

School-Age Child Care

DEFINITION

School-age child care is the number of licensed after school child care programs and slots for children ages 6 and older. These numbers do not include certified family child care home slots, informal child care arrangements, summer day camps, or community programs for youth ages 6 to 12 that do not require licensing by the state.

SIGNIFICANCE

In Rhode Island in 2006, 74% (112,712) of children ages 6 to 17 had all resident parents in the workforce, higher than the U.S. average of 70%.¹ On average, 64% of the time that parents are at work is covered by the school day. The gap between parents' work schedules and students' school schedules can amount to 15-25 hours per week during the school year.² Families often patch together different arrangements to cover the hours before school, after school, and the days during school vacations and summer break.³ Concerns about their children's safety and the reliability of care arrangements is a significant source of stress for working parents of school-age children.⁴

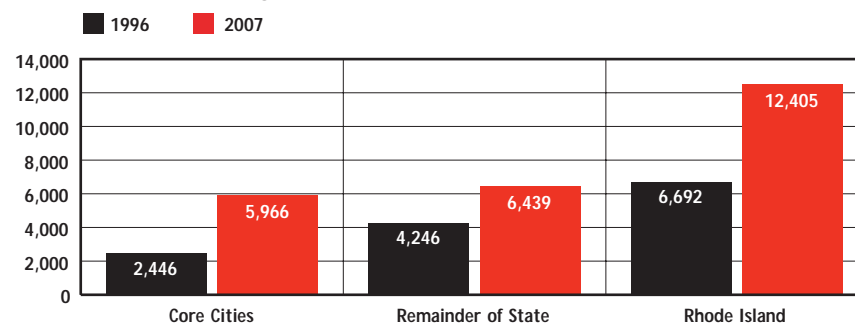
When school is out and parents are at work, children and young adolescents need a safe, structured program with adequate adult supervision. They need

access to a wide variety of enriching and challenging activities such as homework and reading help, sports, music, theater and art. They also need the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with caring adults and their peers.⁵

Children who are left alone, without adult supervision, when school is out are at greater risk of accidents and injuries, social and behavior problems, poor school performance, substance use, and delinquent behavior.^{6,7} National research indicates that approximately 7% of children ages 6 to 9 and 26% of children ages 10 to 12 are regularly left home alone or in the care of a slightly older sibling.⁸

Children who participate in high-quality, well-designed after-school programs and extracurricular activities have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, social skills, schoolwork habits, grades, and conduct in school than children who do not.⁹ Students who are low-income, have low school attendance, limited English proficiency and low test scores gain the most from participating in high-quality after-school programs.¹⁰

Licensed School-Age Child Care Slots, Rhode Island, 1996 and 2007



Source: Options for Working Parents, 1997. Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, 2007. Data do not include slots in family child care settings.

- ◆ **The number of licensed school-age child care slots in Rhode Island has almost doubled since 1996. Licensed school-age child care slots in the core cities have more than doubled.**¹¹
- ◆ **In December 2007 in Rhode Island, 3,624 children ages 6 to 12 received a child care subsidy for before and/or after school care. Of these children, 2,358 (65%) were enrolled in a licensed center-based program, 1,198 (33%) were enrolled in certified family child care, and 68 (2%) were in the care of a license-exempt provider.**¹²
- ◆ **In 2007 in Rhode Island, 5 of the 233 licensed school-age child care programs were accredited by the National Afterschool Association.**¹³

Major Challenges Facing the School-Age Care Field

- ◆ **Recruiting and retaining qualified staff was cited as the number one challenge by respondents to a national survey of school-age care professionals. The part-time nature of after-school programs and prevailing low wages make finding skilled staff difficult.**¹⁴
- ◆ **Securing adequate funding while keeping care affordable for families also pose major challenges for school-age care providers.**¹⁵ In 2007, the rate the state pays child care providers for providing before-school and after-school care for children from low-income families was restructured which reduced payments to providers. Additionally in 2007, children ages 13 to 15 lost eligibility for child care subsidies.¹⁶

Table 35. Licensed School-Age Child Care for Children Ages 6 to 12, Rhode Island, 2007

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 12	PROGRAMS	SLOTS
Barrington	2,064	7	265
Bristol	1,784	5	176
Burrillville	1,672	3	213
Central Falls	2,190	6	448
Charlestown	717	1	26
Coventry	3,431	8	273
Cranston	7,115	18	585
Cumberland	3,135	5	290
East Greenwich	1,581	2	92
East Providence	4,292	13	632
Exeter	684	4	109
Foster	489	2	39
Glocester	1,105	1	10
Hopkinton	802	2	92
Jamestown	576	1	51
Johnston	2,490	7	180
Lincoln	2,206	7	335
Little Compton	322	1	26
Middletown	1,787	6	206
Narragansett	1,144	2	89
New Shoreham	69	0	0
Newport	2,056	8	566
North Kingstown	2,823	9	375
North Providence	2,444	4	165
North Smithfield	988	1	100
Pawtucket	7,477	11	965
Portsmouth	1,839	3	134
Providence	18,592	32	2,831
Richmond	830	1	52
Scituate	1,102	2	72
Smithfield	1,653	6	204
South Kingstown	2,630	5	204
Tiverton	1,452	3	103
Warren	1,032	2	92
Warwick	7,630	18	958
West Greenwich	592	2	28
West Warwick	2,618	8	578
Westerly	2,160	7	263
Woonsocket	4,373	10	578
Core Cities	37,306	75	5,966
Remainder of State	64,640	158	6,439
Rhode Island	101,946	233	12,405

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Number of children ages 6 to 12 years old is from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, P14.

Department of Children, Youth and Families, number of licensed school-age child care programs and slots for children ages 6 to 12 as of December 2007. These numbers do not include certified family child care home slots, informal child care arrangements, and community programs for youth ages 6 to 12 that do not require licensing by the state. Licensed school-age child care programs also provide services to 5 year old children who are enrolled in Kindergarten.

References

- ¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey, 2006. Selected Economic Characteristics, Rhode Island and United States, 2006.
- ^{2,4} *After-school worries: Tough on parents, bad for business.* (2006). New York: Catalyst.
- ³ Lawrence, S. & Kreader, J. L. (2006). *School-age child care arrangements.* Child Care & Early Education Research Connections, No. 4. Retrieved February 6, 2007 from www.childcareresearch.org
- ⁵ Hall, G., Yohalem, N., Tolman, J. & Wilson, A. (2003). *How after-school programs can most effectively promote positive youth development as a support to academic achievement.* Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time.
- ^{6,8} Vandivere, S., Tout, K., Capizzano, J., & Zaslow, M. (2003). Left unsupervised: A look at the most vulnerable children. *Child Trends Research Brief.* Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- ⁶ *Making the case: A fact sheet on children and youth in out-of-school time.* (2006). Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College.
- ⁹ Chaplin, D., & Puma, M. J. (2003). *What "extras" do we get with extracurriculars? Technical research considerations.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- ¹⁰ Miller, B. M. (2003). *Critical hours: Afterschool programs and educational success.* Brookline, MA: Nellie Mae Education Foundation.
- ¹¹ Options for Working Parents, 1996 and Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, 2007.
- ¹² Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2007.
- ¹³ National After School Association Accredited Programs, November 2007.
- ^{14,15} Neugebauer, R. (September/October, 2007). School-age child care trend report: Views from the field. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 28-31.
- ¹⁶ *Legislative wrap-up: 2007 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly.* (2007). Providence, RI: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT