

# 2025 Legislative Affairs Priorities

## CHILDCARE TASK FORCE SUBCOMMITTEE

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### **Position Statement**

Access to affordable and quality childcare is essential for Utah's economic prosperity. Childcare services directly impact the well-being of Utah families, the productivity of employers, the vibrancy of communities, and the state's long-term economic growth.

While Utah continues to experience population growth, our birthrate has dropped below replacement levels, largely due to the high costs of raising children and childcare. A sustainable birthrate is vital for maintaining the size of our future workforce and ensuring a robust economy. To address this, investing in childcare options that are accessible, flexible, and financially sustainable is imperative. Expanding access to affordable childcare is not just a social necessity but a strategic investment in Utah's future economic success.

### **Possible Solutions For Consideration in Addressing the Childcare Crisis in Utah**

By providing families with flexible, immediate, and sustainable childcare options, Utah can strengthen its workforce, enhance community well-being, and ensure long-term economic resilience. Addressing this issue requires innovative policies that leverage both public and private resources to benefit families, businesses, and communities alike.

We propose the following concepts for consideration:

- **Refundable Child Tax Credit:** Implement a monthly refundable tax credit for children, similar to the federal government's advanced earned income credit, to provide immediate financial relief for families.
- **State-Run Childcare FlexCare Spending Account:** Create a state-administered Childcare FlexCare Spending Account to complement the federally available Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account, offering employers additional tools to support working parents.
- **Increased Childcare Subsidies:** Expand state investments in childcare subsidies to make childcare more affordable and accessible for working families.
- **Business Tax Incentives:** Introduce a state tax credit for businesses that provide childcare benefits to their employees, incentivizing employers to play an active role in addressing the childcare challenge.

### **Unlicensed Home-Based Facilities**

As a Chamber, we are concerned about additional proposals to increase the number of unrelated children allowed in unlicensed home-based childcare facilities. We believe further deregulation of home-based childcare could compromise child safety, creating environments with less oversight and greater risks for children. ChamberWest emphasizes that the safety and well-being of children should remain a top priority for the state. Ensuring strong safety standards in all childcare settings is non-negotiable.

### **The Importance of Early Childhood Investment**

We commend the state for its recent investments in the K-12 public school system, which have significantly benefited Utah's children. However, we urge additional investments for children from birth through age five, as 90% of brain development occurs by the age of five. Prioritizing early childhood development is crucial to giving Utah's youngest residents the foundation they need to succeed and ensuring a skilled and capable future workforce.

By taking bold and innovative steps to address Utah's childcare crisis, we can set an example for the nation, empower families, and secure a prosperous future for our state.

### **Subcommittee Members**

Kory Holdaway, KMH Consulting & Government Affairs, Chair  
Council Member Anna Barbieri, City of Taylorsville & White Elegance

Johnny Anderson, ABC Great Beginnings  
Paul Coates, City of West Jordan

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**ChamberWest**

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