

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

Advocates for Children of New Jersey | 35 Halsey Street | Newark, NJ 07102 | 973.643.3876 | advocates@acnj.org



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NJ Legislative District 37 Infant-Toddler Child Care

Legislative District #37: 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 |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Bogota | 0 | 230 | 152 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 |
| Englewood | 6 | 1,034 | 683 | 123 | 106 | 16% | 1 | 1 |
| Englewood Cliffs | 2 | 83 | 55 | 121 | 141 | 256% | 0 | 0 |
| Fort Lee | 5 | 1,024 | 677 | 115 | 82 | 12% | 0 | 0 |
| Hackensack | 8 | 1,616 | 1,068 | 357 | 326 | 31% | 1 | 0 |
| Leonia | 2 | 198 | 131 | 74 | 42 | 32% | 0 | 0 |
| Palisades Park | 5 | 687 | 454 | 111 | 85 | 19% | 0 | 0 |
| Ridgefield | 2 | 312 | 206 | 97 | 81 | 39% | 1 | 1 |
| Teaneck Twp. | 6 | 1,259 | 832 | 183 | 157 | 19% | 0 | 0 |
| Tenafly Boro | 3 | 194 | 128 | 195 | 175 | 137% | 0 | 0 |
| All Municipalities | 39 | 6,637 | 4,387 | 1,376 | 1,195 | 27% | 3 | 2 |

Infant-Toddler Child Care Deserts *

Number of municipalities in the district that are infant-toddler child care deserts: 5

Percent of district that is a child care desert: 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.

*"We cannot find anyone willing to work at \$14 an hour."
Leonia Child Care Center Director*

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