Employee Support:** Educate employees about the program's benefits and guide them through the application process. Assist employees in connecting with participating childcare providers.
- ✔ **Collaboration with Facilitators (Hub):** Work closely with the facilitator organization to ensure smooth program operations. Provide feedback on how the program impacts employee retention, satisfaction, and productivity.

Employee (Parent) Responsibilities

- ✔ **Cost Sharing and Participation:** Agree to pay one-third of the childcare costs directly to the childcare provider. Choose a provider that meets personal needs and aligns with the program's guidelines.
- ✔ **Application Process:** Apply for the Tri-Share program through their employer or directly with the program facilitator. Provide necessary documentation to establish eligibility.

- ✔ **Compliance and Reporting:** Adhere to the terms of the program, including making timely payments and reporting any changes in employment or childcare needs.

Childcare Provider Responsibilities

- ✔ **Program Enrollment and Compliance:** Enroll in the Tri-Share program by meeting the state's eligibility requirements to receive child care assistance. Agree to the terms of payment and reporting as outlined by the program.
- ✔ **Billing and Reporting:** Manage billing by invoicing the government, employers, and employees for their respective shares of the costs. Report on program participation and any issues to the facilitator organization.
- ✔ **Quality Assurance:** Maintain high standards of care and comply with state-mandated quality assessments and inspections.

Facilitator Organization (Hub) Responsibilities

- ✔ **Program Management and Facilitation:** Serve as the primary point of contact for employers, employees, and childcare providers. Oversee the implementation of the Tri-Share model, ensuring all parties fulfill their responsibilities.
- ✔ **Technical Assistance and Support:** Provide technical assistance to employers and childcare providers to help them navigate the program. Offer support services to employees, such as assistance with finding childcare or applying for the program.
- ✔ **Data Collection and Reporting:** Collect and report data on program participation, effectiveness, and outcomes to the government. Identify and address any operational challenges to ensure the program runs smoothly.

Community Partner and Stakeholder Responsibilities

- ✔ **Advocacy and Support:** Advocate for the Tri-Share model within the community and encourage more employers and childcare providers to participate. Support the program through partnerships that may include additional resources, outreach, or funding.
- ✔ **Evaluation and Feedback:** Engage in program evaluations by providing feedback on the Tri-Share model's effectiveness and its impact on the community.



The [Michigan Tri-Share Pilot Evaluation Final Report, October 2022](#) may be helpful in establishing program guidelines, roles and responsibilities of participants.

Phase 3

Secure public and private funding to implement the Tri-Share pilot program and engage in policymaking that supports expanded access to early childcare (2025-2026).



Investment in childcare can yield significant benefits for both individuals and the community. Investing in childcare is an investment in the future. It promotes economic growth, social equity, and the well-being of children and families. A public-private partnership is an effective strategy to address the complex challenges facing the childcare sector and to achieve these important goals.

As the ECA develops a childcare framework using a Tri-Share model and complementary approaches under Phase 2, it is also important to conduct a parallel effort, Phase 3, to identify the right tools and strategies to attract additional public and private childcare investment.

“We have been too reliant on the federal government and what that has done with many areas of domestic policy is infantilize cities because everyone is waiting for the federal government to do something— whether it’s on housing or whether it’s on infrastructure—that’s just not how the world works anymore. Cities and counties need to accept the fact that national governments are only going to play a certain kind of role going forward. What we really need to do is put the innovation of financial techniques and structures on steroids. We can’t wait for national governments anymore”

Bruce Katz

Childcare is an investment that returns significant dividends to families, businesses and the broader community. But as with any investment, the funding has to come from somewhere. Without any hesitation, we believe that investment in early childhood is a commitment that federal, state, and local governments should just go ahead and fund. Summit County and Park City have shown a willingness to lead out with impressive childcare funding commitments. Their leadership is unique and should be commended. Unfortunately, funding is still not at levels adequate to meet the demand for affordable care.

Assuming government funding will continue below the level needed to meet the needs of families in Summit County, **below are some tools we identify to increase and stretch available resources for childcare that we recommend for further evaluation during Phase 3.**

1 Public-Private Partnerships

Inherent in the Tri-Share model is the notion that private businesses will share in the cost of providing childcare for their employees. While some businesses may be willing to directly fund the employer share in a Tri-Share program, other small businesses may struggle. Financial tools and incentives don’t need to fit into a one-size-fits-all model. We encourage a willingness to consider different approaches to fit different situations.

2 Property and Sales Tax Incentives

Businesses could be incentivized to participate in a Tri-Share program with refundable tax credits to offset their property or sales tax obligations. Employers would contribute to the program, but would receive partial tax relief and also multiply the benefits for their employees by unlocking a matching investment of public dollars.

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."

Chinese Proverb

A refundable sales tax or property credit funded through a floating rate countywide property tax levy could provide a significant incentive to individual employers with no negative impact to the county general fund and with minimal impact to countywide taxpayers because the relatively small sum would be spread across the large countywide tax base.

3 Transient Room Tax

Transient Room Taxes (TRT) are authorized by the State of Utah and imposed by state and local government primarily for the purpose of promoting tourism and funding related impact of tourism such as enhanced public safety expenses. The Utah Legislature is exploring an increase in TRT to support, in part, the expansion of professional sports franchises in Utah which might also create additional revenue for local government.

We encourage childcare advocates to watch closely what discussions occur related to expanded TRT taxes and whether there might be an opportunity to capture additional revenue to support early childcare, or otherwise offset existing government expenditures related to tourism to free up funding that could support early childcare.

4 Special Revenue Fund

Counties may levy a property tax to create a Special Revenue Fund to provide funding for a specific purpose in accordance with **Utah Code Section 17-36-31.5**.

A Special Revenue Fund must:

- ✓ Identify the specified service for which the tax is levied.
- ✓ Create a special revenue fund to hold the revenues collected by the tax.
- ✓ A property tax levied under this section is subject to the maximum rate a county may levy for property taxes under Section 59-2-908. Summit County currently has a property tax levy of .000482 against a maximum levy of .0032.
- ✓ A taxing entity must go through Truth in Taxation requirements if it exceeds the certified tax rate for the Special Revenue Fund as with other property tax levies.

Tax increment can be a valuable tool for securing local revenue to support investment in childcare. Summit County and Park City could use property or sales tax increment revenues to capitalize an early childcare fund to fund need-based scholarships, to pay for the government share of a Tri-Share program, or to pay for tax rebates for businesses that participate in Tri-Share.

Traditionally, tax increment revenues are captured and directed to an identified economic development priority through the creation of a tax increment project area created through various different mechanisms under Utah law. In most circumstances, state law providing for the creation of tax increment project areas requires that incremental revenues created within a project area must be spent within the project area. Several major proposed developments in Summit County present significant opportunities to capture incremental tax revenues that could support early childcare.




An interlocal agreement between government entities is another mechanism for capturing incremental tax revenue. In 2010, when Salt Lake City proposed the construction of the 2,500 seat Eccles Theater on Main Street, Salt Lake County raised concerns about the potential negative impact the new theater would have on legacy arts groups in the downtown. Salt Lake City believed the new theater would become an entertainment anchor that would attract new retail and restaurant spending in the downtown and economic prosperity for downtown business and tourism. To mitigate potential negative impacts to legacy arts venues, Salt Lake City and County entered into an interlocal agreement committing incremental sales tax revenues generated in the Central Business District up to a specified amount to fund an arts and culture investment in the Cultural Core to promote and develop arts and culture in the Cultural Core. A taxing district was established to provide a reliable revenue source for a 20-year period. The City and County selected the Downtown Alliance to administer these funds for the benefit of downtown arts.

Similarly, a rising tide of development across Summit County may have countywide economic benefits to taxpayers, but will also create increased need for a workforce with associated childcare and housing needs.

We encourage Summit County and Park City policymakers to anticipate challenges that are expected to result from economic growth with a commitment to long-term strategic investments by capturing incremental tax revenues generated from rising economic tides to create reliable long-term revenue to mitigate specific challenges created by the rising tide.

Impact fees assessed as part of development approvals could also provide additional private funding to support childcare investments. New development often impacts the community need for additional childcare and housing. These needs can be offset through a development fee.

Some ideas for how to leverage these impact fees include:

-  **Childcare Fund:** Establish a fund to support childcare development by imposing fees on new developments.
-  **Dedicated funding:** Use a portion of impact fees or development contributions specifically for childcare infrastructure.
-  **Collaborate with developers:** Work with developers to create innovative childcare solutions, such as on-site childcare or partnerships with childcare providers.

Incorporating childcare requirements into planning and zoning regulations offers significant advantages that directly contribute to community well-being and economic growth. By addressing the shortage of childcare options, these regulations can lead to **increased childcare availability**, making it easier for working families to find the care they need. This not only supports parents but also bolsters the local economy by ensuring that families have access to reliable childcare.

From an economic development perspective, these regulations can make a community more attractive to businesses and employees who prioritize family-friendly environments. The presence of ample childcare facilities signals to potential employers that the community values and supports families, which can be a deciding factor in their decision to establish or expand their operations locally.

Additionally, including childcare in planning and zoning regulations plays a crucial role in **supporting the workforce**. By ensuring that childcare options are readily available, employers are better able to retain employees, reducing turnover and fostering a stable, productive workforce. This, in turn, benefits the entire community by creating a more resilient and robust economic foundation.

7 Direct employee benefits for childcare workers

Tri-share benefits families by providing funding to help afford childcare. It is worth considering additional options that provide a direct benefit to childcare workers that can help to attract employees to the childcare workforce.

Providers have some of the lowest wages in Utah. In the last legislative session, HB 461 Child Care Grant Amendments was passed (but not funded) in the 2024 General Session). The bill would make childcare workers eligible for childcare subsidies regardless of income. It would help childcare owners cover the costs of providing a childcare benefit and help staff keep more of their paycheck. Perhaps the PCMC/Summit County Scholarship could be expanded to make childcare workers eligible for the scholarship. Like Tri-share eligibility, a family would have to be ineligible for DWS subsidy.

Another option would be to allow childcare workers to qualify for in-state tuition at Utah institutions of higher education or ensure their eligibility to participate in the Utah Service Year Fellows Program that provides state funding and tuition assistance for service fellows.

8 Other Employer Benefit Options

Participation in Tri-Share is one benefit option, but other employer benefits can play a role in bridging the gap between state provided support for childcare and the arrangements that parents are reliant on. The dependent care assistance program (DCAP) is an employee benefit plan – or a flexible spending plan – that helps employees pay for the care of a qualifying dependent. Employees can exclude employer payments from income, and the employer can deduct amounts paid or incurred under a qualified DCAP.

The program provides reimbursements for up to \$5,000 annually (\$2,500 each for married couples filing separately) to employees who pay for dependent care. Employees are then allowed to deduct these dependent care expenses from their paycheck on a pre-tax basis, which can include an employer contribution. DCAP helps parents afford childcare by offsetting the costs of going to work and providing for their families. Throughout the year, the employee can use funds in their DCAP to pay for care. While the plan does include a grace period of 2.5 months following the end of the calendar year, generally unused DCAP funds do not roll over and therefore any unspent funds are forfeited to the employer.

Employees with access to DCAP are generally higher compensated employees at larger companies. Even so, often employees may not be able to afford to set aside money from their paychecks, making participation difficult. For these reasons, DCAP may not reach the parents who need the most support accessing and affording childcare.

9 Planning & Zoning

In addition to direct funding, Summit County and Park City could help address childcare needs through planning and zoning regulations as well as shared use of facilities, existing and planned.

Summit County and Park City, with their proximity to world-class skiing and outdoor recreation, have seen a surge in development interest. One of the largest is Cedar Crest Village, an ambitious development project that will significantly transform the Hoytsville area in Summit County. The project is focused on revitalizing the existing, unincorporated community by introducing a diverse mix of housing options that cater to various demographics. This includes plans for both different housing types and affordability levels, ensuring that the development meets the needs of a broad range of residents.

Beyond housing, the project also aims to enhance community life by incorporating spaces for businesses, parks, schools and other essential amenities. The potential impacts of the project are substantial. An expected influx of new residents, perhaps as many as **20,000**, will lead to a marked increase in the population of eastern Summit County.

Currently, the project remains in the planning stages. Multiple public meetings and feedback sessions have been held to engage the community and gather input. However, many specifics, such as the exact number of housing units, the housing mix, and the construction timeline, are yet to be finalized. The latest updates and information can be found on the official project [website](#).

Summit County could use development projects to leverage planning and zoning regulations to incentivize or mandate the inclusion of childcare facilities. Additional incentives to developers could also be created to offset potential increased costs.

Planning and zoning regulations could directly increase child care availability in several ways:

A Inclusionary Zoning:

- ✓ **Mandating childcare space:** Require developers to set aside a specific percentage of new residential or commercial developments for childcare facilities.
- ✓ **Density bonuses:** Offer increased density or floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses to developers who include childcare facilities in their projects.

B Zoning Ordinance Amendments:

- ✓ **Rezoning for childcare:** Designate specific areas for childcare facilities, making it easier for developers to incorporate them into their plans.
- ✓ **Reducing barriers:** Streamline permitting and zoning processes for childcare facilities to encourage development.
- ✓ **Incentive-based zoning:** Offer tax breaks or other incentives to developers who include childcare facilities in their projects.

C Conditional Use Permits:

- ✔ **Require childcare as a condition:** Stipulate that childcare facilities must be included as a condition of approval for large-scale developments.
- ✔ **Negotiate terms:** Use the conditional use permit process to negotiate the size, location, and other details of the childcare facility.

D Shared Use of Facilities

Co-locating childcare centers in public buildings, such as schools, libraries, or government offices, is one strategy to address the growing need for affordable and accessible childcare.

Benefits of co-locating childcare centers in public buildings include:

- ✔ **Maximized Use of Space:** Public buildings often have unused or underutilized spaces. Co-locating childcare centers allows these spaces to be used more effectively, benefiting the community without the need for new construction.
- ✔ **Improved Affordability:** Co-located childcare centers can optimize resource utilization and reduce operating costs.
- ✔ **Enhanced Safety and Security:** Public buildings typically have robust safety measures in place, providing a secure environment for children.
- ✔ **Stronger Community Connections:** Co-located childcare centers can foster stronger connections between families and the community, promoting a sense of belonging and support.

10 Engage in state policymaking

While local childcare initiatives can make a difference, building a comprehensive childcare and early learning system that has long been needed will require state action. Increased investment by the state is crucial to build a robust, sustainable childcare system that not only supports the economic well-being of families but also strengthens the broader community and economy.

Nonprofits must adhere to IRS regulations regarding lobbying. However, that does not prevent the Park City Community Foundation from providing information and being a resource for policymakers. Other Early Childhood Alliance partners may not have restrictions and can engage more directly in advocacy that supports the community's childcare goals.

Key points to remember:

- ✔ **Focus on Education and Awareness:** Nonprofits can effectively advocate for budget requests by educating policymakers and the public about their mission, impact, and funding needs.
- ✔ **Build Coalitions:** Partnering with other organizations can amplify the impact of advocacy efforts.
- ✔ **Grassroots Advocacy:** Encouraging supporters to contact policymakers can be a powerful tool without directly engaging in lobbying.
- ✔ **Public Relations:** Effective communication about the nonprofit's work and impact can influence public opinion and policymakers.
- ✔ **Expert Testimony:** Providing expert testimony on budget-related issues can lend credibility to the nonprofit's advocacy efforts.

Several childcare bills were introduced during the 2024 Utah General Legislative Session. Two bills, HB 541 and HB 96, that did not have a committee hearing may be re-introduced in the 2025 session.



HB 541: Child Care Grants Amendments, Rep. Andrew Stoddard

This bill would have extended Utah's current childcare stabilization grant program, funded at 50% of the original grant for another two years as an emergency stop gap measure.



HB 96: Child Care Program Sales Tax Exemption, Rep. Christine Watkins

This bill would allow for a sales and use tax exemption for construction materials used to construct or expand a childcare program.



One bill that did pass was **HB 461 Child Care Grant Amendments**, sponsored by Rep. Ashlee Matthews and Sen. Luz Escamilla. However, the legislation states that enactment is "subject to available federal funds" so implementation is delayed until additional funding is secured. The bill, which mirrors a Kentucky initiative, would make childcare workers eligible for childcare subsidies regardless of income. It would help childcare owners cover the costs of providing a childcare benefit and help staff keep more of their paycheck. It is unknown whether there will be an attempt to fund the bill during the 2025 legislative session. Unfortunately, it was not included in the FY25 budget that the State Office of Child Care presented to the Office of Child Care Advisory Committee on May 8, one week after the law was meant to go into effect. The policy was also not included in Utah's draft CCDF State Plan that was submitted on June 30, 2024.

The State has contracted with Grace Reef, President of the Early Learning Policy Group, a Washington D.C.-based government relations group, to conduct a childcare analysis. Her final report isn't due until December 1, 2024, so it is unknown at this time what policy recommendations may be included.

Examples of States Investing in Childcare

Federal funding for childcare stabilization grants has ended, but a number of states are not waiting for the federal government to act to address the childcare needs of working families by investing money to increase subsidized childcare slots and the number of children served by the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Some states have increased eligibility, waived copayments for families making less than 30 percent of the state median income, increased reimbursement rates to providers, provided support for employer-led childcare programs, and made grants available for start-up costs. Overall, at least 12 states have implemented various measures to address the funding gap left by the expiration of the federal childcare stabilization grants.

Examples of policy innovations and new investments include:

Maine

Maine's fiscal year 2024–2025 budget increases eligibility for childcare subsidies from 85 percent to 125 percent of the SMI.

Michigan

Michigan is extending its COVID-19 relief policy, which establishes eligibility for childcare subsidies at 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Minnesota

Minnesota will increase funding for its Early Learning Scholarships program by \$252 million in FY 2024–2025, with another \$58.9 million increase in FY 2026–2027. The state is also expanding scholarship eligibility to children ages 0 to 5 and **increasing the number of subsidized childcare slots by more than 50 percent.**

Montana

Montana is expanding childcare subsidy eligibility up to 185 percent of the FPL and will use a sliding scale for family copayments, not to exceed 9 percent of family income.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire is investing \$45.5 million to increase childcare subsidy eligibility for families earning up to 85 percent of the SMI. The state will also eliminate copayments for families below 100 percent of the FPL and limit copayments to \$5 per week for families below 138 percent of the FPL.

North Dakota

North Dakota is investing \$66 million in new state funding to provide incentives to increase the supply of care for infants and toddlers. It is also waiving copayments for families making less than 30 percent of the SMI.

Vermont

Vermont will invest \$125 million annually in childcare to, among other things, end copayments for families who are at or below 175 percent of the FPL, expand childcare subsidy eligibility up to 575 percent of the FPL by the end of 2024 and address gaps in support for children with special needs.



Phase 4

Boost Employer Engagement, Assess Progress, and Refine Strategic Insights for Future Actions (2027-2028)



As the strategic plan to increase affordability and access to childcare in Summit County moves forward, it is crucial to focus on strengthening employer engagement, conducting a comprehensive assessment of progress, and refining strategic insights for future activities. To ensure that the strategic plan remains aligned with the evolving needs of the community, we recommend an update to the previous needs assessment conducted in 2023. This updated assessment will provide valuable insights into changes in demographics, economic conditions, and childcare preferences within Summit County. By incorporating these findings, strategies can be updated to address the most pressing childcare challenges and opportunities.

Involving employers in the childcare solution can create a more sustainable and equitable system that benefits both families and businesses. Continued outreach and education is essential to help employers recognize the value of quality childcare as a critical employee benefit that can also attract and retain top talent, improve employee morale, and contribute to a more vibrant community.

To measure the effectiveness of the strategic plan, a thorough assessment of progress should be conducted that includes an analysis of key metrics such as increased childcare enrollment, reduced waitlists, and improved family satisfaction. This data will inform future efforts and help identify areas where additional support is needed.

By gathering feedback from families, childcare providers, employers, and community members, it will be possible to refine future strategic actions and develop a roadmap for continued growth and improvement. This ongoing engagement will ensure that the childcare solutions remain responsive to the evolving needs of the community and contribute to a thriving Summit County.

Conclusion: It's time to care

Park City and Summit County are grappling with a significant shortage of childcare services, with recent reports highlighting a gap of over 1,100 spaces needed to meet local demand. The Summit County Childcare Needs Assessment emphasized that many families in the area face long waitlists and high costs for care. Parents are often paying over 10% of their income on childcare, a figure that is unaffordable for many.

Early childhood education and high-quality childcare are crucial for a child's growth, providing the foundation for lifelong learning and development. Research highlights that early education fosters cognitive, emotional, and social skills, which prepare children to navigate school and life more effectively. Through structured play and activities, children build essential skills like problem-solving, communication, and self-regulation, all of which are critical for success in both academic and personal contexts.

High-quality childcare goes beyond ensuring safety; it actively contributes to development by offering responsive caregiving, engaging activities, and meaningful interactions. Trained professionals, who understand the developmental stages of young children, guide their growth in a nurturing environment. This not only supports children but also benefits working parents by offering them peace of mind, knowing their children are in a stimulating and caring setting, which can reduce stress and improve family well-being.

The social impact of accessible and affordable childcare is significant. It is closely tied to better cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes, leading to higher educational achievement and increased earning potential later in life. Making childcare more accessible helps to break the cycle of poverty by enabling parents to pursue higher-paying jobs, thus contributing to long-term economic stability.

Summit County's strategic plan addresses these needs by improving childcare accessibility and affordability while ensuring the sustainability of providers.

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”

Fred Rogers

Emphasizing public-private solutions, such as the Tri-Share model, would make it possible to share the costs of childcare between employers, employees and government, making care more affordable for working families and could serve as a model for the State. Additionally, revising planning and zoning requirements could facilitate the development of new childcare facilities.

Investing in childcare and early education strengthens communities by fostering social cohesion and reducing crime rates. It also promotes gender equality, as better childcare support enables women to participate fully in the workforce, helping to close the gender pay gap. Incorporating these social benefits into the strategy ensures that investments in childcare lead to long-term advantages for families, communities, and society at large.

Appendix A

PCCF Childcare Strategic Planning Process



Background Preparation

- Read Summit County Needs Assessment and 2024 updated assessment
- Listened to June and November 2023 presentations to Summit County Council

Meetings with Childcare Providers

- July 2: Zoom meeting with Brandy Rasmussen, Creekside Kids Academy Director
- July 3: Zoom meeting with Sue Banjeree, PC Tots Director
- August 5: Zoom meeting with Sue Banjeree, PC Tots
- August 6: Zoom meeting with Brandy Rasmussen, Creekside Kids Academy

Other meetings

- June 25: Listened to presentation to the Utah Women's Commission by Grace Reef who the State has contracted with to do an in-depth childcare analysis
- July 1: In-person meeting with Heather Thomas, Director of the Office of Child Care
- July 12: Zoom meeting with Heather Thomas Director of the Office of Child Care
- July 17: ECA Steering Committee In-person meeting
- August 5: Zoom meeting with Michelle Downard, Park City Municipal Corporation
- August 15: Zoom meeting with Miriam Nieto, Director of Education Holy Cross Ministries
- August 19: Zoom meeting with Andrew Caplan, Park City School District
- August 21: Zoom meeting with Becca Gerber, Park City Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau Director of Community and Government Relations
- August 22: Listened to Zoom meeting update to the Utah Women's Commission by Grace Reef
- August 23: In-person meeting with Elizabeth Garbe, United Way Vice President of Public Policy
- September 6: Phone call with Mike Tanner, COO Park City School District
- September 9: Zoom meeting with Shayne Scott
- September 10: Zoom meeting with Ginger Wicks, Executive Director Historic Park City Alliance, Park City Restaurant Association
- September 10: Zoom meeting with Park City Mayor Nann Worel
- September 11: Zoom meeting with Heather Brace, Chief People Officer Intermountain Health
- September 16: Zoom meeting with Dan Gallery, Park City Preschool Director and Cara Kody, Park City Education Foundation Vic e-President of Programs
- September 16: Zoom meeting with Storm Mastrodonato, Brooke Fletcher and Stephanie DeLeon, Upwards

Review other available data and reports to develop a strategic action plan.

Summit County and Utah:

- Summit County Childcare Needs Assessment https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/2031700/Staff_Report-Childcare_Needs_Assessment.pdf
- Summit County Needs Assessment Partial Update <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5defd133890848234a6a9d5a/t/6671e8ec389b4368bd296ae5/1718741230747/Partially+Updated+Summit+County+Child+Care+Needs+Assessment.pdf>
- Cedar Crest Village development <https://www.cedarcresthoysville.com/home>
- Summit County, Park City and Upwards Announce Childcare Needs-Based Scholarship Program Expansion <https://parkcitycf.org/summit-county-park-city-and-upwards-announce-childcare-needs-based-scholarship-program-expansion/>
- Employers in Summit County <https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/data/library/firm/majoremployers.html?hl=en-US>

- Utah CDF State Plan <https://jobs.utah.gov/occ/ccdfplan.pdf>
- Utah Childcare provider types <https://childcarelicensing.utah.gov/parents-and-public/child-care-provider-types/#:~:text=LE%20stands%20for%20license%20Exempt.&text=They%20are%20home%2Dbased%20providers,DWS%20child%20care%20sub%20sidy%20payments.&text=DWS%20FFN%20Requirementsopens%20in%20a%20new%20tab>
- Snapshot of childcare in Utah 2021 https://www.stlouisfed.org/-/media/project/frbstl/stlouisfed/files/pdfs/community-development/child-care-fact-sheets/childcare-factsheets-allstates-us.pdf?sc_lang=en&hash=BEE2C7383F16E38DDAC7FC2A810376F1
- U of U Department of Economics and DWS Report <https://jobs.utah.gov/occ/23bonussurvey.pdf>

USU Women in Leadership Childcare Reports 2023 and 2022:

- Childcare-What Utahns Need to Know Now: A 2023 Update <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/snapshot/51.pdf>
- Childcare and PreK Summary <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/childcare-research-summary.pdf>
- The Complex Childcare Landscape <https://www.usu.edu/uwlp/files/wp/no-5.pdf>

How Childcare Impacts Utah's Workforce Productivity and the State Economy 2023 Report Salt Lake Chamber, United Way, US Chamber, Community Builders, Voices for Utah Children Report

https://uw.org/wp-content/uploads/UntappedPotential_UTAH_011223_DIGITAL.pdf

Early Care and Education Workforce Salary Scale Playbook Implementation Guide

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ece/Early-Care-and-Education-Workforce-Salary-Scale-Playbook-Implementation-Guide.pdf>

First Five Years Fund Fact Sheet CCDBG in Utah

<https://www.ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Utah-CCDBG-State-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Research state childcare funding models

Much of the efforts by state and cities in the area of early childhood and child care have focused on pre-K initiatives. However, Tri-Share, an innovative child care financing model, is gaining traction as a potential solution to the childcare affordability crisis. States are at various stages of implementing or studying the tri-share funding model. Michigan was the first state to implement a large-scale tri-share program in 2021. Several other states are starting to pilot their own versions.

Michigan Tri-Share Pilot Final Evaluation 2022 <https://www.michigan.gov/mileap/-/media/Project/Websites/mwc/Tri-Share/MI-Tri-Share-Pilot-Evaluation-Report-FINAL.pdf?rev=b22e11e8ff544f4ba7666644447647fd>

Michigan Tri-share <https://www.michigan.gov/mileap/early-childhood-education/mi-tri-share-child-care/mi-tri-share-child-care-program-guidelines>

Michigan Chamber of Commerce MI Untapped Potential report <https://www.michamber.com/miuntappedpotential/>

West Virginia 2024 HB5293 Legislation to Pilot Tri-Share [https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb5293%20intr.htm&yr=2024&sesstype=RS&i=5293#:~:text=\(a\)%20The%20Legislature%20finds%20and,assist%20parents%20and%20caretakers%20to](https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb5293%20intr.htm&yr=2024&sesstype=RS&i=5293#:~:text=(a)%20The%20Legislature%20finds%20and,assist%20parents%20and%20caretakers%20to)

Smart Start Will Implement Tri-Share Pilot

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