

Child Care in Pierce County



March 2024

Statewide during the past 12 years, Washington has gained over 20,000 slots and decreased by 2,000 providers. The increases in capacity are a result of more family child care closures and larger centers opening. Since 2022, Washington has seen an increase of 500 family child care programs and 70 centers. Current gains in providers are encouraging, however we have significantly less providers than 12 years ago. The trend of less providers and more capacity being available at large centers has contributed to child care deserts, as the number of child care locations has decreased. Moreover, communities across the state have experienced differential outcomes in child care availability as some areas experienced greater child care decreases and in some cases lowered capacity.

Child Care Aware of Washington

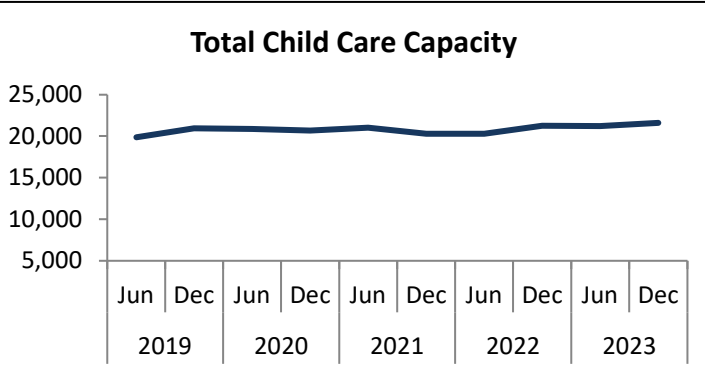
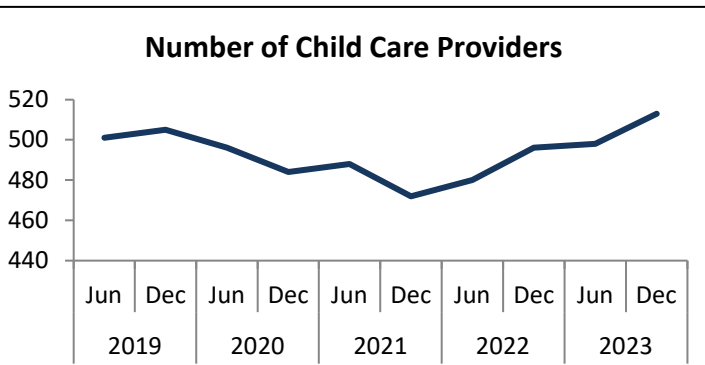
Child Care Aware of Washington provides thorough and independent information and support:

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

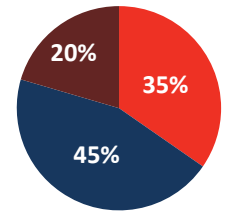
Since 1989, our regional member programs and statewide Family Center have enhanced the quality of child care and helped families by:

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

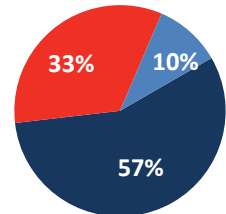
In Pierce County, the number of child care providers has increased from 501 with capacity for 19,868 children in 2019, to 513 providers with capacity for 21,606 children in December of 2023.*



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, 4,628 child care providers participate in Early Achievers.

Approximately 68% of licensed child care providers in Pierce 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	385
Child Care Centers	144
Family Child Care	175
Head Start & State Preschool Sites	66

Enrollment as of 3/24/2024

Pierce County

is served locally by
Child Care Aware of Tacoma-Pierce County
a program of
BrightSpark
1501 Pacific Ave. Ste. 305
<http://www.brightspark.org>
253.272.8000

Demographics

Population¹

Total Population in 2020	900,700
Change since 2015	70,580
Children under 5 yrs	60,030
Children under 15 yrs	182,109
K-12 Enrollment ²	134,040
Pre-K-5th Enrollment ²	64,870

Economics

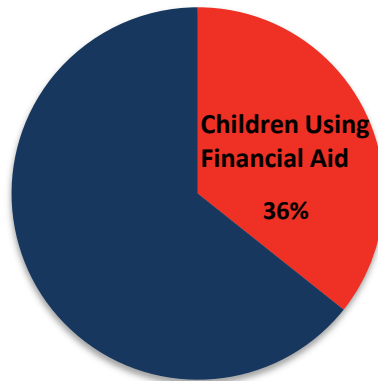
% of children under 18 living in poverty ³	10.1%
% of children under 6 w/ all parents working ⁴	67.3 to 72.7%
Median Household Income ¹	\$85,492
Unemployment Rate ⁵	5.5%

Helping Families Find Child Care in 2023

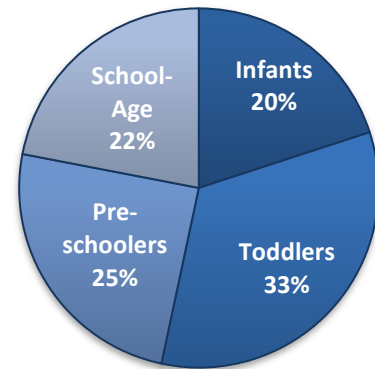
In 2023, Child Care Aware of Washington programs have helped 12,199 families find child care providers matching their unique needs.

In Pierce County alone, we helped 2127 families with 2823 children in need of child care to search for matching providers 3010 times.

Children Using Subsidies



Referral Demand by Child Age



Compensation in 2022

Comparison of Average Annual Salary/Income ⁶	
Child Care Center Teacher	\$37,261
Child Care Center Director	\$40,569
Family Child Care Provider	\$42,462
K-12 Teacher (Statewide) ⁷	\$91,982

Monthly Cost of Child Care in 2023

Centers	Median Cost	75th Percentile Cost	State Subsidy Rate	Median Cost as a % of Median Income
Infant	\$1,600	\$1,776	\$1,572	22%
Toddler	\$1,400	\$1,524	\$1,387	20%
Preschool	\$1,213	\$1,390	\$1,208	17%
School Age	\$442	\$607	\$1,174	6%

Family Child Care	Median Cost	75th Percentile Cost	State Subsidy Rate	Median Cost as a % of Median Income
Infant	\$1,138	\$1,408	\$1,280	16%
Toddler	\$1,083	\$1,400	\$1,280	15%
Preschool	\$975	\$1,223	\$1,067	14%
School Age	\$520	\$650	\$960	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, 2023-2024

³ U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2022

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2022

⁵ Washington State Employment Security Department; U.S. BLS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2023 (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. Pierce County is in King/Pierce which includes: King, Pierce.

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

For more information, go to <https://www.childcareawarewa.org>