

Expanding Child Care Access in the Strafford Region

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Part I

Introductions and Context

About us

Danya



Hannah



Hanyan



Kevin



Today's Presentation

Overview of childcare challenges

Project objectives and methods

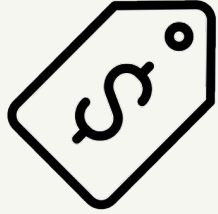
Key findings and recommendations

Tour of resources

Questions



Child Care Challenges in New Hampshire



High Costs

Rising tuition

Operational expenses

General unaffordability

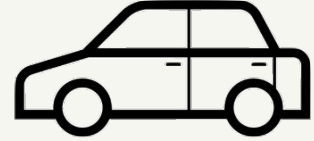


Staffing Shortages

High barriers, low wages

Licensing requirements

Limited career growth



Access Barriers

Limited availability

Heavy competition

Quality assurances

Child Care Challenges by the Numbers

6,851

SRPC households w/ children <6 yrs

4,414

March 2025 total provider capacity

\$86.6K

Median Strafford Co. salary

\$32K

Median child care worker salary

\$6,000

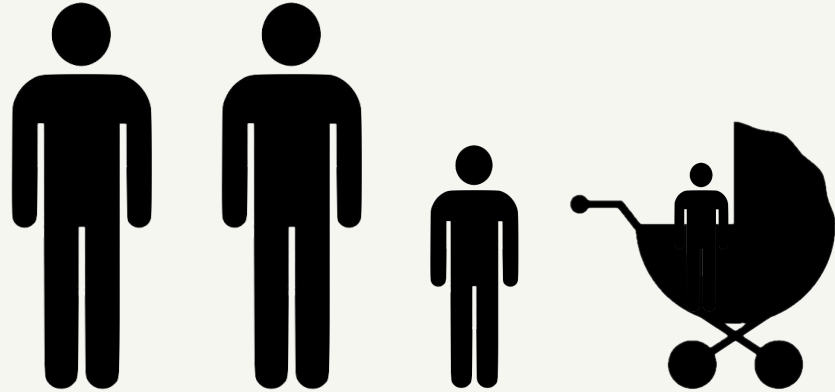
"Affordable" yearly infant care cost

\$16,300

Actual yearly infant care cost

“Affordable” Child Care

Actual:
37%



\$86,564	x	7%	=	\$6,059
?	x	7%	=	\$15,346
?	x	7%	=	\$31,646

Part II

Our Methods and Approach

Project Timeline

OCT - Introductions, Initial Research

NOV to DEC - Lit Review, Stakeholder Call

JAN to MAR - Interviews, Policy Research

MAR to APR - Drafts, Drafts, Drafts

APR to MAY - Final Products

Stakeholder Engagement

Interviews With:

Childcare providers and business owners

Economic development stakeholders

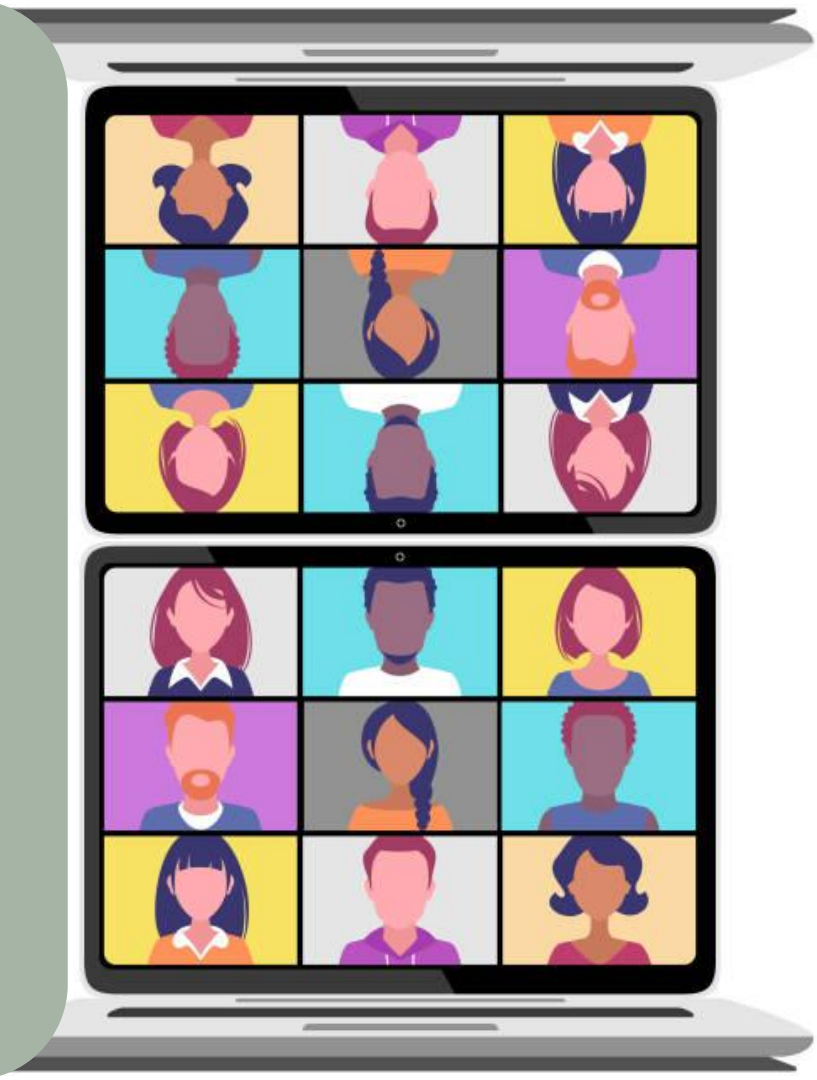
Research and policy experts

Key Questions:

Barriers to childcare access

Financing challenges and workforce issues

Policy solutions/innovative models





GRANITE
UNITED WAY

Carsey School of Public Policy



COMMUNITY COLLEGE
system of New Hampshire



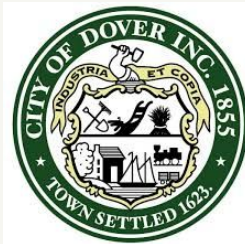
University of
New Hampshire

LEARN!
APPRENTICESHIPNH
The Community College System of New Hampshire

STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission



**ROCHESTER
CHILD CARE
CENTER**



AMERICA'S
SBDC
NEW HAMPSHIRE



Part III

Our Recommendations

Policy Recommendation 1 - Leveraging Federal Funding

Challenges:

Federal funding unstable

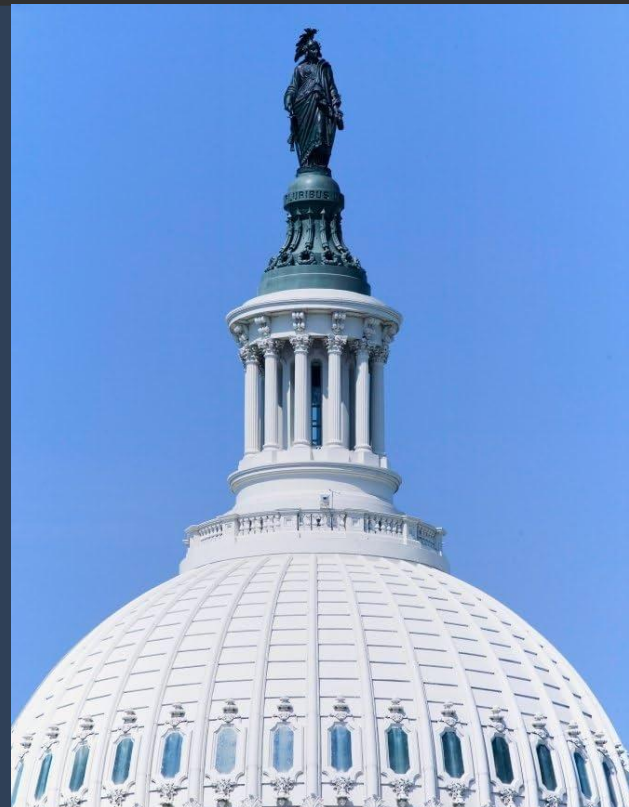
Systems hard to navigate

Recommendations:

Regional technical assistance teams

USDA Rural Development Grants

Community Development Block Grants



Policy Recommendation 2 - State Budget Allocations

Challenges:

- Over-reliance on short-term fixes

- Unstable or sunseting federal and state funds

Recommendations:

- Baseline state funding year over year

- Include adjustments for inflation

- Sustainable revenue streams

- Vermont Case Study



Policy Recommendation 3 - Expanding State Subsidy Programs

Challenges:

- Child care subsidies underutilized

- Confusing forms, timelines, (re-)enrollment

Recommendations:

- Awareness campaign

- Extend enrollment deadlines

- Ensure timely reimbursement for providers



Policy Recommendation 4 - Granite Steps for Quality

Challenges:

Large burdens for compliance

Low participation

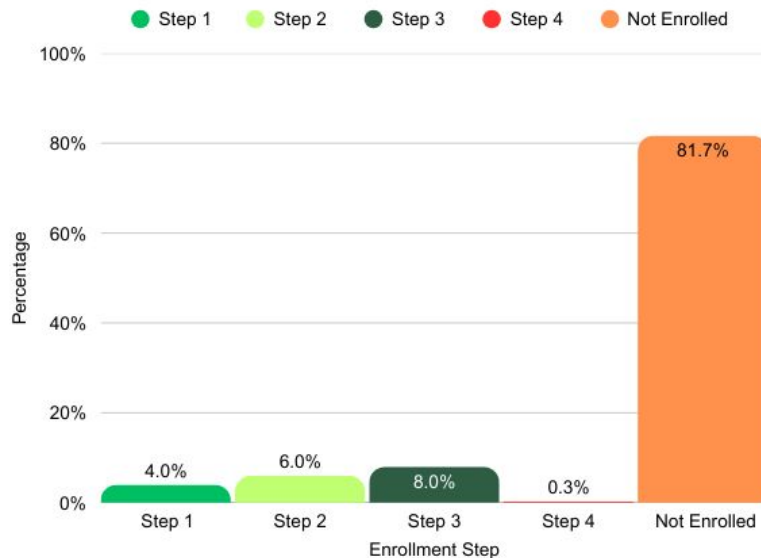
Benefits don't outweigh costs

Recommendations:

Upfront support via grants, stipends

Subsidized professional development

Expand definitions of “quality”



**Granite Steps for Quality:
Enrollment by Step**

Policy Recommendation 5 - Zoning and Regulatory Reforms

Challenges:

Inconsistencies across municipalities, state regulations

Lack of accessible technical assistance

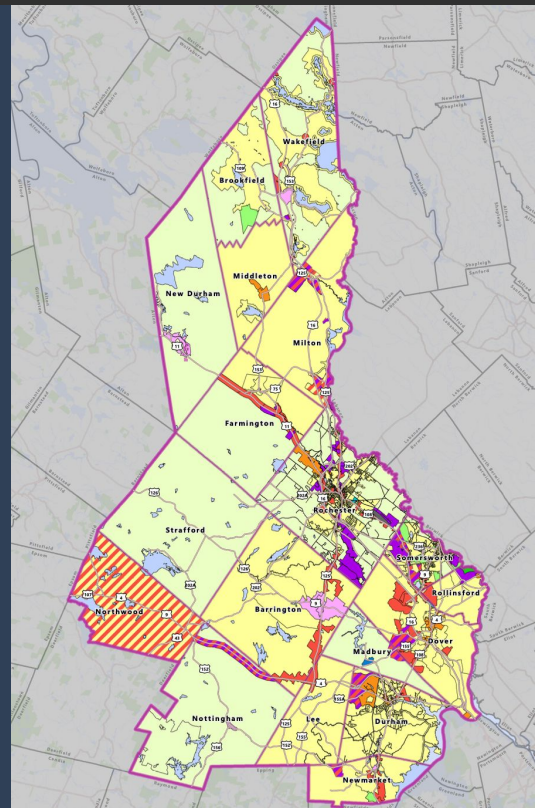
Lack of flexibility

Recommendations:

Child care by right in commercial/industrial zones

Incorporate child care into planning process

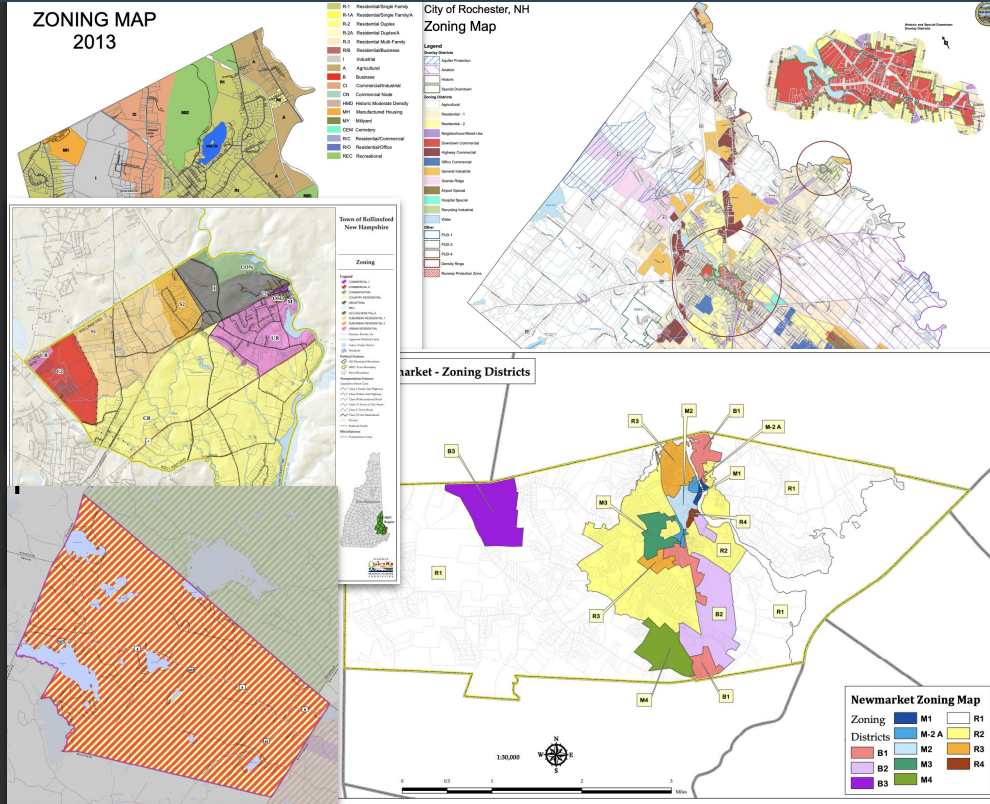
Increase developmental assistance



HB 1567

“Family or group family child care shall be allowed as an accessory use to any primary residential use and shall not be subject to local site plan review regulations in any zone where a residential use is permitted”

“Allow home-based care by right or pursuant to a conditional use permit”



Policy Recommendation 6 - Public-Private Partnerships & Employer Engagement

Challenge:

Working families, businesses feel the burden

Recommendations:

Follow local models

Advocate for family-friendly policies

Promote legislative efforts

SRPC as a regional facilitator



Policy Recommendation 7 - Workforce Development and Licensure

Challenges:

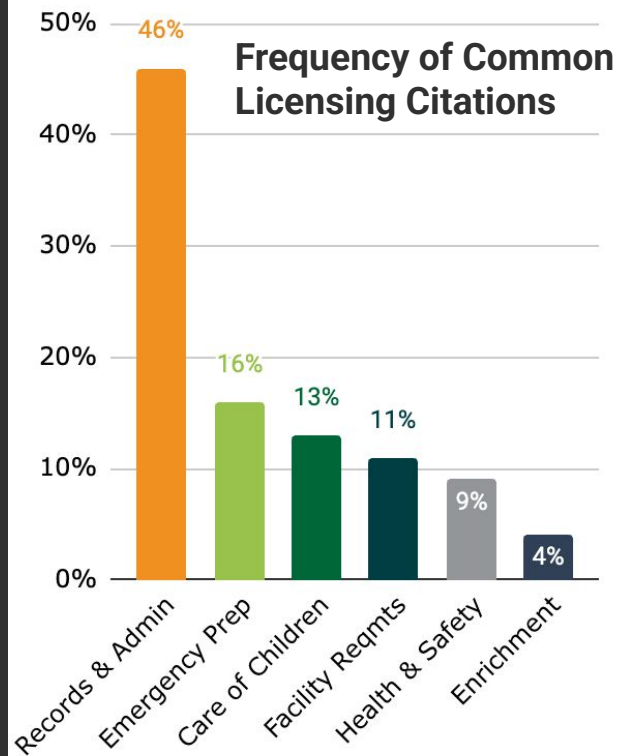
Complex net of certifications, degree reqs, screenings

Licensing hurdles

Recommendations:

Expand apprenticeship & CTE programs

Reduce administrative burdens in licensing



Policy Recommendation 8 - Startup Funding for New Providers

Challenges:

Few mechanisms to support new child care facilities

High startup costs as a barrier to entry

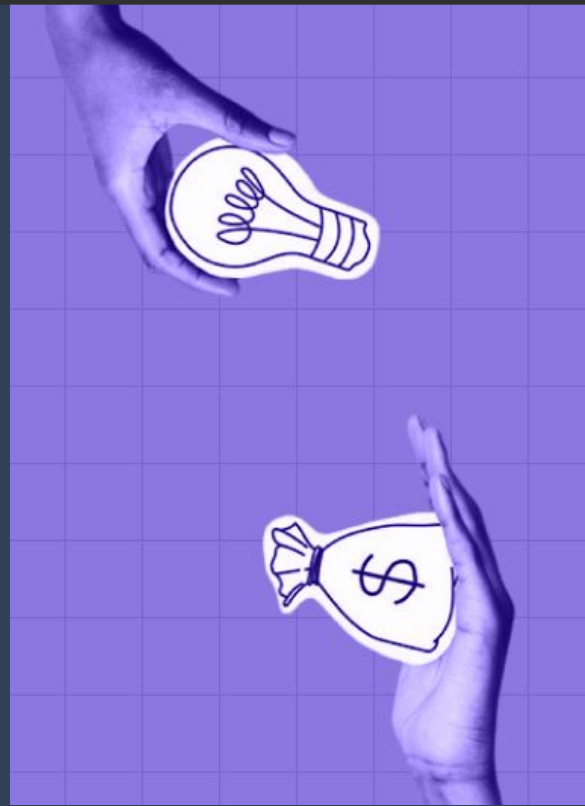
Recommendations:

Support local funding mechanisms and models

Regional child care startup fund

Low-cost microloans

Expand pre-existing programs (e.g., GSQ)



Questions?

Part IV

Resources

Interactive Digital Resource Tool - Map and Storymap

Target Users

Families seeking childcare options & funding
Childcare providers navigating regulations & resources
Employers
Municipal and Economic Development Stakeholders
Policy advocates

Formats

Printable resource pamphlet (QR code below)



Interactive digital guide (ArcGIS StoryMap)

Childcare in New Hampshire: A Resource Guide for Families, Providers, Businesses & Advocates

Contact SRPC

150 Wakefield St, Suite 12
Rochester, New Hampshire
03867
Tel. (603) 994-3500
Fax. (603) 994-3504
srpc@strafford.org



STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission

Parents and Families:

Find quality, affordable childcare and explore financial help through programs like the [NH Child Care Scholarship](#).

Learn about resources like [NH Connections](#), [Waypoint](#), and the [Parent Information Center](#).

Childcare Providers & Economic Stakeholders:

Get tools to run or support a childcare program from groups like [SELA](#), [SBDC](#) and [ApprenticeshipNH](#). Learn how to accept Child Care Scholarships and join the [Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan](#) for supporting employees.

Policy Advocates & Community Planners:

Support childcare access with advocacy groups like the [NH Child Care Advisory Council](#) and [Chamber of Mothers](#). Tap into research from the [NH Fiscal Policy Institute](#) and [Carsey School](#) to understand workforce needs and economic impacts.



For Families: Accessing Resources and Financial Assistance

How can I find quality, affordable child care?

Managed by Child Care Aware of NH, [NH Connections](#) provides consumer education on what makes a quality child care program, how to assess options, and virtual sessions on child care selection.

Need help with registering for or determining eligibility for the NH Child Care Scholarship?

The New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship is managed by the NH Department of Health and Human Services. A user friendly guide to the program and eligibility [can be found here](#).

Income Eligibility Levels

To qualify for help paying for child care, your household income needs to fall within one of three steps based on family size:

Step 1: Very Low Income (<100% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)

Step 2: Low Income (100% to 138% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)

Step 3: Moderate Income (Above 138% of Federal Poverty Guidelines but Below 85% of the State Median Income)

How can I apply for child care financial assistance?

NH Child Care Scholarship Program:

Offers financial aid to eligible families for licensed or approved child care. To apply, visit NH Easy Gateway to Services, call 1-844-ASK-DHHS, or visit a local DHHS office.

New Hampshire Freedom Accounts:

Funding of up to \$3,700 for New Hampshire families with children from 5-20 years old and earning up to 350% of the poverty line. Money can be used for tuition, tutoring, online learning, educational supplies, and more.

Temporary Assistance for Needy

Families: TANF can be used for childcare assistance for dependents under the age of 6 through payments to providers. Eligible families are under 250% of the federal poverty line.



What support is available for families with children with disabilities?

Parent Information Center NH: Provides guidance and resources.

Waypoint: Offers community-based family services and resource centers.

For Child Care Providers and Businesses: Enhancing Operations and Cost Savings

How can I start my childcare business?

Small Business Development Center:

SBDC provides business services for small businesses in New Hampshire.

Find their website [here](#).

Government Services: Cities and towns within the Strafford Region have a variety of economic development and business service departments within their governments. Two prominent agencies are within the Cities of Dover and Rochester, which provide business services for new or existing organizations. Contact [Dover offices here](#) and [Rochester offices here](#).



How can I receive specialized training and assistance?

NH Preschool Technical Assistance

Network: Provides training in special education for early childhood educators.

NH Connections Provider Support:

Offers professional development, technical assistance, licensing info, and best practice guidance.

Early Care and Education Association

(ECEA): A resource network for early childhood professionals in the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire. ECEA provides professional development, networking opportunities, and business support for childcare providers.

How can I accept child care scholarships?

Enroll through **NH Connections Information System (NHCIS)** by submitting required forms and completing staff background checks.

How Can I Offer an Apprenticeship Program?

If you are a childcare provider interested in offering an apprenticeship, *ApprenticeshipNH* provides support in developing and implementing programs tailored to your workforce needs.

Connect with ApprenticeshipNH: Visit the ApprenticeshipNH website and contact a regional program specialist to discuss how an apprenticeship program can fit your organization's needs.

Develop a Training Plan: Work with ApprenticeshipNH to outline a structured training program that includes:

- On-the-job learning
- Classroom instruction (often provided through local colleges or training programs).
- Wage increases at key milestones

Apprenticeships can be funded through grants, employer contributions, or state programs. Employers may receive financial incentives or tax credits for participating.

Recruit & Register Apprentices

Employers can hire new employees as apprentices or enroll existing staff looking to upskill. ApprenticeshipNH will assist in recruiting, onboarding, and ensuring compliance with state and federal apprenticeship guidelines.

How can I join a Childcare apprenticeship?

Visit the ApprenticeshipNH website to see current apprenticeship openings and contact a regional specialist to learn about upcoming opportunities.

Apply for an Apprenticeship: Interested individuals can apply directly through participating childcare centers, preschools, or organizations offering ECE apprenticeships.

Begin Paid On-the-Job Training:

Apprentices work full-time or part-time while receiving structured training from experienced childcare professionals. Wages increase as apprentices complete key milestones in their training.

Complete the Apprenticeship & Earn

Credentials: Upon completion, apprentices receive a nationally recognized credential and may qualify for lead teacher or director positions in early childhood education. Some apprenticeship programs count toward state licensing requirements, making it easier to advance in the field.

How do I participate in the Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan to support my employees?

Decide to Opt-In: Employers choose whether to enroll in the program and offer paid family leave insurance.

Benefits: Employees can take up to 6 weeks of paid leave at 60% of their wages for:

- Birth, adoption, or fostering of a child
- Caring for a seriously ill family member
- Military caregiving responsibilities
- Personal serious health condition

Enroll Through MetLife: New Hampshire has contracted MetLife to administer the plan. Employers can sign up through MetLife to select coverage options. Employers can:

- Fully cover the insurance premiums for employees
- Split the cost with employees
- Offer the insurance as an employee-paid option

Claim the Tax Credit: Employers who contribute to employee premiums receive a **50% tax credit** on their Business Profits Tax (BPT) or Business Enterprise Tax (BET).

Communicate the Benefit to Employees: Employers must inform employees about the program, eligibility, and how to access paid leave when needed.



Are there any shared cost-saving networks I can join?

State Early Learning Alliance of NH (SELA):

A shared services network offering significant cost and time savings. Benefits include discounts for pooled purchasing, partnerships with local businesses, and business management and licensing support.

***For Policy Advocates and
Community Planners:
Tools for Advocacy and
Planning***

How can I influence child care policies?

NH Child Care Advisory Council (NHCCAC):

Advises the DHHS commissioner on child care policies and laws.

Want to attend meetings? Meetings happen bi-monthly in Concord, NH. Contact Early Learning NH at (603) 226-7900 for details or to share concerns.

What is the Chamber of Mothers?

The Chamber of Mothers is a national advocacy organization dedicated to improving policies that support mothers and families. Their work includes advocating for paid family leave, affordable childcare, maternal healthcare, and workplace protections.

They mobilize parents, collaborate with lawmakers, and run public awareness campaigns to push for meaningful policy changes.

Is there a local chapter in New Hampshire?

Yes! The Chamber of Mothers has a New Hampshire chapter based in Portsmouth.

This chapter focuses on advocacy efforts at the state and national levels, providing a space for local parents to connect, organize, and take action on issues affecting families in the region.

How can I get involved?

There are several ways to get involved with the Chamber of Mothers:

- Join the Portsmouth chapter to connect with other local advocates.
- Participate in advocacy campaigns by signing petitions, writing to lawmakers, or attending events.
- Support fundraising efforts to help sustain their work.
- Spread awareness by sharing their initiatives on social media and within your community.

To learn more, visit [the Chamber of Mothers website](#), where you can find details on membership, upcoming events, and current advocacy priorities.



Where can I find data and advocacy resources?

- **New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute:** NHFPI has a wide array of resources on childcare. Read about the economic impact of the childcare shortage, the fragile economics of this sector, the state of childcare in the state, and more.
- **Carsey School of Public Policy:** UNH's policy school published the Granite Guide to Early Childhood series. Read about families' needs, a childcare landscape analysis, the childcare workforce, and more.
- **Zoning Atlas:** Saint Anselm College produced a comprehensive zoning atlas, which includes a section on the zoning of home-based childcare. This is a good representation of where home-based businesses are allowed to operate, relevant after the passage of HB1567.



Digital Guide - StoryMap



Part V

Questions

Thank you!

Acknowledgements

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Director, University of New Hampshire
Child Study and Development Center

Chuck Grassie: Former State
Representative, State of New
Hampshire

Joelyn Drennan: Assistant Vice
President of Impact, Granite United
Way

Liz Scruton: Director of Early
Childhood Initiatives, Granite United
Way

Jackie Cowell: Executive Director,
Early Learning NH

Katie Brissette: Deputy Director, Early
Learning NH

Jean Nelson: Business Advisor, Small
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Lisa Ranfos, Ed.D.: Executive Director
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College

Christopher Lalmond: Northern Hub
Developer, Community College System
of New Hampshire's Apprenticeship
NH

Evan England: Research Assistant
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Pamphlet



StoryMap



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