

Infant and Preschool Child Care

DEFINITION

Infant and preschool child care is the number of regulated child care slots per 100 children under age six estimated to be in need of care. Regulated child care slots include licensed child care center slots and licensed 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 2007, 70% (51,215) of Rhode Island children under age six had all parents in the workforce, higher than 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

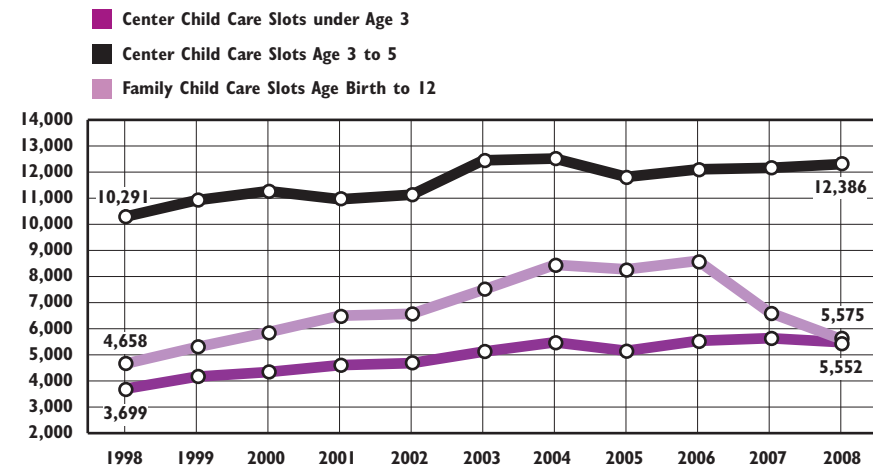
The availability of stable child care is critical for Rhode Island's economy. When parents have difficulty finding

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 and more hours of maternal employment in the long term, 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. 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, 1998 - 2008



Source: Options for Working Parents, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes 1997-2006. Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes, 2007-2008.

◆ In 2008 in Rhode Island, there were 23,513 slots for children under age six in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes, down from peak high of 26,243 in 2006 and up from 18,648 in 1998.⁸

◆ Since 1998 the number of licensed child care center slots for infants and toddlers (children under age three) in Rhode Island has increased fairly steadily, growing 50%, from 3,699 to 5,552.⁹

◆ The number of licensed child care center slots for preschoolers (children ages three to five) has grown more slowly. Since 1998, there has been a 20% increase in the number of licensed slots for preschoolers.¹⁰

◆ The number of certified family child care slots nearly doubled between 1998 and 2006. In 2007 and 2008, there were marked reductions in the number of certified family child care slots in Rhode Island, dropping by over 3,000 slots in two years, from 8,601 to 5,575.¹¹

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Table 30.

Child Care for Children under Age 6, Rhode Island, 2008

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILD CARE CENTER SLOTS < AGE 3	# OF CHILD CARE CENTER SLOTS AGES 3-5	# OF 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	102	170	28	300	386	78
Bristol	33	117	47	197	447	44
Burrillville	28	114	20	162	408	40
Central Falls	93	244	197	534	520	103
Charlestown	13	35	20	68	170	40
Coventry	80	197	112	389	962	40
Cranston	453	1,130	366	1,949	1,799	108
Cumberland	114	267	116	497	912	54
East Greenwich	283	466	14	763	277	275
East Providence	157	542	83	782	1,168	67
Exeter	28	60	8	96	189	51
Foster	29	40	0	69	107	64
Glocester	60	61	12	133	264	50
Hopkinton	0	0	32	32	283	11
Jamestown	31	33	8	72	83	87
Johnston	219	342	83	644	702	92
Lincoln	119	297	35	451	565	80
Little Compton	0	0	6	6	53	11
Middletown	168	389	32	589	463	127
Narragansett	24	40	0	64	228	28
New Shoreham	12	22	0	34	27	126
Newport	104	192	26	322	615	52
North Kingstown	178	339	36	553	805	69
North Providence	112	196	108	416	662	63
North Smithfield	0	79	50	129	285	45
Pawtucket	279	732	385	1,396	2,103	66
Portsmouth	90	132	12	234	411	57
Providence	920	2,078	3,268	6,266	4,002	157
Richmond	0	36	16	52	255	20
Scituate	12	44	28	84	288	29
Smithfield	227	472	26	725	400	181
South Kingstown	117	313	59	489	590	83
Tiverton	25	136	22	183	358	51
Warren	42	70	14	126	325	39
Warwick	783	1,522	139	2,444	2,119	115
West Greenwich	134	161	0	295	173	171
West Warwick	136	399	57	592	737	80
Westerly	134	300	0	434	644	67
Woonsocket	213	619	110	942	1,100	86
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>1,745</i>	<i>4,264</i>	<i>4,043</i>	<i>10,052</i>	<i>9,077</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>3,807</i>	<i>8,122</i>	<i>1,532</i>	<i>13,461</i>	<i>16,808</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>5,552</i>	<i>12,386</i>	<i>5,575</i>	<i>23,513</i>	<i>25,885</i>	<i>91</i>

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 2008. *Family child care slots are for children birth to 12 years old.

The denominator is the Census 2000 number of children under age six 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).

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

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- ^{8,9,10,11} Options for Working Parents, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes 1997-2006. Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes, 2007-2008.
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