

2021 Alameda County Early Care and Education Needs Assessment

Executive Summary

ALAMEDA COUNTY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PLANNING COUNCIL/FIRST 5 ALAMEDA COUNTY



Introduction

It took a pandemic to alert the country to what those steeped in early education have always known: child care is a key economic driver for families, employers, and communities, and is an economic engine allowing our local and national economy to thrive. Child care keeps Alameda County working. The availability of quality child care supports the economic success of families, employers, and children as future contributors to society, and the county. Child care, which includes preschools; child care centers; family child care homes; and license-exempt family, friend and neighbor care, has critical economic multiplier effects.

Further, research has confirmed that children who receive quality early care and education experiences are more likely to have advanced language, academic and social skills, and be more likely to succeed in school and contribute to the economy and to the wellbeing of their families and community. It is imperative that access to quality ECE is afforded to all children, particularly to those historically and currently underserved.

The Alameda County Early Care and Education Planning Council (ECE Planning Council) is charged in statute to complete a Needs Assessment every five years. The comprehensive Needs Assessment has been created at this critical juncture for the field. This year's report highlights high-impact communities, sheds light on provider and program concentration throughout the county, informs outreach strategies for our County's Quality Counts program, and lays the groundwork for implementation of Measure C, the Children's Health and Child Care Initiative recently approved by voters. The Needs Assessment provides an overview of child care in Alameda County while keeping abreast the Planning Council's priorities for our ECE advocacy and policy work: access to care, quality of child care programs, facilities funding, and workforce support.

This Executive Summary contains key summarized data at a glance, for a deeper dive into detailed analysis and zip code level data, <http://www.first5alameda.org/the-2021-alameda-county-early-care-and-education-needs-assessment>.



Family and Child Demographics¹

253,684

number of children **birth – 12 years**
in Alameda County.

117,267

number of children **under 6 years**
in Alameda County.

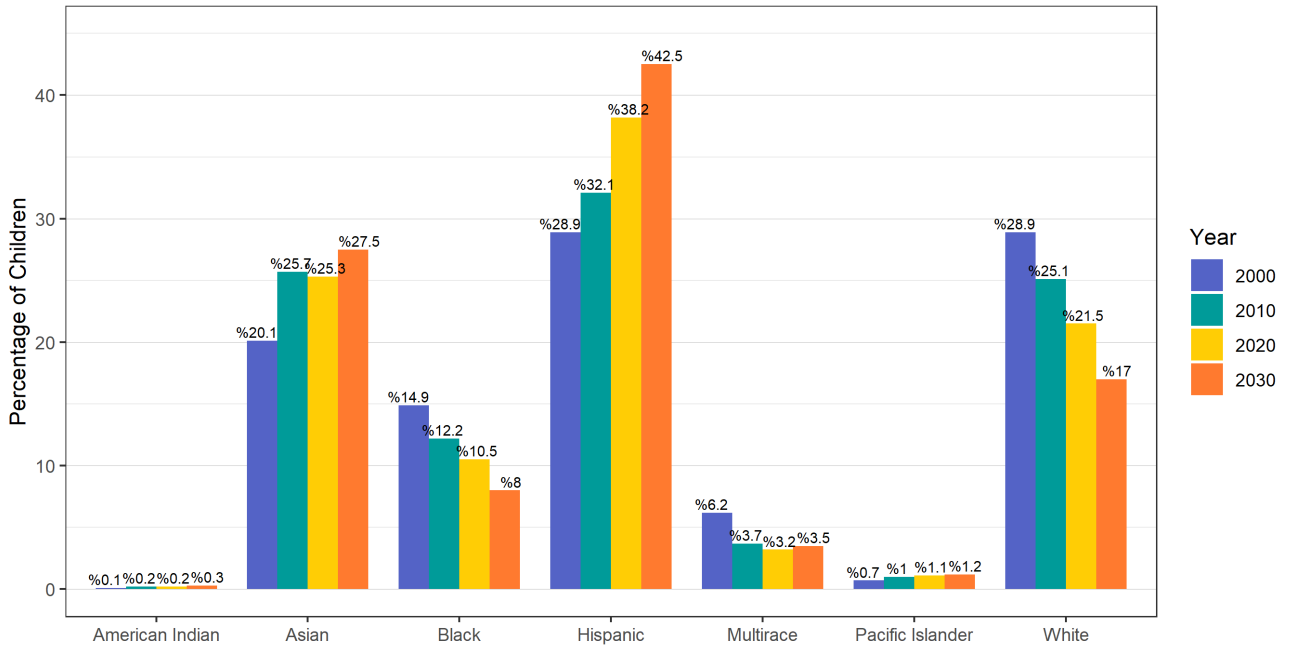
79%

of children **birth to 12**
are **children of color.**

Hispanic/Latinx (31%)
and Asian (25%)

children are currently the largest
racial/ethnic groups and are
projected to grow.

Race/Ethnicity of Children Birth-5 Over Time²



LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION

30%

of **preschool children** in
Alameda County are
English Language Learners³

Spanish is spoken by

61%

of ELL students in
Alameda County
public schools⁴

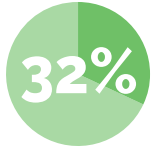
Over

52

languages spoken
by ELL students in
Alameda County⁴



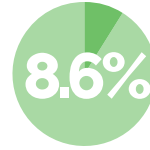
FAMILY INCOME & DEMOGRAPHICS¹



From 2010 to 2018, while the **median household income increased by 32%** the **cost of living increased even more** over the same period.



Between 2012 and 2020, the percent of **affordable homes** for purchase to median income households **declined from 64% to 31%**.






of **children birth – 12 years** old live in **families earning below the federal poverty level**.¹

HIGH COST COUNTY⁵



\$66.18 hourly wage is needed to be **considered self-sufficient** in Alameda County for two adults and two children

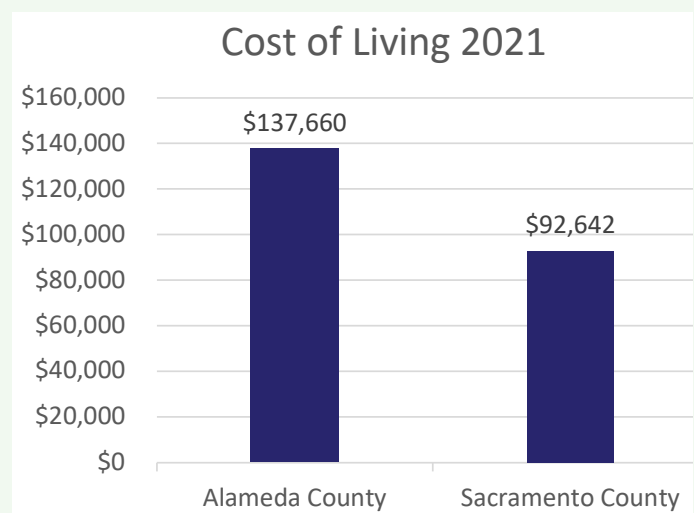
	 Median home price	 Median rent	 Transportation (gas)
Cost in Alameda County	\$981,287	\$3,074	Gas \$3.40 per gallon
Compared to California Average	\$505,000 ⁷ 49% higher	\$1,488 ⁷ 52% higher	Gas \$3.13 per gallon 8%
Compared to National Average	107% higher	183% higher	30% higher



In **Alameda County** a family of four (two adults, an infant and a preschool aged child) must bring in **\$137,660** annually to pay for –

- basic housing
- food
- transportation
- health and child care

In **Sacramento County** a similar family would require an annual income of **\$92,642**.



Capacity

MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM

No one type of care is considered “best” for children birth to 5 years old, rather a **robust variety of affordable, quality, care options is the goal.**

The mix of available care options is considered essential to support family choice

- Licensed and unlicensed sites
- Schedules of care and flexibility
- Language, diversity, and inclusion

Capacity is complex—children may attend more than one program to meet the family's various needs and one program may serve more children than their licensed capacity (e.g. part-day programs may serve twice as many children).

Number of Child Care Spaces Currently Available by Age Group and Setting¹

Setting	Infant Spaces	Preschool Spaces	School-Age Spaces
Licensed Centers	2,206	24,856	9,804
Licensed Family Child Care	3,399	6,699	1,517
License-Exempt Centers	172	1,172	5,481
Total	5,777	32,727	16,802

REDUCTION IN CAPACITY OVER TIME²



There is an overall **decline in licensed capacity** since 2007.



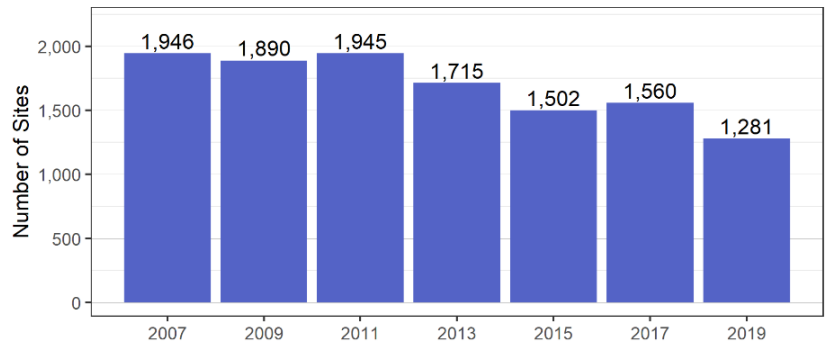
One reason for this decline in capacity is because the **number of licensed family child care providers declined by 34%** during this same time period.



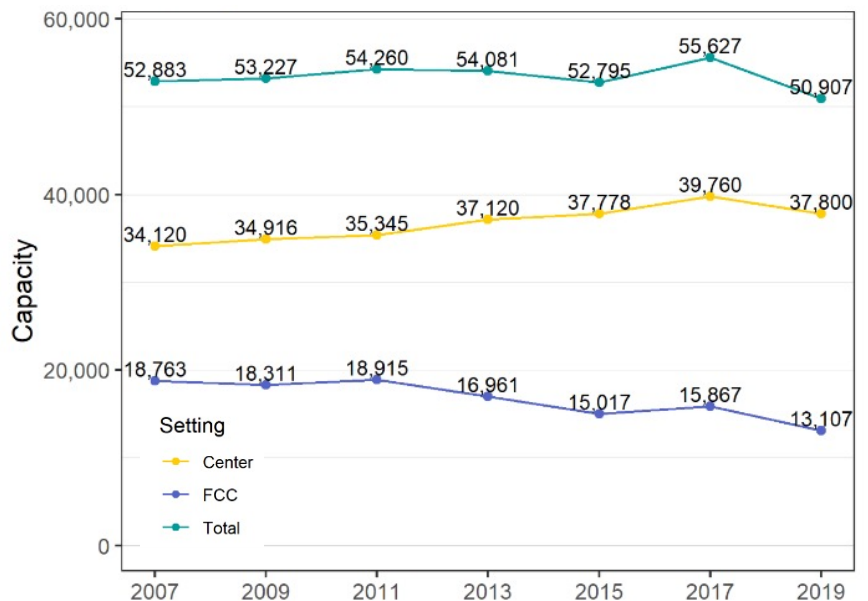
The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this decline — **2 out of 5 child care providers** are expected to **permanently close** without additional public assistance.³



Number of Family Child Care Providers Over Time



Capacity Over Time



AVAILABILITY OF LICENSED CHILD CARE IN ALAMEDA COUNTY¹



556
centers



1,281
family child care sites

Percent of Children for Whom a Licensed Child Care Space Is Available⁴

Age Group	Number of Children	Child Care Capacity	Unmet Need
Birth-2	55,374	5,563	90.0%
3-5	61,893	31,555	49.0%
Birth-5	117,267	37,118	68.3%

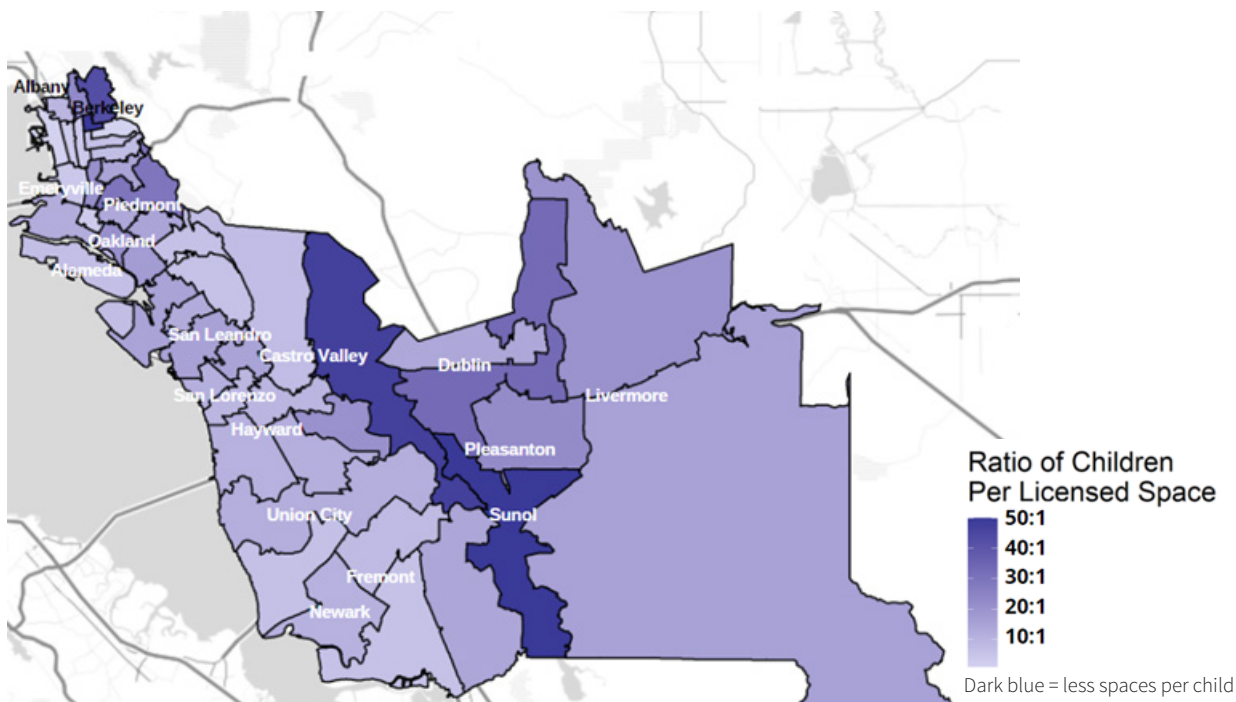


The **entire county** is considered a **desert for infant/toddler care**.⁵



of infants and toddlers do **not** have access to a licensed child care space⁴

Pre-COVID Infant/Toddler Capacity Deserts



Subsidies/Unmet Need

TYPES OF SUBSIDY PROGRAMS

There are two types of child care subsidies:

Vouchers

- CalWORKs
- CAPP – California Alternative Payment Program
- Foster Care Bridge
- CARE (County homeless pilot)

Contracted Spaces

- **Early Head Start/Head Start** – 0<3-year-olds, including some home visiting options/3-5-year-olds.
- **California State Preschool (CSPP)** – Preschool
- **California General Center Contract (CCTR)** – 0-12, but generally 0-2 and school-aged enrollments
- **California Handicapped Program (CHAN)** – for children are severely disabled

ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT¹



of children birth-12 live in households making below 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).

114,704

children birth-12 are eligible for state subsidized child care

25,720

infants/toddlers

17,629

preschoolers

17,604

children utilize subsidized child care, the majority of whom are ages 3-5.

Of these subsidy enrollments, **3,478 children utilized vouchers**. For CAPP vouchers, the majority were **used at FCCs (43%)**, while **30% were used at centers** and **27% for license-exempt care**.

Eligibility for Subsidized Care, Family Size of 3

Eligibility	Income Standard	Annual Standard 2018	Annual Standard 2020
Early Head Start / Head Start	Federal Poverty Level ²	\$ 21,330	\$ 21,960
State Subsidized Child Care (CCTR, CSPP, CAPP)	CA Subsidized Child Care Eligibility Limit (85% of SMI) ³	\$ 65,604	\$ 78,135
CalWORKs	CalWORKs Initial Eligibility Limit ⁴	\$17,436	\$ 17,520

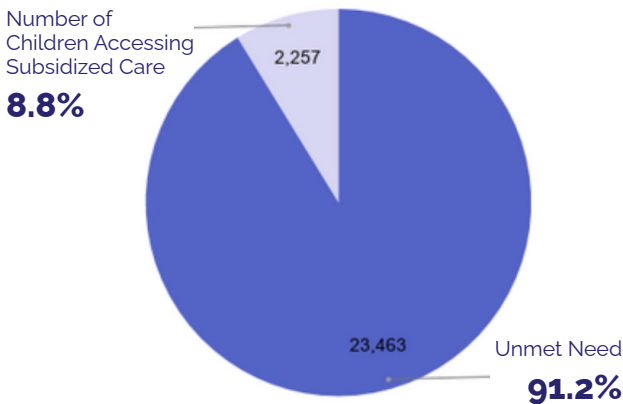
UNMET NEED FOR SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE¹

Unmet need refers to the **difference between subsidy eligible children and those benefiting from subsidized programs**

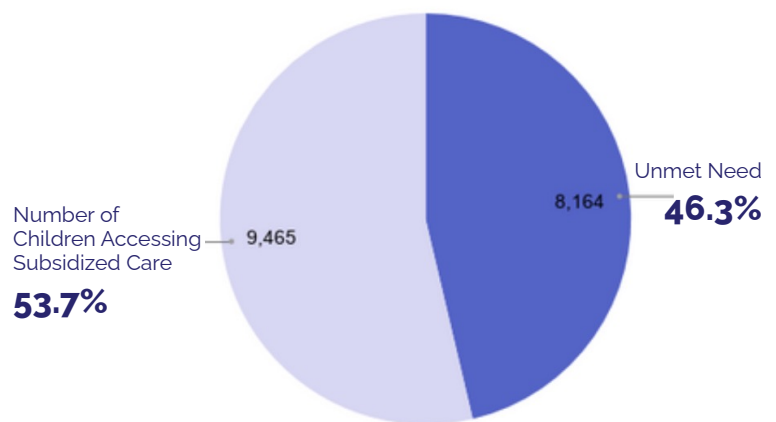
The average **unmet need** in Alameda County ranges between **46%-91%**

6,743 children are on a **subsidy eligibility waitlist**

Infant/Toddler: Unmet Need for Subsidized Care



Preschool: Unmet Need for Subsidized Care



RATES

Current reimbursement rates to child care providers **do not cover the true cost of care**

“While we can make a case that Title 5 centers should be higher than the RMR (Regional Market Rate) no one can make a legitimate case that they should be lower, especially given the lower ratios, teacher requirements and population served.”

Renee S. Herzfeld, Executive Director, 4Cs of Alameda County

CARE HOMELESS CHILD CARE PILOT IN ALAMEDA COUNTY⁶

- Homelessness in the county has doubled from 2015 to 2019⁷
- In 2019, the number of people in **families with children represented 7% of the county’s overall homeless population**. There were 170 unhoused families consisting of 524 individuals counted in the Point-in-Time count. **This is an undercount** since most families counted live in shelters and hidden homeless families staying hidden.⁸
- Alameda County has a **local CARE Pilot for homeless families**. The project was the result of Parent Voices’ advocacy and a response from the Board of Supervisors. BANANAS, Inc administers the pilot which includes approximately \$100,000 for vouchered subsidies and dedicated navigation support to unhoused families to alternative subsidies and subsidized care options. **This program is a bright spot exemplifying how homeless families may be supported to improve their access subsidized care.**
- Since 2019, **187 families have been referred to the CARE Pilot Program.**
- There is greater need for more supports and the **CARE Homeless Child Care Pilot demonstrates the effectiveness of local investment.**

Family “Choice” and Affordability

- The California Child Care system leadership articulates a **commitment to parent choice**. However, **true choice would ensure an adequate supply of care in a variety of settings which are reimbursed at the true cost of providing quality care and wages and benefits for the early care and education workforce**.
- Parent Voices Oakland survey data suggests that **families with the least stability are the most likely to have problems accessing child care**.¹
- There is **no real parent choice if programs are full, unaffordable, or inflexible** in meeting children and families' needs. Ideally, Alameda County's child care system would support a robust set of child care options that are affordable and would allow parents to access quality child care that meets their preferences and needs.



Alternative Payment Voucher Use by Setting²

Setting	Number of Children	Percent of Children Utilizing Vouchers
Licensed Family Child Care Home	1,690	48.7%
Licensed Center Based Care	848	24.4%
License-Exempt Care	931	26.8%
Total	3,469	100%

VOUCHER USE BY RACE/ETHNICITY³

Black/African American families have the highest number of voucher enrollments as well as the highest percentage of enrollments in licensed family child care homes and license-exempt care; while Caucasian/White families have the second highest number of voucher enrollments and the highest percentage of enrollments in centers.

<p>Black/African American families (50%) and Hispanic/Latino families (57%) most frequently chose family child care (50%).</p>	<p>Native American (57%) and Asian American (43%) families chose license-exempt care over other settings.</p>	<p>White/Caucasian families predominantly chose center care (49%)</p>
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CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY⁴



Across reimbursement rate types, **infant/toddler care is consistently the most expensive type of care**.



In Alameda County, a **single-parent family** working full-time and at minimum wage (\$15 per hour) would have to **pay more than half of their net income to pay for full-time care for one child**.



The average cost of **center care for a preschooler in Alameda County at \$23,016 annually**, costs over 40% of the income for a family who is eligible for a subsidy.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), **child care is affordable if it costs no more than 7% of a family's income**. A family with one preschooler and one infant/toddler would need to make \$605,229 to have child care cost no more than 7% of their income.

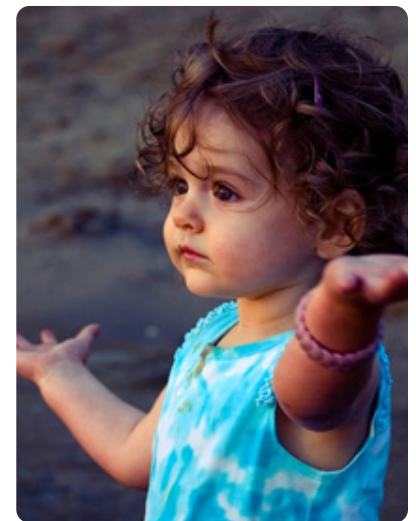
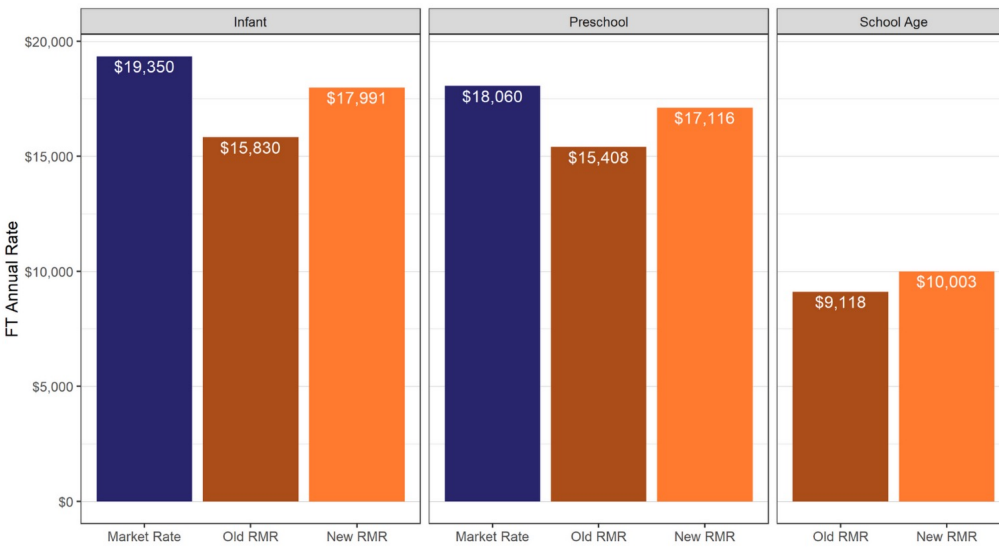
Child Care Rate Analysis

Center Rate Analysis



Market Cost = Average cost of care from the October 2020 Child Care Provider Survey
 SRR Pilot = Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR) for state contracted child care programs as of June 2021
 Old RMR = 2020-21 Regional Market Rate Reimbursement Ceilings; state subsidized rate for alternative payment vouchers
 New RMR = 2022 Regional Market Rate Reimbursement Ceilings; state subsidized rate for alternative payment vouchers

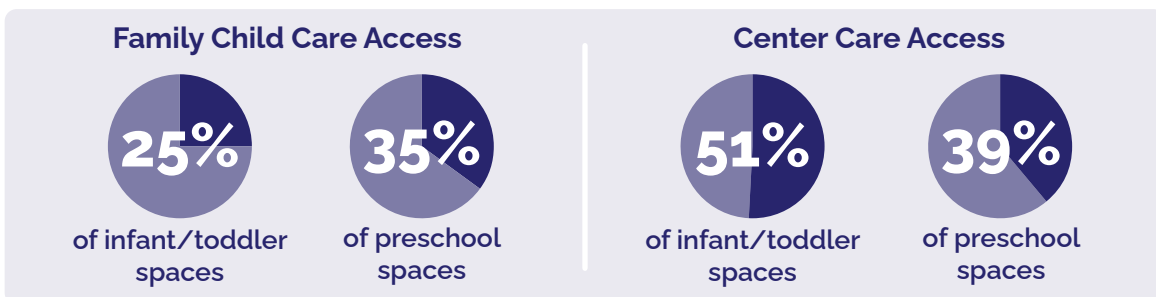
Family Child Care Rate Analysis



Market Cost = Average cost of care from the October 2020 Child Care Provider Survey
 Old RMR = 2020-21 Regional Market Rate Reimbursement Ceilings; state subsidized rate for alternative payment vouchers. Based on payments weekly.
 New RMR = 2022 Regional Market Rate Reimbursement Ceilings; state subsidized rate for alternative payment vouchers. Based on payments weekly.

ACCESS TO CHILD CARE

Regional Market Rate (RMR) payments are supposed allow access to 85% of the child care market, but currently only allow access to the following because of the high cost of care in Alameda County:⁵



Workforce¹

The total **ECE workforce** in Alameda County, pre-COVID, is estimated at **7,680** including



4,085 center workforce professionals



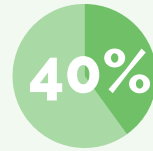
1,281 family child care professional owner operators



2,314 family child care program staff



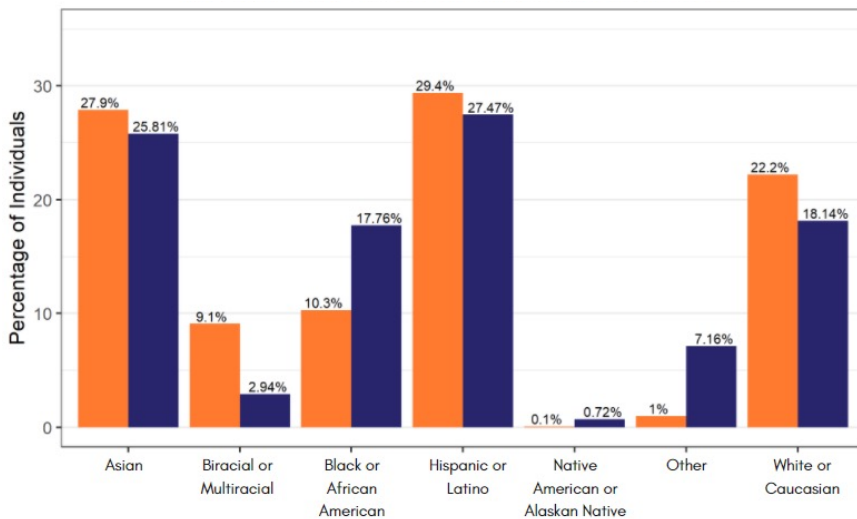
79% are **women of color**



40% of the ECE workforce is **50 or older**

Strategies to professionalize and grow the workforce must be multi-pronged and must include increased compensation. Innovative programs such as the ECE Apprenticeship programs is one strategy to grow our own workforce at little to no cost to participants and that tie wages to professional milestones.

Race/Ethnicity of ECE Workforce and Children Birth-5



WAGES AND COMPENSATION



\$18.00 is the **median hourly wage** and **\$19.64** is the **average hourly wage** for ECE professionals.



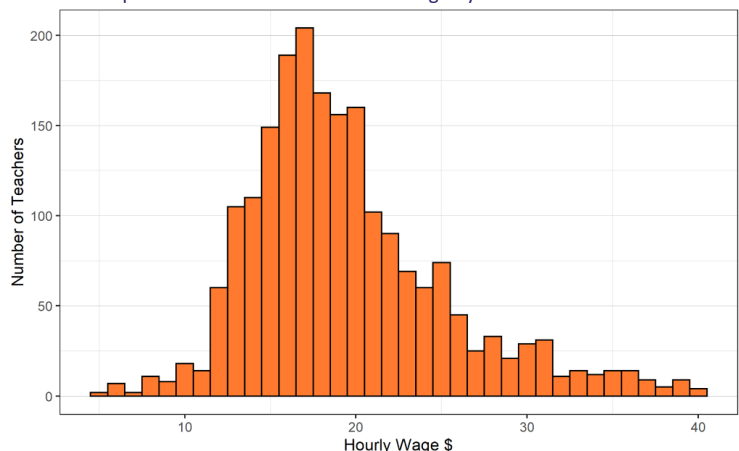
87% of the workforce is **considered very low-income** for Alameda County.



Nearly half of the ECE workforce in **California** is dependent on some form of **public service** (Medical, CalFresh, subsidized childcare and housing).

ECE Workforce Wages

Self-Reported Data from the Workforce Registry October 2020



COVID-19

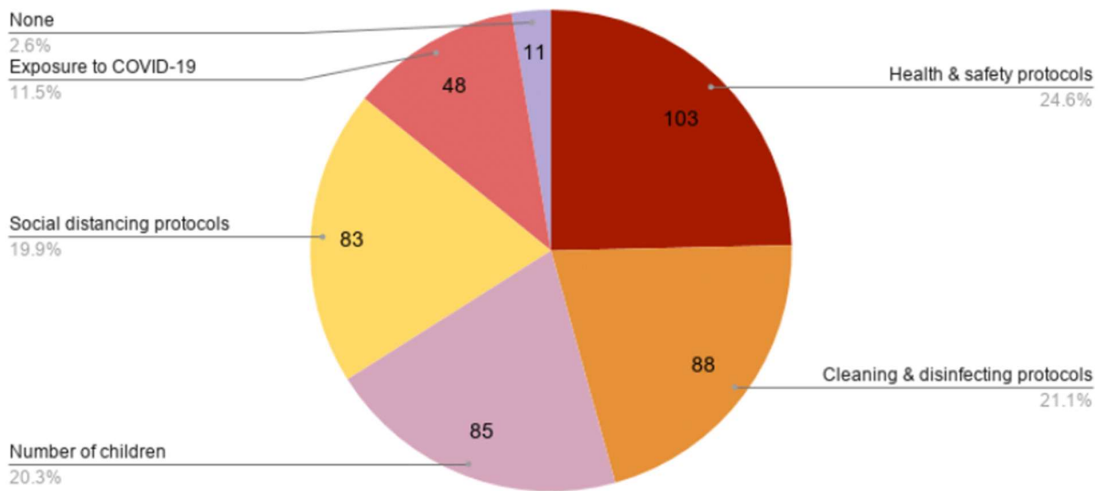
IMPACT

The **COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the lives of many Alameda County residents**, particularly those who have lost their jobs or been unable to work due to child care or other caretaking responsibilities. As of **June 2020**, the **County-wide unemployment rate reached 13.4%**, with certain areas being hit harder than others.

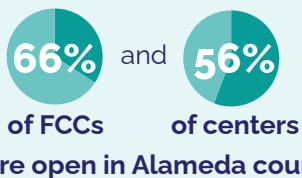
For those **families who continued to work, sending their child(ren) to child care presented many challenges**, including concerns about protocols to keep children safe from COVID.

"I used up my sick time. Now I have no options for income. I will have my job once we can go back to work, but then no money for childcare."
 -Alameda County parent
 (Parent Voices Oakland, 2020)

June 2020 Concerns about Sending Children to Child Care

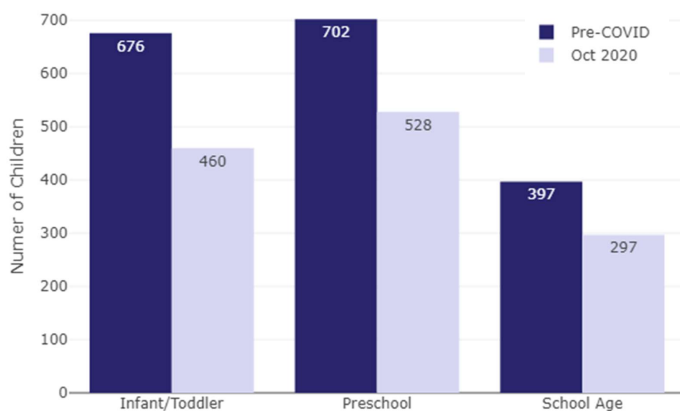


ECE providers were also greatly impacted by COVID-19. In October 2020, only

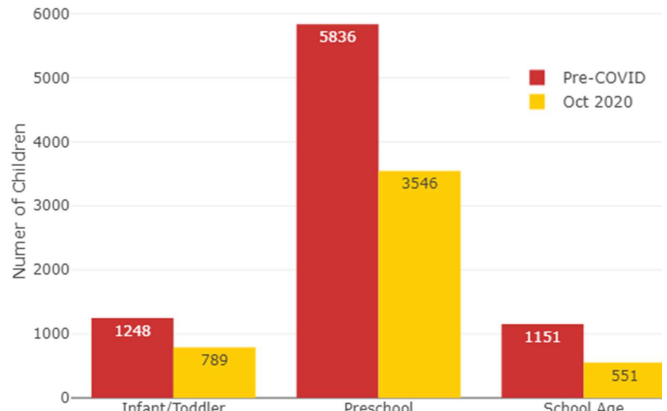


The decrease in enrollment and closures resulted in an estimated loss of **\$18 million per month, an estimated loss of \$395 million in FY2020-21**, in the Alameda County ECE field.

Family Child Care: Reduction in Onsite Enrollment



Child Care Centers: Reduction in Onsite Enrollment



ALAMEDA COUNTY'S COLLABORATION/RESPONSE EC CRT

In response to the pandemic, the **Alameda County Emergency Child Care Response Team (ACECCRT)**, concentrated planning to immediately respond to the needs that arose out of the COVID-19 impact on the child care field. In the constantly changing health and regulatory environment, the ACECCRT **worked to coordinate communications, concrete support, two vaccination clinics, and advocacy on behalf of the county** to ensure the availability of safe care options for families.



"We're currently not only running our child cares and taking care of the children, we're also assisting the public school districts in teaching the children their educational curriculum through Zoom."

-Alameda County Child Care Provider

SPOTLIGHT: HEALTH HEROES

The **Alameda County Health Heroes for Child Care Program**, in partnership with **Samuel Merritt University (SMU) School of Nursing** began at the start of the pandemic to **provide health and safety support from student nurses to child care programs** to help manage the uncertainties and impacts of COVID-19. The Program ran seven cohorts in 2020 and was continued due to its success, including:



111 sites served:
53 FCCs, 57 centers,
1 site unknown



268 student nurses supported 600 ECE teachers



237 children were served in Cohort 7



Needs Assessment Findings

- 1.** *Alameda County’s children and families are extremely diverse — programs and systems must meet the needs of the diverse population.*
- 2.** *There is an inadequate supply of licensed child care and the availability of licensed child care spaces has been declining.*
- 3.** *The current subsidy system is failing to meet the needs of subsidy-eligible children birth-5.*
- 4.** *State and federal income standards do not reflect local cost of living and limits access for families who need help paying for care.*
- 5.** *The high cost of living in the county impacts families’ ability to afford child care and the ability of providers to deliver child care affordably.*
- 6.** *Reimbursement rates from the state and the federal government are grossly inadequate.*
- 7.** *The “system” is extremely complex, resulting in families experiencing difficulties accessing limited choices.*
- 8.** *The early care and education workforce is primarily women of color who are poorly compensated despite years of experience, education, and expertise.*
- 9.** *COVID-19 disrupted the lives of children and families and the systems that support them, exacerbating existing inequities.*
- 10.** *Alameda County’s early care and education field showed its creativity and resilience throughout the pandemic, yet COVID-19 severely impacted the provider community and the systems that support them.*

Acknowledgements

ECE PLANNING COUNCIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT AD HOC ADVISORY

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Lorita Riga	Alameda County Subsidized Child Care Pilot		
Alexia Ritchie	Alameda Unified School District		

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FAMILY AND CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

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2. 2000-2030 RAND State Statistics, Service of the RAND Corporation. Note: Race/ethnicity categories are defined in a variety of ways depending upon the entity collecting the data. Categories are reported according to source categorization.
3. American Institutes for Research, Early Learning Needs Assessment Tool, 2018 and California Department of Education, DataQuest 2018-2019
4. California Department of Education, DataQuest 2018-2019
5. 2020 PayScale, Living wages calculated from <https://insightcced.org/family-needs-calculator/>
6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines 2019 (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/2019-poverty-guidelines>)
7. 2018-19, California Department of Education

CAPACITY

1. 2019 CA R&R Network – Alameda County Child Care Sites. Note: Distribution of FCC spaces across age groups reflects an estimate based on typical distribution of spaces according to licensing ratios and provider enrollment preferences as reported to CC R&Rs. Number of license-exempt centers includes unlicensed parent co-operatives, and some out-of-school time programs not required to be licensed. Numbers do not include license-exempt family, friend and neighbor and nanny care.
2. California Resource and Referral Network 2007-2019 Alameda County Profiles.
3. National Association for the Education of Young Children, “Holding On Until Help Comes: A Survey Reveals Child Care’s Fight to Survive.” July 13, 2020. (https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/holding_on_until_help_comes_survey_analysis_july_2020.pdf)
4. 2019 Alameda County Resource & Referral Child Care Site Data and 2018 American Institutes for Research Early Learning Needs Assessment Tool (ELNAT) data for the number of children by zip code. School age excluded due to the extensive use of unlicensed programs and settings.
5. 2016 Child care desert definition from Center for American Progress: “Areas with an insufficient supply of licensed child care, defining them as census tracts where there were more than three times as many children under the age of five as licensed child care slots,” i.e. any area that has less than 3:1 slots.

SUBSIDIES/UNMET NEED

1. American Institutes for Research, Early Learning Needs Assessment Tool, 2018
2. 2019 and 2021, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/2019-poverty-guidelines>

3. 2019, California Department of Education, Management Bulletin 18-03, Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent SMI) for Recertification, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/mb1803.asp> and 2021-22, California Department of Education, Management Bulletin 21-09, Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent SMI) for Recertification, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/mb2109.asp>
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5. California Department of Education and average Alameda County Market Rate During COVID-19 is from the October 2020 Alameda County Child Care Program Survey conducted by the Alameda County Early Care and Education Program Local Planning Council and First 5 Alameda County. First 5 Alameda County also studied the Private Market Rates for centers by searching all online posted rates and used Child Care Resource and Referral data.
6. BANANAS, Inc. Homeless Child Care CARE pilot data 2018-2020.
7. 2019, <https://everyonehome.org/>
8. 2019, <https://homelessness.acgov.org/homelessness-assets/docs/2019AlamedaCountyHomelessCountReport.pdf>

FAMILY “CHOICE” AND AFFORDABILITY

1. Parent Voices of Oakland, Parent Engagement Study: Informal Care in East Oakland, Parent Voices Final Report to Oakland Starting Smart and Strong, May 1, 2017
2. October 2019 Alternative Payment agencies voucher use from 4Cs of Alameda County, BANANAS, Child Family and Community Services (now closed), Davis Street Family Resource Center, and Hively.
3. September 2020, Alternative Payment Agencies Voucher Use
4. Market Rates are from the October 2020 Alameda County Child Care Program Survey conducted by the Alameda County Early Care and Education Program Local Planning Council and First 5 Alameda County. Percentiles are weighted according to the number of children enrolled by age to ensure that the calculated percentiles more accurately reflect the distribution of rates. Some providers may charge separate rates for infant and toddlers. The voucher rate (RMR) is the full time 2020-21 Voucher Reimbursement Ceiling (based on 2016 Regional Market Rate).

WORKFORCE

1. California ECE Workforce Registry, October 2020.