

# CHILDCARE TASKFORCE

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## INTRODUCTION

Affordable, accessible, quality childcare is one of the top recommendations from the City of Boise's Economic Recovery Taskforce. To this end, a Childcare Taskforce was convened in March of 2021 by the City of Boise to address existing hurdles to accessing childcare in the city and to better understand the needs of the childcare industry, childcare workers, and parents in Boise.

The taskforce identified three areas of impact to focus attention and resources: licensing, accessibility, and affordability. The taskforce then developed recommendations for the actions the city can take, opportunities for community collaboration, and actions that the business community can engage in with city support.

### Task Force Members

**Nora Carpenter**

*CEO, United Way of Treasure Valley*

**David Duro**

*CEO, Treasure Valley Family YMCA*

**Lori Fascilla**

*Director of Giraffe Laugh Childcare Centers*

**Alison Giachetti**

*Program Coordinator, Just For Kids, Boise School District*

**Belen Guillen**

*Owner, Acuarela Spanish Preschool*

**Sheila Hennessey**

*Interim CEO, Idaho Nonprofit Center*

**Marni McDowell**

*Director of Global Health and Wellbeing, Micron*

**Beth Oppenheimer**

*Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC)*

**Ericka Rupp**

*Childcare program manager, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare*

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# AREAS OF IMPACT

## Licensing and Background Checks

Childcare across the nation in every other state is licensed by that state. Idaho is currently the only state that allows cities to offer their own license. For the most part, childcare licenses in the state of Idaho are issued by the state except in the case of a handful of cities that have decided to issue their own licenses. Currently, the City of Boise issues childcare licenses to individual employees and providers that operate within city limits, allowing the city to have more stringent requirements for teacher-to-child ratios and training hours, as well as allowing the city more control over the background checking process.

To receive a childcare license from the city, applicants must complete the following:

- **A CHILD PROTECTION CENTRAL REGISTRY CHECK**

Applicants need to provide Child Protection Registry checks for every state they have lived in the last five years. These checks are for complaints and violations made with child protective services and would not show up on a standardized background check. While getting the results from Idaho can be relatively quick, there is no centralized way for applicants to access data from other states. States have up to 45 days to send results to the applicant. The applicant must then communicate the results to the City.

Idaho's checks are \$20, each additional state has their own requirements.

- **CPR/FIRST AID TRAINING:** Typical cost is around \$40
- **WORKER LICENSE FEE:** \$37.00
- **FINGERPRINTING AND BACKGROUND CHECK:**
  - **BACKGROUND CHECK FEE FROM STATE:** \$38.25
  - **PROCESSING FEE** \$1.50
  - **FINGERPRINT ROLL FEE** \$5.00

Currently, the City of Boise does not allow applicants to begin working until all the requirements are met. This can mean that although the average time from new application to license in 2020 was 17 days, some applicants who have multiple state Childcare Registry Checks might wait up to 8 weeks to complete the process. The State of Idaho, as well as the other licensing cities, issues temporary licenses to childcare applicants that have completed the background check while they wait for their Child Protection Registry checks to be completed. These temporary licenses allow applicants to begin employment and work under supervision.

Because Boise is the only city that does not issue temporary licenses, childcare employers are struggling to hire staff. Applicants can begin working in neighboring cities within a week or two of starting the application process whereas Boise applicants may be waiting for several additional weeks before they can begin employment. When the average pay for childcare workers is \$9.71 and the upfront cost of licensing over \$100, many applicants are unwilling to wait the extra weeks unpaid.

The following table highlights some of the differences between the State of Idaho and City of Boise licensing requirements for both employees and facilities.

***Note:** When the city began issuing licenses, there was a bigger disparity on background checks and criminal history. The state has since updated its requirements to be closer to the city's.*

	CITY OF BOISE	STATE OF IDAHO
Child to Teacher Ratios	<p><b>Maximum of 12 points per staff member.</b></p> <p>a. Less than 24 months, each child = <b>2.4 points</b></p> <p>b. 24-36 months, each child = <b>2 points</b></p> <p>c. 36 months to under 5 years, each child = <b>1.2 points</b></p> <p>d. 5 years to under 13 years, each child = <b>1 point</b></p>	<p><b>Maximum of 12 points per staff member.</b></p> <p>a. less than 24 months, each child = <b>2 points</b></p> <p>b. 24-36 months, each child = <b>1 ½ points</b></p> <p>c. 36 months to under 5 years, each child = <b>1 point</b></p> <p>d. 5 years to under 13 years, each child = <b>½ point</b></p>
Training Hours	<p><b>Level I: Assistant Teacher</b> <i>14 hours of training annually</i></p> <p><b>Level II: Teacher</b> <i>10 hours of training annually</i></p> <p><b>Level III: Senior Teacher</b> <i>8 hours of training annually</i></p>	<p><b>4 hours</b> of training every twelve months after employee's hire date.</p> <p>Pediatric Rescue Breathing, Infant-child CPR, and first aid treatment training doesn't count towards 4 hours of annual training.</p>
License Renewal	» <b>Required annually</b>	» <b>Required every 5 years</b>

### Childcare Availability

Related to the issues of staffing is the availability of childcare in Boise. As many parents know, getting a child into childcare can include multiple waitlists, deposits to hold a spot, and uncertainty. This is especially true for infant care as there are less facilities that provide infant care due to the additional cost and staffing requirements.

According to AEYC, in early 2020 there were 55,845 available spaces for childcare statewide and 74,600 kids in need of care. That leaves a statewide gap of 20,663 children. The City of Boise currently has 249 childcare facilities, including 117 home care facilities and 127 childcare centers. Since January of 2020, 21 childcare facilities within the city closed, putting additional pressure on existing facilities and parents.

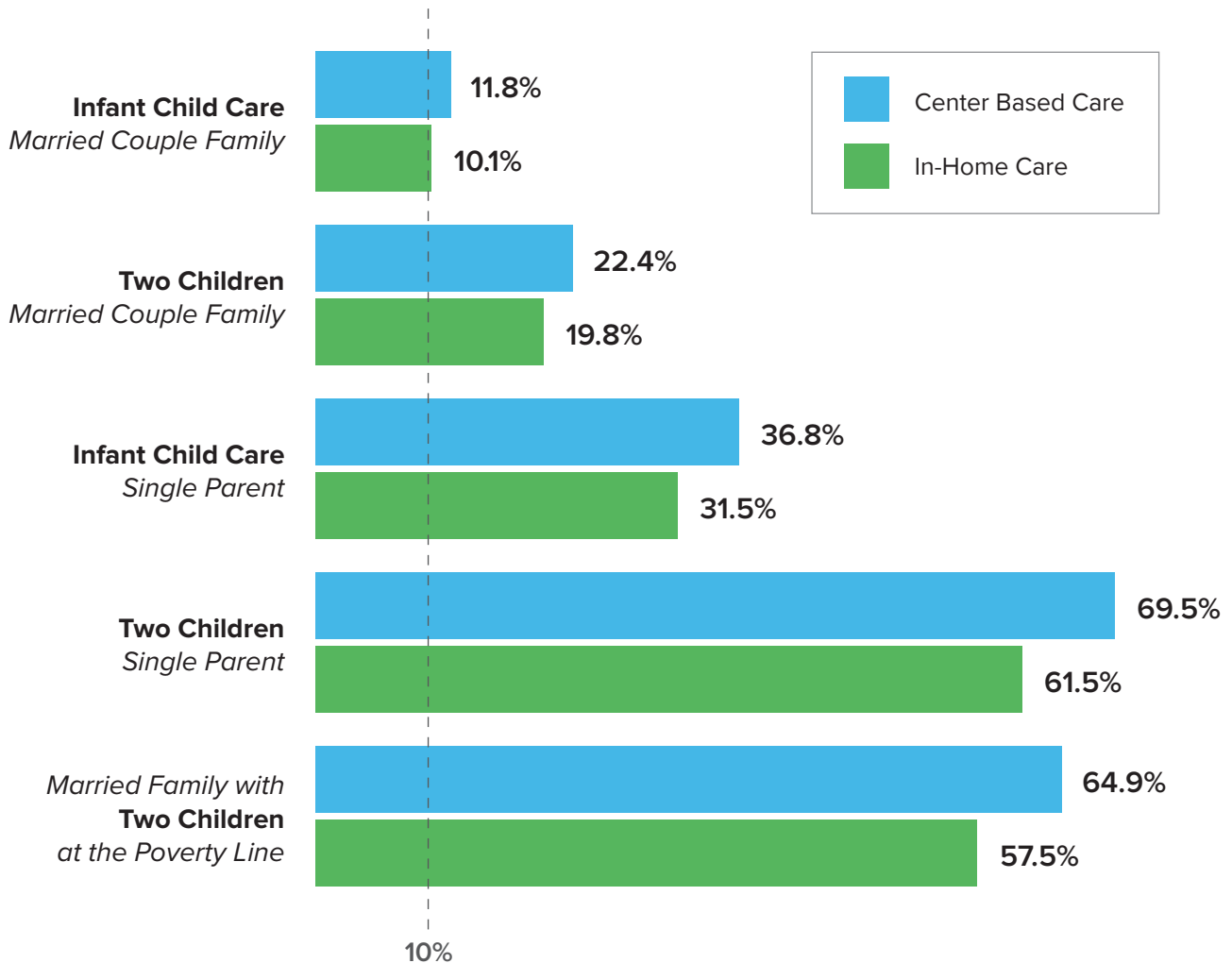
Additionally, 81% of childcare is only available Monday-Friday during regular business hours. Up to 40% of workers in America work non-traditional hours, meaning that families are having to arrange for other types of care during evening and weekend work.

## Affordability

The cost of childcare in Boise can be overwhelming for families. According to the United Way, 28% of families in the Treasure Valley are classified as ALICE families (Asset Limited, Income Restrained, Employed), indicating that families or individuals are working, but unable to afford basic needs such as housing, transportation, or childcare. The State of Idaho does provide financial support to the 12% of families that fall into the poverty category, but that leaves the 28% of Alice families paying a disproportionate portion of their income towards childcare expenses.

The US Department of Health and Human Services recommends that childcare not take up more than 10% of a household income. According to United Way, many Idaho families are currently spending over 60% of their income on childcare expenses. The following chart illustrates the average percentage of income spent on childcare for Idaho families.

Taken in the context of other affordability metrics for the area, including the rising costs of housing, utility bills, food, and other essentials, the cost of childcare is prohibitively expensive for a large portion of our community.



DATA SOURCE: Child Care Aware of America, 2019

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Over the course of four months, the City of Boise has engaged with a task force of community members to work towards addressing the issues facing childcare in Boise.

The taskforce members looked at three areas of impact for the city:

1. What the city could do?
2. What the city in partnership with businesses and community members could do?
3. What could businesses and community members do to support childcare businesses, and access to childcare?

The following table summarizes the recommendations put forth by the task force.

CITY OF BOISE		PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES
ACTIONS	PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS	
<p>Allow the City of Boise to issue a temporary license (applicant must not be left alone with children and must be supervised at all times) while awaiting results of the state child protection checks required to obtain a full license.</p> <p>» <i>TOP RECOMENDATION</i></p>	<p>Use ARPA funds to support childcare through a grant to a non-profit to administer who will target the funds for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage enhancement</li> <li>• Childcare center funding</li> <li>• Establishment of childcare collectives (businesses work together for grants or funding for childcare needs in a community)</li> </ul>	<p>Create a private pool for scholarships that businesses would collaboratively contribute to. Businesses are better able to attract and retain employees when they have access to quality childcare.</p>
<p>Boise waives license renewal fee for the next two years.</p>	<p>Create visibility on the importance of childcare for economic vitality through our social media platforms, as well as amplify the importance of quality affordable childcare through business messaging—leverage partnerships with business and education organizations to support messages.</p>	<p>Incentivize childcare in new housing developments by asking developers to set aside space for childcare.</p>
<p>Boise provides trainings for CPR or other trainings required to obtain a childcare license.</p>		<p>Create a business co-op where several businesses collaborate to provide childcare to their collective workers.</p>
		<p>Provide vouchers for already existing childcare businesses to ensure spots for employees and ensure that childcare businesses have enough workers, and employees have guaranteed spots at childcare centers around the city.</p>