

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 21 Infant-Toddler Child Care

NJ Legislative District 21 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
Berkeley Heights Twp.	1	309	226	78	65	29%	0	0
Bernards Twp. (inc Basking Ridge and Liberty Corner)	13	481	325	605	437	134%	1	1
Bernardsville Boro	1	229	155	26	10	6%	0	0
Chatham Boro	4	259	186	141	118	63%	1	0
Chatham Twp.	0	215	154	0	0	0%	0	0
Dunellen Boro	3	283	175	63	46	26%	0	0
Far Hills Boro	0	16	11	0	0	0%	0	0
Garwood Boro	0	140	102	0	0	0%	0	0
Green Brook Twp.	2	176	119	50	42	35%	0	0
Long Hill Twp.(inc Stirling)	3	256	184	138	118	64%	2	1
Middlesex Boro	4	485	300	175	88	29%	2	0
Mountainside Boro	1	171	125	76	76	61%	0	0
New Providence	2	345	253	80	67	26%	0	0
Peapack Gladstone	1	62	42	24	20	48%	0	0
Springfield Twp.	3	549	402	141	121	30%	0	0
Summit City	5	708	518	337	265	51%	1	0
Warren Twp.	7	318	215	259	214	100%	0	0
Watchung Boro	0	129	87	0	0	0%	0	0
Westfield Twp.	12	782	572	517	446	78%	1	0
All Municipalities	62	5,913	4,149	2,710	2,133	51%	8	2

Infant-Toddler Child Care Deserts *

Number of municipalities in the district that are infant-toddler child care deserts: 2

Percent of district that is a child care desert: 20%

*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.

"Staffing is our biggest issue and even those hired are not qualified, not quality staff. Biggest waitlist for infants and toddlers - could serve many more but don't have the staff." - Summit Child Care Center Director

"Staffing is a MAJOR issue since COVID." - Lawrenceville Child Care Center Director

"Finding and keeping qualified staff is extremely difficult." - Chatham Township Center Director

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