

February 15, 2021



**Voices for Utah Children is proud to support HB277, “Childcare Eligibility Amendments,” sponsored by Rep. Ashlee Matthews.**

Voices for Utah Children is a statewide advocacy organization that works on a number of issues that impact the wellbeing of children in Utah. Access to safe, affordable childcare is one of our priority issues.

**HB277 is the result of many discussions and compromises with multiple stakeholders, including the agency responsible for implementation.**

HB277 contains several common-sense provisions to support working families and the childcare providers they rely on. These provisions have already been in place during the pandemic, utilizing emergency COVID relief funding from the federal government, and which have proven very successful thus far.

**HB277 directs Utah’s Office of Child Care to continue the use of these successful approaches, using CARES Act COVID relief funding already available from the federal government, over the next two years. There is a June 2023 sunset for these provisions.**

This ensures that Utah can appropriately budget its CARES Act COVID relief funding to best support working families, as well as Utah’s critical childcare businesses. After June 2023, HB277 directs the prioritization of subsidies for working families for whom affordable childcare is out of reach.

Even before the onset of the COVID pandemic, access to affordable childcare was a statewide challenge. This challenge looks different in every region of the state, but it impacts thousands of working families across all socioeconomic levels.

Childcare is like affordable housing and transportation infrastructure. People can’t work without it. Childcare is critical to the state’s economy and to the success of its workforce. Ensuring there is a sufficient stock of childcare to support our workforce is critical – especially as we aim to recover from this pandemic, even stronger than before.

**Is HB277 good for kids? It certainly is!  
We urge you to support HB277(S01) as written.**

