

Promoting High-Quality Early Childhood Education for Flint, Michigan Preschoolers

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Executive Summary

A court-ordered settlement from the *Davis v. State of Michigan* case called for an analysis of the true cost to provide high-quality early childhood education (ECE) services for all Flint's 3- and 4-year-old children. The goal of this estimate is to inform sustainable funding and system improvements that ensure full access and equitable resource allocation for preschool programs in Flint.

Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) to conduct a study with two principal goals:

1. Estimating Childcare Needs for Flint's 3- to 4-Year-Olds: Tasks under this goal included
 - a. determining the universe of 3- and 4-year-olds residing in the city of Flint,
 - b. estimating the number of 3- and 4-year-olds currently served,
 - c. documenting the quality rating of early education, and
 - d. documenting the need for additional preschool classrooms that meet high-quality standards.
2. Cost Study of High-Quality Childcare in Flint. Associated tasks included
 - a. determining the resources needed to bring all existing and additional programs to accepted high-quality standards, and
 - b. documenting the funding needed to provide ECE to all 3-4 year olds (whether through existing or new programs) and bringing all existing programs to accepted high-quality standards.

In addition, AIR was asked to support GISD's planning efforts for new ECE slots. Section 1 of this report addresses Goals 1 and 2 (estimating need and costs); Section 2 presents a communications and outreach strategy; Section 3 sets forth a tentative plan to support greater access to transportation; Section 4 outlines a preliminary timeline for reaching the goal of universal access to high-quality ECE. The report also includes references and a technical appendix with additional methodological details.

According to AIR estimates, approximately 542 three- to 4-year-olds living in Flint are not currently enrolled in high-quality ECE programs. The per-child cost of providing high quality ECE varies depending on program type and the conservatism of cost assumptions, ranging from roughly \$10,000 to \$21,000 per child for high-quality private programs and \$14,000 to \$22,000

for public programs. The aggregate estimated costs of providing this universal access thus range between \$6 million and \$12 million per year, excepting transportation and family outreach costs. AIR also recommends that GISD adopt an aggressive parent outreach plan based on nationally recognized best practices. Further, GISD should assess the need for additional school bus routes, and work with community partners to support greater access to convenient transportation to child care for low-income parents. Should these steps be taken, we believe that GISD could make substantial progress in improving access to high-quality ECE within a mixed-delivery system by the 2027–28 school year.

Section 1. Estimating the Cost of Providing High-Quality Early Childhood Education for All 3- to 4-Year-Olds in Flint

Flint, Michigan is already home to several publicly funded ECE programs that serve 3- and 4-year-olds. Michigan has embarked on a PreK for All initiative that includes expanding free existing high-quality programs, such as the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). The GSRP, administered by the Michigan Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) Office of Early Education, aims to provide high-quality early childhood education (ECE) programming that prepares children for kindergarten and beyond. While all 4-year-olds have access to free PreK through the GSRP, enrollment priority is given to those at or below the federal poverty limit. In addition, Flint is home to Head Start and Early Head Start programs. There are also several private licensed child care providers in Flint with high ratings through the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

Michigan's state-funded PreK program for 4-year-olds. The GSRP is designed to prepare children for kindergarten by supporting their learning, social skills, and development.

The purpose of the cost analysis is to estimate the number of children who are not currently served by these high-quality public and private programs and to estimate the per-child and aggregate cost of providing these services to all currently unserved children.

The AIR study team reviewed policy documents (e.g., Great Start to Quality Indicators, basic licensing requirements), conducted formal interviews with program leaders, held informal discussions with Great Start to Quality and GISD staff, and leveraged extant data (e.g., Provider Cost of Quality Calculator [PCQC], Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT] Living Wage Calculator) to produce a range of per-child cost estimates for implementing a GSRP-quality program that would be available universally to preschoolers in Flint through both private child care centers and public schools.

We developed different tiers on the basis of program type (private or public) and assumptions about the cost to provide high-quality care. We developed a total of five different tiers: high, medium, and low tiers for private programs, and a high and low tier for public programs. Because there is less variation in personnel costs for public programs, there is no "medium" tier for those programs.

The range of estimates produced across tiers provide GISD concrete cost data with which to plan supporting greater ECE for Flint 3- to 4-year olds-within a mixed-delivery system. The inputs that varied across the tiers in private and public programs included wages, benefits,

weekly instructional time, annual instructional/care time, margin, and paid time off.¹ All other inputs (e.g., insurance, materials and equipment, operational expenses) remain the same across all tiers in both public and private setting estimates. A summary of variation of inputs across tiers can be found in Exhibit 1, and a more comprehensive description can be found in the “Cost Estimates” subsection.

The estimated per-student cost of care across tiers ranges from \$10,219 (Tier 3) and \$20,942 (Tier 1) in the private setting and \$14,436 (Tier 3) and \$22,495 (Tier 1) in the public setting. These per-child cost estimates represent the value of resources that are likely needed to provide ECE within each tier and setting, according to the tier-specific set of assumptions and other resources that we know are needed regardless of tier or setting. Using a mix of administrative and public data, the estimated unmet need was calculated as the difference between the estimated number of children enrolled in public PreK or high-quality private child MIT Living Wage Calculator care programs and the estimated total number of children likely in need of care. When we multiply per-child costs by the number of children lacking access to high-quality care, we find that the overall cost to serve unserved children within each tier would range from \$5.5 million to \$11.4 million in private settings and \$7.8 million to \$12.2 million in public settings.

Exhibit 1. summarizes the inputs that were varied across settings and tiers, the associated per-child estimated cost, and the total cost if all unserved children were served in the associated tier.

¹ Because GSRP teachers in public settings are required to be paid on the Flint K–12 salary and the inclusion of a margin is inappropriate for public programs generally, public program costs estimates are only available for Tiers 1 and 3.

Exhibit 1. Assumptions and Associated per-Child Cost Estimates, by Setting and Tier

Private programs

Inputs	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Wages	Flint K–12 salary	MIT Living Wage	MIT Living Wage
Benefits	Included	Included	Not Included
Weekly instruction time	Five 10-hour days	Five 10-hour days	Four 7-hour days
Annual instruction/care time	50-week program	50-week program	36-week program
Margin	Included	Included	Not included
Paid time off	3 weeks annually	3 weeks annually	2 weeks annually
Per-child cost estimate	\$20,942	\$18,741	\$10,219
Overall cost of unserved	\$11.4 million	\$10.2 million	\$5.5 million

Public programs

Inputs	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Wages	Flint K–12 salary	N/A	Flint K–12 Salary
Benefits	Included	N/A	Included
Weekly instruction time	Five 10-hour days	N/A	Four 7-hour days
Annual instruction/care time	50-week program	N/A	36-week program
Margin	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paid time off	3 weeks annually	N/A	2 weeks annually
Per-child cost estimate	\$22,495	N/A	\$14,436
Overall cost of unserved	\$12.2 million	N/A	\$7.8 million

Note. MIT = Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Costs are rounded to the nearest dollar and represent 2024 dollars.

This section of the report summarizes the methodology and data used to produce these cost estimates. Methodological details are included in Appendix B, with pricing sources and resource assumptions.

Methodology

The AIR team applied the ingredients approach (Levin et al., 2018) whenever possible to estimate the value of resources used in the implementation of a high-quality PreK program in public and private Flint programs. The ingredients approach is a method used widely in social

science to produce robust cost estimates by valuing all ingredients used in program or policy implementation to thus understand its total cost. To use the ingredients approach, we first identified the resources (or ingredients) used to implement a specific program (in this case, the GSRP). A review of basic licensing and GSRP regulations, interviews with program leaders, and our prior work in estimating the costs of child care programs were used to identify both the quantities (e.g., number of staff hours, square footage of facility) and the qualities (e.g., staff credentials, program facility specifications). Information about the qualities of each resource was then used to identify accurate pricing for each resource used in the provision of GSRP care. Pricing data sources included the MIT Living Wage Calculator, the Provider Cost of Quality Care (PCQC) calculator, and so forth. Prices are then multiplied by quantities to generate overall cost, which is then divided to produce the per-child cost estimate.

Some resources were used at the child level (e.g., the cost of food), and some resources were priced at a per-child level in the pricing sources we used (e.g., the PCQC includes the cost of educational materials and insurance at the per-child level). Resources with per-child consumption or pricing were summed and included in the overall per-child cost estimate.

Some resources were used by an entire classroom (e.g., teacher time, classroom space). Costs of classroom-level resources were divided by an assumed classroom of twenty 3- and 4-year-old children served in a GSRP classroom (with one lead teacher and one assistant teacher).

Other resources were used at the program level (e.g., the time of a program director and assistant director). The costs of these resources were divided across the average total number of children (regardless of age) in any program (based on the 2023 Market Rate Survey of all Flint child care programs), then added to the per-child cost estimates for 3- and 4-year-olds in the GSRP program. Pricing information for each resource can be found in Appendix B.

Data

A variety of sources were used to inform the development of tiers and the associated cost estimates. Both general licensing regulations and the Great Start to Quality Indicators were reviewed carefully to understand the resources that were required to provide child care at a basic level, and what was required to provide high-quality care that met the GRSP standards. For example, the staff qualifications in the general licensing criteria, in combination with the required annual professional development, helped identify the wages used in each care tier. A review of these documents also revealed critical information used in the cost estimates. For example, information about the approved curricular materials and educational screeners helped us identify accurate pricing for these resources.

PCQC was used to identify pricing information for a variety of nonpersonnel resources, including insurance, facilities, educational supplies, and maintenance.² The PCQC was also used to estimate the wage differential across staff positions (e.g., lead teacher, assistant teacher, center director). The PCQC included wage information based on Michigan state averages, which did not seem to accurately reflect the likely wages in Flint. We therefore analyzed the Flint Community Schools K–12 Collective Bargaining Agreement and the MIT Living Wage calculator (for Flint) to triangulate what appropriate wages would be for a sustainable high-quality program.³

Formal interviews with program leaders were used to check assumptions regarding resources used for high-quality care, whereas while informal discussions with GISD staff helped ensure that our assumptions across the three tiers did not contradict any existing guidance or regulations. The specific data sources used for each resource implicated in the cost estimates can be found in Appendix B.

Cost Estimates

Per-child costs were estimated for multiple scenarios, each of which was based on a plausible assumption. To meet the goal of providing high-quality child care to all 3- to 4-year-olds in Flint, GISD and other stakeholders must make important choices in specifying this goal. This analysis presents GISD with guidance about the cost implications of each possible choice. Varying assumptions can substantially impact costs. This section describes how the assumptions about each input varied across cost tiers and types of programs, and summarizes the additional inputs that were also included in the cost estimates but do not vary by tier. Detailed information about assumptions and pricing sources for each resource appear in Appendix B.

Wages

The cost of wages is typically the largest cost for educational programs serving any age, and implementing GSRP is no exception. There are several pricing databases that can be used to represent the cost of personnel, including Flint K–12 teacher salaries, average child care staff

² The Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (<https://pcqc.acf.hhs.gov/>) is a tool from the Administration for Children and Families that is intended to help states model the costs of child care. The tool includes prices for resources commonly used in child care programs.

³ The MIT Living Wage Calculator (<https://livingwage.mit.edu/>) was developed to help individuals, communities, employers, and others estimate the local wage rate that a full-time worker requires to cover the costs of their family's basic needs where they live.

salaries in Michigan documented in the PCQC, and the MIT Living Wage calculator.⁴ The PCQC provides wage estimates for lead teacher, classroom support, and floater (qualifications equate to an administrative assistant in the PCQC), and program director; the differentials between these position salaries were used to estimate the wage differential across positions, using the lead teacher as the base. For example, the PCQC differential showed that classroom support position wages were estimated to be 22% lower than a teacher's, whereas the program director's wage was estimated to be 36% higher than a teacher's. These differentials were added to teacher wage sources for each tier and setting. Exhibit 2 shows the hourly wages from each pricing database, by position (rounded to the nearest dollar, representing 2024 dollars).

Exhibit 2. Personnel Wages, by Pricing Database and Position

Pricing database	Teacher	Classroom support	Program director	Administrative assistant/floater
PCQC differential	0%	-22%	36%	-45%
Flint K–12 salary	\$38	\$21	\$52	\$21
MIT Living Wage	\$33	\$18	\$44	\$18

The Flint K–12 salary was used as the upper bound salary in our cost estimates in private Tier 1 and Tiers 1 and 3 in the public setting. The MIT Living Wage for one adult and one child was used as the lower bound wage input for tiers 1 and 2 in the private setting.⁵ We applied the PCQC differentials between these positions (with the lead teacher as the base) to estimate the wages for each position using the Flint K–12 teacher salary scale.⁶ Both the upper and lower bound wages were then adjusted up or down on the basis of on the PCQC differentials across positions. Exhibit 3 summarizes the hourly wages (with no benefits) for each staff position, by tier and setting.

⁴ The MIT Living Wage calculator includes wage information for Flint Michigan specifically. Therefore, when the MIT Living Wage calculator is referenced in this memo, we are talking specifically about the Flint Michigan estimates. See <https://livingwage.mit.edu/metros/22420> for more information

⁵ The MIT Living Wage is higher than what is currently paid to GISD program staff, according to available data. However, the use of the MIT Living Wage as the lower bound estimate ensures that the per-child estimates represent a wage that is more likely to recruit and retain the staff needed to provide high-quality care for 3- and 4-year-olds.

⁶ The assistant director wages were assumed to be half of the differential (18%) between lead teacher and program director (36%).

Exhibit 3. Hourly Wages for Each Staff Position, by Setting and Tier

	Program director	Administrative assistant	Lead teacher	Classroom support	Floater
Private program					
Tier 1	\$52	\$21	\$38	\$21	\$21
Tier 2	\$44	\$18	\$33	\$18	\$18
Tier 3	\$44	\$18	\$33	\$18	\$18
Public program					
Tier 1	\$52	\$21	\$38	\$30	\$21
Tier 3	\$52	\$21	\$38	\$30	\$21

Benefits

Offering employee benefits is more likely to attract and retain the staff needed to provide high-quality child care. Therefore, we included the cost of employee benefits in Tiers 1 and 2 for private settings and in Tiers 1 and 3 for public settings. We assumed typical private and public benefit rates (Shand & Bowden, 2021) in Tiers 1 and 2 for private programs and in Tiers 1 and 3 in public programs, assuming only the minimum required benefits (e.g., social security, disability, unemployment, workers' compensation) in the Tier 3 private program estimate. As shown in Exhibit 4, the presence and the amount of benefits are varied across the scenarios for the private programs to inform future policy and funding decisions.⁷

Exhibit 4. Benefit Rates, by Setting and Tier

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Private programs	42.3%	42.3%	11.9%
Public programs	62.7%	N/A	62.7%

Weekly Instructional Hours

Current public programs offer four 7-hour instructional days, which may make them unrealistic for working families, who need at least five 8-hour days to meet work responsibilities. Therefore, we estimate the cost of both the current structure and longer instructional days that may be more able to support the needs of those working families. Exhibit 5 summarizes the assumptions for weekly instructional hours in each Tier and setting.

⁷ Because all publicly run programs include staff that receive benefits, a 62.7% rate was added for all staff positions in public settings for both tiers.

Exhibit 5. Weekly Instructional Hours, by Setting and Tier

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Private programs	Five 10-hour days	Five 10-hour days	Four 7-hour days
Public programs	Five 10-hour days	N/A	Four 7-hour days

Future investigations could include a deeper dive into what working families need and want in child care programs, to ensure that public dollars are spent in ways that can most effectively support the economy. Discussions with program leaders in public and private settings can also help uncover the way staffing needs would change if the required weekly instructional hours were changed.

Annual Instructional Weeks

Current public programs (i.e. GSRP) operate for 36 instructional weeks; private programs can vary in the number of instructional weeks they provide. A 36-week calendar may not serve the needs of working families and a 50-week program may not be possible within certain circumstances depending on facility and staffing needs. Therefore, we represented variation in the annual instructional hours to help inform discussions about program development and funding. Exhibit 6 summarizes the assumptions for annual instructional hours, by setting and tier.

Exhibit 6. Annual Instructional Weeks, by Setting and Tier

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Private programs	50-week program	50-week program	36-week program
Public programs	50-week program	N/A	36-week program

Future investigations to inform any follow-up cost estimates can focus on understanding the number of instructional weeks that private programs include and the way children served in public settings are cared for in the summer months. Information from public and private programs about their operating schedules, along with information from parents about their needs and preferences can help guide decisions about the number of instructional weeks that are needed for high-quality programs to be sustainable and accessible.

Paid Time Off

Paid time off is another employee benefit that can help recruit and retain high quality staff. The amount of paid time off can vary depending on setting, position, and program configuration. For example, some programs may consider federal holidays as part of paid time off, whereas others may offer additional paid time off in the form of sick or personal days. We

therefore also varied assumptions regarding paid time off included in the cost estimates across settings and tiers.

In the estimates, we account for the pay for each staff member who is away from work plus time for a floater to cover that person’s instructional responsibilities. For weeks when the entire program is closed but staff are still paid, no floater time is included. Exhibit 7 summarizes the assumptions around paid time off by setting and tier. The cost estimates presented here assume the same amount of paid time off for all positions, to reflect a system with a compensation package that is more likely to be successful in recruiting and retaining staff.

Exhibit 7. Assumptions Regarding Paid Time Off, by Setting and Tier

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Private programs	3 weeks paid time off (PTO), 2 weeks program closed (with pay)	3 weeks PTO, 2 weeks program closed (with pay)	2 weeks PTO
Public programs	3 weeks PTO, 2 weeks program closed (with pay)	N/A	2 weeks PTO

An ongoing collection of administrative data about the amount of paid time off for staff, by setting and position type, could inform future discussions regarding this assumption. In addition, discussions with program leaders and staff could help decision makers understand what amount of paid time off (as a component of compensation) is needed to recruit and retain staff for these programs.

Margin

The inclusion of margin, or program reserves, in a cost estimate can yield a cost that reflects a more sustainable system. Having funds in reserve by having a margin in the operating budget can support programs during lean financial times (e.g., short-term changes in the need for early education, temporary increases in the cost of resources) and be a buffer in case there are large-ticket items needed (e.g., broken playground equipment, classroom furniture needs). Margin can also be a source of funding to expand the program (e.g., additional hours, more classrooms), thereby serving more children and families. An industry report reflects a 12.59% pretax net profit for child care businesses in the United States (Vertical IQ, 2024), which is equivalent to approximately 1.5 months of operational expenses.⁸ For the purposes of this analysis we treat this as an adequate margin for a sustainable business, and we have included it in the cost estimates as a percentage of the overall cost. Exhibit 8 shows these assumptions by setting and tier. Because public programs do not operate as a business, no margin was included in any of the tiers for public programs.

⁸ Local and state guidance may dictate a different margin to support child care market stability.

Exhibit 8. Margin Percentages for Private Programs, by Tier

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
12.59%	12.59%	0%

Resources Not Varied by Tier

Some resources used to provide high-quality child care for 3- and 4-year-olds were not varied by setting or tier, including materials and equipment, facilities, and other operational expenses. This section summarizes pricing sources for these types of resources and provides estimated prices for each.⁹

Materials and equipment. Assumptions regarding materials and equipment used to provide high-quality ECE services did not vary across setting or tiers in these estimates. Prices for materials and equipment were derived from website searches for the most commonly used curriculum kits, screeners, and annual assessments (according to interviewee report), and from the PCQC general supplies (e.g., office supplies, educational supplies, food). Because food is included in this category, the cost of materials and equipment varies by the number of instructional weeks (i.e., Tier) but not by setting. Exhibit 9 shows the cost of materials and equipment (including food) that is integrated into each estimate.

Exhibit 9. Annual per-Child Cost of Materials and Equipment, by Setting and Tier

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Private programs	\$2,652	\$2,652	\$1,777
Public programs	\$2,652	N/A	\$1,777

Facilities. The cost of facilities for both private and public programs can vary greatly. For example, public programs may not be charged an annual fee for using facilities, and therefore do not view these as costs of operation. Private programs may receive discounted or free rent depending on arrangements with the owner of the facilities they use. Our estimates there account for the cost of facilities based on the value of the space used for child care, not the potential facility usage arrangements. In this way, we can more accurately represent what it may cost to expand or establish new programs.

We triangulated data from the PCQC and a commercial real estate site (LoopNet.com) for the annual per-square-foot rental cost for commercial properties in Flint (\$18 per square foot per year). We also used the PCQC to estimate the size of a typical classroom (1,280 square feet) and the annual cost of utilities, building insurance, and maintenance and repair per classroom space

⁹ Exhibits 1 through 5 in Appendix A illustrate the proportion of costs that each resource type represents of the overall

(\$35,840 annually). The overall annual cost of facilities was then divided by the number of children served in a typical classroom (20 children) to estimate that **facilities cost about \$1,792 per child, per year.**

Other operational expenses. Programs often incur additional operational expenses, including things like accreditation fees, licensing fees, telephone and internet, professional memberships, and insurance. The costs of these operational expenses may vary according to site or program circumstances; however, our goal is again to represent the *value* of these resources to ensure that our estimates represent what it may take to establish new programs.

Prices of these operational expenses were found from publicly available sources. Some costs are incurred at the program level and others at the classroom or child levels. The program level cost (\$11,166 annually for things like licensing fees, telephone, Internet, accreditation fees) was divided by the average number of children served in a program (59 according to the Flint sample of the 2023 Market Rate Survey). The classroom level cost (e.g., teacher professional association costs) was divided by 20 (the assumed number of children in each classroom). The overall per-child cost of other operational expenses, including things like insurance and advertising, totaled \$151 annually. In total, the **other operational expenses are estimated to cost \$344 per child, per year.**

Estimating the Need for High-Quality Early Childhood Education in Flint

In order to determine the total cost of providing high-quality ECE to all 3- to 4-year-olds in Flint, it is necessary to establish (a) how many 3- to 4-year-olds there are in Flint in need of ECE services, and (b) how many are already in high-quality ECE programs. The difference between these two figures would result in the number of children still in need of high-quality care.

We began by using American Community Survey (ACS) data to estimate the *total* number of 3- to 4-year-olds in Flint, using the Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) for the city of Flint. The survey is an annual random-sample survey with statistically valid estimates for all PUMAs. To improve reliability, we pooled the data for the years 2019–2023, yielding an estimated total number of 2,707 children ages 3 and 4. Following a common assumption in the research literature, we used ACS survey data to remove the children in families in which an adult was not working, to account for the fact that same children would be cared for by a family member and hence not necessarily in need of child care. According to our calculations this left an estimated 1,763 children in need of care.

Determining the number of children currently enrolled in *high-quality ECE programs* is much more challenging than estimating the number of children in need of care, given that many in the field define “high-quality” in different ways. The strictest method is to restrict the definition of “high quality ECE” only to public programs (i.e., Head Start and GSRP). Records provided by GISD indicate a total of 729 filled slots for Head Start and GSRP (included those slots with blended funding), and another 177 children estimated from Flint’s GCcard program (a Head Start program not run by GISD), for a total of **906 Flint children already enrolled in high-quality public programs**. However, this approach excludes 3- to 4-year-olds who are in high-quality *private* ECE programs. According to the GSRP, the state of Michigan defines “high quality” as those programs with a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) of Level 3 or above. Programs must demonstrate strong educational services in order to earn this designation. Excluding private programs would give a biased estimate of the number of children in need of ECE care by deflating the number of 3- to 4-year-olds currently in high-quality ECE programs. In other words, a realistic estimate of the number of children in high-quality care should also include children in private programs.

Although it is important to include private ECE enrollment in our estimates of the number of underserved children, there are no publicly available data on the number of 3- to 4-year-old children enrolled in private programs (i.e., the data are all held privately at each private ECE site). MiLEAP does publish the licensed capacity of all private child care programs,¹⁰ but licensed capacity does not tell us how many children are actually attending; nor does it give specific information about ages served. Programs are licensed to serve different age groups, but licensing data do not indicate what proportion of slots are allocated to each age group.

To estimate the number of 3- to 4-year-olds served by private ECE programs, we used aggregated anonymized survey data from the Flint sample of the 2023 Michigan Market Rate Survey (provided by Public Policy Associates). Among those programs that responded to the survey, preschool slots (filled and unfilled, part or full time) represented 44.3% of available child care slots. Multiplying this figure by the total number of licensed slots in private programs with a QRIS rating of 3 or higher results in an estimated 446 slots available for Flint 3- to 4-year-old children in high-quality programs. The Flint sample of the Market Rate Survey indicated that 70.6% of available preschool slots were actually filled. By applying this average fill rate to high-quality preschool capacity in the licensing data, we estimated a total of **315 additional children enrolled in high-quality private ECE programs**.

Our analysis shows that there are therefore **1,221 children currently being served in high-quality programs** across public (708 children) and private (315 children) programs. With an

¹⁰ Total number of programs and licensed capacity by program type and QRIS level are included in Appendix C.

estimated 1,763 3- to 4-year-old children needing access to high-quality care, we estimate that **542 Flint 3- to 4-year-old children currently lack access to high-quality ECE services.** In estimating potential costs for serving this population (see above), we multiply this total number of 542 by the per-child cost for each tier for public and private programs, in order to give an estimate of the total cost if all children were served at the respective tier. Exhibit 10 summarizes the data sources and findings from this analysis.

Exhibit 10. Calculation of the Estimated Need for High-Quality ECE

Measure	Estimated number of children	Data source
Total number 3- to 4-year-olds	2,707	ACS
3- to 4-year-olds in need of care	1,763	ACS
3- to 4-year-olds in GSRP and Head Start	906	Head Start & GSRP administrative data
Total licensed capacity in Flint (QRIS 3+) that serves preschoolers	1,007	MiLEAP
% preschool slots in Flint	44.3	2023 Market Rate Survey (Flint sample)
High-quality preschool slots	446	Licensed capacity x% preschool slots
Average preschool fill rate	70.60%	2023 Market Rate Survey (Flint sample)
3- to 4-year-olds in high-quality private programs	315	Preschool slots x fill rate
3- to 4-year-olds in high-quality programs	1,221	Public + private enrollment
Children in need	542	Number of children in need of care— number currently served

Considerations

These estimates of the cost of providing high-quality ECE to all 3- to 4-year-olds comes with a number of caveats. These fall into two main categories: (1) limitations in the data and (2) potential changes in the child care market.

With respect to data limitations, our estimates of the number of children currently served by high-quality ECE programs should be treated with caution. As we have stated previously, there are no reliable public data on either enrollment or age-specific capacity in private ECE

programs. Our estimates are based on reasonable assumptions, given the data that do exist, but there is certainly potential for the number of underserved children to be biased either upward or downward, with attendant impacts on total cost. Similarly, although our analysis of the costs of providing high-quality care are in line with best practices, they remain *estimates*. For example, the per-child costs may not fully reflect cost of implementing programs. On the other hand, our estimates do not account for additional revenue from other sources, such as Child and Adult Care Food Program, tuition (in private settings), and in-kind resources (e.g., discounted or no-cost facility usage).

It should also be noted that our estimates assume a static child care market. However, expansion of high-quality ECE could alter the local market for child care, thereby increasing costs. For example, our cost estimates assume that there is an adequate supply of ECE educators to staff new positions at the proposed rate of compensation (which is generally above the prevailing market rate). Local staff shortages or an inadequate teacher pipeline could increase costs by requiring higher salaries and/or benefits. Expansion plans should include consideration of the teacher pipeline to serve Flint children. This could include partnerships with local high schools and community colleges, to increase awareness of early educator careers, incentives for getting the required credentials to work in these programs, or other ways to bring more teachers to the profession. In addition, our estimates of the need for high-quality ECE assumes static workforce participation. Following the prevailing approach, we defined need for child care as among those children in families in which all adults were in the labor force. An expansion of PreK services could induce nonworking adults with children to enter that labor force, which would increase the total demand for care and increase total costs for providing it.

Section 2. Communications Plan

Objective

The goal of this section of the report is to provide GISD a communications strategy to increase awareness of Flint families regarding available high-quality early childhood education and care options and promote informed choices. Messaging should be inclusive of both public and provider program options, focus on clarifying eligibility and enrollment processes, and emphasize the role of parents as decision-makers and advocates. The plan leverages Flint's strong network of community-based organizations and trusted messengers to strengthen connections between families and available early learning opportunities.

Guiding Framework

This plan aligns with the [Head Start Parent, Family, Community Engagement Framework](#) and draws on Head Start's Family Outreach Series: [Strategies for Outreach to All Families](#), and guided by effectively executed campaigns in that emphasize a planning process informed by focal community engagement, and implement a plan with two-way communication, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, and ongoing trust building through local partnerships.

Target Audience

The primary audience is parents and caregivers of 3- and 4-year-olds in Flint who are unaware of the availability of high-quality child care options or lack effective access to those programs. There is a secondary audience that includes relevant community partners such as health clinics, libraries, schools, employers, and local organizations, which serve as information conduits to families regarding ECE and care.

Stakeholders

This effort should rely on strong engagement from a broad network of stakeholders who influence families' access to early childhood options in Flint. Parents and families of young children remain the central focus, as their needs and decision-making experiences must guide all outreach activities. Support from state and local policy makers and early childhood experts, including MiLEAP, the Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD), and advisors from Michigan's PreK for All Action Team (MiLEAP, n.d.), will ensure alignment with statewide priorities and technical guidance. Partnerships with community organizations and local leaders, such as the Flint Early Childhood Collaborative and the Flint Public Library, can help deliver consistent, trusted messages across the city. Equally important are early childhood care providers, across public and private settings, who offer critical insight into program availability, enrollment processes, and family experiences. Finally, AIR recommends that GISD include

community service providers and employers who extend the reach of communications by sharing information through workplaces and health systems.

Strategic Plan

Use Flint Family and Key Partner Insight to Shape Strategic Messaging and Rollout. To lay the groundwork for an effective communications campaign in Flint, AIR recommends that GISD convene a strategic planning work group and launch parent-and-provider focus groups to identify key priorities, refine messaging, and ensure that the initiative reflects local realities. The work group should include representatives from the GISD, the Flint Early Childhood Collaborative, Early On, and Flint child care providers. The work group should also seek input from MiLEAP, GSRP, and the PreK for All Initiative. Together, they should map the ways in which existing informational outreach about child care options and enrollment can be improved, as well as expanded, to inform parents of 3-year-olds.

The working group should conduct focus groups with parents and caregivers of 3- and 4-year-olds that reflect the demographics in Flint neighborhoods. For example, it is important to gather perspectives from families of children with special needs, speakers of languages other than English, and of varying backgrounds. Sessions should be structured around key learning questions such as the following:

- “How did you first learn about preschool or child care options for your child?”
- “What factors led you to choose one program over another (e.g., cost, location, hours, staff credentials)?”
- “What made it difficult for you to find or enroll in a high-quality child care program?”
- “Which communication channels (text message, social media, paper mail, community event) would you trust most when receiving child-care information?”
- “What words, visuals, or messages caught your attention or helped you understand the program?”

As is important, these parent focus groups should present a critical opportunity to gather reactions to the existing [PreK for All Digital Toolkit](#) materials, to understand what is working and what might be improved to help parents better understand child care options and enrollment information.

From the work group and focus group insights, GISD can confirm strategic priorities that inform tailored messages, branding, and outreach decisions. This approach ensures that messaging is not only accurate but that it resonates with Flint families and uses trusted community partners to amplify reach.

Develop Clear, Accessible and Consistent Communications. To ensure that families in Flint can easily understand and act on information about available child care and preschool options, we recommend designing a unified communications toolkit that utilizes the findings from family and key partner engagement insights and improves on the successes of PreK for All’s digital toolkit, which is adapted for Flint. Messaging will follow plain-language principles and emphasize the details families say matter most—age eligibility, cost, location, hours, and enrollment steps. Examples include simple, action-oriented statements such as “Age 3 is perfect time to start learning. Do you know your child’s options?” “For Flint families, PreK starts at 3!” or “Flint families: Free programs for 3s and 4s are open now!” The communications strategy should take into account the mixed-delivery system: Although the main priority will be disseminating information about public PreK programs, the work group should also consider the best ways to improve awareness of high-quality private programs that meet parent needs.

The communications toolkit should be translated into multiple languages to reflect Flint’s linguistic diversity and features:

- consistent branding, including shared logos, color palettes, and taglines, so families can easily recognize official and trustworthy information
- concise, accessible content using large fonts, plain language, and clear calls to action
- infographics that break down eligibility, timelines, and steps to enroll across GSRP, Head Start, and private care options
- short videos and testimonials featuring Flint families and providers to build trust, show real experiences, and increase relatability
- multiplatform templates, including social media posts, text-message scripts, newsletter blurbs, flyers, and community-event talking points to support consistent messaging across partners
- weblinks and Quick-Response (QR) codes that guide families to centralized, up-to-date information about child care availability

Communication materials should consider metrics and tracking tools, such as website analytics, email open rates, text-message engagement, and outreach event attendance. These materials and approaches should also be dynamic and subject to refinement according to feedback from partners, navigators, and families.

Implement Coordinated Outreach and Dissemination. Building on materials developed from insights gathered through the strategic planning work group and focus groups, the next phase of the communications plan focuses on how messages will be delivered, who will deliver them, and how to ensure reach and coordination across Flint’s community infrastructure.

1. Mobilize Trusted Community Partners to Amplify Reach and Promote “No Wrong Door.”

Families in Flint consistently rely on networks and institutions they trust. Therefore, communication must flow through multiple, reinforcing channels that align messaging across partners. GISD should work with partners—including MiLEAP, GISD, GSRP, Head Start, Early On, and the Flint Early Childhood Collaborative—to embed clear, consistent child care messaging into their existing outreach mechanisms. Regardless of where a family inquires about care options, they should receive the same clear messages, enrollment guidance, and referral pathways.

Key strategies include

- email, newsletter, and website dissemination through community organizations such as the Flint Early Childhood Collaborative, neighborhood family centers, and health partners;
- consistent posting on social media platforms commonly used by Flint families (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), supported by predesigned templates from the communications toolkit;
- word-of-mouth amplification through parent networks, faith-based organizations, neighborhood groups, and early learning providers; and
- cross-agency alignment, ensuring partners use the same messages, visuals, and descriptions of available programs so that families receive clear, unified information regardless of where they access it.

2. Deploy Parent Ambassadors and Navigators. Because parents and caregivers are the primary audience, it is optimal to empower other parents who understand the program options and enrollment steps to serve as trusted messengers to help families overcome confusion and increase their confidence to navigate available program options for their 3- and 4-year-old children. To best involve parents into this process, we recommend

- recruiting, training, and compensating parent ambassadors who reflect Flint’s cultural, linguistic, and demographic diversity;
- equipping ambassadors with tools, scripts, and printed materials to support outreach at community events, school enrollment fairs, grocery stores, libraries, pediatric visits, and neighborhood gatherings;
- setting targeted goals, such as, number of contacts made and families enrolled; and
- enabling ambassadors to conduct peer-to-peer outreach, drawing from their own experiences navigating GSRP, Head Start, and private care arrangements.

3. **Target Outreach Using Community Insight and Enrollment Data.** Building on focus group insights and local data, outreach efforts should be responsive to priority groups or neighborhoods where information gaps may be highest (e.g., areas with low GSRP/Head Start enrollment).
4. **Embed Outreach Within Broader Agency Communications.** To strengthen the reach, coordinate messaging with related efforts, such as existing kindergarten readiness and enrollment campaigns; MiLEAP and GSRP communications about early learning and family supports; Early On's child care resource/referral activities; and Flint Early Childhood Collaborative's community-facing communication efforts.
5. **Launch a Coordinated Multichannel Rollout.** Using the tailored messaging and communications toolkit, implement a coordinated rollout across
 - social media (templated posts, stories, and short videos);
 - SMS/text-based reminders (e.g., "Flint Families: PreK Starts at 3! Explore your options");
 - Printed flyers, brochures, and posters displayed in high-traffic community locations (schools; Women, Infants and Children's Program offices; clinics; parks; laundromats; libraries);
 - local media partnerships (radio spots, community newspaper ads);
 - community events and tabling, leveraging parent ambassadors and provider partners; and
 - QR codes and links pointing families to the Great Start to Quality or other site regarding provider information in Flint.
6. **Monitor progress and apply continuous improvement.** Meaningful metrics to monitor progress should be implemented. This can include various engagement analytics, feedback from parent navigators and partners, event attendance, and tracking enrollment data. Utilize findings to evaluate and improve messaging, visuals, and dissemination tactics to maximize clarity and reach—ensuring that Flint families can easily understand options and enroll their 3- and 4-year-olds in programs that meet their needs.

Summary

This plan provides recommendations for a coordinated, data-driven communications plan to increase Flint families' awareness of child care options for 3- and 4-year-olds across all available providers. Grounded in input from the Flint community, this plan centers on three priorities: (1) delivering clear and accessible messaging about eligibility and enrollment; (2) strengthening alignment across trusted community organizations; and (3) promoting a "No Wrong Door" approach so that families receive consistent, accurate information wherever they engage.

The plan recommends developing a unified communications toolkit, implementing targeted neighborhood and partner-led outreach, and using shared metrics to track engagement and refine efforts. The plan also calls for an agreed-on implementation schedule with milestones to ensure coordinated rollout and sustained impact across Flint’s early childhood ecosystem.

Section 3. Transportation Plan

One of the key barriers for families accessing child care is access to reliable, convenient transportation (Blumenberg et al., 2024). The issue is not necessarily that families lack any transportation—only 7% of Flint households are without a car, and 72% drive alone (*Flint, MI*, n.d.)—but that they may struggle to reconcile competing needs. Multiple adults might share the same vehicle, or parents may have difficulty finding time to drop their children off at a child care program while still getting to work on time. This is a particular problem for low-income families. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, only 6% of individuals lack consistent access to reliable transportation, but the proportion is 16% for those living below the poverty line (Ng et al., 2022).

As part of its overall aim of increasing access to high-quality child care for 3- to 4-year-olds in Flint, AIR has developed a phased strategy for improving transportation options for children. The key components of this strategy include

- a focus on children from low-income families,
- support for mixed-delivery options, and
- development of additional bus routes for public PreK programs

The first step in AIR’s recommended transportation strategy is identifying the number of families that lack access to transportation, making use of both public survey data and primary data collection from families. On the basis of analysis using the American Community Survey 5-year sample (2019–2023), there are approximately 1,763 three- to 4-year-olds in need of child care (i.e., in households in which all adults are in the labor force), 507 of which are in families below the poverty line. Because the low-income population is most likely to struggle with transportation, these families should be the initial focus of GISD’s efforts to improve access. In addition, in order to gather more specific information about the need for transportation, GISD should conduct a short survey of current families participating in GSRP programs to determine the ways they transport their children to the program, the degree to which transportation is a burden, and whether they would participate in GISD-sponsored bus routes and/or subsidized bus fare.

The second component of GISD's approach should be to assess the need for providing GISD-operated school bus routes to serve 3- and 4-year-olds attending PreK for all classrooms. Should feedback from parents indicate that there is strong demand for bus routes, GISD should endeavor to set up these routes. It should be noted that there are significant logistical and financial challenges with providing school buses for PreK programs. In 2019, the cost to schools for providing transportation was \$1,152 per child on average in Michigan, which adjusted for inflation, is approximately \$1,500 per child (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022) in 2025 dollars. This cost is not included in the previously presented cost estimates for providing high-quality ECE to Flint 3- to 4-year-olds. The Michigan state budget does allocate funds to assist with transportation for children in GSRP programs, for which GISD should investigate applying, but the likelihood that this would significantly defray costs is unclear because total state expenditures are capped. Adequate staffing is another potential challenge. At present there is nationwide shortage of bus drivers (Hickey, 2025). and adding PreK children to regular school buses would also require supervisory aides (meeting a 12:1 child-to-adult ratio). It should also be noted that there are restrictions on using Head Start funds to pay for public transportation (along with other detailed Head Start regulations).

Finally, GISD should work with other state and community partners to explore other strategies for improving parent access to transportation. One possibility would be to adapt Seattle's successful Seattle Preschool Program Transit Pass (Seattle Department of Transportation, n.d.), which provides subsidized transit on public bus routes for parents taking their kids to ECE services. GISD could work with the Flint Mass Transit Authority to craft a similar plan. Monthly passes are currently \$55, and GISD could negotiate with Flint MTA and other partners to support free or reduced-price passes.

Section 4. Timeline

Exhibit 11 presents a tentative timeline of activities to support the increase in enrollment in high-quality ECE for Flint 3-4 year olds, including implementation of the communications and transportation plans. A key component of this strategy is to establish a Mixed-Delivery Working Group that brings GISD staff, public and private child care providers, and other local stakeholders to guide the planning and feedback process.

Exhibit 11. Recommended Timeline of GISD Implementation Activities, 2026-2027.

Activities
Period January – February 2026
Implementation planning
Stakeholder feedback on plans
Survey of GSRP families (transportation)
Focus groups of families (communications/outreach)
Establishment of Mixed-Delivery Working Group (MDWG), including public and private providers
Period April – June 2026
Specification of communications plan, message testing
Planning for transportation assistance (public bus vouchers)
Enrollment data-sharing plan for private and public providers
Support for quality improvements of existing programs (coordinate with Great Start Collaborative)
MDWG meetings
Period July – September 2026
Enrollment period beginning
Advertising/communications
Recruitment for additional staff/classrooms
MDWG meetings
Period October – December 2026
Internal evaluation of public/private enrollment data, coordination
Internal evaluation of transportation utilization and need, planning for additional bus routes
Internal evaluation of communication
Assess gap in PreK enrollment

MDWG meetings
Period January – March 2027
Stakeholder feedback on progress
Revisions to communications, transport, enrollment plans
Survey of GSRP families (transportation)
Focus groups of families (communications/outreach)
MDWG meetings
Period April – June 2027
MDWG meetings
Period July - September
Outreach and enrollment for the 2027–28 school year; goal of 100% access.

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Appendix A. Per-Child Cost Estimates, by Setting and Tier

The following figures illustrate the distribution of the overall per-child cost for child care (by setting and tier) across resource types (personnel, materials and equipment, facilities, margin, and other operational costs).

Exhibit A-1. Per-Child Cost for Private Programs, Tier 1

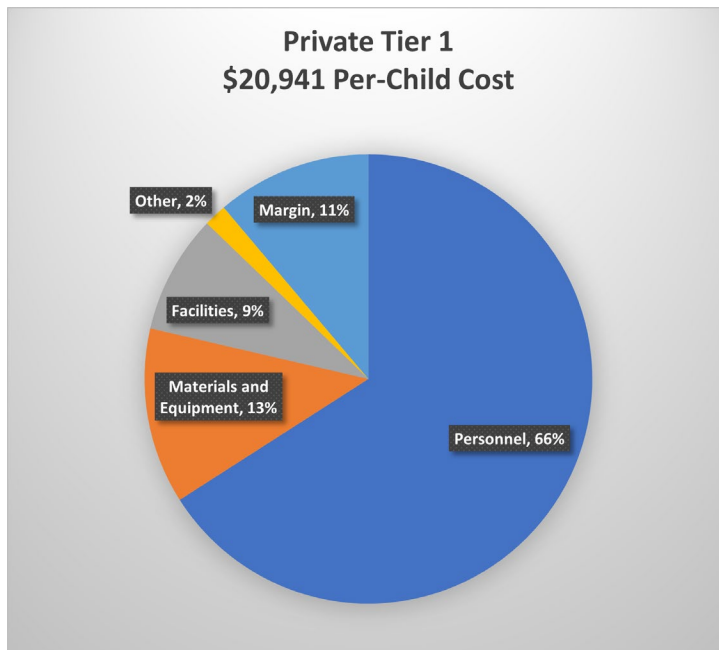


Exhibit A-2. Per-Child Cost for Private Programs, Tier 2

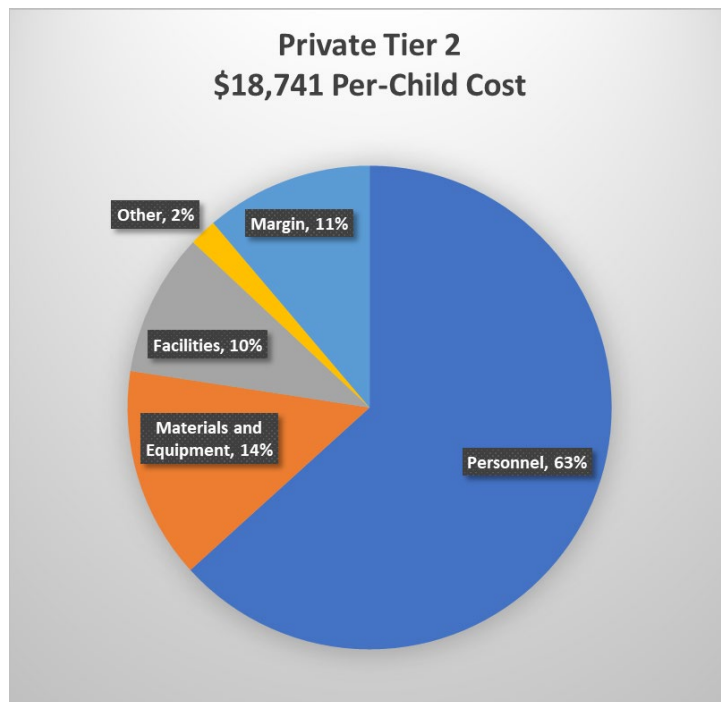


Exhibit A-3. Per-Child Cost for Private Programs, Tier 3

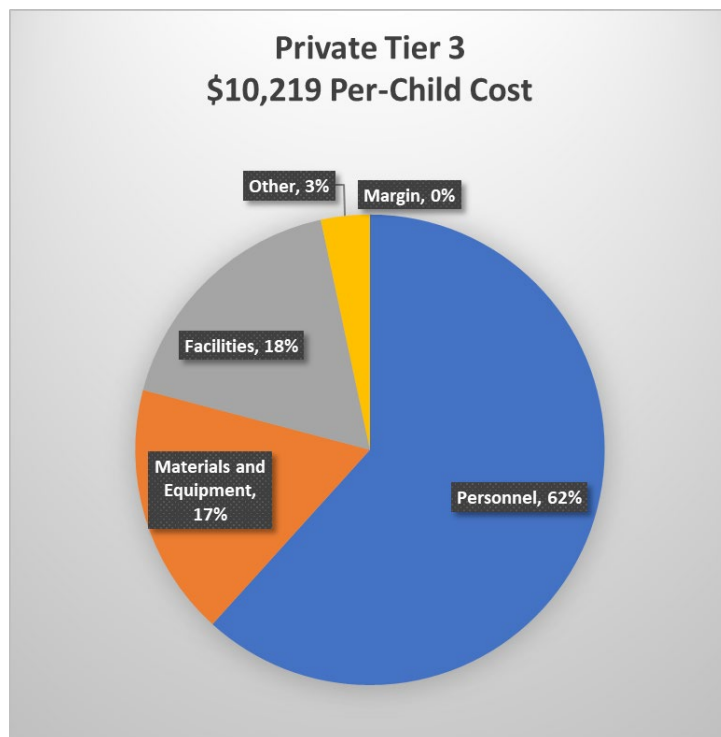


Exhibit A-4. Per-Child Cost for Public Programs, Tier 1

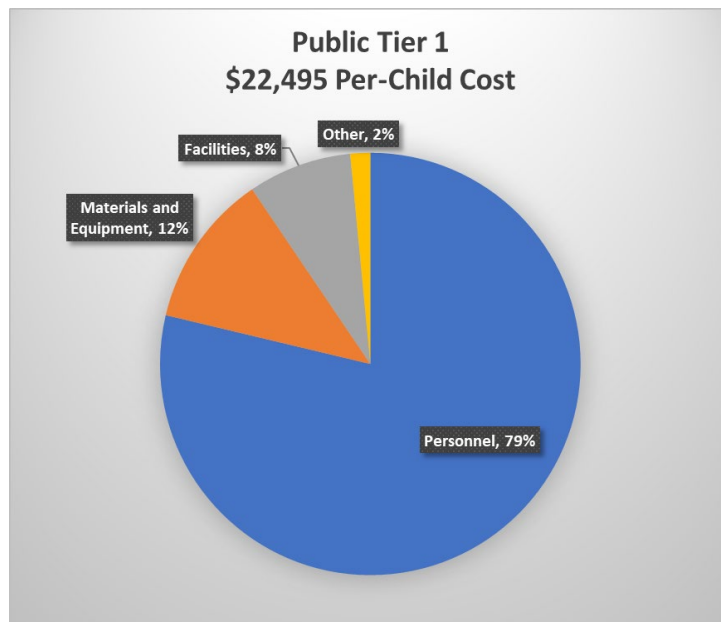
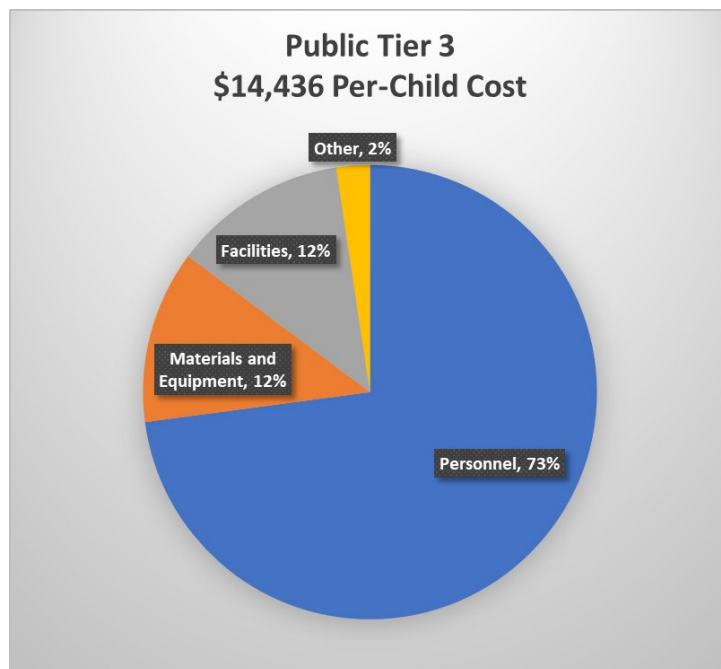


Exhibit A-5. Per-Child Cost for Public Programs, Tier 3



Appendix B. Resource Assumptions and Price Sources

The cost estimates here are based on a set of assumptions, and they use a variety of pricing sources to ensure accuracy. Exhibits B-1–4 summarize the resource, the unit (e.g., per-hour, per-child, per-classroom), the pricing source, and the price (rounded to the nearest dollar, representing 2024 dollars) used in the cost estimates. We reviewed wage information from the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC), the Flint K–12 Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Living Wage Calculator (for one adult and one child). The upper bound wages in these estimates represent the teacher wages from the Flint K12 Collective Bargaining Agreement and the respective benefit rate for public and private programs, and the lower bound teacher wage represents the MIT Living Wage estimate of what is needed to meet basic needs.

In addition to the PCQC, Flint K–12 Collective Bargaining Agreement and the MIT Living Wage Calculator (for Flint), we reviewed the wage information provided by GISD as another data point. A review of those salary data showed that wages were between 7% and 37% lower than the MIT Living Wage estimate of what is essential to cover the cost of basic needs. Therefore, we decided to use the MIT Living Wage (for Flint) as the lower bound wage in our estimates. Because public program teachers are already paid using the Flint K–12 salary scale, we used the teacher salary for someone on Step 7 as the wage for lead teachers.

For all wage sources, we applied the differential between positions (with the teacher as the base) derived from the PCQC salary information to estimate the wages for program director, administrative assistant, classroom support, and the floater. The decision to use the PCQC differential for positions was also informed by our review of the general licensing and Great Start to Quality indicators, along with conversations with GISD administrators to ensure that the required credentials and training were appropriate for each position type used.

Exhibit B-1. Personnel Wages and Benefit Rate, Private Tier 1

Position	Hourly wage	Benefit rate	Hourly compensation
Program director	\$52	42.3%	\$64
Lead teacher	\$38	42.3%	\$54
Classroom support	\$21	42.3%	\$30
Floater	\$21	42.3%	\$30

Note. Wages taken from the Flint K–12 Collective Bargaining Agreement (2022–2025) and benefit rate from Bowden and Shand (2021) and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025).

Exhibit B-2. Personnel Wages and Benefit Rate, Private Tier 2

Position	Hourly wage	Benefit rate	Hourly compensation
Program director	\$44	42.3%	\$63
Lead teacher	\$33	42.3%	\$47
Classroom support	\$18	42.3%	\$26
Floater	\$18	42.3%	\$26

Note. Wages taken from the MIT Living Wage Calculator (2025; for one adult and one child in Flint) and benefit rate from Bowden and Shand (2021) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025).

Exhibit B-3. Personnel Wages and Benefit Rat, Private Tier 3

Position	Hourly wage	Benefit rate	Hourly compensation
Program director	\$44	11.9%	\$50
Administrative assistant	\$18	11.9%	\$20
Lead teacher	\$33	11.9%	\$37
Classroom support	\$18	11.9%	\$20
Floater	\$18	11.9%	\$20

Note. Wages taken from the MIT Living Wage Calculator (2025; for one adult and one child in Flint) and benefit rate from the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (2023).

Exhibit B-4. Personnel Wages and Benefit Rate, Public Tiers 1 and 3

Position	Hourly wage	Benefit rate	Hourly compensation
Program director	\$52	62.7%	\$84
Administrative assistant	\$21	62.7%	\$34
Lead teacher	\$38	62.7%	\$62
Classroom support	\$21	62.7%	\$34
Floater	\$21	62.7%	\$34

Note. Wages taken from the Flint K–12 Collective Bargaining Agreement (2022–2025 and benefit rate from Bowden and Shand (2021) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025).

Exhibit B-5. Materials and Equipment Prices

Resource	Resource description	Price source	Price
Classroom supplies	Classroom supplies are recurring, consumable materials required in classrooms (e.g., arts and crafts, paper, writing/drawing materials, glue, scissors, craft supplies, low-cost manipulatives, and routine consumables used in classrooms).	PCQC	\$148 per child, annually
Education supplies	Consumable learning materials are supplies more directly tied to educational programming: books, educational games, puzzles, learning kits, consumable components of curriculum (e.g., worksheets, supplementary materials), or items that support instruction beyond general classroom consumables.	PCQC	\$119 per child, annually
Office supplies and equipment	These recurrent consumable items are used for administrative operations: pens, paper, postage, printing, forms, binding, general office stationery. Office equipment refers to small capital or durable assets used in administrative function: items like computers, printers, software, desk hardware, perhaps small office furniture or depreciable office devices. The PCQC tool assumes depreciation or amortization for equipment.	PCQC	\$119 per child, annually
Medical supplies	Covers health, safety, and first-aid consumables: things like first aid kits, gloves, antiseptics, basic health-safety supplies for a child care setting.	PCQC	\$67 per child, annually
Curriculum	The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 6th Edition (reported as most commonly used via interviews with program leaders) provides a set of resources to support active learning through a variety of learning experiences. The curriculum includes six volumes that describe its foundation, interest areas in the classroom, objectives for development and learning, and domain-specific teaching practices. The curriculum also provides teaching guides on six study topics with detailed daily plans. We used the pricing information from the Teaching Strategies vendor instead of the PCQC based on Head Start and interviewee input that this is the most commonly used curriculum.	https://teachingstrategies.com/head-start-alignments/	\$2,149 per site, annually

Resource	Resource description	Price source	Price
Screeners	Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ®-3), is a developmental screening tool (reported as most commonly used via interviews with program leaders) designed for use by early educators and health care professionals. It relies on parents as experts, is easy to use, is family friendly, and creates the snapshot needed to catch delays and celebrate milestones. We used the pricing information from the Ages & Stages vendor instead of the PCQC based on interviewee input that this is the most commonly used screener tool.	https://agesandstages.com/	\$445 per classroom, annually
Annual assessment	The BRIGANCE Criterion-Referenced Inventory of Early Development 4 (IED 4) is a comprehensive assessment tool (reported as most commonly used via interviews with program leaders) designed to evaluate the developmental progress of children from birth through Age 8. It includes over 130 assessments across various domains such as physical, language, cognitive, adaptive, social-emotional, and academic skills. This tool is particularly useful for early childhood and special education professionals to identify strengths and areas for growth, plan individualized instruction, and monitor school readiness. We used the pricing information from the Curriculum Associates vendor instead of the PCQC based on interviewee input that this is the most commonly used annual assessment tool.	https://www.curriculumassociates.com/	\$419 per classroom, annually
Food	Includes reimbursement for two meals and one snack per day (5 days per week and 52 weeks per year). Note that interviewees did talk about the cost of food being volatile and sometimes being greater than expected. Policy decisions should include a consideration of food costs to ensure adequate support for healthy meals for children.	PCQC	\$41 per child, weekly
Kitchen supplies	Includes supplies to serve meals	PCQC	\$56 per child, annually

Exhibit B-6. Facility and Maintenance Prices

Resource	Resource description	Price source	Price
Facility rent	Rent represents the estimated value of the space used to provide child care. Per-square-foot rental rates were explored in the PCQC and LoopNet (a commercial real estate website) to understand what is most likely in Flint. We also reviewed the Great Start to Quality Indicators to ensure that our rental prices reflected what would be needed to have the required elements.	PCQC	\$18 per square foot, annually
Utilities	The utility costs are considered part of the occupancy/operational expenses for a child care center. Examples include electricity, gas/heat, water/sewer related to the operation of the building. These costs can be volatile in certain markets/regions and should be monitored to ensure they are included accurately in future cost estimates.	PCQC	\$4 per square foot, annually
Building insurance	This insurance covers the building where early education and child care are provided.	PCQC	\$2 per square foot, annually
Maintenance, repairs, and cleaning	Maintenance and repairs for the building along with cleaning services, are necessary for keeping the building clean and functioning.	PCQC	\$4 per square foot, annually

Note. We assume 1,280 square feet per classroom.

Exhibit B-7. Prices of Other Resources Used

Resource	Resource description	Price source	Price
Professional development	The Great Start to Quality Indicators lay out substantial professional development requirements for all staff. GISD staff explained that the required professional development is provided by the state at no cost to programs. However, cost estimates include a floater's time to cover the classroom responsibilities of the lead teacher (1.2 weeks) and classroom support (1.2 weeks) to attend the required professional development.	Respective wage source	Respective hourly wage for a floater, based on setting and tier
Licensing fees and permits	This includes the fees required by state and local governments to operate a child care business.	PCQC	\$581, per site annually
Liability insurance	General liability insurance is necessary to operate a child care business. Note that recent increases in liability insurance may not be fully reflected in available data, and therefore should continue to be monitored over time to ensure accurate representation in future cost estimates.	PCQC	\$127 per child, annually
Advertising	Programs often need to advertise to ensure community awareness of the services offered.	PCQC	\$24 per child, annually
Telephone and internet service	Reliable connectivity is an essential component of child care and early education services.	PCQC	\$5,196 per site, annually
Audits and legal fees	This input includes the services a business often needs to engage to meet legal and financial requirements.	PCQC	\$3,482 per site, annually
Professional services and fees	This input includes the professional support services that a business may need to support its program. This could include consultative services, membership fees, or other professional services.	PCQC	\$1,282 per site, annually
Accreditation fees	Sites typically pay an annual accreditation fee to maintain their standing.	PCQC	\$625 per site, annually
Professional association fees	Annual membership to an association is encouraged in the Great Start to Quality Indicators and is a key source of information and support for early educators and child care businesses. This cost is applied only to the lead teacher role.	Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children	\$72 per teacher, annually

Appendix C. Profile of Flint Licensed Providers

Programs	Maintaining health and safety	Reflecting on quality	Enhancing quality	Enhancing quality-validated	Demonstrating quality	Quality level currently unavailable
Licensed center (GSRP or HS)	5	6	3	12	9	N/A
Licensed center (not GSRP or HS)	7	N/A	9	3	1	1
Licensed family homes	12	N/A	19	1	1	1
Licensed group homes	5	N/A	11	N/A	1	2

Capacity	Maintaining health and safety	Reflecting on quality	Enhancing quality	Enhancing quality-validated	Demonstrating quality	Quality level currently unavailable
Licensed center (GSRP or HS)	788	872	173	1475	795	N/A
Licensed center (not GSRP or HS)	635	N/A	589	90	60	75
Licensed family homes	73	N/A	118	6	6	6
Licensed group homes	58	N/A	136	N/A	14	24

Programs and Capacity	Maintaining health and safety	Reflecting on quality	Enhancing quality	Enhancing quality-validated	Demonstrating quality	Quality level currently unavailable
Licensed center (GSRP or HS)	5 (capacity 788)	6 (capacity 872)	3 (capacity 173)	12 (capacity 1475)	9 (capacity 795)	0
Licensed center (not GSRP or HS)	7 (capacity 635)	0	9 (capacity 589)	3 (capacity 90)	1 (capacity 60)	1 (capacity 75)
Licensed family homes	12 (capacity 73)	0	19 (capacity 118)	1 (capacity 6)	1 (capacity 6)	1 (capacity 6)
Licensed group homes	5 (capacity 58)	0	11 (capacity 136)	0	1 (capacity 14)	2 (capacity 24)

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