



North Dakota Legislative Council

Prepared for the Human Services Committee
LC# 27.9138.01000
November 2025

PROGRAM EVALUATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES - PROPOSED OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The 2023 Legislative Assembly significantly increased its investment in child care services to support North Dakota's workforce and working families. The program evaluation will focus on the effectiveness of those programs and investments during fiscal years 2022 through 2025.

PROGRAM EVALUATION OBJECTIVE

Determine whether the additional child care-related funding provided in House Bill No. 1540 (2023) increased the availability, affordability, and quality of child care in North Dakota, and whether the programs have been effective.

PROGRAM EVALUATION SCOPE

1. Availability - Are more child care slots available for families choosing to use child care services?
 - a. Identify the changes in the number of child care providers by geographic area and license type.
 - b. Identify changes in the number of licensed child care slots by geographic area and age group.
 - c. Determine whether child care capacity is sufficient to meet the demand.
2. Affordability - Are families able to afford child care for their children?
 - a. Identify the average cost of child care by geographic area and statewide and compare rates among license types.
 - b. Identify the number of families receiving child care financial assistance by age group.
 - c. Determine the number of families qualifying for child care assistance and receiving benefits.
 - d. Determine the share of child care costs provided by parents, the state and federal governments, employers, and other programs.
3. Quality - Are child care providers participating in programs to raise the quality of the child care services they provide?
 - a. Identify the percentage of child care providers that have advanced their Bright & Early ND step levels.
 - b. Identify child care provider participation rates in the Best in Class Program and determine program impacts on the quality of child care.
 - c. Identify child care provider participation rates in professional development and grant programs.
4. Workforce - Is access to child care affecting labor force participation?
 - a. Identify the extent to which employees and employers have participated in the Child Care Workforce Benefit and Employer-Led Cost-Share Program.
 - b. Determine the effectiveness of the Child Care Workforce Benefit in improving child care provider staff hiring and retention.
 - c. Identify labor force participation rates for parents with children under age 6.

5. Administration and Policy Review - How do child care program administration and policies affect participation rates?
 - a. Identify child care program funding available and spent for fiscal years 2022 through 2025.
 - b. Determine the effectiveness of program marketing, outreach, and the application process.
 - c. Determine the timeliness of the program application and assistance payment process.
 - d. Compare North Dakota child care policies and programs to regional and national best practices.
 - e. Identify any other challenges, successes, or policy areas in which program changes or legislation would improve child care programs.