



# EVERY TEXAN

Formerly Center for Public Policy Priorities

## Every Texan Supports the Efforts of HB 619 to Strengthen Texas' Child Care Infrastructure

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### Families Can't Afford the Care They Need to Build Household Security

Our elected officials have failed to respond to the changing landscape of work by consistently underinvesting in child care infrastructure despite the economic and social benefits the system has the potential to provide. Research shows that investment in child care for children age [birth to 5 years yields a 13% return](#) on investment. Yet rather than recognize the collective good that comes from this care we put that burden on low income earning mothers. The average American family with young children spends approximately [23% of their net income](#) on child care - an astounding cost for [the 1.3 million Texan households with children struggling to meet basic needs](#). [For minimum wage workers](#), child care costs represent nearly half of their pre-tax earnings. According to the Economic Policy Institute, in Texas, the [average cost for a single infant is \\$9,324](#) annually or 15.7 % of median income; for a four year old child the annual cost is \$7,062. Texas families with two children will spend 28.6 % of their median income on child care.

Texas, which has one of the highest proportions of low-wage workers in its workforce, places extra burdens on working parents. Texas has the highest rate of people without health insurance, one of the lowest rates of investment per student in public education, and low rates of availability of paid sick, family, and medical leave (PFML). On top of these existing challenges, the pandemic has required already struggling Texas parents to do even more for their children with significantly less support than working families in other states. Research shows these pressures are also disproportionately felt by BIPOC and rural families who are more likely to live in [child care deserts](#).

### Our Child Care Infrastructure is Crumbling Under the Weight of an Underpaid Workforce

State investment in the child care sector is a double win: we provide affordable child care for working parents and quality child care jobs for the Texas workforce. Without strong investment, child care work is low paying and often doesn't provide benefits like health insurance to the workforce. 94% of child care workers are women. One in six women child care workers live below the poverty line--twice the rate of women in other sectors. Half of Black and/or Latinx child care workers live in poverty. The majority of child care workers do not have health insurance benefits, paid sick time, or paid vacation time. Today, one in six women child care workers live below the poverty line--twice the rate of women in other sectors.

### Texas Must Address Child Care to Strengthen our State's Workforce and Economy

Texas needs a strong strategic plan to guide investment in the indispensable child care workforce. COVID-19 has led to a child care scarcity, contributing to a horrific wave of women leaving the workforce – at rates four times that of men. We cannot let this weigh down our pandemic recovery or widen the racial and gender gaps it already exacerbated.

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For citations please visit: [bit.ly/3cfyFWT](https://bit.ly/3cfyFWT)