LACK OF ACCESS TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION HURTS WORKING PARENTS & EMPLOYERS IN ST. TAMMANY PARISH

March 2024

IN LOUISIANA

- **2 out of 3** young children have both parents, or their single parent, in the workforce.
- **70%** of children begin kindergarten behind their peers.
- Families in Louisiana reported paying an average of **$9,491 per year for child care for two children**, even when they receive financial assistance or subsidized care.
- Families that don't receive any financial assistance or subsidized care report paying an average of **$15,960 per year for child care for two children,** which can be as much as public college tuition.

IN ST. TAMMANY PARISH

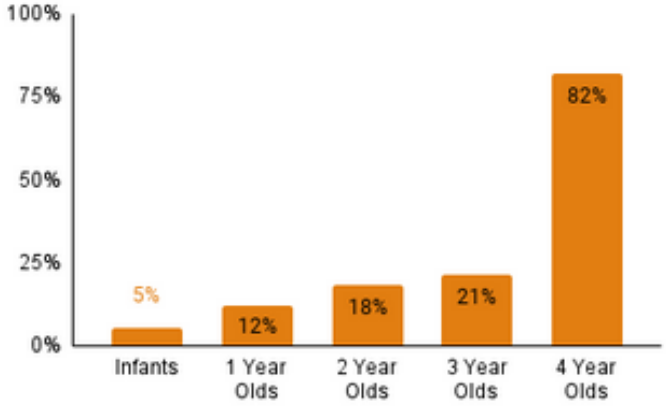
There are **7,280 children in need of care from birth through age 4.**

Yet **only 28%** can access publicly funded seats, **leaving 5,275 in-need children unserved.**

36% of children enter kindergarten on track.

96% of child care programs are rated as high-quality child care providers.

Children Served in St. Tammany Parish



THE IMPACT

- Lack of access to quality, reliable child care for working parents costs Louisiana employers **$762 million per year**, and results in a **$1.3 billion loss** for Louisiana's economy.
- **Over half of parents** experienced some sort of adjustment to their work or school schedule to provide child care in the previous six months.
- The loss of full-time child care is associated with **employment disruptions**, including employer-related costs for employees' time lost from late arrivals or early departures, absences from work, and decreased productivity.

Note: "Publicly funded seats" includes those funded through Early Head Start, Head Start, IDEA, LA4, NSECD, and Child Care Assistance Program. Estimates of at-risk served and unserved child population are calculated by the Louisiana Department of Education and are based on the number of children currently enrolled in kindergarten.

Data Sources

- Louisiana Policy Institute for Children's 2023 Parent Poll.
- Louisiana Department of Education, Served Unserved October 2022.
- Louisiana Department of Education, Fall 2023 K-3 Literacy Screener
- Louisiana Department of Education, Early Childhood Care Site & Network Performance Profiles 2023
- Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Child Care and the Economy in Louisiana, 2021.