

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 Somerset County As of March 2022

Number of Licensed Centers that Provide Infant Toddler Child Care	86
Number of Children Under Age 3	9,327
Children Under Age 3 Likely to Need Child Care Because All Parents Work	6,296
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers are Willing To Provide	3,712
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers Typically Provide	2,768
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Participating in Grow NJ Kids	14
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Rated by Grow NJ Kids	6

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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Somerset County Infant-Toddler Child Care

The biggest challenge is how much to charge for infant/toddler care, finding staff to manage the room, being able to pay staff enough (a decent living wage) and be a cost effective program.

-Somerset 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
Bernardsville Boro	229	155	1	26	10	6%
Bound Brook Boro	451	304	0	0	0	0%
Branchburg Twp. (North Branch)	349	236	5	190	181	77%
Bridgewater Twp.	1,124	759	7	346	296	39%
Far Hills Boro	16	11	0	0	0	0%
Franklin Twp. (Franklin Park and Somerset)	2,225	1,502	20	728	530	35%
Green Brook Twp.	176	119	2	50	42	35%
Hillsborough Twp.	977	659	14	760	517	78%
Manville Boro	329	222	1	22	19	9%
Millstone Boro	8	5	0	0	0	0%
Montgomery Twp. (Belle Mead and Skillman)	409	276	5	310	182	66%
North Plainfield Boro	936	632	4	155	137	22%
Peapack Gladstone Boro	62	42	1	24	20	48%
Raritan Boro	252	170	3	147	115	68%
Rocky Hill Boro	17	11	0	0	0	0%
Somerville Boro	424	286	2	38	30	10%
South Bound Brook Boro	189	128	0	0	0	0%
Warren Twp.	318	215	7	259	214	100%
Watchung Boro	129	87	0	0	0	0%
County Total	9,327	6,296	86	3,712	2,768	44%

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