

Child Care in Whatcom 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

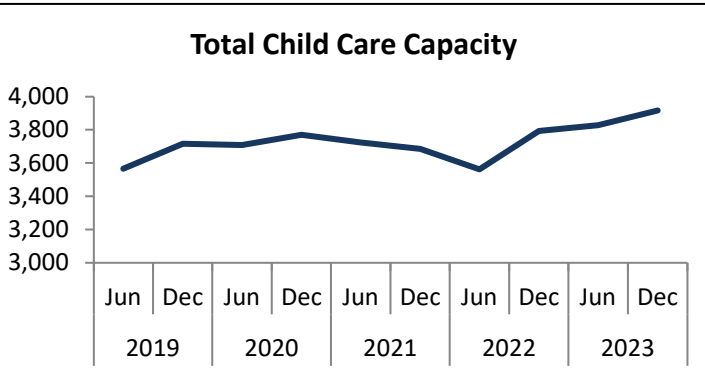
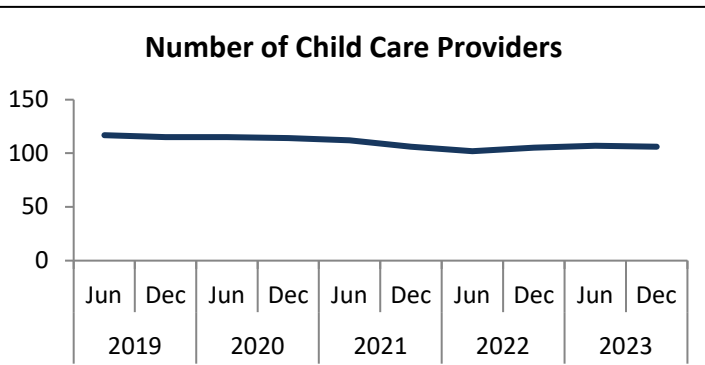
Child Care Aware of Washington provides thorough and independent information and support:

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

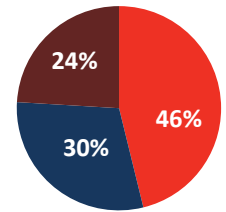
Since 1989, our regional member programs and statewide Family Center have enhanced the quality of child care and helped families by:

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

In Whatcom County, the number of child care providers has dropped from 117 with capacity for 3,566 children in 2019, to 106 providers with capacity for 3,918 children in December of 2023.*

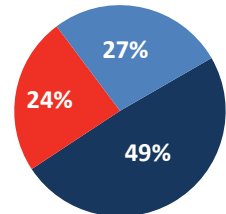


Child Care Provider Type



- Centers
- Family Child Care
- School Age Only

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 65% 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 | 23 |
| Head Start & State Preschool Sites | 17 |

Enrollment as of 3/24/2024

Whatcom County

is served locally by
Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington

a program of
The Opportunity Council

1201 Cornwall Ave. Ste. 201

<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 | 27,504 |
| Pre-K-5th Enrollment ² | 12,799 |

Economics

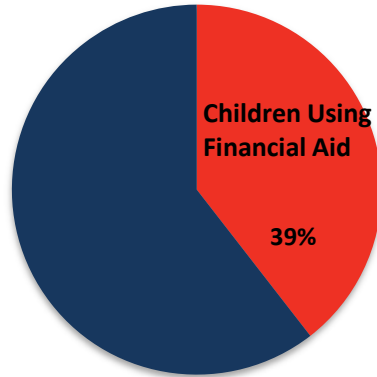
| | |
|---|---------------|
| % of children under 18 living in poverty ³ | 11.2% |
| % of children under 6 w/ all parents working ⁴ | 72.4 to 78.2% |
| Median Household Income ¹ | \$71,739 |
| Unemployment Rate ⁵ | 5.1% |

Helping Families Find Child Care in 2023

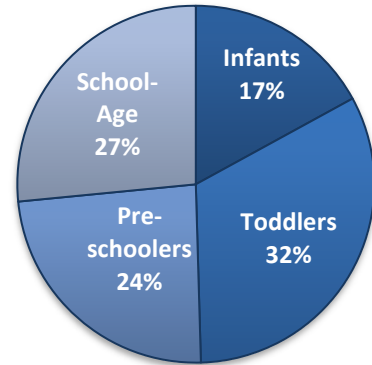
In 2023, Child Care Aware of Washington programs have helped 12,199 families find child care providers matching their unique needs.

In Whatcom County alone, we helped 334 families with 438 children in need of child care to search for matching providers 411 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 | \$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 | \$1,693 | \$1,729 | \$1,919 | 28% |
| Toddler | \$1,642 | \$1,712 | \$1,741 | 27% |
| Preschool | \$1,427 | \$1,484 | \$1,571 | 24% |
| School Age | \$350 | \$607 | \$1,418 | 6% |

| Family Child Care | Median Cost | 75th Percentile Cost | State Subsidy Rate | Median Cost as a % of Median Income |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Infant | \$1,300 | \$1,417 | \$1,408 | 22% |
| Toddler | \$1,210 | \$1,312 | \$1,280 | 20% |
| Preschool | \$1,124 | \$1,274 | \$1,174 | 19% |
| School Age | No Rates Available | No Rates Available | \$1,067 | N/A |

Contact Child Care Aware of Washington

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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. 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