2021 Alameda County Early Care and Education Needs Assessment

Executive Summary

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 Demographics

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 Time

Linguistic Composition

30%
of preschool children in Alameda County are English Language Learners.

61%
of ELL students in Alameda County public schools.

Over 52
languages spoken by ELL students in Alameda County.
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.

### FAMILY INCOME & DEMOGRAPHICS

- 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%.
- 8.6% of children birth – 12 years old live in families earning below the federal poverty level.

### HIGH COST COUNTY

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median home price</th>
<th>Median rent</th>
<th>Transportation (gas)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost in Alameda County</td>
<td>$981,287</td>
<td>$3,074</td>
<td>Gas $3.40 per gallon</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Gas $3.13 per gallon 8%</td>
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### Cost of Living 2021

- Alameda County: $137,660
- Sacramento County: $92,642

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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).

Reduction in Capacity Over Time

There is an overall decline in licensed capacity since 2007.

One reason for this decline is 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.

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

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

Source: 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.
AVAILABILITY OF LICENSED CHILD CARE IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

556 centers
1,281 family child care sites

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Child Care Capacity</th>
<th>Unmet Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth-2</td>
<td>55,374</td>
<td>5,563</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>61,893</td>
<td>31,555</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth-5</td>
<td>117,267</td>
<td>37,118</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 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.

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

of infants and toddlers do not have access to a licensed child care space.

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 ENROLLMENT

41% 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, the majority of whom are ages 3-5.

25,720 infants/toddlers

17,629 preschoolers

17,604 children utilize subsidized child care. The majority of whom 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Income Standard</th>
<th>Annual Standard 2018</th>
<th>Annual Standard 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Head Start / Head Start</td>
<td>Federal Poverty Level²</td>
<td>$ 21,330</td>
<td>$ 21,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Subsidized Child Care (CCTR, CSPP, CAPP)</td>
<td>CA Subsidized Child Care Eligibility Limit (85% of SMI)³</td>
<td>$ 65,604</td>
<td>$ 78,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CalWORKs</td>
<td>CalWORKs Initial Eligibility Limit⁴</td>
<td>$17,436</td>
<td>$ 17,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CARE HOMELESS CHILD CARE PILOT IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

- Homelessness in the county has doubled from 2015 to 2019.
- 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.
- 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.

Alternative Payment Voucher Use by Setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Percent of Children Utilizing Vouchers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Family Child Care Home</td>
<td>1,690</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Center Based Care</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License-Exempt Care</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,469</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VOUCHER USE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

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.

CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY

- Across reimbursement rate types, infant/toddler care is consistently the most expensive type of care.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
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. The Regional Market Rate (RMR) payments are supposed to 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.

**Center Rate Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Infant</th>
<th>Toddler</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMR</td>
<td>$31,990</td>
<td>$22,569</td>
<td>$21,381</td>
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<td>$31,990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old RMR</td>
<td>$22,569</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>New RMR</td>
<td>$21,381</td>
<td>$21,381</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Cost</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>$12,818</td>
<td>$19,825</td>
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<td>$20,000</td>
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</tr>
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<td>New RMR</td>
<td>$19,825</td>
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</table>

**Family Child Care Rate Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Infant</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>School Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMR</td>
<td>$19,350</td>
<td>$18,080</td>
<td>$10,003</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRR Pilot</td>
<td>$19,350</td>
<td>$18,080</td>
<td>$10,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old RMR</td>
<td>$15,830</td>
<td>$15,408</td>
<td>$9,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New RMR</td>
<td>$17,991</td>
<td>$17,116</td>
<td>$10,203</td>
</tr>
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<td>$17,000</td>
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Workforce

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage of Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial or Multiracial</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>17.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White or Caucasian</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
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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).

WAGES AND COMPENSATION

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

ECE Workforce Wages

Self-Reported Data from the Workforce Registry October 2020

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

ECE providers were also greatly impacted by COVID-19. In October 2020, only 66% of FCCs and 56% of centers were open in Alameda county.

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.

“\[I used up my sick time. Now I have no options for income. I will have my job once we can go back to work, but then no money for childcare.\]”

- Alameda County parent (Parent Voices Oakland, 2020)

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.
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
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

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Oakland Unified School District
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Oakland Starting Smart and Strong
First 5 Alameda County
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Fremont Unified School District
Castro Valley Unified School District
Oakland Unified School District
Alameda Unified School District

YMCA of the East Bay
Works Cited

FAMILY AND CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

1. American Institutes for Research, Early Learning Needs Assessment Tool, 2018
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.
5. 2020 PayScale, Living wages calculated from https://insightcced.org/family-needs-calculator/
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.
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
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.

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