

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT Executive Department



MEETING DATE:	July 8, 2025
PROJECT:	Consideration of a Resolution of Support for a Childcare and Early Learning Project Utilizing the Tri Share Funding Model
PROJECT MANAGER:	Chris Forster, MPA, CPFO, CGFM, Assistant Town Manager

REQUEST:

Town Council to consider a resolution expressing support for a project pilot implementing a childcare tri-share funding model to improve access to childcare. The resolution of support will be presented to the State Legislative delegation.

BACKGROUND:

Many working-class families are unable to afford or find quality Childcare and Early Learning. In South Carolina only 36% of children reach kindergarten and first grade with the development and skills necessary to perform at grade level. Childcare affordability has an adverse effect on workforce availability and is estimated to cost the South Carolina economy \$1.4 billion.

In 2024, the Southern Lowcountry Regional Board (SOLOCO) established a subcommittee to examine affordable childcare solutions. The committee Chair was Mr. Orlando Lewis. The committee reported back to SOLOCO with a proposed model called "Tri-Share." This approach splits the cost of childcare between the child's family, their employer and a government.

Notable states to implement this approach include Michigan, Kentucky, Louisiana, and North Carolina among others. The program structure varies slightly from state to state but the approach is largely the same. The City of Beaufort, Town of Port Royal and the City of Hardeeville have all passed similar resolutions of support. The Town of Hilton Head Island is considering a similar resolution at their next meeting.

NEXT STEPS:

Approve, approve with conditions, or deny the proposed resolution in support of asking the State Legislature to implement a project pilot using the tri-share funding approach to childcare.

ATTACHMENTS:

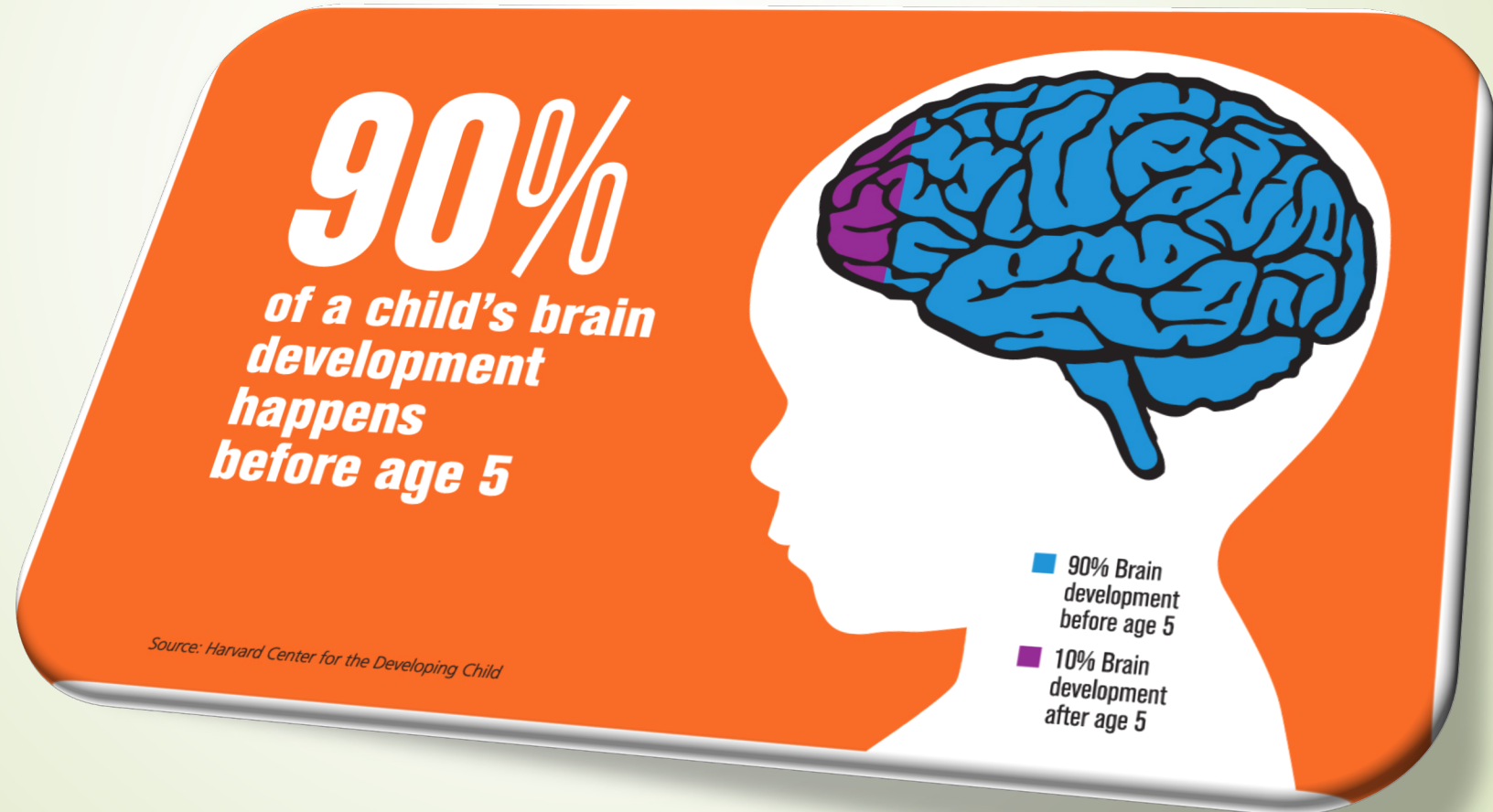
1. Presentation
2. Resolution
3. Proposed Motion

The Tri-Share Model: An Introduction to affordable early childhood education



SOLOCO Early Childhood Development Sub-Committee

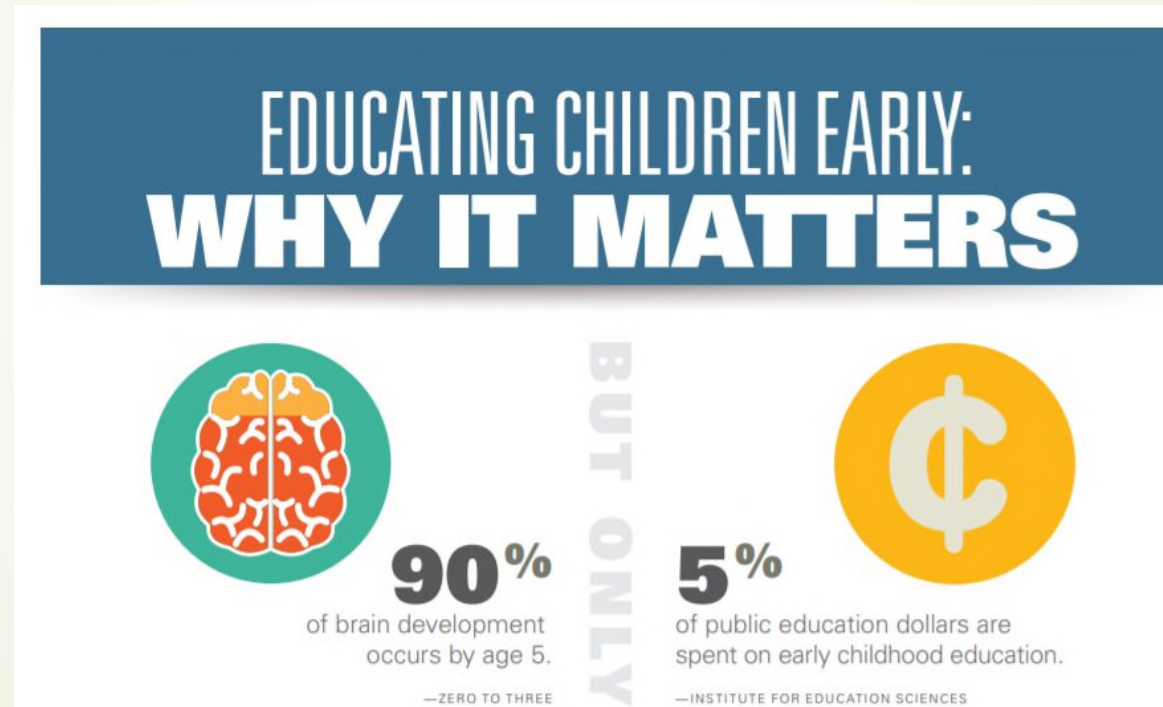
A Child's Brain Development



Early Childhood Education: Deeper than What's on the Surface

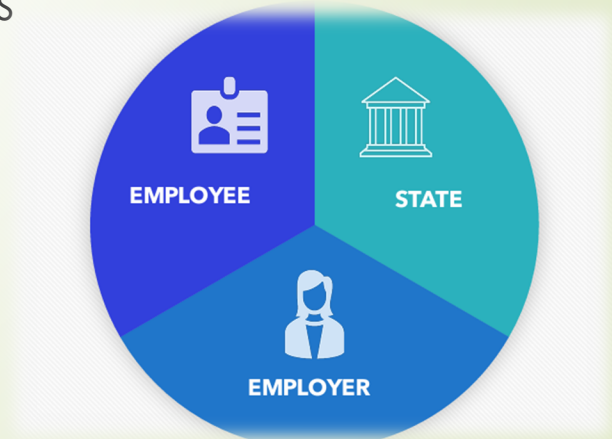


Return on Investment



Tri-Share: What is it?

- ▶ Public-Private Partnership: Tri-Share is a childcare cost-sharing program where the cost of childcare is divided equally among the employer, the employee, and the state or local government.
- ▶ Parent choice: Allows parents to choose their preferred early childhood development provider.
- ▶ Local & State Administration: Community-based partners, through a state-based entity (e.g. DSS) where applications could be processed from employers, employees and child care providers

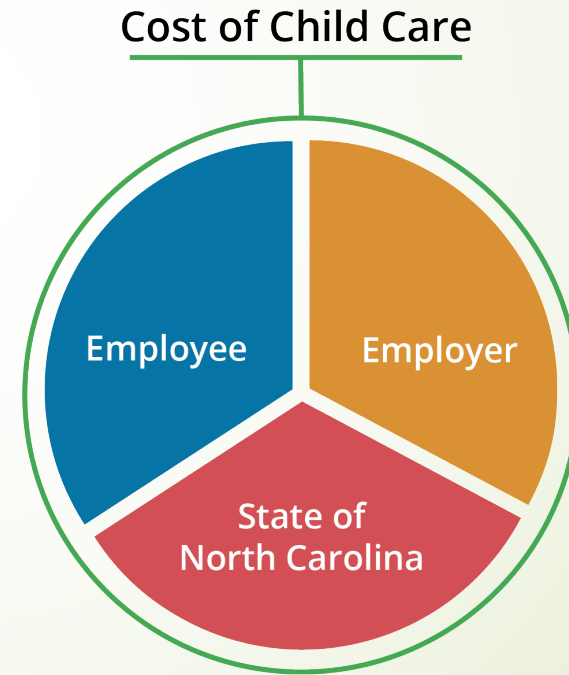
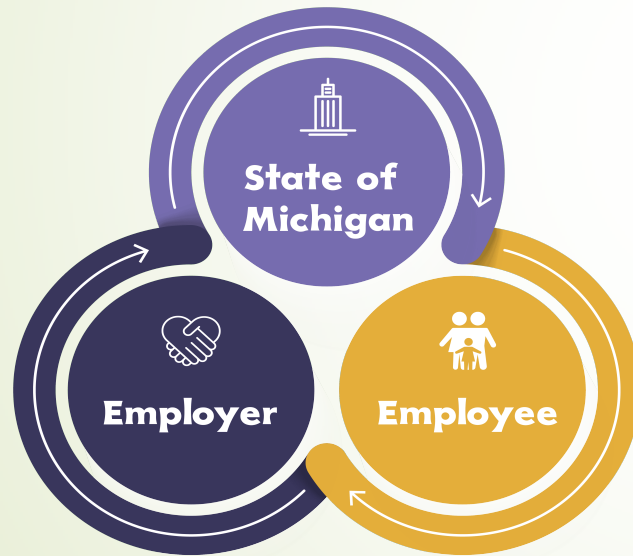




Tri-Share: The Why?

- ▶ Parents with low-to middle incomes: The Tri-Share model targets support for parents who earn too much to qualify for child care assistance, but still struggle to afford care.
- ▶ Employee Retention/Attendance
- ▶ Increased Affordability Options
- ▶ Enhanced Childcare Quality (Greater Return on Investment)
- ▶ Addressing the Childcare Crisis
- ▶ Enhanced Kindergarten Preparedness

The Tri-Share Model: Other State Models

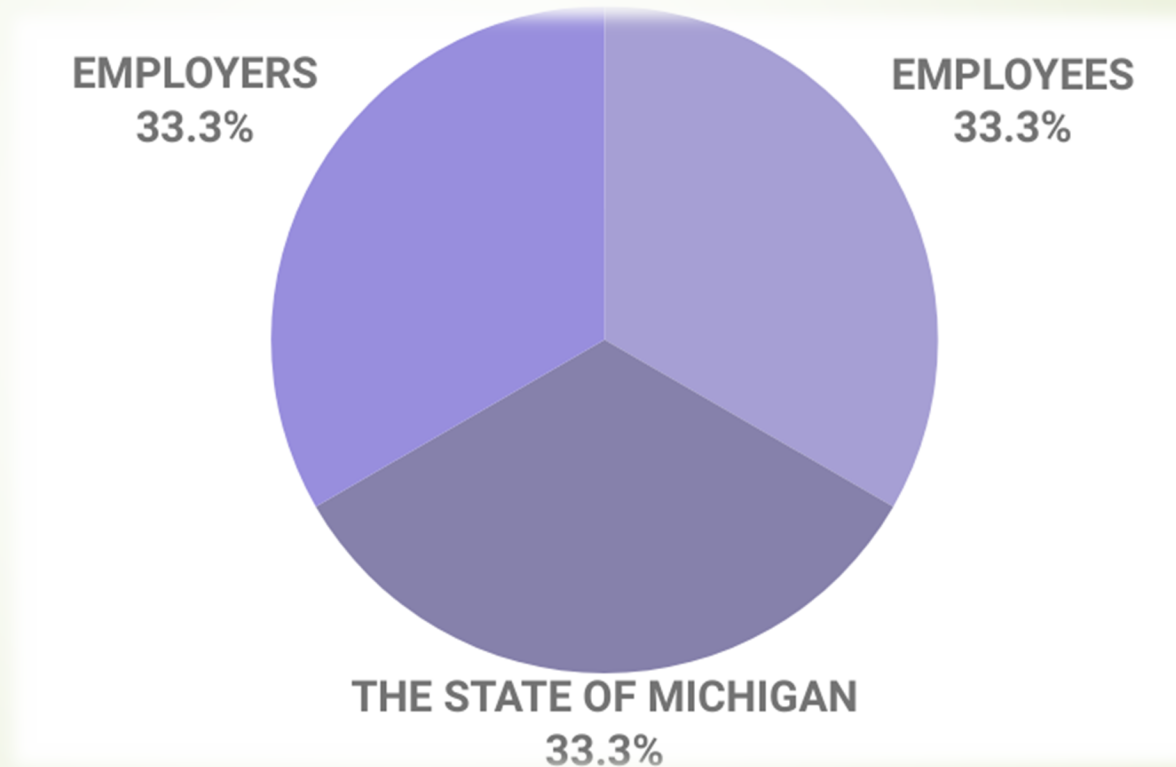




The Tri-Share Model: Other State Models

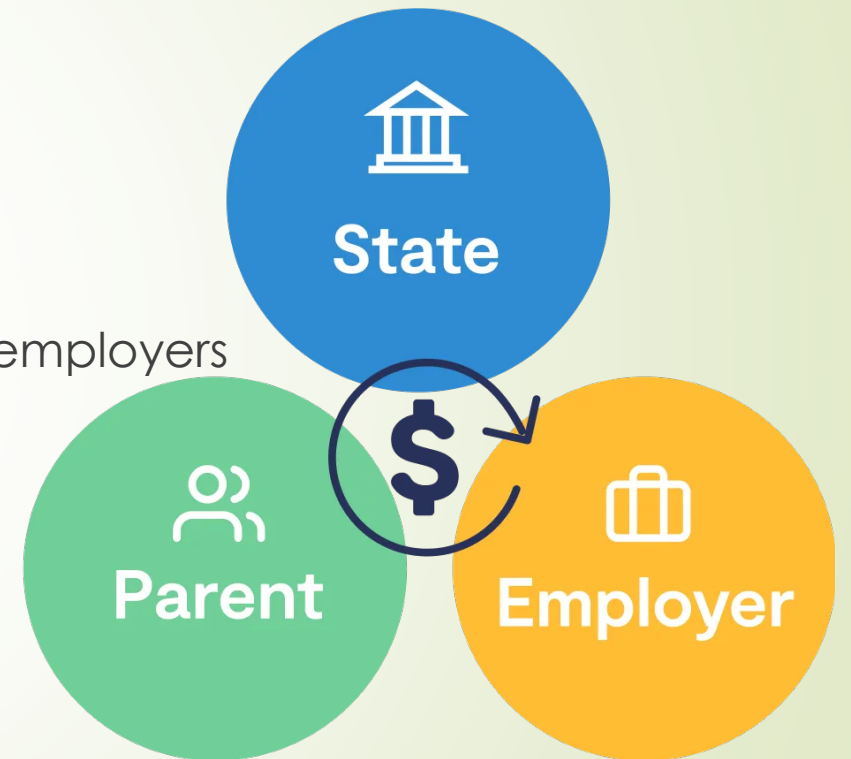
- Michigan: Pilot program began in 3 counties in 2021, now reaches 59 of the state's 83 counties.
 - Current: 489 children from 376 families.
 - Future: Projected to reach 7,500 children across 5,000 households statewide by 2028.
- Noble County, Indiana: Investment of \$50,000 in County Economic Development Income Tax revenue for a county wide pilot.
- Kentucky HB 499 (2022): Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership. Investment of \$15 million from state general fund over the biennium.
- New York: FY24 budget includes \$4.8 million for the state's Employer-Sponsored Child Care Pilot Program that will operate in 3 regions.
- North Carolina: FY24 budget includes \$900,000 a year for a pilot in 3 counties.

Tri-Share: The How?



Benefits

- Affordability for families
- Consistent, timely payments to providers
- Work life balance for employees
- Increased recruitment and retention for employers



Thoughts and Considerations

- Resolution Support
- Administrative model
- Eligibility
- State subsidy
- Employer participation
- Employee participation

Template for use by SOLOCO partner municipalities in support of Tri-Share

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

WHEREAS: (municipal name of City/Town/District), is a member of the Southern Lowcountry Regional Board (SOLOCO), a regional think tank that identifies the problems and opportunities that face the entire southern low country, as defined by the members and regardless of municipal or county boundaries;

WHEREAS: There are childcare and early learning agencies in our community that provide services to working class parents;

WHEREAS: (municipal name of City/Town/District) and those interested service providers, who have interest in a partnership with the SC Department of Social Services, a pilot demonstration project using the Tri-Share funding model being employed in other locales;

WHEREAS: Childcare and Early Learning in South Carolina is in crisis, with too many working-class families unable to afford or find quality Childcare and Early Learning, with the result that too few South Carolina children (36%) reach kindergarten and first grade with the development and skills necessary to undertake a successful lifetime of learning and education;

WHEREAS: The crisis in Childcare and Early learning has an adverse effect on workforce availability and results in an estimated \$1.4 billion loss to the South Carolina economy.

WHEREAS: Increasing the availability and affordability of high-quality Childcare and Early Learning will enhance the programs and goals of the SC Department of Commerce and Department of Education;

WHEREAS: There is a useful and innovative Childcare and Early Learning supplemental funding model called Tri-Share that is being successfully employed in other locales to expand the availability and affordability of Childcare and Early Learning, enables tax dollars to be spent more efficiently and effectively, and which appears to be readily adaptable for use in South Carolina;

NOW THEREFORE: (municipal name of City/Town/District) as a member of SOLOCO resolves and requests the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation and the Jasper County Legislative Delegation undertake those steps necessary to enable, fund and ensure that the South Carolina Department of Social Services, with the support of the Department of Commerce and the Department of Education, will establish and conduct a Childcare Demonstration Project utilizing the Tri-Share funding model, in Beaufort and Jasper Counties and such other counties as may be appropriate, with such demonstration project to be organized and managed to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of programs offered by South Carolina Childcare and Early Learning providers.



Thank You!

OUR TEAM

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John Shkor jeshkor@aol.com

Tom Henz thenz@hiltonheadisland.org

Dan Wood dwood@townofbluffton.com

RESOLUTION

TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR A CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT UTILIZING THE TRI-SHARE FUNDING MODEL

WHEREAS, The Town of Bluffton is a member of the Southern Lowcountry Regional Board (SOLOCO), a regional think tank that identifies the problems and opportunities that face the entire southern low country, as defined by the members and regardless of municipal or county boundaries.; and

WHEREAS, There are childcare and early learning agencies in our community that provide services to working class parents; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Bluffton and those interested service providers, who have interest in a partnership with the SC Department of Social Services, a pilot demonstration project using the Tri-Share funding model being employed in other locales; and

WHEREAS, Childcare and Early Learning in South Carolina is in crisis, with too many working-class families unable to afford or find quality Childcare and Early Learning, with the result that too few South Carolina children (36%) reach kindergarten and first grade with the development and skills necessary to undertake a successful lifetime of learning and education; and

WHEREAS, The crisis in Childcare and Early learning has an adverse effect on workforce availability and results in an estimated \$1.4 billion loss to the South Carolina economy.; and

WHEREAS, Increasing the availability and affordability of high-quality Childcare and Early Learning will enhance the programs and goals of the SC Department of Commerce and Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, There is a useful and innovative Childcare and Early Learning supplemental funding model called Tri-Share that is being successfully employed in other locales to expand the availability and affordability of Childcare and Early Learning, enables tax dollars to be spent more efficiently and effectively, and which appears to be readily adaptable for use in South Carolina;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA AS FOLLOWS:

The Town of Bluffton, as a member of SOLOCO, requests the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation and the Jasper County Legislative Delegation undertake those steps necessary to enable, fund and ensure that the South Carolina Department of Social Services, with the support of the Department of Commerce and the Department of Education, will establish and conduct a Childcare Demonstration Project utilizing the Tri-Share funding model, in Beaufort and Jasper Counties and such other counties as may be appropriate, with such demonstration project to be organized and managed to increase the availability, affordability, and quality of programs offered by South Carolina Childcare and Early Learning providers.

DONE AND ACCEPTED the _____ day of _____, 2025.

A public meeting was held on this Resolution on the _____ day of _____, 2025.

Larry C. Toomer, Mayor

Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

Marcia Hunter, Town Clerk

Town of Bluffton, South Carolina

Attachment 2
Proposed Motion

Consideration of a Resolution of Support for a Childcare and Early Learning Project Utilizing the Tri Share Funding Model.

Proposed Motion

"I make a motion to approve a resolution asking the Beaufort County State Legislative delegation to support a project pilot implementing a tri-share funding model to improve access to childcare."