



# March Newsletter



If your child is in preschool or child care, who is one of the most important people in your family's life? The child care worker or the preschool teacher!

Yet, while these people play a critical role in the development and well-being of our youngest citizens, their wages fall near poverty levels. Early childhood workers make far less than their K-12 peers, even when you consider the level of education.

**The average full-time child care teacher makes \$28,797 annually.**

**50% of child care teachers** with one dependent in our region would qualify for Medicaid.

**25% of child care teachers** with one dependent in our region would qualify for WIC (Women, Infants and Children), the low-income supplemental nutrition program.

Child care workers are paid out of tuition paid by families. Margins in this business are very narrow. Essentially, this sector of the education workforce is subsidizing the true costs of care with their personal income.

### How do we grow the workforce?

Southwest Washington is experiencing a vast shortage of child care, making it difficult for parents to find work and advance. To fill the gap in the early care and education workforce, our region would need more than 1,000 additional educators. And that requires a focus on compensation and professional development investments.

### The impact of COVID-19

While the child care system in Southwest Washington was already under strain, COVID-19 has put it at risk of collapse. Families and employers will continue to struggle until parents in the workforce have the child care they need.

**91 child care programs** have temporarily closed, as of June 2020, and it's likely many will not open their doors again.

That's an estimated capacity loss of **30% or 3,000 slots**.

**30 child care programs (totaling 468 jobs)** in the region received a Paycheck Protection Loan.

The pandemic created an overnight drop in ESD 112's Early Care and Education child care center attendance by 86%. As a result, more than 200 staff were laid off and ESD 112's 0-5 child care services ended permanently after 30 years in operation.

**We must do more to ensure our communities and families have the early childhood resources they need to thrive.**

For more details, click the link below to read the State of the Children: Early Learning & Care, published in Southwest Washington by SELF, SWEL (SW Washington Early Learning Regional Coalition), Washington STEM and Washington Communities for Children.

[READ THE REPORT](#)

Stay healthy and safe

Debbie Ham  
Executive Director

### Great news!

Child care workers have bumped up as a priority to receive the COVID vaccine.

### What does this mean for you?

If you are a child care worker, contact your healthcare provider to get your vaccination scheduled.

If you are a parent who sends your kids to child care, know that your children will be even safer, surrounded by healthy professionals.

We are thrilled that the valuable child care workers who provide essential services are being included in the vaccine effort.

For more information on Washington State vaccinations, visit the [Washington State Department of Health](#).

### SELFies for SELF

SELF provides essential child care services, and that means that all our staff are eligible for the COVID vaccine. We are proud to be part of the solution. Have any photos of yourself getting vaccinated?

Email Debbie Ham at [debbie.ham@selfwa.org](mailto:debbie.ham@selfwa.org)

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