

Infant and Preschool Child Care

DEFINITION

Infant and preschool child care is the number of regulated child care slots per 100 children under age 6 estimated to be in need of care. Regulated child care slots include licensed child care center slots and certified family child care home slots.

SIGNIFICANCE

Child care enables parents to work and, when high quality, supports the development of important school readiness skills. Research indicates that high quality child care and early learning programs for infants, toddlers and preschoolers has long-lasting positive effects on how children learn, develop, cope with stress, and handle their emotions.¹

Early and extensive enrollment in child care is common in the United States and is a basic need for many working families in Rhode Island. In Rhode Island in 2006, 63% (45,300) of children under age 6 had all parents in the workforce, comparable to the U.S. rate of 62%.² National data indicate that, on average, preschoolers with an employed mother spend 28 hours per week in non-parental care, compared to 18 hours per week for children with mothers not in the workforce.³

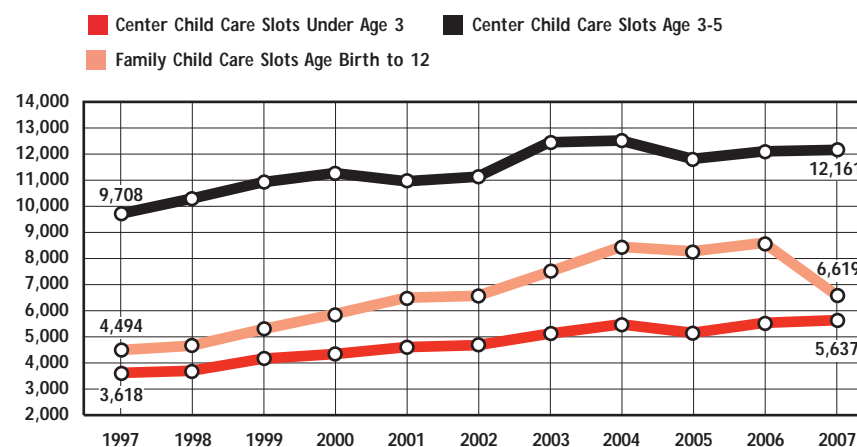
The availability of stable child care is critical for Rhode Island's economy. When parents have difficulty finding

and keeping child care, they miss work more frequently and are more likely to leave their jobs.⁴ Access to affordable, quality child care plays a pivotal role in supporting maternal employment and economic self-sufficiency. On average, women with children earn lower hourly wages than women without children. In contrast, having children has a positive or no impact on men's wages. Research shows that greater use of child care during the early childhood years is associated with higher hourly wages for mothers in the long-term and more hours of maternal employment, indicating that child care support can improve women's career trajectories.⁵

In 1997 Rhode Island passed legislation known as Starting Right to improve low-income families' access to affordable quality child care. With the passage of Starting Right, Rhode Island experienced significant growth in the availability of regulated child care. As a result of the Starting Right reforms, Rhode Island families receiving child care subsidies are significantly more likely to choose licensed and certified care rather than non-certified care.⁶

Researchers have found that unregulated child care is often low quality.⁷ When the availability of child care is sufficient to meet demand and child care subsidies are accessible and tied to market rates, families have more options and can make enrollment decisions based on the quality of the care.

Infant and Preschool Child Care Capacity, Rhode Island, 1997 - 2007



Source: Options for Working Parents, 1997-2006. Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, 2007.

- ◆ In 2007 in Rhode Island, there were 24,417 slots for children under age 6 in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes, down from 26,243 in 2006.⁸
- ◆ Since 1997, there has been a 37% increase in the availability of licensed and certified child care for children younger than age 6.⁹
- ◆ The number of licensed child care center slots for infants and toddlers (children under age 3) has increased steadily since 1997, rising 56% over the decade.¹⁰
- ◆ The number of licensed child care center slots for preschoolers (children ages 3-5) has grown more slowly and less consistently over the past decade. Since 1997, there has been a 25% increase in the number of licensed slots for preschoolers.¹¹
- ◆ The number of certified family child care slots grew rapidly from 1997 to 2006, increasing 91%. In 2007, there were marked reductions in the number of certified family child care slots, dropping by nearly 2,000 slots in one year from 8,601 to 6,619. Half of these slots were lost in Providence and the remainder were spread across the rest of the state.¹²

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Table 30.

Child Care for Children Under Age 6, Rhode Island, 2007

CITY/TOWN	# CHILD CARE CENTER SLOTS < AGE 3	# CHILD CARE CENTER SLOTS AGES 3-5	# CERTIFIED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME SLOTS*	TOTAL REGULATED CHILD CARE SLOTS FOR CHILDREN < AGE 6	POTENTIAL CHILDREN < AGE 6 IN NEED OF REGULATED CHILD CARE	SLOTS PER 100 CHILDREN < AGE 6 IN NEED OF REGULATED CHILD CARE
Barrington	90	170	42	302	386	78
Bristol	33	88	17	138	447	31
Burrillville	28	114	41	183	408	45
Central Falls	93	244	218	555	520	107
Charlestown	13	35	26	74	170	44
Coventry	115	257	118	490	962	51
Cranston	442	918	476	1,836	1,799	102
Cumberland	102	251	119	472	912	52
East Greenwich	248	385	29	662	277	239
East Providence	157	542	85	784	1,168	67
Exeter	28	65	0	93	189	49
Foster	29	48	6	83	107	78
Glocester	67	45	20	132	264	50
Hopkinton	0	0	37	37	283	13
Jamestown	31	33	8	72	83	87
Johnston	194	401	114	709	702	101
Lincoln	119	297	46	462	565	82
Little Compton	0	0	6	6	53	11
Middletown	159	386	24	569	463	123
Narragansett	24	40	0	64	228	28
New Shoreham	12	22	0	34	27	126
Newport	104	188	14	306	615	50
North Kingstown	194	359	57	610	805	76
North Providence	92	243	118	453	662	68
North Smithfield	0	79	42	121	285	42
Pawtucket	323	741	449	1,513	2,103	72
Portsmouth	90	132	18	240	411	58
Providence	915	1,999	3,903	6,817	4,002	170
Richmond	0	36	20	56	255	22
Scituate	12	44	25	81	288	28
Smithfield	240	457	12	709	400	177
South Kingstown	240	367	81	688	590	117
Tiverton	25	136	33	194	358	54
Warren	42	70	23	135	325	42
Warwick	754	1,502	200	2,456	2,119	116
West Greenwich	134	161	5	300	173	173
West Warwick	136	399	56	591	737	80
Westerly	134	289	0	423	644	66
Woonsocket	218	618	131	967	1,100	88
Core Cities	1,789	4,189	4,771	10,749	9,077	118
Remainder of State	3,848	7,972	1,848	13,668	16,808	81
Rhode Island	5,637	12,161	6,619	24,417	25,885	94

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, number of licensed child care center slots for children under age 6 and number of certified family child care home slots, December 2007.

The denominator is the Census 2000 number of children under age 6 with both parents in the workforce, multiplied by 56.5% (the percentage of employed mothers using non-relative care, according to the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation, Spring 1999).

*Family child care slots are for children birth to 12 years old.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

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