AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF THE CHILD CARE SECTOR
OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS
“The most basic of all human needs is to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them.”
—Ralph Nichols
One of the most sacred of actions is to listen to another person and actually hear them—to take in their hopes, thoughts, and even fears, without interruption or judgment. At the 47th Champions for Child Care Annual Summit, Vibrant Futures wanted to communicate to child care businesses and professionals that they matter to the lives of children, health of community, and fabric of society. We wanted to not only provide a powerful professional learning experience, we wanted to make room for these important stakeholder voices. When the opportunity was extended, our small business owners and professionals in Michigan’s child care sector weighed in on all things child care. They endeavored to give voice to the opportunities that often get lost in the noise of everyday life.

This short brief is the culmination of the sector’s collective desire, important
insights, and profound wisdom on how Michigan can improve conditions for child care owners, and operators. It serves to amplify their collective voice revealing opportunities for reducing barriers to entry, slowing declines, and increasing sustainability. Each of the data points mutually reinforces the emerging truth that the future of work for far too many is inextricably tied to the future of child care.

Chana Edmond-Verley
CEO, Vibrant Futures
The data presented here represent professional child care business owners and their workers, and were collected at the Vibrant Futures Annual Child Care Summit.

Child care business professionals from around the state gathered to strengthen their business practices, sharpen their skills, and voice their invaluable perspectives on Michigan’s child care crisis.

**TOP BARRIERS TO ENTRY AND LONGEVITY IN CHILD CARE in their own words**

- **2020-2021**
  - **66%** Licensing process and regulations
  - **61%** High responsibility/low recognition
  - **57%** Earnings/profit levels
  - **25%** CC subsidy process/reimbursement
  - **25%** Talent pipeline issues
  - **16%** Lack of shared services and subsidies
  - **13%** Social Isolation

- **2020**
  - **63%** Licensing process and regulations
  - **61%** Earnings/profit levels
  - **52%** High responsibility/low recognition
  - **32%** Other policy barriers (CC subsidy)
  - **16%** Raise CDC provides rates by 10%
  - **5%** Expand Tri-share up to 250% of FPL
  - **5%** Covered CDC family co-pays

**PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS TO CHILD CARE SUBSIDY**
- **Increased payment**: Higher pay rate for essential child care workers
- **Greater accessibility**: Increase support, communication and outreach
- **Modernize process**: Increase speed, better technology, streamline paperwork
- **Speed of process/payment**: On time, faster notice if subsidy discontinued
- **Payment structure**: Pay based on enrollment not attendance, hourly limits
- **Access to resources**: Support systems for providers and families

**PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS TO LICENSING PROGRAM**
- **Fewer regulations**: Difficult to keep up with ongoing changes, cumbersome
- **Reduce paperwork**: Streamline requirements, reduce burden
- **More supportive approach**: Consistency in rule interpretations, opportunities to make corrections, support for implications of unscheduled visits
- **Ratio flexibility**: Adjustments for school aged siblings/children
- **Education**: Ongoing opportunities to learn about regulations and requirements
IN GOVERNOR WHITMER’S BUDGET, WHAT MATTERS MOST TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

1. Provide business stimulus grants to child care providers
2. Pay child care providers on enrollment over attendance
3. Increase eligibility in child care subsidy to 200% FPL
4. Raise rates by 10% for CDC providers
5. Expand Tri-share up to 250% of FPL
6. Cover CDC family co-pay

MAJORITY OF VOICES

Allegan, Barry, Kalamazoo, Ingham, Ionia, Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa

BARRIERS TO TALENT PIPELINE

Increased wages: Competitive wages to compete with centers or institutions
Awareness: Education about career pathways, greater outreach
Financial support: Grants, health benefits, start-up cost assistance
Training: Educational opportunities and coaching for new businesses
Recognition and support: Valued as education professionals

Vibrant Futures holds sacred the promise and potential in every child, youth, family, and caregiver to ensure more vibrant futures for all by creating cradle-to-career opportunities for children and their families.


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