

Child Care in Pierce 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

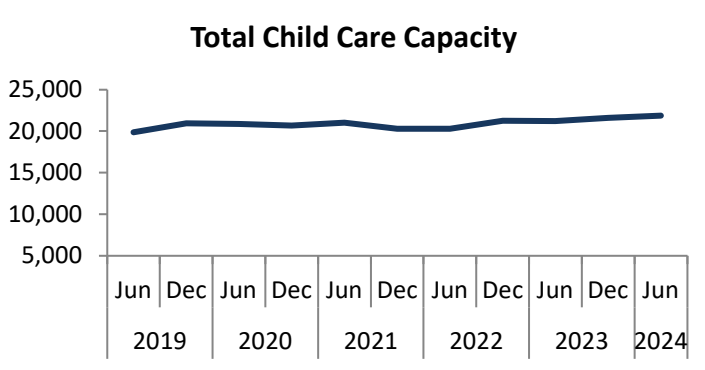
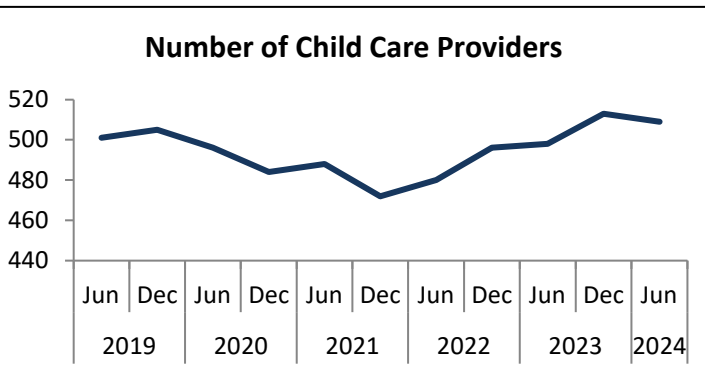
Child Care Aware of Washington provides thorough and independent information and support:

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

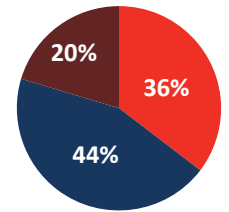
Since 1989, our regional member programs and statewide Family Center have enhanced the quality of child care and helped families by:

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

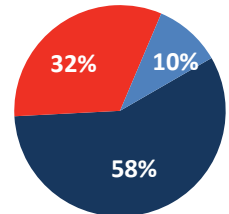
In Pierce County, the number of child care providers has increased from 501 with capacity for 19,868 children in 2019, to 509 providers with capacity for 21,879 children in June of 2024.*



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 80% 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	391
Child Care Centers	146
Family Child Care	178
Head Start & State Preschool Sites	67

Enrollment as of 8/6/2024

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 2023	946,300
Change since 2015	116,180
Children under 5 yrs	56,137
Children under 15 yrs	170,832
K-12 Enrollment ²	134,074
Pre-K-5th Enrollment ²	64,900

Economics

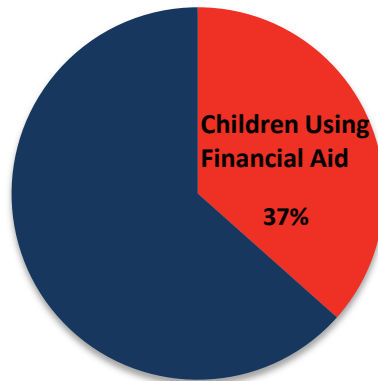
% of children under 18 living in poverty ³	10.1%
% of children under 6 w/ all parents working ⁴	67.3 to 72.7%
Median Household Income ¹	\$92,793
Unemployment Rate ⁵	5.1%

Helping Families Find Child Care in 2024

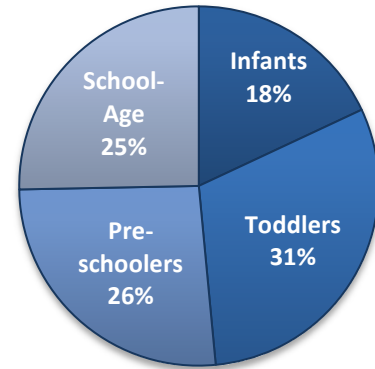
In 2024 so far, Child Care Aware of Washington programs have helped 7,065 families find child care providers matching their unique needs.

In Pierce County alone, we helped 1160 families with 1561 children in need of child care to search for matching providers 1532 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 2024

Centers	Median Cost	75th Percentile Cost	State Subsidy Rate	Median Cost as a % of Median Income
Infant	\$1,600	\$1,776	\$1,572	21%
Toddler	\$1,400	\$1,524	\$1,387	18%
Preschool	\$1,213	\$1,390	\$1,208	16%
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	15%
Toddler	\$1,083	\$1,400	\$1,280	14%
Preschool	\$975	\$1,223	\$1,067	13%
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. (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. Pierce County is in King/Pierce which includes: King, Pierce.

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/>