LICENSED CHILD CARE SUPPLY

In California more than 11,200 center-based programs and 30,700 family child care homes are licensed to serve over 1 million children ages birth to 12 years. Yet this supply is only available for 25 percent of children with working parents. Since 2008, we have seen the supply shrink year after year. If trends continue, options available for working families will be even more limited.

Licensed Child Care

A majority of center-based programs are licensed to serve children 2-5 years. Only 4% of spaces are dedicated to infants.

Family child care homes represent a third of the supply, and are more likely to care for infants and toddlers and offer full-time and flexible hours of care.

Changes in Supply

Between 2008 and 2014, a large portion of California’s counties have experienced a decrease in the number of licensed child care spaces. Family child care homes in particular were severely impacted during the Great Recession and have had a slow recovery since.

High Cost of Care

Families across California struggle to afford care. Child Care Aware of America ranked California the 3rd least-affordable state for center-based infant care. Those that cannot access a subsidy will pay close to half of their income on licensed care.

Maximum Income to Qualify for a Child Care Subsidy Family of 3

All other family needs

- Housing
- Preschooler in a center
- Infant in a family child care home

$42,216 Annual Income

33% 22% 20% 25%


1. California Child Care Resource & Referral Network estimate based on the total number of licensed slots and the estimated number of children with parents in the labor force.
2. Breakdown of age is not available for homes because they are licensed to serve all ages.