
Early Learning Program Updates

*House Early Learning & Human Services
Tuesday, October 14, 2025*

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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES





Access to high-quality early care and education means

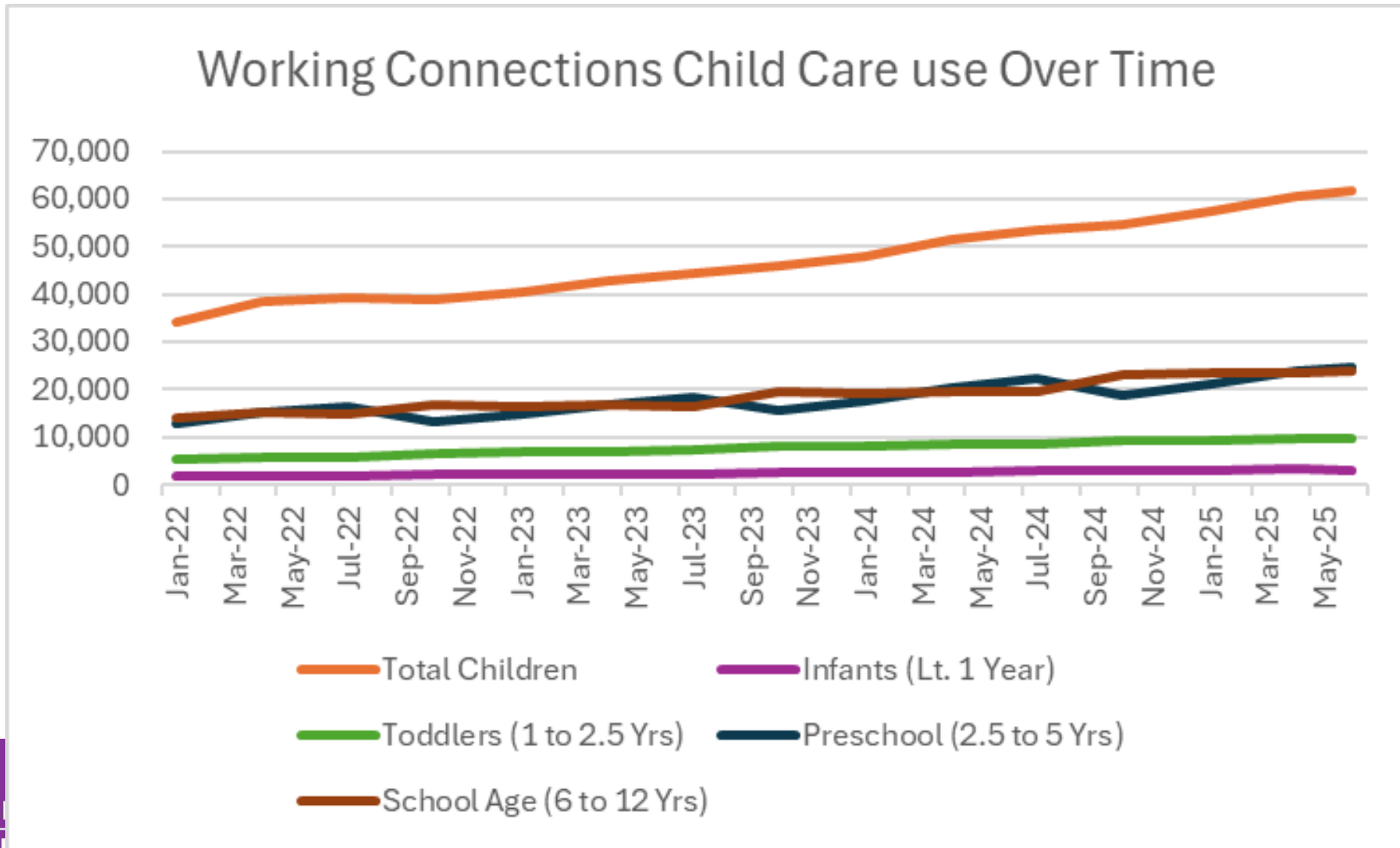
- ✓ Children will arrive at Kindergarten ready to learn
- ✓ Parents and guardians can participate in the workforce
- ✓ The Washington State economy is stronger

Access is driven by the availability and affordability of care

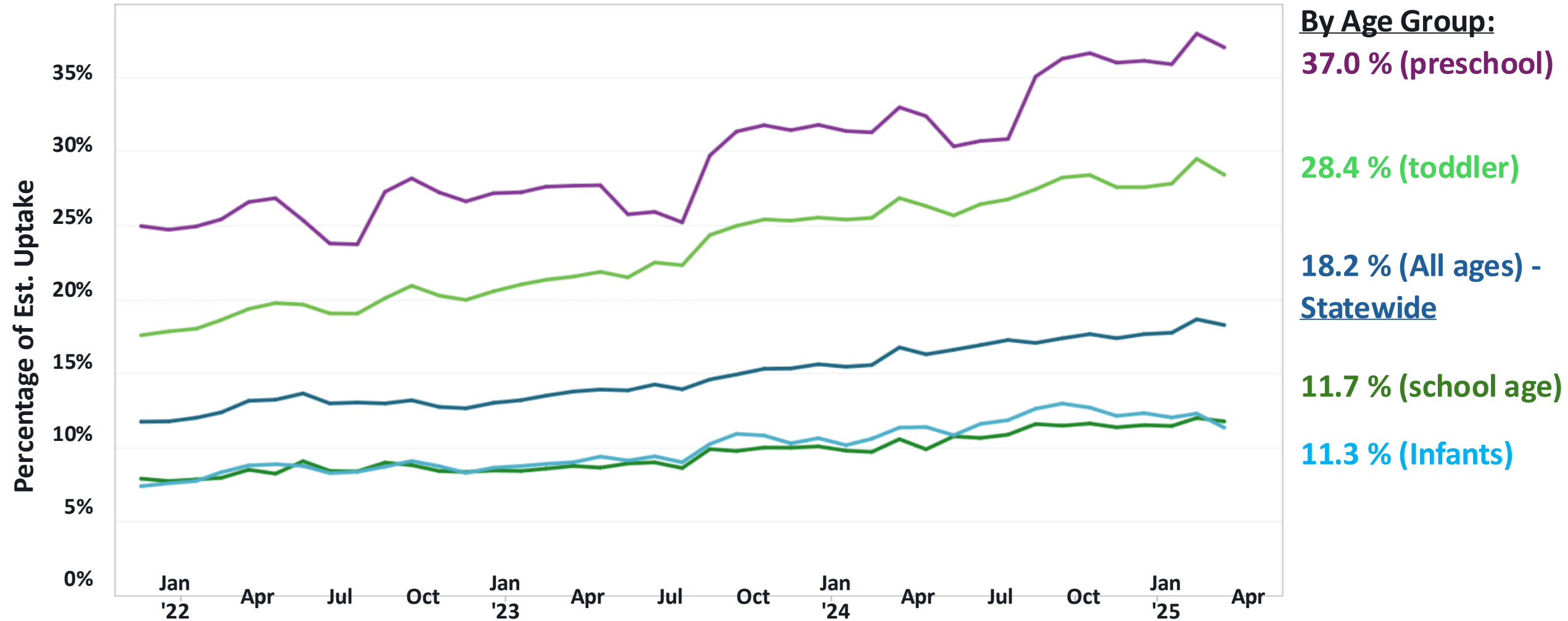
Increasing access means **more families are eligible** and the **rate paid for care is sufficient** for the costs of quality.



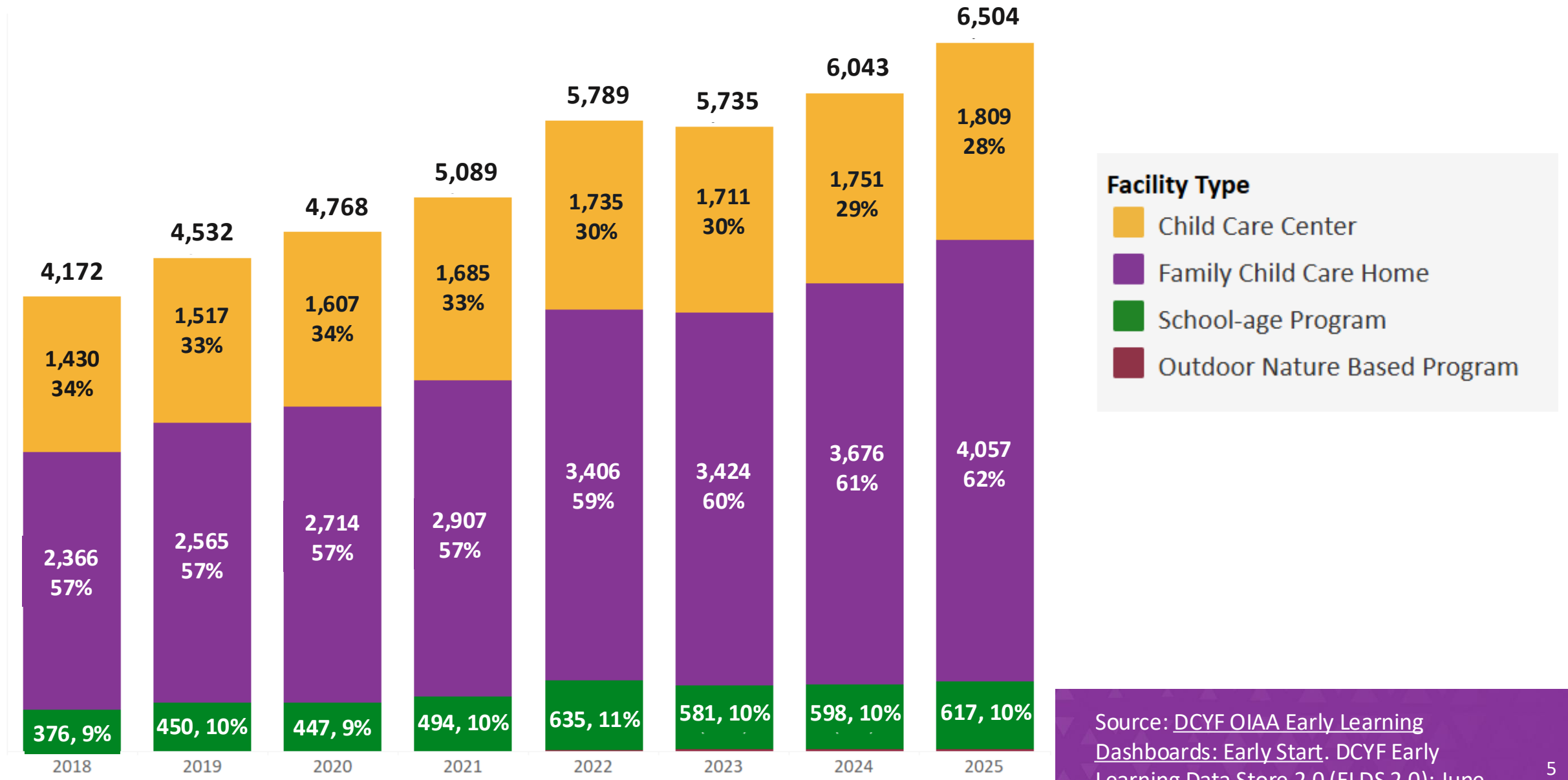
Child Care Access is Increasing



Working Connections Child Care Uptake is Increasing

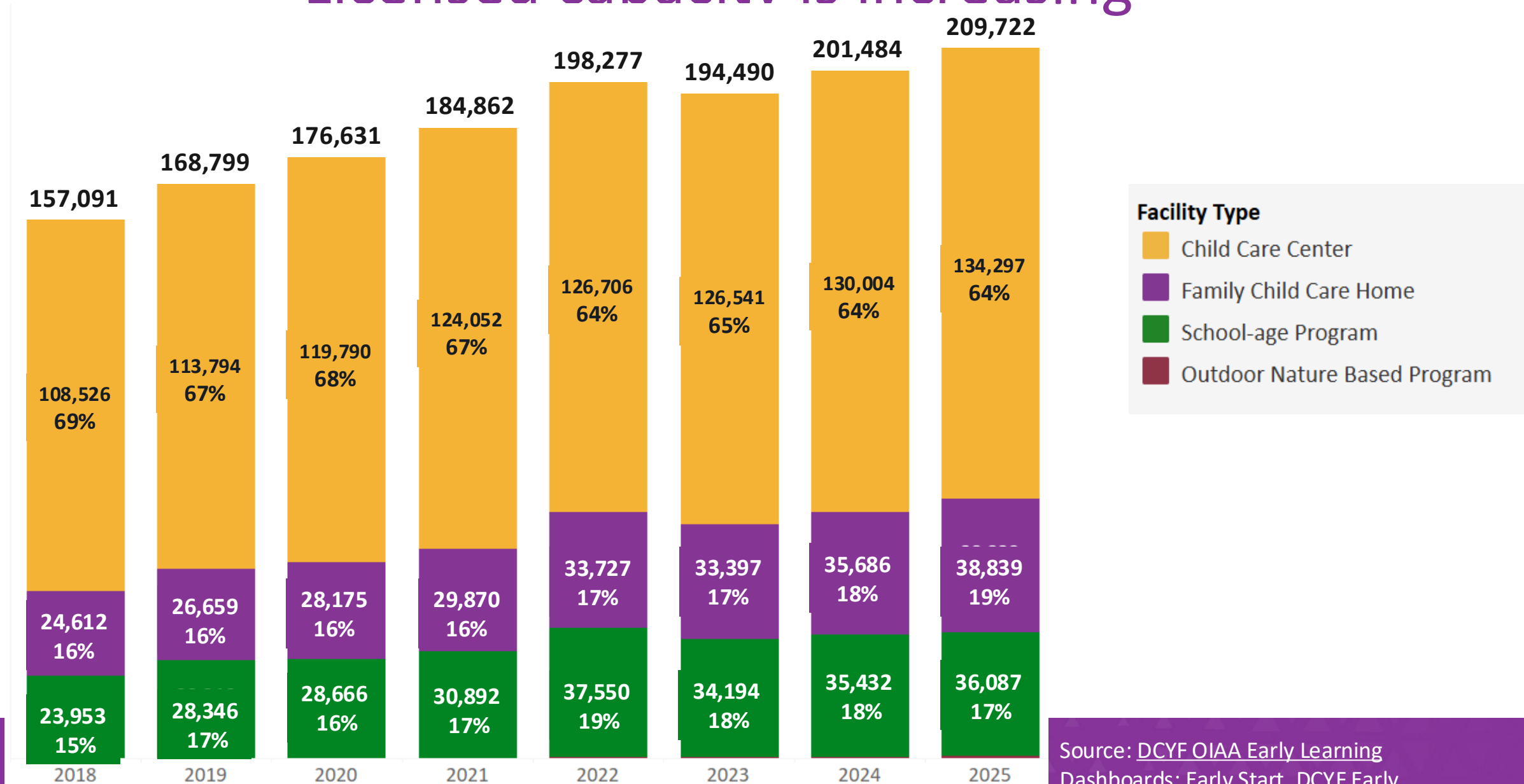


The number of licensed providers is increasing



Source: [DCYF OIAA Early Learning Dashboards: Early Start](#). DCYF Early Learning Data Store 2.0 (ELDS 2.0); June. 2025.

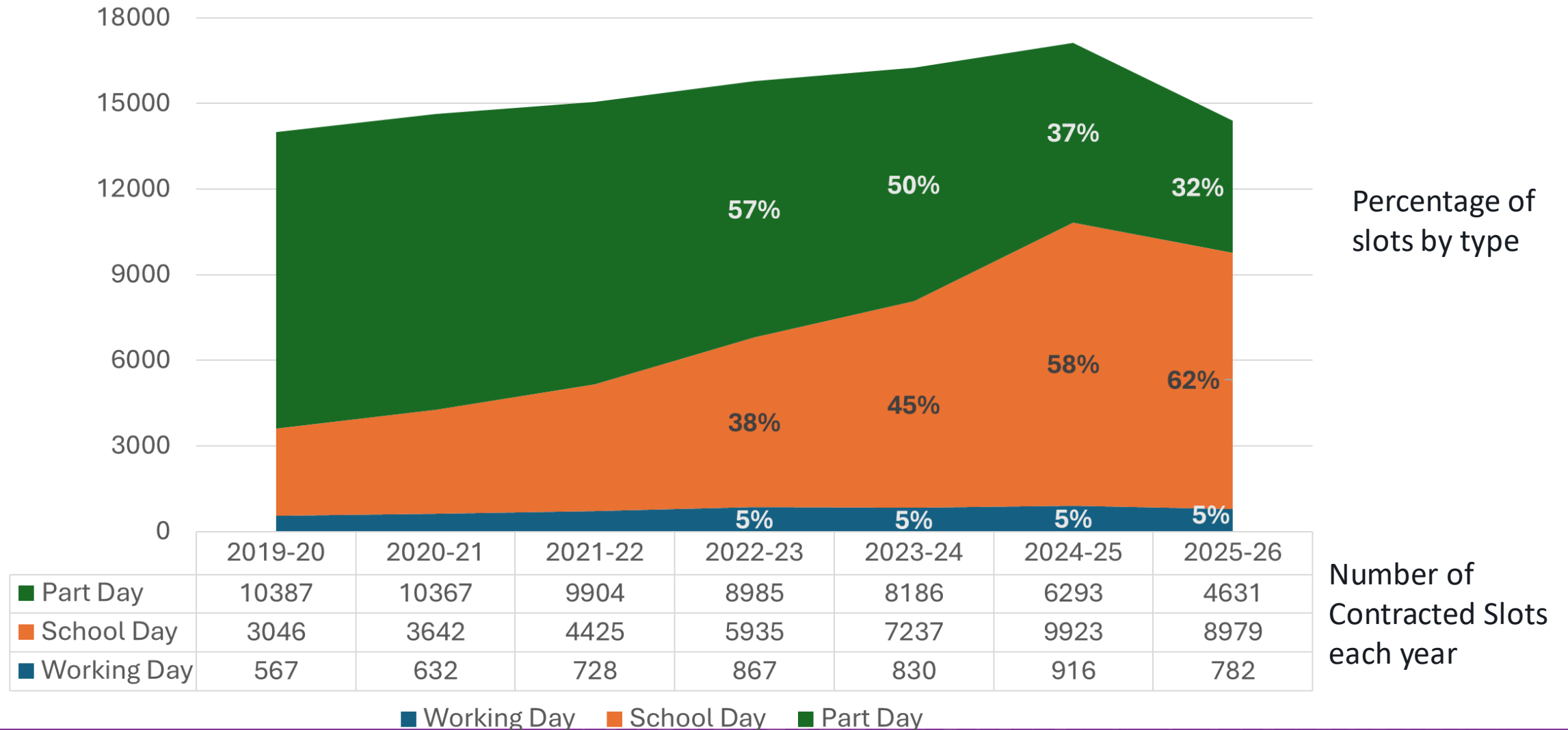
Licensed capacity is increasing



Source: [DCYF OIAA Early Learning Dashboards: Early Start](#). DCYF Early Learning Data Store 2.0 (ELDS 2.0); June 2025.



Length of Day for High-Quality Pre-K is Increasing



Family Access Increased post Fair Start for Kids Act



More families are receiving child care than ever before. 36,531 families are receiving child care subsidies through WCCC as of June 2025.

- Income eligibility increased for WCCC access
- Cap on WCCC was removed



More ECEAP pre-k slots available between the 2020-21 to the 2024-25 school year.

- Income eligibility for ECEAP increased to 36% SMI
- Expanded eligibility for Indian Children

Providers received more supports post Fair Start for Kids Act

Between 2020 and 2024 DCYF increased supports for child care and ECEAP providers

- ✓ Delivered more than **\$552.8 million** in grants and incentives to early learning providers.
- ✓ **Rates increased for licensed providers** through the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program and for ECEAP Providers.
- ✓ Increased scholarship and professional development funding

Impacts to Family Access

In 2025 family access was impacted by

- Co-payments will increase for most families in 2026.
- Eligibility Expansion delayed until 2029.
- Child Care Employees (375 families) and Registered Apprenticeship (15 families) eligibility eliminated.
- 3,000 less ECEAP slots in the 2025-26 school year, than the year prior.
- Entitlement delayed to 2030-31 school year.

Impacts to supporting providers

In 2025 support for providers was reduced

- Rate increases delayed for child care center providers
- Reduced grant funding from the complex needs funds and equity grants
- Trauma informed care and dual language available for licensed family homes only
- Reduced infant and early childhood mental health consultation in early learning settings

THANK YOU

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Thank you

Appendix



ECEAP Comparison: FY25 to FY26

FY25 to FY26 Proviso Level Comparison

	Total Slots	Part Day	School Day	Working Day
May 2025 Contracted Slots	16,250	6,262	9,072	916
FY25 Funded Proviso Level	17,278	7,610	8,766	902
FY26 Funded Proviso Level	14,278	4,610	8,766	902
FY 26 Final Slots Contracted	14,395	4,631	8,982	782

