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CONTACT: Karen Sampson
Director of Data and Evaluation
253-533-6808

Marcia Jacobs
Communications & Marketing Mgr.
253-533-6794
253-905-9271 (cell)

**CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON RELEASES CHILD CARE DATA FOR EVERY COUNTY IN STATE –
CHILD CARE CAPACITY RECOVERY UNEVEN ACROSS WASHINGTON**

TACOMA, WA – Aug. 14, 2018 – Child Care Aware of Washington’s newest data show that while statewide child care capacity is nearing pre-Great Recession levels, the recovery has not been even across the state. Twenty of Washington’s 39 counties still have less licensed child care capacity than they did five years ago, reducing access to child care for families in many regions of the state. **Of the 20 counties with lower capacity, more than half experienced double-digit declines.** With approximately 60% of all Washington’s children under age six living in families where all adults work, declines in licensed child care capacity can negatively impact our state’s economy. Reduced child care capacity has been linked to decreasing rates of maternal employment, reduced choice for families seeking child care, and increased reliance on other forms of child care, including a reliance on unlicensed child care, which can sometimes be unsafe for infants, toddlers and young children.

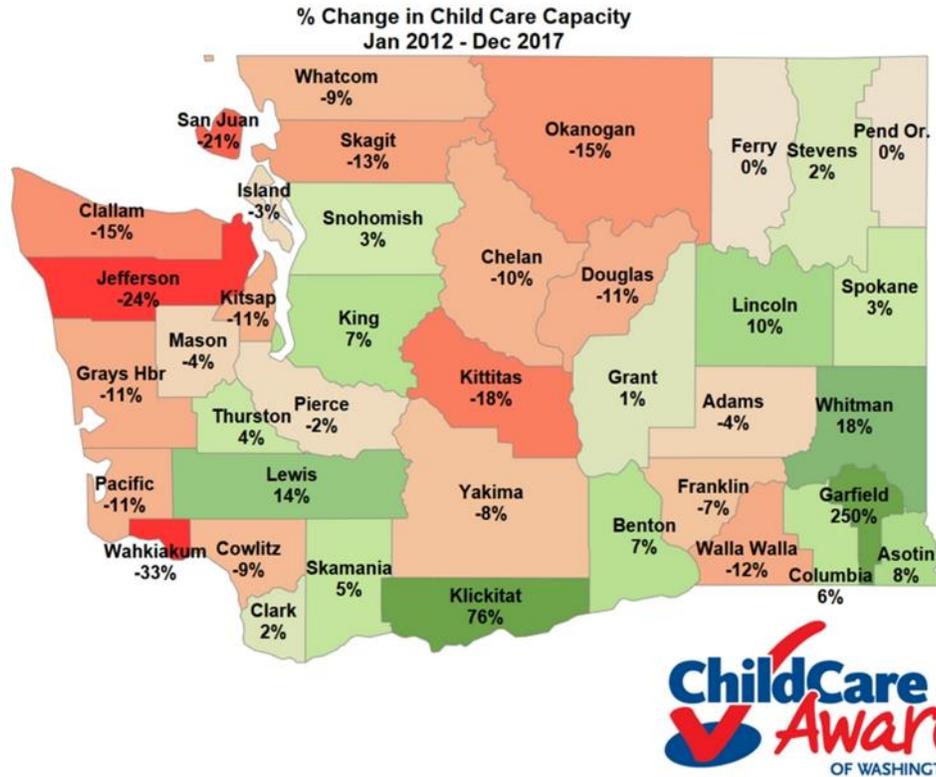
“It’s clear that communities benefit in multiple ways when there is high-quality child care available to all families seeking care. Several areas of our state would benefit from increased licensed child care capacity,” said Robin Lester, Chief Executive Officer at Child Care Aware of Washington.

Child Care Aware of Washington’s [“2017 Data Report: Trends, Child Care Supply, Cost of Care & Demand for Referrals”](#) shows the six counties with the biggest child care capacity declines from 2012 to 2017 were Wahkiakum, Jefferson, San Juan, Kittitas, Okanogan and Clallam Counties, each showing a decline of between 15 and 33 percent. Smaller counties tend to have more volatility in their capacity because the opening or closing

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of one child care program can have a big impact on the availability of care.



Although, Washington’s child care capacity was 1% higher at the end of 2017 compared to 2012, much of the growth was concentrated in high-population counties, offsetting many smaller counties that have seen declines in child care capacity. Additionally, the estimated number of children under age 10 living in Washington increased more than 5% during the same period.

Washington’s licensed child care system is a key component of our state’s economy. Right now, the system is in crisis with child care supply dwindling in many areas, family costs for care surpassing the cost of annual tuition at state colleges, and child care professionals continuing to be underpaid to the point where they must rely on public assistance.

Washington ranks 3rd in the nation for least affordable child care for an infant in a family child care program, and 7th least affordable for care of an infant in a child care center. Our state also ranks 4th in the nation for least

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affordable care of a toddler in a family child care program and 7th for care of a toddler in a center. This is the 5th year in a row Washington has ranked among the top 10 least affordable states for child care, according to the 2017 "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care Report" from Child Care Aware of America. This means the average cost to have an infant in a child care center consumes 15.4% of the median income for a married couple and a daunting 51.5% of the median income for a single mother.

Solving Washington's child care crisis requires increased public, business and philanthropic investment in child care and early learning programs. Child Care Aware of Washington advocates for increased investment at both the state and federal levels. In addition to working to continuously improve child care throughout Washington we also work with child care providers to help them manage the business side of their programs with our online shared business services portal [Washington Child Care Business Edge](#).

Child Care Aware of Washington tracks child care supply, demand and costs statewide and in **every county**. Our data reports are available here: <http://www.childcarenet.org/about-us/data/>. They provide an important glimpse into the state of child care in Washington, and include demographic information about each county, such as the percentage of children living in poverty, child care workforce wages and the average cost of child care.

Child Care Aware of Washington is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to connecting families to local, high-quality, licensed child care and early learning programs, and to supporting providers who deliver high-quality care. As a statewide network of six regional agencies, we work side-by-side with child care providers, offering professional development services and higher education scholarships to help them integrate research-based, best practices into their programs. We are committed to ensuring that each and every child in Washington has access to the quality care and early learning they need to succeed in school and life. For more information, please visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org> and follow us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/> and on Twitter @childcarewa.

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