



# BUSINESS COALITION COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

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PROVIDED BY EXCEL BY EIGHT





Dear Excel by Eight Business Coalition Members,

On behalf of Excel by Eight and the communities we serve, I am grateful for your commitment to our shared mission of addressing Arkansas businesses' child care needs. Your partnership and dedication will be instrumental in changing opinions about the importance and necessity of quality, affordable and accessible child care, and I am inspired by the collective impact we are already making.

As we begin this journey together, I am thrilled to introduce the Excel by Eight Business Coalition Communications Toolkit. This toolkit was created to empower you with the necessary resources to amplify our message and promote our vital work.

Within this toolkit, you will find a range of communication elements, including draft op-eds, speech scripts, PSA scripts and social media posts, all centered around the importance of quality child care in today's workforce. These tools are designed to give you the ability to effectively communicate our mission; engage with your communities; and advocate for policies that prioritize accessible, affordable and high-quality child care.

Your voice is critical in shaping the dialogue surrounding child care in Arkansas, and I urge you to use this toolkit to its fullest extent. By leveraging these communication elements, you can become influential advocates, championing the cause of quality child care and driving positive change across our state.

Together, let us continue to challenge norms and work toward a future where every child and family in Arkansas has access to safe, nurturing and high-quality child care.

Thank you for your partnership, your passion and your commitment to our shared mission.

With gratitude,

Alison R. Williams  
Coalition Director  
Excel by Eight Business Coalition

# PRESS RELEASE TO ANNOUNCE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S INVOLVEMENT

[Your Organization's Logo]

For more information:  
[INCLUDE MEDIA CONTACT NAME, EMAIL, PHONE NUMBER]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **[Organization's Name] Joins Excel by Eight and 30 Statewide Businesses to Combat Arkansas's Child Care Crisis**

Will support working parents, strengthen our workforce and build a brighter future for Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April XX, 2024) – [Organization's Name], a leading advocate for [mention your organization's mission or area of focus], is proud to announce its participation in an initiative aimed at addressing Arkansas's child care crisis. The Business Coalition, spearheaded by Excel by Eight (E8), brings together a diverse coalition of more than 30 businesses, nonprofits and chambers of commerce from across the state to tackle the critical issues of child care accessibility, affordability and quality.

"As a champion for [mention your organization's mission or area of focus], we recognize the profound impact the child care crisis has on Arkansas families and communities," said [Your Name], [Your Title] at [Organization's Name]. "We are excited to partner with Excel by Eight and other esteemed organizations to find innovative solutions that will ensure all families have access to safe, reliable and affordable child care."

The formalized business coalition marks a significant milestone in the collective effort to address the child care crisis in Arkansas. Quarterly meetings will provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss policy goals and propose meaningful change ahead of the Arkansas State Legislature's 2025 general session.

[Your Organization's Name] joins a diverse coalition, including [pick a few organizations from this list that you would like to highlight]. A complete list of Business Coalition members is available on Excel by Eight's website.

"We are grateful to [Your Organization's Name] for joining our Business Coalition in the crucial mission of addressing Arkansas's child care crisis," said Angela Duran, Excel by Eight executive director. "We look forward to leveraging their expertise and dedication as we work together to find innovative solutions to this pressing issue."

For more information about Excel by Eight and the business coalition's efforts to address Arkansas's child care crisis, visit [excelby8.net](https://excelby8.net).

**About [Your Organization's Name]**  
INCLUDE BOILERPLATE

### **About Excel by Eight**

Excel by Eight is a network of hundreds of individuals and organizations focused on increasing Arkansas children's health and education outcomes. It is committed to strengthening resource grids statewide by building local models for change, identifying and resolving policy barriers, and enhancing public understanding of early childhood development. For more information, visit [excelby8.net](https://excelby8.net).

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### Investing in Child Care: A Vital Strategy for Arkansas's Workforce

As a business executive deeply invested in the economic prosperity of our state, I can attest firsthand to the critical importance of a robust and resilient workforce. However, amidst our discussions on strategies to recruit and retain top talent, there lies an often overlooked yet profoundly impactful aspect – the accessibility, affordability and quality of child care.

In Arkansas, the child care crisis looms large, casting a shadow over our workforce's ability to thrive and our economy to reach its full potential. Shockingly, only 15% of families can find quality, licensed care. This staggering statistic means that a significant portion of our future workforce lacks the foundational support necessary for early childhood education and care, hindering their parents' ability to fully engage in the workforce.

For working parents, the challenge of securing quality child care is a constant balancing act. They juggle multiple responsibilities, striving to provide for their families while ensuring their children receive the nurturing care they deserve. However, the financial burden of child care often forces families into difficult decisions. In Arkansas, the average annual cost of infant care in a licensed child care center is approximately \$8,000 annually, nearly 15% of the median household income. This stark reality leaves parents grappling with the choice between sacrificing their professional ambitions to care for their children at home or choosing lower quality care for their children so the parents can work.

Quality child care services yield tangible benefits for businesses, including enhanced employee retention, reduced absenteeism and increased productivity. Beyond the immediate advantages, investing in quality child care lays the foundation for a skilled and competitive workforce, essential for driving innovation and economic growth in our state.

Recognizing the urgency of this crisis, my company, <INSERT COMPANY NAME>, has proudly aligned with Excel by Eight's Business Coalition. Founded in 2020, this coalition has mobilized businesses across Arkansas to address the pressing challenges within the child care landscape. We understand that investing in accessible, affordable, high-quality child care is not just a social responsibility but a strategic imperative for our businesses.

As we set our sights on the Arkansas State Legislature's 2025 general session, we must seize the opportunity to advocate for policies that prioritize the accessibility, affordability and quality of our state's child care services. Research demonstrates that for every \$1 invested in early childhood education and care, there is a return of up to \$13 in long-term economic benefits. These benefits include increased earning potential for children later in life and reduced reliance on social services, illustrating the profound impact of strategic investments in child care on our state's economic prosperity.

Let us commit to championing the cause of quality child care – not merely as a societal need but as a fundamental pillar of Arkansas's economic success. By leveraging our collective influence and advocating for meaningful change, we can create a thriving environment where businesses flourish, families thrive and our workforce remains strong.

If you share our commitment to this cause, I invite you to join the efforts of the Excel by Eight Business Coalition. Together, we can drive positive change and build a brighter future for all Arkansans.



## DRAFT SPEECH SCRIPT - THREE-MINUTE READ TIME

Good [morning/afternoon/evening] esteemed guests,

As business leaders, it is incumbent upon us to not only drive profitability but also to nurture the environment in which our workforce thrives. Today, I want to address a pressing issue that impacts the well-being of our workforce and the future of our economy – the state of child care in Arkansas.

Like many states across the nation, Arkansas is grappling with a significant child care crisis. The accessibility, affordability and quality of child care services in our state are critical factors that directly influence the ability of working families to participate fully in the workforce. Yet, the current landscape presents considerable challenges.

Consider this: in Arkansas, only 15% of working parents can find quality, licensed care.. This means a staggering 85% of our young children lack access to quality early childhood education and care, a figure that should concern us all deeply.

To truly grasp the importance of quality, affordable and accessible child care and its impact on Arkansas businesses, let's look at the facts:

- 1. Economic Impact:** The child care crisis has significant financial implications for Arkansas. Businesses in our state lose an estimated \$865 million annually due to employee absences related to child care issues. These absences disrupt business operations, hinder productivity and ultimately affect the bottom line. Furthermore, the lack of accessible and affordable child care options limits the participation of parents, particularly mothers, in the workforce. In Arkansas, 30% of mothers with children under the age of 6 are not in the labor force, citing caregiving responsibilities as a primary reason. This loss of talent stifles economic growth and perpetuates gender disparities in the workplace.
- 2. Income Inequality:** Low-income families bear the brunt of the child care crisis. The average annual cost of infant care in a licensed child care center in Arkansas is approximately \$8,000, amounting to nearly 15% of the median household income. For families struggling to make ends meet, this financial burden is simply untenable. As a result, many parents are forced to choose between enrolling their children in lower quality care or exiting the workforce altogether to stay home to care for them. This dilemma perpetuates cycles of poverty and exacerbates income inequality within our communities.
- 3. Educational Disparities:** Access to quality early childhood education sets the stage for future academic success. However, with limited access to quality child care, many children in Arkansas start kindergarten already behind their peers who were enrolled in licensed programs, perpetuating educational inequities. Research has shown that children who receive high-quality early childhood education are more likely to perform well academically, graduate from high school and pursue higher education or vocational training. By addressing the child care crisis, we can level the playing field and ensure that all children in Arkansas have a strong start, regardless of who they are or where they live.
- 4. Current Workforce:** Investing in accessible, affordable and high-quality child care is not only essential for supporting working families but also for fostering a skilled and resilient workforce. Quality child care allows parents to fully engage in their careers with the peace of mind of knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing environment. In turn, this enhances productivity, reduces employee turnover and strengthens the overall competitiveness of Arkansas businesses.
- 5. Future Workforce:** By providing children with a strong foundation in early childhood education, we are equipping the next generation with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in an increasingly complex and dynamic economy. The brain develops faster from birth to age three than

## DRAFT SPEECH SCRIPT - THREE-MINUTE READ TIME

at any other period in life, building the foundation for future learning, behavior and health. Children require stimulating learning environments to develop executive function – such as adaptable thinking, planning, self-monitoring, self-control, working memory, time management and organization. Whether it's in a center or through a home-based program, high-quality child care provides children with learning opportunities and nurturing, responsive relationships that contribute greatly to their future success.

As responsible corporate citizens, we cannot afford to overlook the urgency of addressing the child care crisis in our state. My company, <INSERT COMPANY NAME>, recognizes the imperative of investing in accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care for our workforce. That's why we've aligned ourselves with Excel by Eight's Business Coalition, a collaborative effort dedicated to advocating for policies that prioritize child care as an essential component of our state's economic infrastructure.

The economic benefits of investing in early childhood education and care are undeniable. For every dollar invested, there is a return of up to \$13 in long-term economic gains. These gains include increased earning potential for children as they grow into the workforce, reduced reliance on public assistance programs and enhanced productivity for businesses. By ensuring that all families have access to reliable child care options, we create a level playing field where all children have a strong start, irrespective of socioeconomic background.

Moving forward, it's incumbent upon all of us here today to advocate for policies that prioritize quality child care. This means fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors to create innovative solutions that address the unique needs of our communities. Together, we can build a brighter future for Arkansas – one where businesses thrive, families flourish and our workforce remains strong and resilient.

I invite each of you to join Excel by Eight's Business Coalition and be a part of this group of businesses, nonprofits, chambers of commerce, and philanthropic organizations that agree that early childhood education is critical to the recruitment and retention of Arkansas's current workforce and the development of its future workforce.. Your involvement can make a meaningful difference in the lives of countless Arkansans. If you're interested, please let me know, and I can put you in touch with Allison Williams, our coalition director.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for your commitment to this important cause. Together, let's pave the way for a more prosperous future for our state.

Thank you.

## 30-SECOND PSA SCRIPT

[Background Music]

Voiceover: In Arkansas, quality child care is more than a necessity – it's an economic imperative. Quality child care that is affordable and accessible is key to recruiting and retaining today's workforce – and equipping the workforce of tomorrow.

Join the Excel by Eight Business Coalition in advocating for policies that prioritize quality child care for working families. Together, we can build a brighter future for Arkansas – one where businesses thrive, families flourish and our economy remains strong.

Brought to you by Excel by Eight.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

- I'm proud to be part of the Excel by Eight Business Coalition, working to address the child care crisis in Arkansas. Quality child care is essential for our workforce's success. #ExcelByEight #ChildCare #WorkforceDevelopment
- I'm joining forces with businesses, nonprofits and chambers of commerce across Arkansas to tackle the child care challenges facing our state. Together, we can make a difference! #ChildCareMatters #Workforce #Arkansas
- As a member of the Excel by Eight Business Coalition, I'm committed to advocating for policies that prioritize accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care. Let's build a stronger future for Arkansas! #InvestInChildCare #WorkforceDevelopment
- Quality child care isn't just a family issue – it's an economic imperative. I'm proud to be part of the solution with the Excel by Eight Business Coalition. Join us in making a difference! #ChildCareForAll #ArkansasEconomy