

# Governor's Task Force on Child Care

House Labor & Commerce Committee

---

Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner

Leah Van Kirk, Health Care Policy Advisor



Wednesday, February 19, 2025

# Governor's Task Force on Child Care



**4 Studies | 2 Reports | 56 Recommendations**



## **Areas of Focus**

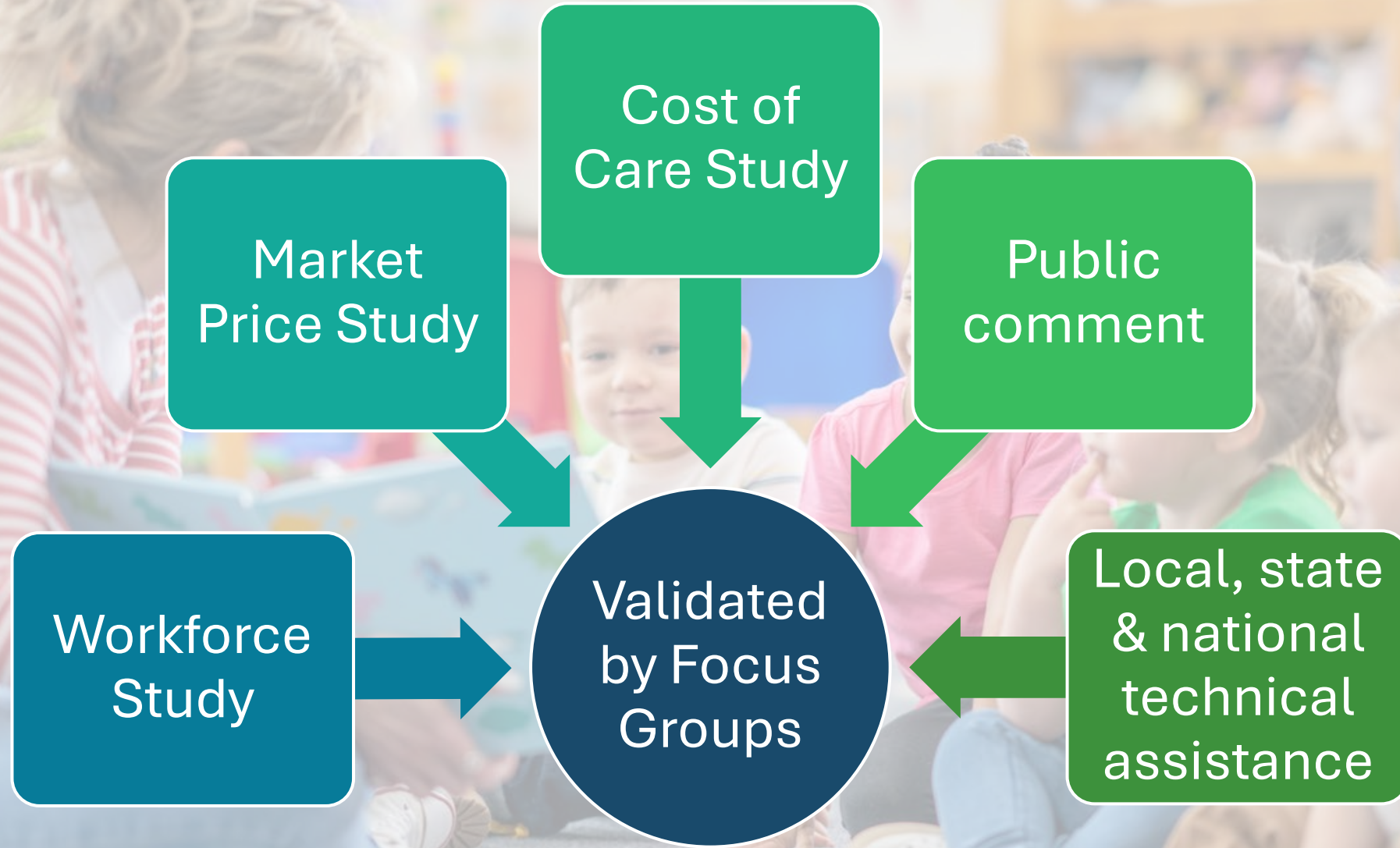
- |                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>1) Background checks</b>           | <b>5) Tribal Authority</b> |
| <b>2) Licensing</b>                   | <b>6) Accessibility</b>    |
| <b>3) Workforce Support</b>           | <b>7) Affordability</b>    |
| <b>4) Public/Private Partnerships</b> | <b>8) Quality</b>          |



**Access  
to safe,  
affordable  
& high-  
quality  
child care  
for families**



# Studies Informed Recommendations





# Workforce Study



## Wages & Benefits

Support & retain the workforce



## Healthy Workplace Conditions

Wellness for children & caregivers

## Strengthen Career Pathways

Professional development & training



## System Coordination

Shared values & goals support improved systems



## Small Business Supports

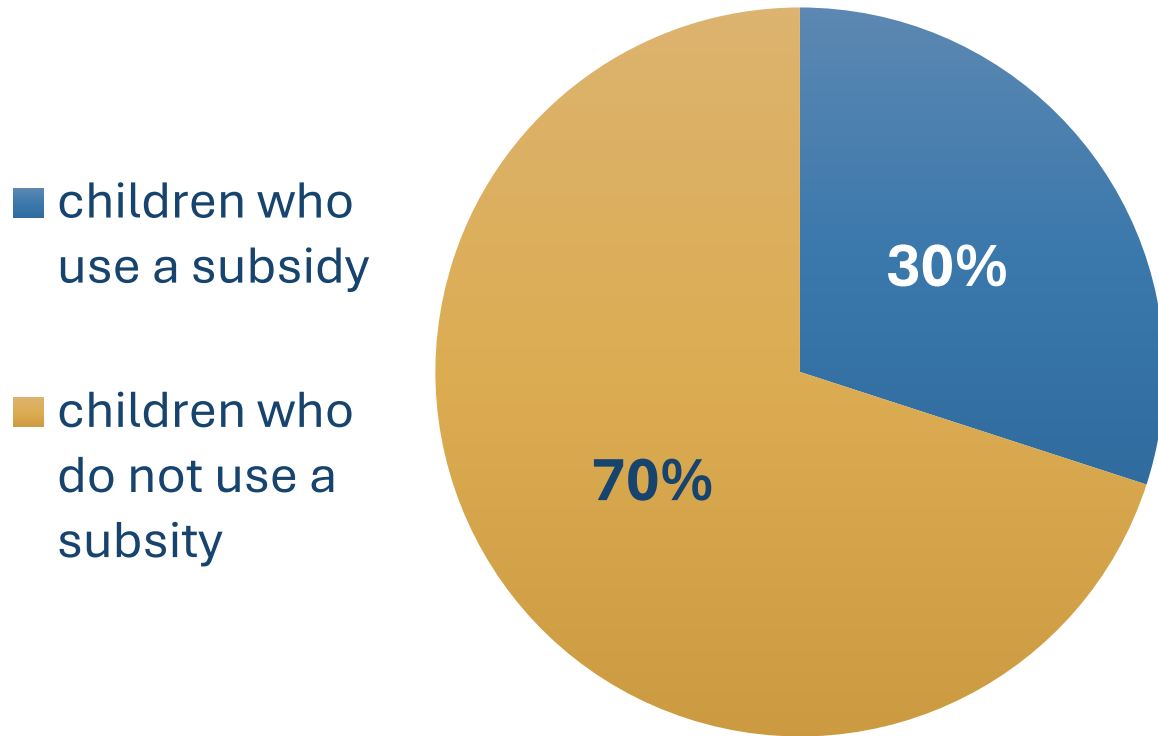
Optimized supports for smaller businesses



# Selecting a Rate Setting Methodology



## Children Enrolled in Child Care



***GOAL: Ensure child care is affordable for all families***

### Key information

State rates influence prices set by child care businesses

Careful consideration must be taken to set rates that are not beyond what families can pay who do not use a subsidy

The child care rate setting methodology is in Alaska Statute and also requires federal approval

# Child Care Subsidy Rates in Alaska



## Market Price Survey

Conducted every two years

Sets rates based on the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile

Market analysis conducted through a survey

## Cost of Care Study

Conducted for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in Alaska

True cost of providing child care in Alaska per child

Home & center-based costs

Alternate scenarios – wages, benefits, facilities, quality



### 2023 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report

Prepared for  
THE ALASKA CHILD CARE PROGRAM OFFICE

Prepared by  
Brett Watson  
Ashley Hamming  
Ashley Schroeder

Institute of Social and Economic Research  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
3211 Providence Drive  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

May 12, 2024

All ISER publications are solely the work of the individual authors. This report and its findings should be attributed to the authors, not to ISER, the University of Alaska Anchorage, or the research sponsors.



2023 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report

Page | 1

# Cost Components

“ Model incorporates all operating costs incurred by child care providers in the normal course of business

• • • •

Not adjusted downward to reflect any type of in-kind support or other measures to reduce costs ”





# Current Structure Unsustainable



**Actual  
Cost of Care  
Methodology**

**Market Price  
Survey**



# Key Highlights & Recommendations



## Gaps

- Subsidy Rates
- Regional Costs



## Public Private Partnerships

- Leverage public spaces
- New position focused on business partnerships

# Key Accomplishments



## Workforce Supports



- ❖ *Removed Child Care Associate requirement*
- ❖ *Broadened Administrator qualifications*
- ❖ *Delegation of Authority*
- ❖ *Relative & in-home care educational requirements*
- ❖ *Professional Development*



## Affordability

- ❖ *Covering cost of care for children in OCS custody*
- ❖ *Distributed \$7.5m to providers*



## Licensing & Background Checks

- ❖ *Digital Fingerprinting*
- ❖ *System Modernization*



## Quality

*Quality Recognition & Improvement System (QRIS) fully developed*



## Tribal Authority

- ❖ *Tribal child care exempt from state licensure*
- ❖ *Tribal Health & Safety standards acknowledged*



# Work Underway



**Decreasing  
barriers**

Pilot digital fingerprinting

Modernize Systems  
Alaska Child Care Information  
System "AKCCIS"



**Child Care  
as a  
business**

Public private partnerships

Start-up & expansion support  
Cost of Care Study to inform  
rate methodology



**Advancing  
a sector**

Regulatory changes

Support infant & early  
childhood mental health  
Professional development  
support



# Questions?

Courtney Enright  
Department of Health  
Legislative Liaison  
[courtney.enright@alaska.gov](mailto:courtney.enright@alaska.gov)  
907-269-7803

