

# Nebraska's child care crisis is worsening the labor shortage.



A recent statewide public opinion survey commissioned by **Nebraska Extension** and **We Care for Kids** reveals that parents are leaving the workforce or turning down job opportunities because they can't find affordable child care. This is bad news for the state's employers as Nebraska is already experiencing a severe labor shortage.

Nebraskans want the state to take action. They recognize that access to quality, affordable child care strengthens the economy and helps workers provide for their families.



**A labor shortage threatens Nebraska's businesses and economic growth.<sup>1</sup>**

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska has a severe labor shortage with **54 available workers** for every **100 open jobs.**<sup>2</sup>



As of October 2022, there were more than **64,000 job openings** in Nebraska.<sup>3</sup>

## Lack of quality, affordable child care is causing parents to leave the workforce or turn down opportunities.

31%

of parents with children five and under said that they left the workforce because they couldn't find affordable child care.

34%

of parents with children five and under said they refused a job opportunity, promotion, or change because it would increase child care expenses.

**The child care crisis is costing Nebraska millions in lost revenue.** Inadequate access to child care and early learning costs Nebraska families, businesses, and state tax revenues nearly **\$745 million annually in direct losses**, according to a report released by First Five Nebraska.<sup>4</sup>

**\$745m**  
direct loss  
per year

**Nebraskans clearly see a link between access to child care, helping workers provide for their families, and keeping businesses strong. 90% agree that ensuring working families have quality child care and early learning will strengthen Nebraska's economy.**

78%

say it will be hard for Nebraska to attract new business to communities that don't have access to quality, affordable child care and early learning.

74%

say the lack of child care and early learning options is making it hard for Nebraska businesses to hire new employees and grow.

92%

believe quality, affordable child care and early learning is an important part of keeping Nebraska a great place to live and raise a family.

**An overwhelming majority want Nebraska to take action to solve the crisis in child care.**

84%

say the lack of child care in Nebraska is a problem that will not solve itself and want Nebraskans to come together to solve the problem and invest in solutions. **84% say that Nebraska should support child care and early learning like it does for K-12 schools and higher education.**

**Child care and early learning programs support working parents on the job, allow businesses to recruit and retain talent and help Nebraska's future workforce develop skills for long-term success in school and life.**

<sup>1</sup> Kauffman, N., & McCoy, J. (2023, January 11). *Labor Scarcity Remains Key for Nebraska's Economy in 2023*. Nebraska Economist. Retrieved February 24, 2023, from <https://www.kansascityfed.org/omaha/nebraska-economist/labor-scarcity-remains-key-for-nebraskas-economy-in-2023/>

<sup>2</sup> Cates, L., & Ferguson, S. (2023, February 20). *Understanding America's Labor Shortage: The Most Impacted States*. Retrieved February 24, 2023, from <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/the-states-suffering-most-from-the-labor-shortage>

<sup>3</sup> Kauffman, N., & McCoy, J. (2023)

<sup>4</sup> First Five Nebraska. (n.d.). *The Bottom Line: Economic Impacts of Inadequate Child Care Access in Nebraska*. Lincoln. [https://www.firstfive-nebraska.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Bottom\\_Line\\_Report\\_Overview.pdf](https://www.firstfive-nebraska.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Bottom_Line_Report_Overview.pdf)

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