

# 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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 Mercer County As of March 2022

Number of Licensed Centers that Provide Infant Toddler Child Care	69
Number of Children Under Age 3	11,884
Children Under Age 3 Likely to Need Child Care Because All Parents Work	8,224
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers are Willing To Provide	2,883
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers Typically Provide	2,286
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Participating in Grow NJ Kids	13
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Rated by Grow NJ Kids	5

## 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](http://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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## Still No Room for Babies:

### Child Care Staffing Crisis Impacts Supply of Infant-Toddler Child Care

# Mercer County Infant-Toddler Child Care

Staffing is a crisis. We can't take more infants and toddlers until we can hire more staff.

-Mercer County Child Care Provider

### Infant-Toddler Child Care by Municipality, As of March 2022

Municipality	Number of Children Under Age 3	Estimated Number of Infants-Toddlers in Need of Care	Number of Centers Serving Infants and Toddlers	Number of Infants-Toddlers Centers are Willing to Serve	Number of Infants-Toddlers Centers Typically Serve	Percent of Slots Typically Available for Infants and Toddlers
East Windsor Twp.	909	629	4	197	161	26%
Ewing Twp.	938	649	8	242	188	29%
Hamilton Twp.	2,834	1,961	15	568	431	22%
Hightstown Boro	188	130	1	17	15	12%
Hopewell Twp. and Boro (including Titusville)	375	260	1	72	60	23%
Lawrence Twp. (including Lawrenceville)	868	601	10	430	334	56%
Pennington Boro	56	39	3	165	137	351%
Princeton Boro and Twp.	506	350	8	405	375	107%
Robbinsville Twp.	339	235	6	260	221	94%
Trenton City	4,339	3,003	9	350	221	7%
West Windsor Twp. (including Princeton Junction)	532	368	4	177	143	39%
<b>County Total</b>	<b>11,884</b>	<b>8,224</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>2,883</b>	<b>2,286</b>	<b>28%</b>

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