

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

- Develop creative policy and legislative options aimed at increasing compensation and benefits for child care staff.
- Ensure the successful implementation of Thriving by Three, a grant program signed into law in 2022 to incentivize the development of child care programs for infants and toddlers.
- Raise the infant-toddler child care subsidy reimbursement rate to enable child care programs to increase salaries that will help to attract and retain staff to work in the infant-toddler classroom.
- Consider new options to strengthen and expand New Jersey's family child care system.

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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NJ Legislative District 12 Infant-Toddler Child Care

NJ Legislative District 12 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 and Improvement System)	Number of Centers Rated by GNJK
Allentown Boro	2	59	39	101	76	211%	1	0
Englishtown Boro	0	53	35	0	0	0%	0	0
Helmetta Boro	0	86	53	0	0	0%	0	0
Jackson Twp.	9	1,966	1,119	286	283	25%	4	1
Manalapan Twp.	6	834	554	299	251	45%	1	0
Matawan Boro	4	335	222	270	210	95%	1	0
Millstone Twp.	0	198	131	0	0	0%	0	0
North Hanover Twp.	0	312	224	0	0	0%	0	0
Old Bridge Twp. (including Laurence Harbor and Parlin)	12	1,749	1,081	474	389	36%	4	0
Plumsted Twp.	0	196	112	0	0	0%	0	0
Roosevelt Boro	0	18	12	0	0	0%	0	0
Spotswood Boro	1	196	121	49	23	19%	0	0
Upper Freehold Twp. (including Cream Ridge)	0	142	94	0	0	0%	0	0
All Municipalities	34	6,144	3,798	1,479	1,232	32%	11	1

Infant-Toddler Child Care Deserts *

Number of municipalities in the district that are infant-toddler child care deserts: 8

Percent of district that is a child care desert: 61%

*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.

“How can quality care be provided without being able get qualified staff? People are leaving the industry and one is willing to learn and train with the pay centers are able to afford.” - Jackson Child Care Center Director

“We are having trouble finding staff. There are families interested in enrolling but there is not enough staff to take care of them.” Old Bridge Child Care Center Director

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