



The Crisis of Affordability

2025 Central Ohio Child Care Provider Survey Executive Summary

The 2025 Central Ohio Child Care Provider Survey findings confirm the affordability crisis faced by child care providers and parents alike. Financial viability of providers is waning, with 47% experiencing revenue shortfalls despite raising tuition in the last year. The cost of child care grows increasingly out of reach for working parents and is often the household's single largest monthly expense, surpassing even housing costs.

Changes to family child care ratios, licensing requirements, and Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) rate structure are poised to put even greater pressure on this essential piece of the child care and early education landscape. Based on [research by Policy Matters](#), Type A providers in urban areas are projected to lose \$600/week in revenue. And while an increase in the child-to-adult ratio allows FCCs to expand enrollment and potentially improve financial stability, the invisible cost is borne entirely by child care workers, who will be caring for more children without any additional pay.

Key Takeaways:

- After improving gradually over the previous four years, **provider confidence has begun showing signs of weakness**. Sixteen percent of providers are unsure if they will be open in three months, and 58% - a ten-percentage point increase from 2024 - are unsure if they will be open in 12 months.
- Staffing continues to be a challenge. **Sixty-three percent of surveyed child care centers want to hire**, with the majority needing to re-hire for at least one position over the past year. The most frequently cited challenge when hiring staff is "ability to pay," and our data confirm that wages for child care workers remain well below wages in other sectors of the economy.
- **Child care costs range from 12-34% of median household income in central Ohio**, far above the federal government's seven percent affordability threshold. For families with young children, monthly child care costs typically exceed housing costs.

The 2025 report includes:

- Summary data by county and by child care setting
- Insider looks on special topics:
 - Affordability of care for working families
 - Compensation and benefits for child care workers
 - Impact of changing regulations and rates on FCCs
 - Participants in Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)

It is time for action for our communities.

Child care is essential infrastructure, without which our economy cannot grow or thrive. Action for Children urges government, corporate, and philanthropic leaders to dig into addressing the care crisis, focusing on the needs of the child care professionals and families closest to the challenges.

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)