

# School-Age Child Care

## DEFINITION

*School-age child care* is the number of licensed child care programs and slots for children ages 6 to 12. 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.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Many children are without adult supervision during the hours before and after school.<sup>1</sup> Many parents need care for their school-age children during work hours. Children spend only 20% of their waking hours in school. The gap between parents' work schedules and students' school schedules can amount to 20 or more hours per week.<sup>2</sup>

Children who are without adult supervision when school is out are at significantly greater risk of truancy from school, emotional stress, receiving poor grades, substance use, sexual activity, and crime.<sup>3,4</sup> Low-income children, children in urban or high-crime neighborhoods are most at risk when they spend time caring for themselves and are most likely to benefit from high quality after-school programming.<sup>5</sup>

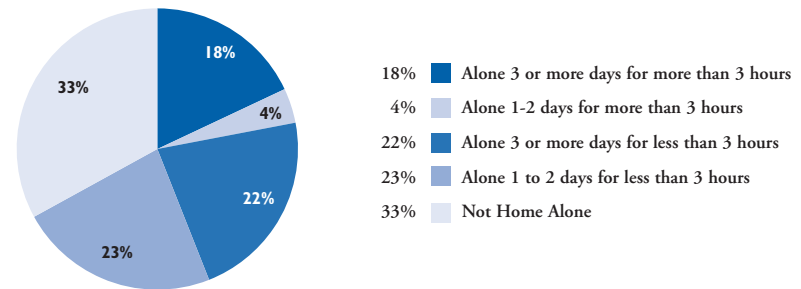
When school is out, children and young adolescents need a safe environment that does not simply

duplicate the school day. They need access to a wide variety of enriching and challenging activities – homework and reading help, sports, music, theater, art – and the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with their peers and caring adults.<sup>6,7</sup> Programs for older youth can be particularly successful if they engage youth as a resource and provide opportunities to contribute to the community.<sup>8</sup>

Children 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. They are less likely to use drugs or become teen parents or become involved in criminal activities. Their parents are more likely to be involved in school activities.<sup>9,10,11,12,13</sup> Yet, many programs are poor in quality due to a lack of resources, staff turnover, and inappropriate physical space. Resources are particularly scarce in low-income communities where they are needed most.<sup>14</sup>

In 2003 there were 14,236 licensed child care slots for children ages 6 to 12 in Rhode Island, up from 12,117 in 2002 and nearly two and a half times as many as in 1995 (5,750).<sup>15</sup>

**Rhode Island Middle School Children (Grades 5-8)  
At Home After School without Adult Supervision, 2002-2003**



Source: Felner, R. Ph.D. (2003). *SALT Survey Reports, School Year 2002-2003*. Providence, RI: University of Rhode Island, National Center on Public Education and Policy.

- ◆ Children in grades 5 through 8 left home alone for three hours or more report more negative perceptions of school climate, lack of family involvement in their educational activities, depression, low self-esteem, behavior problems, and poor academic performance than children who were not left home alone for that length of time.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ One in five (18%) Rhode Island school children in grades 5 to 8 are home after school without adult supervision for more than three hours on at least three days per week. An additional 4% are home alone one to two days per week for more than three hours. Being home alone for three hours or more on even one day places children at higher risk than children who are home alone more frequently but for fewer than three hours.<sup>17</sup>
- ◆ Rhode Island students in grades 5 through 8 from low-income families are less likely than students from higher-income families to participate in extracurricular activities and programs. In 2002-2003, 59% of low-income students in grades 5 through 8 participated in at least one extracurricular activity compared to 80% of higher-income students.<sup>18</sup>

Table 26.

## Licensed School-Age Child Care for Children Ages 6 to 12, Rhode Island, 2003

CITY/TOWN	PROGRAMS	SLOTS
Barrington	9	396
Bristol	4	126
Burrillville	4	242
Central Falls	6	325
Charlestown	1	26
Coventry	14	612
Cranston	22	701
Cumberland	3	115
East Greenwich	6	225
East Providence	15	813
Exeter	4	130
Foster	2	68
Glocester	0	0
Hopkinton	1	40
Jamestown	1	50
Johnston	6	133
Lincoln	9	367
Little Compton	1	26
Middletown	7	248
Narragansett	1	60
Newport	9	413
New Shoreham	0	0
North Kingstown	11	530
North Providence	2	150
North Smithfield	1	100
Pawtucket	17	1,328
Portsmouth	2	91
Providence	42	3,058
Richmond	3	90
Scituate	2	64
Smithfield	3	112
South Kingstown	8	370
Tiverton	2	95
Warren	5	202
Warwick	32	1,581
West Greenwich	2	36
West Warwick	7	390
Westerly	14	488
Woonsocket	11	435
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>5,949</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>197</i>	<i>8,287</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>14,236</i>

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

All data are from Options for Working Parents, Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, December 2003.

Number of licensed school-age child care programs and slots for children ages 6 to 12 as of December 2003. 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 for Indicator

<sup>1,4,9</sup> *Making the Case. Fact Sheet on School-Age Children's Out-of-School Time.* (January 2003). Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College.

<sup>2</sup> *Fact Sheet on School-Age Children's Out-of-School Time.* (March 2001). Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College.

<sup>3</sup> Vandivere, S. et al. (April 2003). *Left Unsupervised: A Look at the Most Vulnerable Children.* (Research Brief). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

<sup>5</sup> Vandell, D.L., et al. (Fall 1999). *After-School Child Care Programs. When School is Out.* Los Altos, CA: Center for the Future of Children, David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

<sup>6</sup> *Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time.* (June 2000). Wellesley MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

<sup>7,8,11</sup> Hall, G. et al. (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.

<sup>10</sup> Chaplin, D. et al. (2003). *What "Extras" Do We Get with Extracurriculars? Technical Research Considerations.* Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

<sup>12</sup> Miller, B. et al. (May 2003). *After-school Programs and Educational Success: The Critical Hours.* Brookline, MA: Miller Midzik Research Associates.

<sup>13</sup> Kane, T. et al. (January 16, 2004). *The Impact of After-School Programs: Interpreting the Results of Four Recent Evaluations.* Working Paper of the William T. Grant Foundation.

<sup>14</sup> *Working for Children and Families: Safe and Smart After-School Programs.* (April 2000). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice.

<sup>15</sup> Options for Working Parents, Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, 2002, 2003.

<sup>16,17,18</sup> Felner, R. PhD. (2003). *SALT Survey Reports, School Year 2002-2003.* Providence, RI: University of Rhode Island, National Center on Public Education and Policy.