



# **CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS FOR CITY OF BOULDER EMPLOYEES**

**2017 Leadership ICMA Capstone**

**City of Boulder, Colorado**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Recently, the City of Boulder conducted a series of Employee Well-Being Focus groups in which several themes emerged. Through these efforts to enhance employee well-being, it became apparent that there needed to be a concerted effort to help foster and promote a culture of work-life balance. In particular, an area of increasing need was that of child care solutions for City of Boulder employees.

Increasingly, parents across the United States are finding that access to high quality, affordable child care is a challenge. As a Pew Research Center study pointed out, “the share of mothers who do not work outside the home rose to 29% in 2012, up from a modern-era low of 23% in 1999.”<sup>1</sup> Several factors have likely contributed to the increase of stay at home mothers and is a challenge that is multidimensional and includes several considerations related to access, cost, choice, and quality.

In January 2017, the City of Boulder engaged Leadership ICMA to conduct an analysis of child care options for the City of Boulder workforce. The purpose of the analysis is to determine employee child care needs, evaluate existing programs and solutions, and identify and evaluate best practices in order to best serve employees’ needs. To accomplish this, Leadership ICMA conducted on-site interviews with key stakeholders and staff, in addition to soliciting the input of City staff through a series of focus groups. This collective input, in addition to a comprehensive research, data collection and review, and literary review, will be the basis for identifying the child care solutions that are the best fit for the City of Boulder.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/04/08/after-decades-of-decline-a-rise-in-stay-at-home-mothers/>

## **BACKGROUND**

In order to understand the opportunities for the City and employees, we must first define the current state of child care services affecting the City of Boulder.

In recent years, the focus of early childhood research has concentrated on two distinct policies: Parental Leave and Early Childhood Education. For many parents, addressing both these concerns comes down to a balancing act between what is feasible (as the national standard provides **unpaid** parental leave) and what is desirable (the quality of early childhood development). Recently, the City of Boulder has made this balancing act much easier for their employees through several actions. In 2014, the City of Boulder updated a 2003 Resolution committing the city to pay standard, full-time employees no less than 120% of the federal poverty guidelines. Additionally, in 2017 the City Council approved a budget that included funding for an increased living wage for city employees to a minimum rate of \$15.67 per hour. Most recently, the city approved a Parental Leave Policy that provides four months of paid leave for new parents, which does not affect existing employee sick or vacation banks.

These actions have had several effects on new parents: 1) New parents are able to avoid the higher costs of child care associated with infants for the first four months following birth;<sup>2</sup> and 2) With higher wages, parents are better able to financially provide for quality child care.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qualistar.org/uploads/ColoradoChildCarePricesandAffordabilityBrief.pdf>

## Early Childhood Development – Quality

Within the first three years of life, research has shown that many of the basic learning blocks are formulated.<sup>3</sup> During this period, synapses in the brain (how the brain communicates) are created at a much faster rate than at any other point in their life. By the time a child reaches the age of three, their brains are functioning at twice the rate of adults. As illustrated in the graph below,<sup>4</sup> within the first three years of life, the functions of seeing, hearing, speech, and overall cognitive functions are at the highest levels of development. With this level of activity in the brain, it is no doubt critical that a child has quality, positive experiences that will develop the brain for adulthood.

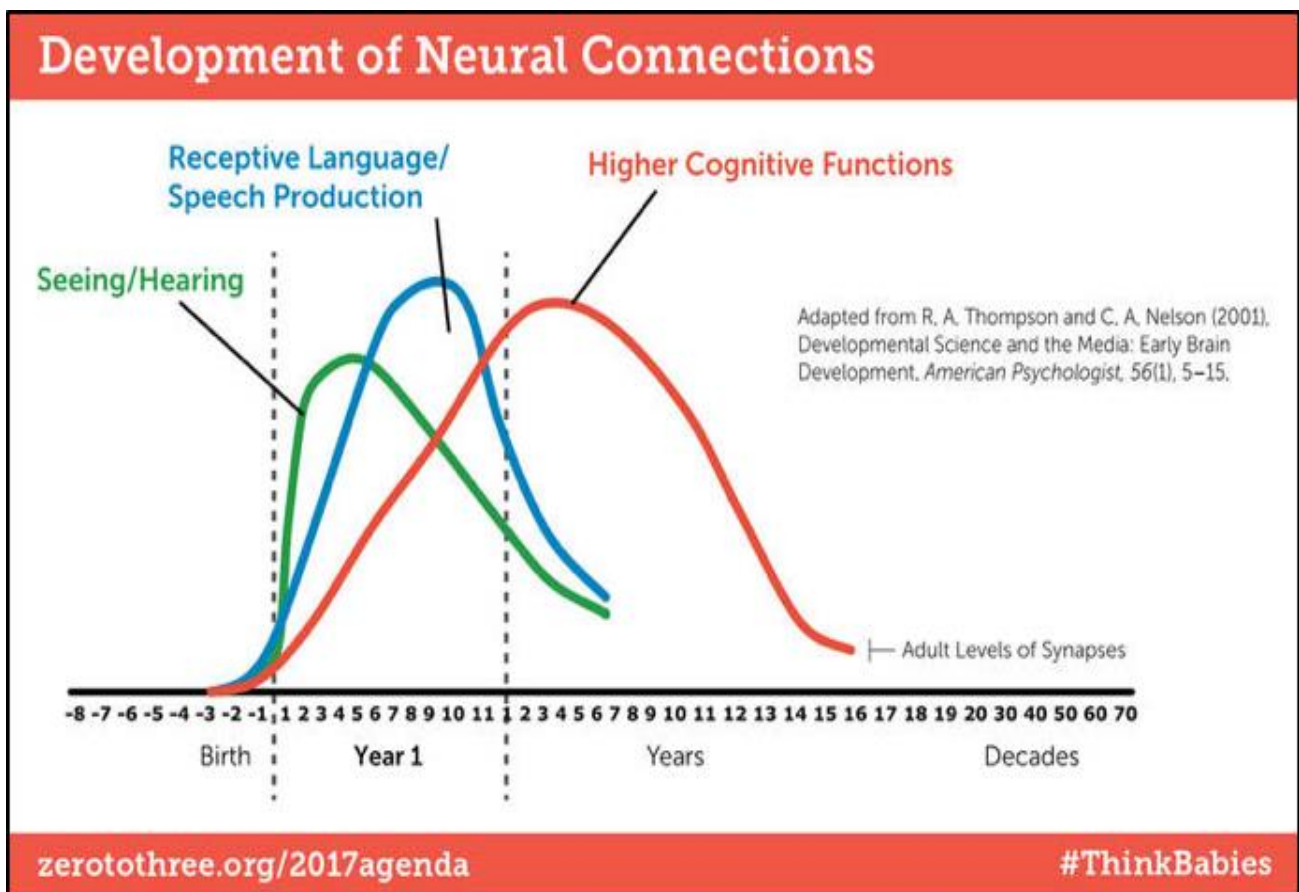


Figure 1

<sup>3</sup><https://www.oregon.gov/osl/LD/youthsvcs/reading.healthy.families/Research/BrainSynapticDensityImage.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1665-an-infant-toddler-agenda-for-the-new-administration-and-congress>

## Fiscal Trends – National, Colorado, and Boulder County

According to the U.S. Census, Child care costs have nearly doubled between 1986 and 2011.<sup>5</sup> "Perhaps the most critical decision parents make in balancing their work and home life is choosing the type of care to provide for their children while they work," said Lynda Laughlin, a family demographer in the Census Bureau's Fertility and Family Statistics Branch. "Child care arrangements and the financial burden they impose on families are important issues for policymakers and anyone concerned about the welfare of children. This report is unique in that it is not only the sole study from the Census Bureau on this topic, but also provides a consistent time-series on trends going back to the mid-1980s." Within the

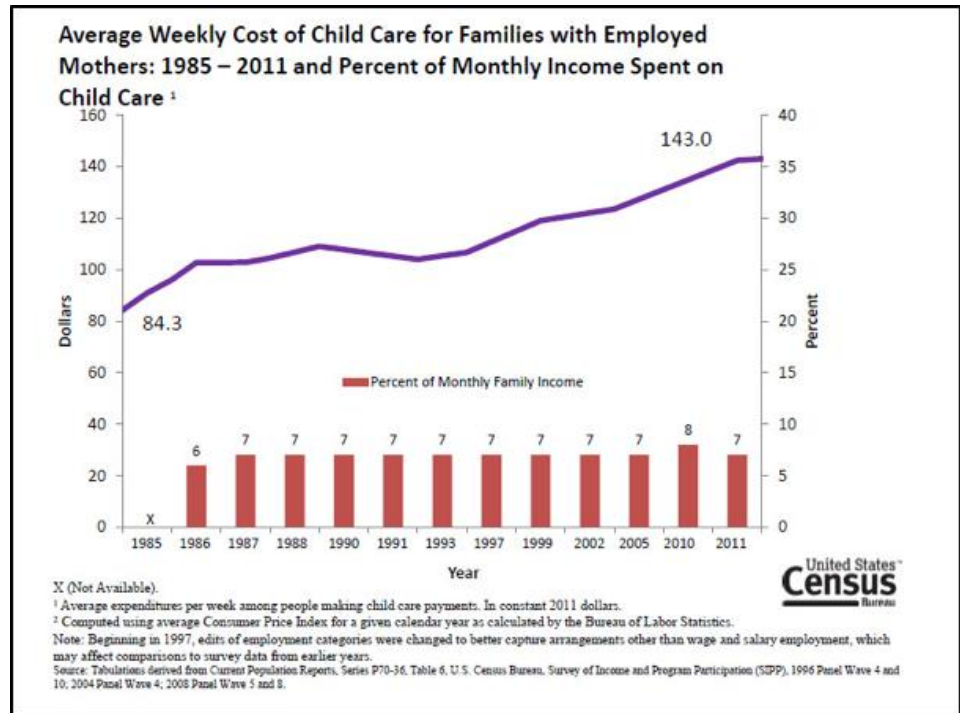


Figure 2

State of Colorado, issues of affordability for child care are even more pronounced.

In 2013, a report was commissioned to research the status of women in Colorado. As a result of this research, several concerns regarding child care access and affordability became apparent. As a labor intensive business, personnel costs are the leading operational expense.<sup>6</sup> This cost increases as the “quality” of the operation increases, due to State licensing regulations and the need to maintain low staff-to-child ratios. For new parents in Colorado, what this means is that they pay one of the higher costs per State in the United States. Furthermore, Colorado is ranked 7th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for most expensive infant care.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2013/cb13-62.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.qualistar.org/uploads/ColoradoChildCarePricesandAffordabilityBrief.pdf>

According to the Economic Policy Institute, the average annual cost of infant care in Colorado is \$13,154 – equating to \$1,096 per month – and \$9,882, or \$824 per month, for a four-year-old child.<sup>7</sup> Infant care for one

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>% Change 2010-2016</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	74.1	73.7	-0.54
<b>All Children &lt;18</b>	49.8	49.6	-0.4
<b>Children 0-5</b>	24.3	24.1	-0.8

*Total Population and Child Population, by Age Group, National, 2010 and 2016.*  
**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Data beyond 2015 are derived from the national population projections released in December 2014.  
 Retrieved from <https://www.childstats.gov/AMERICASCHILDREN/tables/pop1.asp>

child, alone, requires 18.8% of a typical family’s income in Colorado. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) sets affordable child care at no more than 10% of a family’s income. Meaning that only 22.6% of Colorado families can afford infant care by national standards.

For the County of Boulder, where the City of Boulder is located, the affordability of child care by both national and state standards is deficient. The average annual cost of preschool-age Care in a Center is \$13,210, representing about 41% of the county median income for single mothers.<sup>8</sup> Of the 64 Counties in the State of Colorado, Boulder County ranks as the 10th least affordable for single mothers. For married parents, the State ranking improves moderately.

In 2016, one in five people (20%) in Boulder County had a child under the age of 18. Boulder County’s child population increased from 62,754 in 2010 to 65,302 in 2016 and nationally there has been a decrease of 0.4% of the same population (*Table 1*). Colorado’s total and child populations grew slightly faster from 2010 to 2016 (10% and 6% respectively) than did Boulder County’s. A decade from now, in 2026, Boulder County’s child population is projected to be 67,227, a 3% increase from 2016, with the national child population projected 75.2 million, a 1.5% increase.

Despite these challenges and other challenges, nationally there are nearly 12.5 million of the 20.4 million children, equating to 61%, under the age of 5 in some type of regular weekly child care arrangement.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/?gclid=CM7knte-99QCFZm4wAodoaAGvA#/CO>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.qualistar.org/uploads/ColoradoChildCarePricesandAffordabilityBrief.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2013/cb13-62.html>

## **STRATEGIES**

Typically, employers in both the public and private sector have approached child care services as an employee benefit through legal requirements for unpaid time-off (in accordance with FMLA) and providing Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) dedicated towards dependent care. Conversely, organizations have increasingly begun to view child care under the well-being umbrella of promoting a culture of work-life balance. The full range of services or programs that an employer could offer has been framed in academic research in a model that includes offering services, supplying information, and providing financial assistance.<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this report, our team developed a methodology to consider potential child care solutions based on this model. Likewise, through the feedback of interviews and focus groups, we are better able to suggest how policies, both new and existing, can be developed and administered to better fit the needs of the organization.

A high level summary of the common types of solutions for addressing child care is outlined on the following page in Table 2.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1466&context=articles>



Table 2 – Contemporary Child Care Options

OPTIONS	DESCRIPTIONS	PROS	CONS	EXAMPLES
<p><b>Offering services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•On-site day care</li> <li>• Consortium-sponsored day care</li> <li>•Public-private partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Care is provided on or near the employer's property, perhaps by a contracted operator.</li> <li>• Employers join forces to finance day care, frequently run by a contracted operator.</li> <li>•The employer joins forces with a public agency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Decreases lateness, absenteeism, and turnover. Helps recruitment.*</li> <li>• Reduces costs and liability.</li> <li>•Reduces costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•May be expensive for the employee. Its quality must be monitored. May raise issues of co-worker equity.</li> <li>•Policy and procedures must be agreed upon. Raises co-worker equity issues. Location may pose problems.</li> <li>•Same as above.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Opryland Hotel</li> <li>•Marriott headquarters</li> <li>•Sands Hotel, Casino, and Country Club</li> <li>•Mauna Lani School</li> <li>•Twin Towers Hotel and Convention Center</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supplying information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The employer provides information about community services, helping the employee learn about what kind of care to look for, where to look, and how to evaluate it. The employer may hire a full-time administrator and may offer seminars and family support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Low cost. No liability. Serves many employees. Serves communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Narrow in scope. Doesn't lower absenteeism. Isn't a recruiting tool.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Marriott</li> <li>•General Mills</li> </ul>
<p><b>Providing financial assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Flexible spending accounts</li> <li>•Cafeteria benefit plans</li> <li>•Subsidies and discounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The employee pays for child care with before-tax dollars.</li> <li>•Employer sets total of benefit package and available options and employees select their own levels of contribution (allocation) for the benefit(s) desired.</li> <li>•The employer subsidizes the child-care provider, negotiates a discount with a day-care center, or reimburses the employee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Low cost. Reduces the employee's taxes. No equity/co-worker issues.</li> <li>•Low cost. Employees can select their child care. No equity issues.</li> <li>•Low cost. Employees can select their child care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Restrictive regulations. May be hard for small employers to administer.</li> <li>•Confusing to employees. Complex to administer.</li> <li>•Doesn't provide for evening-shift workers if community centers are used. Considered taxable income.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•International Dairy Queen</li> <li>•General Mills</li> <li>•Brinker-International</li> <li>•BBD Consultants</li> <li>•KFC</li> </ul>
<p>*All options may provide these benefits by reducing the employee's worries and obligations about child care.</p>				

Source: <http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1466&context=articles>



## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

It was critical for this project to assess the needs of City of Boulder employees with dependent children to better understand the gaps in their support network. In order to collect this data, the project team took a three-pronged approach.

- First, a literary and research review of national trends and best practices (*covered in the previous section*).
- Second, the project team reviewed city employee data to understand future needs.
- Finally, the project team conducted an on-site visit to the City of Boulder to meet with key stakeholders. This included meeting with City of Boulder community experts in the field of child care/early childhood development, and holding several employee engagement sessions in the form of focus groups with City of Boulder employees.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

High-quality child care is expensive. There is a low supply of affordable and quality child care in the City of Boulder. Another issue is that the City of Boulder will have increased demand for additional child care capacity as outlined further below.

In an effort to address cost of living, in 2014 the City of Boulder updated the 2003 Resolution 926, committing the city to pay standard, full-time employees no less than 120% of the federal poverty guidelines.<sup>11</sup> The 2017 approved city budget includes increased funding for an expanding living wage for city employees, to a minimum rate of \$15.67 per hour.<sup>11</sup> The living wage increase has ensured no city employee lives below the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The City of Boulder provided data on current employees with dependents covered under City sponsored insurance. The total number of dependent children 0-18 years of age is 730 with the projected growth to 949 by 2026. The current landscape shows the growing need for child care for the children between ages 0-4 and 5-12 accounting for 76% of City dependents (Table 3). It is worth noting that within this population of dependent children, there is a fairly even distribution of children among employee work groups. It is also worth noting that 20% of employees with dependent children have a maximum salary between \$45,000-\$79,000, while the remaining employees with dependent children have maximum salaries of more than \$80,000.

**Table 3 – City of Boulder Dependents by Age**

Ages	Number of Dependents
0-4	186
5-12	366
13-17	178

*Source: City of Boulder Health Plan Data*

<sup>11</sup> City of Boulder (2017). Living Wage. Retrieved from <https://bouldercolorado.gov/community-relations/living-wage>

Child care facilities in the City of Boulder report having significant waiting lists for openings, and in some cases, these waiting lists exceed six months. These same findings were supported over and over by comments in the City of Boulder employee engagements. Data from Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood shows licensed family child care homes decreased from a

total of 109 in 2009 to 54 in 2015, which is a 50% loss during these six years.<sup>12</sup> Due to the reduction of licensed day care homes, the total capacity of licensed family home slots saw a similar reduction of 51%.<sup>12</sup> While this reduction in slots may be consistent with national and local population changes for children 0-5 as previously outlined and as shown in Table 4, demographic changes through 2026 suggest a child population increase of 1.5% nationally and 3% in Boulder County. The shortage of slots for children ages 0-5 will become even more acute in the next decade.

**Table 4 – Boulder County’s Child Population Growth**

	2010	2016	% Change 2010-2016
<b>Total Population</b>	294,567	321,872	9.3%
<b>All Children &lt;18</b>	62,754	65,302	4.1%
<b>Children 0-5</b>	20,089	18,569	-7.6%

*Total Population and Child Population, by Age Group, Boulder County, 2010 and 2016.*  
**Source:** Population of Children in Boulder County and Colorado by Age Group, 2010, and 2016, Colorado Department of Local Affairs, State Demography Office; U.S. Census Bureau.

**Table 5 – Child Care Facilities & Capacity Ages 0-4**

City	Number of Centers	0-4 Years old	CCCAP 0-4 Years Old
<b>Boulder</b>	13	390	2
<b>Lafayette</b>	10	548	2
<b>Longmont</b>	18	646	28
<b>Louisville</b>	15	1186	100

*Total Childcare Facilities and Capacity, by Age Group, Colorado Office of Early Childhood Department of Human Services (2017). March 2017 report<sup>12</sup>.*

A March 2017 report from the Office of Early Childhood found that there were 13 child care facilities for ages 0-4 years old with a total licensed capacity of 390 in the City of Boulder<sup>12</sup> (for the purpose of this report family care homes and summer camps were not included). If every City of Boulder employee's dependent child enrolled in a licensed child care facility providing care for 0-4 years old, this would fill 48% of the permitted positions in the City of Boulder.

During this study the project team performed a geographic information system (GIS) study on employees' home zip codes who have dependents (see Appendix A). The GIS data revealed only 22 employees with dependents live within the city limits. The larger number of employees with dependents live in the surrounding communities of Lafayette, Longmont, and Louisville<sup>12</sup>. The project team reviewed the surrounding cities childcare facility capacity.

<sup>12</sup> Colorado Office of Early Childhood (2017). March 2017 report. [http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC\\_Resources?p=Resources&s=Reports-and-Data&lang=en](http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oec/OEC_Resources?p=Resources&s=Reports-and-Data&lang=en)

As shown in Tables 5 and 6, the number of licensed facilities and capacity are reflected for City of Boulder, City of Lafayette, City of Longmont, and City of Louisville.<sup>12</sup> Licensed capacity does not reflect the actual number of children each facility will allow for enrollment. According to Annette Crawford (interview, March 8, 2017), childcare facilities typically enroll below the license capacity, so reported numbers do not reflect real capacity within these communities. The surrounding communities face similar capacity issues for child care as the City of Boulder. The Boulder County Leadership Academy completed a similar study in 2016 with findings for capacity that match those outlined in this report.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 6 – Child Care Facilities & Capacity Ages 5-12**

City	Number of Centers	5-12 Years old	CCCAP 5-12 Years Old
<b>Boulder</b>	77	5802	157
<b>Lafayette</b>	23	1614	54
<b>Longmont</b>	27	2150	414
<b>Louisville</b>	10	755	0

*Total Childcare Facilities and Capacity, by Age Group, Colorado Office of Early Childhood Department of Human Services (2017). March 2017 report<sup>12</sup>.*

<sup>13</sup> Boulder Leadership Academy (2016). Child Care Needs Assessment. P.3-8.

## Stakeholder Review

### Interviews

With the assistance of the City of Boulder core team, eight community stakeholders were identified. The project team met with each stakeholder and held a Question and Answer session about childcare needs in the City of Boulder community, child care challenges, and community resources. Through this process key themes became apparent.

Stakeholders Interviewed included:

- *Karen Rahn, Director, City of Boulder Human Services*
- *Jane Wilkinson, Boulder County Public Health; Member, Children's Services Advisory Committee*
- *Annette Crawford, Boulder County*
- *Steve Callendar, Executive Director, Boulder Day Nursery*
- *Bobbie Watson, Director, Early Childhood Council of Boulder County*
- *Ben Pearlman, Attorney, Boulder County (Sponsor, Boulder County Employee Child Care Action Team)*
- *Yvette Bowden, Director, City of Boulder Parks and Recreation*
- *Alison Rhodes, Deputy Director, City of Boulder Parks and Recreation*

### Key Themes

#### ***I. There is a high demand for childcare in the City of Boulder***

- There is not enough child care in Boulder County to meet the demand
- It is difficult to get enrolled in quality childcare programs
- City of Boulder area parents demand special services
- Lack of childcare options affects families who are trying to balance their family life with work-life
- Child care in the City of Boulder and Boulder County is expensive
- There is a demand for intermittent care
- Infants and toddler care is the biggest need
- Community has need for affordable childcare
- Opening a facility could contribute to diminishing the already low teacher pool

#### ***II. Quality of care is important***

- Parents are demanding high quality childcare services in the City of Boulder
- Parents will pay more for quality
- There are specialized programs in the City of Boulder with specific diet programs and curriculums

### **III. Why Provide Childcare?**

- Demand of Childcare is high
- Childcare is a source of stress for some employees
- Would help with recruitment and retention of employees
- City of Boulder would be on the forefront of municipalities addressing this issue
- Helps realize the City's wellness vision

### **IV. Making it a reality**

- County has done an assessment and realizes their employees demand for childcare
- Community, not just employees, demanding childcare
- The ability to partner with other sites to "build on" their already established infrastructure

### **V. Challenges**

- Location: most employees live outside the city limits
- Employer provided child care may not be affordable for everyone
- Expensive startup

## **Employee Engagement: Focus Groups**

Focus groups were conducted with the Boulder Executive Team, Management Team, Union Leadership and selected employees representing a cross section of the organization. The feedback from approximately 80 city employees was particularly valuable in learning their perspectives on child care and understanding the most valued benefits already provided as well as the important gaps and needs specific to the City's workforce. The key concerns from the focus groups are listed below. Other key comments will be addressed in the Gap Analysis and Recommendation sections of this report. In addition, a lengthier sampling of comments recorded in the employee focus groups is included as Appendix B to this report.

Executive Team Members:

- *Jane Brautigam, City of Boulder City Manager*
- *Mary Ann Weideman, City of Boulder Deputy City Manager*
- *Tanya Ange, City of Boulder Deputy City Manager*
- *Bob Eichem, City of Boulder Chief Financial Advisor*
- *Cheryl Pattelli, City of Boulder Chief Financial Officer*
- *Joyce Lira, City of Boulder Director of Human Resources*

Management Team Members:

- *Jane Brautigam, City of Boulder City Manager*
- *Mary Ann Weideman, City of Boulder Deputy City Manager*
- *Tanya Ange, City of Boulder Deputy City Manager*
- *Bob Eichem, City of Boulder Chief Financial Advisor*
- *Cheryl Pattelli, City of Boulder Chief Financial Officer*

- *Joyce Lira, City of Boulder Director of Human Resources*
- *Lynnette Beck, City of Boulder City Clerk*
- *Patrick vonKeyserling, City of Boulder Director of Communications*
- *Molly Winter, City of Boulder Director of Community Vitality*
- *Heather Bergman, City of Boulder Director of Energy Strategy*
- *Michael Calderazzo, City of Boulder Fire Chief*
- *Karen Rahn, City of Boulder Director of Human Services*
- *Don Ingle, City of Boulder Director of Information Technology*
- *David Farnan, City of Boulder Director of Library/Arts*
- *James Cho, City of Boulder Municipal Court Administrator*
- *Tracy Winfree, City of Boulder Director of Open Space & Mountain Parks*
- *Yvette Bowden, City of Boulder Director of Parks and Recreation*
- *Greg Testa, City of Boulder Chief of Police*
- *Maureen Rait, City of Boulder Director of Public Works Department*

#### Unions Representation

- *Municipal Employees Association*
- *International Associate of Fire Fighters*
- *Boulder Police Officer's Association*

#### **Key Concerns:**

- **Cost**
- **Affordability**
- **Choice**
- **Accessibility**
- **Other issues affecting child care (Commute, Cost Of Living, etc.)**
- **Benchmark of Work-Life Balance (Google, Patagonia)**
- **Loss of other benefits if childcare is offered**

#### **Employee's Expressed Needs**

The main solutions to deal with the childcare concerns were lumped into the following sections: employer providing information, the employer providing financial assistance, offering childcare services and creating new policies.

##### ***I. Information Sharing***

- There is a need for a childcare coach or a transportation coach
- Interest in receiving peer support (possibly through intra-net)
- Not all employees have access to electronically distributed communication- need to make sure city is not just relying on email to disseminate information
- More one on one opportunities with Human Resources Department such as a direct



contact for childcare or a contracted person

- Information should be shared at the right time, such as right before or after someone goes on parental leave

## **II. *Financial Assistance***

- Not everyone is aware of Flexible Spending Account (FSA) for Dependent Care and how to use it for childcare
- FSA Dependent Care is capped by IRS guidelines - covering about half of the average cost of child care
- Opportunity to “assist” employees with child by contributing money to FSA for Dependent Care

## **III. *Offering Childcare Services***

- On-site day care
- Consortium-sponsored day care
- Drop-in services
- Sick child services
- Intermittent care (during late meetings)

## **IV. *Policy Development/Administration***

- City of Boulder has strong flex time, telecommuting, and family leave guidelines. Need to make sure they are being administered to people that can and would like to use them
- Develop guidelines for bringing infant to work, lactation friendly policy, family friendly workplace policy

## **Current Employer Solutions**

Fortunately for City of Boulder employees, the City's efforts to create a culture of employee well-being. As outlined below, that are several existing programs, benefits, and policies currently in place at the City of Boulder that offer valuable support for working parents.

### ***I. Information Sharing***

- Robust Onboarding process
- Employee Benefits Annual Wellness Fair
- City intra-web page

### ***II. Financial Assistance***

- Flexible Spending Account for Dependent Care
- Health Savings Account
- Parks and Recreation discount for COB employees

### ***III. Offering Childcare Services***

- County Referral Service

### ***IV. Policy Development/Administration***

- Well-being Program
- Organizational culture and values
- Flex and telecommute policies
- Paid Family Leave Policy

## **Gap analysis**

Based on our research, there appears to be a major gap between the supply of childcare in the community and the amount of demand. This gap is widened when we take into account the desire of “affordability” and “quality.” Furthermore, based on a variety of factors, notably infant-to-staff ratio requirements, there appears to be an acute lack of supply for infant and toddler care in the City of Boulder community.

A gap also appears to exist between the level of childcare support employees would like and what City is currently supplying. In general, employees believe the City does a good job at sharing information about childcare during open enrollment and onboarding but when employees are ready to use the services they have a hard time finding it. The City provides financial assistance for childcare services through providing an FSA Dependent Care; however, due to IRS guidelines there is a gap between how much a person spends and how much they can save in the FSA Dependent Care. Additionally, the City has supportive policies as far as telecommuting and flex time to make it easier on families, however, many employees feel like it is not evenly distributed throughout the departments.

Our recommendations will further address these gaps and while offer suggestions for closing them.

## **RECOMMENDED OPTIONS**

As outlined above, there are multiple challenging factors that impact the ability of City of Boulder employees to obtain quality child care. Services and policies that support City employees in providing care for their children would be a meaningful benefit. While the City is not in a position to address all factors that impact child care, the City is in a position to leverage its own assets in ways that are supportive of working parents. If the City of Boulder determines that employer sponsored child care options are a strategic focus area for the organization, then the below strategies are recommended.

### **1. Improve Communication and Facilitation of Existing Services**

**Description:** Greater awareness will leverage existing programs without requiring new resources. There are numerous services already in place that could be of benefit to working parents. However, the focus groups demonstrated that many employees are not aware of these services, including but not limited to the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Dependent Care, Paid Time Off to care for immediate family, child care referral service, and City of Boulder Recreation Program discounts.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Create a City intranet page outlining employee benefits based on “life events”
- Leverage awareness of employee well-being program to highlight child care services
- Assign Human Resources benefits staff member(s) as the lead in facilitating connection with the County’s Child Care Resource and Referrals (CCRR) Program, and other community resources
- Create a peer support group for parents through the well-being program

It is important to note that information about child care services is provided during new employee orientation, open enrollment and is available on the internet. However, feedback from the employee focus groups highlighted the importance of having information readily available to employees at the time in which they need – in addition to orientations or trainings. Further, employees expressed a desire to find information on employee benefits in a format that is more consumer friendly. Creating an intranet page outlining employee benefits based on life events would both make it more consumer friendly and make it easier for employees to access information specific to their needs at different points in time.

A “life events” structure means organizing employee benefits based on events or changes in employees’ lives. Examples include a change in marital status, birth of a child, death in the family, change in legal name, etc. If an employee is seeking out information on completing Family Medical Leave Act paperwork, they could be pointed to all other resources on this intranet page based on their particular need for using (FMLA). An important reason for creating an intranet page is the speed at which information and resources change. Hard copy

packets are quickly outdated and an electronic resource is accessible from any location and a more sustainable solution. This approach to organize employee benefits based on “life events” also provides a benefit to the entire organization under the label of “dependent care.” This approach would broaden the appeal of the City’s efforts for child care while being more inclusive to the needs of, likely, the entire organization.

The employee focus groups highlighted the success of the employee well-being program. A vast majority of employees praised the communication and transparency of the well-being program. When informed in the focus groups about child care resources for which they were unaware, employees suggested that any efforts to share more information about child care services be done through the well-being program because there is already a high level of awareness and saturation for that program.

Human Resources staff have the most knowledge of child care related benefits available to City employees. In addition, through this project, it is assumable that Human Resources staff have achieved greater awareness of child care services offered by partner agencies and community resources. We recommend that one or more Human Resources benefits employees be designated as the main contact or liaison for employees seeking child care services. This role would include connecting employees to the Boulder County Child Care Referral Service. The role would also include providing information about other community resources such as the YWCA Children’s Alley drop-in program and the County Take-A-Break in-home care for sick children. We recommend that Human Resources staff be the lead for developing the “life events” intranet page for employee benefits. As the lead for each of these related efforts, Human Resources staff would build institutional knowledge of child care services and have a more comprehensive knowledge base for facilitating the needs of City employees. It is worth noting that this point contact role could be expanded to include “dependent care.”

During the employee focus groups, we recognized many working parents that had informal peer groups with other working parents and we witnessed some participants forming new informal networks as they saw the value in parents informing one another. Another participant noted that with the most recent release of the City’s intranet, that there was an effort to create online peer networks, but that the effort didn’t really take off. The implementation of the recommendations of this project and the interest it has generated in City employees could be leveraged to create a peer network of working parents employed by the City. This same network could serve as a resource in reviewing and testing materials or resources resulting from this project.

**Resources for Implementation:** The infrastructure for an intranet site is currently in place. The employee well-being program has acknowledged success. Human Resources staff are already assigned multiple related services. An online forum for peer support groups has already been developed.

**Cost and Funding:** This series of recommendations is primarily staff resource driven. No additional funding is required. Updating the City intranet page requires limited staff time. Designating specific Human Resources employees as leads for interacting with employees related to child care services may require some shifting of responsibilities, but should not require additional resources. We recommend that the parent peer network be self-facilitated; the City would only create the opportunity and space for the group to communicate and meet.

## 2. Conduct a Benefits Utilization Analysis to Better Understand Needs of Working Parents

**Description:** It would be cost prohibitive for the City of Boulder to offer significant financial assistance in the form of vouchers, stipends, etc. for child care related expenses. In addition, the City already provides access to Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts for City employees. However, the City currently invests significant funding into multiple benefit programs that may not be optimally aligned to working parents. Conducting a benefits utilization analysis will help leadership understand how employees are using the resources available to them and assess in particular if working parents are taking advantage of all employee benefits.

**Recommendation:**

- Conduct a Benefits Utilization Analysis, including a distinct report of utilization by employees with dependent children
- Identify where benefits programs can be better aligned with working parent lifestyles

During the focus groups, employees recognized that the City of Boulder was not responsible for their personal costs in providing child care services. However, many employees expressed frustration that some employee benefits were not practical for working parents. Realigning employee benefits to better fit employee needs is likely to result in higher employee satisfaction and work-life balance without investing new dollars into employee benefits. A benefit utilization study would also provide value to the overall organization and to all employees regardless of whether they are working parents. This equitable approach would offer insight into employee behavior and preferences and allow the City to be responsive to evolving expectations of employees.

**Resources for Implementation:** Existing budget allocation for employee benefits.

**Cost and Funding:** Conducting a quality benefits utilization study would be labor intensive for City staff. We recommend that the City develop a work plan for the study and seek out qualified vendors with this expertise to complete the work plan. Funding and prioritization for this study should be considered as only one potential project in the overall Human Resources work plan. If the City does determine that there are underutilized employees benefits, reallocating existing resources for benefits or programs more aligned with employee needs will create increased employee satisfaction without any additional funding.



### 3. Identify Lactation Locations

**Description:** Multiple employees made requests during focus groups for greater access to private rooms or dedicated lactation locations.

**Recommendations:**

- Identify lactation locations in all City facilities
- Assign Human Resources benefits staff member(s) as the lead in responding to requests and community lactation locations to City employees
- Where necessary, provide additional lactation locations through mobile lactation stands

We received feedback from the Management Team that dedicated lactation rooms or other private locations are readily available to employees throughout the City. However, multiple employees shared personal experiences of not having access to lactation locations. It is possible that employees are not familiar with lactation locations available to them or that their work groups can be more accommodating in making those locations available.

**Resources for Implementation:** A majority of City facilities will have lactation locations available. Limited staff resources will be required to identify locations and communicate these locations to employees on an ongoing basis.

**Cost and Funding:** If additional lactation locations are necessary, portable lactation stations have been developed, which offer desirable privacy without excessive cost. From an informal survey of vendors, average costs for a portable lactation station are approximately \$10,000 with an additional \$1,000 for shipping and installation<sup>14</sup>. No funding source has been identified for this one-time cost.

### 4. Explore Improving Employee Access to City Youth Summer Camps

**Description:** Obtaining child care services for elementary and middle school aged children presents different challenges. The primary challenge referenced during employee focus groups was child care during summer months and other breaks from school. Employees described the urgency and distress of registering and organizing a multitude of summer camps for their children in a competitive environment in a very short time frame. The City of Boulder already offers youth summer camps. Making City summer camps more accessible to City employees would provide a valuable benefit with minimal investment.

**Recommendations:**

- Explore opportunities to have early registration for summer camps to City Employees
- Offer summer camp registration workshop for parents
- Develop communication plan to promote City summer camps to employees

The biggest challenge for employees accessing youth summer camps that surfaced during the focus groups was the limited number of available camps coupled with the annual rush to get their children registered before camps were filled up. Because the City already offers summer camps, employees could be given an opportunity for early registration. This would alleviate much of the stress for City employees. Beyond limited discounts already in place, employees would pay for summer camps at market rate. The benefit to City employees is the ability to access spots in advance of the rush to register for camps, avoiding the stress of the tight time frames and uncertainty of getting the camps that employees desire. Early registration, as opposed to allocating dedicated spots in camps for City employees, would allow time for Recreation staff to plan for additional camp offerings that would open to the public if City employees register their children for a large portion of available camp spots. We recognize that this recommendation must be weighed with the organizational mission to provide services to the community. The ideal scenario would be offer early registration to City employees without impacting the overall number of spots available to the community.

Another piece of feedback from the focus groups was that not all City employees demand City of Boulder summer camps. Employees may choose other options closer to their children's schools, closer to a spouse's work or choose other camps based on their children's areas of interest. Because employees may select a variety of summer camp options, organizing a workshop for parents to help them learn to navigate the annual registration process would be very helpful. This workshop could be held a month in advance of the annual registration deadlines and help employees understand the process and inventory of camps available.

We also recommend that a specific communications plan or marketing checklist be developed to use each year to inform employees in advance of the City's summer camp registration. This plan would outline the ways that City employees could be informed of the availability of summer camps, the discount available to City employees and the summer camp registration workshop. This would bring greater awareness for parents to access this benefit and may lead to more camp registrations.

**Resources for Implementation:** The existing expertise, process and infrastructure for holding youth summer camps is the greatest resource related to this recommendation. In addition, limited employee discounts for summer youth camps already exist.

**Cost and Funding:** No new funding would be required for this recommendation. There may be some staffing impacts to facilitate dedicated employee spots and/or early registration for City employees.

## **5. Communicate Opportunities for Use of Flex Time and Telecommuting Guidelines**

**Description:** The City of Boulder has adopted progressive flextime and telecommuting policies in support of sustainability and work-life balance. These policies can be utilized as a great benefit to working parents that are employed work units where the policies make sense. However, feedback from the focus groups was that the policies are not consistently applied throughout the organization. Many employees expressed a desire for clarity on the application of these policies.

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop and carry out an employee engagement plan to facilitate conversations at the Management Team, Department and Division levels to achieve a common vision for appropriate and consistent use of policies where appropriate
- Use employee survey data to assess use of these policies; consider follow-up assessments to evaluate work groups that could more fully implement these policies
- Pursue full implementation of Office 365
- Encourage work units to adopt “No Meeting” work days

Employees readily recognized in the focus groups that flexible schedules and telecommuting do not apply to all work units. The chief concern related to this topic was that these policies are not consistently applied among work groups with similar working conditions. Many employees expressed gratitude for positive work cultures and supervisors supportive of these policies. More employees expressed frustration that their supervisors and work groups made use of these policies unrealistic.

As with any policy, philosophy or value, it will take time and consistent effort for the organization to fully embrace and implement these policies. An employee engagement plan would provide City leadership with a deliberate approach for facilitating dialogue related to these policies. The City has already completed the initial steps of adopting the policies, encouraging their use and posting them for public review. Simple communication of the policies will not have significant additional impacts. However, facilitating conversations about the policies at multiple levels of the organization helps managers, supervisors and employees come to a shared vision for the policies and offers opportunities to explore when and how they should be used. The process of dialogue requires more time and investment. However, it brings clarity and promotes the appropriate use policies through common understanding. More importantly, it instills more deeply the values and work culture that the City is trying to achieve.

The employee child care needs assessment survey may offer additional insight into the extent to which employees use these policies or seek clarity related to them. Based on survey results, additional follow-up inquiries or assessment may be valuable. A full organizational

assessment of the use of flextime and telecommuting by employee or work group would be costly, time intensive and possibly divisive or distracting for employees. Instead, the recommendation is to determine if there are a smaller number of work units well suited to these policies, but have very low use of the policies. An assessment of only those work units that fall within these criteria would provide the greatest return on value.

The City of Boulder uses the Microsoft Office 365 application. Office 365 offers multiple tools that facilitate work planning and remote communication. The use of SharePoint and OneDrive enable employees to access their working files from any location as well as share files and documents with their work groups. Office 365 integration with Skype allows calls, video conferences and messaging between employees from any location. Office 365 also allows calendar sharing and work organization functions to also assist work groups in jointly planning work assignments. Feedback from employees suggests that Office 365 capabilities are available to all employees, but training and implementation of all capabilities is inconsistent across the organization. Implementation of Office 365 is recent enough that this is understandable. Continued implementation and more importantly continued training and adoption of the applicable tools from Office 365 will make telecommuting increasingly feasible.

During the employee focus groups there were multiple comments about the frequency of work meetings making flexible schedules and telecommuting unrealistic. While some work units may require regular meetings, each work unit should be encouraged to assess their work meeting schedule to determine if 1-2 days per week could be free of meetings. Adopting “No Meeting” days by consolidating meetings into other days of the week would allow employees the ability to telecommute. An additional benefit is allowing employees time blocks to complete challenging work assignments and spend time on strategic priorities as opposed to the less critical tasks that tend to consume their work days.

It is worth noting that an advantage to promoting flextime and telecommuting that the appropriate use of these policies impacts a greater population than working parents. It is supportive of employees that need to care for a partner, spouse, aging parent, etc. These policies are also consistent with other organizational values and goals such as sustainability. Continued implementation of flextime and telecommuting policies are a critical component of the organizational effort to create a culture of whole person well-being and work-life balance.

**Resources for implementation:** The most valuable resource related to this recommendation is the Executive Team leadership, Management Team leadership and existing venues for employee conversations on this topic. Other resources include communication around the well-being program, department and division meetings in which to have conversations and employee performance coaching and evaluations where this topic can be discussed. It is important to also note that employees and work units have increasingly capable technology to organize their work and facilitate telecommuting, particularly the full Office 365 suite which the City has already licensed.

**Cost and funding:** There is no additional funding required for this recommendation. Staff resource time and leadership discipline is required to continue to push values in the organizational culture for the appropriate use of these policies.

#### 6. Conduct Employee Child Care Needs Assessment Survey

**Description:** The data analysis described in this project is based on 1) countywide statistics related to child care services and 2) dependents of employees covered on the City's health insurance plans. This analysis is neither specific enough to the needs of City of Boulder employees nor a complete picture of all dependents of employees. The employee focus groups offered valuable insight into the challenges and needs of employees in obtaining child care services. However, an employee survey would provide additional perspective and allow for a series of more detailed follow-up questions developed based on feedback received in the focus groups. Before investing City resources in programs or in particular investing in a high cost facility, it is critical to obtain a deeper understanding of specific information from City employees on their current child care options and usage as well as the options that would be most attractive to them.

**Recommendation:**

- Conduct an online survey to assess child care needs and preferences of City employees

**Resources for Implementation:** The Leadership ICMA project team developed a sample survey for the City to use for distribution through an online survey tool (Appendix D). The survey questions are based on similar surveys administered in other municipalities, the questions asked in the employee focus groups, follow-up questions from the focus groups, and mirrors a survey completed by Boulder County during their needs assessment for a related project for their employees. The City of Boulder may need to update survey instrument to align with City objectives and address emerging inquiries related to this topic

**Cost and Funding:** There is minimal to no cost for use of the online survey tool. Limited staff resources would be required to administer and analyze the survey results. The Leadership ICMA project team offers to review and discuss survey results with the City of Boulder.

#### 7. Investigate Alternatives for City Sponsored Child Care Facility

**Description:** A key issue noted throughout this project is access to quality child care. There is a shortage of child care providers in the City of Boulder. Working parents struggle to find quality care and are often on long waiting lists. Other parents experience unanticipated changes imposed by their child care providers. Working parents are subject to the conditions set by their child care providers. By offering a City sponsored child care service at a City

facility, the City could play a more active role in establishing the quality, conditions and permanency of child care to which their employees have access.

### **Recommendations:**

It is worth noting that the City of Boulder should first complete the Employee Child Care Needs Assessment Survey to determine the demand for a City sponsored child care facility. If the City determines that there is sufficient impetus for pursuing a City sponsored facility, we recommend the following:

- Identify future capital projects with the potential for inclusion of a child care facility
- Develop business requirements for a City sponsored child care service
- Approach County leadership to explore co-location of child care facilities

As noted in the Gap Analysis of this report, there is a shortage of child care facilities in the City of Boulder, particularly for infants and toddlers. Pursuing a City sponsored child care facility would benefit employees and the community by creating additional child care capacity. More importantly, a City sponsored facility would offer the City more control in the operations and services provided by the facility. In addition, a City facility would allow greater parent access during working hours, adding to quality of life and work-life balance. In addition, a City sponsored facility could defray some costs that make it difficult for child care providers to ensure quality services.

### Capital Project

Building a stand-alone child care facility is cost prohibitive for the City of Boulder. Retrofitting existing facilities is also cost prohibitive. For these reasons, we recommend that the City identify strategic capital improvements that will take place in the next five years as potential projects for including a child care facility. In addition, we recommend that the City explore a partnership with Boulder County to share in the capital costs for a potential facility.

### Business Requirements

The City of Boulder is not in the business of providing employer based child care. As discussed, providing quality child care is challenging and costly. Most notably due to the rigorous licensing and staffing requirements. We recommend that the City develop the business requirements or conditions that are desired for a child care service and solicit providers to offer the services by contract. The requirements or conditions should be based on the results of the Employee Child Care Needs Assessment Survey. In addition to the survey results, we recommend the following as a baseline for business requirements based on feedback gleaned from interviews and employee focus groups:

- Fully accredited service providers



- Prioritize infant and toddler care; preschool and after school care are less of a challenge
- Staff slightly above State required provider to child ratios for quality and coverage
- Charge market rates; employees recognize they would pay market rates for care, the assurance of access and quality is the benefit
- Offer intermittent care services separate from full-day care; drop-in service, sick child care, evening hours for night meetings
- Dedicate a small number of enrollments for open enrollment from the community and allow additional community enrollment when employee enrollment is down; increases the diversity of the enrollment, leverages CCAP funding

It is important to note that two of the recommendations above would impact the cost of services. Staffing for intermittent care needs must remain static, while revenues will fluctuate based on usage. Some intermittent needs can be planned, such as child care during night meetings, but other services in addition, staffing above State required ratios also impact cost. However, intermittent care and high quality care were the largest gaps identified by employees. These are the two areas that we recommend the City consider subsidizing in order to provide these services at a City sponsored facility.

#### Potential County Partnership

In order to make a City sponsored child care facility far more feasible, we recommend pursuing a joint venture with Boulder County. Boulder County is currently in the process of addressing the topic of child care for their employees. County leadership is highly engaged and a needs assessment conducted by an employee task force has also recommended partnership with the City of Boulder. Partnership with County would share costs and create the necessary economy of scale to control costs. In addition, partnership with the County could multiple locations, a potential benefit to many City employees that live outside of the City and may prefer child care closer to home or a spouse's employment.

**Resources for Implementation:** The City will invariably have future capital projects that can be a resource for this recommendation. In addition, the City has positive working relationships with child care providers and experts in the community to facilitate a quality solicitation for service providers. Furthermore, the County appears willing and able to work in partnership with the City.

**Cost and Funding:** As noted above, it is cost prohibitive for the City of Boulder to build a stand-alone child care facility solely for City employee use. Retrofitting existing City facilities can be even more cost prohibitive because of unique permitting requirements for child care facilities. A recent child care facility was constructed in City of Boulder by a local church at the cost of \$455/sq. ft. Within the City of Boulder, there must be 35 sq. ft. of indoor space per child and 75 sq. ft. of outdoor space per child. At the estimated rate of \$455/sq. ft., a child care facility with capacity for 30 children would cost approximately \$1.5 million and a facility with

capacity for 50 children would cost \$2.5 million. Building a child care facility in conjunction with another capital project and in partnership with the County would have a significant impact on costs. Also as noted above, it is expensive to operate a child care facility. The City would be better suited by leveraging the expertise of child care providers and contracting out operations to manage costs and long-term employee obligations. There are important advantages that the City could offer to a potential contract provider in keeping down costs. By providing the physical space for a child care operation, the City could reduce or eliminate the lease or mortgage payments for a provider. In addition, if the facility is categorized as a not-for-profit government facility, there may be tax advantages to the provider. Through these two advantages, the City may be able to subsidize the quality and intermittent care services without significant financial subsidy from other City funds.

## **CONCLUSION**

Providing quality early childhood development and quality child care is a national challenge, a challenge even more pressing for the County and City of Boulder. While it is a personal responsibility for parents, and while it is not within the jurisdiction or ability of City to improve all factors impacting child care, the City can make an impact for its own employees. City of Boulder is doing good work, particularly in the area of policy development. However, there are opportunities for improvement in information sharing, easing financial burden and in particular setting a leading example for municipal employers by:

- 1) Reinforcing whole person well-being and work-life balance through existing family leave, flextime and telecommuting policies, and
- 2) Developing joint use facilities with the County to ensure access to quality care for employees.

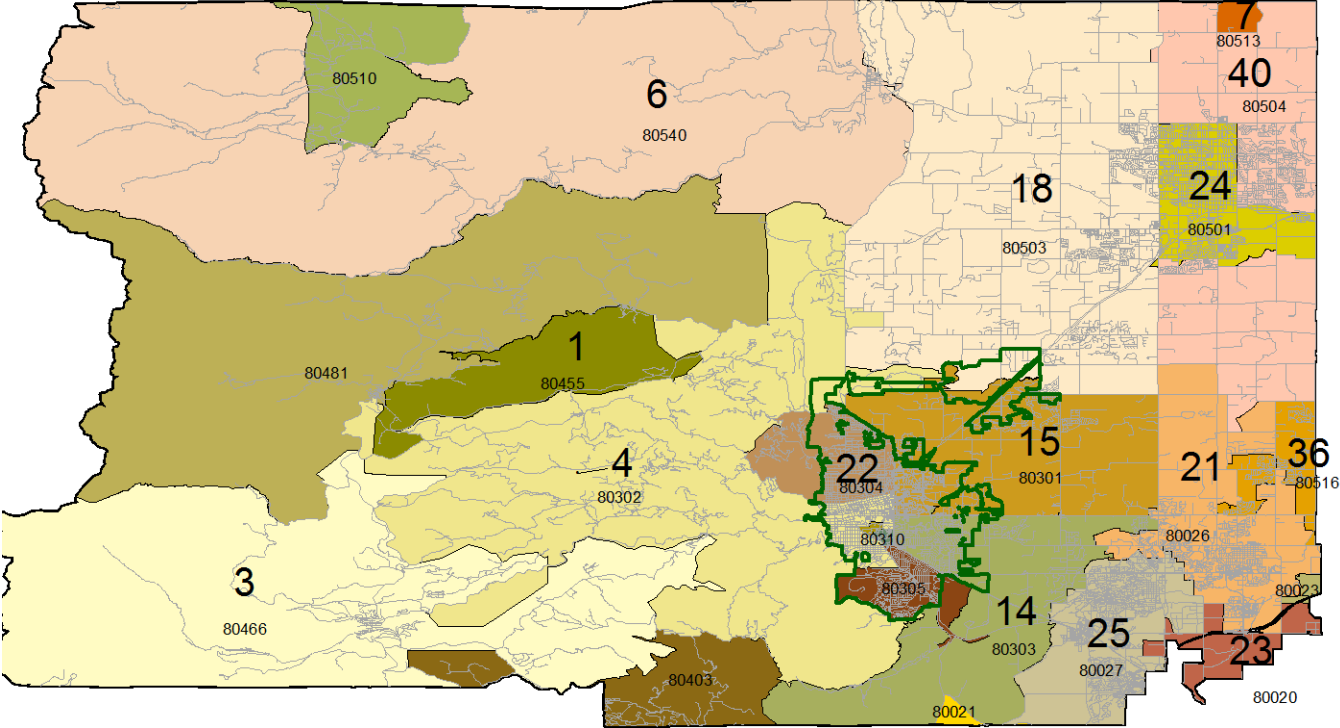
As the City of Boulder makes progress toward these outcomes, not only will they improve organizational culture and employee well-being, they have the potential to impact the development of generations to come.

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**Appendix**

**Appendix A - City of Boulder Employee Residences with Dependent Children by Zip Code**



## **Appendix B – Employee Focus Group Comments**

- The cost of health insurance is also a huge factor in affording child care
- The amount of care for the dollars provided by the City has reduced over time; insurance only covers major medical; the City seems to be pushing employees to the high deductible plan by offering only that amount in employer contribution to the health plan
- Child care is also about life benefits, like being able to visit your child at lunch or being close to your child if an issue comes up
- Most day care providers offer hours consistent with school day hours, not work day hours, and charge a premium for the 2-5 hours
- Having a City operated child care facility would offer more choice to employees
- Child care can't be free, it is important that there is parity in the benefits provided to the community; but child care assistance to employees does benefit the community and makes it better
- Yes, I would drive with my child to Boulder for child care to spend that much more time with them
- Regular hours for child care are not always sufficient for commuting employees, have to drop child off at 7am to be at work at 8am and can't pick them up until 6 pm
- I don't think many employees would really use drop-in care for only one or two hours
- Perhaps the City could partner with CU students for on-call baby sitters
- I feel like I have to choose between living in the community I work or choose quality housing outside the community
- My commute is 30-60 minutes, but I spend more time traveling through Boulder than traveling to Boulder
- The City of Boulder claims to be progressive, but the reality for employees is that policies and practices don't always back that up
- We need clarity on what the flex time and telecommuting policies are
- We all know that we are supposed to flex, but no one really knows what that means
- The application of flex and telecommute policies is very supervisor and manager dependent; some are great and some are awful
- It would be great to have sick leave for kids or additional floating sick days or holidays for sick children that expire every year I don't like that if both spouses work for the City, they only get one \$1500 employer contribution to health insurance
- I don't like that if both spouses work for the City, that they have to split the 12 weeks of family leave time
- The problem with the family leave policy is that it is an event based policy that is not a holistic parent based policy; it doesn't allow for long-term bonding for both parents
- The needs for accommodating regular alternative schedules are different than the one-time, intermittent needs
- The GoBoulder Green commute policy and incentives don't work for parents of young children with car seats and drop offs at day care; we can't use the EcoPass benefit, and we have to pay for parking, so it is a \$100 swing in costs; maybe the City could allow parking in City lots for parents with young children; the free lots are too far from downtown for working parents to make drop offs at day care, park and then get to work

- It would be helpful to know more about what benefits the City offers, a benefit guide, and what you are allowed to do under flex and telecommute policies
- The City of Boulder is not just competing in the local government market, they are competing with the private sector, like tech companies, that offer different employee benefits
- The City does offer an early drop off and late pick up option for summer camp
- It is important to think of child care as how it can benefit the mission of the City in serving the community, not just serving City employees
- Housing is the biggest issue – particularly families won't come here
- Single-family homes; not stacked; very expensive; hard to recruit families with young children
- Lot more home for their money outside of Boulder – commute in
- All other amenities to recruit make a difference – health care, rec centers, and child care
- We lose middle income families here
- Role of city in child care depends on city's model, value, business and strategy. Are we a family or business?
- Childcare seems to be such a problem for people here
- Looking at childcare helps measure the gender pay gap
- Paternal child care helps family
- Having resources available would be helpful
- A lot of people do commute
- If we do something, we need to do it right: longer hours, accredited, etc.
- Opening up slots to the community; a community benefit: like NIST & NOAA
- A lot of people that work for the city don't live in town
- If we subsidize, do we subsidize for employees that live in town?
- If have to run to childcare place, its often not in city
- Flex time is helpful when needed
- Wonderful positive thing that city is looking into child care
- One size does not fit all
- Availability is challenge
- Finding a flexible day care is challenge
- Cost, schedule and location is challenge
- Flexible schedule is a challenge or a flexible time at work
- Finding affordable and quality is an issue
- Women are taking on more of the responsibility; gender gap
- Want choice, credit for spending money on daycare even out of city as a benefit
- An overall care voucher: Would like doggy daycare and elder care especially for travel for the city
- More people are dealing with parental care than for children
- Child care doesn't stop after age 5: offset cost for afterschool program
- Problem with elder care and child care is sick leave; no paid leave for family life emergencies, moving parents into a nursing home
- Would like unlimited PTO
- Infant toddler - like being closer to work; older kids - like broader choice
- Unlimited PTO a lot simpler way to deal with it
- Single parent homes are an additional challenge

- Flexibility with starting and ending hours of care would help
- Telework is helpful
- Hard to let every department have flex
- Holiday and summer off is hard; currently pay a fortune for camps
- Sick kids are a problem
- Nanny on call may be a good option for single parents
- Currently use vacation time to deal with intermittent child care issues
- Based on where you are in the organization it impacts your accruals
- FSA Dependent Care - it is a benefit and people know about it
- Partnership with childcare centers to get discounted rate
- Even if you don't have kids, it is important for the well-being of the entire workforce; especially single parents
- Only problem it may open up a huge can of worms
- If employees weren't worried about childcare it would help with work-life balance for employees
- Would love a secure child Uber; the amount of driving
- Preschool half day is a problem trying to figure out picking up with a workforce living outside the city
- Addressing child care helps people be more dependable
- Helps with retention not recruitment because not a strong benefit, because it's a hygiene factor not a motivating factor
- May help with recruitment, but for diverse population like single mothers
- Triggers the idea to applicant that employer cares about work-life balance
- Do you want kids around your coworkers' kids or your neighborhood's kids?
- When doing job offers people like to hear about wellness passes, they are liking more benefits
- People are looking at benefits and its becoming somewhat of a retention issue
- Some employees looking at County and their benefits
- Would help with retention of the people still wanting to have children or more children
- Salary not as high but employees see the value proposition of local government: benefits, purpose
- Employees are hesitant to say they should provide childcare because there are not a lot of options, so the employer might not have to provide those services
- Need more child care options in Boulder
- Need help with placement
- Sometimes I need a childcare coach/like transportation coach
- Hard to figure it all out
- Have never found a good resource to help
- Helping with nanny share?
- Boulder is a high performing organization with talented people, so it needs to recognize that it is recruiting in competition with private sector, like Google
- Help with child care would be a great benefit
- Would be awesome to offer infant to 4
- Since it is so hard to get in to child care facilities, there is not much of a choice of where you send your child
- It would be enough of a plus to have onsite to drive in even if you are not at work



- But if you have one kid at school outside Boulder, it might be harder to do both
- Boulder actually has a lot of options for afterschool care
- The convenience of an onsite facility would be the perk
- Not compensation; a perk
- Employee equity a concern
- Employees are located all over the place so people won't be all happy about where a child care facility is located
- Would like in alignment with goals and values
- Child care concierge and figuring out schools would really help
- On-site day care for infant care would be great for nursing mothers
- If your child is sick, then use flex or sick time
- Consistency and legality of flex time to care for children if it is a salaried employee; should they be getting paid to be home with their child?
- Inconsistencies with application of the telecommuting policy if your child is sick
- Some supervisors are more trusting
- Not interested in nanny or on-call services
- Nanny on call might be an option
- More important to be home
- The FSA Dependent Care is known and used
- Infant care would be tremendous benefit
- Hard to afford child care
- Parental leave policy; consider mandatory 3 months' leave
- Intermittent child care – would be great to somehow provide some sort of childcare
- Providing more flexible schedule; work a 9x9 and take every other Friday off
- Managers should allow a 7-3 or 9-6 shift
- Need flexibility and a supportive environment
- Work-life balance is a cultural issue, not something that onsite daycare will solve; could create a situation where employees are expected to do more and work longer because child care is on site
- Also a risk with public perception of a City child care facility
- Don't like rolling sick time and vacation together
- If PTO time was reduced, I would be looking for another job
- Recruitment is difficult, but you get 6 weeks of vacation if you have 15 years
- Right thing to do to help with child care
- No legal obligation to provide child care, but it is in support of the well-being program and would be a great benefit
- Cost is biggest challenge
- Potential to negotiate a group rate with child care providers
- Close to work is best
- Close to home is good for work from home
- An after school program would be helpful
- Biggest challenge is hours; need to have earlier time with 7 am start time
- Summer camps are challenging; different camps and they are expensive; City one is less expensive 8-6 but your child has to want to go to that camp
- Nanny chauffer and child Uber

- Patagonia employees – get to have lunch with their kids during the day; they have a 100% female retention rate
- Child care is challenging for snow days
- When I am home with a sick child I can get more work done than at work
- Sick kids is super tough because of missing a day
- There are flexible schedules in some departments; there are some departments that that is not an option
- PADAGONIA model is great – on site, being able to pop in and not having to pump
- On-site daycare is challenging because of location
- Voucher program preferred so child doesn't have to leave her friends
- Nanny service or pre-vetting of intermittent care providers would be great; especially for night meetings
- Employees know about FSA Dependent Care, but it isn't enough to cover the costs
- Not all employees know about and use FSA Dependent Care, others don't know it can be used for child care costs
- Hard to find information about FMLA
- Parental leave information was rolled out well
- Intra-web organized by department so it's hard to figure out; documents not clear; not clear who to talk to, talked to three different people in HR to get to the right person
- Have to be here for a while to feel like you have enough time to care for kids
- When you start, your PRO is super low
- Sick and vacation time should stay separate
- I feel like with deadlines, I can't call out sick
- Need more options when coming back from leave; can't come back half time; want to ease in, check email or work from home
- Should be more progressive when it comes to HR
- Child care is good for recruitment
- Addressing child care would help with retention
- Need childcare that can accommodate 6:30am to 7pm
- Parental leave policy made us proud to work for Boulder
- Flex time policy is applied differently work group to work group
- Would be good to have more flex schedule options when coming back from parental leave
- Park Central has no space for pumping
- Child care help is not expected but it would be appreciated
- If we had a facility it would be bad; there would be perceived or real preferential benefits
- If no financial benefit is available, being flexible is appreciated
- Flex time is very inconsistent among workgroups
- Finding part time infant care is difficult
- Intermittent child care is difficult
- Being home with a sick child is my preference
- Spouse's job can affect where you want your child care
- Want children closer to home so we can build community
- Want on-site day care for intermittent needs
- On site would be good, but it needs to be cheaper
- Money would be the best benefit

- Hard to find something that matches everybody's needs
- Cafeteria model would be great
- Child care for working late after normal work hours would be great
- Need quality
- Summer is expensive
- The way child care providers are set up is not geared for people that work
- I don't feel stressed about taking sick time
- I feel supported if I need to take sick time, but I just feel bad doing it
- I would not use a sick care service
- Productivity is lower with a baby at work
- Good option but wouldn't want to bring my own baby to work
- Think it's a great thing to bring a baby to work
- Pumping – there is no place to pump
- Quit breastfeeding before I wanted to because of the discomfort of the time away from my desk and people not understanding and people not being respectful of my schedule
- Everybody knows about FSA Dependent Care
- Drop in care is super expensive; \$100 a day for drop in
- Day care is more than a 1/4 of my monthly pay
- Need friends to help with care
- Night meetings are really difficult
- Child care benefits would play a major role and would be good for recruitment
- Helps with quality of life
- Infant to 2.5 can be challenging
- A lot of people seem not to have family support in the area
- Finding quality care is hard
- Vetting would be helpful
- Expense is one issue
- City has good policies on flex time
- At lower levels employees might not have the same support on flex time
- Telecommuting is a real option
- Need more information for new people to the area
- Let employees have a clearinghouse of child care information
- On-site day care at NOAA is loved; easy for parents to visit
- Put a child care facility in the hospital on Broadway?
- It would be initially hard to get into the childcare business
- Once it's a decent fee, comfort level would be high with the city's name
- Should have to pay something because don't appreciate service
- Need an affordable option
- Would appreciate a sliding scale for child care costs based on income
- Safety issue; would want a City facility to be secure, public safety employees are vulnerable
- Closer to where they work
- Once on a corridor
- Summer is a scramble
- Transportation is always an issue
- Bussing service for kids?

- Camp hours is stressful; not consistent with working hours
- Night meetings-might be hard for parent
- Parent support group for the city; online support group
- Need evaluation criteria for keeping everyone in the loop, would help with consistency in applying policies; annual 360 evaluation
- Why do we have to split the leave? And consecutive makes it harder
- Affordability is the issue with recruitment and retention
- Sick time to deal with parents would make it happier
- Clarity of what time you can take for family care
- Encourage city to allow sick leave for family care
- Take a look at PTO
- Do cap amount for PTO pay out
- Allow more PTO for a catastrophic bank
- Need a flexible policy to donate sick time