

A LABOR CRISIS WITHIN THE CHILD CARE CRISIS:

**Growing Need for “Non-
Traditional Hours” Met by
Underpaid In-Home Providers**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A CHALLENGING POLICY AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

- The U.S. is the only wealthy country in the world without national paid parental leave; it also lacks national, universal, early childhood education and care.
- Though economically essential and yielding high economic returns to public investment, child care is largely privately funded, and, as a result, is scarce, unaffordable, extremely poorly compensated, operating in cheap real estate like church basements, and, too often, a one-size-fits-all model.
- Child care should be publicly provided, like all physical and social infrastructure, such as street lighting and K-12 education, and will generate high returns on investment.
- The public child care programs we do have are small, available only to families with low or very low incomes, and to just a fraction of those eligible.
- Child care options are extremely limited for children whose parents work early in the morning, during evenings, overnight or on the weekend. Yet the number of jobs requiring non-traditional hours is large and increasing, particularly in low wage sectors.
- Irregular and unpredictable work schedules are also on the rise, often in industries with non-traditional hours, including retail and health care. Largely unrestrained by wage and hour law which still assumes standard schedules, many employers now demand that employees work beyond their scheduled hours, change schedules with very little notice or require that employees be “on-call.”

IN-HOME CARE PROVIDERS: UNPAID, UNDERPAID AND BADLY SERVED BY PUBLIC POLICY

- In-home child care providers are the most important source of paid child care during non-traditional hours. They also represent critical sources of racial and ethnic diversity, care in languages other than English, care for children with special needs, relatively affordable care and small settings that are the best fit for some children.
- In-home child care providers bear the costs of underfunded child care programs and the lack of effective law on work scheduling practices. They work many hours for free, often working additional unpaid hours on short notice, as parents' employment schedules change, even to the point of being required to work a second shift with no notice.
- Our public programs pay less per child to in-home providers than they pay child care centers, and pay both significantly less than what's increasingly recognized as the "true cost of care," defined as the cost to provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate, safe, and reliable child care staffed by a professionally compensated workforce.
- In-home providers are too often unrecognized for their care of children with special needs, are not compensated for working overtime hours or assisting parents navigating school and public benefits bureaucracies and receive no pay differential for "non-traditional" hours.
- In-home providers' numbers have been dropping over time, in Oregon and nationally, as they are increasingly financially marginalized, and paying a high personal price for accommodating the non-traditional, irregular and unpredictable work schedules of their clients.

URGENTLY NEEDED FEDERAL AND STATE POLICY CHANGES

- In-home child care providers are critical to federal and state child care initiatives, which advocate “mixed delivery” by a diverse set of providers. These initiatives must compensate all child care workers and providers for all hours worked, comparably with elementary school teachers; and offer pay differentials for care during non-traditional hours, on short notice, in languages other than English and for children with special needs; and provide support for professional development, food, materials and equipment.
- Rather than subsidize the development of private facilities, we need a program for building, purchasing and renovating public child care facilities.

