Child Action, Inc.

IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024

Quality Child Care
Impacts Everything

Child Action, Inc.

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Our Mission

We empower families and child care professionals with the tools and support services they need to successfully care for children.

Our Vision

All children and families in Sacramento County will have access to affordable, quality child care and early education services.

Our Values

- Quality care for children
- Families' right to choose services that fit their family needs
- Support for child care professionals in providing quality care
- Excellence and teamwork in all that we do
- Collaborative work within the community to develop services that support children and families

Message From Child Action, Inc. CEO Adonai Mack

Celebrating nearly 50 years of service in Sacramento County, we honor our visionary founders, Lynn Patten and Jaclyn White. These trailblazing women recognized the vital need to support mothers, families, and children, shaping a system of care that continues to uplift our community today. We are deeply grateful for their revolutionary spirit and enduring legacy.

We are building upon this foundation to create more opportunities to serve our families. Child Action, Inc. (Child Action) intends to address the challenges in finding high-quality, affordable childcare. We also want to be even better servants for our community by improving our services through innovation and increased efficiency, expanding our reach, and building stronger partnerships.

I often discuss the opportunities with our amazing team of employees by articulating that approximately 275,000 children throughout our county are between birth and thirteen years old. We should have some connection with every one of them and their families. This is an ambitious and audacious goal. But I was taught at an early age to always reach for the stars and dream big. I challenge my staff to do the same. DREAM BIG! I strongly believe that we can provide more services for our children, their families, and the providers who support the families. We can eliminate learning gaps for our children and create the conditions for their success regardless of the language they speak, the zip code they live in, or the color of their skin. I believe we can support our families/parents in sustainable employment regardless of the day of the week or time of the day. But we cannot do this alone.

Change will be necessary for us to reach all who need support. We need to change our mindset and belief in what is possible, change policies, and change regulations on a federal, statewide, and local level. We all need to be advocates for this change and support families. And I believe that anyone can be an advocate. Our parents are advocates, our community partners are advocates, our providers are advocates, and even our children are advocates.

I invite you to join us on this wonderful adventure and join our movement to serve every child in Sacramento County. Partnership and collaboration are paramount to service because Child Action cannot achieve our audacious goals alone. We need our community partners to jump in and support the effort. We need our local government officials to invest in our communities. We need our businesses to support our families and their employees. We need our local school districts to find alignment with their goals in our goals. We need our institutions of higher education to support our mission. We believe that caring for our children and their families takes a village. Child Action is looking for all our villagers to join hands, wrap our collective arms around our families, and support their growth.

Adonai Mack
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

(as of June 30, 2024)

Chastity E. Benson
President

Jaclyn White
Past President

Marie Jones
Vice President

Erica Morgera
Secretary

Harmit Pabla
Director

Tracy Tomasky
Director

Alicia Hanley
Director

Danielle Foster
Director

Cassandra Lichnock
Director

Roy Kim
Director

At the time of this publication, we are proud to welcome the following new board members:

Linda White
Director

Shari Slate
Director

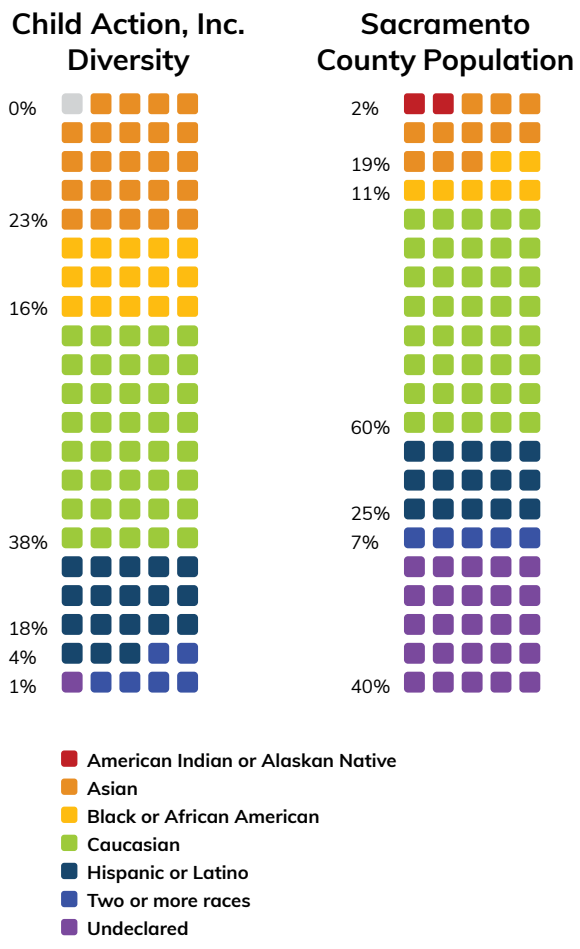
Prashante Bailey
Director

We also extend our sincere appreciation to our departing board members for their service and dedication. Their contributions have guided our work and strengthened our commitment to children and families.

A Culture of Belonging and Opportunity

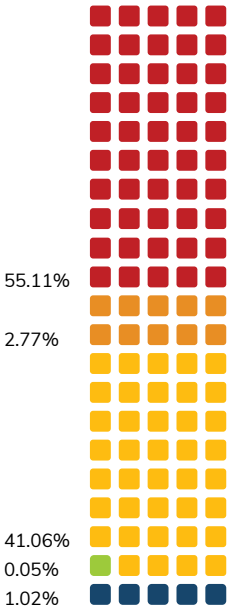
At Child Action, we are committed to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, access, belonging (DEIAB), and social justice in all we do. We are dedicated to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where everyone—regardless of race, gender, ability, or socioeconomic status—is respected, valued, and empowered. Our inclusive practices ensure that every family and employee feels supported and has a true sense of belonging. We advocate for policies that create lasting change, ensuring all families have the resources and opportunities to thrive. By integrating these principles, we build stronger, more inclusive communities for all.

We also believe it is essential that our staff reflect, in meaningful ways, the incredible diversity of the communities we serve. This commitment strengthens our ability to serve with empathy, cultural responsiveness, and authenticity.



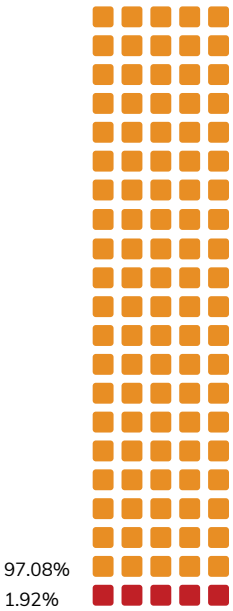
Financials

Financial Revenue Breakdown



FUNDING FROM	% of Total Revenue	Total Revenue
State	55.11%	83,828,610
County/City	2.77%	4,210,576
Federal	41.06%	62,461,409
Family Fee for Service	0.05%	73,786
Fundraising, Grants, Foundations & Other	1.02%	1,548,842
TOTAL	**100.00%**	**152,123,204**

Financial Expenditures Breakdown



FUNDING SUPPORTS	% of Total Expenditures	Total Expenditures
Programs & Services	97.08%	147,645,368
Agency Overhead	2.92%	4,446,460
TOTAL	**100.00%**	**152,091,828**

Leadership Team

(as of publication)

Adonai Mack
Chief Executive Officer

Blake Johnson
Chief Strategy Officer

Dr. Juanita Reynolds
Chief Program Officer

Kelli Newman
Director of Community Services

Leslie Taylor
Director of Client Services

Heidi Keiser
Director of Government Affairs

Jennifer Johnson
Director of Information Technology

Denye Versher
Director of Finance

Sarah Smernes Edson
Director of Fund & Business Development

Jenine Jenkins
Director of Human Resources

Dr. Gregory Diggs
Director of Training and Enhanced Learning

Iris Murillo
Director of Communications

Snapshot of Child Care in Sacramento County

The lack of accessible child care forces many parents, particularly women, to leave the workforce, contributing to an estimated $1.2 billion in economic losses annually in Sacramento County alone. Additionally, over 60% of child care workers earn wages so low they qualify for public assistance, making it difficult to maintain a stable workforce.

FACT 1

Availability of Child Care

Access to affordable child care falls far short of demand. In Family Child Care Homes (FCCH), options are especially limited for parents needing care in specific languages.

63,182 Total Licensed Child Care Slots

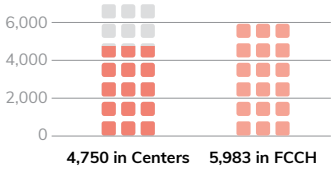
- 38,878 in centers
- 24,304 in FCCH

FACT 2

Need for Child Care

The demand for licensed infant care remains high. Despite state investments, child care deserts persist, especially for children ages 0-2. Many centers have long waiting lists for infant care, leaving families with limited options.

- **4,315 Total Children Waiting on Child Care Eligibility List**
  (1,762 of them are between ages 0-2)
- **10,733 Vacancies in Licensed Child Care**

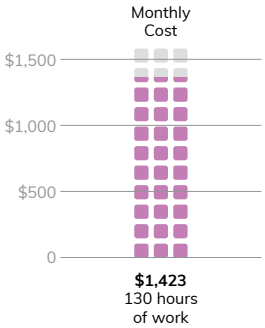


FACT 3

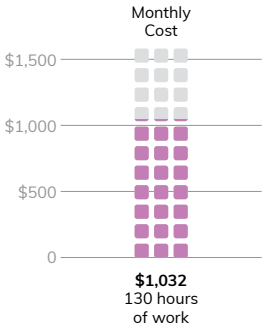
Cost to Families

In Sacramento County, the average monthly cost for full-time infant care in a licensed child care center is approximately $1,423.

Infant Care Center Costs



In-home Child Care Costs



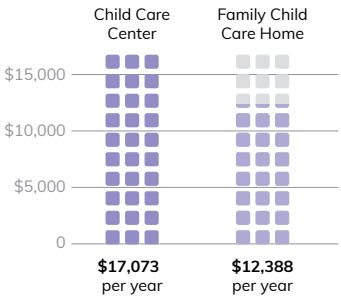
FACT 4

Cost of Care

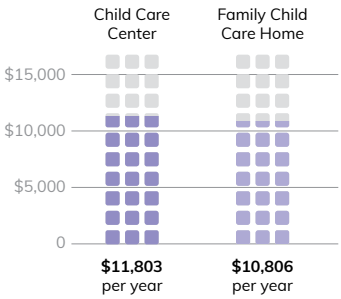
Infant care costs significantly more than care for older children, yet state reimbursement rates fail to cover the actual expense. Most providers absorb the shortfall, often at the expense of their own income.

In Sacramento County, the median annual cost for infant care in a child care center is around $17,073, while for a two-year-old (preschooler), it's roughly $11,803.

Infant Care Costs



Preschooler Care Costs



Only 12% of Sacramento County infants and toddlers eligible for child care subsidies receive them.

FACT 5

Economic Realities for Child Care Providers

As more 3-and 4-year-olds transition to Universal Transitional Kindergarten, child care providers often try to offset the loss by accepting infants. However, their capacity is limited due to the higher costs of infant care and lower ratios.

For instance, required staff ratios are generally three times higher for infant/toddler care than for preschool-age care. For small family child care homes, the ratio is twice as high. Yet, the reimbursement rate is only 1.4 times higher for centers and 1.1 times higher for family child care homes.

Infant care is more expensive for providers due to stricter regulations that necessitate the hiring of additional staff. Lower adult-to-child ratios result in higher staffing costs and increased demand for resources.

Furthermore, the change in market demand has been swift in the last few years. Between 2021–22 and 2023–24, Transitional Kindergarten enrollment in California doubled, from approximately 75,000 to over 151,000 children, which has increased challenges for struggling child care providers.

Building Child Care Capacity Through Strategies and Solutions

Increased investment in child care in recent years has been a major step in the right direction, but more must be done to ensure families have access to quality, affordable options. To address these challenges, we focus on key strategies that expand capacity, support providers, and strengthen the workforce.

- **Strengthen Public Investment in Child Care for a Sustainable Future** – Child care is vital to California's economic stability and growth. Long-term, stable funding from local, state, and federal sources is essential for expanding access, strengthening programs, and ensuring that both families and providers have the resources needed to thrive.
- **Expand and Strengthen the Child Care Workforce and Infrastructure** – Increasing provider capacity requires both attracting new providers and supporting existing ones. This includes improving financial stability, streamlining licensing processes, incorporating child care into local planning efforts across the county, and investing in workforce development.
- **Expand Advocacy and Strengthen Cross-Sector Partnerships** – Lasting change requires a united effort. To truly address the needs of children and families, we must build a broader coalition that brings together businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and community organizations. By expanding local advocacy efforts and fostering cross-sector partnerships, we can elevate child care as a critical economic and social priority. A strong, coordinated network of stakeholders will drive impactful policy solutions that support child care providers, improve access for families, and create a more sustainable child care system for the future.

Recent investments in child care have set the stage for progress, but continued action is essential. With sustained public funding, a stronger workforce and infrastructure, and united cross-sector partnerships, we can ensure all families have access to quality, affordable care—and position child care as a cornerstone of economic growth and community well-being.

> “ ***Child care fuels Sacramento County’s economy—****supporting families, strengthening our workforce, and driving growth. Last year, we supported* ***nearly 17,000 children and over 9,000 families,*** *generating up to* ***$2 billion in economic impact.*** *Expanding access to* ***quality child care*** *is one of the* ***smartest investments*** *we can make* ***for our region’s future. Quality child care impacts everything.”***
>
> *– Adonai Mack, CEO*

Transforming Lives through Service and Programs

Client Services

The Client Services Division administers the Alternative Payment Program and maintains the Child Care Eligibility List (CEL) for subsidized child care programs. Families are ranked based on size and income, and those with the highest needs are served first.

Enrollment

Total children enrolled in FY 23-24 by fund:

C2AP: 5700

C3AP: 3318

CAPP: 8737

Total unique children enrolled in all programs: 16,841
(914 children transferred to another fund)

New children added during FY 23-24 by fund:

C2AP: 2256

C3AP: 148

CAPP: 3178

Community Services

The Community Service Division comprises Sacramento County’s Resource and Referral Department and the provider enrollment department. Community Services administers grants and contracts to build capacity and quality in child care, assist parents with finding child care, and work with providers to enroll in Child Action’s subsidy program. Our programs help families enhance parenting skills and build a supportive network within safe, nurturing learning environments.

Service Stats

Child Care Referrals

- 14,278 requests for child care referrals for 13,468 children
- 881 family, friend, or neighbor and exempt providers registered using Trustline
- 6,140 child care providers and parents attended 214 workshops

Impact on Sacramento County

Parents

In Sacramento County, access to high-quality early care and education is not just a necessity for families—it's a key driver of economic growth and stability. Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman found that targeted early childhood programs yield a lifetime return of $4 to $16 for every $1 invested, attributed to higher earnings, increased workforce participation, and reduced social costs. Reflecting this, Child Action, Inc. distributed $127.1 million in child care subsidies in Sacramento County last fiscal year. Based on Heckman's research, this investment may have contributed an estimated $508 million to $2 billion in economic impact. Beyond supporting families, child care drives workforce participation, fuels economic growth, and builds long-term prosperity.

- **$127.1M** in child care subsidies distributed to **16,841 children** and **9,088 families**
- 236 children received $693,268 in Foster Care Bridge child care vouchers
- 88% of enrolled families are working and/or in school:

Employment	68%
School	15%
Child Protective Services	4%
Both Employed and Student	5%
Job Seeking	7%
Others (medical issues, seeking permanent housing)	~1%

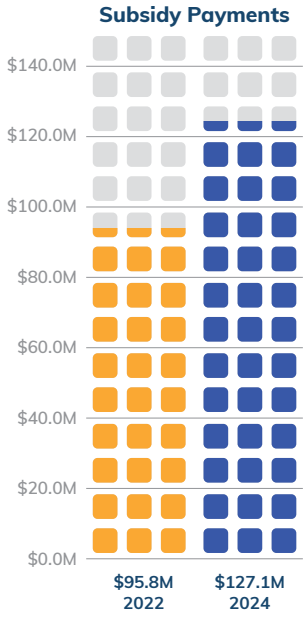
Total subsidies distributed: $127.1 million

$107.2M in child care payments

$9.9M in Cost of Care Plus payments (SB 140)

$10M in stipends (AB 110, AB 140, ARPA supplements)

- Service hours: approximately 25 million hours of child care paid



Providers

- 214 family child care homes and 1 child care center opened, creating new spaces for 1,755 children
- $64,018 health and safety training rebates for 667 providers
- 415 centers caring for 6,086 children

  12% of total subsidy providers serving 35% of all children enrolled
- 1,266 FCCH caring for 7,777 children

  36% of total subsidy providers serving 45% of all children enrolled
- 1,787 non-licensed FFN caring for 3,555 children

  51% of total subsidy providers serving 20% of all children enrolled
- 42% of non-licensed FFN providers are grandparents
- Despite statewide declines in FCCH child care, Sacramento County has seen impressive post-pandemic growth—thanks to strong local, county, and state support. Initiatives like training and streamlined licensing helped drive a 27% increase in capacity from 2019 to 2023.

Highlighting our Mission Moments

Nahida Qazizada

Nahida Qazizada's journey embodies the transformative power of quality child care. As a single mother living in a modest Sacramento apartment with three children, Nahida embraced a bold new path in August 2023 by becoming a licensed child care provider. With essential guidance and translation services from Child Action, she navigated the complexities of the application process, training, and documentation—paving her way to success as a small business owner.

Nahida's connection with Child Action began through a refugee project in collaboration with Opening Doors and the Refugee Enrichment and Development Association (REDA). With additional support from Family First Sacramento, which included professional development training and fiscal incentives to help pay for materials for her program, she now provides vital care for subsidy children in a high-need area, strengthening a close-knit community of Farsi-speaking neighbors.

Driven by her passion, she shares, "I like the job very much because I love children." She deeply appreciates the flexibility to care for her children while earning a living. Today, she supports four families, caring for children aged three to 11 and, in doing so, creating a safe, nurturing space that extends far beyond her home. Her services are a lifeline for families and a catalyst for community empowerment. By offering reliable child care, she enables Farsi-speaking parents to pursue English-language courses and job skills training, fostering brighter futures for entire households.

Nahida serves a small community comprised of Farsi-speaking neighbors in her building. While she aims to build an after-school program in the coming years, her big dream is to own a home with a backyard where the children exercise outside. Her favorite activities include spending time outdoors teaching and watching them play. She hopes to procure more educational toys, books, dolls, DIY project kits, and a small activities table. "I recommend Child Action. I introduced other mothers to Child Action. [On a scale of 100,] Child Action is a 100 number. Child Action is very, very good."

Nahida's story is a powerful testament to how child care services can uplift families, empower communities, and create lasting change. Through dedicated support and innovative programs, Child Action makes a profound difference—one family, one child, and one community at a time.

Liliana Menjivar-Vaquero

Liliana Menjivar-Vaquero, a single mother of three, faced losing her full-time job due to the high cost of child care. Everything changed when she discovered Child Action, which provided a subsidy that allowed her to work while ensuring her children had a safe, nurturing environment.

“Securing child care gave me peace of mind to focus on my job,” Liliana said. The support from Child Action not only stabilized her family but also set her on a new career path. Encouraged by staff, she pursued licensing to become a Family Child Care Home (FCCH) provider.

Just before the pandemic, Liliana opened her child care service, transitioning from subsidy recipient to provider. With Child Action’s ongoing support, she expanded her knowledge through early childhood training and built a thriving business. Today, her facility is near full capacity, serving working parents—many of whom are Spanish speakers who value her bilingual skills.

Liliana’s success story highlights how affordable child care fuels economic stability, enabling parents to remain in the workforce while creating new business opportunities. However, demand still outpaces availability, and she hopes to expand her services in the future.

“Child Action provides vital programs for families, regardless of income, immigration status, or language,” Liliana said. “They helped me build a future, and now I’m giving back to other working parents.”

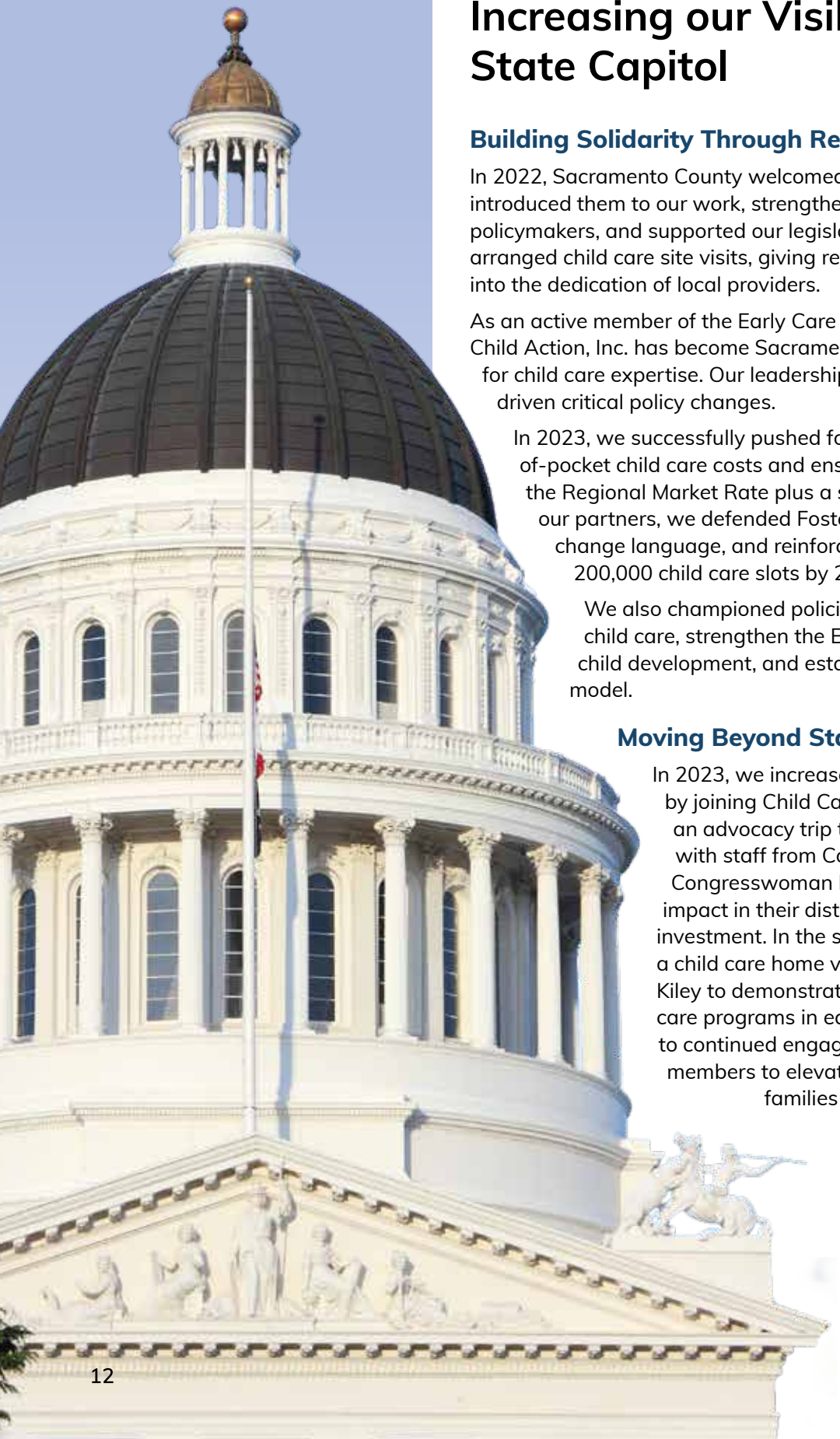
Subsidized child care doesn’t just help families—it strengthens communities, boosts the workforce, and fosters economic growth. Investing in these programs ensures more parents can work, more children receive quality care, and more providers like Liliana can build businesses that benefit everyone.

Partnering to Brighten Futures, Stabilize Lives, and Prosper Together

Ensuring every child has access to quality child care is a shared opportunity that thrives when businesses, philanthropists, and government come together to create lasting solutions. A strong child care system supports a strong workforce, allowing parents to remain in their jobs and businesses to attract and retain talent. Investing in child care isn’t just the right thing to do; it’s a smart business decision that drives economic growth and stability. Child Action is the perfect partner to bring this vision to life, bridging the gap between employers, policymakers, and families to create sustainable solutions.

We encourage state and local governments to explore new funding strategies, economic incentives, and business collaborations that expand access to high-quality child care for all families. At the same time, we urge businesses to recognize the economic benefits of supporting child care for their employees and to develop innovative solutions tailored to their workforce needs.

With deep partnerships, including the County of Sacramento, First 5 Sacramento and the City of Sacramento, we are uniquely positioned to strengthen the child care infrastructure, ensuring a more prosperous future for our entire region. We invite businesses, philanthropists, and community leaders to join us in building a stronger Sacramento County—because when we invest in child care, we invest in a thriving future for all.



Increasing our Visibility at the State Capitol

Building Solidarity Through Relationships

In 2022, Sacramento County welcomed new state legislators. We introduced them to our work, strengthened relationships with key policymakers, and supported our legislative champions. By 2024, we had arranged child care site visits, giving representatives firsthand insight into the dedication of local providers.

As an active member of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Coalition, Child Action, Inc. has become Sacramento legislators' go-to source for child care expertise. Our leadership in state budget advocacy has driven critical policy changes.

In 2023, we successfully pushed for family fee reform, reducing out-of-pocket child care costs and ensuring a subsidy covering 75% of the Regional Market Rate plus a supplement. In 2024, alongside our partners, we defended Foster Bridge funding, advanced rate change language, and reinforced the commitment to securing 200,000 child care slots by 2028.

We also championed policies that expand access to quality child care, strengthen the ECE workforce, promote whole-child development, and establish a true cost-of-care payment model.

Moving Beyond State and Local Advocacy

In 2023, we increased our federal advocacy presence by joining Child Care Aware of America. During an advocacy trip to Washington D.C., we met with staff from Congressman Ami Bera and Congresswoman Doris Matsui to highlight our impact in their district and the need for child care investment. In the summer of 2024, we organized a child care home visit for Congressman Kevin Kiley to demonstrate the vital role of family child care programs in early education. We look forward to continued engagement with our congressional members to elevate the needs of children and families at the federal level.

Becoming a Convener in our Region

Local Action

Child Action, Inc. led the Sacramento County Child Care Coalition, securing ARPA funds for stipends and startup costs. We advocated for Child Care Provider Appreciation Day proclamations across multiple cities and partnered with the Department of Labor and SBA to secure local provider funding.

As a founding member of the Sacramento Child Care Taskforce, we helped secure one-time city funding for early education. Our leadership on the County Prevention Council also directed state prevention funds to child care—strengthening our advocacy for children, families, and providers.

Regional Action

We continue to lead the Northern Directors Group, an association of child care agencies advocating for the unique needs of providers, young children, and families in Northern California. With a strong focus on rural communities, we actively engage members and mobilize their support for key state advocacy initiatives.

Our 2025 Public Policy Platform:

Shaping Policy, Supporting Families

Child Action will always advocate for policies, legislation, and budgetary proposals informed by the lived experiences of the families we serve and that uplift our diverse community of early educators. We champion initiatives that advance social justice, promote equity, and support strength-based, trauma-responsive approaches to care and education.

For the 2025 legislative session we are committed to:

- **Fair Pay for Providers:** Ensure child care providers are paid fairly for their services.
- **Adequate Agency Funding:** Secure funding that covers the true cost of care.
- **Parent Choice:** Include all child care options in California's Universal Pre-K system.
- **Simplified Family Services:** Reduce paperwork and make enrollment easier for families.
- **Workforce Development:** Expand training and recruitment to ensure a strong, well-prepared ECE workforce.
- **Regional Child Care Partnerships:** Lead local efforts to create a coordinated child care strategy.
- **Whole-Family Support:** Promote coordination across programs to better serve families' needs.

" AB 1808 is a critical step toward economic stability for families in Sacramento and across California. By establishing a consistent 24-month eligibility period for CalWORKs child care, it provides families with the stability needed to pursue employment and education without the constant fear of losing child care support. It eliminates disparities, streamlines processes, and reduces burdens on both families and child care providers. Reliable child care is essential for working parents, and this bill strengthens the foundation for families striving for a better future. ***I appreciate Child Action, Inc.'s support of AB 1808 and their continued commitment to uplifting working families."***

~ Asm. Stephanie Nguyen

Who We Serve

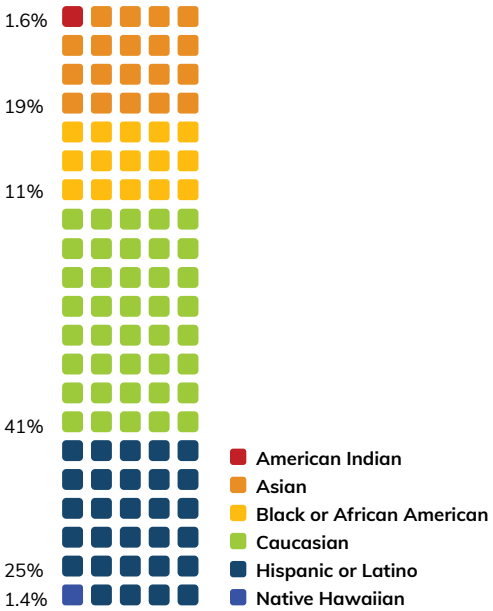
Age

By comparison, the smallest percentage of children in child care are less than two years old while the vast majority are between ages 2 and 10. After age 10, the number of children enrolled in child care programs steadily declines to fewer than 1,000 per age year through age 14 and older.

Household Income

While the average family income in Sacramento is $2642/month, the median county household monthly income is $7001. The average income change from enrollment to recertification (enrollments July 2015 to present) shows an increase from $1836 to $2300. This equates to a $463.21 difference or 25% increase in family income during the first year of enrollment with Child Action.

Race/Ethnicity

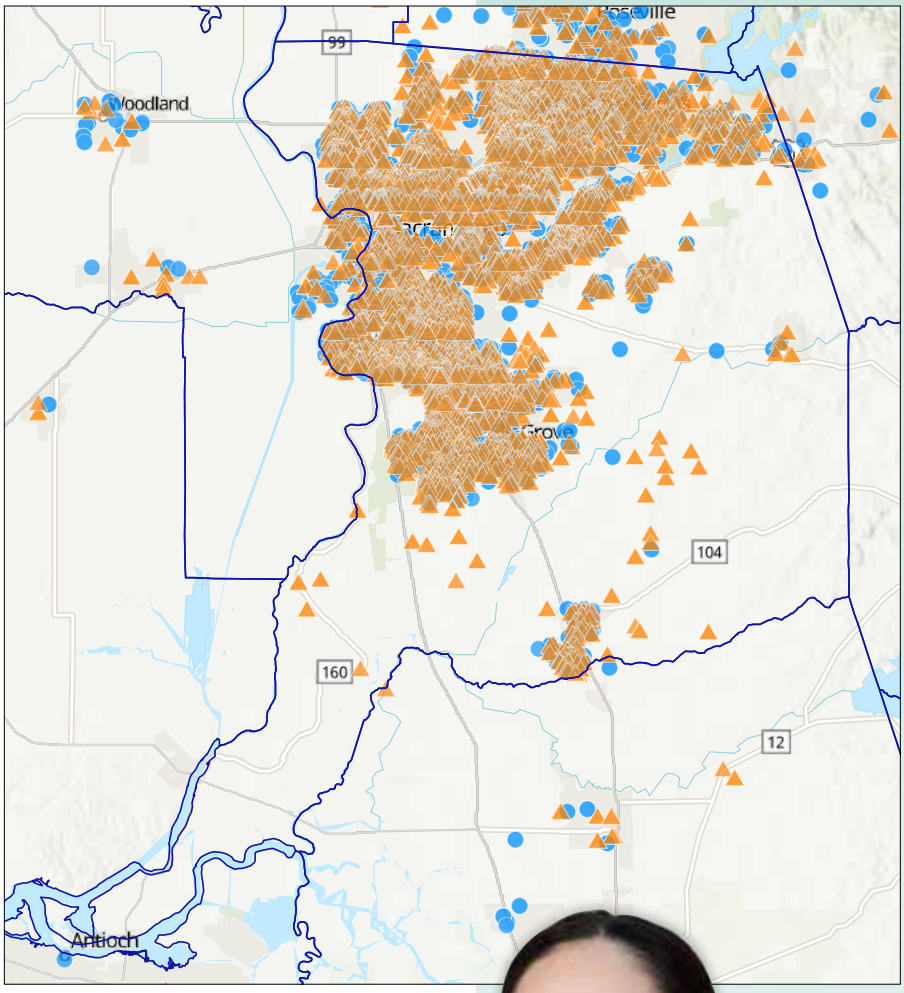


Sacramento County Child Action Service Area Map

▲ Program Households

● Program Providers

Sources: Esri, Tom Tom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS. © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS.



Family Composition

Most families enrolled in Child Action programs are single-mother households (69.4%), followed by two-parent households (27.1%) and single-father households (3.5%)

The top 10 employers of our enrolled parents who report employment data are comprised of the following:

353 parents - State of California

293 parents - IHSS – Sacramento County

160 parents - County of Sacramento

149 parents - Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

147 parents - Kaiser Permanente

103 parents - UC Davis health System

102 parents - Dignity Health

94 parents - Sutter Health

74 parents - DoorDash, Inc.

68 parents - Sacramento City Unified School District

Advancing Philanthropy to Support Child Care

At Child Action, we are dedicated to strengthening families and improving the well-being of children in our community. Philanthropy is an investment in expanding child care access, ensuring stability, and driving advocacy efforts—while providing crucial support during shifting funding streams—to create lasting opportunities for children and families to thrive.

We are working to develop a grant fund and establish new funding streams from local corporations and private foundations to strengthen and expand essential services. These efforts will help sustain programs, enhance advocacy for early education, and support long-term initiatives that improve child care accessibility.

Investing in technology and innovation is a key part of this strategy. By developing tools that streamline access to child care resources, we can better serve families and providers while improving efficiency across the system.

Through expanded philanthropic partnerships, Child Action is building a sustainable foundation for families, child care providers, and early learning professionals in Sacramento County. These strategic funding efforts will allow us to continue adapting to evolving needs and ensure the long-term success of our child care system.

For more information, please contact Sarah Smernes Edson at sarah.edson@childaction.org

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