



Child Care in Whatcom County



March 2023

In most parts of Washington, the number of child care providers declined from 2008-2013, becoming more stable from 2014-2020 although still in decline at a lesser rate. Capacity for children declined from 2008-2013, however due to more family child care closures than center-based care, capacity has risen from 2014-2019. Since the pandemic there has been a net loss of nearly 150 providers and around 1,500 slots. This decline has disproportionately impacted communities based on location. In the net loss of providers, nearly 40% are center-based, representing 60% of the capacity lost.

Child Care Aware of Washington

Child Care Aware of Washington provides thorough and independent information and support:

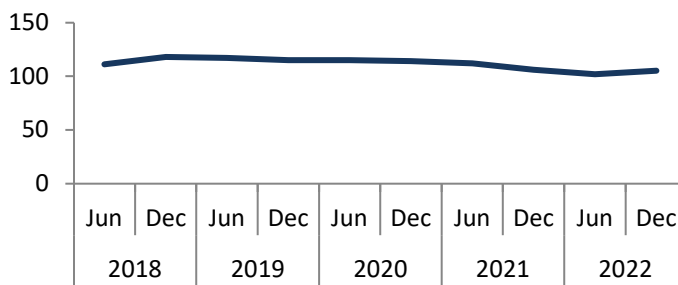
- For families seeking quality child care
- For child care programs seeking to improve quality
 - For effective policymaking

Since 1989, our regional member programs and statewide Family Center have enhanced the quality of child care and helped families by:

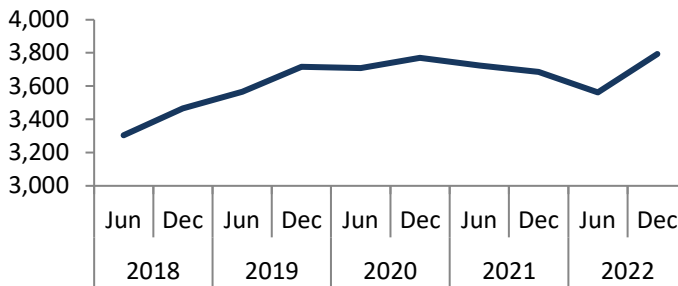
- Delivering training, technical assistance, & consultation to child care providers
- Supplying families with consumer education & referrals for child care

In Whatcom County, the number of child care providers has dropped from 111 with capacity for 3,305 children in 2018, to 105 providers with capacity for 3,793 children in December of 2022.*

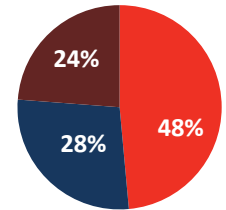
Number of Child Care Providers



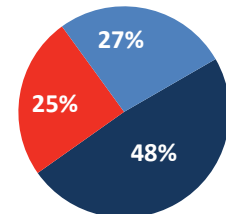
Total Child Care Capacity



Child Care Provider Type



State Subsidy



- Accept all ages
- Do not accept
- Accept school age only

Early Achievers

Early Achievers is Washington's **Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS)**, which gives training, technical assistance, coaching, awards, scholarships, and other benefits to child care providers **to improve the quality of their care.**

Statewide, 4,225 child care providers participate in Early Achievers.

Approximately 69% of licensed child care providers in Whatcom County are enrolled in Early Achievers. Early Achievers provides families with valuable child care program quality information so they can make informed child care choices.

Early Achievers (QRIS) Participation

Total	74
Child Care Centers	34
Family Child Care	21
Head Start & State Preschool Sites	19

Enrollment as of 1/5/2023

Whatcom County

is served locally by
Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington
a program of
The Opportunity Council
1201 Cornwall Ave
<https://www.ccanorthwest.org/>
888.444.1862 x1227

Demographics

Population¹

Total Population in 2020	228,000
Change since 2015	18,210
Children under 5 yrs	11,258
Children under 15 yrs	38,556
K-12 Enrollment ²	26,958
Pre-K-5th Enrollment ²	12,426

Economics

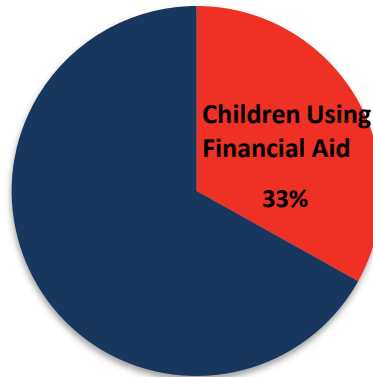
% of children under 18 living in poverty ³	15.3%
% of children under 6 w/ all parents working ⁴	56.2 to 63.4%
Median Household Income ¹	\$70,463
Unemployment Rate ⁵	4.8%

Helping Families Find Child Care in 2022

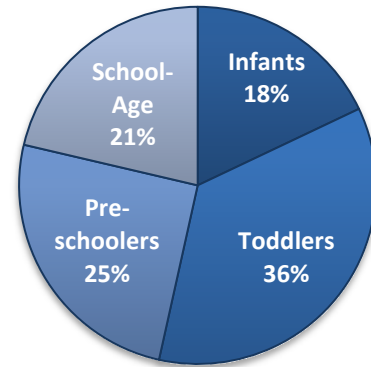
In 2022, Child Care Aware of Washington programs helped 13,579 families find child care providers matching their unique needs.

In Whatcom County alone, we helped 476 families with 592 children in need of child care to search for matching providers 645 times.

Children Using Subsidies



Referral Demand by Child Age



Compensation in 2022

Comparison of Average Annual Salary/Income ⁶	
Child Care Center Teacher	\$36,252
Child Care Center Director	\$40,035
Family Child Care Provider	\$36,079
K-12 Teacher (Statewide) ⁷	\$86,889

Monthly Cost of Child Care in 2022

Centers	Median Cost	75th Percentile Cost	State Subsidy Rate	Median Cost as a % of Median Income
Infant	\$1,671	\$1,727	\$1,919	28%
Toddler	\$1,517	\$1,678	\$1,719	26%
Preschool	\$1,300	\$1,441	\$1,449	22%
School Age	\$390	\$661	\$1,097	7%

Family Child Care	Median Cost	75th Percentile Cost	State Subsidy Rate	Median Cost as a % of Median Income
Infant	\$1,210	\$1,300	\$1,192	21%
Toddler	\$1,082	\$1,229	\$1,059	18%
Preschool	\$1,020	\$1,129	\$1,040	17%
School Age	\$399	\$399	\$867	7%

Contact Child Care Aware of Washington

1001 Pacific Avenue Suite 400
Tacoma, WA 98402
253.383.1735

Data Sources:

Most data is from Child Care Aware of Washington. More data and full citations are available at <https://www.childcareawarewa.org>.

*Includes licensed child care (centers and family child care) and exempt school-age programs only

¹ Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2022

² Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Report Card Enrollment, 2021-2022

³ U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2021

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2021

⁵ Washington State Employment Security Department; U.S. BLS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2022 (not seasonally-adjusted)

⁶ Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies, Cost of Quality Survey, 2022

Note: Child care provider income is regional data, not county-specific. Whatcom County is in Northwest Washington which includes: Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom.

⁷ Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Historical Comparison of Statewide School District Personnel, 2022-23