

---

## Childcare Worker Opportunity Act

---

The District of Columbia simultaneously suffers from a crisis of student educational attainment and soaring childcare costs, creating a vicious cycle in which young people from poorer backgrounds routinely lack access to the very early-age developmental support required to succeed in academia and later life.

One major contributor to the decline in academic attainment amongst D.C.'s youth is the city's failure to address chronic supply and access issues associated with childcare. More than half of parents in D.C. have reported being unable to find childcare for their preschool-aged children, and if they are able to enroll their children in childcare, they find themselves paying the highest rates in the entire country.<sup>1</sup>

Rather than attempting to address the soaring cost of childcare and the general lack of availability of early child services, the D.C. City Council enacted a new law in 2016 that served only to further exacerbate the shortage of childcare providers. The new regulation, which officially came into effect in 2023, requires childcare workers to have either an associate or bachelor's degree before being able to receive a license to perform childcare services in the District. D.C. is one of the only areas in the country that requires a college degree to receive a childcare license, despite virtually no research suggesting that childcare providers with a college degree prove more effective than their counterparts without a formal university education.

The Childcare Worker Opportunity Act will repeal the 2016 regulation requiring a college degree for childcare workers in the District of Columbia to receive their official childcare license by:

- Repealing portions of the final rulemaking issues by the State Superintendent of Education of the District of Columbia, issued on December 7, 2016, that requires a staff member of a child development facility to have a degree, certificate, or a minimum number of credit hours from an institution of higher education.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the Economic Policy Institute, D.C. is ranked number 1 in the country for childcare costs. The annual cost of childcare in the District of Columbia stands at \$24,243 a year, whereas the annual cost of college stands at just \$5,756.