



Charleston County School District
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Media Release

CCSD's Expanded Employee Childcare a Continuing Success - Efforts Underway to Add More Sites

Charleston, SC (September 23, 2025) - In 2021, Charleston County School District (CCSD) launched its first [employee childcare](#) pilot at Charleston Progressive Academy, developed through the D20 Principal Collaborative. The pilot program was immediately successful, with all of the spaces filled and a waitlist. Its role in supporting our teachers while strengthening teacher retention has since made it a budget priority.

The average cost of daycare in the tri-county area can be \$1,300 a month, depending on the region. The cost to CCSD teachers to send their children to district-run sites is \$700 a month.

"Offering affordable childcare to our employees is just one way that CCSD values the time and commitment teachers give to the students in our district," said Kimberly Foxworth, CCSD's Executive Director, Early Childhood School Readiness Programs.

Ukecia Gilmore is a teacher at North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School, and this is the second year in a row that she and her husband have utilized the daycare program for their child, who attends North Charleston Elementary School. She said it gives her peace of mind knowing her child is just blocks away from where she works, and for her husband, who is a teacher at North Charleston Elementary School.

"This has been a blessing for our family because it has eased the financial burden and provided a location that is convenient," said Gilmore. "My husband and I can also better focus on our jobs as educators because we know and trust her teachers. I can relax and teach, and focus on my students' needs."

Since its 2021 launch, the program has expanded beyond Charleston Progressive Academy to include North Charleston Elementary. This year, the district opened its first Mount Pleasant site at Laurel Hill Primary School. In addition, West Ashley High School houses a program for employees' children who are 3 and 4 years old.

Parents Katherine and Adam Simbek are both teachers at Wando High School. They have two young children who attend the daycare program at Laurel Hill. Katherine said the convenience and affordability allow her to focus on her work as an educator and eliminate the stress of finding options that her budget can support.

"Daycare options in Mount Pleasant, which is where we work, are out of reach for us financially," said Katherine. "My husband and I would both have to get a second job to afford it. We appreciate the district providing this option and look forward to the daycare program's expansion to more sites. This will definitely play a role in continued teacher retention."

Teachers have reported that the program significantly reduces financial stress, allows them to focus on their profession, and provides comfort in knowing their children are cared for nearby.

"Teachers are best supported when they have what they need," Superintendent Anita Huggins said. "As a district, our mission is centered on supporting students, and one of the best ways we do that is by supporting our educators and staff who serve them. Providing access to affordable childcare for our employees directly impacts their ability to focus on teaching and learning, knowing their own children are cared for in a safe, nurturing environment. When we reduce barriers for our staff, we strengthen teacher retention, improve morale, and ultimately create more student stability."

Even more special for the Simbeck family is that Laurel Hill is where the children will attend when it is time for kindergarten.

Principal Sims refers to the infants and toddlers as the school's 'littlest Loggerheads.' In their classes, the children are learning and rowing so that they will be adequately prepared for kindergarten. Katherine calls it a win-win for her children and the district.

"This is not just daycare," said Katherine. "My children are getting a quality education."

Gilmore agrees.

"It is important to continue to expand employee childcare because so many other teachers could benefit from this," Gilmore added. "It will keep quality educators in the district where the cost of living is ever-increasing. It's also a blessing for our family because as educators, my husband and I want her to be here learning, and she is. It is heartwarming as an educator to know that she is growing and evolving thanks to her teachers."

Given the program's success as both a childcare solution and a teacher retention tool, CCSD is exploring the creation of additional sites. With the backing of the Board of Trustees, district leaders plan to expand access over the next several years to ensure more educators can benefit.

For more information, contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.