

Child Care for Utah's Future: A Call to Action for Elected Officials

Published: Wednesday, 31 January 2024 10:44

Written by: Anna Thomas



This open letter was released on January 31, 2024, by [Neighborhood House](#) and [Voices for Utah Children](#), two non-profit organizations working together with other community partners to create a better childcare system in Utah for the benefit of all the children in care. You can sign on, too, by completing [this short form](#).

The undersigned community leaders urge the Utah State Legislature to take bold action on proposals that invest more dollars into Utah's early education and childcare infrastructure.

Investing in a robust, high-quality childcare system and creating in-state infrastructure, is one of the best investments we can make for our children, and our state.

A well-supported early care and education system supports families by increasing their earning potential so they can get out of, and stay out of, poverty. It also contributes to the success of children in our school systems and as future contributors to our community.

Approximately 77% of Utahns live in a childcare desert, demonstrating that the

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majority of our state lacks sufficient licensed childcare to meet families' needs (Voices for Utah Children, 2023). This predicament stems from both limited availability of services and the strikingly high cost of quality care. When available, the high cost of care inhibits lower income families from participating in the workforce.

For childcare to be considered affordable, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests that a family should pay no more than 7% of its household income for childcare services. In more than half of Utah's 29 counties, families are burdened with paying between 15% and 20% of their annual income for infant/toddler care at licensed childcare facilities. (Voices for Utah Children, 2023)

The current amount of investment by state government is insufficient to address these needs. Choosing high-quality childcare is out of reach for most families, and is unattainable by most childcare providers because of the labor-intensive nature of the industry.

Without government investment, families are left with low quality options that endanger children, and disincentivize providers. We are calling on the Utah Legislature to invest more dollars into the childcare industry. With cross sector collaboration between business, the philanthropic community, and government entities, we can address this crisis and become a model for the nation.

This is truly an investment, as the long-term positive outcomes for our state are significant.

- Utah's economic prosperity is directly tied to the success and stability of its workforce. Currently, Utah's economy loses \$1.36 billion annually due to lack of childcare access. (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2022)
- Investing in our children during the most formative times of their lives staves off costly interventions that come later in life, including in our school systems. (Davis Schoch, 2023)
- The outcomes are proven: Adults who receive early childhood education as children are more likely than their peers to finish high school, have higher lifetime earnings, and avoid involvement in the criminal justice system. (Davis Schoch, 2023)

We urge you to use your influence and position to champion increased prudent

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investment in our state's childcare system.

Please, take [bold action](#) for our state's future.

Letter Signatories

(as of March 31, 2024)

- Lisa Eccles, President and COO, George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation
- Spencer and Kristine Eccles
- Larry H. & Gail Miller Family Foundation
- Clark and Christine Ivory Foundation
- Angela and Zeke Dumke
- Jeffrey & Helen Cardon Foundation
- Richard K. and Shirley S. Hemingway Foundation
- Carol W. and John H. Firmage, III
- Millerberg Family Giving Fund
- Semnani Family Foundation
- The McGuire Family Foundation
- BMW of Murray
- MINI of Murray
- BMW Pleasant Grove
- Firmco
- Motoring Skins
- Krystal Nielsen, Lil Oaklies Childcare
- Katie Ricord, Utah Association for the Education of Young Children
- Kristy DeGraaf, Childcare Provider, Children's Tylenol National Childcare Teacher of the Year
- IJ & Jeanné Wagner Jewish Community Center
- Salt Lake Chamber
- Neighborhood House
- The Children's Center Utah
- Utah Non-Profit Association
- Utah Afterschool Network
- United Way of Salt Lake
- Ogden Contemporary Arts
- Utah Child Care Cooperative

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- YWCA Utah
- Holy Cross Ministries
- Early Childhood Alliance
- Utah Care for Kids Network
- Utah Center for Civic Improvement
- Voices for Utah Children
- South Valley Unitarian Universalist Society (Salt Lake City)
- Canyon Creek Services (Cedar City)
- Friends of the Children Utah (Kearns)
- YCC Family Crisis Center (Ogden)
- Seekhaven, Inc. (Moab)
- Peace House (Park City)
- English Skills Learning Center (Murray)
- Northeastern Utah Friends Against Family Violence (Vernal)
- Ashley Ence, Sunny Kids, LLC (Saint George)
- Moab Community Childcare (Moab)
- Bright Beginnings Academy (South Jordan)
- KaRis KiDdos (Magna)
- North Star Children's Center (Kaysville)
- Little Geniuses Learning Center LLC (Pleasant Grove)
- Little Orchard Preschools and. Learning Centers (Bountiful)
- ABC Great Beginnings (Taylorsville)
- Kool Kidz Adventure Academy (Clearfield)
- Tiny Woodland LLC (Bountiful)
- Erin Aguilar (North Salt Lake)
- Nando Arroyo (Salt Lake City)
- Michelle Barker (Woods Cross)
- Jenn Bean (Midvale)
- Stacy Bernal (Ogden)
- Robyn Blackburn (American Fork)
- Ana Castaneda (Salt Lake City)
- Merry Clift (Salt Lake City)
- Dana Cremeno (Park City)
- Mikenna DeBruin (Draper)
- Erica Flugan (Salt Lake City)
- Carlie Fowles (Manti)
- Maria Sara Gonzales (Salt Lake City)

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- Reverend Brent Gundlah (Salt Lake City)
- Janie Harris (Nephi)
- Tyler Harris (Nephi)
- Jessica Jauregui (Salt Lake City)
- Caressa King (American Fork)
- Heather Larsen (Nephi)
- Rhiana Medina (Moab)
- Rylee Messick (Eagle Mountain)
- Jessica Mirabile (Sandy)
- Monique Montoya (West Valley)
- Hayley Neff (Salt Lake City)
- Curtis Price (Salt Lake City)
- Stephen Scoville (Salt Lake City)
- Sally Tauber (Park City)
- Marisela Valerio (Salt Lake City)
- Maria Zavala (Salt Lake City)
- Jamie Bitton (Ogden)
- Kate Blanch (Ogden)
- Tricia Bunderson (Lehi)
- Amariah Gibbs (Salt Lake City)
- Brenda Gonzalez (Salt Lake City)
- Brittany Greenwood (West Jordan)
- Eddie Greenwood (Salt Lake City)
- Todd Hepworth (Santaquin)
- Robin Hough (Salt Lake City)
- Jeff Howell (Salt Lake City)
- Jennifer Johnson (Syracuse)
- Mariana Kraschowetz (Salt Lake City)
- Amber Lewis (Kaysville)
- Alysse Loomis (Salt Lake City)
- Lianna Lopez (Kamas)
- Natalie Mason (Salt Lake City)
- Bree Murphy (Salt Lake City)
- Reverend David Nichols (Salt Lake City)
- Reba Kiger-kolasch (Salt Lake City)
- Connie Roller (Salt Lake City)
- Jennifer Rosas (Salt Lake City)

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- Eduardo Rubalcava (Magna)
- Sean Schilling (Smithfield)
- Susan R. Madsen (Bountiful)
- Reverend Jamie White (Salt Lake City)
- Mackenzie Genecov (Park City)
- Lucia Miramontes (Salt Lake City)
- Julie Adam (Salt Lake City)
- Shelby Averett (Salt Lake City)
- Alison Dedman (Cottonwood Heights)
- Monica Delgadillo (Bountiful)
- David Durrant (Cottonwood Heights)
- Elaine Ellis (Salt Lake City)
- Hannah Eldredge (Salt Lake City)
- Kayley Heier (North Salt Lake)
- John Hewes (Salt Lake City)
- Lindsay Larkin (Salt Lake City)
- Jen Milner (Salt Lake City)
- Brittany Mitchell (Salt Lake City)
- Elizabeth Moon (Salt Lake City)
- Reverend Chelsea Page (Salt Lake City)
- Melanie Pehrson (Salt Lake City)
- Erica Sánchez (West Valley City)
- Catherine Sharpsteen (Salt Lake City)
- Brooke Skelton (West Valley City)
- Karla Smith (Salt Lake City)
- Sadé Turner (Salt Lake City)
- Paul Walker (Farmington)
- Sue Womack (Springville)
- Gabriella Archuleta (Holladay)
- Sebastian De Freitas (Salt Lake City)
- Jason Johnson (Salt Lake City)
- Allison Nicholson (Salt Lake City)
- Kalolaine Tamoua (Salt Lake City)
- Cassidie Archuleta (Murray)
- Richard Biren (Lehi)
- Neal Davis (South Jordan)
- Emmie Gardner (Bountiful)

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- Molly McFadden (Salt Lake City)
- Meredith Muller (Salt Lake City)
- Ze Min Xiao (Salt Lake City)
- Maggie Beers (Salt Lake City)
- Vicki Dickinson (West Jordan)
- Aubrey Meyer (Salt Lake City)
- Maureen O'Malley Kirschner (Salt Lake City)
- Rebecca Burggraaf (Salt Lake City)
- Jacqueline Diaz (Salt Lake City)
- Emilie Anderson (Salt Lake City)
- Nirla Harris (South Jordan)
- Hannah McBrayer (Salt Lake City)
- Danelle Montero (Salt Lake City)
- Diane Nielsen (Millcreek)
- Brennan Replogle (Salt Lake City)
- Leigh Tolboe (Salt Lake City)
- Liliana Torres (West Jordan)
- Sara Troutman (Salt Lake City)
- Marcus Volk (Salt Lake City)
- Grace Watts (Tooele)
- Chris Weigel (Salt Lake City)
- Maxine Baldwin (Riverton)
- Sam Mecham (West Jordan)
- Melea Rogers (Ogden)
- Rose Valderramos (Salt Lake City)
- Jackilyn Wadsworth (West Valley City)
- Jeanetta Wadsworth (Smithfield)

You can add your foundation, business, organization or name by completing our simple form below.

[Sign on today!](#)

References

Davis Schoch, A. S. (2023). Children's learning and development benefits from high-quality early care and education: A summary of the evidence. OPRE Report

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