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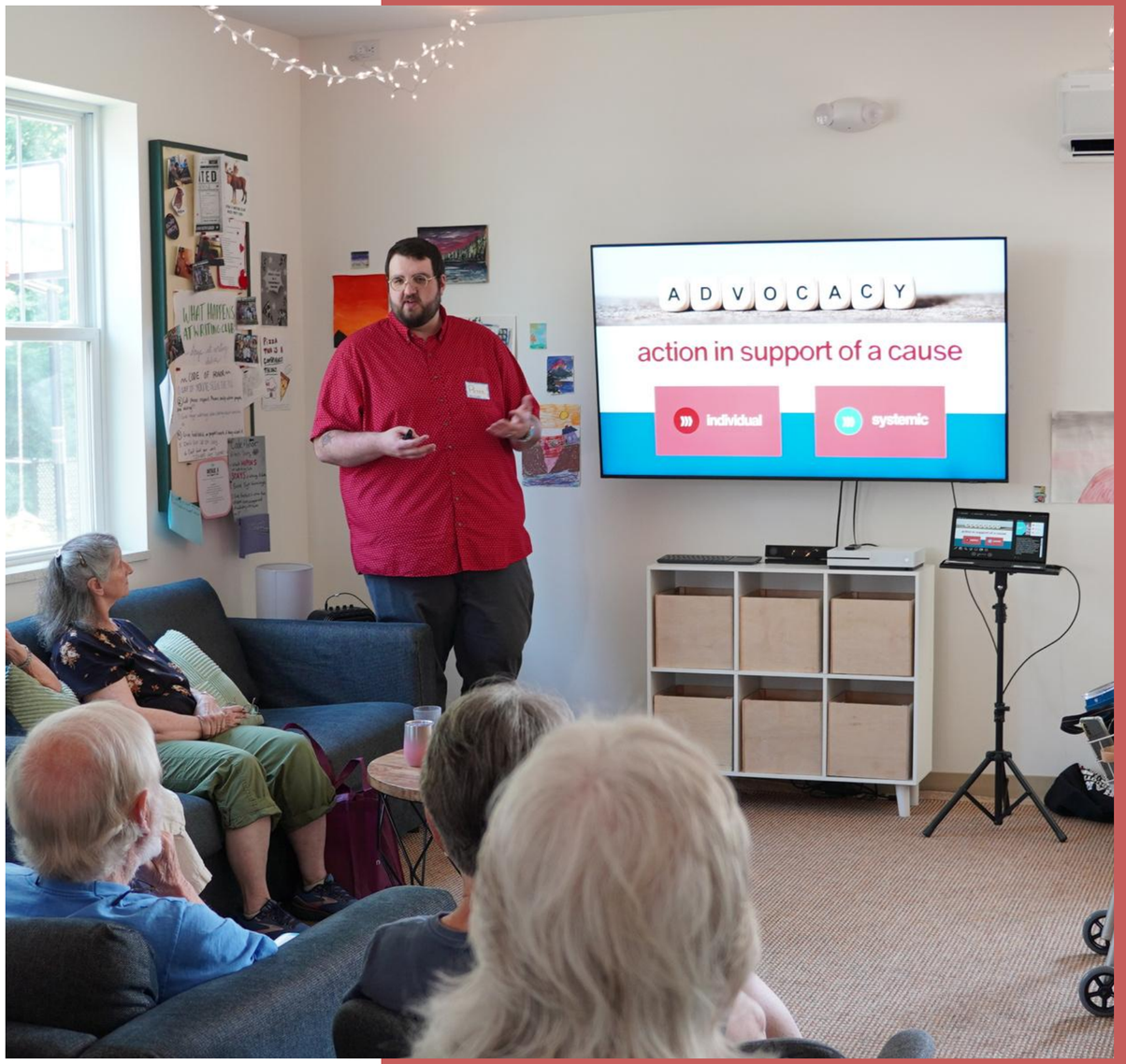
SPEAKING UP FOR WHAT MATTERS

Policy **Roundtables**

Early Care and Education



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Your Presenters



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Who we are

Solving problems through policy change.

New Futures works to improve the health and well-being of all Granite Staters through public policy change and civic empowerment.



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How we **do it**



Promoting Civic Engagement

to empower Granite Staters to take action on issues they care about.

Educating Communities

about the legislative process in NH.

Building Partnerships

to work together to solve NH's health problems.

Advancing Public Policy

to build a brighter, healthier NH.

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Policy Area Overview

Early Care and Education



- High Quality, Affordable Child Care
- Supporting Child Care Scholarship
- Child Care Zoning Restrictions
- Behavioral Supports

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NEW HAMPSHIRE FISCAL POLICY INSTITUTE

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY AND FUNDING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

DOW DRUKKER, NHFPI SENIOR POLICY ANALYST

NEW FUTURES POLICY AND ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 19, 2026

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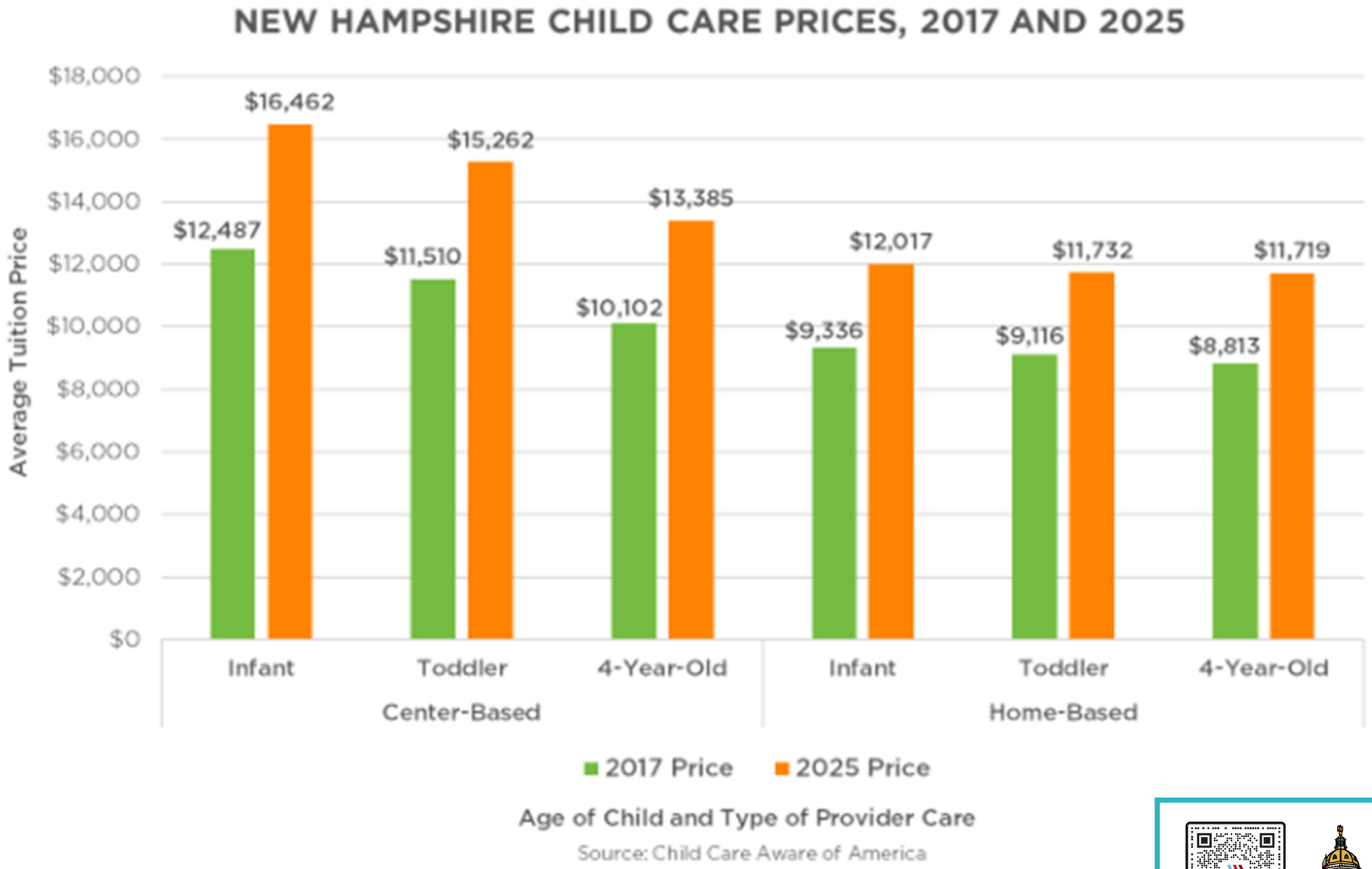
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AFFORDABILITY CONSTRAINTS PERSIST

AVERAGE CHILD CARE PRICES CONTINUE TO RISE

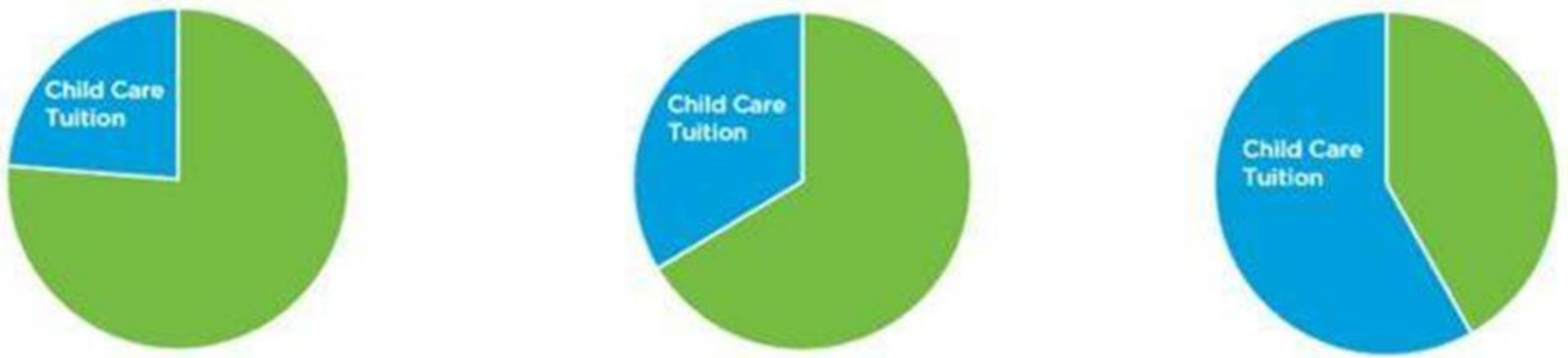


FAMILIES FACE CHILD CARE PRICES HIGHER THAN FEDERAL BENCHMARK OF 7% TOTAL INCOME

Percentage of Median Household Income Needed for an Infant and Four-Year-Old Child in New Hampshire Center-based Care

Source: Child Care Aware of America, American Community Survey 2020-2024, 5-Year Estimates

MARRIED COUPLE FAMILY: 24% **SINGLE MALE HOUSEHOLDER: 34%** **SINGLE FEMALE HOUSEHOLDER: 58%**



Sources: Child Care Aware, U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, U.S. Department of the Treasury

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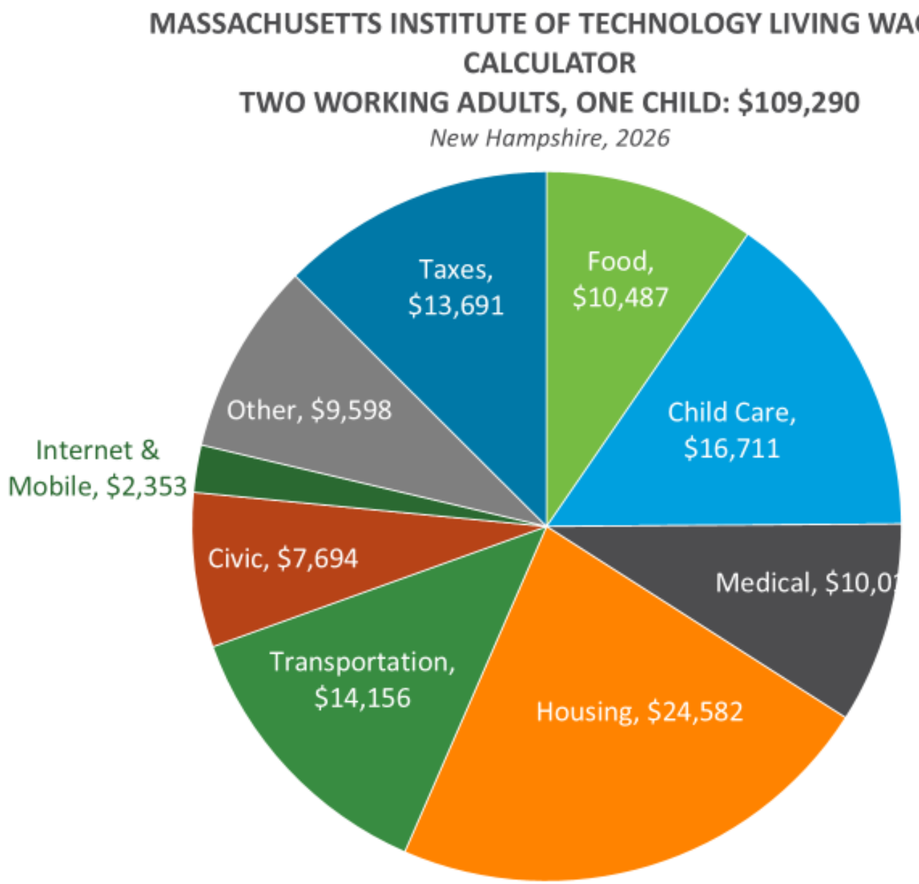
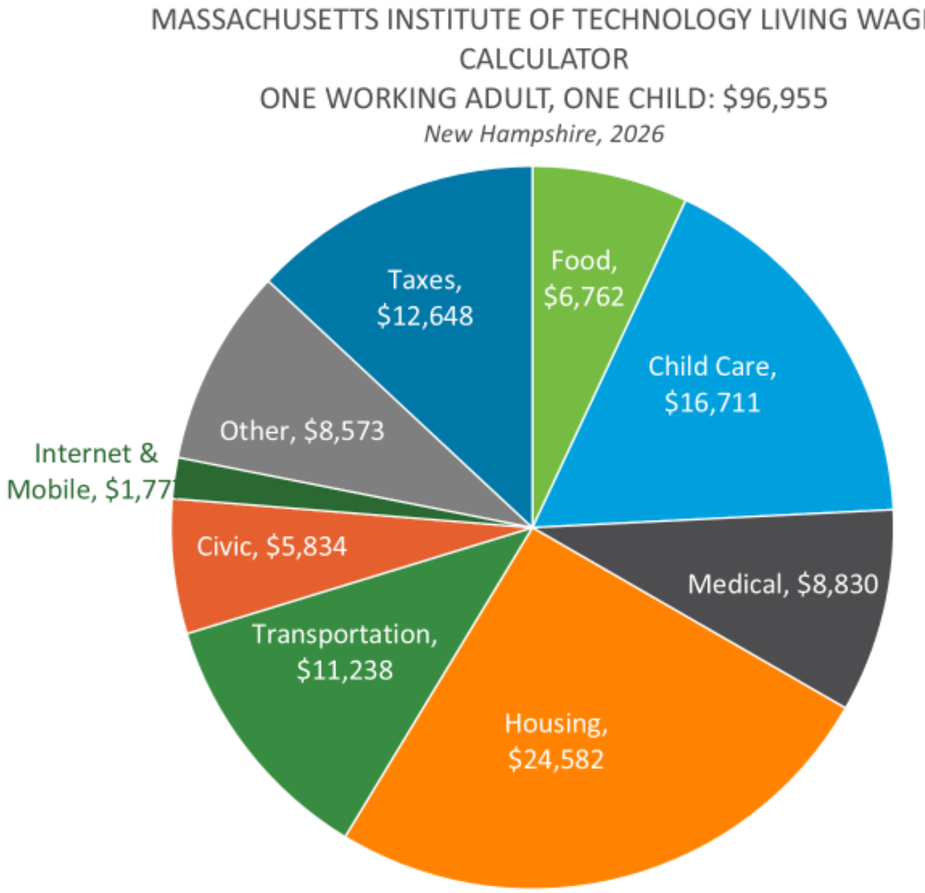
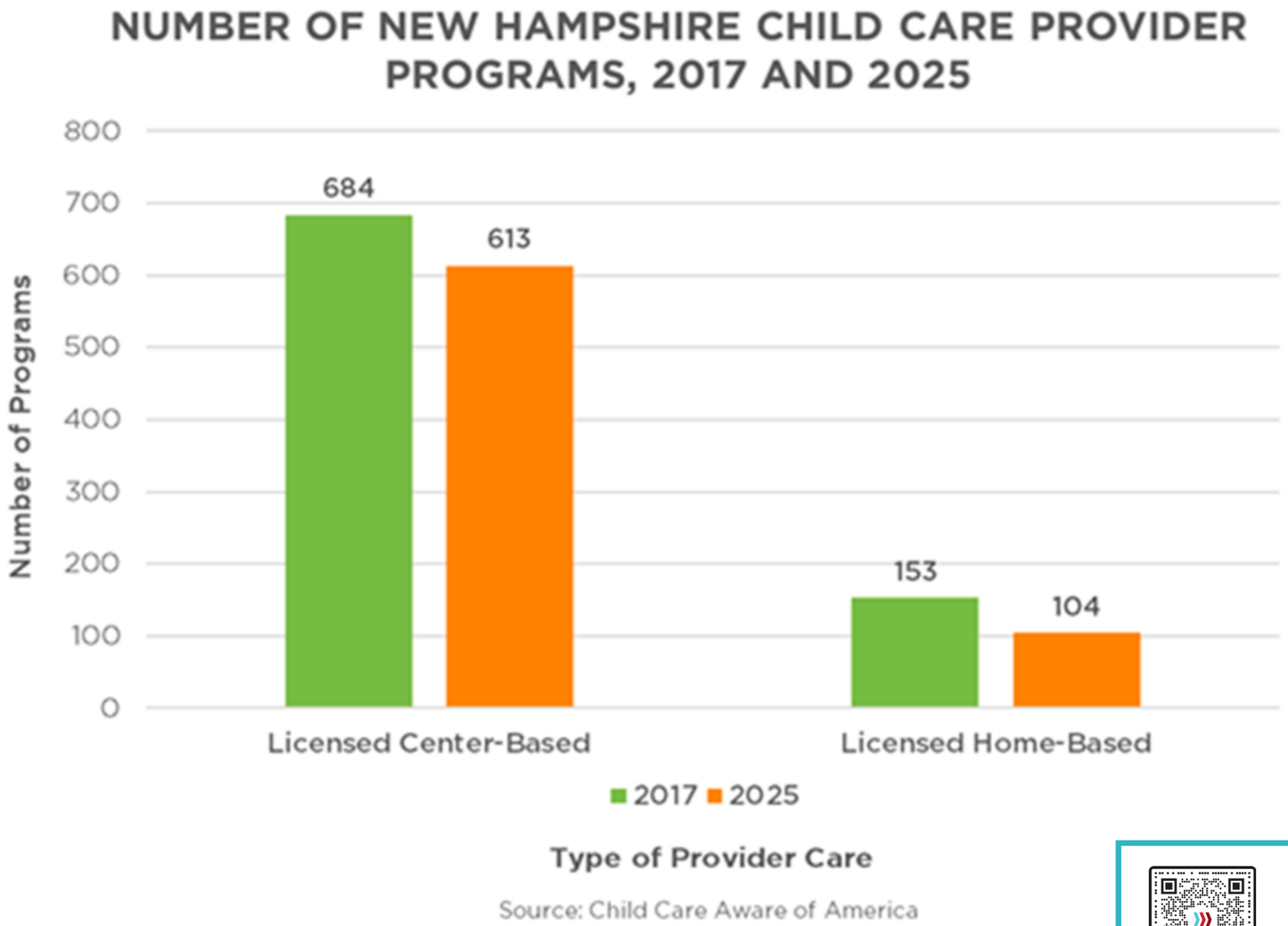
CHILD CARE ESTIMATED TO BE A SIGNIFICANT COMPONENT OF HOUSEHOLD COSTS





NUMBER OF PROVIDERS CONTINUE TO DECLINE



LIMITED CHILD CARE SLOTS IMPACTS FAMILIES, BUSINESSES, AND TAX REVENUE

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF LIMITED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION AVAILABILITY

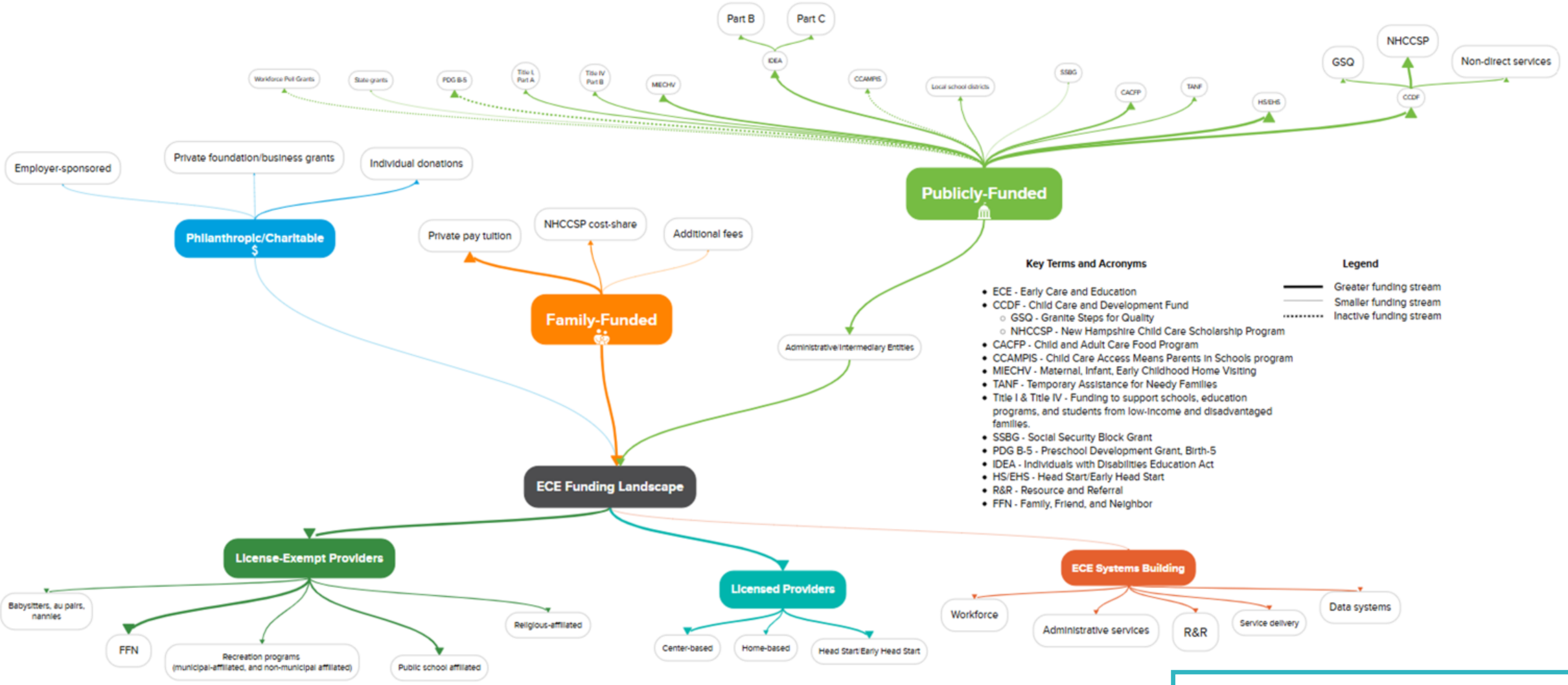
Total Estimated 2025 Financial Costs Associated with High and Low Impact Scenarios and Per Unavailable Early Care and Education Slot for Family Incomes and Businesses, Local, and State Tax Revenues

	Low Impact Total	High Impact Total	Low Impact Per Slot	High Impact Per Slot
Family Income	$121.5M	$189.7M	$24,929	$38,929
Business Revenues	$37.9M	$59.2M	$7,778	$12,146
Local & State Tax Revenues	$9.6M	$15M	$1,978	$3,088
Overall Total	**$169M**	**$263.9M**	**$34,685**	**$54,164**

Source: Updated 2025 NHFPI calculations as detailed in NHFPI's February 2025 report, "The Economic Impacts of the Granite State's Child Care Shortage."

HOW IS CHILD CARE FUNDED IN NH?

NEW HAMPSHIRE ECE FUNDING LANDSCAPE



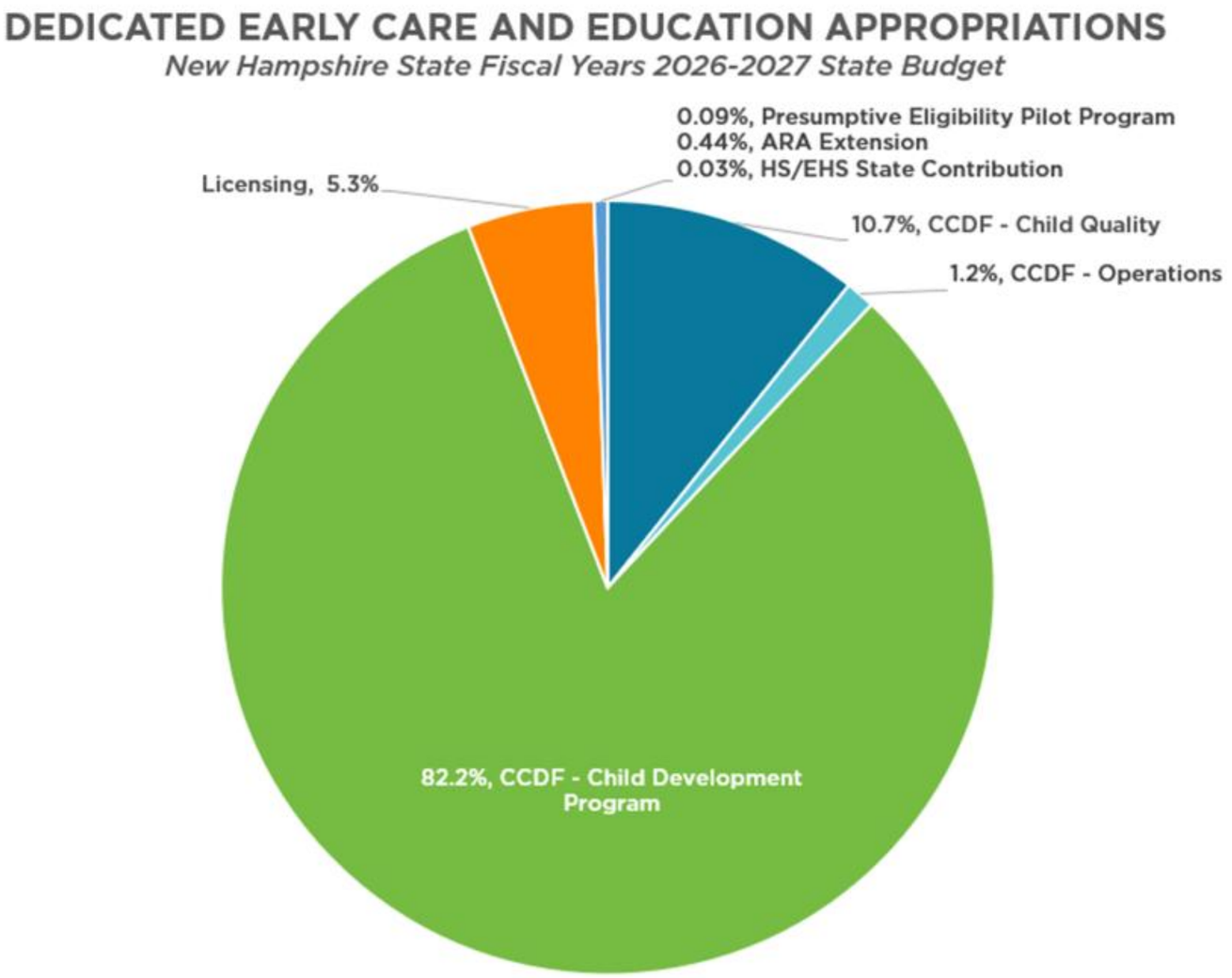
TRACKING PUBLIC FUNDING FOR ECE IS LIMITED

POTENTIAL EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PUBLIC FUNDING STREAMS					
Funding Stream	**Most Recent Full Year Allocation**	**Amount Dedicated to Support Services Delivered in ECE Settings**	**Service Delivery Type**	**Funding Source**	**Service Administrative Entity**
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	$5.7 million (SFY 2027)	Unknown	Direct care	Federal	State designated private Sponsoring Organizations
Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)	$51.3 million (SFY 2027)	100%	Direct care & Systems-building	Federal & State	State Lead Agency (NH DHHS)
Federal emergency relief grants	$476,777 (GY 2025)	100%	Systems-building	Federal	State Lead Agency (NH DHHS)
Head Start and Early Head Start	$23.8 million (GY 2024)	100%	Direct care & systems-building	Federal	Private federal grantee organizations, including Community Action Agencies
Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Part B, Section 619	$1.9 million (SFY 2027)	100%	Direct care	Federal	Local SAUs/LEAs
IDEA, Part C	$2.6 million (SFY 2027)	Unknown	Direct care & Systems-building	Federal	State designated private system area agencies
Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)	$5.1 million (SFY 2027)	Unknown	Systems-building	Federal & State	State designated private agencies
Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)	$10.1 million (SFY 2027)	0%	Direct care & Systems-building	Federal	State Lead Agency (NH DHHS)
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	$38.4 million (GY 2027)	28% (anticipated CCDF transfers)	Direct care & Systems-building	Federal & State	State Lead Agency (NH DHHS)
Title I, Part A	$53 million (SFY 2027)	Unknown	Direct care & Systems-building	Federal	Local SAUs/LEAs
Title IV, Part B, Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)	$7.1 million (SFY 2027)	Unknown	Direct care & Systems-building	Federal	State Lead Agency (NHED)

Note: Funding timeline may vary by funding stream and source of funding. If a funding stream is not currently active in New Hampshire, then the amount dedicated to support early care and education services will reflect N/A status. Grant Year = GY; SFY = State Fiscal Year; LEA = Local Education Agency.

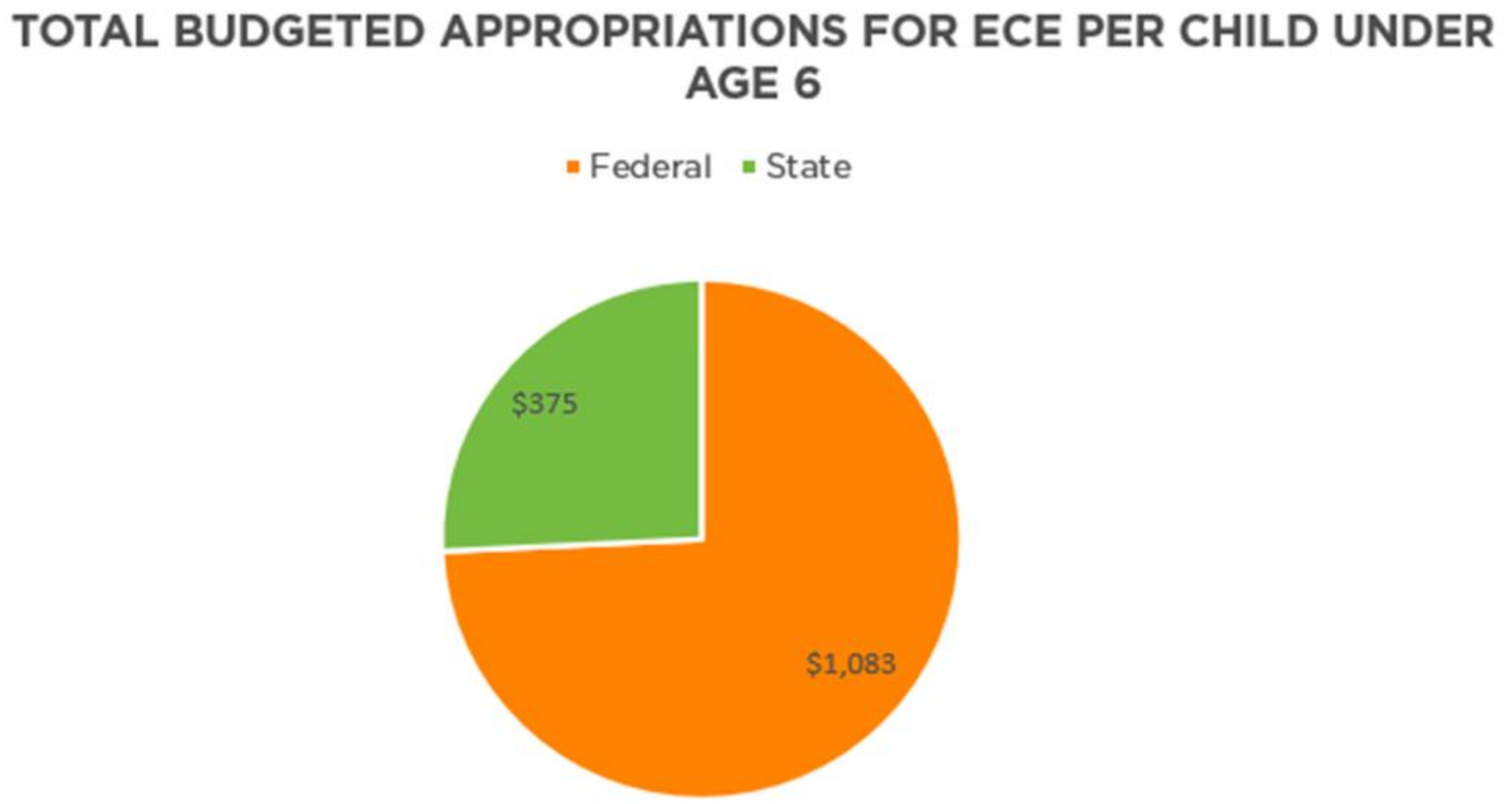
Source: New Hampshire Office of Legislative Budget Assistant, Chapter 140, Laws of 2025; U.S. DHHS, Office of Child Care, GY 2025 & 2026 CCDF Funding Allocations; U.S. DHHS, Head Start Program, Fiscal Year 2024; NH DHHS, Forms & Documents.

MAJORITY OF ECE PUBLIC FUNDING IS CCDF



Notes: Data represents budget appropriations for programs and initiatives dedicated to funding early care and education (ECE) services for children in formal care and education settings. It excludes broader funding streams that may be used to support ECE services but are not exclusively dedicated for this purpose. CCDF = Child Care Development Fund; ARA = American Relief Act; HS/EHS = Head Start/Early Head Start.
Source: New Hampshire Office of Legislative Budget Assistant: Chapter 140, Laws of 2025.

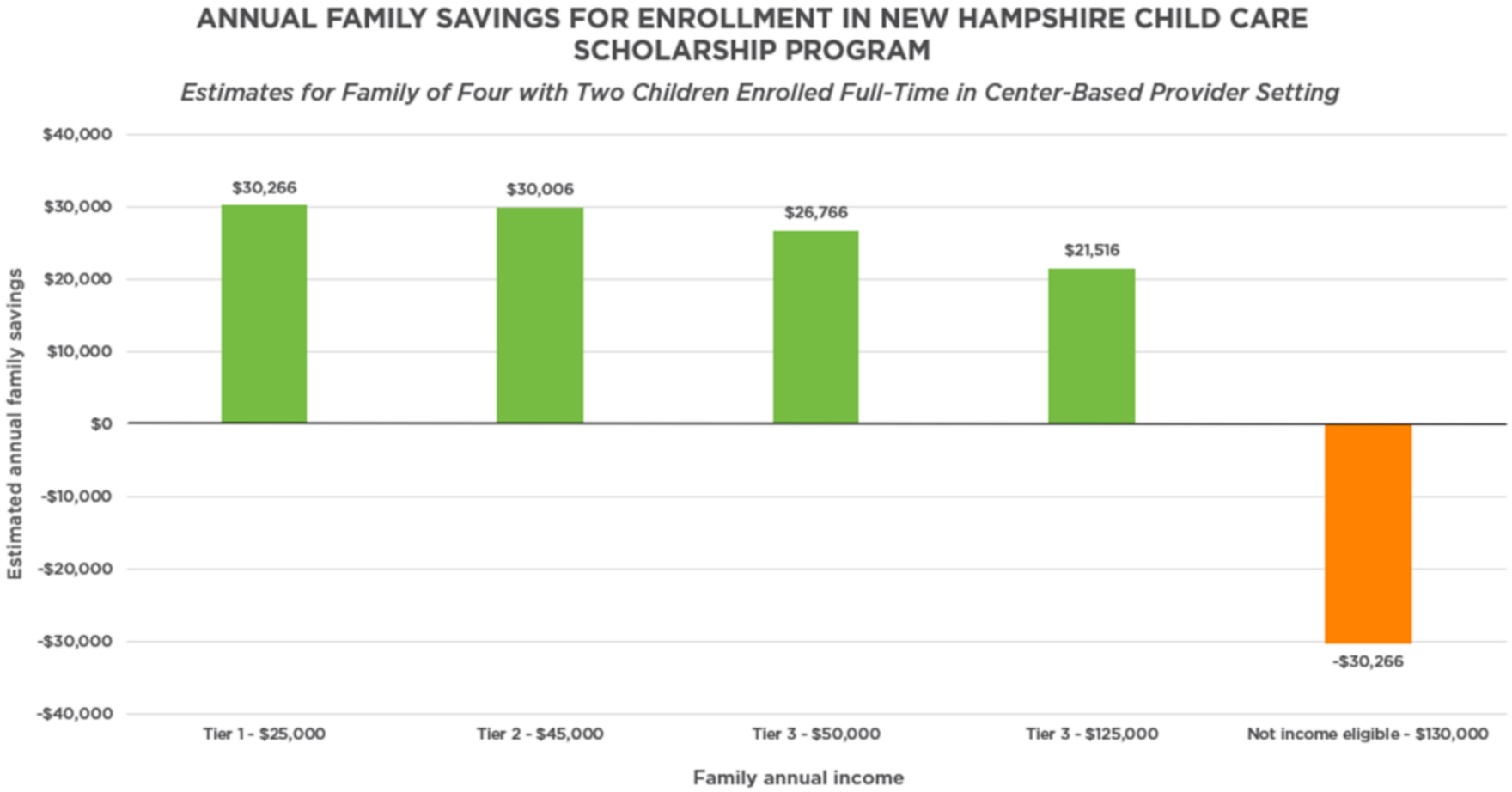
STATE SPENDS JUST $375 PER CHILD ON ECE



Source: New Hampshire Office of Legislative Budget Assistant: Chapter 140, Laws of 2025.

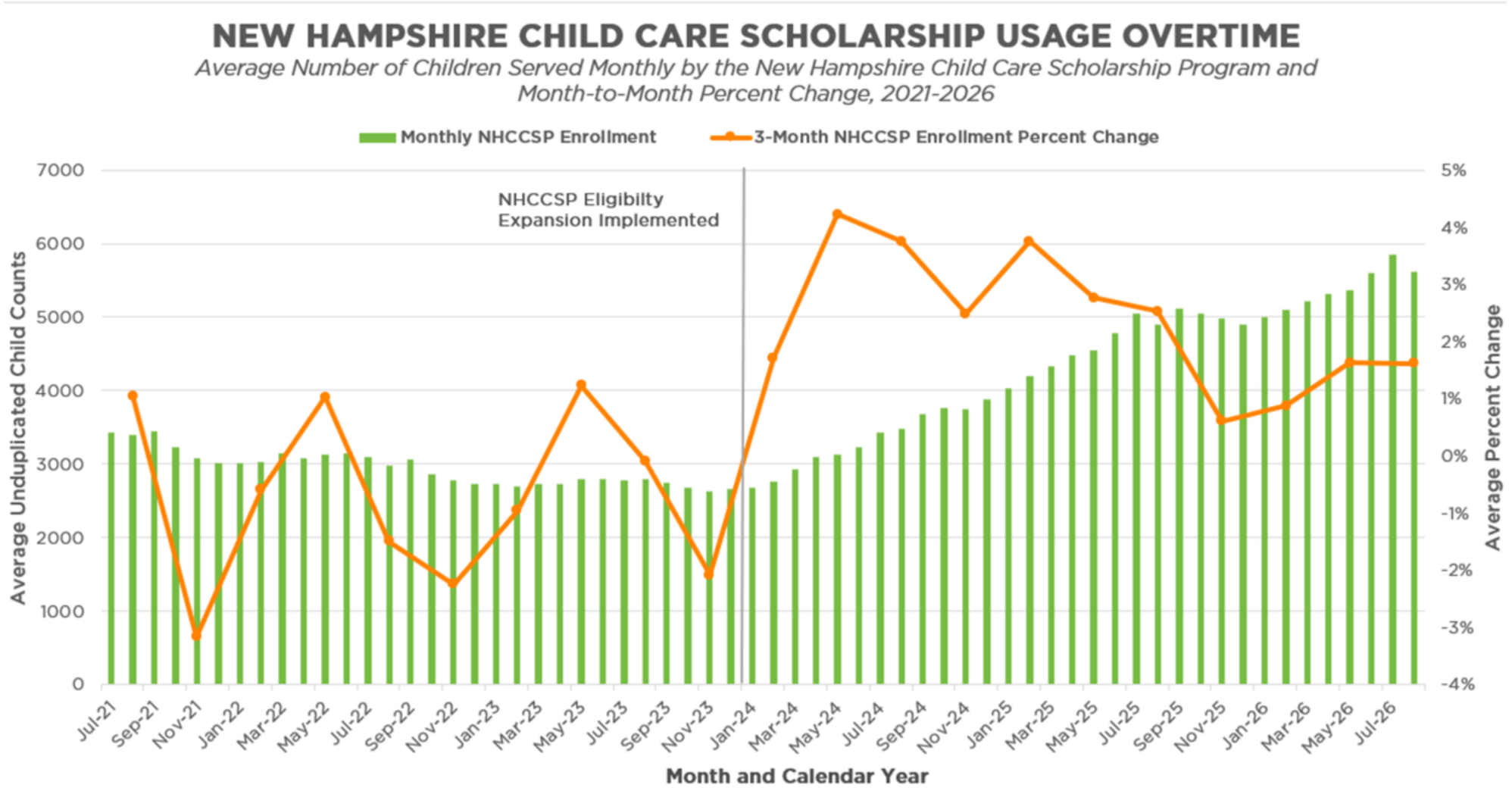
WHAT ABOUT THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM?

FAMILIES SAVE BIG WHEN ENROLLED IN NHCCSP



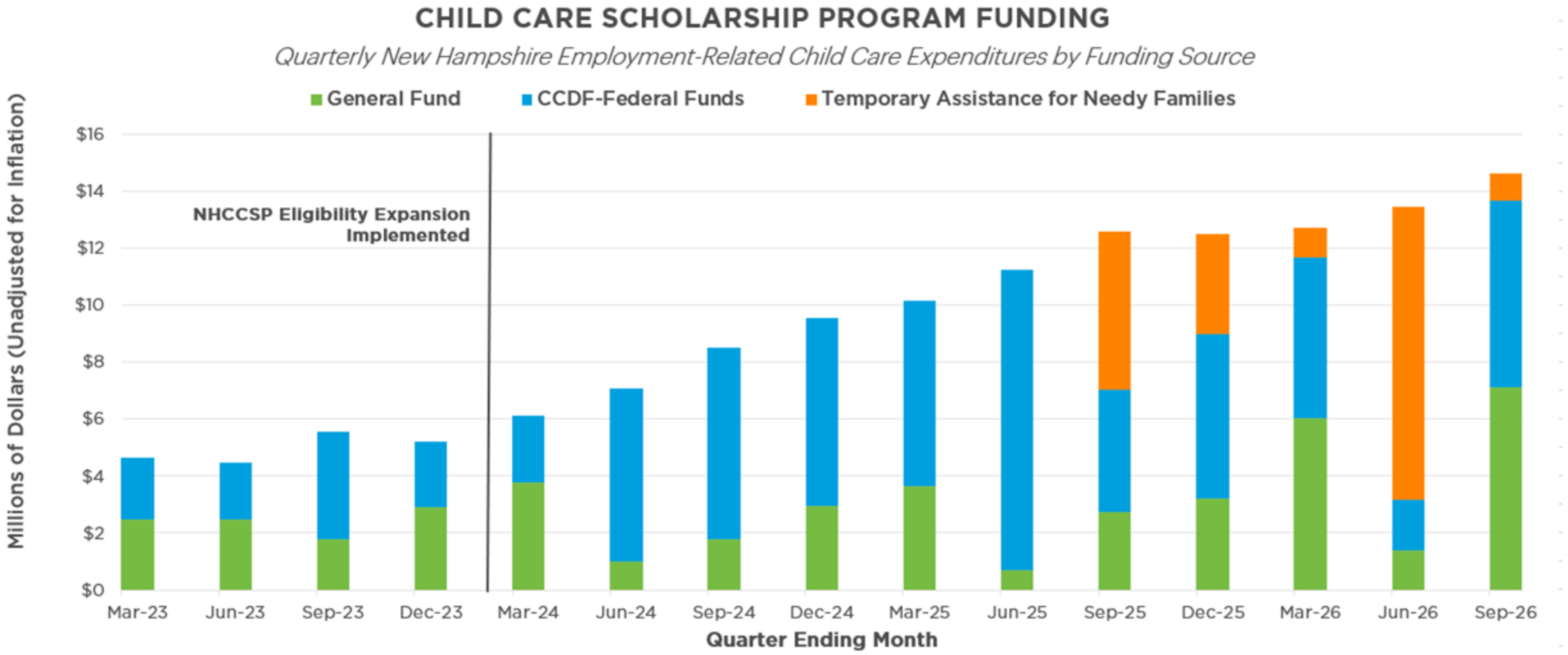
Notes: Tuition prices are based on center-based full-time enrollment for one infant and one preschool-age child and do not account for potential co-pay family may be charged.
Source: NH DHHS Family Assistance Manual, chapter 935, SR 26-17; Child Care Aware of America, Child Care in America: 2025 Price & Supply.

INCREASED NHCCSP ENROLLMENT IN RECENT YEARS



Note: NHCCSP is the New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship Program, which provides subsidies to help families access and afford child care services.
Source: New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services.

INCREASED RELIANCE ON TANF FUNDING FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Note: CCDF is the Child Care and Development Fund, a federal block grant funding source.
Sources: New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Fiscal Committe Items FIS 23-305, 24-292, 25-227, 25-293

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Prices for early care and education are high relative to incomes, and have continued to increase in recent years, outpacing inflation
- The shortage of child care slots in New Hampshire relative to demand likely has significant costs for household incomes, business revenues, and the overall economy
- The New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship Program helps families access care, but faces significant funding constraints following program expansion
- Funding streams for early care and education can be very complex, with a wide variety of potential public funding sources, but with most providing a limited amount relative to cost and compared to family tuition payments

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NH EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY ROUNDTABLE

The Rise of Challenging Behaviors in Early Childhood Settings

Stefanie Wieder, M.S.Ed

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What do we mean by “challenging behavior?”

- **Safety concerns**
- **Interfere with learning or positive social interactions**
  - Biting
  - Hitting / kicking
  - Tantrums / poor emotional regulation
  - Eloping
  - Damaging classroom materials

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Has there been an increase in challenging behavior?

3x

Higher exclusion rate in early childhood vs. K–12

National benchmark reflected across NH programs

Higher Intensity

Hitting, biting, eloping, and room destruction

Earlier Onset

Spiking among 2- and 3-year-olds

“Soft Expulsions”

Reduced hours and frequent early parent pick-ups

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Why is this happening?

Behavior is communication

Unmet Needs / Overload



- **Biting**
- **Hitting / kicking**
- **Tantrums / poor emotional regulation**
- **Eloping**
- **Damaging classroom materials**

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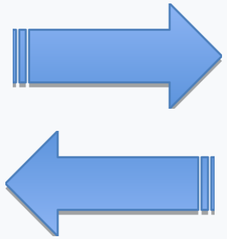
Are the kids alright…?

CHILD & FAMILY FACTORS

- Developmental & speech delays due to increased screen time & overscheduling
- Neurodivergence & sensory overload / long waitlists for access to services
- Early trauma
- Family stress



CLASSROOM CONDITIONS

- Large group sizes & high noise
- Chronic staffing shortages due to low pay & stressful work conditions
- Inadequate teacher training
- Pandemic effect on young teachers' executive functioning skills

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Three proven pillars reduce expulsions & burnout

01

Tiered Prevention

Teach social-emotional skills to every child before crises start.

02

Practice-Based Coaching

In-classroom modeling vs. one-off Saturday workshops.

03

Mental Health Consultation

Rapid clinical support during acute classroom crises.

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Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ) Overview

Voluntary Quality System

TWO PATHWAYS:

Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

Physical space, health, safety & routines (All ages)

Pyramid Model (PM) Pathway

Social-emotional health & behavior (Ages 6 wks – 5 yrs)

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The Pyramid Model prevents expulsions at every tier



PROVEN FIDELITY OUTCOMES

↓ Challenging Behaviors

Fewer classroom safety incidents

↓ Preschool Expulsions

More children stay in care

↓ Educator Burnout

Higher teacher confidence & retention

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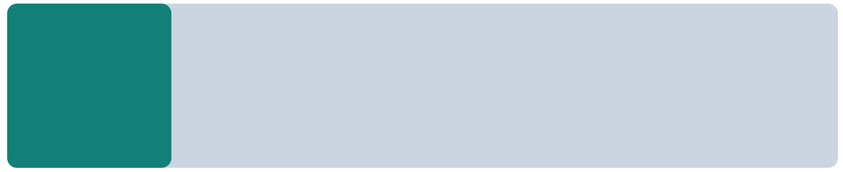
So what's the problem?



~132 of 700+ Enrolled

Voluntary Quality System (Steps 1–4)

80% of licensed NH programs sit outside the GSQ

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Structural barriers that block NH directors from GSQ & PM

1. Speed Mismatch

12 month wait for new programs; lengthy wait to get a coach

2. Expense of Climbing GSQ Ladder

Financial incentives for climbing the latter don’t cover the cost

3. Conflicting Regulations

Conflicting rules bump teachers and programs off GSQ ladder

4. State Contract Instability

Executive Council delays & DHHS turnover erode trust

5. Age-5 Cutoff

School-age programs cannot access Pyramid Model at all

6. Lack of bandwidth

Program directors are in classrooms covering for teachers

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Impact on NH state economy…and on our children's welfare

Teachers Burn Out → **Classrooms Destabilize** → **Children Expelled** → **NH Parents Exit Workforce**

THE ULTIMATE FIXES

- ✓ Troubleshoot the GSQ and strengthen access to PM (this will cost $)
- ✓ Improve initial teacher training / increase requirements
- ✓ Improve teacher pay and benefits
- ✓ Lower cost for families

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Save the Children
Action Network ™

Advocacy Skills:

Crafting Your Story for Advocacy



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Creating Bi-Partisan Support for Children in the U.S. and Globally

Kids can’t vote, and they don’t give money to political candidates.

That’s why they need **your voice**!



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SCAN'S KEY ISSUES

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Expand access to quality early education nationwide, recognizing that early learning sets the foundation for a child's future success.



CHILD HUNGER

Combat food insecurity to ensure children receive the nutrition they need to grow and thrive.



CHILDREN IN CRISIS

Protect children's rights to physical and emotional safety during crises, ensuring they receive necessary support and protection.

ADVOCACY

Actions that aim to change thoughts, attitudes, procedures, or practices

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POLICY ADVOCACY

The process of influencing decision makers to support public policy change

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ANYONE WHO
believes every
child deserves
A STRONG
start in life
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WHY DO WE USE STORIES IN OUR ADVOCACY WORK?

Listen to each approach. What do you remember?

JUST THE FACTS

- My current child care center was closing at the end of the month.
- The new center I will be using opens at 6:30 a.m.
- This center is 20 minutes from my office.
- My standard work hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- My supervisor addresses repeated tardiness but has approved reasonable schedule adjustments for others to meet their personal needs.

THE STORY BEHIND THE FACTS

Context changes how the request is understood

My child care center is closing at the end of the month, and the only available option I found opened at 6:30 a.m. and was 20 minutes from work. On paper, that gives me 10 minutes to complete drop off and arrive by 7:00.

But drop off is not as simple as leaving my child at the door. I may need to wait for the classroom to open, sign my child in, put away their belongings, speak with the teacher, or help my child through a difficult goodbye. Even a small delay could make me late, despite leaving home as early as possible.

I value being dependable and want to address the issue before tardiness becomes a problem. I am requesting a schedule adjustment to 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. This would give me enough time to complete drop off safely and arrive consistently while still working my full scheduled hours.

BUILDING YOUR STORY

01	Focus your advocacy	Identify the issue you are building your story around.
02	Choose one moment	Identify an experience that shaped why you care.
03	Identify the facts	Choose the essential information that clarifies the moment.
04	Build the story	Organize the challenge, the choice, and the outcome.

STEP 1: FOCUS YOUR ADVOCACY

01 Focus your advocacy

- **Which issue do you want to talk about?**

  Choose an ECE issue that connects most clearly to your experience.

- **What do you want the listener to understand?**

  Name the main idea before you begin writing the story.

STEP 2: CHOOSE ONE MOMENT

02 Choose one moment

A broad issue

Child care is difficult to find and afford.

One moment

The morning your child care arrangement fell through before work.

Where were you? What happened? Who was affected?

STEP 3: ESSENTIAL FACTS

03 Identify the facts

WHO AND WHAT

Who was involved? What happened?

WHEN AND WHERE

When and where did the moment happen?

KEY DETAILS

Which dates, costs, distances, or other details clarify the challenge?

Keep the facts that clarify the moment. Leave out details that distract from it.

STEP 4: BUILD THE STORY

01

CHALLENGE

What happened?
What was at stake?

02

CHOICE

How did you respond?
What guided that choice?

03

OUTCOME

What changed?
Why does it matter now?

The outcome may be a result, a realization, or a reason you advocate for this issue.

SHARING YOUR STORY FOR POLICY ADVOCACY

- Public Speaking
- Lawmaker Meeting
- Letter to the Editor
- Media and Publications
- Peer to Peer Advocacy
- Social Media





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RELATIONAL ORGANIZING



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What is Relational Organizing?

Hint: You do this already!



Advocate's friend

Advocate's friend

Advocate's friend

Advocate's friend

Advocate's friend

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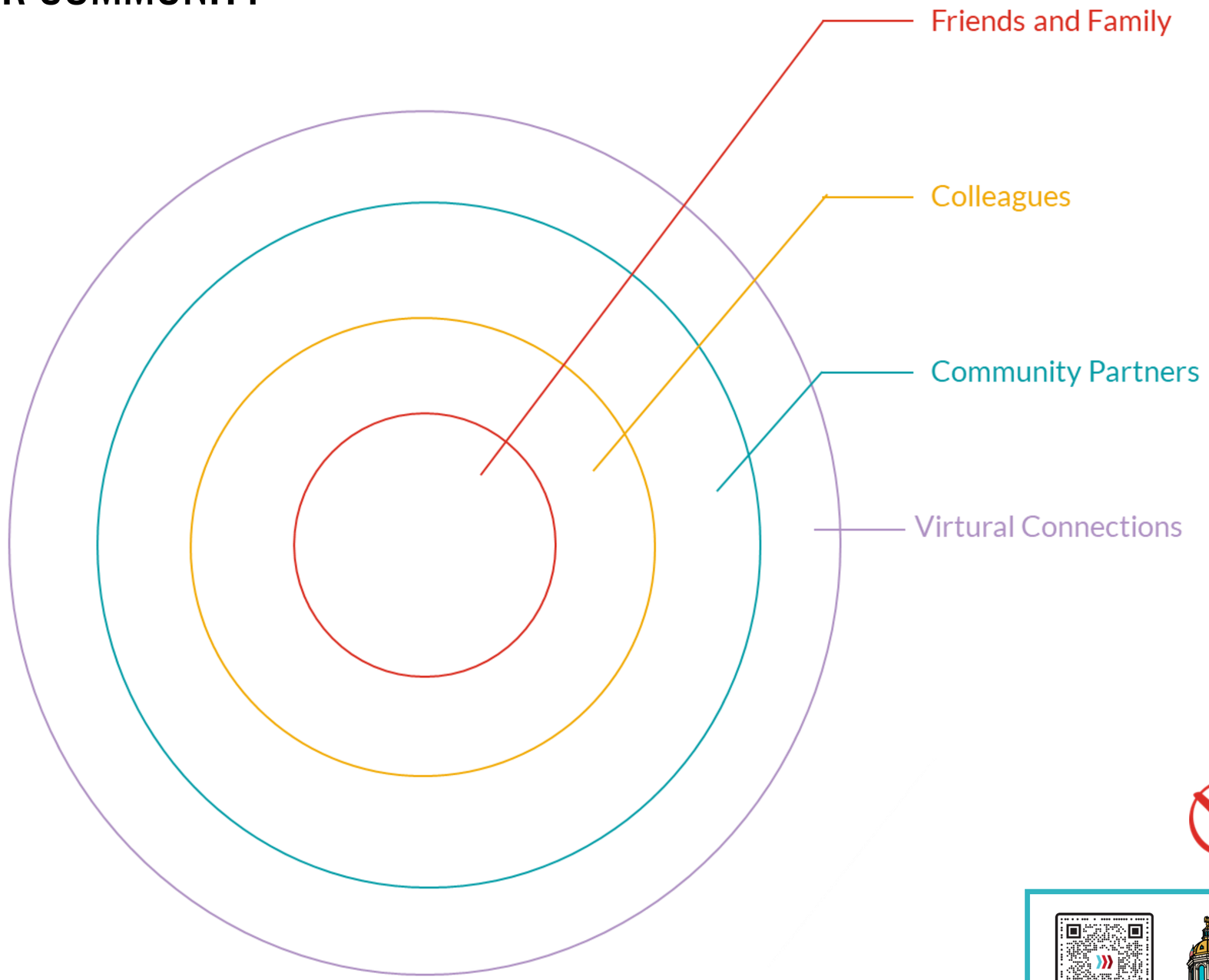
IDENTIFY YOUR COMMUNITY



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Who in your community is passionate about early childhood education and nutrition?



Helpful Skills for Advocates

- Communication
- Persuasion
- Public Speaking
- Organization
- Writing
- Research

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YOUR STORY HAS A PURPOSE

KEEP TELLING IT. KEEP ADVOCATING.





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Questions?



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Advocating for a Healthy NH

Opportunities for Engagement



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Writing for **change**

LTE or Op-ed

Letter to the Editor is usually 250 words while Op-ed are about 800 targeting legislators and the public

Email your Legislator

Make subject line searchable (constituent of town, Bill # and Issue) and personalize your message

Written Testimony

State your position and print out copies to deliver in person or email entire committee through gen-court website



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Using your **voice**

Testifying
Prepare bullet points and print copies for committee members

Calling your Legislator
Prepare a concise message and leave a message on voicemail, or if staff or family answers

Social Media
Share information and ways to advocate with your network to raise awareness

Remote Sign-in
GenCourt website has senate and house links where you can input the hearing information to state your position on the bill



Sign Up for **Action Alerts**



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