

2026 Legislative Updates: K-12 Education and Child Care

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Written by: Jennifer Stout



As Utah enters the 2026 legislative session, we are watching child care policy with both urgency and optimism. Families across the state continue to face rising costs, limited availability, and persistent workforce shortages that strain providers and leave too many parents without reliable options. We will stay vigilant to policies that may unintentionally reduce access, such as tightening eligibility requirements, limiting provider support, or increasing administrative burdens. We remain hopeful about efforts that strengthen affordability, stabilize the child care workforce, and expand high-quality care in rural and high-need communities.

This blog will be updated as information becomes available. Last updated 1/16/26.

Child Care Priorities

[HB 190: Child Care Business Tax Credit \(Rep. Thompson\)](#)

This bill expands Utah's income tax credits for employer-provided child care. It

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increases the nonrefundable credit for eligible small businesses to 30% of qualified child care expenses, while other qualifying employers can claim 10%. It also updates and clarifies key definitions, [removes an outdated requirement tied to construction credits](#), and explains when a business must repay part of the credit (recapture) if certain conditions are met.

While we support efforts to improve access to child care, experience shows similar tax credits have been underutilized, and linking child care benefits to employment may inadvertently lock parents into inflexible job situations. We share these concerns not to dismiss the bill, but to emphasize that it should not be seen as a comprehensive solution to all child care challenges, and stakeholders should proceed with caution.

The bill would take effect May 6, 2026, and applies to tax years starting January 1, 2026, or later.

[SB 29: Child Care Advisory Committee Amendments](#)

[the Child Care Advisory Committee](#)

K-12 Education Priorities

[SB 51: School Safety Modifications](#)

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While we support safety protocols to keep children safe, we understand that more can be done to protect children against school violence, such as more restrictive gun laws. If this bill could be passed in conjunction with **HB 43: School Safety Support Program** (to provide funding for school safety requirements and infrastructure), it would be more effective in protecting children.

[HB 109: Utah Fits All Scholarship Program Alterations](#)

[Utah Fits All Scholarship Program](#)

While adding additional compliance can be beneficial, the use of a [voucher program](#) has been proven not to benefit states as a whole. Instead of creating more limitations for voucher programs, the solution would be to eliminate school vouchers and use the funding to strengthen the public school systems.

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BILL TRACKING AND EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Bill Tracking

Subscribe to our [K-12 Education](#) and [Child Care](#) bill trackers to stay alert of bill updates and contact your legislators.

Learn more about other bills on our [bill tracking page](#).

Event Opportunities

Friday, February 13, 2026: Suit up and Show Up For Children - Early Childhood Day on the Hill

Join Utah Care for Kids and other community advocates at the Utah State Capitol for a day filled with advocacy and support for early childhood education. This in-person event is a great opportunity to make your voice heard and show your commitment to children's well-being. Don't miss this chance to connect with like-minded individuals and make a difference in the lives of children in our community. Let's come together and make a positive impact! Children are welcome to attend.

- Utah State Capitol from 7:30am-9:30am. RSVP [here](#).