



TOOTRiS Technology Powering Missouri's First-Ever Statewide Tri-Share Child Care Program

Working with Child Care Aware of Missouri and state partners to expand affordable, high-quality Child Care for working families.

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For years, advocates and employers in Missouri have been searching for a solution to one of the state's toughest challenges — access to affordable, quality Child Care. Now, thanks to a new collaboration with an innovative technology platform, that vision is becoming a reality.

TOOTRiS, the nation's largest and most comprehensive Child Care platform, has joined forces with [Child Care Aware of Missouri](#) (CCAMO), [Kids Win Missouri](#), and several local community partners who have boots on the ground, and the Missouri Children's Trust Fund to launch [Missouri Child Care Works](#) — the state's first-ever cost-sharing program designed to help families afford Child Care while strengthening Missouri's workforce.

Backed by \$2.5 million approved by Governor Mike Kehoe and state lawmakers, the program officially launches in November and represents a major step toward building a sustainable Child Care funding model for the state.

A Coordinated Solution to a Statewide Challenge:

Two-thirds of Missouri's counties are considered Child Care deserts, meaning there are not enough licensed slots available for the number of children who need them. For families who do find openings, costs are often out of reach averaging as much as rent or mortgage payments in many parts of the state.

A statewide survey of Missouri voters commissioned by First Five Years Fund last month found that nearly half (47%) of young voters say they, or someone they know, would consider entering the workforce if quality Child Care options were available*. The same poll found that 84% of respondents say having Child Care options helps the economy, while 72% say it will help reduce crime.

TOOTRiS[®]
Powering Absolute Potential
TOOTRiS Child Care on Demand

Missouri Child Care Works helps address both the availability and affordability of care through a cost-sharing model, in which the cost of Child Care is split between the state, employers, and families. Each family's share is based on a sliding scale tied to household income, ensuring equitable access to quality programs.

What makes this model work at scale is the TOOTRiS technology platform, which unites every part of the system in one place — enabling parents to search in real time for available providers and facilitating all multi-source payments through a single, seamless process. By bringing together the funding, the search, and the care coordination, TOOTRiS makes an otherwise complex system simple, transparent, and sustainable for families, employers, and providers alike.

“As a Child Care Resource & Referral agency, our mission is to connect families to programs while coordinating vital resources with state and local governments,” said Robin Phillips, CEO of Child Care Aware of Missouri. “This partnership represents the best of Missouri — leaders, advocates, and innovators uniting to strengthen families, support providers, and sustain our workforce.”

“In many cases, the cost of child care is a big barrier for working families, often causing them to limit their work hours or forego working altogether. We’re excited about the potential of Missouri Child Care Works to increase working families’ access to affordable, quality child care and support children’s success in school and life,” said Brian Schmidt, Executive Director of Kids Win Missouri.

A Powerful Partnership for Families and Employers:

In addition to Missouri Child Care Works, TOOTRiS and Child Care Aware of Missouri have partnered to fully power the state’s digital Child Care infrastructure — including employer-sponsored Child Care Benefits and a parent search platform under the Child Care Aware of Missouri brand.

Through this partnership, families can now search in real-time for Child Care programs directly from Child Care Aware of Missouri’s website, while employers gain access to TOOTRiS’ technology to easily manage Child Care Benefits for their workforce.

This synergy between TOOTRiS’ technology and CCAMO’s on-the-ground Child Care referral expertise, allows Missouri to connect families, providers, and businesses in ways that were never possible before.

“This initiative shows what’s possible when policy meets technology,” said Alessandra Lezama, TOOTRiS CEO and select member of the ReadyNation CEO Task Force on Early Childhood. “Our technology gives CCAMO and its partners the digital infrastructure to scale programs statewide — while their boots on the ground bring the heart, connection, and trust that families rely on.

Together, it's a model for how Child Care should work everywhere."

Helping Employers Maximize Their Investment:

The collaboration also helps Missouri employers leverage the federal Section 45F Employer-Provided Child Care Tax Credit, which allows businesses to receive up to 50 percent back in tax credits on qualified Child Care expenditures.

Through TOOTRiS, employers can easily implement and manage these benefits, turning their Child Care contributions into as much as a 4-to-1 return on investment. For every dollar an employer contributes to support working parents, they can recoup up to half through federal tax credits — while improving retention, reducing absenteeism, and building a stronger, more reliable workforce.

TOOTRiS simplifies this process by managing the administrative complexities that often prevent businesses from taking advantage of the credit, making it easier for employers to invest in families and the state's economic future.

Strengthening Missouri's Workforce and Future:

Missouri's Child Care shortages have an estimated \$1.35 billion impact on the state's economy each year, costing employers valuable productivity and families vital stability*. By combining TOOTRiS' cutting-edge technology with CCAMO's and Kids Win Missouri's statewide networks, Missouri is creating a sustainable system that supports families, empowers providers, and strengthens the workforce**.

The collaboration is designed not only to help working parents today, but to establish a proven model that can be scaled to every corner of the state — and eventually, replicated across the nation.

About CCAMO:

Founded in 1999, CCAMO is a statewide nonprofit that focuses on a comprehensive early childhood education experience through impactful programs and partnerships. The organization's services include workforce development, child care business supports, advocacy and policy work, and its new Child Care Keeps Missouri Working, a regional campaign offering concierge solutions to businesses undergoing employee recruitment and retention challenges due to the overwhelming shortage of quality child care options. For more information, call (314) 535-1458 or visit www.mochildcareaware.org.

Kids Win Missouri:

Kids Win Missouri is a non-partisan coalition dedicated to advancing evidence-based policies that improve the well-being of Missouri's children and their families. Through research, coalition building, and community engagement, Kids Win Missouri strives to ensure all children in the

state have the opportunity to be healthy, happy, and successful. Visit www.kidswinmissouri.org to learn more.

About TOOTRiS:

TOOTRiS is the nation's largest Child Care platform partnering with employers, providers, government agencies, and Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) organizations to strengthen local Child Care ecosystems, amplify the impact of community-based initiatives, and make care more accessible, equitable, and sustainable — empowering parents, supporting providers, and fueling economic growth. Learn more at tootris.com

* - <https://www.ffyf.org/2025/10/06/polling-highlights-missouri-oklahoma-and-ohio-voters-on-child-care-challenges-workforce-impact-and-need-for-action/>

** - <https://mochamber.com/news-archive/new-research-shows-missouri-loses-1-35-billion-in-annual-economic-opportunity-due-to-childcare-gaps/>

*** - <https://tootris.com/employer-sponsored-child-care>

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