

# 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 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>1</sup> Many children are alone during the hours before and after school. It is estimated that nationally 8 million children ages 5 to 14 spend time without adult supervision on a regular basis.<sup>2</sup> During the summer, children spend a significantly longer amount of time in self-care than during the rest of the year and are thus at increased risk of physical injury and psychological or emotional harm.<sup>3</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>4,5</sup> Low-income children and 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>6</sup>

When school is out, children and young adolescents need a safe place that does not simply duplicate the school day. They need access to a wide variety of enriching activities – homework and reading help, sports, music, theater, art – and the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with their peers and caring adults.<sup>7</sup> Programs for older youth can be particularly successful if they treat youth as a resource and provide opportunities to contribute to the community.<sup>8</sup>

After-school programs are cost-effective, returning \$2-\$4 for every dollar spent, due to a variety of positive effects including improved academic performance, reduced crime and reduced welfare costs.<sup>9</sup> Children in high quality, well-designed after-school programs and extracurricular activities have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, grades, and conduct in school than their peers without such opportunities. They are less likely to use drugs or become teen parents.<sup>10,11</sup> Yet, many programs are of poor quality due to a lack of resources, staff turnover, and inappropriate space. Resources are particularly scarce in low-income communities where they are needed most.<sup>12,13,14</sup>



## Supporting Children with Special Needs

- ◆ According to a recent Rhode Island Department of Health survey of child care providers serving children of all ages, 44% of center-based child care providers who responded indicated that they had asked a child to leave within the last 6 months, primarily due to behavioral problems.<sup>15</sup>
- ◆ Few providers of child care or youth care have the training to provide care to children with special needs. The Rhode Island Department of Human Services is currently finalizing standards for the provision of Therapeutic Services in Child Care and Youth Care. The program will provide supports and services that children with moderate to severe special needs require in order to participate successfully in child care and youth care settings.<sup>16</sup>



## Out-of-School Time and After-School Programs

- ◆ In Rhode Island, the number of licensed school-age child care slots for children ages 6 to 12 increased from 6,692 in 1996 to 12,117 in 2002.
- ◆ Quality after-school programs can provide safe, engaging environments that improve children's academic achievement and self-confidence, promote healthy development and peer relationships, and decrease television viewing, drug and alcohol abuse and juvenile crime.<sup>17</sup>
- ◆ Exemplary after-school programs are well-managed, employ qualified staff, forge effective community and family partnerships, provide enriching learning opportunities, pay attention to safety, health and nutrition, coordinate activities with those provided in school, and include an evaluation and improvement component.<sup>18</sup>
- ◆ A recent study on out-of-school time in Providence found that demand for out-of-school opportunities continues to exceed supply, coordination among programs is limited, the quality of programming varies widely, and lack of transportation is a barrier to participation. Inadequate, uncoordinated and unstable funding undermines the success of some out-of-school time programs for youth. Child care subsidies are not being accessed for older children because few programs for school-age children are licensed.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 25. Licensed School-Age Child Care for Children Ages 6 to 12, Rhode Island, 2002**

CITY/TOWN	PROGRAMS	SLOTS
Barrington	4	183
Bristol	5	186
Burrillville	1	38
Central Falls	5	245
Charlestown	1	26
Coventry	6	279
Cranston	18	582
Cumberland	5	225
East Greenwich	2	55
East Providence	14	718
Exeter	3	80
Foster	2	68
Glocester	1	75
Hopkinton	0	0
Jamestown	1	50
Johnston	5	165
Lincoln	11	484
Little Compton	1	26
Middletown	5	196
Narragansett	1	60
New Shoreham	0	0
Newport	8	336
North Kingstown	12	549
North Providence	2	150
North Smithfield	1	100
Pawtucket	14	1,123
Portsmouth	2	191
Providence	43	2,968
Richmond	0	0
Scituate	1	25
Smithfield	2	120
South Kingstown	5	216
Tiverton	2	95
Warren	4	235
Warwick	24	1,095
West Greenwich	2	36
West Warwick	7	390
Westerly	10	354
Woonsocket	10	393
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>5,455</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>6,662</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>240</i>	<i>12,117</i>

#### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

All data are from Options for Working Parents, Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, December 2002.

Number of licensed school-age child care programs and slots for children ages 6 to 12 as of December 2002. 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 service to 5 year old children who are enrolled in Kindergarten. The community-based/school-based breakdowns that appeared in previous factbooks are not available for 2002.

#### References for Indicator

- <sup>1</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>2,5,9,11</sup> *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>3</sup> Capizzano, J. et al. (2002). *What Happens When the School Year is Over? The Use and Costs of Child Care for School-Age Children during the Summer Months* Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- <sup>4</sup> *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Out-of-School Hours* (1994). New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development.
- <sup>6</sup> Vandell, D.L., et al. "After-School Child Care Programs" in *When School is Out* (Fall 1999). Los Altos, CA: Center for the Future of Children, David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

<sup>7,10</sup> *Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time* (June 2000). Wellesley, MA: National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

<sup>8,13</sup> Quinn, J. "Where Need Meets Opportunity: Youth Development Programs for Early Teens" in *When School is Out* (Fall 1999). Los Altos, CA: Center for the Future of Children, David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

<sup>12</sup> Halpern, R. "After-School Programs for Low-Income Children: Promise and Challenges" in *When School is Out* (Fall 1999). Los Altos, CA: Center for the Future of Children, David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

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

<sup>15</sup> "Child Care Health Survey Results" (Power Point Presentation) (December 2002). Rhode Island Department of Health, Emotional Health in Child Care Committee.

<sup>16</sup> *Certification Standards, Providers of Therapeutic Services in Child Care and Youth Care* (Draft, January 2003). Cranston, RI: Department of Human Services.

<sup>17,18</sup> *After-School Programs: Keeping Children Safe and Smart* (2000). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>19</sup> *Stepping Up! Out of School Time and Youth Development in Providence: A School-Community Analysis* (January 2003). Prepared by Community Matters for the Providence School Department and United Way of Rhode Island.