

Renee Rider
Executive Director
Council on Children and Families
52 Washington Drive
Rensselaer, NY 12144

Re: Child Care Desert Grant Report

Dear Renee,

Thank you so much for the support to Long Island to address the challenges facing the early childhood system. Beginning in June 2019, the Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc. co-chaired the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council's (LIREDC) new child care sub-committee. The focus of this sub-committee was to assess the child care needs of the region and identify potential solutions and recommendations that would increase access to child care. Working closely with the Child Care Council of Nassau and our business and labor partners on the sub-committee, we have achieved the following:

1. Needs assessment based on capacity, cost and accessibility.

We compared child care capacity by County, modality and age group from 2017 to 2019 and identified the trends. Overall, there was a decrease in total capacity for children under age 5, and an increase in care for school-age children. Suffolk County experienced a greater loss, especially in family child care providers.

This trend has recently reversed and there is a slow but steady increase in child care capacity in centers, group family child care and school-age child care. We are now trying to determine the quality and enrollment issues facing these providers. There has been a documented increase in providers receiving violations and requiring mandated training. So while capacity may be increasing, we have more work to do to determine the quality and stability of the care being provided.

We also analyzed the cost of child care, compared with the median salaries in our counties for various family units (single mother, two-parent working, minimum wage earners, etc). The summary of all of this analysis is included in the LIREDC 2019 Strategic Plan (relevant section attached).

"YOUR LINK TO CHILD CARE OPTIONS"

2. Parent Needs and Experiences

Data Analysis. As a Child Care Resource & Referral agency, we work with thousands of parents every year who are looking for child care. This has provided us with an extensive data-base of parent needs, challenges and outcomes. While we have a sense of the biggest challenges and most important family needs, we have never had the capacity to do a deeper dive into the data to fully identify patterns and trends. With support from this grant, we began an in-depth analysis of the extensive data contained in our database with an experienced researcher from St. John's University. The analysis is well underway and will be completed by the end of March 2020. We will share the final results as soon as it is completed.

Survey. In an effort to get a better sense of the general need of working parents on Long Island (not just from the parents who contact our agency which is a small percentage of families who use/need child care), we issued an on-line survey through Survey Monkey (questions are attached). This survey was sent out by multiple labor unions, the County Departments of Social Services and Labor, the LIREDC members, and the two child care councils.

As of February 19, 2020 there have been 601 responses to the survey. Further analysis is required of the responses but some highlights are:

- 20% of respondents work more than 1 job
- 64% of respondents prefer child care closer to home (rather than closer to place of employment)
- 83% of respondents believe the amount they pay for child care is unreasonable for their budget/income
- 54% of respondents with children under age 2 use licensed/regulated child care
- When asked if the following were very important, somewhat important, not very important or not important at all:
 - Cost: 79.3% very important
 - Location: 75% very important
 - Quality of program: 95% very important
 - Credentials of caregivers: 70% very important
 - Reputation of program: 85% very important
- In general, people were interested in child care outside of their home that was available from 6:30am – 7pm; but not before 6:30am or after 7pm. Only 8% said they would be interested in overnight care.
- 11% said they had no trouble finding appropriate care for their child under age 2.

“YOUR LINK TO CHILD CARE OPTIONS”

- The respondents income range was:
 - 28% above \$150,000 per year
 - 33% between \$90K and \$149,999
 - 39% below \$90K

We will be breaking this data down further to understand the differences in parent needs/views based on income level, hours of employment, ages of children, etc.

3. Provider Needs & Challenges

With a better understanding of the needs of families, we also examined the needs of child care providers. Operating a child care program on Long Island presents many challenges that are now exacerbated with the increasing minimum wage. Based on forums with child care providers the top challenges right now are:

- (1) Paying staff competitive salaries. Many programs experience high-turnover with staff leaving to work in retail or the service industry where they can make more money.
- (2) Finding qualified staff. The workforce pipeline is drying up on Long Island. Many professionals have been able to find early childhood positions in NYC as the City ramps up Pre-K for All. The colleges and universities are not encouraging people to pursue a career in early childhood education. In fact, several have openly discouraged students, instead recommending the K-12 system.
- (3) Recruiting new families and children. High costs, changing demographics and staffing challenges have made it difficult for many providers to recruit children. While some of the larger and more stable programs may have waiting lists, smaller programs are struggling to survive.

In response to some of these challenges, the region has applied for and been granted support with a Leadership Initiative and Career Center through the PDG grant. We are also working on several strategies to identify funding that would support the compensation of the workforce.

The comprehensive proposal included by the LIREDC examines all of this information and proposes bold recommendations to make quality child care available and affordable to all Long Islanders, while ensuring a family-sustaining wage for providers (see attached). The sub-committee is continuing to meet and the LIREDC leaders have made child care a top priority for the region. We are also discussing pieces of these proposals with local leaders on the County and Town levels.

The support from this grant has ensured that we have been able to fully participate in working with our REDC and local business groups. It also helped us create a stronger linkage with our

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local labor leaders and Industrial Development Agencies. We were also finally able to conduct a much more meaningful analysis of the extensive data that is available to us regarding parent needs and decisions.

This work will continue and we will share the results at further analysis is completed.

Thank you again for the support. I look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Rojas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Jennifer Rojas
Executive Director
Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.

"YOUR LINK TO CHILD CARE OPTIONS"

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This survey will help identify the child care needs of Long Island families. If you have parental responsibilities and live in Nassau County or Suffolk County, please complete this short survey. Your response will be very helpful.

Basic Information

1. 1. Are you a resident of Suffolk County or Nassau County, NY?

- Suffolk County
 Nassau County

2. Do you currently work more than 10 hours per week?

- Yes
 No

3. In which County is your primary place of employment?

- Nassau Brooklyn
 Suffolk Manhattan
 Queens Bronx
 Other (please specify)

4. Approximately how many hours do you work every week?

- Less than 20 hours per week
 Between 20 and 40 hours per week
 Between 40 - 60 hours per week
 More than 60 hours per week

5. Do you currently have more than one job?

- Yes
 No

6. 1. What days of the week do you typically work?

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

7. What hours/shifts do you typically work? (check all that apply)

- First shift - 8 hour (usually around 8am - 4pm)
- Second shift - 8 hour (usually around 4pm - 12am)
- Third shift - 8 hour (usually around 12am - 8am)
- 9am - 5pm
- First shift - 12 hour (usually around 8am - 8pm)
- Second shift - 12 hour (usually around 8pm - 8am)
- Other (please specify)

8. How many children do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

9. Are any of your children cared for by someone other than a parent/guardian more than 5 hours per week?

- Yes
- No

10. Approximately how much do you spend each month of child care costs for all of your children?

- Less than \$500 per month
- Between \$500 and \$1000 per month
- Between \$1000 and \$1,500 per month
- Between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per month
- Between \$2,000 and \$2,500 per month
- More than \$2,500 per month

11. If quality child care was available and affordable, would you prefer a location closer to your home, or to your place of employment?

- Closer to home
- Closer to employment
- No Preference

12. Please respond to the following statements.

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure		
I feel the amount I pay each month for child care is reasonable for my budget.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel the amount I pay each month for child care is unreasonable for my budget.	<input type="radio"/>				

13. What are the ages of your children?

under 1 year of age

1 year old

2 years old

3 years old

4 years old

5 years old

6 - 12 years old

13 years and up

For Children Under Age 6

14. If you have children UNDER age 6, what is your current child care arrangement?

- I do not have a child under age 6
- Licensed or registered child care program
- Family member who lives in the home (grandparent, sibling, etc)
- Family, friend or neighbor caring for child in your home
- Family, friend or neighbor caring for child **outside** of your home
- Alternating arrangements based on work schedule and availability
- Nanny or AuPair

Other (please specify)

15. Approximately how many hours per week is your child(ren) under age 6 being cared for by someone other than a parent/guardian?

- Less than 5 hours per week
- Between 5 and 10 hours per week
- Between 10 and 20 hours per week
- Between 20 and 40 hours per week
- More than 40 hours per week

16. For your child(ren) under age 6, how satisfied are you with your current child care arrangements?

- I do not have a child under age 6
- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

19. If you work hours before 8am and/or after 6pm, please answer the following:

	Yes	No	Maybe	Depends	N/A
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care before 8am.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care after 6pm.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use overnight child care outside of my home.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care after 9pm.	<input type="radio"/>				
If it was available and affordable, I would use a child care program that offered child care before 6am.	<input type="radio"/>				

Other (please specify)

20. If you have a child **under 2 years of age**, did you have trouble finding appropriate child care options?

- Yes, options for babies and toddlers under age 2 were hard to find.
- There were options available, but I did not feel comfortable with them.
- I did not look for child care for my children under age 2.
- A family member or friend cares for my child under age 2.
- I had no problem finding child care for my child under age 2.
- Not applicable/I do not have a child under age 2

Other (please specify)

21. Do you also have a school-age child (over the age of 6)?

Yes

No

School-age children (6 years of age and older)

22. For your school-age child (age 6 and older) what is your current child care arrangement?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Licensed or registered child care program | <input type="radio"/> After-school program located at school |
| <input type="radio"/> Family member who lives in the home (grandparent, sibling, etc) | <input type="radio"/> Alternating arrangements based on work schedule and availability |
| <input type="radio"/> Family, friend or neighbor caring for your child in your home | <input type="radio"/> After-school program at location different from school |
| <input type="radio"/> Family, friend or neighbor caring for child outside of your home | <input type="radio"/> Nanny or AuPair |

Other (please specify)

23. For your school-age child (age 6 and older), how satisfied are you with your current child care arrangements?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

24. For your school-age child(ren), are the following factors (a) very important, (b) somewhat important, (c) not very important, or (d) not important at all?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important At All		N/A
Cost	<input type="radio"/>					
Convenience/Location	<input type="radio"/>					
Quality of program	<input type="radio"/>					
Transportation offered	<input type="radio"/>					
Credentials of teachers/caregivers	<input type="radio"/>					
Reputation of program	<input type="radio"/>					
Language spoken by staff	<input type="radio"/>					
Homework help provided	<input type="radio"/>					
Enrichment activities available	<input type="radio"/>					

Are there any other factors that are important to you when choosing a child care provider/program?

Demographics

26. What is your household income?

- Less than \$30,000 per year
- Between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per year
- Between \$50,000 and \$70,000 per year
- Between \$70,000 and \$90,000 per year
- Between \$90,000 and \$110,000 per year
- Between \$110,000 and \$150,000 per year
- More than \$150,000 per year

27. What is your zip code (of your residence)?

28. What is the primary language spoken in your home?

- English
- Spanish
- Creole
- Asian or Pacific Islander languages

Other (please specify)

29. If you would like to receive the results and analysis of this survey please provide your email address.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.



Regional Economic
Development Councils

State of the Region:

LONG ISLAND

Breaking Down Barriers



2019 Progress Report



PART THREE

Implementation Agenda

The beating heart of the LIREDC is really dozens of beating hearts — the volunteers that comprise our Work Groups. Their years of expertise and experience and months of research and engagement help shape our strategies and initiatives and, ultimately, the Implementation Agenda at the core of our annual report.

Strategies and Actions Related to State Priorities

*“Your knee bone connected to your thigh bone.
Your thigh bone connected to your back bone...”*

African-American Spiritual

An Introduction

Everything’s connected. We may organize ourselves around Work Groups dedicated to a specific strategy or industry cluster, but the LIREDC understands that connectivity is the key to a sustainable economy. We know that Long Island’s ecosystem is strongest when every component is in sync. And that includes our people, from the most powerful officials and successful entrepreneurs to the poorest families and most struggling veterans. Of course, in a fragmented suburban policy-scape, where scores of jurisdictions hold sway within their borders, coaxing a critical mass of agreement in a single neighborhood is easier said than done. But the LIREDC is committed to breaking down barriers to communication and collaboration, and in a region with a reputation as the NIMBY “Land of No” we believe we are getting through more and more often.

In implementing the LIREDC’s growth agenda, the region has seen more and more local leaders accept the benefits of thinking – and acting – holistically. Along the length of this very long island, more and more have come to understand that the “knee bone” of innovation is connected to the “thigh” bone of education. That the “hip bone” of tourism is connected to “back bone” of the environment. And agriculture. And historic preservation. And so it goes, as we seek synergies in the sum of all our sectors and related work groups.

In concrete terms, success means more and more village officials approving strategic “place-making” proposals for affordable apartments near transportation hubs, especially the dozens and dozens of commuter rail stations that may be our most under-used asset. These mixed-use developments, often with restaurants and boutiques, relieve congestion and pollution by getting people out of their cars. They generate tax dollars that ease the burden on traditional single-family homeowners. At the same time, these new downtowns create a “buzz” that attracts young workers so desperately desired by businesses where new jobs are going begging.

It’s a virtuous cycle that embraces and benefits even those who often fight such development. As we’ve found in Patchogue, Rockville Centre, Farmingdale, Wyandanch and other places with appealing new apartments and other amenities, the value of the single-family homes – and the equity of the owners who often led opposition to higher-rise housing – has risen as well. Yes, we need to be vigilant about the

impact of gentrification on poorer residents and to subsidize the truly affordable rentals that young and old alike desire. We must provide workforce education and other support for people at all ends of the employment spectrum, even as we continue to invest heavily in engineers and researchers at the cutting edge of discovery. We are doing all that and more. We are as obsessively focused on filling our jobs as we were for years in creating them. But, big picture, the LIREDC’s approach to leveraging our regional investments has paid off and contributed to a strong, self-nurturing ecosystem.

Still, it’s not enough. As we explained in the executive summary, it’s not enough to create prosperity for most. Or to let the region and individuals stand pat in their accomplishments. We need to do more and we were tasked to do more. “Regional Councils are asked to address statewide priorities in ways uniquely tailored to...complement the regional vision,” according to state guidelines. “Each is asked to develop strategies to address those priorities, and to identify and encourage applicants to apply for funding through the CFA to implement those strategies.”

Creating an Equity Economy

That’s why, this year, we have committed to creating not just an Opportunity Agenda directed at our most distressed communities, but an Equity Economy that leaves no resident or neighborhood behind. We have embraced Governor Cuomo’s call to examine the economy and environment through the lens of justice. And we are doing so with the same, inclusive spirit that we have taken to other state and regional priorities. For instance, we have chosen to craft a plan for child care – whose “hip bone” is connected to an entire skeleton of economic and community needs – with a similar focus on equity. We have sought to connect all our work with an emphasis on inclusion that celebrates the value of diversity in building a strong economy. In short, the LIREDC has united behind the idea of equity as a growth strategy in and of itself.

What follows are the reports of our work groups. They include some new job-generating and community-building strategies around child care, place-making, energy development, workforce training for all, and environmental and economic justice. And they reinforce policies and projects that energize innovation and tradeable sectors, spur tourism and support policies to aid our veterans and others we have not abandoned in the ninth year of our mission. While we’ve sorted the Implementation Agenda into segments for ease of reading, the work group reports should be seen as a seamless strategic narrative that connects the dots of everything we do.

The Child Care Challenge

“This year, Regional Councils should develop strategies to address child care needs in their region. Strategies should identify community needs and examine the gap between...the resources available. Councils are encouraged to leverage and maximize existing resources, both within and outside the CFA, explore new and creative funding streams... and are encouraged to develop innovative child care business development, workforce development techniques.”

REDC Guide Book, 2019 Page 10

A CALL TO ACTION ON “CHILD CARE DESERTS”

We get it. Even before child care was declared a State Priority, the LIREDC identified the lack of adequate and affordable “slots” as a threat to local economic growth – especially in recruiting young workers with or planning to have children. It also slowed our efforts to create an Opportunity Economy for all our residents. That’s why the experts on our Child Care Work Group are proposing that Long Island craft a comprehensive system that will make child care affordable and accessible for every family. “Safe, affordable care is becoming harder to find, and families are facing increasingly difficult choices,” says Jennifer Rojas, who operates the Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc. and chairs the LIREDC Child Care Work Group. “A significant investment will eliminate barriers to full employment for many parents and boost our local economy.”

That’s also why we supported Bridgehampton Child Care in 2018 (Round 8) with a \$300,000 grant that leveraged private investment of \$1.5 million for a new building that will allow the not-for-profit to serve hundreds more children and their working parents. And that’s hardly the only LIREDC-supported child care project. In 2015 and 2016 (Rounds 5 and 6), the LIREDC awarded the YMCA of Long Island grants totaling \$900,000 to support private investment of \$8.4 million to construct and equip “The Y Healthy Living Center” in the “smart growth” downtown of Huntington. Just the joy in the faces of the 700 campers we visited on the last day of the program was enough to assure us this was money well spent.

The lack of child care slots not only keeps thousands of people, mostly women, from reaching their full potential as employees, it prevents children from preparing as fully as possible for a successful academic career. But trying to close the child care gap one center at a time won’t get Long Island and its families where they need to be. Our research shows getting there will require an investment substantial of public and private funds.

But it’s an investment that will catalyze enough economic activity to sustain the program. Child care already is an \$800 million industry on Long Island, providing jobs for 9,000 people, many of them minorities. And studies show that the sector produces one of the highest multipliers of dollars invested. So the lack of additional public and private investment is a missed opportunity to boost child care as a well-paying profession whose employers and employees can accelerate growth.

Child care is a chance to achieve economic justice and growth. Improving child care and the economy, as well as helping thousands of working families and their children reach their full potential, is a great deal that Long Island and the rest of the state can’t afford to pass up. The LIREDC will do its part. Governor Cuomo’s Child Care challenge couldn’t have come at a better time.

That’s because the problem is worsening: The number of child care slots on Long Island is actually shrinking. This is a crisis that hits every income group – and most businesses – but the burden falls most heavily on the working poor who are not eligible for a subsidy. A significant number of families are likely to pay as much as 25 percent of their paycheck for safe, reliable care. That loss of disposable income drains families and neighborhoods alike. It’s bad for everybody’s business.

Background

In order to address our employment and skills gaps, Long Island must attract workers whose ideas and energy can grow our industries. Younger workers are increasingly looking at the options available for child care. With all the challenges to recruiting and retaining workers on Long Island, from traffic to taxes, it would be foolish to add child care to the list.

The approach should be region-wide and focus on facilities, training and affordability. Similar to the progress toward Universal Pre-Kindergarten in New York State (and fully universal Pre-K for All in New York City), Long Island needs nothing less than universal Child Care.

Long Island has always taken pride in our public education system. We have some of the best schools in the country and we’ve invested heavily because we care about our children. But it’s the first five years of life – prior to Kindergarten for most children – when the brain grows the most. A universal child care program would help all children – regardless of their zip code or school district – prepare for school success.

Child care is also a key aspect of economic development. Parents with reliable child care are more productive, miss less time at work and have more opportunities for upward mobility. Access to affordable child care allows more women to work and to earn more, helping to close the gender wage gap.

New York State has demonstrated a commitment to working families and young children by implementing a strong Paid Family Leave policy and Pre-K expansion. Child care is the nexus between these two programs, serving children from 6 weeks of age through school-age.

Assessing Need on Long Island

But the child care industry is at a crossroads. Like public education (which is almost entirely subsidized by taxpayers) it is not a typical market-based industry. The cost exceeds what most parents can afford. Unlike public education, 85% of revenue for child care is through private fees paid directly to the provider by the parent. Furthermore, child care programs cannot control their cost drivers which are set by regulations and statutes – such as staffing, facility requirements, credentialing and training. The result is an unstable industry with low salaries and high turnover.

Long Island working families:

- 46% of households in Nassau and 52% in Suffolk earn less than \$100,000/year.
- The average income for a single mother in Nassau is \$50,000 and in Suffolk \$45,000.

Market rates for child care on Long Island are:

- \$15,500 for one pre-school child in a center
- \$14,250 for one child in a family or group program
- \$18,200 for one child under age 2 in a center
- \$15,000 for one child under age 2 in a family or group

That means about half the working families on Long Island would have to spend at least 15 percent of their

pre-tax income – right off the top of their paycheck – for child care. For a single parent, the burden can be far bigger.

*A single mother earning \$50,000/year with an 18-month old would pay **at least 36%** of her gross income for a regulated child care slot. With 2 children under age 5 she would pay **more than 60%** of her income.*

*A family with two parents both earning \$15/hour with a 1 year old would pay **at least 30%** of their gross income for regulated child care.*

Supply

Even for parents who can afford licensed child care, there is an inadequate supply.

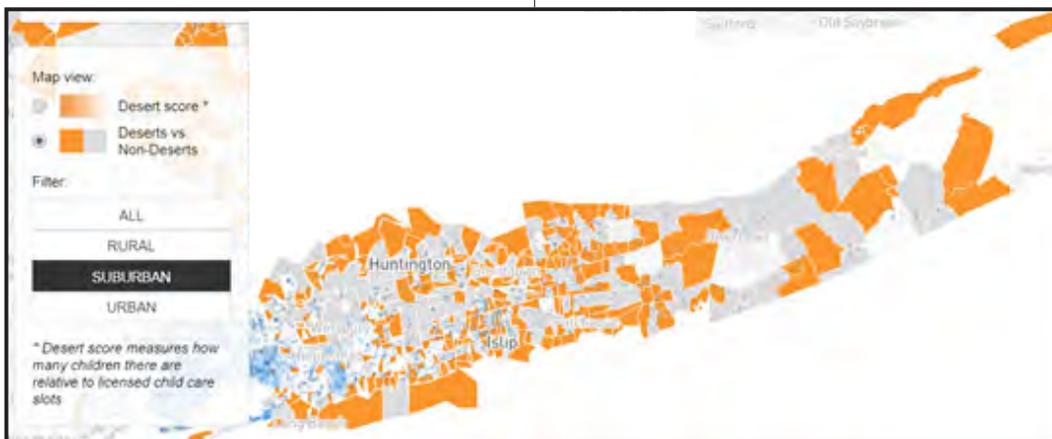
- There are 1,518 child care businesses on Long Island; 80 fewer than in 2017.
- Long Island has 61,227 licensed/registered child care slots for children under 5, about 1,000 fewer than in 2017.
- There are 155,795 children under 5 on Long Island, 122,917 in a household with all available caregivers in the workforce.
- Only 10% of Long Island’s 4-year olds have access to publicly-funded pre-kindergarten through their school district (compared to every 4-year old in New York City).

Long Island has a significant number of “child care deserts” – almost half of Suffolk’s census tracts.

Economic Benefit

According to the Long Island Association’s Chief Economist, John Rizzo child care has one of the highest economic multipliers of all sectors in the region with a return of \$1.95 for every \$1 invested: “As child care businesses and their employees spend money... they collectively stimulate economic activity in other industries as well.”

Parents who use child care on Long Island earn \$10 billion each year. Unfortunately, this number is decreasing as child care becomes harder to find. As more families cobble together unregulated, unreliable child care, our economy is losing money, too.



Proposal

We are proposing to phase in a comprehensive child care program for every family who needs it. This will require significant public and private investment over a five-year phased-in implementation period. We believe most, if not all, of the funds will be recouped through increased economic activity. Studies and experience suggests Long Island would see new economic activity of more than \$1 billion once fully implemented.

Several models with a high return on investment could be replicated or adapted as a pilot.

- The U.S Department of Defense (DoD) has a high-quality child care system available to children of active military. DoD programs are accredited and available on a sliding scale fee. The military invests almost \$1 billion in centers and parent subsidies because it knows service members will be more focused on their jobs if not worried about their kids.
- In 1996, Quebec implemented a universal program for children under 5. The province annually subsidizes with roughly \$2 billion. Quebec families cover part of the costs on a sliding scale. More working mothers, plus increased economic activity by the programs themselves, has provided tax revenues to cover more than 100% of the program.
- Oregon, Washington, Illinois and the District of Columbia have all added significant funding to their budgets to support child care expansion, increasing salaries for the workforce and increasing affordability.

Strategies

Make Child Care Affordable. Research into successful programs indicates that parent costs should be capped between 7% and 10% of gross income depending on family earnings and size.

Increase Availability and Supply. We must meet the needs of working parents, including new industries and shift-workers. This can be done through start-up and capacity-building funds, as well as ongoing support for operations. The development of child care capacity in new hubs, downtowns and other projects as appropriate could be incentivized with grant programs.

Public/Private Partnerships. Funds from P3s can provide ongoing operational support to on-site child care programs for employees of hubs, industrial parks, downtowns, etc.

Stabilize and Expand the Workforce. Childcare workers must be paid livable wages and have professional training & credentials. The existing structures on Long Island could be leveraged to create a cohesive and effective career pathway, including:

- Career counseling support
- More access to credentialing programs with articulation to community colleges
- Increased opportunities for higher-education degrees in early education
- Apprenticeship programs
- Salary enhancements based on position and/or level of education

Outcomes

In the short-term (1 – 3 years) investments in child care will:

- Stabilize the child care industry, preventing closures and job loss.
- Create new jobs for entry-level and experienced early educators.
- Increase options for families.
- Brand Long Island as a desirable option for young families.
- Increase economic activity by the child care workforce and the parents.

Once fully implemented (5+ years) a universal system will:

- Increase workforce participation, particularly of women ages 20-44
- Decrease the gender wage gap.
- Generate revenue & economic activity of more than \$1 billion.
- Decrease the need for remedial education.

This plan is ambitious but it can pay off big-time. In the short term, investments in child care will stabilize the industry, create new jobs for entry-level and experienced early educators, better serve families with children and the children themselves, brand Long Island as a desirable place to live and work, and increase economic activity by as much as \$2 billion. And that's just the benefits in the first three years. Once fully implemented after five years, a universal system will progressively increase workforce participation and give women a better chance to win promotions and support their families. Universal child care also will save money by boosting the number of children starting kindergarten more ready to learn – and thus decreasing costs of remedial programs.

We are all in on child care. It's hard to imagine any public or private investment that can pay off so well and so fast for so many. What's even more remarkable is how it breaks down another barrier to filling jobs for businesses and expanding opportunity to people with few other options. Adding thousands of affordable child care slots advances economic growth and equity, the twin pillars our development strategies.