

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

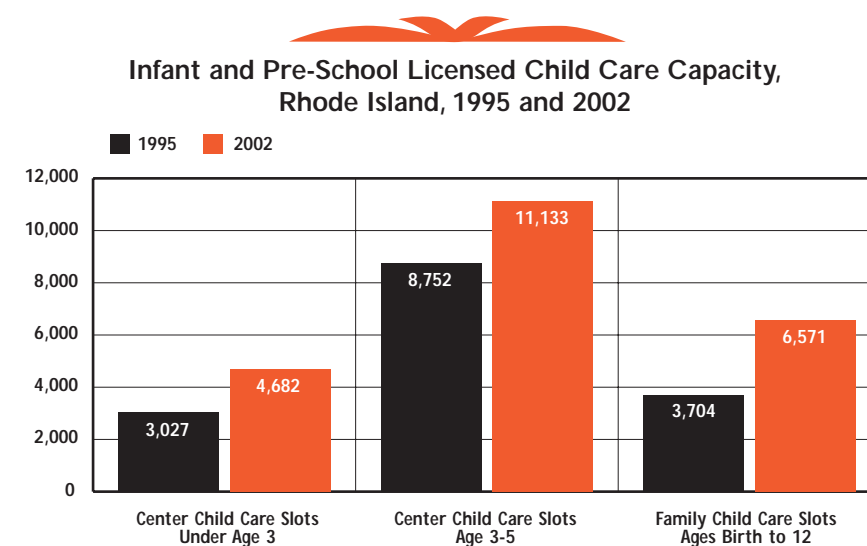
High quality child care provides a safe and nurturing learning environment for infants and young children. Recent brain research indicates that early care and education has long-lasting effects on how children learn and develop, cope with stress, and handle their emotions.^{2,3,4} High quality child 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}

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, thinking, problem solving and working with others.^{7,8} 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, irregular hours) make it difficult to find such care.^{9,10,11}

The quality of child care is strongly related to the wages, education, and retention of teachers. Initiatives designed to increase wages and benefits can improve child care workforce education and retention, particularly when professional development and education are linked to pay increases.¹²

In 2002 in Rhode Island, there were 22,386 slots in licensed child care centers or certified family child care homes for children under age six, as compared with 15,483 slots in 1995. In 2002 in Rhode Island, 33 of the 269 licensed child care centers serving children under age 6 were accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and 12 of the 1,071 certified family child care homes were accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care.¹³



Source: Options for Working Parents, 1995 and 2002.

The Impact of Child Care on the Economy

- ◆ The child care sector contributes \$38 billion-\$41 billion a year to the national economy in direct expenditures and generates over \$9 billion a year in tax revenues. It directly employs more workers than public secondary schools. It creates an infrastructure that permits parents to be employed outside the home, generating additional billions of dollars of taxable earnings each year.¹⁴
- ◆ Recent research indicates that high quality child care also makes significant long-term contributions to the economy due to improved outcomes for families and children. High quality child care can generate a four to one return on investment due to increased lifetime earnings of both the child and the mother and in decreased public expenditures on special education, remedial education and medical costs.¹⁵
- ◆ Responsive caregivers who surround children with language, warmth and chances to learn are the key to good child outcomes.¹⁶ Lower child-staff ratios, smaller group sizes and better-educated teachers provide better quality overall, including more positive caregiving and a more developmentally-appropriate learning environment.^{17, 18, 19}

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Table 23.

Child Care for Children Under Age 6, Rhode Island, 2002

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	29	218	400	55
Bristol	33	94	71	198	463	43
Burrillville	16	78	36	130	422	31
Central Falls	39	137	186	362	537	67
Charlestown	10	19	27	56	175	32
Coventry	107	281	117	505	995	51
Cranston	274	865	370	1,509	1,860	81
Cumberland	57	125	193	375	943	40
East Greenwich	297	483	47	827	287	288
East Providence	220	584	155	959	1,208	79
Exeter	8	45	25	78	195	40
Foster	31	35	8	74	111	67
Glocester	16	66	50	132	273	48
Hopkinton	0	0	21	21	292	7
Jamestown	31	33	6	70	86	81
Johnston	107	353	102	562	726	77
Lincoln	188	236	29	453	584	78
Little Compton	0	0	0	0	54	0
Middletown	149	262	12	423	479	88
Narragansett	41	90	6	137	236	58
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0	28	0
Newport	100	163	22	285	636	45
North Kingstown	141	286	71	498	832	60
North Providence	67	193	145	405	684	59
North Smithfield	0	0	59	59	295	20
Pawtucket	422	617	506	1,545	2,174	71
Portsmouth	80	118	44	242	425	57
Providence	864	2,276	3,361	6,501	4,136	157
Richmond	0	37	51	88	263	33
Scituate	12	47	11	70	298	23
Smithfield	128	207	48	383	413	93
South Kingstown	104	198	78	380	610	62
Tiverton	25	145	53	223	370	60
Warren	25	93	39	157	336	47
Warwick	607	1,373	273	2,253	2,191	103
West Greenwich	133	174	5	312	179	174
West Warwick	76	270	111	457	762	60
Westerly	72	387	0	459	666	69
Woonsocket	157	619	204	980	1,137	86
Core Cities	1,658	4,082	4,390	10,130	9,382	108
Remainder of State	3,024	7,051	2,181	12,256	17,379	71
Rhode Island	4,682	11,133	6,571	22,386	26,761	84

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

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

The denominator is the number of children under age 6 with both parents in the workforce, multiplied by 58.4% (the percentage of parents using non-relative care, according to the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation, Spring 1997). 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 31, 2002 (data provided by Options for Working Parents).

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

See Methodology page 125.

References

- ¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 2000.
- ² Shore, R. (1997). *Rethinking the Brain*. New York, NY: 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 *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.
- ⁸ 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.
- ^{9,10} Marshall, N. et. al. (2001). *The Cost and Quality of Full Day, Year-round Early Care and Education in Massachusetts: Preschool Classrooms (Executive Summary)*. Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley, MA.

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