

Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies

DEFINITION

Children receiving child care subsidies is the number of children receiving child care that is either fully or partially paid for with a child care subsidy through the Rhode Island Department of Human Services' Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Child care subsidies can be used for care in a licensed child care center, a licensed family child care home, or by a license-exempt provider (family, friend, or neighbor).

SIGNIFICANCE

Families rely on child care to enable them to work and to provide the early education experiences needed to prepare their children for school. Yet the high cost of child care puts quality care out of reach for many low-income families. State child care subsidy programs help low-income families access child care.¹

Child care is often the biggest living expense in family budgets. For families with two children enrolled in a child care center, child care costs exceed median rent payments in all 50 states and median mortgage payments in 40 states.² A 2019 Rhode Island study of families with children under age six found that affordable child care was consistently reported as the highest family need.³ Using the federal child care affordability guideline (no more than 7% of family income should be

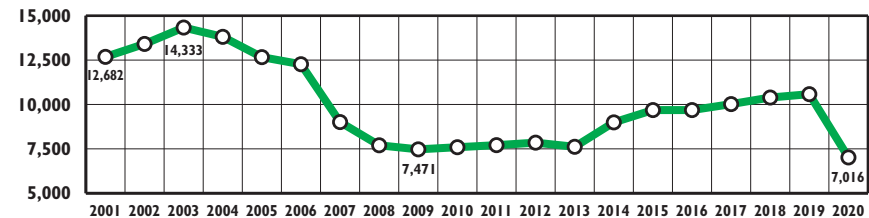
spent on child care), a Rhode Island family would need to earn at least \$155,757 annually to afford the average yearly cost for a three-year-old at a licensed center in 2018 (\$10,903).^{4,5}

Subsidy payment rates for child care providers should meet or exceed the federal benchmark established to ensure low-income families have equal access to the child care market and to promote access to quality care.⁶ Child care programs across the U.S. have faced significant financial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic as enrollment is down and costs have gone up as much as 60% due to the need to maintain small, stable groups of children and staff and pay for professional cleaning and sanitation.^{7,8}

Child care teachers, almost all of whom are women and often are Women of Color, are responsible for the safety, health, learning, and development of our youngest children yet make very low wages and many are not able to meet their basic needs.⁹ At least 15 states fund wage supplements designed to improve qualifications and retention of child care teachers.¹⁰

In Rhode Island in 2019, the median wage was \$12.01/hour for a child care educator and \$13.80 for a preschool educator.¹¹

Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, 2001-2020



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2001–December 2015, September 2016, December 2017–December 2020. Data for December 2016 were not available.

- ◆ In December 2020, there were 7,016 child care subsidies in Rhode Island, down 34% from December 2019 (pre-pandemic) and down 51% from the 2003 peak. In December 2020 in Rhode Island, 77% of child care subsidies were for care in a licensed child care center, 22% were for care by a licensed family child care home, and 1% were for care by a license-exempt provider, similar to the choices parents made pre-pandemic.¹²
- ◆ As of December 2020, 21% of children participating in the Rhode Island Child Care Assistance Program were enrolled in programs with high-quality BrightStars ratings (four or five stars), up from 16% in 2019 and 10% in December 2018. Preschool-age children were more likely to be enrolled in a high-quality program (23%) than infants and toddlers (20%) or school-age children (19%).¹³
- ◆ In December 2020, 82% of all children receiving child care subsidies were in low-income working families not receiving cash assistance and 8% were in low-income families receiving cash assistance. Another 10% of child care subsidies were used for children in the care of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families.¹⁴

Average Annual Cost for Full-Time Child Care, Rhode Island, 2018

PROGRAM TYPE	COST PER CHILD
Child Care Center (infant care)	\$13,093
Child Care Center (preschool care)	\$10,903
Family Child Care Home (preschool care)	\$8,811
School-Age Center-Based Program (child age 6-12)	\$7,664

Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT analysis of average weekly rates from Silver, B. E. (2018). *Statewide survey of childcare rates in Rhode Island*. Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island.

Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies

Table 36.

Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, December 2020

CITY/TOWN	SUBSIDY USE BY CHILD RESIDENCE				SUBSIDY USE BY PROGRAM LOCATION			
	UNDER AGE 3	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-12	TOTAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES	CENTER	FAMILY CHILD CARE	LICENSE EXEMPT	TOTAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES
Barrington	7	16	13	36	32	1	0	33
Bristol	4	9	7	20	19	0	0	19
Burrillville	12	19	21	52	53	0	0	53
Central Falls	56	93	112	261	166	58	1	225
Charlestown	3	7	1	11	2	1	3	6
Coventry	21	42	34	97	116	0	0	116
Cranston	78	126	149	353	461	145	0	606
Cumberland	13	24	48	85	101	5	0	106
East Greenwich	3	3	4	10	41	0	0	41
East Providence	53	69	90	212	262	8	7	277
Exeter	3	5	5	13	15	0	0	15
Foster	0	3	2	5	5	0	0	5
Glocester	0	4	1	5	20	0	0	20
Hopkinton	3	5	1	9	5	0	0	5
Jamestown	0	1	0	1	4	0	0	4
Johnston	26	39	47	112	275	36	0	311
Lincoln	15	28	46	89	2	0	0	2
Little Compton	1	0	0	1	97	10	0	107
Middletown	15	16	9	40	63	0	0	63
Narragansett	4	0	3	7	5	0	0	5
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newport	31	44	72	147	155	0	6	161
North Kingstown	16	22	19	57	65	0	0	65
North Providence	32	50	36	118	103	14	0	117
North Smithfield	2	6	3	11	1	0	0	1
Pawtucket	157	292	387	836	725	76	0	801
Portsmouth	3	7	0	10	2	0	0	2
Providence	532	819	1,153	2,504	1,271	1,161	27	2,459
Richmond	2	2	2	6	0	0	0	0
Scituate	4	4	2	10	6	0	0	6
Smithfield	6	12	9	27	93	0	0	93
South Kingstown	14	17	35	66	64	12	0	76
Tiverton	3	9	6	18	19	3	0	22
Warren	9	8	8	25	39	2	0	41
Warwick	60	118	133	311	486	0	0	486
West Greenwich	2	1	0	3	12	0	0	12
West Warwick	40	84	77	201	160	0	0	160
Westerly	17	19	17	53	68	5	0	73
Woonsocket	99	174	202	475	383	27	0	410
DCYF	230	319	156	705	NA	NA	NA	NA
Undetermined Address	2	4	8	14	NA	NA	NA	NA
Out-Of-State	NA	NA	NA	NA	12	0	0	12
Four Core Cities	844	1,378	1,854	4,076	2,545	1,322	28	3,895
Remainder of State	502	819	900	2,221	2,851	242	16	3,109
Rhode Island	1,578	2,520	2,918	7,016	5,408	1,564	44	7,016

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2020.

DCYF is the number of children in the care of the Department of Children, Youth and Families who are receiving child care subsidies.

Out-of-State is subsidies used by Rhode Island resident children who attend child care located outside of Rhode Island; they are included in the total count for Rhode Island.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

NA=Not applicable

Subsidy data by age of child are reported by the child's residence. Subsidy use by program type is reported by location of the program.

The average annual cost for full-time child care was determined by multiplying the average weekly tuition rate by 52 weeks (for infants and preschoolers). For school-age children, the annual cost was determined by multiplying the average weekly tuition for before and after school care by 39 weeks and adding 13 weeks of average school vacation/summer camp tuition.

References

- ¹⁶ Schulman, K. (2019). *Early progress: State child care assistance policies 2019*. Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center.
- ² *The U.S. and the high price of child care: An examination of a broken system*. (2019). Arlington, VA: Child Care Aware of America.
- ³ Abt Associates. (2019). Rhode Island PDG B-5 family needs assessment final report. Retrieved February 8, 2021, from www.kids.ri.gov
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). Child Care and Development Fund Program: Final rule. *Federal Register*, 81(190), 67438-67595.
- ⁵ Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations based on average weekly rates from Silver, B. E. (2018). *Statewide survey of child care rates in Rhode Island*. Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island

(continued on page 186)