

Infant and Pre-School Child Care

DEFINITION

Infant and pre-school child care is the number of regulated child care slots per 100 children under age 6. Regulated child care slots include full-time licensed child care center slots and certified family child care home slots.

SIGNIFICANCE

Child care has become a fundamental need for Rhode Island families over the past two decades. In Rhode Island in 2000, 62% (45,820) of children under age 6 had all parents in the workforce, higher than the U.S. average of 59%.¹

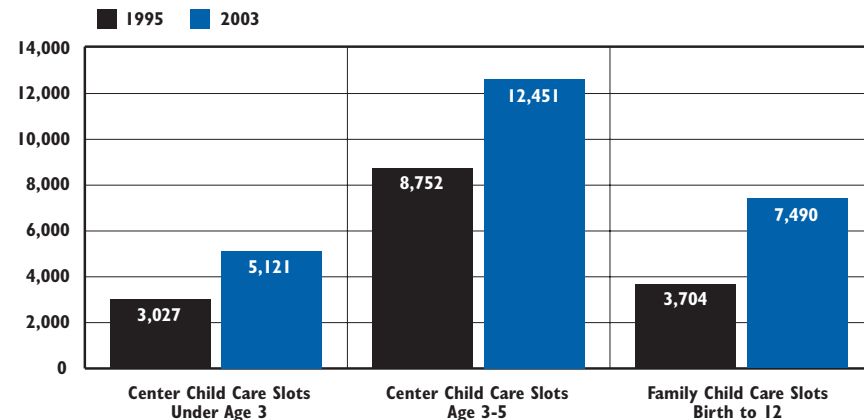
High-quality child care provides a safe and nurturing learning environment for infants and young children. Recent brain research indicates that early care and education has long-lasting effects on how children learn and develop, cope with stress, and handle their emotions.^{2,3,4} High-quality child care programs are linked to school readiness. Children from all backgrounds who have received high-quality child care score higher on tests of both cognitive and social skills in their early school years than children in poor quality care.^{5,6} High quality child care can generate a four to one return on investment in increased lifetime earnings of both the child and the mother and in decreased public expenditures on special

education, remedial education and medical costs.⁷

Low-income children, who receive high quality early education score significantly higher on tests of reading and math from the early grades through middle adolescence and are less likely to repeat a grade. They are more interested in learning, and are stronger in reading, math, problem solving, and working with others.^{8,9} Low-income children are less likely to be in high quality care arrangements because of the high cost of such care, and because nonstandard work hours (weekends, night shifts, and irregular hours) may make it difficult to find such care.^{10,11,12,13}

In 2003 in Rhode Island, there were 25,062 slots in licensed child care centers or certified family child care homes, as compared with 15,483 slots in 1995. In 2003 in Rhode Island, 28 of the 444 licensed child care centers in Rhode Island were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and 25 of these were serving children under age 6. The National Association for Family Child Care accredited 6 of the 1,164 certified family child care homes.¹⁴

Infant and Pre-School Licensed Child Care Capacity, Rhode Island, 1995 and 2003



Source: Options for Working Parents, 1995 and 2002.

Caring for Infants and Toddlers

- ◆ Child care for infants and toddlers is more expensive to provide than for older children due to the need for more intensive supervision and interaction.¹⁵ National research indicates that the quality of infant care is often very low.¹⁶
- ◆ Recent research points to several strategies that are effective in promoting the availability of higher quality child care for infants and toddlers. These include combining multiple funding streams to cover the higher costs associated with caring for young children and developing collaborative relationships with programs such as Early Head Start. Financial incentives are important to promote training, accreditation and to improve the quality of the physical environment.^{17,18}
- ◆ The quality of child care is strongly related to the wages, education, and retention of teachers. Compensation initiatives can improve child care workforce education and retention, particularly when professional development and education are linked to pay increases.¹⁹

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Table 24.

Child Care for Children Under Age 6, Rhode Island, 2003

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	45	144	40	229	386	59
Bristol	33	108	61	202	447	45
Burrillville	16	78	35	129	408	32
Central Falls	56	218	222	496	520	95
Charlestown	23	35	19	77	170	45
Coventry	118	203	124	445	962	46
Cranston	370	932	491	1,793	1,799	100
Cumberland	75	125	178	378	912	41
East Greenwich	303	513	39	855	277	309
East Providence	222	654	182	1,058	1,168	91
Exeter	8	45	6	59	189	31
Foster	31	35	0	66	107	62
Glocester	16	68	35	119	264	45
Hopkinton	0	0	21	21	283	7
Jamestown	31	33	8	72	83	87
Johnston	132	394	135	661	702	94
Lincoln	208	331	44	583	565	103
Little Compton	0	0	0	0	53	0
Middletown	208	367	16	591	463	128
Narragansett	41	90	0	131	228	57
New Shoreham	6	30	0	36	27	133
Newport	146	268	48	462	615	75
North Kingstown	114	323	58	495	805	61
North Providence	54	166	168	388	662	59
North Smithfield	0	0	183	183	285	64
Pawtucket	292	914	559	1,765	2,103	84
Portsmouth	67	200	28	295	411	72
Providence	859	2,053	3,942	6,854	4,002	171
Richmond	14	19	77	110	255	43
Scituate	27	85	11	123	288	43
Smithfield	143	246	36	425	400	106
South Kingstown	119	307	82	508	590	86
Tiverton	25	145	64	234	358	65
Warren	43	130	44	217	325	67
Warwick	743	1,601	228	2,572	2,119	121
West Greenwich	133	174	0	307	173	177
West Warwick	158	423	110	691	737	94
Westerly	72	411	11	494	644	77
Woonsocket	170	583	185	938	1,100	85
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>1,681</i>	<i>4,459</i>	<i>5,066</i>	<i>11,206</i>	<i>9,077</i>	<i>123</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>3,440</i>	<i>7,992</i>	<i>2,424</i>	<i>13,856</i>	<i>16,808</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>5,121</i>	<i>12,451</i>	<i>7,490</i>	<i>25,062</i>	<i>25,885</i>	<i>97</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

The denominator is the number of children under age 6 with both parents in the workforce, multiplied by 56.5% (the percentage of mothers using non-relative care, according to the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation, Spring 1999). The number of regulated child care slots is the number of licensed full-time child care center slots for children under age 6 and the number of certified family child care home slots, as of December, 2003 (data provided by Options for Working Parents).

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

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

See Methodology, page 133.

References

- ¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 2000.
- ² Shore, R. (1997). *Rethinking the Brain*. New York: Families and Work Institute.
- ³ *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. (2000). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- ⁴ *Using Mental Health Strategies to Move the Early Childhood Agenda and Promote School Readiness*. (2000). New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York and National Center for Children in Poverty.
- ⁵ *The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go to School*. (June 1999). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- ⁶ Vandell, D. Lowe and Wolfe, B. (2000). *Child Care Quality: Does It Matter and Does It need to be Improved?* Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin at Madison.
- ⁷ Masse, L. et al. (2002). *A Benefit Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: National Institute for Early Education Research.
- ⁸ *Early Learning, Later Success: The Abecedarian Study, Executive Summary*. (1999). Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- ⁹ Xiang, Z. et. al. (January 2002). *Effects Five Years Later: The Michigan School Readiness Program Evaluation Through Age 10*. Ypsilanti, MI: For the Michigan State Board of Education.

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