



HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

HB2243

*Since 2010,
Washington lost
2,000 family child
care providers
and 300 child
care centers*

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Early Education Land Trust

CREATING A PERMANENT TRUST TO FUND CHILDCARE

Finding childcare in Washington can be difficult for working parents with young children. Parents are often forced to reduce their hours, decline promotions, or leave the workforce entirely due to a lack of affordable, reliable childcare. Additionally, the lack of access to these services continues to disproportionately impact working-age mothers and contributes to the gender pay gap in Washington State.

A New Trust for Old Challenges

House Bill 2243 would create a **Children's Social Equity Trust**. This trust would be managed much like the trusts that were created at Statehood which fund schools, libraries, and other community services. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would acquire and manage land with Climate Commitment Act funding, and sustainably manage that land for uses such as commercial forestry, renewable energy projects, and carbon sequestration credits for reforestation provide permanent funding for childcare Washington State.

Since Washington's founding, our working forests and farmlands have produced critical funding for educating our children. The more than three million acres of trust lands managed by the state generate more than \$200 million per year, supporting our K-12 schools and other public services.

An accompanying \$100 million from the Natural Climate Solutions Account, part of the Climate Commitment Act, would allow DNR to purchase new lands for the trust. DNR's Children's Social Equity Land Trust would creatively meet multiple statewide goals:

- Conserve working forestlands at risk of conversion
- Provide greater economic development opportunities for families and reduce or end cycles of poverty in communities with economic disparity
- Sequester carbon and limit the harmful impacts of global climate change
- Establish a stable funding source for creating or expanding child care. Often, these are small businesses that are overwhelmingly owned and operated by women and people of color

The new trust would direct revenue to the State Treasury for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, which oversees the Childcare Desert Grant Program (RCW 43.216.602). This program has yet to be funded and expires in 2026. These grants may be for one-time costs associated with opening childcare sites in communities considered a childcare desert.

High-quality, accessible childcare reduces the opportunity gap for low-income children and children of color. Once established, the trust would ensure a consistent and reliable revenue source, in perpetuity, to assist with the start-up costs of childcare where there is the most significant community need. This could be transformative for families, enabling parents to stay or re-enter the workforce. Children would benefit from early education and social and emotional development, setting them up for success in their K-12 education.

This landmark trust is a dual investment in the next generation of Washingtonians. Ensuring they have the foundation for their K-12 education and mitigating the potential impacts of climate change through climate smart forest management and by making Washington State a national leader in sustainable, innovative approaches to limiting greenhouse gases.



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What Are ChildCare Deserts?

Child care deserts are often found in communities that struggle with health and economic disparities. Lack of access to affordable childcare perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequities.

In 2019, the Washington State Childcare Collaborative Task Force found in their report that 49% of parents in the state found it complicated or very difficult to find, afford, and keep care for their children. Lack of childcare was projected to cost the state \$2.1 billion due to employee turnover and missed work and \$6.5 billion in direct and opportunity costs.

Even more troubling is the decrease in childcare providers and facilities. Between 2010 and 2023, the state saw a reduction of 2,000 family childcare providers and 300 centers, contributing to an increase in these deserts statewide. The new trust intends to reverse this trend.

Impact for the Environment

In 2020, the state adopted a limit on greenhouse gases (GHGs) to align with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommendations for limiting likely global temperature rise to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. With the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, the state must cut emissions by roughly 50% to the levels of 2018 and 2019 by the end of the decade. This will require ambition reduction in emissions and an acceleration of carbon sequestration.

Last year, global leaders at COP 28, including the United States Special Presidential Climate Envoy, announced their support for a substantial increase in the use of timber for construction as a vital decarbonization strategy. Their statement reads, "Recognizing that wood from sustainably managed forests provides climate solutions within the construction sector, we commit to, by 2030, advancing policies and approaches that support low carbon construction and increase the use of wood from sustainably managed forests in the built environment. Such policies and approaches will result in reduced GHG emissions and an increase in stored carbon."