

Still No Room for Babies: Child Care Staffing Crisis Impacts Supply of Infant-Toddler Child Care

March 2023

Having access to a robust supply of high-quality licensed child care near their home or workplace is an essential support for working parents. Licensed child care programs not only offer parents a safe and reliable child care option while they work, but they can also be a valuable source of early education during the critically important first three years, laying the foundation for healthy development and success in school and life. Statewide, more than 207,000 children under age three live in families where both parents work, meaning they will be in need of some form of child care.¹

However, according to a recent survey conducted by Advocates for Children of New Jersey regarding the availability of infant-toddler care in New Jersey, licensed child care for babies is in short supply with only enough space to serve roughly a third of the children that need care because all parents in the household work. Furthermore, although centers report that they have the capacity to serve approximately 68,000 infants and toddlers, they typically serve closer to 55,000, leaving more than 150,000 very young children without the option of center-based care. The primary reason centers reported serving fewer children than they have the capacity to serve is that they cannot find enough staff to work in the infant-toddler room.²

1. 2015-2019 American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample

2. Help Wanted! Child Care Staffing Crisis Means Still No Room for Babies, ACNJ August 2022



Infant-Toddler Child Care in New Jersey As of March 2022

Number of Licensed Centers that Provide Infant Toddler Child Care	1,720
Number of Children Under Age 3	304,277
Children Under Age 3 Likely to Need Child Care Because All Parents Work	206,908
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers are Willing To Provide	68,348
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers Typically Provide	54,860
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Participating in Grow NJ Kids	443
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Rated by Grow NJ Kids	143

Recommendations to address the shortage of high-quality infant-toddler child care

- Support an increase of CCDBG by \$4.3 billion in FY24—for a total discretionary funding level of \$12.4 billion.
- Support an increase of \$17.47 billion for Head Start in FY 2024.
- Support the Child Care and Working Families Act and funding that will provide basic grants, similar to Stabilization grants to support child care programs that have fewer children whose families are eligible for child care assistance but are struggling to meet the true cost of care without unduly burdening parents with higher tuition rates.

For more information, visit acnj.org to download a copy of Still No Room for Babies (March 2023) and County Profiles.

Giving Every Child A Chance To Grow Up Safe, Healthy and Educated

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Congressional District #10: Infant-Toddler Child Care Availability As of March 2022

Municipality	Total Number of Centers Serving Infants and Toddlers	Total Number of Infants and Toddlers	Estimated Number of Infants and Toddlers with All Parents in Workforce	Number of Infants and Toddlers Centers are Willing To Serve	Number of Infants and Toddlers Centers Typically Serve	Percent of Slots Typically Available for Infants and Toddlers	Number of Centers Participating in GNJK (NJ's Quality Rating Improvement System)	Number of Centers Rated by GNJK
Caldwell Boro	2	241	177	60	54	31%	0	0
City Of Orange	6	1,405	1,030	192	151	15%	3	1
Cranford	3	793	580	148	123	21%	0	0
East Orange	17	2,682	1,966	599	447	23%	6	1
Essex Fells	0	48	35	0	0	0%	0	0
Garwood	0	140	102	0	0	0%	0	0
Hillside	3	698	511	127	82	16%	2	0
Irvington	22	2,655	1,946	766	614	32%	6	0
Jersey City	86	12,948	8,610	2,908	2,352	27%	16	4
Kenilworth	1	232	170	82	82	80%	0	0
Linden	1	1,344	984	16	13	1%	0	0
Montclair Twp. (including Upper Montclair)	8	1,054	773	348	209	27%	4	0
Newark	53	12,112	8,878	1,881	1,632	18%	28	10
Roselle	6	790	578	178	139	24%	1	0
Roselle Park	1	421	308	28	23	7%	0	0
Union Twp. (including Vauxhall)	5	1,638	1,199	309	228	19%	2	1
Verona	1	423	310	33	28	9%	0	0
West Orange	9	1,483	1,087	416	344	32%	1	0
All Municipalities	224	41,107	29,245	8,091	6,521	22%	69	17

Number of municipalities in the district that are infant-toddler child care deserts: 9/50%

*An infant-toddler desert is any municipality with more than 50 children under age 3 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there is less than 20% of available slots for infants-toddlers that are likely to need child care because all parents in the home are employed.

"Pay is low, hard to find qualified staff." Jersey City Center Director

"We have a waiting list but not enough staff to open new rooms." - East Orange Center Director

"Hard to find qualified/consistent staff and hard to meet requested salary of qualified teachers." Irvington Center Director

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