

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

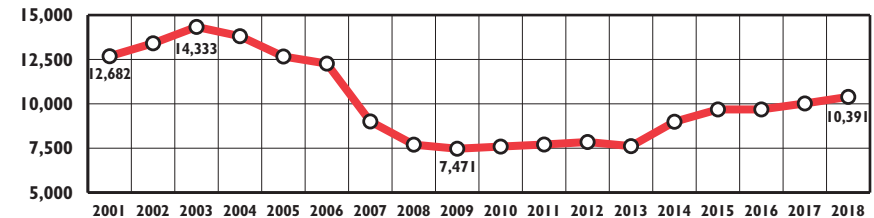
yearly cost for a three-year-old at a licensed center (\$10,903).^{3,4}

Subsidy 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. In 2018, Rhode Island joined 41 other states in the U.S. by establishing a tiered child care rate system to provide access to higher quality care. As of July 2018, the rates paid for infants and toddlers in centers with a five-star quality rating meet the federal benchmark enabling equal access, but rates for preschool and school-age children in centers and for children in family child care remain below the benchmark.^{5,6,7,8}

Child care teachers make very low wages yet are responsible for the safety, health, and development of our youngest children. In Rhode Island in 2017, the median wage for a child care teacher was \$11.82/hour. At least 11 states fund efforts to improve qualifications and retention of child care teachers through targeted wage supplements.^{9,10}

As of December 2018, 10% of children participating in the Rhode Island Child Care Assistance Program were enrolled in programs with high-quality BrightStars ratings (four or five stars). Preschool-age children were more likely to be enrolled in a high-quality program (12%) than infants and toddlers (8%) or school-age children (9%).¹¹

Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, 2001-2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2001-December 2015, September 2016, December 2017-December 2018. Data for December 2016 was not available.

◆ In December 2018, there were 10,391 child care subsidies in Rhode Island, up 4% from December 2017, but down 28% from the 2003 peak. In December 2018 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.¹²

◆ Rhode Island families with incomes at or below 180% federal poverty level (FPL) (\$37,404 for a family of three in 2018) who work a minimum of 20 hours per week are eligible to receive CCAP. Families may continue to receive a child care subsidy until their income reaches 225% FPL (\$46,755 for a family of three in 2018). Families in Rhode Island Works (cash assistance) may also be eligible for CCAP to support education and employment activities.¹³

◆ In December 2018, 82% of all children receiving child care subsidies were in low-income working families not receiving cash assistance and 10% 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.¹⁴

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.

Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies

Table 36.

Child Care Subsidies, Rhode Island, December 2018

CITY/TOWN	SUBSIDY USE BY CHILD RESIDENCE				SUBSIDY USE BY PROGRAM LOCATION			
	UNDER AGE 3	AGES 3-5	AGES 6+	TOTAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES	CENTER	FAMILY CHILD CARE	LICENSE EXEMPT	TOTAL CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES
Barrington	6	10	13	29	45	0	0	45
Bristol	10	23	20	53	44	0	0	44
Burrillville	18	23	27	68	56	0	0	56
Central Falls	94	135	176	405	257	86	3	346
Charlestown	4	4	2	10	5	0	0	5
Coventry	37	56	60	153	184	1	0	185
Cranston	127	211	230	568	729	185	2	916
Cumberland	20	36	75	131	139	4	1	144
East Greenwich	11	10	14	35	78	0	0	78
East Providence	58	86	150	294	348	5	3	356
Exeter	3	11	3	17	19	4	0	23
Foster	0	4	2	6	8	0	0	8
Glocester	1	7	3	11	43	0	0	43
Hopkinton	0	6	1	7	7	5	0	12
Jamestown	0	5	0	5	11	0	0	11
Johnston	35	69	58	162	361	47	3	411
Lincoln	16	41	45	102	177	13	0	190
Little Compton	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
Middletown	7	24	32	63	86	0	0	86
Narragansett	5	16	11	32	13	0	0	13
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newport	38	55	99	192	164	0	0	164
North Kingstown	37	45	53	135	122	0	0	122
North Providence	44	70	80	194	163	19	0	182
North Smithfield	9	8	11	28	43	1	0	44
Pawtucket	263	392	507	1,162	1,008	128	7	1,143
Portsmouth	4	6	0	10	2	0	0	2
Providence	879	1,197	1,606	3,682	1,837	1,760	46	3,643
Richmond	4	10	2	16	6	7	0	13
Scituate	4	8	8	20	1	0	0	1
Smithfield	10	12	14	36	115	0	0	115
South Kingstown	22	33	22	77	126	2	0	128
Tiverton	4	16	5	25	21	8	0	29
Warren	14	25	21	60	86	0	0	86
Warwick	95	161	140	396	670	1	4	675
West Greenwich	2	3	2	7	8	0	2	10
West Warwick	90	118	135	343	280	0	0	280
Westerly	21	32	33	86	94	2	3	99
Woonsocket	142	261	330	733	609	45	4	658
DCYF	295	333	176	804	NA	NA	NA	NA
Undetermined Address	2	1	8	11				
Out-Of-State	NA	NA	NA	NA	25	0	0	25
Four Core Cities	1,378	1,985	2,619	5,982	3,711	2,019	60	5,790
Remainder of State	758	1,244	1,372	3,374	4,254	304	18	4,576
Rhode Island	2,433	3,563	4,175	10,171	7,990	2,323	78	10,391

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Human Services, December 2018. Data for 2016 should not be compared with previous years since the month differs.

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. Total subsidies by program location exceeds subsidies by child residence because children may attend more than one 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. (2018). *Overdue for investment: State child care assistance policies 2018*. 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.
- ³⁶ 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, Charles T. Schmidt, Jr. Labor Research Center.

(continued on page 186)