

Still No Room for Babies: Child Care Staffing Crisis Impacts Supply of Infant-Toddler Child Care

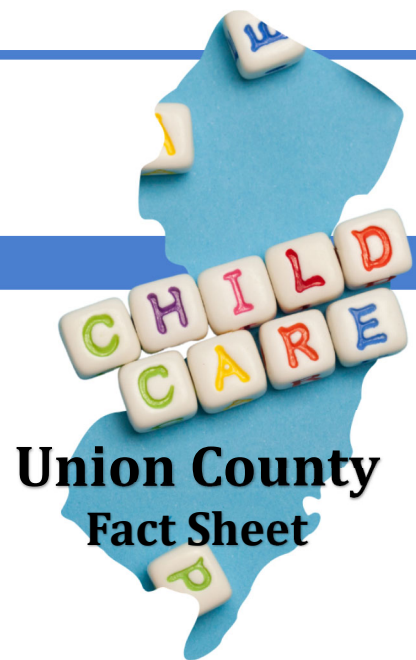
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Having access to a robust supply of high-quality licensed child care near their home or workplace is an essential support for working parents. Licensed child care programs not only offer parents a safe and reliable child care option while they work, 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 Union County As of March 2022

Number of Licensed Centers that Provide Infant Toddler Child Care	80
Number of Children Under Age 3	19,721
Children Under Age 3 Likely to Need Child Care Because All Parents Work	14,436
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers are Willing To Provide	3,619
Estimated Number of Slots Licensed Centers Typically Provide	2,923
Number of Centers Providing Infant-Toddler Child Care Participating in Grow NJ Kids	7
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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Union County Infant-Toddler Child Care

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
Berkeley Heights Twp.	309	226	1	78	65	29%
Clark Twp.	424	310	3	160	142	46%
Cranford Twp.	793	580	3	148	123	21%
Elizabeth City	5,615	4,110	5	143	99	2%
Fanwood Boro	249	182	3	158	132	73%
Garwood Boro	140	102	0	0	0	0%
Hillside Twp.	698	511	3	127	82	16%
Kenilworth Boro	232	170	1	82	82	80%
Linden City	1,344	984	1	16	13	1%
Mountainside Boro	171	125	1	76	76	61%
New Providence Boro	345	253	2	80	67	26%
Plainfield City	2,752	2,014	15	537	426	21%
Rahway City	971	711	6	248	195	27%
Roselle Boro	790	578	6	178	139	24%
Roselle Park Boro	421	308	1	28	23	7%
Scotch Plains Twp.	752	550	3	236	187	34%
Springfield Twp.	549	402	3	141	121	30%
Summit City	708	518	5	337	265	51%
Union Twp. (including Vauxhall)	1,638	1,199	5	309	228	19%
Westfield Twp.	782	572	12	517	446	78%
Winfield Twp.	38	28	1	20	12	42%
All Municipalities	19,721	14,436	80	3,619	2,923	20%

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