

Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies

DEFINITION

Children receiving child care subsidies is the number of children receiving child care that is either fully or partially paid for with a child care subsidy through the Rhode Island Department of Human Services' Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Child care subsidies can be used for care in a licensed child care center, a licensed family child care home, or by a license-exempt provider (family, friend, or neighbor).

SIGNIFICANCE

Families rely on child care to enable them to work and to provide the early education experiences needed to prepare their children for school. Yet the high cost of child care puts quality care out of reach for many low-income families. State child care subsidy programs help low-income families access child care.¹

In Rhode Island, the average cost of full-time child care for an infant in a child care center consumes 50% of the median single-parent income and is more than the average tuition at public colleges. For families with two children (an infant and a preschooler) center-based child care costs exceed the average mortgage payment.² Using the federal affordability guideline that families should spend no more than 7% of their income on child care, a Rhode Island family would need to earn at least \$155,757 annually to afford the average

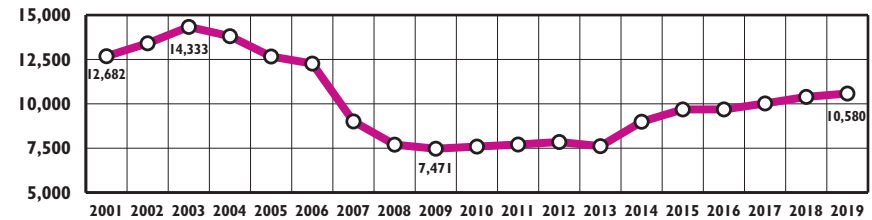
yearly cost for a three-year-old at a licensed center (\$10,903).^{3,4}

Subsidy payment rates for child care providers should meet or exceed the federal benchmark established to ensure low-income families have equal access to high-quality child care that supports children's development and learning. Rhode Island is one of 42 states in the U.S. with tiered quality rates to promote access to higher quality care. Although the state increased rates in 2018 and 2019, rates remain well below the federal equal access standard.^{5,6}

Child care teachers make very low wages yet are responsible for the safety, health, learning, and development of our youngest children.⁷ Experts increasingly recognize that initiatives designed to improve access to high-quality programs must address the low wages of early educators so programs can attract, develop, and retain effective staff. At least 15 states fund wage supplements designed to improve qualifications and retention of child care teachers. Other state strategies to improve child care educator compensation include using contracts that set compensation levels and offering refundable state tax credits for early care and education professionals based on her/his level of education.⁸

In Rhode Island in 2017, the median wage for a child care teacher was \$11.82/hour and was \$14.57 for a preschool teacher.⁹

Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, 2001-2019



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2001–December 2015, September 2016, December 2017–December 2019. Data for December 2016 were not available.

◆ In December 2019, there were 10,580 child care subsidies in Rhode Island, up 2% from December 2018, but down 26% from the 2003 peak. In December 2019 in Rhode Island, 77% of child care subsidies were for care in a licensed child care center, 22% were for care by a licensed family child care home or group family child care home, and 1% were for care by a non-licensed relative, friend, or neighbor.¹⁰

◆ As of December 2019, 16% of children participating in the Rhode Island Child Care Assistance Program were enrolled in programs with high-quality BrightStars ratings (four or five stars), up from 10% in December 2018. Preschool-age children were more likely to be enrolled in a high-quality program (20%) than infants and toddlers (17%) or school-age children (13%).¹¹

◆ In December 2019, 80% of all children receiving child care subsidies were in low-income working families not receiving cash assistance and 12% were in low-income families receiving cash assistance. Another 8% of child care subsidies were used for children in the care of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families.¹²

Average Annual Cost for Full-Time Child Care, Rhode Island, 2018

PROGRAM TYPE	COST PER CHILD
Child Care Center (infant care)	\$13,093
Child Care Center (preschool care)	\$10,903
Family Child Care Home (preschool care)	\$8,811
School-Age Center-Based Program (child age 6-12)	\$7,664

Source: Rhode Island KIDS COUNT analysis of average weekly rates from Silver, B. E. (2018). *Statewide survey of childcare rates in Rhode Island*. Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island.

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Table 36.

Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, December 2019

CITY/TOWN	SUBSIDY USE BY CHILD RESIDENCE				SUBSIDY USE BY PROGRAM LOCATION			
	UNDER AGE 3	AGES 3-5	AGES 6-12	TOTAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES	CENTER	FAMILY CHILD CARE	LICENSE EXEMPT	TOTAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES
Barrington	8	10	14	32	46	1	0	47
Bristol	5	28	23	56	51	0	0	51
Burrillville	19	27	29	75	64	0	0	64
Central Falls	81	135	165	381	251	97	4	352
Charlestown	4	2	1	7	5	0	0	5
Coventry	42	51	49	142	173	1	0	174
Cranston	155	208	273	636	791	216	3	1,010
Cumberland	23	36	57	116	120	4	2	126
East Greenwich	8	12	11	31	78	0	0	78
East Providence	74	110	161	345	360	8	3	371
Exeter	3	3	4	10	19	0	0	19
Foster	0	2	1	3	16	0	0	16
Glocester	3	4	1	8	33	0	0	33
Hopkinton	3	5	1	9	6	6	0	12
Jamestown	1	1	1	3	7	0	0	7
Johnston	44	67	51	162	387	42	0	429
Lincoln	23	39	56	118	149	9	0	158
Little Compton	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Middletown	35	29	41	105	104	0	0	104
Narragansett	6	11	15	32	13	0	0	13
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newport	60	78	109	247	258	0	0	258
North Kingstown	28	40	45	113	109	0	0	109
North Providence	45	82	89	216	205	27	1	233
North Smithfield	7	5	4	16	3	1	0	4
Pawtucket	255	356	502	1,113	1,013	106	5	1,124
Portsmouth	6	6	0	12	1	0	0	1
Providence	1,010	1,243	1,697	3,950	1,859	1,749	30	3,638
Richmond	7	7	2	16	1	5	0	6
Scituate	6	5	3	14	5	0	0	5
Smithfield	5	11	19	35	115	0	0	115
South Kingstown	20	31	21	72	110	9	0	119
Tiverton	11	14	8	33	25	2	0	27
Warren	12	11	24	47	77	1	0	78
Warwick	105	165	158	428	705	1	2	708
West Greenwich	3	2	1	6	6	0	0	6
West Warwick	85	132	133	350	284	1	0	285
Westerly	19	37	30	86	107	3	0	110
Woonsocket	150	257	325	732	632	36	5	673
DCYF	295	342	177	814	NA	NA	NA	NA
Undetermined Address	1	2	4	7	NA	NA	NA	NA
Out-Of-State	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	12	12
Four Core Cities	1,496	1,991	2,689	6,176	3,755	1,988	44	5,787
Remainder of State	875	1,271	1,437	3,583	4,433	337	11	4,781
Rhode Island	2,667	3,606	4,307	10,580	8,188	2,325	67	10,580

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2019.

DCYF is the number of children in the care of the Department of Children, Youth and Families who are receiving child care subsidies.

Out-of-State is subsidies used by Rhode Island resident children who attend child care located outside of Rhode Island; they are included in the total count for Rhode Island.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

NA=Not applicable

Subsidy data by age of child are reported by the child's residence. Subsidy use by program type is reported by location of the program.

The average annual cost for full-time child care was determined by multiplying the average weekly tuition rate by 52 weeks (for infants and preschoolers). For school-age children, the annual cost was determined by multiplying the average weekly tuition for before and after school care by 39 weeks and adding 13 weeks of average school vacation/summer camp tuition.

References

- ¹⁵ Schulman, K. (2019). *Early progress: State child care assistance policies 2019*. Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center.
- ² *The U.S. and the high cost of child care: A review of prices and proposed solutions for a broken system.* (2018). Arlington, VA: Child Care Aware of America.
- ³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). Child Care and Development Fund Program: Final rule. *Federal Register*, 81(190), 67438-67595.
- ⁴ Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations based on average weekly rates from Silver, B. E. (2018). *Statewide survey of child care rates in Rhode Island*. Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island.
- ⁶ Christian, S. (February 5, 2019). Letter to Courtney Hawkins, Director, Rhode Island Department of Human Services.

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