YMCA OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY
COMMUNITY WELL-BEING & BELONGING

YMCA CHILDCARE RESOURCE SERVICE
CHILD CARE DATA DASHBOARD

AFFORDABILITY

FOR FAMILIES

Finding affordable child care is a major challenge, especially in California, where infant care ranks as the third most expensive in the nation. The high cost places a significant strain on household budgets, making it difficult for families to access high-quality care.

In most parts of San Diego County, there simply aren't enough infant care options. The majority of ZIP codes have **fewer than 3 licensed infant care slots** for every **10 infants**. Only 7 ZIP codes have enough capacity to serve even half of the infants in their area.[1]

Despite being eligible, **69% of children ages 0–5 in San Diego County who qualify for a child care subsidy are not enrolled in a subsidized program.**[2]

Between December 2023 – June 2025, YMCA Childcare Resource Service has **enrolled 1,340 families for state-funded child care subsidies**. Currently, there are still **7,639 families waiting** on the Centralized Eligibility List for approval.[3]

The high cost of child care, coupled with the large number of eligible children who remain unenrolled in assistance programs, highlights the urgent need for greater access to affordable, high-quality care. Expanding financial support and ensuring families have the information they need are key to making child care more accessible for all.

FOR PROVIDERS

Child care rates are driven by market considerations rather than the true cost of quality care, resulting in a strain on both families and child care providers.[4]

The price families pay for full-time care at a licensed child care center only covers **52% of the estimated true cost of high-quality care for an infant and 66% for a preschool aged child.**[4]

	Child Care Center Subsidy Reimbursement Rate[5]	Family Child Care Homes Subsidy Reimbursement Rate[5]	The True Cost of High Quality Care[1]
Infant Care	$1,628.90 per month	$1,051.24 per month	$3,393 per child per month
Preschool	$1,198.54 per month	$987.78 per month	$2,326 per child per month
School-Age	$965.69 per month	$744.18 per month	$1,341 per child per month

While providers receive reimbursements for serving families enrolled in subsidy programs, these rates often fall short of covering the true and rising costs of maintaining high-quality care.

Read the latest report, "Understanding the True Cost of Child Care in California" by Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies **here**.

1. University of San Diego & San Diego Foundation. San Diego County Child Care Landscape Analysis. April 22, 2022. Accessed July 21, 2025. https://www.sdfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/USD_Childcare_Report_042222.pdf
2.Tinkler, Tessa and Jamshidi, Mehrnoush, "San Diego County Childcare Landscape: An Analysis of the Supply and Demand" (2022). Youth, Education, and Literacy. 5. https://digital.sandiego.edu/npi-youth/5
3.San Diego County Centralized Eligibility List. "January 31, 2024." Accessed March 25, 2024. https://childcaresandiego.com/.
4.The Center for American Progress. "The True Cost of High-Quality Child Care Across the United States." Accessed June 30, 2025. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/true-cost-high-quality-child-care-across-united-states.
5.California Department of Social Services. "Reimbursement Ceilings for Subsidized Child Care." Accessed March 25, 2024. https://rcscc.adm.dss.ca.gov/index.aspx.

ACCESSIBILITY

FOR FAMILIES

San Diego County is facing a child care crisis with a lack of available licensed child care slots in the region, leaving far too many families without access to child care.

64% of children in San Diego County under age 5 have working parents. **48% of those families have no available licensed child care option.**[2]

Our **Interactive Child Care Supply Maps** offer insight into the local child care landscape, pinpointing regions of opportunity where there is a gap between availability and need. The largest gaps are considered child care deserts. **43% of San Diego County is a child care desert, highlighting a substantial need for more child care slots across the region.**[6]

FOR PROVIDERS

Child care supply is subject to change over time, as license capacities may increase or decrease and individual programs may open or close.The fluctuations that occured between March 2025 and June 2025, resulted in:

- **2 fewer** Child Care Centers
- **293 additional** Child Care Center slots
- **256 additional** Family Child Care Homes
- **2,156 additional** Family Child Care Home slots

Openings:

- 14 newly licensed Child Care Centers resulting in 988 new slots
- 236 newly licensed Family Child Care Homes resulting in 2,062 new slots

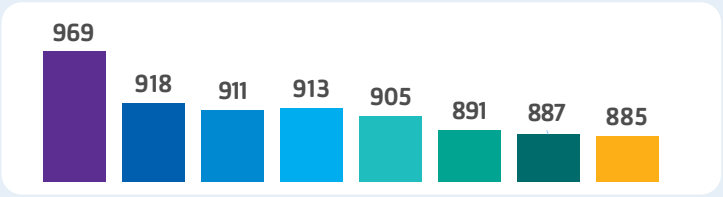
Closures:

- 10 licensed Child Care Centers closed resulting in 534 closed slots
- 110 licensed Family Child Care Homes closed resulting in 964 closed slots

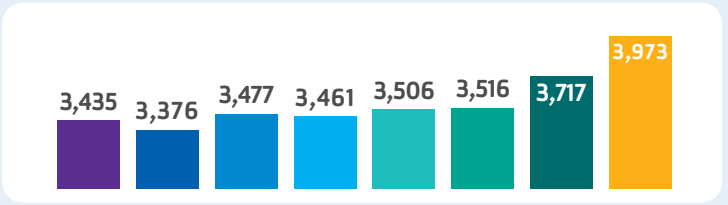
NUMBER OF LICENSED PROGRAMS[7]

JUN 2021 · DEC 2021 · JUN 2022 · DEC 2022 · JUN 2023 · DEC 2023 · FEB 2025 · JUL 2025

Child Care Centers



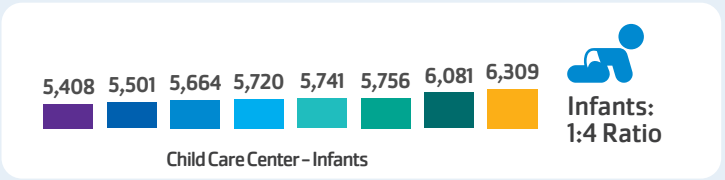
Family Child Care Homes

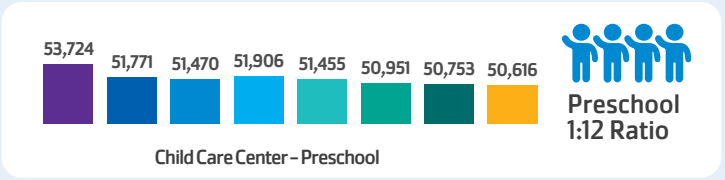


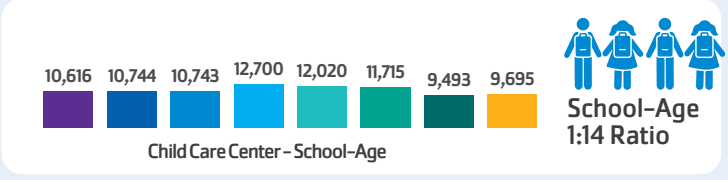
CAPACITY OF CHILD CARE SERVICES[7]

JUN 2021 · DEC 2021 · JUN 2022 · DEC 2022 · JUN 2023 · DEC 2023 · FEB 2025 · JUL 2025

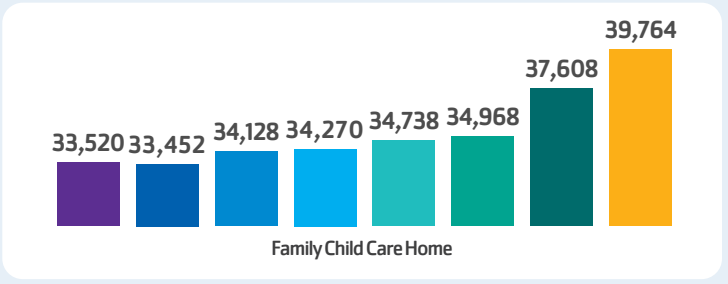
Licensed Child Care Slots at Child Care Centers







Licensed Child Care Slots at Family Child Care Homes



As of July 2025, there are **14 Child Care Centers and 246 Family Child Care Homes** that are licensed but inactive and therefore not currently providing care. Combined, they are licensed for **2,901 child care slots** in San Diego County. They are included in the data provided on this dashboard because they are licensed. However, there is uncertainty if they will reopen again and the slots are not currently available.[7]

Accessibility data reflects known license supply as of the report date. Actual counts may vary, as updates are often received after the fact. Please consider this a point-in-time snapshot.

6. YMCA of San Diego County, Childcare Resource Service. "Child Care Supply Map of San Diego County." Accessed June 30, 2025. https://www.ymcasd.org/child-care-supply-map.
7. YMCA of San Diego County Childcare Resource Service. "Resource and Referral Database." Accessed June 30, 2025.

WORKFORCE IMPACTS

TO PROVIDERS

Decades of underinvestment in the child care system have left those who nurture and educate young children undervalued and underpaid. Child care providers—primarily women of color—are among the lowest-paid workers in the country.

Despite the critical role they play, **the rates providers charge are 30% to 60% lower than the actual cost of care,** which includes staffing, supplies, and operations.[8]

75% of providers don't account for their own wages in their budgets.[9]

93% of child care providers in San Diego County report trouble hiring qualified staff.[2]

Child care providers in California make **$18 per hour** on average.[10]

Increasing pay and benefits for child care providers is needed to sustain this essential workforce and strengthen the existing child care infrastructure.

YMCA Childcare Resource Service is supporting San Diego child care providers with targeted business supports, including **financial aid, technical assistance, training, educational opportunities, and access to key resources.**

TO BUSINESSES

The lack of accessible child care creates significant challenges for businesses, leading to financial strain and workforce barriers for parents. When families struggle to find affordable, reliable child care, many are forced to reduce their work hours or leave their jobs altogether. This not only impacts household stability but also affects businesses through decreased productivity, higher turnover, and talent loss.

Addressing the child care crisis is essential—not just for working families but for building a strong, competitive workforce.

Each year, businesses in the U.S. face a staggering loss of **$4.4 billion** due to child care-related absenteeism.[11]

The lack of accessible child care makes it difficult for working parents, especially mothers, to remain in their jobs – contributing to the **25% gender gap in workforce participation** between mothers and fathers in California.[12]

YMCA Childcare Resource Service is partnering with local businesses and organizations to **assess employee child care needs, connect families to suitable options, and, in some cases, provide financial assistance to help cover child care costs.**

TAKE ACTION FOR CHILD CARE ACCESS

Child care programs do more than support children—they enable parents to work, strengthening our economy and community stability. By maintaining free or reduced-cost child care for families and providing essential support to providers, we are making a lasting investment in the well-being of children, families, and our workforce.

To build thriving communities, we must prioritize expanding child care provider capacity, increasing access to facilities, and enhancing support for children's mental health. **Your involvement is essential in making this vision a reality. Join us in advancing child care solutions that benefit everyone.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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www.ymcasd.org/crs

8. California Child Care Resource Center. 2023.
9. KPBS. "New data shows child care providers continue to struggle." 2024. Accessed March 25, 2024. https://www.kpbs.org/news/politics/2024/01/15/san-diego-child-care-providers-struggle.
10. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics." May 2022. Accessed March 25, 2024. https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes399011.htm.
11. Forbes. "How Unreliable and Costly Child Care Keeps People Off the Job." 2018. Accessed March 25, 2024. https://www.forbes.com/sites/aakashkumar/2018/03/08/how-unreliable-and-costly-childcare-keeps-people-off-the-job/?sh=ce0aad45e18a.
12. Public Policy Institute of California. "Labor Force Participation in California." February 2024. Accessed May 2, 2024. https://www.ppic.org/publication/labor-force-participation-in-california/