



## 2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 1196

April 9, 2024 - Introduced by Representative STUBBS, cosponsored by Senator LARSON. Referred to Committee on Children and Families.

1     **AN ACT to create** 15.207 (20), 48.47 (20) and 48.6595 of the statutes; **relating**  
2             **to:** creation of the council on child care availability and reporting on the cost of  
3             child care.

---

### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill creates a council on child care availability, to be housed in the Department of Children and Families. The council is charged with studying various issues related to the establishment of a free and universal child care system within the state and with making an annual report to the legislature and governor with recommendations for how to establish and pay for the free and universal child care system.

Under the bill, DCF is required to create a biennial report detailing the actual cost of child care, broken out by the type of care provided and compared to the child care rates established by DCF under current law.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

---

*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

4             **SECTION 1.** 15.207 (20) of the statutes is created to read:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 1196****SECTION 1**

1           15.207 (20) COUNCIL ON CHILD CARE AVAILABILITY. There is created in the  
2 department of children and families a council on child care availability. The council  
3 shall consist of the following members:

4           (a) The secretary of children and families and the secretary of workforce  
5 development, or their designees, and a representative from the office of the governor  
6 who shall serve as cochairpersons of the council.

7           (b) Three individuals appointed by the speaker of the assembly, at least one of  
8 whom is a parent who has participated in the Wisconsin Shares program.

9           (c) Three individuals appointed by the assembly minority leader, at least one  
10 of whom is a parent who has participated in the Wisconsin Shares program.

11           (d) Three individuals appointed by the president of the senate, at least one of  
12 whom is a parent who has participated in the Wisconsin Shares program.

13           (e) Three individuals appointed by the senate minority leader, at least one of  
14 whom is a parent who has participated in the Wisconsin Shares program.

15           (f) Two representatives of a child care resource and referral agency.

16           (g) Two representatives of home-based child care providers.

17           (h) Two representatives of center-based child care providers.

18           (i) Two representatives from the business community.

19           (j) Two representatives from unions that represent child care providers.

20           (k) At least one representative from each of the following entities:

21           1. The department of children and families.

22           2. The department of revenue.

23           3. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

24           4. The University of Wisconsin System.

25           5. The technical college system.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 1196****SECTION 1**

1           6. The department of public instruction.

2           7. A county social services agency or an entity that advocates on behalf of social  
3 services or county governments.

4           8. A nonprofit child care advocacy organization.

5           **SECTION 2.** 48.47 (20) of the statutes is created to read:

6           48.47 (20) REPORT ON THE COST OF CHILD CARE. Biennially, prepare a report  
7 detailing the actual cost providers incur when providing child care. The department  
8 shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor and to the appropriate  
9 standing committees of the legislature under s. 13.172 (3) no later than July 1, 2024  
10 and by July 1 of each even-numbered year thereafter, and shall post the report on  
11 its publicly available website. The report shall include:

12           (a) Detailed cost data for each setting, age group, care provided to children with  
13 special needs, and any other grouping for which a separate cost estimation is  
14 appropriate.

15           (b) The level of quality care available for each setting, as determined by the  
16 quality rating system under s. 48.659.

17           (c) A description of the major cost drivers for providing care.

18           (d) A comparison of the costs of child care for each grouping to the child care  
19 rates established under s. 49.155 (6).

20           **SECTION 3.** 48.6595 of the statutes is created to read:

21           **48.6595 Council on child care availability.** (1) The council on child care  
22 availability shall advise the state in developing a system of free and universal child  
23 care using existing state and federal resources and shall make recommendations  
24 based on its study of all of the following:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 1196****SECTION 3**

1 (a) How to implement a universal child care system that is free at the point of  
2 service for all families and that delivers high-quality child care to all residents of this  
3 state, with a 4-year phase-in, taking into account the following priorities and  
4 principles:

5 1. Expansions of subsidized care are targeted to first cover low-income  
6 families, historically underserved communities, and families facing complex needs,  
7 including children with disabilities and child welfare involvement.

8 2. Work requirements, activities tests, and immigration status requirements  
9 for low-income families are all eliminated.

10 3. The phase-in takes all reasonable steps to avoid benefit cliffs.

11 4. Reasonable steps are taken to guard against increases in costs for  
12 middle-income families.

13 5. Roll-out of universal child care is coordinated with expansions of universal  
14 preschool programs so that such programs do not cause unintentional harm to child  
15 care providers.

16 (b) How to eliminate the barriers that eligible families face in obtaining or  
17 utilizing child care subsidies.

18 (c) How to ensure the availability of child care for nontraditional work hours,  
19 and identification of the funding that would be needed to expand facilities that cover  
20 nontraditional work hours.

21 (d) Whether parents are voluntarily leaving the workforce due to lack of child  
22 care, and the demographic information of such parents, if known.

23 (e) Whether employers have identified a lack of child care as a reason for a  
24 shortage of a qualified workforce.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 1196**

- 1 (f) The impact of child care, or lack thereof, on economic development  
2 throughout the state.
- 3 (g) Availability of quality child care by region, including identification of  
4 underserved communities and recommendations for making available free,  
5 high-quality child care in such communities.
- 6 (h) Whether regulatory or statutory changes could promote free and universal  
7 access to high-quality child care and improve health and safety standards in child  
8 care programs.
- 9 (i) Incentives to institutions that offer child care to increase universal and free  
10 child care.
- 11 (j) The existence of unlicensed or unregulated child care providers, the labor  
12 conditions of employees at such facilities, and regulatory recommendations for  
13 approaching such providers.
- 14 (k) Disparities in the quality of child care provided to families of different  
15 economic backgrounds, different geographic regions, and the funding needed to  
16 provide high-quality child care for all.
- 17 (L) The factors contributing to the success of expanding universal preschool  
18 programs in the state and the potential unintended consequences impacting child  
19 care providers, particularly family-based providers.
- 20 (m) The availability of a searchable database of child care providers, and  
21 recommendations for improvement of the database.
- 22 (n) The availability of funds for child care infrastructure development.
- 23 (o) The creation of an office of early education within the department.
- 24 (p) Ways to address concerns identified by the council.
- 25 (q) Anything else the council deems necessary.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 1196****SECTION 3**

1           **(2)** Beginning 2 years after the effective date of this subsection .... [LRB inserts  
2           date], the council shall report its findings and recommendations annually to the  
3           governor and to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature under s.  
4           13.172 (3). The council shall include the following in its report:

5           (a) Specific recommendations to develop and implement a free and universal  
6           child care system with a 4-year phase-in.

7           (b) Recommendations for budget allocations to fund the free and universal  
8           child care system, including wage increases for child care workers that allow them  
9           to achieve pay parity with public school teachers, capital expenditures to allow for  
10          the expansion of child care infrastructure into communities most in need, and  
11          startup funds to allow for the creation of new child care programs in child care  
12          deserts.

13          (c) Recommendations for maximizing the allocation of federal funds, as well as  
14          supplemental funding from the state that would allow for a free and universal child  
15          care system.

16          (d) Recommendations for the integration of child care programs into existing  
17          public programs, such as public schools, public universities, and public housing, to  
18          deliver high-quality child care to all residents.

19          **(3)** Each year, the taskforce shall provide a score card stating how close the  
20          state is to achieving a high-quality universal child care system. Council members  
21          who are members of the legislature or who are employees of the governor's office or  
22          the legislature shall recuse themselves from the rating process.

23

**(END)**