

Methodology

Child care costs are reported at the county-level for infant child care and child care for 4-year-olds where available across the state. To determine the affordability of child care costs by county, we compared the average cost of center-based child care to household median income by county. Affordability was calculated by dividing the average cost of care in that county by the county’s median income as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

Findings

In Minnesota, there are many parts of the state that rely primarily, if not exclusively, on licensed family child care. Most, nearly 75 percent, of the centers in the state are in only eight of the 87 counties; these eight counties are located in urban areas such as the Twin Cities. Accordingly, the cost of center-based child care at the county level exceeds the statewide average in only 2 counties for infants and in 2 counties for 4-year-olds.

Statewide unaffordability of center-based child care cost seems to be driven by two key factors: Higher care costs in urban corridors where incomes are simultaneously lower than in other areas (e.g., in Ramsey County, married

couples pay more than 25 percent of their income for a year of center care for an infant); and low numbers of center child care programs in rural areas to balance higher costs reported for urban areas.

For family child care, the affordability of child care is much more evenly distributed – affordability of child care exceeds the statewide average in nearly half of counties while it is less than the statewide average in the other half. As with centers, urban counties make the costs of family child care appear less affordable statewide, although the difference is not as pronounced.

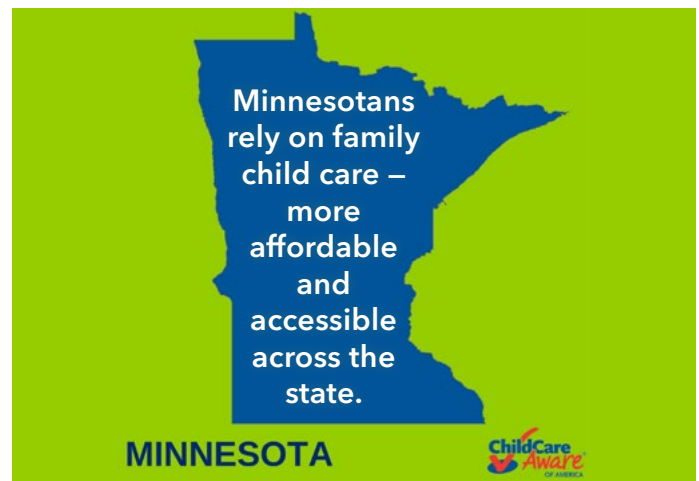


Table 1: Least Affordable Counties for Infant Child Care Costs by Type of Care

Rank	County	Average annual cost of infant care*	Percent median income	Difference between county-level and statewide affordability**
Center-Based (15.7%)				
1	Ramsey County	\$18,044	19.5%	-3.8%
2	Olmsted County	\$16,224	15.9%	-0.2%
3	Hennepin County	\$17,836	15.7%	0.0%
4	Anoka County	\$15,392	15.2%	0.5%
5	Beltrami County	\$11,440	14.9%	0.8%
Family Child Care (8.5%)				
1	Cook County	\$9,256	14.0%	-5.5%
2	Traverse County	\$7,800	10.9%	-2.4%
3	Itasca County	\$8,320	11.5%	-3.0%
4	Cass County	\$6,760	10.4%	-1.9%
5	Pine County	\$7,280	10.6%	-2.1%

Note: NR = Not Reported (meaning that data is unavailable for a given county); NA = Not Applicable

*Source: Child Care Aware® of Minnesota

** Affordability, or Percentage Median Income, is a comparison of average cost against county median income

Table 2: County-Level Costs by Age and Type

County	Infant Care			4-Year-Old		
	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average
	Center-Based Care					
Aitkin County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Anoka County	\$15,392	15.2%	0.5%	\$11,908	11.7%	0.4%
Becker County	\$10,348	12.5%	3.2%	\$9,724	11.7%	0.4%
Beltrami County	\$11,440	14.9%	0.8%	\$6,344	8.3%	3.8%
Benton County	\$11,180	12.9%	2.8%	\$9,932	11.5%	0.6%
Big Stone County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Blue Earth County	\$9,828	11.6%	4.1%	\$8,684	10.3%	1.8%
Brown County	\$8,424	9.9%	5.8%	\$7,384	8.7%	3.4%
Carlton County	\$10,764	13.0%	2.7%	\$7,956	9.6%	2.5%
Carver County	\$16,120	13.1%	2.6%	\$12,480	10.1%	2.0%
Cass County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Chippewa County	\$7,280	NA	NA	\$5,980	NA	NA
Chisago County	\$12,168	12.2%	3.5%	\$10,244	10.2%	1.9%
Clay County	\$10,400	11.7%	4.0%	\$8,476	9.5%	2.6%
Clearwater County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Cook County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Cottonwood County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Crow Wing County	\$8,372	10.7%	5.0%	\$7,592	9.7%	2.4%
Dakota County	\$16,900	14.9%	0.8%	\$12,740	11.2%	0.9%
Dodge County	\$10,452	10.5%	5.2%	\$9,204	9.2%	2.9%
Douglas County	\$9,256	11.1%	4.6%	\$7,540	9.0%	3.1%
Faribault County	\$7,696	10.1%	5.6%	\$7,488	9.9%	2.2%
Fillmore County	\$8,476	10.9%	4.8%	\$6,708	8.6%	3.5%
Freeborn County	\$9,568	12.5%	3.2%	\$7,696	10.1%	2.0%
Goodhue County	\$9,308	10.1%	5.6%	\$8,164	8.9%	3.2%
Grant County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Hennepin County	\$17,836	15.7%	0.0%	\$13,364	11.8%	0.3%
Houston County	\$7,852	NA	NA	\$6,968	NA	NA
Hubbard County	\$8,840	12.6%	3.1%	\$8,320	11.9%	0.2%
Isanti County	\$10,296	11.7%	4.0%	\$9,048	10.3%	1.8%
Itasca County	\$10,140	14.0%	1.7%	\$7,800	10.7%	1.4%
Jackson County	\$8,060	NA	NA	\$8,060	NA	NA
Kanabec County	\$6,916	10.3%	5.4%	\$6,344	9.5%	2.6%
Kandiyohi County	\$9,256	11.4%	4.3%	\$8,164	10.1%	2.0%
Kittson County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Koochiching County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Lac qui Parle County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Lake County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Lake of the Woods County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Le Sueur County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Lincoln County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Lyon County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Mahnomen County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA

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Table 2: County-Level Costs by Age and Type (cont.)

County	Infant Care			4-Year-Old		
	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average
	Center-Based Care (cont.)					
Marshall County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Martin County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
McLeod County	\$11,648	13.7%	2.0%	\$8,528	10.0%	2.1%
Meeker County	\$9,828	12.2%	3.5%	\$8,528	10.6%	1.5%
Mille Lacs County	\$9,100	12.1%	3.6%	\$7,592	10.1%	2.0%
Morrison County	\$8,372	10.8%	4.9%	\$7,332	9.5%	2.6%
Mower County	\$9,204	10.9%	4.8%	\$8,164	9.6%	2.5%
Murray County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Nicollet County	\$9,672	10.9%	4.8%	\$8,476	9.5%	2.6%
Nobles County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Norman County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Olmsted County	\$16,224	15.9%	-0.2%	\$12,636	12.4%	-0.3%
Otter Tail County	\$8,840	11.0%	4.7%	\$7,800	9.7%	2.4%
Pennington County	\$8,580	9.9%	5.8%	\$7,280	8.4%	3.7%
Pine County	\$8,320	12.1%	3.6%	\$7,800	11.4%	0.7%
Pipestone County	\$8,216	11.4%	4.3%	\$6,448	9.0%	3.1%
Polk County	\$10,400	12.1%	3.6%	\$8,112	9.5%	2.6%
Pope County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Ramsey County	\$18,044	19.5%	-3.8%	\$13,260	14.4%	-2.3%
Red Lake County	\$7,540	9.4%	6.3%	\$7,280	9.1%	3.0%
Redwood County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Renville County	\$7,332	10.3%	5.4%	\$6,968	9.7%	2.4%
Rice County	\$10,920	13.0%	2.7%	\$8,580	10.2%	1.9%
Rock County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Roseau County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Scott County	\$16,484	13.9%	1.8%	\$12,480	10.5%	1.6%
Sherburne County	\$11,908	12.6%	3.1%	\$9,412	9.9%	2.2%
Sibley County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
St. Louis County	\$10,400	12.1%	3.6%	\$8,112	9.4%	2.7%
Stearns County	\$11,752	12.9%	2.8%	\$9,932	10.9%	1.2%
Steele County	\$11,440	12.8%	2.9%	\$7,124	7.9%	4.2%
Stevens County	\$8,060	8.7%	7.0%	\$7,280	7.8%	4.3%
Swift County	\$6,240	8.2%	7.5%	\$5,200	6.8%	5.3%
Todd County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Traverse County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Wabasha County	\$10,556	12.2%	3.5%	\$9,100	10.5%	1.6%
Wadena County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Waseca County	\$8,372	9.9%	5.8%	\$7,332	8.7%	3.4%
Washington County	\$17,056	14.2%	1.5%	\$13,104	10.9%	1.2%
Watonwan County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA
Wilkin County	\$7,800	8.8%	6.9%	\$7,020	7.9%	4.2%
Winona County	\$9,724	12.0%	3.7%	\$8,996	11.1%	1.0%
Wright County	\$12,792	12.7%	3.0%	\$10,036	10.0%	2.1%
Yellow Medicine County	NR	NA	NA	NR	NA	NA

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Table 2: County-Level Costs by Age and Type (cont.)

County	Infant Care			4-Year-Old		
	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average
	Family Child Care					
Aitkin County	\$7,072	10.1%	-1.6%	\$6,708	9.5%	-1.8%
Anoka County	\$8,632	8.5%	0.0%	\$7,644	7.5%	0.2%
Becker County	\$7,696	9.3%	-0.8%	\$6,812	8.2%	-0.5%
Beltrami County	\$6,864	8.9%	-0.4%	\$6,500	8.5%	-0.8%
Benton County	\$7,020	8.1%	0.4%	\$6,396	7.4%	0.3%
Big Stone County	\$7,592	NA	NA	\$7,020	NA	NA
Blue Earth County	\$6,864	8.1%	0.4%	\$6,500	7.7%	0.0%
Brown County	\$6,760	8.0%	0.5%	\$6,396	7.5%	0.2%
Carlton County	\$8,060	9.7%	-1.2%	\$7,852	9.5%	-1.8%
Carver County	\$9,464	7.7%	0.8%	\$8,580	7.0%	0.7%
Cass County	\$6,760	10.4%	-1.9%	\$6,604	10.2%	-2.5%
Chippewa County	\$5,980	NA	NA	\$5,512	NA	NA
Chisago County	\$7,904	7.9%	0.6%	\$7,072	7.1%	0.6%
Clay County	\$7,176	8.1%	0.4%	\$6,604	7.4%	0.3%
Clearwater County	\$6,552	9.6%	-1.1%	\$6,032	8.8%	-1.1%
Cook County	\$9,256	14.0%	-5.5%	\$8,528	12.9%	-5.2%
Cottonwood County	\$6,136	9.4%	-0.9%	\$6,136	9.4%	-1.7%
Crow Wing County	\$6,968	8.9%	-0.4%	\$6,552	8.4%	-0.7%
Dakota County	\$9,724	8.6%	-0.1%	\$8,684	7.6%	0.1%
Dodge County	\$7,852	7.9%	0.6%	\$7,384	7.4%	0.3%
Douglas County	\$7,020	8.4%	0.1%	\$6,396	7.7%	0.0%
Faribault County	\$5,200	6.8%	1.7%	\$4,680	6.2%	1.5%
Fillmore County	\$7,176	9.2%	-0.7%	\$6,968	8.9%	-1.2%
Freeborn County	\$6,136	8.0%	0.5%	\$5,824	7.6%	0.1%
Goodhue County	\$7,644	8.3%	0.2%	\$7,176	7.8%	-0.1%
Grant County	\$6,760	8.9%	-0.4%	\$6,500	8.5%	-0.8%
Hennepin County	\$10,608	9.4%	-0.9%	\$9,464	8.4%	-0.7%
Houston County	\$6,916	NA	NA	\$6,448	NA	NA
Hubbard County	\$7,176	10.3%	-1.8%	\$6,604	9.4%	-1.7%
Isanti County	\$7,852	8.9%	-0.4%	\$6,448	7.3%	0.4%
Itasca County	\$8,320	11.5%	-3.0%	\$7,592	10.5%	-2.8%
Jackson County	\$5,824	NA	NA	\$5,460	NA	NA
Kanabec County	\$6,604	9.9%	-1.4%	\$5,980	8.9%	-1.2%
Kandiyohi County	\$6,604	8.1%	0.4%	\$6,240	7.7%	0.0%
Kittson County	\$5,200	6.9%	1.6%	\$5,200	6.9%	0.8%
Koochiching County	\$5,876	7.9%	0.6%	\$5,200	7.0%	0.7%
Lac qui Parle County	\$7,176	9.4%	-0.9%	\$6,396	8.3%	-0.6%
Lake County	\$7,800	NA	NA	\$6,760	NA	NA
Lake of the Woods County	\$5,980	7.4%	1.1%	\$5,980	7.4%	0.3%
Le Sueur County	\$7,644	8.6%	-0.1%	\$7,020	7.9%	-0.2%
Lincoln County	\$6,760	8.7%	-0.2%	\$6,760	8.7%	-1.0%
Lyon County	\$6,708	7.6%	0.9%	\$6,448	7.3%	0.4%
Mahnomen County	\$6,656	9.6%	-1.1%	\$6,500	9.3%	-1.6%

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Table 2: County-Level Costs by Age and Type (cont.)

County	Infant Care			4-Year-Old		
	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average
	Family Child Care (cont.)					
Marshall County	\$6,292	8.0%	0.5%	\$6,084	7.7%	0.0%
Martin County	\$6,136	7.6%	0.9%	\$5,668	7.0%	0.7%
McLeod County	\$6,864	8.1%	0.4%	\$6,136	7.2%	0.5%
Meeker County	\$6,344	7.9%	0.6%	\$5,772	7.2%	0.5%
Mille Lacs County	\$6,968	9.2%	-0.7%	\$6,500	8.6%	-0.9%
Morrison County	\$6,344	8.2%	0.3%	\$5,772	7.4%	0.3%
Mower County	\$6,656	7.9%	0.6%	\$6,344	7.5%	0.2%
Murray County	\$4,680	5.4%	3.1%	\$4,680	5.4%	2.3%
Nicollet County	\$6,864	7.7%	0.8%	\$6,500	7.3%	0.4%
Nobles County	\$5,356	7.4%	1.1%	\$5,252	7.2%	0.5%
Norman County	\$6,084	7.9%	0.6%	\$5,824	7.6%	0.1%
Olmsted County	\$8,892	8.7%	-0.2%	\$7,956	7.8%	-0.1%
Otter Tail County	\$6,552	8.1%	0.4%	\$6,292	7.8%	-0.1%
Pennington County	\$6,292	7.2%	1.3%	\$5,980	6.9%	0.8%
Pine County	\$7,280	10.6%	-2.1%	\$6,864	10.0%	-2.3%
Pipestone County	\$6,344	8.8%	-0.3%	\$5,512	7.7%	0.0%
Polk County	\$6,760	7.9%	0.6%	\$6,344	7.4%	0.3%
Pope County	\$6,344	7.8%	0.7%	\$5,980	7.4%	0.3%
Ramsey County	\$9,412	10.2%	-1.7%	\$8,528	9.2%	-1.5%
Red Lake County	\$5,512	6.9%	1.6%	\$5,460	6.8%	0.9%
Redwood County	\$6,708	8.8%	-0.3%	\$6,136	8.1%	-0.4%
Renville County	\$5,304	7.4%	1.1%	\$5,304	7.4%	0.3%
Rice County	\$7,800	9.3%	-0.8%	\$7,280	8.7%	-1.0%
Rock County	\$5,304	7.0%	1.5%	\$5,200	6.9%	0.8%
Roseau County	\$6,292	8.1%	0.4%	\$5,512	7.1%	0.6%
Scott County	\$9,620	8.1%	0.4%	\$8,684	7.3%	0.4%
Sherburne County	\$7,540	8.0%	0.5%	\$6,656	7.0%	0.7%
Sibley County	\$7,228	9.2%	-0.7%	\$6,604	8.4%	-0.7%
St. Louis County	\$7,956	9.2%	-0.7%	\$7,384	8.6%	-0.9%
Stearns County	\$6,760	7.4%	1.1%	\$6,240	6.8%	0.9%
Steele County	\$6,656	7.4%	1.1%	\$6,188	6.9%	0.8%
Stevens County	\$6,708	7.2%	1.3%	\$6,240	6.7%	1.0%
Swift County	\$5,720	7.5%	1.0%	\$5,356	7.1%	0.6%
Todd County	\$6,136	8.8%	-0.3%	\$6,084	8.7%	-1.0%
Traverse County	\$7,800	10.9%	-2.4%	\$7,800	10.9%	-3.2%
Wabasha County	\$7,020	8.1%	0.4%	\$6,604	7.6%	0.1%
Wadena County	\$6,188	9.1%	-0.6%	\$6,136	9.0%	-1.3%
Waseca County	\$7,436	8.8%	-0.3%	\$6,448	7.6%	0.1%
Washington County	\$9,204	7.7%	0.8%	\$8,320	6.9%	0.8%
Watonwan County	\$5,512	7.5%	1.0%	\$5,512	7.5%	0.2%
Wilkin County	\$6,084	6.9%	1.6%	\$5,720	6.5%	1.2%
Winona County	\$6,396	7.9%	0.6%	\$6,084	7.5%	0.2%
Wright County	\$8,216	8.2%	0.3%	\$7,332	7.3%	0.4%
Yellow Medicine County	\$6,188	7.7%	0.8%	\$5,512	6.8%	0.9%

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