

Child Care in Cowlitz County



September 2024

Since 2012, Washington has gained over 24,000 slots and decreased by over 1,400 licensed 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 over 500 family child care programs and 80 centers. While these current gains in providers are encouraging, Washington still has significantly fewer providers than it did 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. Additionally, communities across the state have experienced varied outcomes in child care availability, with some areas seeing greater decreases in child care options and reduced capacity.

Child Care Aware of Washington

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

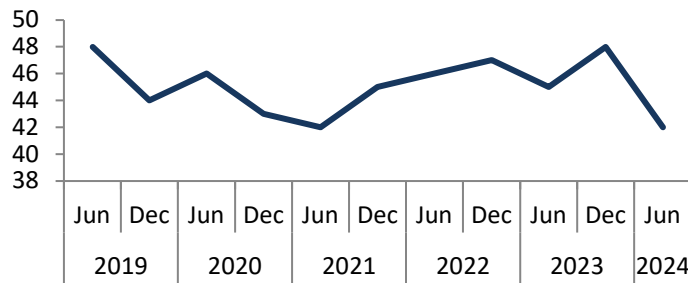
- For families seeking quality child care
- For child care programs seeking to improve quality
- For effective policymaking

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

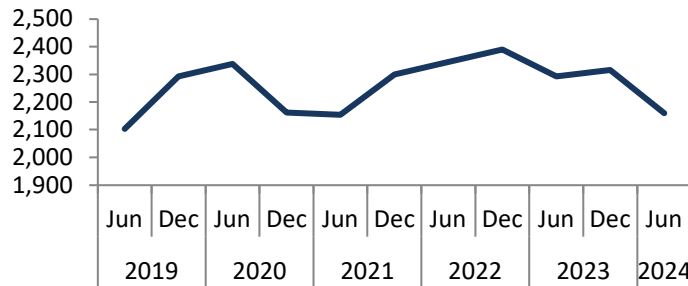
- Delivering training, technical assistance, & consultation to child care providers
- Supplying families with consumer education & referrals for child care

In Cowlitz County, the number of child care providers has dropped from 48 with capacity for 2,103 children in 2019, to 42 providers with capacity for 2,159 children in June of 2024.*

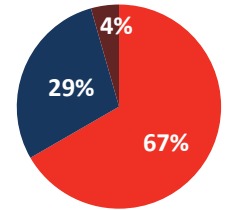
Number of Child Care Providers



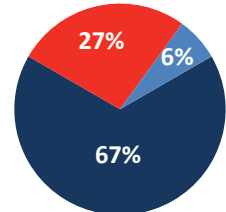
Total Child Care Capacity



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 offers training, technical assistance, coaching, mental health consultation, awards, scholarships, and other benefits to child care providers **to improve the quality of their care.**

Statewide, 4,811 child care providers participate in Early Achievers.

Approximately 77% of licensed child care providers in Cowlitz 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	46
Child Care Centers	22
Family Child Care	11
Head Start & State Preschool Sites	13

Enrollment as of 8/6/2024

Cowlitz County

is served locally by **Child Care Aware of Southwest Washington** a program of Educational Service District 112
2500 NE 65th Ave.
www.esd112.org/ece/
877.414.0071

Demographics

Population¹

Total Population in 2023	113,000
Change since 2015	8,720
Children under 5 yrs	6,363
Children under 15 yrs	20,239
K-12 Enrollment ²	16,812
Pre-K-5th Enrollment ²	7,931

Economics

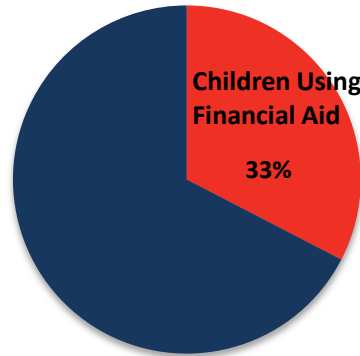
% of children under 18 living in poverty ³	16.5%
% of children under 6 w/ all parents working ⁴	52.9 to 58.1%
Median Household Income ¹	\$71,847
Unemployment Rate ⁵	5.1%

Helping Families Find Child Care in 2024

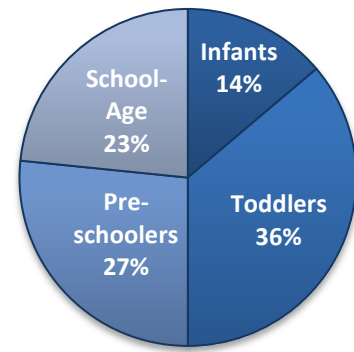
In 2024 so far, Child Care Aware of Washington programs have helped 7,065 families find child care providers matching their unique needs.

In Cowlitz County alone, we helped 69 families with 92 children in need of child care to search for matching providers 112 times.

Children Using Subsidies



Referral Demand by Child Age



Compensation in 2022

Comparison of Average Annual Salary/Income ⁶	
Child Care Center Teacher	\$33,210
Child Care Center Director	\$37,503
Family Child Care Provider	\$34,427
K-12 Teacher (Statewide) ⁷	\$91,982

Contact Child Care Aware of Washington

1001 Pacific Avenue Suite 400
Tacoma, WA 98402
253.383.1735

Monthly Cost of Child Care in 2024

Centers	Median Cost	75th Percentile Cost	State Subsidy Rate	Median Cost as a % of Median Income
Infant	\$1,343	\$1,347	\$1,668	22%
Toddler	\$1,181	\$1,273	\$1,463	20%
Preschool	\$1,050	\$1,105	\$1,251	18%
School Age	\$477	\$639	\$1,088	8%

Family Child Care	Median Cost	75th Percentile Cost	State Subsidy Rate	Median Cost as a % of Median Income
Infant	\$1,020	\$1,072	\$1,280	17%
Toddler	\$975	\$1,062	\$1,192	16%
Preschool	\$888	\$975	\$1,148	15%
School Age	No Rates Available		\$975	N/A

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. (2023). Small area demographic estimates.

² Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2023-2024). Report card enrollment 2023-2024 school year.

³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Small area income and poverty estimates.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American community survey.

⁵ Washington State Employment Security Department, & U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). Local area unemployment statistics (not seasonally adjusted)

⁶ Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies. (2022). Cost of Quality Survey.

Note: Child care provider income is regional data, not county-specific. Cowlitz County is in Southwest Washington which includes: Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Pacific, Skamania, Wahkiakum.

⁷ Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2023-2024). Historical comparison of statewide school district personnel.

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