

# Virginia's Babies Are Waiting

## THE NEED FOR INFANT AND TODDLER EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES



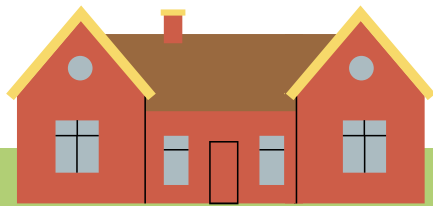
READY REGION CHESAPEAKE BAY

### Insufficient capacity for infant and toddler care

IN READY REGION CHESAPEAKE BAY

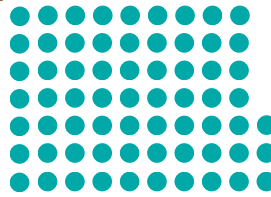
197

Regulated early childhood care and education (ECCE) sites that report serving **infants** and **toddlers**



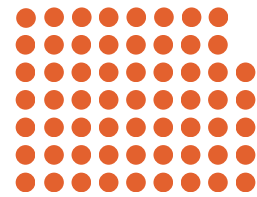
66 infants

PER INFANT-SERVING SITE



61 toddlers

PER TODDLER-SERVING SITE



Given that most sites do not serve nearly this many infants and toddlers, **more capacity is needed** to serve these age groups.

### Inadequate support for low-income and rural families

IN READY REGION CHESAPEAKE BAY

For families with **incomes under 200%** of the federal poverty level, there is:



1 PUBLICLY FUNDED ECCE SLOT FOR EVERY

6 INFANTS AND TODDLERS



In contrast, there is one slot for every **1.1** preschoolers.

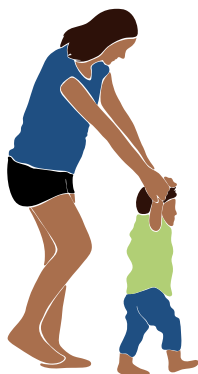
"We don't really have any daycares. The closest one to me is...like 45 minutes to an hour away. And they don't take kids under two. So, I wouldn't be able to put my girls in there anyway."

- **Focus group participant**



### Primary barriers to accessing infant and toddler care

IN READY REGION CHESAPEAKE BAY



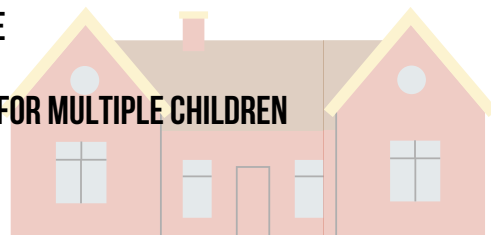
LACK OF AVAILABILITY

EXPENSE

SUPPORT FOR MULTIPLE CHILDREN

HOURS

LOCATION



These barriers **affect parents' ability to work** and **force them to make compromises** about the type and quality of ECCE services their child experiences.

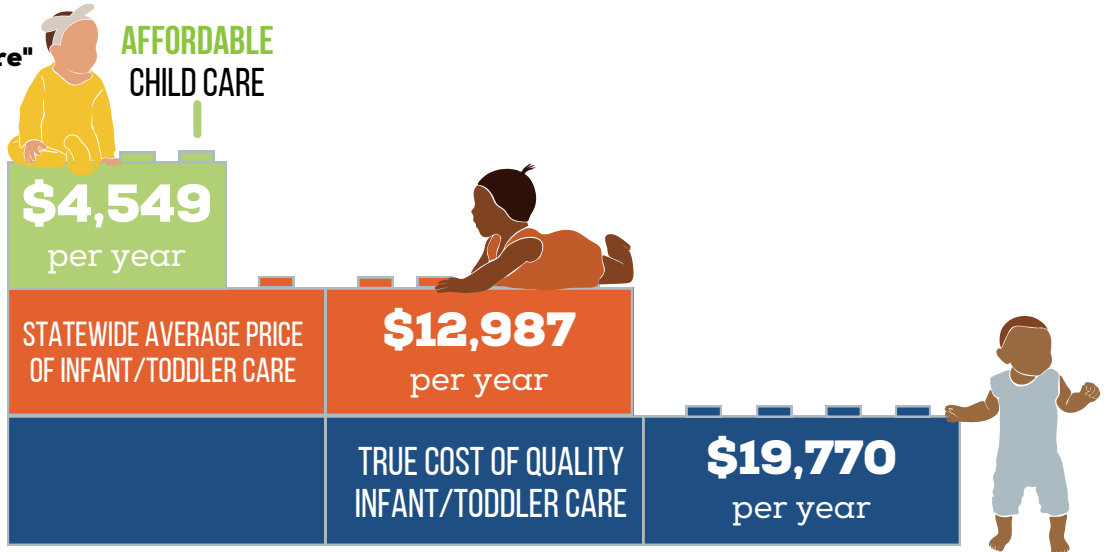
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## THE NEED FOR INFANT AND TODDLER EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES

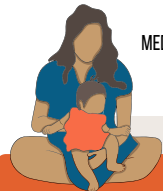
Although the price of infant and toddler services is too high for most families to afford, it is not high enough to pay for quality.

IN READY REGION CHESAPEAKE BAY

"Affordable child care" is considered no more than 7% of family income.



Note: 7% affordability threshold drawn from federal DHHS guidelines; median household income of \$64,988 based on the 2020 5-Year American Community Survey.



Regional average ECCE teacher wages  
**\$15.42** per hour

**High-quality services** cost more than childcare business owners are able to charge families. Because infants and toddlers require a high degree of one-on-one attention and care, Virginia allows no more than four infants per teacher. This helps ensure safe, quality care, but revenue from so few children is insufficient to cover operating costs and pay educators a living wage—even when families are paying so much.

### Making progress

TOWARD QUALITY, ACCESS, AND AFFORDABILITY

#### Milestones in improving ECCE in Virginia:

- Cost-of-quality study to reflect true costs of delivering high-quality services.
- Increase in reimbursement rates to providers serving low-income families to reflect cost-of-quality methodology.
- Updates to copayment rates to reduce family burden.
- Starting in FY24, data on enrollment at all publicly funded ECCE sites.

### Future action steps

TWO IMPROVE INFANT AND TODDLER ECCE SERVICES

#### Steps to build on this progress include:

- Investing in growing the supply of infant and toddler ECCE services.
- Building a workforce that is well-trained and compensated.
- Expanding efforts to improve affordability for families and cost-of-quality funding for providers.
- Building data capacity to understand enrollment and address real-time demand.

**Our youngest children and their families and caregivers can't wait any longer.**

Together, we can create a more equitable ECCE system for Virginia's bright future.

[Learn more at www.vecf.org](http://www.vecf.org)



# References and Methodology

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND

**Supply of ECCE sites:** We estimated the supply of care for infants and toddlers based on the minimum age each provider is licensed to serve according to information included in the database. These data are based on publicly available statewide data and may not precisely reflect the actual supply of care for specific age groups.

**Source:** Virginia Department of Social Services, Division of Licensing Programs. Licensing database (DOLPHIN) as of 1/30/2023. Provided by request from Virginia Department of Education.

**Demand for ECCE services:** The total number of infants and toddlers was derived from population counts by single year of age.

**Source:** Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program. (2022). U.S. Population Data 1969-2020. Retrieved from <https://seer.cancer.gov/popdata>.

**Children-to-site ratios:** The ratio for infants to infant-serving sites is based on the population age < 16 months divided by total providers reporting serving ages < 16 months. The population age < 16 months was calculated by summing the population age 0 with 1/3 of the population age 1 (months 12-15), based on the assumption that population by age in months is evenly distributed within a single year of age.

The ratio for toddlers to toddler-serving sites is based on the population ages 16-35 months divided by total providers reporting serving ages  $\geq$  16 months and < 36 months. Population 16-35 months was calculated by summing 2/3 of the population age 1 with the population age 2.

## SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

**Publicly funded ECCE slots:** Publicly funded slots for infants and toddlers represent the sum of Child Care Subsidy enrollment (as of September 2022), Mixed Delivery slots (FY23), and Early Head Start slots (FY22). Publicly funded slots for preschoolers represent the sum of Child Care Subsidy enrollment, Mixed Delivery slots, Head Start slots, and Virginia Preschool Initiative slots (FY23). Early Head Start and Head Start slots were assigned to geographic region based on the geographic location of the Head Start grantee.

**Low-income families:** Estimate of children in households with incomes <200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) based on single year of age estimates from SEER data multiplied by the <200% poverty rate from the 5-Year 2016-2020 American Community Survey. This estimate is derived from the 0-5 population at the 200% FPL; children ages 0-4 are assumed to have the same rate calculated for the 0-5 population.

**Sources:**

Office of Head Start. (2022). Program Information Report (PIR). <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/data-ongoing-monitoring/article/program-information-report-pir>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). Table B17024 AGE BY RATIO OF INCOME TO POVERTY LEVEL IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS. 2016-2020 5-Year American Community Survey. Retrieved from: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B17024&tid=ACSDT5Y2020.B17024>

Virginia Department of Education. (2022). Virginia Preschool Initiative Late-Enrollment Budget Report, 2022-2023. Provided by request from Virginia Department of Education.

Virginia Department of Social Services. Child Care Subsidy Program enrollment (as of September 2022). Provided by request from Virginia Department of Education.

## BARRIERS TO ECCE SERVICES

**Barriers to access:** Barriers to accessing ECCE services for infants and toddlers were reported by families. In this document, barriers are reported that the most significant barriers at the top of this list.

**Source:** SEE-Partnerships. (2021). *Virginia families with young children survey* [Unpublished tables]. University of Virginia.

## AFFORDABILITY

**Affordable care:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines affordable ECCE as no more than 7% of household income. Statewide in Virginia, the median household income is \$76,398. Due to data limitations at the county level, this is different than the State Median Income scale used for subsidy eligibility.

**Sources:**

Federal Register / Vol. 81, No. 190 / Friday, September 30, 2016 / Rules and Regulations, p. 67440.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-09-30/pdf/2016-22986.pdf>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). Table S1901 Income in the past 12 months (in 2020 inflation-adjusted dollars). 2016-2020 5-Year American Community Survey.

<https://data.census.gov/table?q=Median+house+hold+income&g=0400000US51&tid=ACSDT5Y2020.S1901>

**Average price of care:** The average annual price of care was calculated by summing average costs for infants in centers, infants in family day homes, toddlers in centers, and toddlers in family day homes and then dividing by four.

**Source:** Child Care Aware of America. (2022, November 15). *Child care affordability in Virginia*.

[https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/2021%20Price%20of%20Care%20State%20Sheets/Virginia\\_Price%20Fact%20Sheet%202021.pdf](https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/2021%20Price%20of%20Care%20State%20Sheets/Virginia_Price%20Fact%20Sheet%202021.pdf)

**Cost of quality:** The cost of quality is the annual average cost of care for infants and toddlers in Mixed Delivery in Fiscal Year 2024. The Mixed Delivery reimbursement rates were averaged across age groups (infants, toddlers, 2-year-olds) within each Ready Region and across Ready Regions to obtain a statewide average for infants and toddlers. The reimbursement rates are based on an estimated true cost of ECCE quality that includes competitive compensation for early childhood educators, defined as parity with elementary educators in line with education and/or experience.

**Source:** Virginia Early Childhood Foundation. (2023). *VECF Mixed Delivery funding guide: Fiscal year 2024*.

**Average ECCE teacher wages:** Average ECCE teacher wages were provided by the Virginia Department of Education and reflect the average wages reported in LinkB5 2022 Data Collection for teachers at child care centers. Reported wages below \$7.50/hour were excluded for the purposes of this analysis.

**Source:** LinkB5 2022 Data Collection