

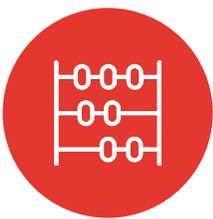
Photo: Children playing at Urban Sprouts, a quality ECE facility in St. Louis, MO.

# Kids Win Missouri

Since 2023, **IFF** has partnered with **Kids Win Missouri** to provide quantitative and qualitative research on the barriers Missouri communities face in accessing high quality early childhood education (ECE).

Looking across a range of urban, suburban, and rural communities, IFF’s research found a persistent gap in access to quality ECE across the state. On average, there are licensed child care slots available for 78% of children aged five years or younger, but the shortfalls in access are greatest for the youngest Missourians. Closing the ECE access gap for infants and toddlers (ages birth to two years) would require **tripling capacity** for that age group.

Here are our main takeaways:



### Limited Supply

A limited supply of quality ECE seats in communities leads to long waitlists and high prices, making quality ECE both elusive and inequitable.



### High Cost

Enrolling a child in an ECE program can pose a tremendous financial burden to families, necessitating sacrifices such as second jobs, home downsizing, and extreme budgeting measures.



### Employment Impacts

A lack of quality ECE negatively impacts caretakers’ ability to work, leading to increased requests for time off and workers’ leaving their jobs altogether.



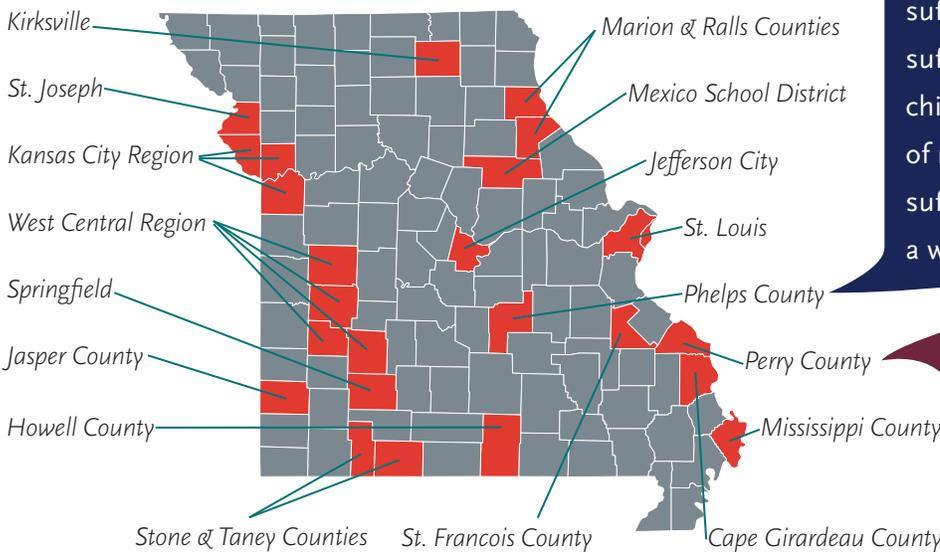
### ECE Staff Retention

ECE providers struggle to remain fully staffed, further depleting their capacity to serve their communities.

# Inaccessible ECE impacts children, caretakers, employers, and communities

IFF conducted research in **17 communities** across Missouri, gathering both quantitative data on child care slots and cost, as well as qualitative data from providers and caretakers illustrating challenges their communities face.

## Missouri communities surveyed include:



“If I give my child my attention work suffers. If I give my job attention my child suffers. Without affordable and reliable child care I’m not able to provide 100% of myself anywhere. In the end everyone suffers. My job, my child, and my family as a whole.” — Phelps County Parent

“I called around to every daycare facility as soon as I found out I was pregnant. I was placed on a 2 year waiting list. The price of child care is high and the quality of care my child receives is questionable. We need more facilities with high quality educators.” — Perry County Parent

“The biggest challenge has been finding openings in the age range of my children, and finding openings that my children could remain together in one facility. Cost of child care has also been a challenge. Most child care facilities cost over \$1500 a month for 2 children.” — St. Francois County Parent

“For one of my children, I had them on the waitlist for a full year, before they had an opening. The other challenge is the cost of child care. We spend twice the amount of our mortgage for child care for 2 children under age 5.” — Cape Girardeau County Parent

Read more and see the full research:

