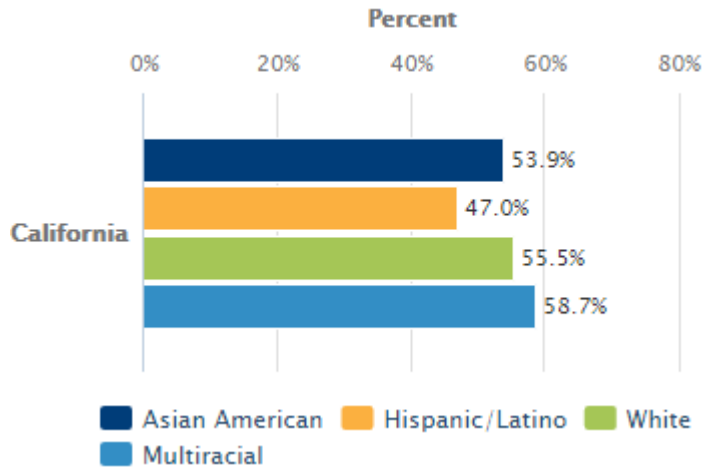


Early Care and Education in California

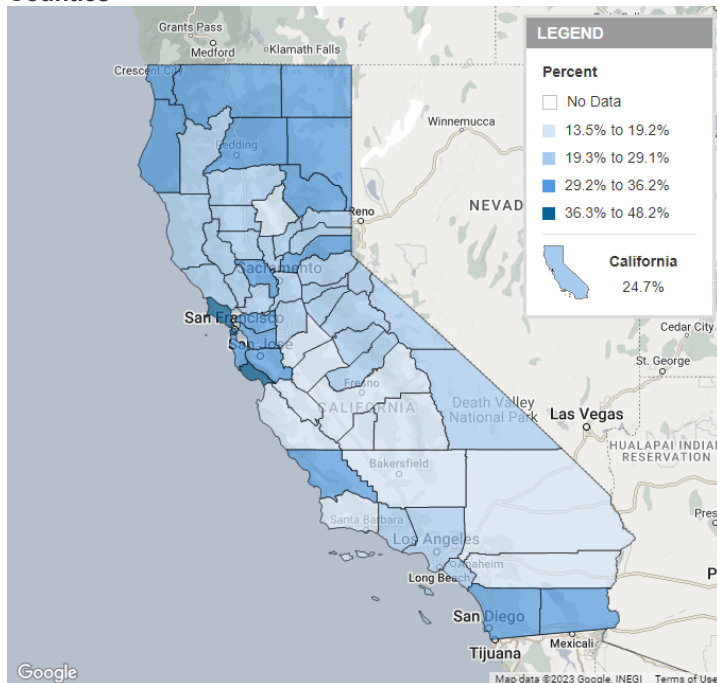
Children Ages 3-5 Enrolled in Preschool or Kindergarten, by Race/Ethnicity: 2021



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 3-5 enrolled in preschool or kindergarten, by race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2021, 47% of Hispanic/Latino children ages 3-5 in California were enrolled in preschool or kindergarten).

Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey public use microdata (Sept. 2022).

Availability of Child Care for Working Families: 2021; Showing Counties



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-12 with parents in the labor force for whom licensed child care spaces are available and unavailable (e.g. in 2021, licensed child care spaces were available for 24.7% of children with working parents in California).

Data Source: California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, California Child

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, indicators of early childhood care and education include:

- The percentage of children ages 0-5 whose parents read with them, by weekly frequency
- Single-year estimates of the percentage of children ages 3-5 enrolled in preschool or kindergarten, by county and county group, and, for the U.S. and California, by age and by race/ethnicity; also available are five-year estimates for cities, school districts, and counties with at least 10,000 residents and legislative districts

Kidsdata.org also provides the following measures of licensed child care in California:

- The median and mean annual cost of child care for infants and preschoolers in child care centers and family child care homes
- The percentage of children in working families for whom child care spaces are available
- The number of child care spaces in licensed facilities and the percentage of full-time and part-time spaces available
- The number of licensed child care facilities and the percentage of facilities offering evening, weekend or overnight care
- The percentage of child care requests by age group and the percentage of requests for evening, weekend or overnight care

Why This Topic Is Important

Experiences during early childhood lay the foundation for future health and well being, and the quality of children's early care and education (ECE) can have significant, lasting effects. High-quality ECE programs deliver consistent, developmentally sound, and emotionally supportive care and education. This type of care before age 5 is associated with improved cognitive, social-emotional, behavioral, and physical health, as well as increased school readiness, academic achievement, and earnings in adulthood. Positive outcomes are particularly pronounced for children from low-income families, children of color, and those at risk for academic

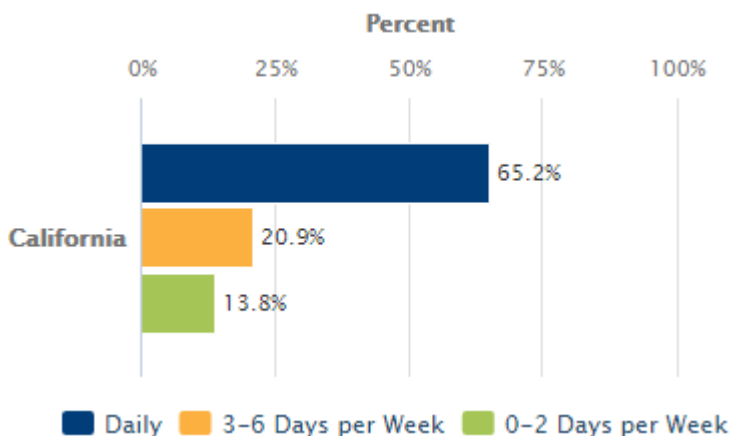
Median Annual Cost of Center-Based Licensed Child Care, by Age Group: 2021

Type of Facility: Child Care Center	Median Annual Cost	
	Infant	Preschooler
Alameda County	\$20,809	\$16,117
Contra Costa County	\$20,802	\$15,550
Fresno County	\$15,563	\$10,503
Kern County	\$15,198	\$10,030
Los Angeles County	\$18,917	\$12,741
Orange County	\$19,097	\$13,073
Riverside County	\$15,505	\$10,433
Sacramento County	\$17,073	\$11,803
San Bernardino County	\$15,247	\$10,140
San Diego County	\$18,238	\$12,740
Santa Clara County	\$21,600	\$18,348

Definition: Estimated annual child care cost at which families of half of children enrolled in full-time licensed care pay more and families of half of children enrolled in full-time licensed care pay less, by age group and type of facility (e.g., in 2021, the median annual cost of full-time licensed child care for an infant in a child care center was \$20,809 in Alameda County).

Data Source: California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, *California Child Care Portfolio* (Jan. 2023).

Children Ages 0-5 Whose Parents Read with Them: 2017-2018



Definition: Estimated percentage of children ages 0-5 whose parents read with them, by frequency (e.g., in 2017-2018, 65.2% of young children in California had parents who read with them daily).

Data Source: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, *California Health Interview Survey* (Aug. 2020).

challenges, such as children in immigrant families and those with a first language other than English. A critically important ECE need for many families is child care; reliable child care can help families move out of poverty and achieve financial stability by enabling parents to work or pursue education and job training.

However, finding affordable, high-quality ECE is a major challenge for many families, especially in California, and access differs based on geography, race/ethnicity, and income. In 2020, California was ranked the least affordable state for center-based infant care in the nation. For example, costs for center-based infant care in California made up an estimated 17% of the median annual income for married couples and 54% for single parents in 2020.

How Children Are Faring

An estimated 51% of California children ages 3-5 were enrolled in preschool or kindergarten in 2021, down from more than 60% between 2007 and 2019. U.S. figures followed a similar trend over this period. Statewide and nationally, percentages have fallen for each age and race/ethnicity group with data—e.g., the percentage of California four-year-olds enrolled in pre-primary programs dropped by almost a third between 2019 and 2021, from 63% to 45%.

California's 35,686 licensed child care centers and family child care homes provided 956,364 child care spaces in 2021. Overall, the number of licensed facilities and spaces have been on the decline since 2008. According to 2021 estimates, there was one licensed child care space available for every four California children ages 0-12 with working parents; in some counties, availability was lower than one space for every seven children.

In 2021, median annual costs for full-time licensed infant care at the county level ranged from \$13,600 to \$22,900 in child care centers and from \$10,100 to \$19,700 in family child care homes. Across counties, care for preschoolers ages 2-5 was less expensive, but also showed wide variation, from \$8,300 to \$19,600 annually in child care centers and from \$9,100 to \$18,000 in family child care homes.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/19/early-care-and-education/summary>



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