

The Montana Child Care Profile



Federal Fiscal Year 2007

A compilation of data about
child care in Montana

Produced by the Montana Child Care
Resource & Referral Network



Funded by a Best Beginnings Grant from
the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Montana

Montana's Children

Total number of residents in Montana ¹	944,632
% growth in population 2000-2005 ¹	4%
Children under 5 as % of population ¹	6%
Children under 18 as % of population ¹	23%
% households with children ¹	30%
% children living in single-parent families ¹	7%
Total number of children under 18 ¹	218,098
Total number of children ages 5-14 ¹	118,019
Total number of children ages 0-4 ¹	57,577
Estimated poverty rate ⁴	14%
% children ages 0-17 living in poverty ¹	17%
% children under 5 living in poverty ¹	19%

Working Parents Need Child Care

Where all available parents are working:	
% children under 6 with working parents ¹	62%
% children ages 6-17 with working parents ¹	75%
% children living in low-income working families ²	21%

Child Care is Expensive

Market rate for one year of full-time, regulated care ³	
for an infant, up to 24 months	\$7,280
for a toddler, 2-3 years	\$6,110
for a preschool child, 3-4 years	\$6,110
for a school-age child, 5+ years ⁴	\$4,160

Child Care Workers are Underpaid

Salary of child care worker ⁵	\$16,930
Salary of preschool teacher ⁵	\$20,420
Salary of public elementary school teacher ⁵	\$35,480

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

² KIDS COUNT Census Data Online, The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2006, http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/profile_results.jsp?r=28&d=1&c=3&p=5&x=0&y=0

³ At 75th Percentile of Center Rates, MT Department of Public Health and Human Services FY07

⁴ At 75th Percentile of Center Rates, MT Department of Public Health and Human Services FY07 Four hours/day – before/after school

⁵ Statewide averages, U.S. Department of Labor, 2006

Child Care Need and Capacity in Montana

Parents Need Child Care ¹

Type of care requested by parents ²	
Infant/toddler care (under 3 yrs)	41%
Preschool care (3-4 yrs)	19%
School-age care (5+ yrs)	27%

Schedules requested by parents ²	
Full-time care	48%
Part-time care	6%
Both full-time and part-time care	8%

Special schedules requested by parents ²	
Before/after school	6%
Rotating/flexible hours	4%

Requests for non-traditional hours ²	
Weekend care	10%
Evening/overnight care	2%

Child Care Is Hard to Find ⁴

Total Regulated Capacity ⁵	22,106 slots
Total Infant Capacity ⁵	6,310 slots
Total Vacancies ²	2,487 slots
Total Infant Vacancies ²	772 slots

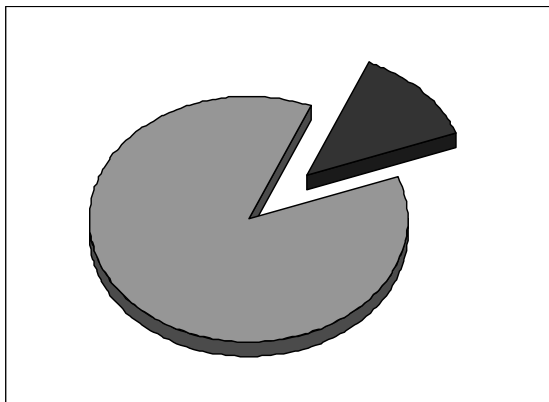
Total Facilities ⁵	1,956
Child care centers	246
Group child care homes	493
Family child care homes	532

Facilities offering care during non-traditional hours ²	
Evening care	4%
Overnight care	5%
Weekend care	9%



Child Care Payment Assistance	
Children served ⁵	9,765
Families served ⁵	6,147
Dollars spent ⁵	\$19,808,446
Spending generated in local communities ⁶	\$31,693,514

Child Care Supply and Demand

There is only enough regulated child care capacity in Montana to serve 18% of children from working families.



Total children ages 0-17 with all available parents working ³ - 145,618

	Number of Regulated Child Care slots =	22,106 slots
	Number of children from working families who cannot be served by regulated child care =	123,512

¹ Percentage may total more than 100% because, in some categories, more than one type of care is requested.

² NACCRRAware Supply & Demand Report FY07

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 <http://www.factfinder.census.gov>

⁴ Within the childcare industry, capacity is described by the term *slots*, indicating the number of children who can be served full-time in a regulated care setting

⁵ MT Department of Public Health and Human Services, FY07

⁶ Approx. number generated from multiplier determined by MT Dept. of Labor and Industry, 2003

The data indicates important trends:

- **Regulated care is still in short supply.**
On average, only one slot at a licensed child care center or registered child care home exists for every five children with working parents.
- **School-age care is hard to find.¹**
School-age care programs statewide have the capacity to serve just 16% of school-age children with working parents. Despite a 10% increase in afterschool capacity, families still need more options for out-of-school time care.
- **Child care capacity and the number of child care facilities declined statewide.**
There is an increase in family child care homes from 2006 to 2007, from 548 to 636. This is especially beneficial to very small rural communities and to families who need the flexible scheduling that home-based child care businesses can provide.
- **Few facilities offer evening or overnight care.**
Statewide, only 3% of facilities offer evening care. Only 4% offer overnight care.
- **Some types of care are less profitable, and harder to find.**
Factors challenge income and profitability for child care businesses.
 - Infant care requires a ratio of one adult to only four children.
 - School-age care is a part-time service, often operating only 3 hours a day.
 - Serving families with flexible and part-time schedules can prevent the business from operating at full capacity.
- **Child care workers are underpaid and losing ground compared to others working with young children.**
There is a growing disparity between Montana child care worker wages and preschool or elementary school teacher wages. Child care worker wages declined 4% over the last three years: \$17,630 in 2003 compared to \$16,930 in 2006. At the same time, both preschool and elementary school teacher wages continued to increase. In 2006, child care workers earned 82% of what preschool teachers earned, and they earned only 47% of what public elementary teachers did.

What the Data Doesn't Show

Although this Profile gives a detailed snapshot of regulated child care in Montana, it doesn't tell the whole story. Until more data is available, important questions remain.

How much child care is really available?

Assessments of capacity assume that regulated providers keep all of their slots open. In fact, many child care facilities do not operate at full capacity because of the shortage of qualified staff and the complexities of serving working families. All of these factors challenge income and profitability for child care businesses.

How many children are in unregulated care?

Hundreds of Montana families rely on unregulated care provided by family, friends, or neighbors. The state recognizes a category of home-based care called legally-unregistered providers. Some parents find this care more convenient or flexible; others may choose it because of cost or quality considerations.

How much capacity is lost in a year?

We know that many facilities closed this year due to their inability to cover operating costs. Despite efforts to recruit and retain regulated caregivers, they often leave the field and are replaced by newcomers with entry level skills. Improved training and compensation enhance caregiver job satisfaction and longevity.

¹ Montana Afterschool Service Capacity Report 2005-2006.

