

Child care: Most parents have difficulty paying the high cost

Continued from Page A1

However, it takes time since there are so few options. In Clatsop County, 8% of children 2 and under and 26% of children 3 to 5 have a slot at a certified or registered facility, according to Oregon State University. Parents also report difficulty finding child care if their child has special needs. Cost is another barrier. “Not one of my employees are paid as low as minimum wage, but they still have trouble affording day care,” Hayward-Hill said.

The median cost of small home-based child care in Clatsop County in 2018 was \$600 per month, according to the Oregon Department of Human Services. For child care at a center, it was \$706 per month, and for large home-based care, it was \$825 per month. In the survey, most parents reported they have difficulty paying the high cost and resort to using family, friends, neighbors and even strangers they find on the internet to watch their children. “It’s impacting parents’ ability to work,” Lovelace said. “What’s kind of scary is what we’re seeing is that parents will post on Facebook groups, ‘Can anyone watch my child today?’ And they’ll just drop their child off. They don’t know the person, they don’t know anything about the person and they’re just dropping their child off because they need to go to work.”

‘Heart-wrenching stories’
Employers reported staff needing to call off and even quitting as a result of not having child care. They also reported difficulty in hiring, as people with specialized skills do not want to move to the area if they cannot find child care or affordable housing. This dilemma has led some employers, like Hayward-Hill, to say they are willing to help in some way with child care costs or growing child care options in the county. “We’re hearing just heart-wrenching stories from parents, especially parents who have children under the age of 3 ... that there just is not child care available,” Lovelace said. “Some parents are moving out of the area because there isn’t child care. Some parents are driving up to an hour outside of Clatsop County to find child care for their younger children — it’s a real struggle.” Parents have become especially desperate to find child care outside of the traditional workday, which affects people working swing, night or weekend shifts. “We live in a tourist town and there is absolutely not one child care center that is open on the weekend,” said Tami Williams, owner of Mrs. Tami’s Daycare & Preschool



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
ABOVE: Tami Williams is the owner and operator of Mrs. Tami’s Daycare & Preschool in Seaside.
BELOW: The state did not renew Shooting Stars’ license due to too many noncompliance findings.



in Seaside. Williams sympathizes with parents who need help at night and on weekends, but said it is difficult for caregivers to offer weekend child care. “It’s hard to staff for it or find staff who want to work the weekends because they kind of like this where they’re working Monday through Friday and they got off at five or six and they are getting paid well and they can have their weekend with their family,” Williams said. She said it’s also unaffordable, since she would have to pay her staff more to work on the weekends. However, she does think the county needs more providers that can offer night and weekend options. Child care providers reported having a hard time finding, keeping and paying highly-trained staff a living wage and benefits while also keeping care affordable for parents. They also reported having a hard time with some parents paying on time and being able to meet their monthly expenses. Most child care providers reported they are fully booked and have waitlists, which means more parents are vying for slots. Denise Giliga, the owner and director of Shooting Stars, said the state notified her on Friday that her license will not be renewed as a result of too many noncompliance findings. “Noncompliances can be anything from the severe — like when you have teachers working without background checks to children dying in your care — down to the sim-

plest thing of, ‘You didn’t mark for a bathroom break.’ And that’s where we’re at,” Giliga said. Giliga believes the state’s standards are too high. “It’s a focus on rules and regulation of paperwork and not necessarily quality of care and how the students are being treated,” she said. Giliga said there needs to be some give and take. “The parents either need to pay more, which in this community they can’t, or the state needs to maybe be stricter on rules that affect actual child quality of care and not this stickler on paperwork,” she said. Shooting Stars accepts state-subsidized child care for children living at 185% of the federal poverty level or lower. “Loss of these spots is a huge blow to our low-income families who may be only just working their way towards self sufficiency,” Debra Reed, an early childhood professional development support specialist for the Northwest Regional Childcare Resources and Referral, wrote in an email.

Moving forward
Task forces have been formed in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties to figure out how to address and finance more child care and preschool options in the region. The Northwest Early Learning Hub received a grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust for \$100,000 to support the task forces. A separate parent advisory board will also help inform the task forces. The initiative follows a feasibility study conducted in 2017 — led by retired Seaside principal Dan Gaffney — that looked at providing subsidized, high-quality preschool in Clatsop and Tillamook counties. It followed the Pay for Success model, where private investors pay for social programs and get repaid with interest if those programs save the public money. The study started the conversation about the need to expand child care, which led the regional Northwest Early Learning Hub to take on the work with the help of the grant, said Lovelace, the leader for the project. Among the goals are to understand child care and preschool needs in each county, create more slots for preschool, support training for early childhood educators and develop a five-year road map for preschool expansion. “These early childhood experiences are critical in a child’s development,” said Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson, who will serve on one of the task forces. “So it’s early childhood education, (and) it’s also the economy because parents’ ability to work is so related to the availability and quality of day care for their children.”

KUBOTA TACKLES ANY JOB!

BX1880

- 16.6 Gross HP† 3-Cylinder Kubota Diesel Engine
- 4WD with Rear Differential Lock Standard
- Category I, 3-Point Hitch
- Performance-Matched Implements Available

L2501HST

- 24.8 Gross HP† 3-Cylinder Kubota Diesel Engine
- 4WD
- Hydrostatic Transmission (HST)
- Performance-Matched Implements Available

B2601HSD

- 24.3 Gross HP† 3-Cylinder Kubota Diesel Engine
- Semi-Flat Deck • Slanted Hood
- Easy to Read Backlit Dash Panel
- Performance-Matched Implements Available

MX5800

- 61.4 Gross HP† 4-Cylinder Kubota Diesel Engine
- Slanted Hood and Halogen Headlights for Better Visibility
- Easy-To-Read Dash Panel
- 4WD

KX040**

- 40.4 Gross HP† Kubota Diesel Engine
- Spacious Cab with Wider Entrance, Fully Flat Floor & Deluxe Suspension Seat
- Hydraulic 6-in-1 Blade

SVL75-2**

- 74.3 Gross HP† 4-Cylinder Turbocharged Kubota Diesel Engine
- 360° Visibility in Cab
- High Ground Clearance

\$0 DOWN, 0% A.P.R. FINANCING FOR UP TO 60 MONTHS* ON SELECT NEW KUBOTAS!

WATKINS
Tractor & Supply Co.

SUNSET
EQUIPMENT

watkinstractor.com

100 PORT AVE • SAINT HELENS, OR • (503) 397-1012 • 800-606-1012

\$0 Down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 60 months on purchases of select new Kubota BX, B, L, MX and M [Except M5, M6, M6s] MH(M7), RB, DMC, DM, RA and TE Series equipment from participating dealers' in-stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A.; subject to credit approval. Some exceptions apply. Example: 60 monthly payments of \$16.67 per \$1,000 financed. Offer expires 12/31/19. For complete warranty, safety and product information see dealer or KubotaUSA.com. ** \$0 Down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 60 months on purchases of select Kubota K008, KX, U, R, SVL, SL (SSV's) & TLB Series equipment from participating dealers' in-stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A.; subject to credit approval. Some exceptions apply. Example: 60 monthly payments of \$16.67 per \$1,000 financed. Offer expires 12/31/19. See us or go to KubotaUSA.com for more information. † For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer and the product operator's manual. Power (HP/KW) and other specifications are based on various standards or recommended practices. K1136-24-143422-2