



Mapping the Gap™: Exploring Child Care Supply & Demand in Minnesota



State Overview

In Minnesota, there are 304,851 children under the age of 6 with one or both parents in the labor force. There are 1,714 center-based child care programs and 8,852 family child care homes, combined to provide 222,348 licensed child care slots. Only 81,150 of those slots are currently participating in the QRIS, leaving working families across Minnesota to face a deficit of 82,503 unmet quality child care slots. Around 1 in 4 of children under the age of 6 do not have access to child care in Minnesota. For more information on quality child care and early learning in your state, visit our [2017 State Fact Sheet](#).

Minnesota has a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for child care centers called Parent Aware. Child Care Aware® of Minnesota supports the statewide QRIS to ensure centers meet standards related to coaching, training, monitoring, recruitment of new programs, community outreach, and data analysis and reporting.

Child care in Minnesota on average makes up greater than 12 percent of the median income, with single parents paying 97% of their income for center care for two children, and married parents with two kids living on the poverty line paying 131 percent of their income on center care. The average annual cost for center-based care is \$14,826 and \$8,033 for home-based care. The average cost of child care for a four-year-old is \$11,420 for center-based care and \$7,295 for home-based care. For more information on the cost of care in your state, visit our [2017 Parents and High Cost of Child Care Report](#).

Mapping Child Care Supply and Demand Gaps

In Minnesota, many families struggle to access child care. Our key stakeholders wanted to know in what areas of the state might families with young children be struggling the most to find care. In addition, unique to Minnesota is a universe of child care options: throughout the state, families have access to a myriad of child care options, such as center-based and family child care programs. Many programs across the state also make use of multiple funding streams - keeping programs sustainable, and supporting families as much as possible in accessing affordable, quality child care. For each map, we examined the locations of child care providers and children by zip code, including county boundaries for reference.

Data & Methodology

The number of children under the age of 6 in each zip code was obtained through the most up to date Census data, specifically, the U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year-Estimates, B23008: Age of Own Children Under 18 Years in Families and Subfamilies by Living Arrangements by Employment Status of Parents. The licensed child care programs and the number of spaces per early care and learning program were obtained using data from NACCRRAware with permission from the license holder in May, 2017.

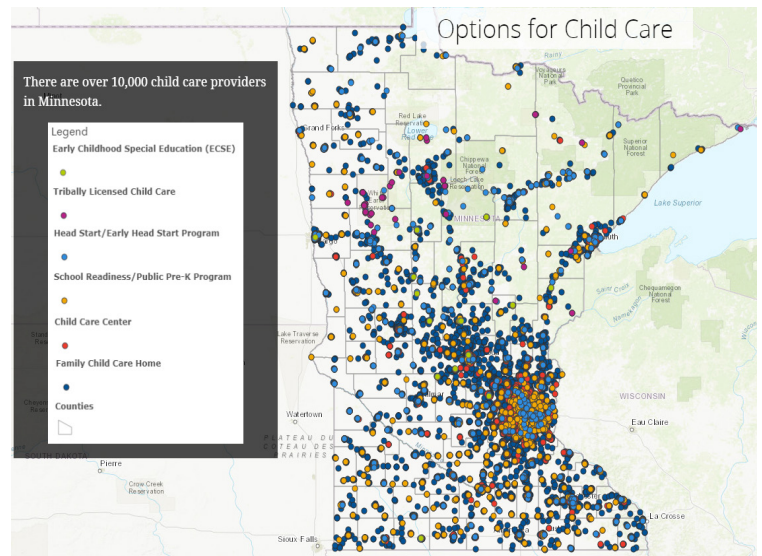
Overall Findings

The points on the map show licensed child care programs. Minnesota is unique in its numerous types of child care and funding types throughout the state. Although there are overall supply and demand gaps in child care, child care advocates, in particular the CCR&R, in the state encourage and promote braided funding streams and partnerships in an effort to accommodate the needs of families throughout Minnesota. Supply & demand maps show all child care providers available

across the state; each type of child care represented in this data set is cascaded, type-by-type, to allow a deeper look at child care options for Minnesotan families.

Although gaps in child care supply and demand are prevalent in urban areas of the state, these areas do have many child care programs in close proximity; many of these programs are center-based. More rural areas of Minnesota are served by family child care programs. One gap across the state is the availability of highly-rated quality child care programs.

Quality child care programs in Minnesota are largely located near more populated, urban areas like Minneapolis and Rochester, which can leave substantial gaps in more rural parts of the state. However, even in urban areas, working families may be struggling to find quality care. Excess demand and limited supply still leaves urban and rural working families with the highest number of unmet spots in the state. Although providers across the state may be operating high-quality programs, there is not great participation, statewide, in the Parent Aware QRIS system. Child Care Aware® of Minnesota is working tirelessly to recruit providers to participate in this system and ensure quality care for all Minnesotan families.



Policy Recommendations

Like many states, Minnesota families are struggling to find high quality child care. Gaps between high quality and low quality child care exist across the state. Many working families in Minnesota may not have a safe place to take their children when they go to work.

In order to address these gaps and help working families, some next steps should include:

- **Funding designated for early childhood education.** Providing incentives for new and existing providers to enroll in Minnesota's QRIS system, [Parent Aware](#), could allow more providers to enter the market. Enrollment in Parent Aware provides additional funding to providers which could allow them to expand their slots for infant and toddlers.
- **Workforce support and recruitment.** Quality education begins early! Child care providers have a tough, but extremely important job caring for the youngest in Minnesota. Workforce recruitment, supports, and retention efforts should be targeted toward areas of greatest supply and demand gap.
- **Monitor the issues.** These maps are a baseline to get a better understanding of what is happening across Minnesota. Demand for child care may be far out-pacing the current supply. As policy, strategy and funding changes, this unique issue, as well as overall the overall quality of child care supply in Minnesota, should be re-visited to best serve Minnesota families.

Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) are uniquely positioned to support the study of and address child care supply and demand issues across the state. In fact, CCR&Rs are specifically called out in the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) of 2014 legislation to help identify supply and demand issues and share information with the state to help target funding to address the issues. An increase in funding for CCR&Rs to do this work is crucial.

The network of CCR&R agencies and staff across Minnesota possess a wealth of knowledge about the regional and statewide needs of families, as well as how best to support the provider workforce. However, without funding designated for early childhood education in the state, CCR&Rs may not have the bandwidth to recruit and retain quality, licensed providers.

Acknowledgments. Child Care Aware® of America collaborated with our partners at Child Care Aware® of Minnesota, Ann McCully and Angie Bowman, to create customized child care supply and demand maps which tell stories about the state of child care in Minnesota.