



# Kansas Care Economy

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My new book: *Swiftnomics: Women in Today's Economy* (UC Press, 2025)

"Ambitious, fast-paced, fact-filled, and accessible."  
—Science

HEATHER BOUSHEY

# Finding Time

THE ECONOMICS OF  
WORK-LIFE CONFLICT

# Career & Family

WOMEN'S CENTURY-LONG  
JOURNEY TOWARD EQUITY

Claudia  
Goldin

# ALREADY

# TOAST

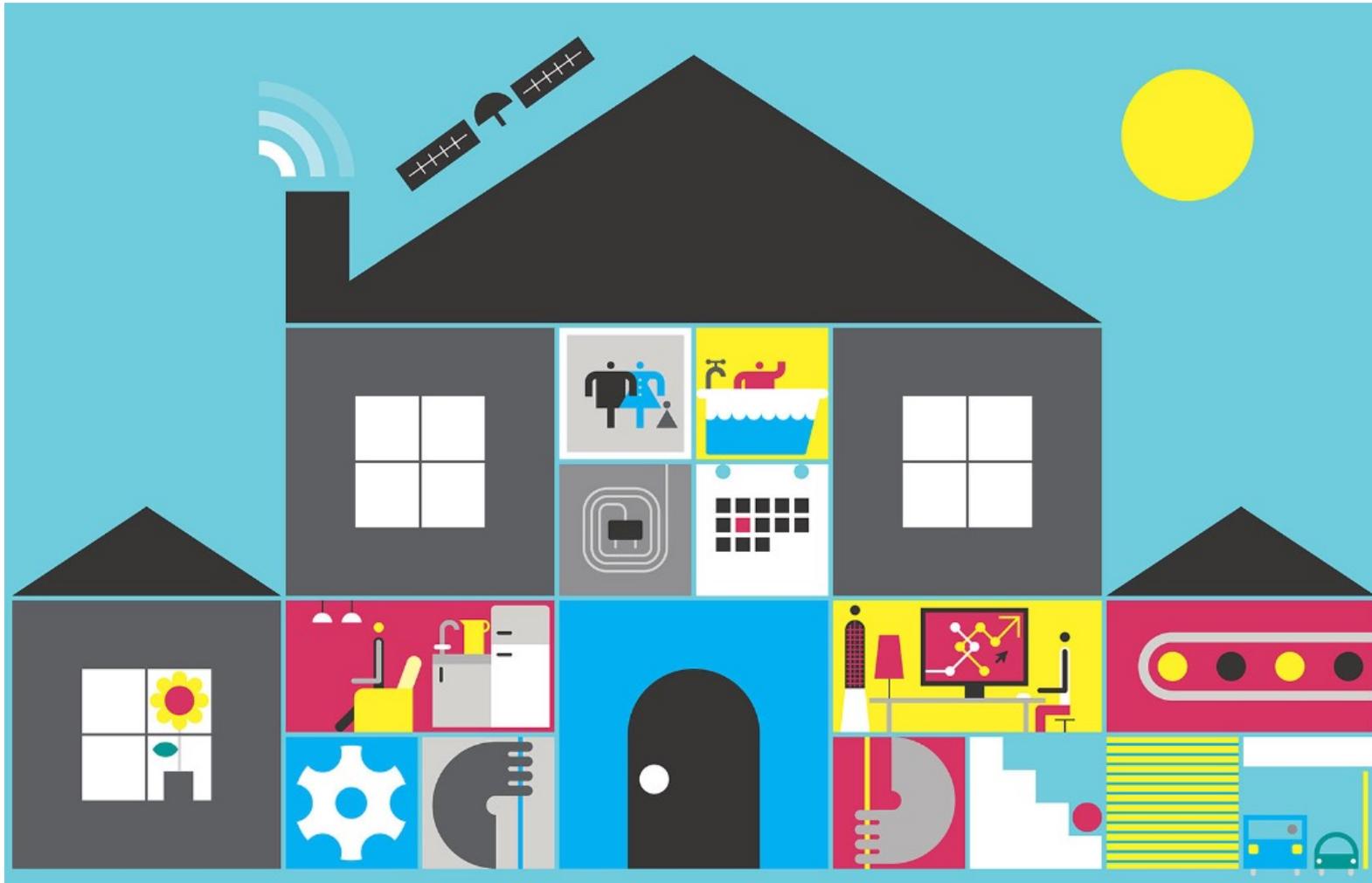
CAREGIVING AND BURNOUT  
IN AMERICA

KATE WASHINGTON

# What is a Care Economy?



# The Care Economy is Heavily Subsidized by Family Caregivers in the Home...



*When society relies heavily on **informal care by family members** alone, we limit the potential to maximize economic activity outside the home.*

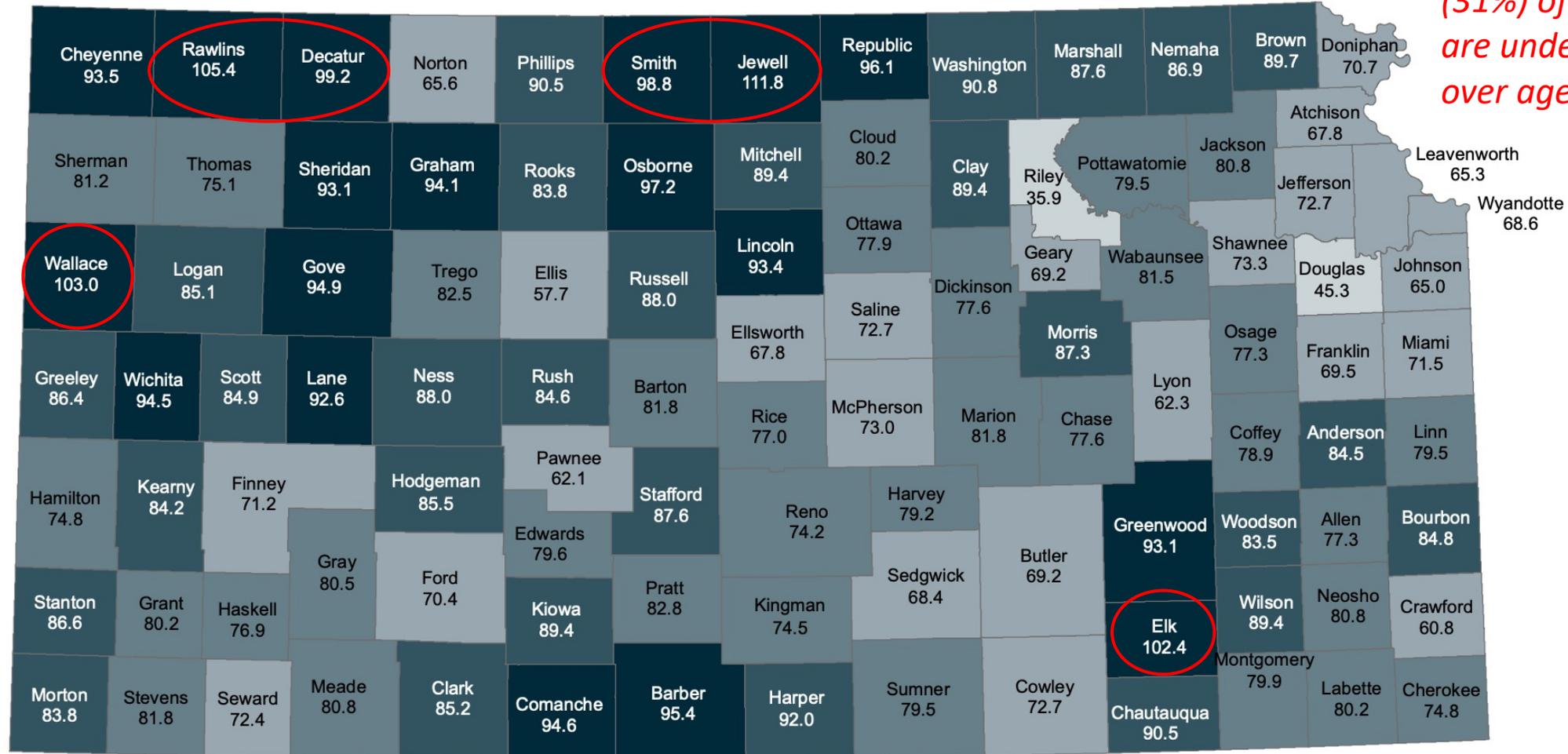
*Overall economic wellbeing of the home is restricted....**and economic growth suffers.***

Work for pay often gets disrupted in Kansas because of a lack of structural supports for caregivers...



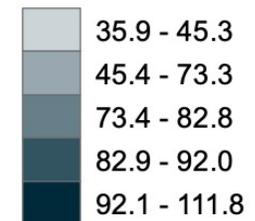
## Dependent Population per 100 People Age 18-64 in Kansas, by County, 2022

*Almost one-third (31%) of individuals are under age 19 or over age 75.*

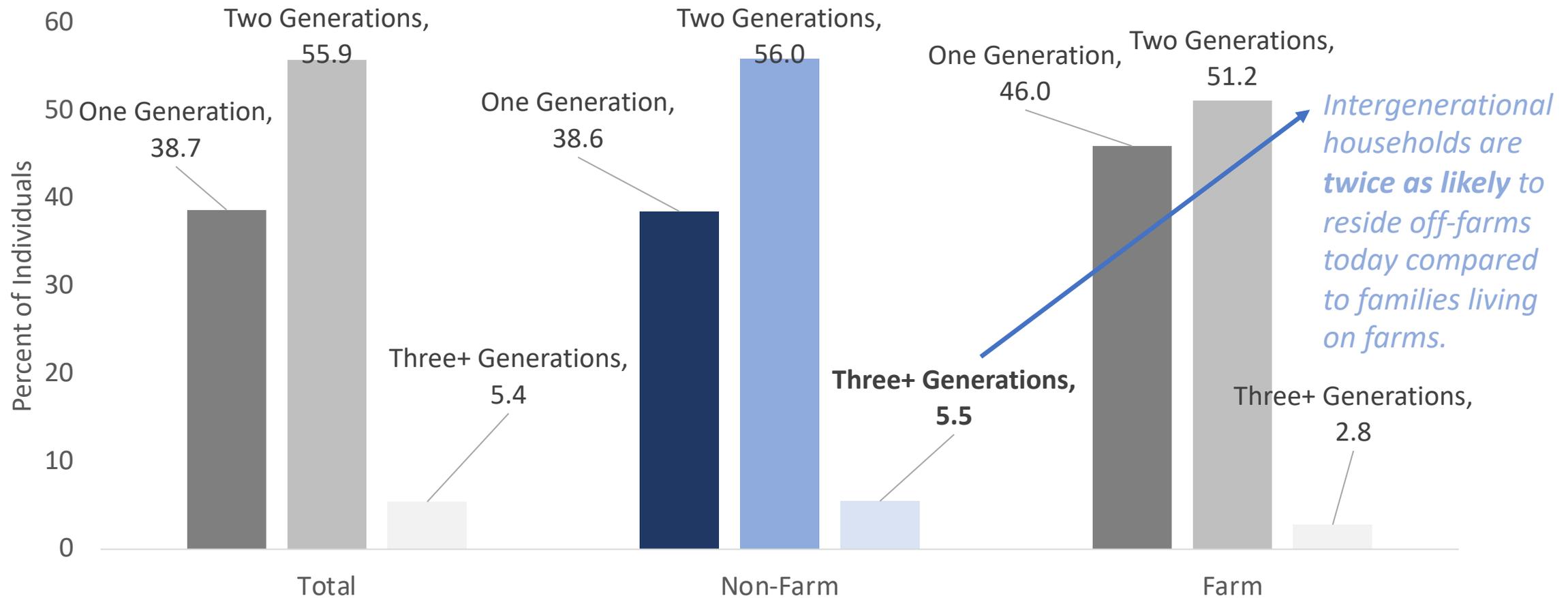


Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas; data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 Population Estimates.

Dependent population includes people under 18 and over 64.



# Care Economy in Kansas: The Household



Source: Author's calculations using 2021 data from the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS), ipums.org

# Grandparents as *Nannies*

- In Kansas, 44,062 individuals living with their own grandchildren in the home.
- Of those, 19,005 are the adult primarily responsible for the child.

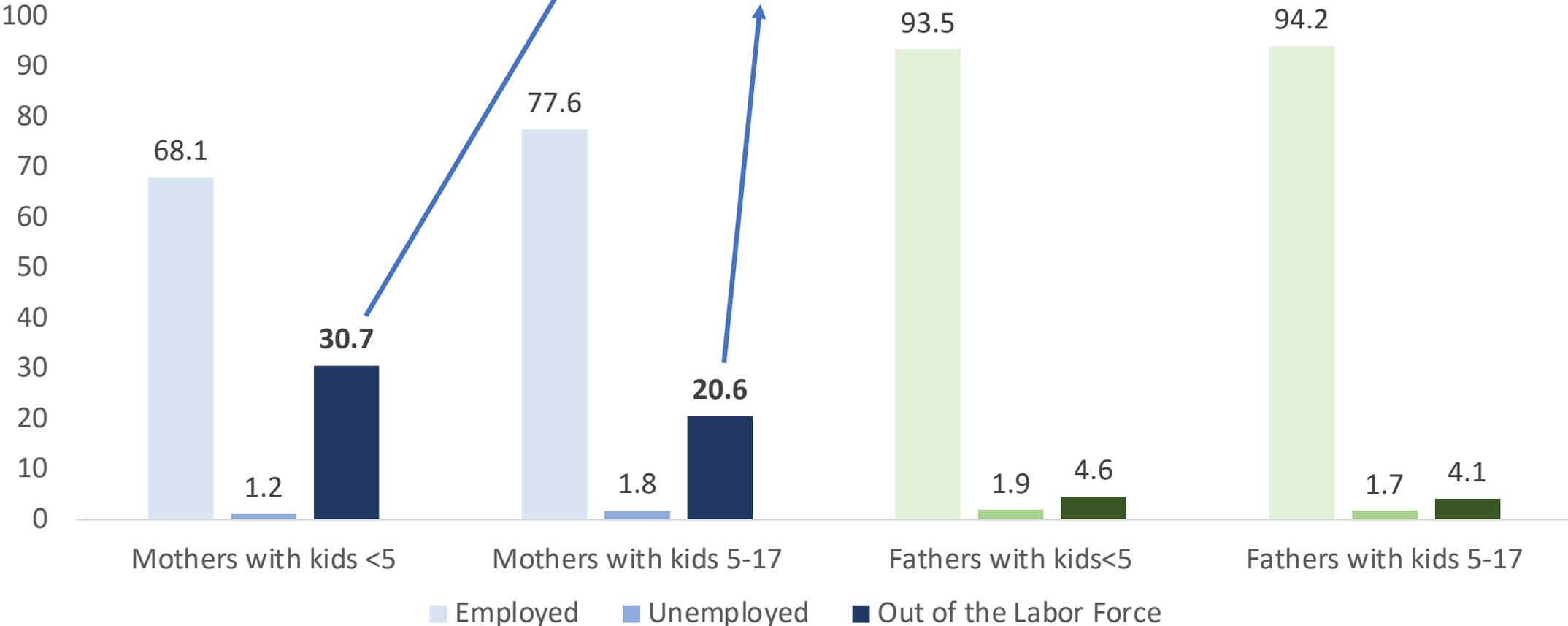


Time Spent Under Care	Number	(%)
< 60 months	1,394	7.33
6 to 11 months	1,878	9.88
1 to 2 years	3,954	20.81
3 to 4 years	3,382	17.80
5 or more years	8,397	44.18
Total	19,005	100.00

Unemployment  
Rate in Kansas:  
2.5%

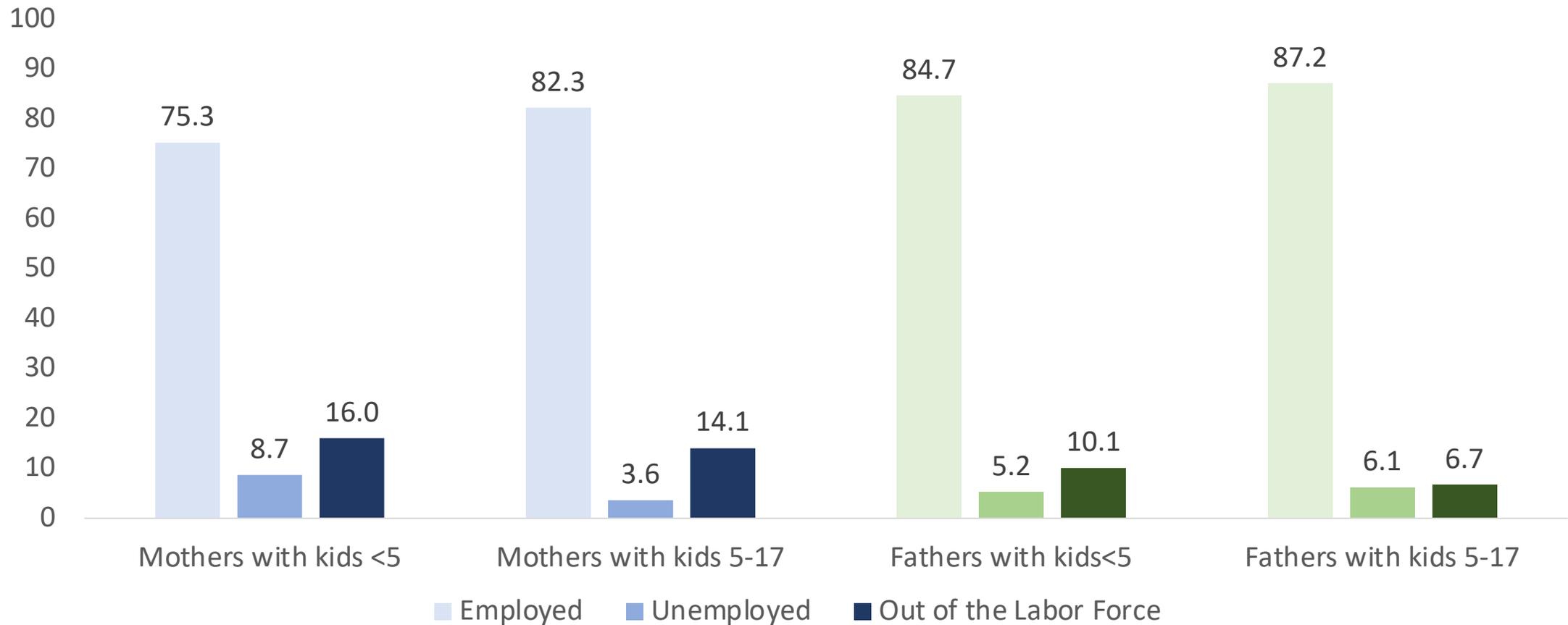
# Prime-Age Parents Employment Status: Spouse Works

Almost 28,000 prime-age mothers of kids under 5 (30.7%) and of kids age 5-17 (20.6%) are not active in the labor force.



Source: Author's calculations using 2021 data from the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS), ipums.org

# Prime-Age Parents Employment Status: No Spouse in the Home



Source: Author's calculations using 2021 data from the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS), ipums.org

# Annual Cost of Formal Childcare in Kansas

	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Infants	\$5,068	\$12,333
Toddlers	\$4,297	\$11,874
Preschool-Age Children	\$4,297	\$8,489
School-Age Children	\$2,650	\$8,489

Median Household Income: **\$64,521**

Gross Earnings Fulltime, Year-Round  
Minimum Wage Job: **\$15,131**

Percent (%) of Median HH Income:

Infant Care: **8%-19%**

Toddler Care: **7%-18%**

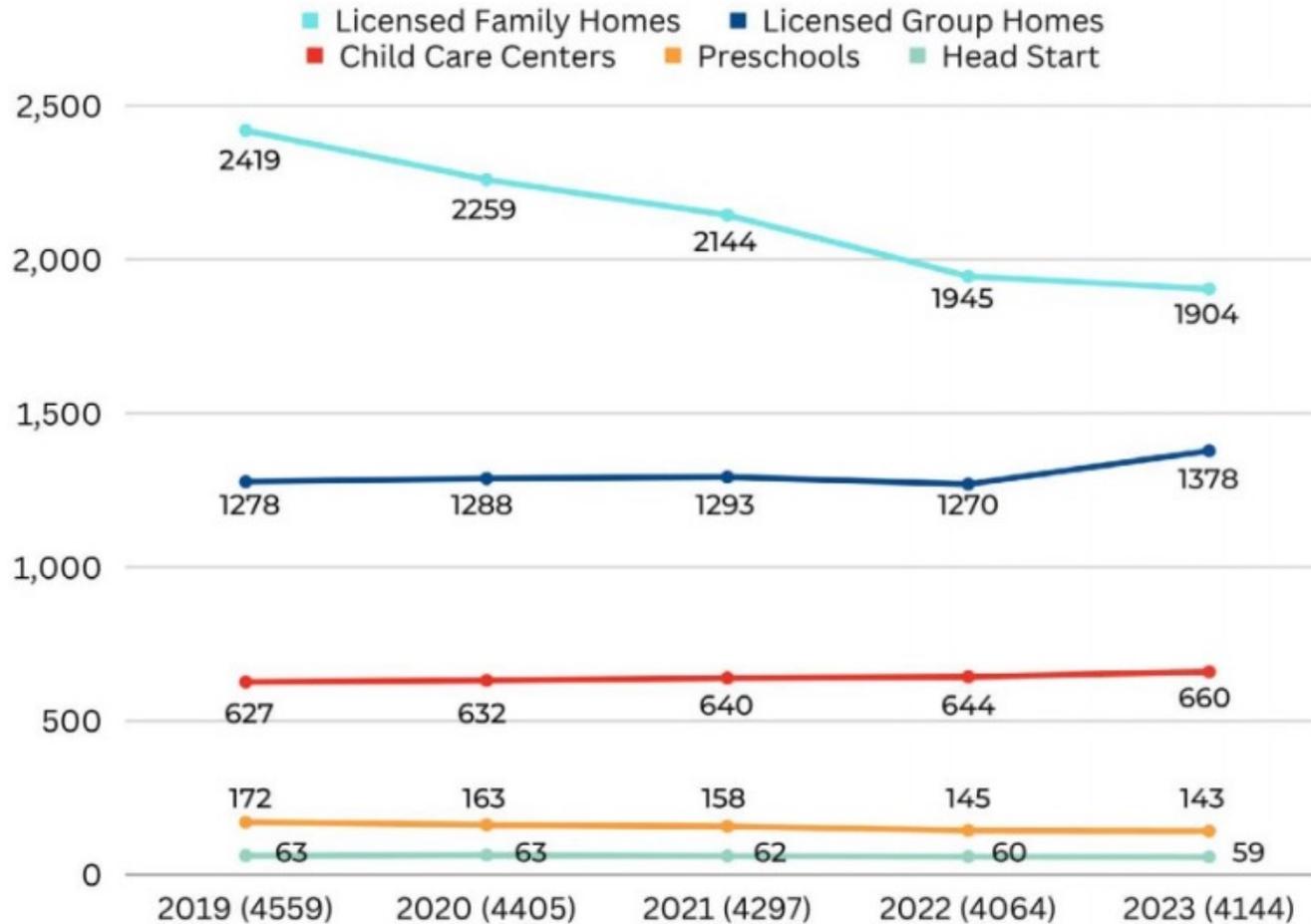
Preschool Care: **7%-13%**

School-Age Care: **4%-13%**

*Source: U.S. Department of Labor, 2023*

# Childcare Programs in Kansas

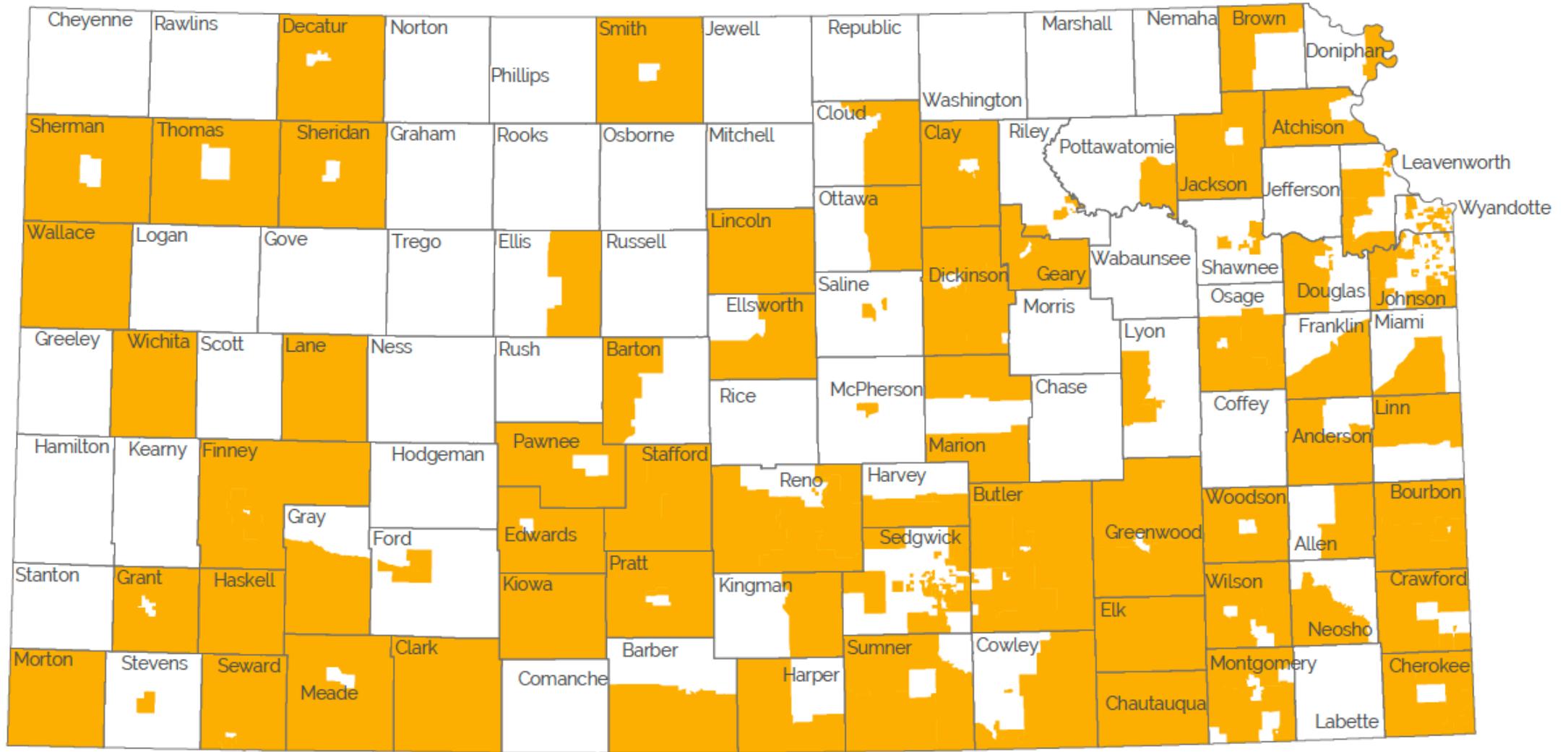
## Licensed Child Care Programs from 2019-2023



*The number of childcare programs have **decreased by 9%** since 2019.*

*Mostly due to decreases in licensed childcare programs.*

# Child Care Deserts in Kansas December 2021



Source: Institute for Policy & Social Research, The University of Kansas; data from Kansas Department of Health & Environment, Child Care Licensing and U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

 Tract with more than 50 children under age 5 and either no child care providers or more than 3x as many children as licensed care slots.

# Some delivery workers have no choice but to bring their kids along during the pandemic



By [Sara Ashley O'Brien](#), CNN Business

🕒 7 minute read · Updated 11:47 AM EST, Fri February 12, 2021



## Liberty Police: Kids left in motel as mom works in pizza shop

The mom, who was found working at a pizza shop, told officers that she usually has someone check in on her children every hour while she is at work.

Friday, February 12th 2021, 10:52 AM EST

**Updated:** Saturday, February 13th 2021, 1:09 PM EST

By Mike Gauntner



- We stifle economic growth in the state when we rely on beliefs that:
  - Take informal care for granted
  - Assume care is a personal, individual issue
- Investments in the care economy have proven to have some of the highest returns.
  - If you don't want to do it for others, do it for yourself and your own family – who will benefit from the investment by:
    - decreases in the cost to society of social welfare take up and crime-related costs
    - Increases in high school graduation, college matriculation, and local area economic development.
    - Increases in women's fertility rates and labor force participation.

**\$1**   
 INVESTED IN EARLY  
 CHILDHOOD YIELDS A  
**\$16 RETURN**

#### INCREASED

- High School Graduation
- College Matriculation
- Economic Development & Personal Income

#### DECREASED

- Special Education/Remediation
- Dependence on Social Welfare
- Crime-related Costs & Incarceration Rates

*Nobel Prize Winning Economist, James Heckman, University of Chicago, has shown consistent evidence that \$1 invested in early childhood yields a return anywhere from \$4 to \$16 back to society.*

