



EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-AGE CARE

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

Early childhood and school-age care programs (serving children birth through age 12) keep kids safe, engage young people in enriching activities, and help working parents keep their jobs. These programs are proven to help children reach their full potential and are a lifeline for families across ND. Yet, the early childhood and school-age care industry has become one of North Dakota's largest workforce issues.

With an expected budget surplus, the unique opportunity exists to strengthen and support the state's early childhood and school-age care industry by ensuring care is **available**, **affordable**, and **high-quality**. North Dakota is in dire need of solutions that consider the cost of care for parents while providing adequate funding for childcare and school-age care businesses.



Increase wages and benefits for a sustainable childcare and school-age workforce.

- \$11.19 per hour is the average pay for childcare providers in ND.
- Support a sustainable workforce through direct salary incentives based on benchmarks.
- Attract a professional workforce by creating a path for employee health benefits and employee childcare tuition assistance.



Increase shared services.

- Provide stability for childcare businesses by pooling resources through cooperative purchasing, business, accounting and billing services, substitute pool, human resources consulting and business training.



Streamline fingerprinting processes for criminal history checks to ensure there is not a delay in onboarding childcare staff.

- Background checks are averaging 6-12 weeks to process in ND.
- Ensure all human service zones have dedicated staff who can provide consistent daily fingerprint appointments to decrease wait times.



Provide business incentives to promote public-private partnerships

- Infrastructure grants to expand or build new facilities to offset overhead costs for providers.



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