

Take Action To Support Child Care



Supporting employees' child care needs supports businesses' bottom line

Business support for child care

- Reduces employee absenteeism and turnover
- Reduces recruitment and training costs
- Increases productivity, performance and loyalty
- Supports recruitment efforts

Today, women with children are the fastest growing segment of the American workforce, and all working parents with young children are vulnerable to work-family stress. This stress can be heightened by the difficulty in finding safe, affordable, and high quality care for their children.

Each week, more than 16,200 children under age 5 in Hawaii are in family or center-based care because their parents are at work. Across the state, the cost of childcare is high. Families with an infant devote close to 20% of their income on childcare. For single-parent families, the share of income devoted to childcare is much higher.

Providing child care supports to workers is less expensive than many employers believe because the provision of child care assistance is tax-deductible to employers.

10 things business leaders can do to help employees meet their childcare needs

- 1 Understand your employees' needs.** Collect information on childcare needs and challenges in your organization through surveys, focus groups, entrance/exit interviews, or talk story sessions.
- 2 Offer flexible schedules and child-friendly leave policies.** Consider telecommuting, flex hours, job-sharing, part-time work, and compressed time scheduling options that can help employees meet their work responsibilities and childcare needs. Offer extended parental leave for childbirth or adoption, use of sick leave for family illness, and/or PTO banking.
- 3 Educate your employees about childcare availability and subsidy eligibility.** Connect your workers with PATCH, the state Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. PATCH provides free referrals to childcare across the state and information on childcare subsidies and scholarships. <http://patchhawaii.org>
- 4 Provide a dependent care flexible spending account (FSA).** A salary-reduction dependent care FSA is an employer-sponsored account in which workers can set aside up to \$5,000 in pre-tax earnings, per year for child or dependent care expenses.

- 5 **Provide on-site or near site childcare.** Build an on-site childcare center and contract a provider to run a high-quality program to serve your employees. Smaller companies can join forces with other nearby employers to co-sponsor a shared childcare site. Employers cover some or all of construction/start-up and operating costs.
- 6 **Contribute to employees' childcare costs.** Offer a childcare allowance, subsidy, or reimbursement for parents to use towards a childcare provider of their choice. Contract with a childcare center or family childcare provider to reserve slots for your employees. The employer contribution can be a percentage of the cost, a set amount, or a sliding portion based on family income.
- 7 **Support backup care or odd-hour options.** Contract with a service to provide in-home care when children are sick or center-based care when employee's regular arrangements fall through. Consider the needs of workers on evening, weekend, and rotating shifts. Allow employees to bring their children to work or hire a shared babysitter to care for a small number of children in a dedicated space.
- 8 **Find creative ways to support childcare providers in your community.** In-kind contributions in your area of expertise can be invaluable to small childcare providers. Offer to handle billing, purchasing, or payroll through a shared services program. Donate materials, support scholarships, or underwrite teacher professional development activities.
- 9 **Businesses support families with young children when they support nursing mothers.** Today, more than 80% of new mothers in the United States begin breastfeeding, and 6 in every 10 new mothers are in the workforce. Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act provides for basic accommodations for nursing women during the work period, including reasonable time to express milk during the workday and a private space to express milk that is not a bathroom.
- 10 **Be a voice for children.** Use your influence with policymakers, other business leaders, and the media to support policies and investment in quality early care and learning.

Resources

Business Case for Breastfeeding.
Office of Women's Health.
www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public/breastfeeding-and-going-back-work/business-case

Child Care in State Economies – 2019 Update.
Committee for Economic Development.
www.ced.org/childcareimpact

Early childhood development toolkit for employers
<http://epicemployertoolkit.org/main.html>

Leading the way: A guide for business engagement in early education.
www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/leading-way-guide-business-engagement-early-education

Supporting nursing moms at work. Fact sheets from the U.S. Office of Women's Health.
www.womenshealth.gov/patient-materials/resource/fact-sheets

Workforce of today, workforce of tomorrow: The business case for high quality childcare.
www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/workforce-today-workforce-tomorrow



Center on the Family
University of Hawaii
<http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu>

