



# Q+A: Crisis of Affordability Webinar

December 16, 2025 @ 2:00 PM

*Presented by Action for Children*

## **Can you comment on the changes to state payment based on enrollment vs. attendance?**

Historically, child care providers have always been paid for their PFCC enrollees based on child attendance – The provider only gets paid if the child shows up. Back in June a law was signed that required DCY to pay child care providers based on enrollment rather attendance, which was great news. That’s the way the most private pay families pay child care providers. That law said it had to go into effect in May of 2026 at the latest.

However, the Ohio legislature recently sent another bill to the Governor (HB 184) that was largely unrelated to child care and noncontroversial, except that tacked on a provision that delayed paying on enrollment until July 2028. As of December 16th, Governor DeWine has not signed that bill.

## **Can a provider charge a family the difference between the state PFCC rate and the rate they charge families who don’t receive PFCC?**

The simple answer is no. When a provider signs an authorization agreement with the state to provide publicly funded child care, the provider agrees to accept that amount as payment in full, and not charge the family further.

An exception is if the family exceeds the hours of care they are authorized for, *then* the program could charge for *only* the hours that beyond the family’s authorization, only. That would have to be part of the provider’s program policies, written into their handbook.

For example (**slide 30**) if a child is authorized for hourly care (less than 10 hours) and the child attends 12 hours that week, the provider could charge for those additional 2 hours.

<https://childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-providers/resources/pfcc>

## **If a family earns just over the federal poverty rate (more than the PFCC threshold) would they receive no support for child care or some partial support?**

In Ohio, families generally can qualify if they earn up to 145% of the federal poverty level, which is \$46,617 for a family of four. The state's 145% threshold is one of the lowest in the country. Families that earn 100% or less of FPL do not have a co-pay. But all families earning between just over the FPL to 146% of FPL do have a copay.

While publicly funded childcare isn't available for those who make more than 142% of the federal poverty level, there are some other resources. Ohio has the Child Care Choice Voucher Program. There's an early care and education grant that is available, that extends beyond those. Families that live in Franklin County can possibly be eligible for a Franklin County RISE scholarship that's offered through Action for Children, Future Ready Five, and the Franklin County Board of Commissioners. And there may be other local options as well.

Additionally, one of AFC's roles as a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency is to help connect families to care that they can afford. So if there are ever any families who you know are struggling with that, they can give us a call at 614-224-0222 at any time and reach our Child Care Intake and Referral team, which will help you find a program that fits your needs and your budget.

### **Do you know if the state will offer grants to help with cost?**

At this time, there's nothing that we're aware of that's coming down the pipeline.

That said, we would encourage child care providers to make sure they're signed up for the Action for Children newsletter and the Department of Children and Youth's Tuesday Times. The newsletter is the main way AFC gets information out to folks about new funding opportunities. Additionally, DCY sends an email out every Tuesday that's really chock full of relevant information. Tuesday Times is weekly, and AFC's newsletter is monthly, so there's always good, meaningful information that you can put to use right then and there, so that's probably going to be your best source to make sure you're up to date on all of those opportunities.

### **Can you explain more about the range of child care wages in Ohio mentioned in the report?**

It's a wide range. Looking at Figure 6 in our report, you can see the range, for newly hired and current, highest pay for lead teachers and assistant teachers. So, we see that assistant teachers are more in that \$14 an hour range, whereas lead teachers are maybe in the \$18-\$19 range, and an administrator is around \$23 per hour. These rates are also different by county – and counties outside of Franklin may be seeing even lower wages than the average.

**Which trends in this report worry you most if they continue unchecked over the next year?**

All of the data in the report is alarming. One of the biggest challenges we're seeing is the affordability of operating a child care center/or FCC at a time when it's already challenging for parents to find affordable child care. Providers are consistently working at a deficit which is unattractive for incoming providers. It's highly likely that the pipeline of new providers will be impacted by new state legislation and payment changes. Our current providers are struggling to keep their doors open ,leaving fewer options for families who may already live in a child care desert.

**What are some examples of successful policies or programs that are helping both families and providers, either locally or nationally?**

We're watching to see how things go in New Mexico, as they've just begun offering free childcare to all families in the state, regardless of income. And that comes with guarantees and funding, to expand childcare facilities, construct new facilities, and actually raise wages for child care providers up to a minimum of \$18 per hour.

Locally, we're starting to see more businesses recognizing child care benefits as a valuable part of a comprehensive benefits package to provide to employees, just like health insurance, paid time off, and child care subsidies. So there's been some good movement in our country and in the state of Ohio on that, and we're hopeful to see that grow.

*To learn more about the report and access the webinar recording and interactive tools, visit [actionforchildren.org/affordability](https://actionforchildren.org/affordability).*