

# 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 Middlesex County As of March 2022

Number of Licensed Centers that Provide Infant Toddler Child Care	129
Number of Children Under Age 3	26,054
Children Under Age 3 Likely to Need Child Care Because All Parents Work	16,101
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers are Willing To Provide	5,138
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers Typically Provide	3,982
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Participating in Grow NJ Kids	40
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Rated by Grow NJ Kids	13

## 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

# Middlesex County Infant-Toddler Child Care

Our most difficult challenge is finding high quality staff to be able to open the classrooms and fill the open spaces

-Middlesex 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
Carteret Boro	969	599	2	52	49	8%
Cranbury Twp.	89	55	2	36	27	49%
Dunellen Boro	283	175	3	63	46	26%
East Brunswick Twp.	1,214	750	12	551	503	67%
Edison Twp.	3,198	1,976	16	670	523	26%
Helmetta Boro	86	53	0	0	0	0%
Highland Park Boro	485	300	3	88	78	26%
Jamesburg Boro	191	118	2	48	43	36%
Metuchen Boro	443	274	7	266	213	78%
Middlesex Boro	485	300	4	175	88	29%
Milltown Boro	220	136	1	14	8	6%
Monroe Twp.	642	397	2	106	81	20%
New Brunswick City	2,109	1,303	6	205	144	11%
North Brunswick Twp.	1,533	947	12	475	339	36%
Old Bridge Twp. (Laurence Harbor and Parlin)	1,749	1,081	12	474	389	36%
Perth Amboy City	2,370	1,465	4	70	63	4%
Piscataway Twp.	1,758	1,086	9	370	259	24%
Plainsboro Twp.	608	376	3	165	136	36%
Sayreville Boro	1,440	890	2	135	126	9%
South Amboy City	310	192	1	26	22	11%
South Brunswick Twp. (Dayton, Kendall Park, and Monmouth Junction)	941	582	10	416	275	47%
South Plainfield Boro	834	515	2	70	59	11%
South River Boro	519	321	1	62	65	20%
Spotswood Boro	196	121	1	49	23	19%
Woodbridge Twp. (Avenel, Colonia, Iselin, Port Reading, Sewaren, and South Iselin)	3,382	2,090	12	552	423	20%
<b>Total County</b>	<b>26,054</b>	<b>16,101</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>5,138</b>	<b>3,982</b>	<b>25%</b>

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