

# 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 have long-lasting positive effects on how children learn, develop, cope with stress, and handle their emotions.<sup>1</sup>

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. Between 2006 and 2008, an estimated 68% of Rhode Island children under age six had all parents in the workforce, higher than the U.S. estimated rate of 63%.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

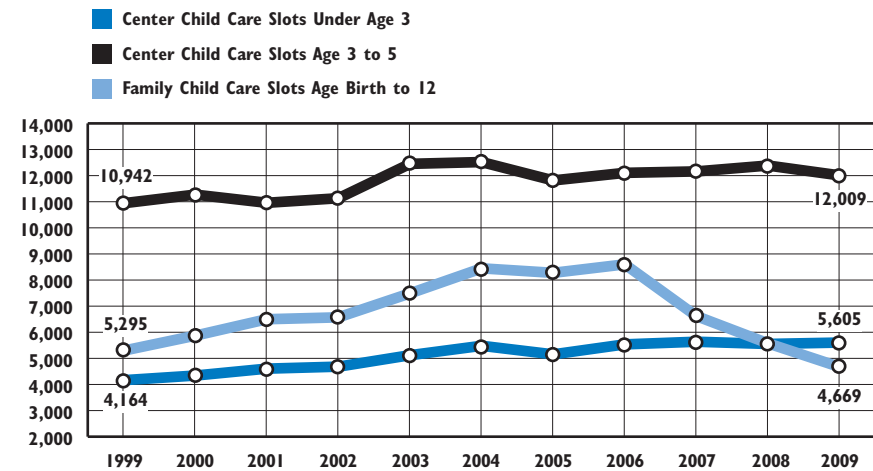
The availability of stable child care is critical for Rhode Island's economy.

When parents have difficulty finding and keeping child care, they miss work more frequently and are more likely to leave their jobs.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

Researchers have found that unregulated child care is often of low quality.<sup>7</sup> 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, 1999 - 2009



Source: Options for Working Parents, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes 1999-2006. Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes, 2007-2009.

- ◆ In 2009 in Rhode Island, there were 22,283 slots for children under age six in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes, down from a peak high of 26,243 in 2006, but up from 20,383 in 1999.<sup>8</sup>
- ◆ Since 1999, the number of licensed child care center slots for infants and toddlers (children under age three) in Rhode Island has increased fairly steadily, growing 35%, from 4,164 to 5,605 in 2009.<sup>9</sup>
- ◆ The number of licensed child care center slots for preschoolers (children ages three to five) has grown more slowly than slots for infants and toddlers since 1999. Between 1999 and 2009, there has been a 10% increase in the number of licensed slots for preschoolers.<sup>10</sup>
- ◆ The number of licensed family child care slots grew 62% between 1999 and 2006. Since 2006, the number of family child care slots has decreased; the 2009 level is 12% below the capacity in 1999.<sup>11</sup>

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Table 34.

Child Care for Children Under Age 6, Rhode Island, 2009

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	116	235	14	365	386	95
Bristol	33	117	25	175	447	39
Burrillville	28	114	6	148	408	36
Central Falls	93	219	147	459	520	88
Charlestown	13	36	20	69	170	41
Coventry	82	233	93	408	962	42
Cranston	458	1,041	345	1,844	1,799	103
Cumberland	107	286	89	482	912	53
East Greenwich	306	482	24	812	277	293
East Providence	137	474	52	663	1,168	57
Exeter	28	60	8	96	189	51
Foster	17	25	0	42	107	39
Glocester	60	58	6	124	264	47
Hopkinton	0	0	16	16	283	6
Jamestown	31	33	8	72	83	87
Johnston	224	323	90	637	702	91
Lincoln	136	275	43	454	565	80
Little Compton	0	0	6	6	53	11
Middletown	131	322	24	477	463	103
Narragansett	0	0	0	0	228	0
New Shoreham	12	22	0	34	27	126
Newport	48	158	18	224	615	36
North Kingstown	187	402	34	623	805	77
North Providence	130	227	77	434	662	66
North Smithfield	0	0	46	46	285	16
Pawtucket	302	733	301	1,336	2,103	64
Portsmouth	90	112	6	208	411	51
Providence	900	1,876	2,814	5,590	4,002	140
Richmond	0	36	8	44	255	17
Scituate	12	44	30	86	288	30
Smithfield	237	479	8	724	400	181
South Kingstown	217	464	50	731	590	124
Tiverton	25	136	14	175	358	49
Warren	55	119	20	194	325	60
Warwick	794	1,402	116	2,312	2,119	109
West Greenwich	107	159	0	266	173	154
West Warwick	136	340	39	515	737	70
Westerly	152	284	0	436	644	68
Woonsocket	201	683	72	956	1,100	87
<b>Core Cities</b>	<b>1,680</b>	<b>4,009</b>	<b>3,391</b>	<b>9,080</b>	<b>9,077</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Remainder of State</b>	<b>3,925</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>1,278</b>	<b>13,203</b>	<b>16,808</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>5,605</b>	<b>12,009</b>	<b>4,669</b>	<b>22,283</b>	<b>25,885</b>	<b>86</b>

## 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 six and number of certified family child care home slots, December 2009. Only full-day and morning slots are counted for center-based care.

The denominator is the number of children under age six with both parents in the workforce, according to Census 2000 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.

## References

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- <sup>8,9,10,11</sup> Options for Working Parents, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes 1999-2006. Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, slots in licensed child care centers and certified family child care homes, 2007-2009.