

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment



April

2024





Equitable access to early learning and care depends upon families having a choice of program settings near their homes or work. Ensuring such access requires not just having the funds to finance the care, but also having the facilities to deliver it.

~CALIFORNIA'S MASTER PLAN FOR EARLY LEARNING AND CARE, PAGE 40



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Special thanks to:

- *The family child care and center child care operators who took the time to complete the Child Care Facilities Survey, which provided critical information for this report.*
- *City and County planning departments for quickly responding to the child care land use survey and for considering policy changes that will support child care facility development.*

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment (Facilities NA) is to review and expand on what is known about child care facilities in Santa Barbara County to more clearly understand the need for child care facility development and expansion, especially for infants and toddlers. Information gathered through this work will inform the creation of a Child Care Facilities Master Plan for Santa Barbara County in 2024-2025.



This report is part of a larger body of work aimed at ensuring that families in Santa Barbara County have access to high-quality child care services, especially families with infants and toddlers.

Funded by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors through American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) federal allocations, the work aims to:

- Increase the child care workforce for infants and toddlers
- Expand child care facilities through grants, technical assistance, and business training
- Understand and clarify the child care facilities needs in the various regions
- Assist child care operators to recover from the effects of COVID-19.

The funding is overseen by First 5 Santa Barbara County, contracted to the Santa Barbara Foundation and subcontracted to Children’s Resource and Referral of Santa Barbara County and the Santa Barbara County Education Office.

Parallel and coordinated work through the same County ARPA grant funding is happening through United Way of Santa Barbara County, which is focused on a continuing assessment of child care in general across the county, employer-sponsored child care, a scholarship fund for middle income families, and emergency child care for the County’s first responders and emergency management staff.

Methodology

The following are the driving questions this report aims to address for Santa Barbara County:

- *What, and where, is the unmet need for licensed child care for children ages 0-5?*
- *What are the opportunities and challenges for expanding child care access through facility development?*
- *What are the recommended next steps?*

Although there are many ways child care can be provided, this report focuses on licensed child care facilities - family child care (in a child care operator's home), and child care centers, in Santa Barbara County. A variety of sources and methods were used to collect and analyze data in order to understand what is needed to increase access to quality child care through the expansion and development of facilities.

See the Appendix for a breakdown of the regions by zip code, regional data snapshots, and a complete list of definitions used in this report. A complete list of references is listed in the appendix as well.

Two new surveys provided information and insights into aspects of child care facilities for which there was limited current local data:

Land Use Planning Survey

A survey was conducted in the fall of 2023, asking local city and county planning departments about their child care land use policies and practices. All nine jurisdictions (Santa Barbara County and eight cities) participated in the survey. All were invited to study sessions February - May 2024 on child care land use, best practices, and resources. Plans for policy changes from the jurisdictions will be included in a report on child care land use planning and recommendations in Santa Barbara County, to be published June 2024. Highlights from the survey are included in the Child Care Facilities Development section.

Child Care Facilities Survey

Local state-licensed child care operators were surveyed specifically about their facility sites as well as their licensed capacity and enrollment, facility expansion history and interest in future expansion, as well as facility renovation needs. Questions about emergency preparedness and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic were also included. Children's Resource and Referral spearheaded the distribution of the online bilingual survey to all licensed child care providers in Santa Barbara County in February 2024. The survey was open for two weeks.

Throughout this document, for responses to survey questions that used checkboxes, total response percentages may exceed 100% when respondents could select all that apply.

A total of 210 child care programs operating in Santa Barbara County completed the survey (64 in Spanish and 146 English) survey. The respondents included:

- 77 child care centers representing 59% of the 130 licensed centers and 55.2% of the center-based licensed spaces in the county.
- 133 Family Child Care (FCC) programs representing 27% of the licensed FCCs in the County
 - 55 Small FCCs representing 24% of those in the County
 - 78 Large FCCs representing 29% of those in the County

The following is an overview of the characteristics of the 210 respondents to the Child Care Facilities Survey that was conducted as part of this project.

Business Structure of Center-based Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 88.3% operate a nonprofit/government business (e.g. School District, City, County, etc.). ● 11.7% operate a for profit business.
Location of Center-based Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 35% are on a school district site. ● 20% are on a faith organization’s site. ● 17% are on a site designated primarily for the child care center.
Ability to Serve Infants and Toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 33% of FCCs have infants and/or toddlers enrolled. ● 36% of centers are licensed to serve infants and/or toddlers.
Operational Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 64.9% of centers and 98.5% of FCCs operate year round (minus time off for holidays and seasonal breaks). ● 35.0% of centers operate on the school district calendar year (closed during the summer and other district breaks).
Days of Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nearly all sites are open Monday through Friday. ● 44.4% of the FCCs offer care on Saturdays compared to only one center.
Number of Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The majority (69%) of centers have 1-3 classrooms although 25% of center sites have 4-6 classrooms.
Daily Hours of Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is more common for FCCs to be open earlier in the morning and for more hours a day compared to centers. ● 68.4% of centers open at 8am or earlier compared to 94.7% of FCCs. ● 58.0% of centers and 75.2% of FCCs are open 9-12 hours a day. ● 40.7% of centers and 9.0% of FCC are open 8 hours or less a day.
Vouchers and Subsidies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 46.5% of centers and 93.0% of FCCs accept tuition vouchers that help families pay for care (e.g. Alternative Payment Program (APP) through Children’s Resource and Referral and Santa Barbara County Education Office).

Throughout this report the terms ‘child care’ and ‘facilities’ are used to refer to all licensed child care programs (operated in family child care (FCC) homes and centers) for children ages 0-5. Such programs are licensed by California’s Community Care Licensing (Licensing) division of the Department of Social Services. Information about California’s Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is included where data was available.

Executive Summary

Santa Barbara County

Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment



The Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment delves deep into the critical intersection of child care demand and infrastructure availability. By examining existing research data, demographic insights, and new surveys, the report sheds light on the challenges and opportunities of providing accessible, high-quality child care spaces across the county.

Assets, regional summaries and recommendations are provided to empower communities to take action locally. Calling for collaboration across sectors, this assessment paves the way for a strategic Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Master Plan in 2025, with strategies to help ensure every child, family, and community has the child care infrastructure they need to thrive.

DRIVING QUESTIONS



WHAT, AND WHERE, IS THE UNMET NEED FOR LICENSED CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN AGES 0-5?

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR EXPANDING CHILD CARE ACCESS THROUGH FACILITY DEVELOPMENT?

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS?

KEY FINDINGS

More Child Care Facilities are Needed for Young Children

Just 1 in 10 infants and toddlers currently have access to a licensed child care space and 7 in every 10 preschool aged children (ages 3-5) have access to a licensed child care or TK space, although this varies by region.



There is Interest in Facility Expansion

In the last 10 years, 16 child care centers and 31 FCCs who responded to the Child Care Facilities Survey expanded and created a total of 587 new spaces. Thirty-seven centers and 96 FCCs indicated they would be interested in increasing their current number of licensed spaces in the next 5 years if support and funding were available.



Operators Face Challenges to Expanding

Operators reported that the greatest challenges to expansion are lack of staff and funding, regulatory requirements, finding a site and the time required to complete the work.



Resource Needs are identified

To add more spaces at a current or new site, operators identified needing help with funding, city/county permitting, finding possible sites, facility design, and purchasing a site.



RECOMMENDATIONS



1

Build community knowledge and public will for the expansion of high quality licensed child care facilities in Santa Barbara County. Convene a coalition to address barriers and opportunities with stakeholders from a diverse array of sectors such as local government, urban planning, early childhood education, philanthropy, business/economic development, communications, building and real estate. Set goals for policy, public investment and new or upgraded facilities, and track successes as well as new challenges that arise.

2

Work with communities to add data that further defines regional capacity, unique needs and assets, and to estimate the cost of addressing the child care facilities gap.

3

Expand the Facilities Needs Assessment by gathering additional details and real stories from child care providers about their facilities start up and expansion experiences, prospects, and assistance needed.

4

Support the city and County planning departments to learn more about child care land use best practices, and to consider making changes to current policies and practices in order to increase child care facilities development.

5

Identify facilities development and funding strategies, and gather input from a broad audience on those options that will have the greatest impact. Create a Roadmap for Child Care Facilities for Santa Barbara County, with specific steps and strategies for each community.

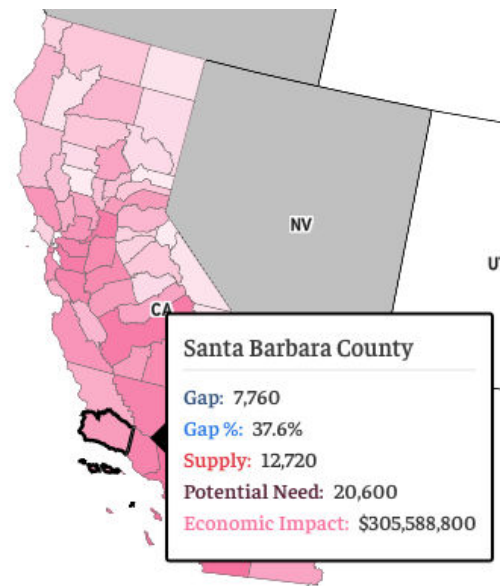
OVERVIEW OF CHILD CARE FACILITIES

High quality child care can help children thrive, allow families to work, and improve economic outcomes for businesses and the community. The child care facilities themselves, and their condition, are critical to ensuring access to high quality services in locations where families need them, and offer good places for teachers to work. Child care facilities that are safe, free of hazards, and provide opportunities for learning and growth are essential, for both children and teachers.

The child care facility development system, though, is complex and requires expertise, capacity, money and time to navigate, just like any other type of development. Individual child care operators cannot address this community challenge on their own, as many do not have the necessary resources or knowledge. In order to increase access by expanding current programs or starting up new programs, operators need funding, technical assistance and supportive policy environments. The community benefits from broad access to high quality child care, and all sectors can contribute towards the effort to ensure this critical community infrastructure is in place.

The availability of high quality child care facilities affects a community's economy. According to the [Bipartisan Policy Center's Child Care Gap report](#) (2019), Santa Barbara County experiences an annual negative economic impact of \$305 million in lost revenue for families, businesses, and government due to the limited supply of licensed child care options.

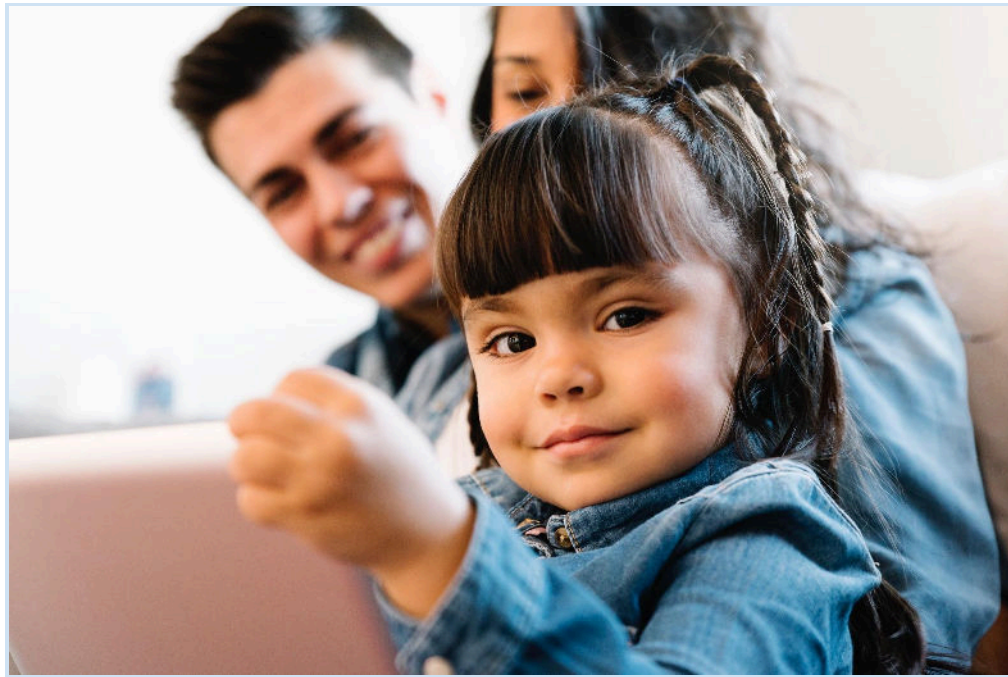
The information, data and resources included in this report break down the complexity of the child care facilities system, identifying specific barriers and opportunities that can be acted upon to improve access.



Bipartisan Policy Center [Child Care Gaps Assessment](#) (2019)

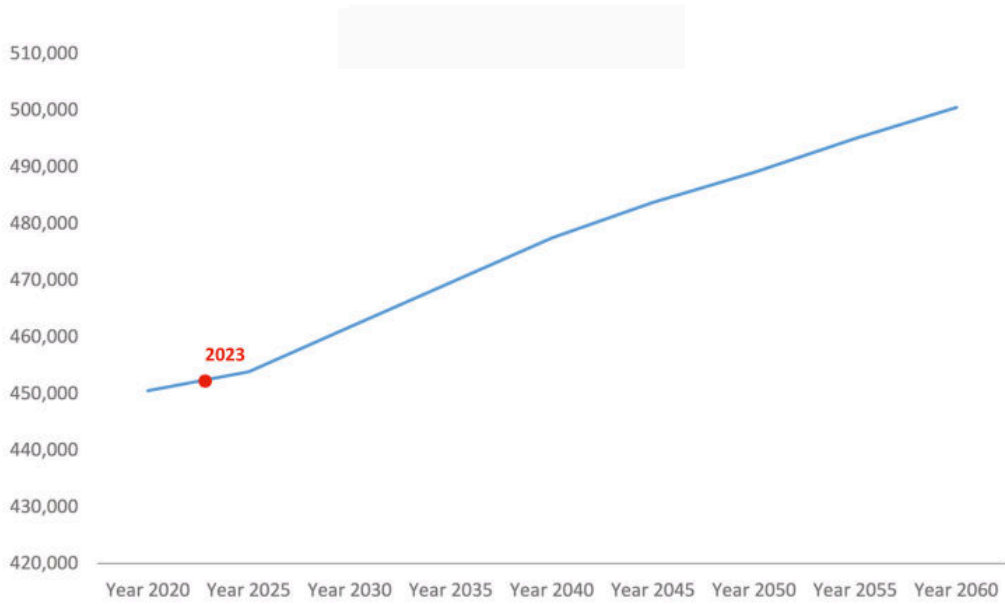
FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

There are 443,837 residents in Santa Barbara County ([U.S. Census, 2022](#)) and 32,874 children (ages 0-5) ([American Institute for Research \(AIR\), 2020](#)). The total population in Santa Barbara County has steadily increased over time and is projected to continue to do so yet the population of children (ages 0-5) has decreased from 2020 to 2023 and is projected to continue to decline a total of 9% by 2060 ([California Department of Finance, 2023](#)).



The population growth rate in Santa Barbara County was 0.54% in the past year and 7.46% since 2010. ([World Population Review, 2023](#)). Even though the total local population has, and continues to be projected to steadily increase over time (from 450,504 in 2020 to 500,477 in 2060), the population of children (ages 0-5) in Santa Barbara County is projected to decrease during this same period (from 35,075 children ages 0-5 in 2020 to 31,865 children ages 0-5 in 2060) ([California Department of Finance, 2023](#)). The following charts illustrate these trends, showing an increase in total population of 49,973 (9%), and a decrease in the population of children aged 0-5 of 3,210 (9%).

Local total population projected to increase



California Department of Finance, 2023

Local population of children (ages 0-5) projected to decrease



California Department of Finance, 2023

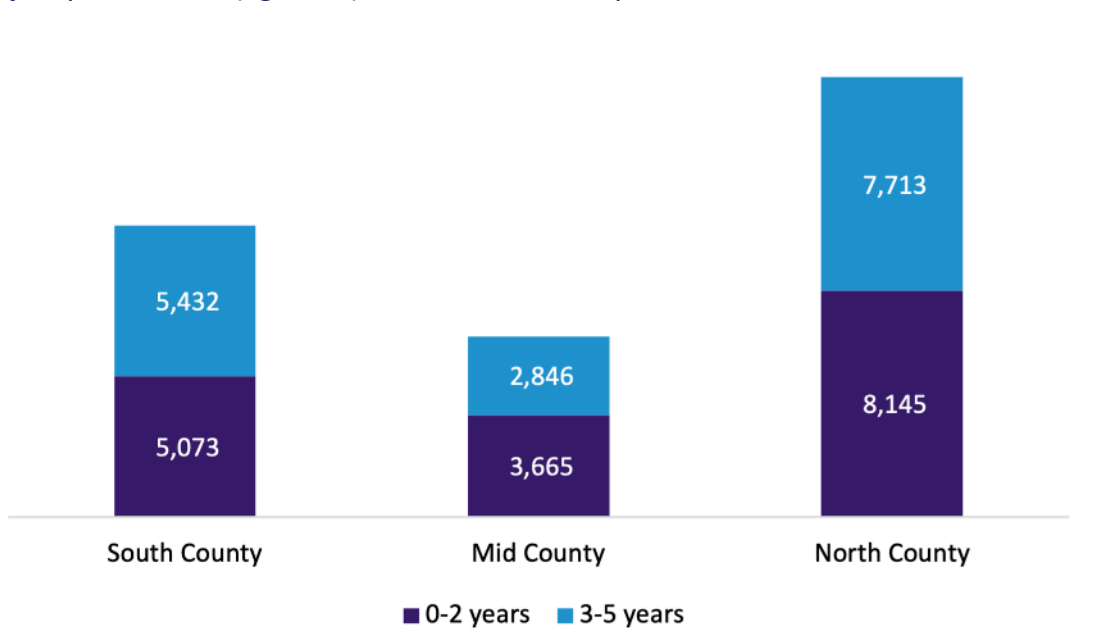
Children in Santa Barbara County

Of the 32,874 children (ages 0-5) in Santa Barbara County, more than half (16,883) are ages 0-2 years old and 15,991 are ages 3-5 years old (AIR, 2020). This equates to nearly 900 more children ages 0-2 compared to children ages 3-5. The majority of young children (ages 0-5) live in North County and 63% of all children (ages 0-5) in Santa Barbara County are living in homes with working families.

The population of children ages 0-5 is commonly used to determine the demand and unmet need for child care in a community. Parents who work often rely on care in order to fulfill work-related responsibilities. The data in this section creates a baseline for understanding the need for quality child care facility development and expansion.

There are more children living in North County compared to South County and Mid County. The following charts depict the number of children by age, region, and community area.

The majority of children (ages 0-5) live in North County



AIR, 2020

More children (ages 0-5) live in Santa Maria than other community areas

	Children ages 0-2	Children ages 3-5	Total children ages 0-5
Carpinteria/Summerland	417	451	868
Goleta	1,375	1,445	2,820
Guadalupe	335	260	595
Lompoc	2,719	2,110	4,829
New Cuyama/Cuyama	38	30	68
Orcutt/Los Alamos	2,519	2,415	4,934
Santa Barbara	3,281	3,536	6,817
Santa Maria	5,253	5,008	10,261
Santa Ynez Valley	946	736	1,682
Santa Barbara County	16,883	15,991	32,874

AIR, 2020

The Majority of Local Children (ages 0-5) Live with Working Families

Working families who have children ages 0-5 often rely on child care in order to fulfill their job responsibilities. County-wide, 62% of local children (ages 0-5) are living in homes with working families; however, this rate varies by community: 65% in South County, 60% in Mid County, and 60% in North County (AIR, 2020).

Cost of Living in Santa Barbara County

The cost of living in Santa Barbara County is higher than many other California counties. Families with young children face above-average housing costs. A smaller percentage of people own homes in Santa Barbara County compared to both California and the United States, and a greater percentage of residents and children are living in poverty in Santa Barbara County compared to California. All of these factors make it difficult for families to afford quality child care and make ends meet in Santa Barbara County. Child care operators and staff face the same cost of living challenges, which make it difficult to run and sustain a child care business.

Local Families Struggle to Make Ends Meet

The median household income in Santa Barbara County was **\$92,332** in 2022 ([U.S. Census](#), 2022). The annual household income needed to make ends meet for a family of four (two adults, one infant or toddler, one preschooler) is **\$124,072** ([Self-Sufficiency Standard at the Center for Women's Welfare](#), 2021). This requires both adults to earn at least \$29.37/hour and work full time to earn \$10,339 per month total. The following chart illustrates the monthly cost of living for a family of four. The high cost of living in Santa Barbara County creates additional challenges for single parent households.

Monthly cost of living in Santa Barbara County for a family of four

Monthly Expense	Cost
Rent	\$2,275
Utilities	\$99
Child Care	\$3,090
Health Care	\$807
Food	\$821
Transportation	\$615
Miscellaneous	\$771
Taxes	\$2,295
Child Care Tax Credit (-)	(\$100)
Child Tax Credit (-)	(\$333)
Earned Income Tax Credit (-)	\$0
TOTAL Monthly Expenses	10,340
SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD	
Hourly Wage (per adult)	\$29.37
Monthly Wage (two adults)	\$10,339
Annual Wage (two adults)	\$124,072

Note: Variation in totals due to rounding and application of tax credits.

[Self-Sufficiency Standard at the Center for Women's Welfare](#), 2021

The cost of child care is a financial stress for many local families. According to the 2022 report published by [United Way of Santa Barbara County](#), “for the average dual-income household with two children ages 0-5 in a licensed child care facility here in Santa Barbara County, they can be expected to spend an estimated 37% of their monthly income on child care costs alone.” Child care costs vary by region, type of care (center and FCC) and the age of the child. Tuition rates for infant-toddler care are often highest.

A variety of subsidies are available to help offset parent fees, including the Alternative Payment Program through the California Department of Social Services, State preschool and TK (offered at no cost through school districts), and locally through programs such as the [William and Lottie Daniel Child Care Scholarship Program through Santa Barbara Foundation](#). Some child care operators offer their own scholarships to families and there are a few employer-sponsored centers that offer reduced tuition and/or priority enrollment for employees. These tuition supports are available to just a portion of families in the County.

Poverty Rates in Santa Barbara County

Santa Barbara County has the second highest poverty rate in California (16.9%) as well as the second highest child poverty rate (19.5%) in the state as of the first quarter of 2023 according to the [California Poverty Measure \(CPM\)](#), a joint research effort between Public Policy Institute of California and the [Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality](#) that takes into account [the cost of living and resources from social safety net programs](#).

According to 2020 data, there were approximately 6,000 children (ages 0-5) living in households earning under 100% federal poverty level (FPL) in Santa Barbara County (AIR, 2020).

The percentage of children facing poverty in North County (22%) and Mid County (20%) is more than double that in South County (9%). Communities with the highest rates of children (ages 0-5) living in poverty are Orcutt/Los Alamos (23%), Santa Maria (22%), and New Cuyama (21%), which are the same areas with the lowest percentage of children living in homes with working families (as previously stated).

Even though North County is more affordable, children who are living there are twice as likely to face poverty compared to children living in South County.

Cost of Home Ownership in Santa Barbara County

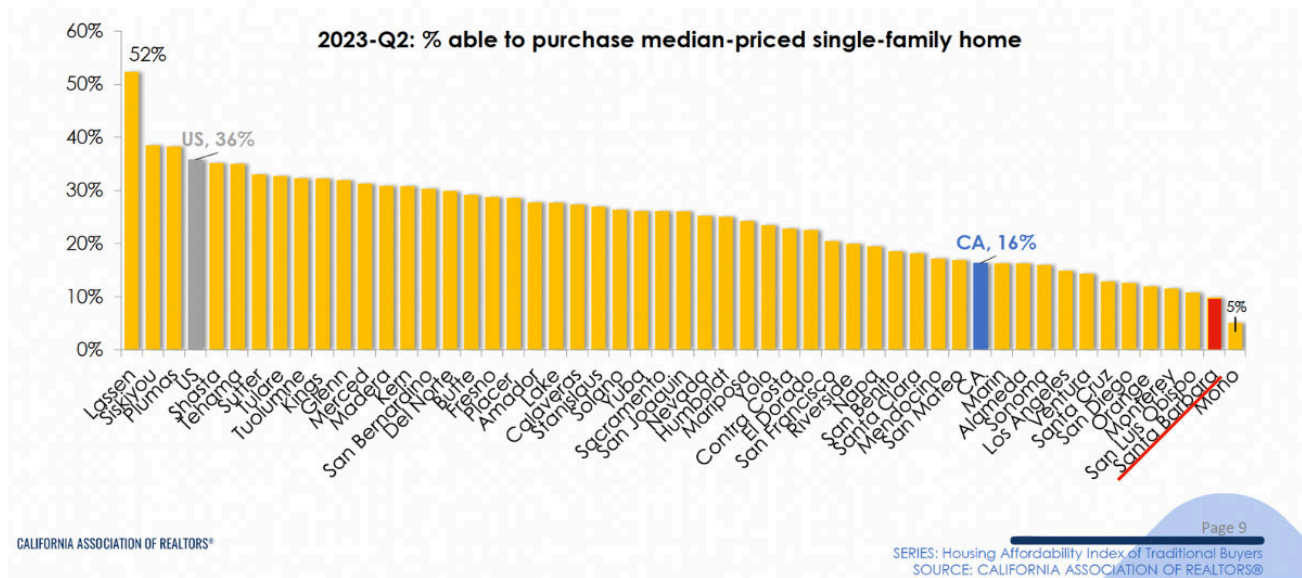
Research indicates there are a range of benefits associated with home ownership for families and children ([Habitat For Humanity](#)). Positive outcomes include enhanced psychological and physical health, lower exposure to crime, higher rates of civic involvement, and better school performance, including higher achievement scores, increased rates of high school graduation, and increased rates of postsecondary education (Rohe & Lindblad, 2013).

Home ownership for family child care providers, and facility ownership for center-based providers creates the conditions for stability and financial security, which in turn promotes high quality services and business sustainability. The results of the Child Care Facilities Survey indicate that 33.8% of centers and 65.4% of FCCs own their child care facility site.

The median cost of a house as of May 2022 was \$1,600,000 in South County and \$565,000 in North County according to the [Economic Forecast Project Monthly Update](#). However, the high cost of housing in Santa Barbara County as a whole results in a smaller percent of people who can afford a median-priced home in Santa Barbara County compared to the percent who can afford a median-priced home in most other California counties, the entire state, and the U.S. as illustrated in the following chart ([California Association of Realtors](#), August 2023).

Even though more than half of local residents currently own their home, that is not an indication of the percent who could afford to purchase a home in today's market as seen in the below chart that illustrates Santa Barbara County ranks second lowest in the ability to purchase a home.

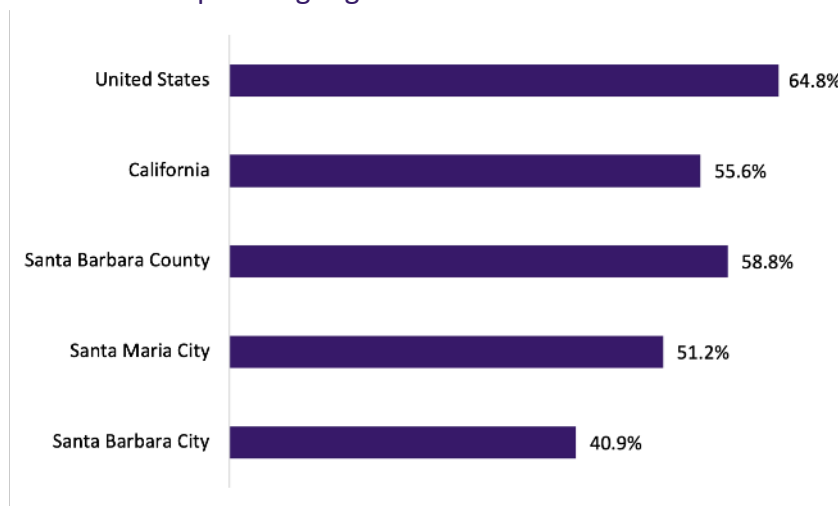
Santa Barbara County is the second least affordable county for home purchases



California Association of Realtors, August 2023

The rate of home ownership in Santa Barbara County was 52.8% in 2022, a slight increase from 2019 (52.1%)([U.S. Census](#), 2018-2022). Slightly more than half of Santa Barbara County residents own (52.8%) versus rent (47.2%) their homes. The percentage of homeowners in Santa Barbara County (52.8%) is less than those in California (55.6%) and the U.S. (64.8%).

Comparison of homeownership among regions

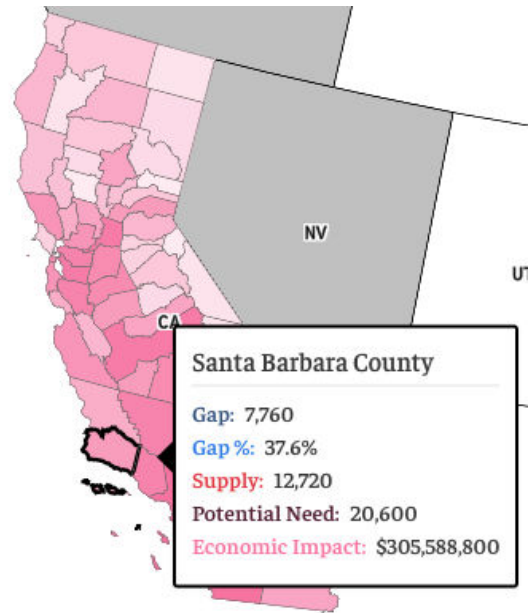


U.S. Census, 2018-2022

Family and Community Needs for Child Care

The availability of high quality child care facilities affects a community's economy. According to the [Bipartisan Policy Center's Child Care Gap report](#) (2019), Santa Barbara County experiences an annual negative economic impact of \$305 million in lost revenue for families, businesses, and government due to the limited supply of licensed child care options.

Families in Santa Barbara County and across the state have preferences and specific needs regarding child care facilities. "Families ultimately select (child care) arrangements that accommodate their unique circumstances, family values and culture, and multiple constraints related to income, employment, family composition, transportation, and availability of child care options in their community" according to [Banghart](#) (2022), a report commissioned by the Federal Administration for Children and Families. Proximity and availability require adequate numbers and quality of facilities in a community to meet family needs.



Bipartisan Policy Center
[Child Care Gaps Assessment](#) (2019)

The Child Care Facilities Survey asked providers where families live and work in proximity to their child care site in order to determine families preferences regarding the location of care. Center and FCC respondents indicated that the majority of families enroll in child care:

- *Near where they live* (46.5% of centers and 40.0% of FCCs)
- *Near where they live and work* (45.1% of centers and 40.9% of FCCs).
- Very few operators indicated that they have parents who work (and not live) near the child care site (8.5% of centers and 19.1% of FCCs).



Families ultimately select (child care) arrangements that accommodate their unique circumstances, family values and culture, and multiple constraints related to income, employment, family composition, transportation, and availability of child care options in their community.

~**ACCORDING TO [BANGHART](#), (2022)**



[Banghart \(2022\)](#)

GAP IN LOCAL LICENSED CHILD CARE CAPACITY

There are 1,457 licensed ECE spaces for infants and toddlers, 9,782 licensed ECE spaces for preschool age children, and 1,996 TK spaces throughout Santa Barbara County. One in 10 infants and toddlers currently have access to a licensed child care space and 7 in every 10 preschool aged children (ages 3-5) have access to a licensed child care or TK space although this varies by region. Understanding where there is unmet need for licensed child care and TK, including parent preferences for care near home or work, informs where to focus efforts for development and expansion of quality child care facilities.

Understanding Child Care Capacity in Santa Barbara County

This report focuses on licensed child care capacity for children ages 0-5, with a special emphasis on infants and toddlers. Licensed capacity is the maximum number of children a child care program can serve at one time in a specific facility, but it is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the operating capacity nor an accurate indication of how many children are enrolled. Centers are licensed based on childrens' ages. FCCs can serve children ages 0-12 and are licensed for the total maximum capacity (8 for small FCC and 14 for large FCC), but the licenses are not broken down by ages like center-based licenses.

To help estimate capacity by age for both centers and FCC, a formula that has been used by a few other counties was applied to the FCC data for this report. In this formula, 15% of FCC licensed spaces are allocated to infants and toddlers, 70% to preschoolers, and 15% to school age children. When considering facilities expansion in Santa Barbara County, this estimate may be high. Many FCCs in the county do not accept infants and toddlers because caring for younger children reduces the total number of children they can legally serve, which is often economically infeasible.

Additionally, many programs under-enroll their full licensed capacity by choice in order to allow more space per child and/or smaller groups per teacher to achieve a higher quality environment. Some programs also operate below their licensed capacity due to limitations related to facility design, quality, staffing, and/or funding. And, not all families need full-time care, therefore many programs "share" spaces by enrolling more than one child per licensed spot and/or by having AM and PM sessions.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have had lasting effects on all aspects of the economy, with the negative effects on child care more severe. A recent report by the Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board (CED) states three key findings in the study of the decline in use of child care by families: 1) a 19% decline in the number of children in paid care from 2019 to 2020. 2) a far slower recovery than other industries, with the number of children in paid care in 2022 rising to just 9.5%, and 3) the decline in the number of child care aged children during the pandemic.

Child care spaces fluctuate in any community, making an accurate projection of future space needs difficult. In addition to the recent child care expansions in the county as reported in the Child Care Facilities Survey, there are a few center facilities projects currently underway that are known, along with some that are not yet public. Many family child care openings and closings occur regularly. Parents of 4-year-olds may have the choice of enrolling their child in TK or a licensed child care program.

TK is part of the early care and education system and is currently offered in ½ or ¾ day sessions, free of charge through school districts to age-eligible children for the year prior to Kindergarten. Some TK availability will expand through the 2025-26 fiscal year throughout Santa Barbara as a result of California’s Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) initiative. The number of families who will choose TK for their children is not yet known.

All of the factors above impact the true operating capacity of licensed programs across Santa Barbara County. The following is a summary of child care operators’ insight into these capacity-related topics from the Child Care Facilities Survey.

1. **The Differences between Licensed Capacity, Ideal Operating Capacity, and Actual Enrollment:**
 - a. Licensed Capacity: Based on data reported below, there are 12,240 spaces in center and family child care programs in the County.
 - b. Ideal Capacity: Child care center operators reported an average “ideal enrollment” of 86% of their licensed capacity and 94% of licensed capacity for FCCs.
 - c. Actual Enrollment: Child care centers reported enrollment rates of 85% of ideal capacity and 73% of licensed capacity. For FCCs, enrollment was reported to be at 77% of ideal capacity, and 72% of licensed capacity.

As can be seen in the data above, there is variation among enrollment and capacity rates throughout the county and by type of child care. The average enrollment rates reported suggest there are fewer spaces available than allowed by licensing, but there may be spaces available in some child care programs across the county that are not full to their ideal capacity.

2. **“Shared” AM and PM Sessions:** Offering morning and afternoon sessions creates the ability for sites to enroll more children per day. According to respondents, 15.6% of centers and 21.0% of FCCs offer more than one session to different children in the same classroom.
3. **Reasons for Low Enrollment:** 70.4% of centers and 58.3% of FCCs reported having low enrollment. As previously mentioned, there are a number of reasons why sites may prefer to operate below their licensed capacity. Other operators may be under enrolled due to factors beyond their control. The top reason centers report low enrollment is *Difficulty hiring qualified staff (some centers cannot open at least one classroom due to lack of staff)* and the top reason reported by FCCs is *Families choosing TK instead of choosing or continuing enrollment in child care.*

Reasons for low enrollment

	Centers	FCCs
Reduced demand from families	16.9%	9.6%
Families choosing Transitional Kindergarten (TK) instead of child care	25.4%	26.1%
Difficulty hiring qualified staff	36.6%	9.6%
I intentionally limit enrollment so that my program is higher quality	9.9%	16.7%

Centers (n = 71); FCCs (n = 115)

The following chart depicts current local child care and TK capacity per age group and community area. Considering the factors listed above, it is estimated that numbers are likely lower than listed.

Child care capacity for children (ages 0-5)

	Infant-Toddler capacity* (ages 0-2)	Preschool capacity* (ages 3-5)	TK capacity	Total capacity (ages 0-5)
Carpinteria/Summerland	42	551	29	622
Goleta	181	1,176	70	1,427
Guadalupe	27	215	60	302
Lompoc	186	1,061	197	1,444
New Cuyama/Cuyama	0	24	0	24
Orcutt/Los Alamos	111	838	75	1,024
Santa Barbara	415	2,923	1125	4,463
Santa Maria	474	2,589	386	3,449
Santa Ynez Valley	21	405	54	480
Santa Barbara County	1,457	9,782	1,996	12,240

*Infant-toddler and preschool capacity is derived from the number of licensed spaces in center-based or FCC program.

Note: FCC capacity: 15% total FCC capacity is allocated to infants and toddlers and 70% total FCC capacity is allocated to preschool age children.

TK data: Data Quest 2021-2022, Large FCC and Center data: Community Care Licensing retrieved 10/9/23, Small FCC data: CRR 10/13/23

When considering facility expansion in a community, it is recommended that the identified factors that impact true capacity are considered in order to determine a more accurate depiction of the number of spaces needed.

Unmet Need for Child Care in Santa Barbara County

In order to estimate the unmet need for care, the total child population (for children ages 0-5 years old) is compared to the number of licensed child care and TK spaces (to account for TK being available to a growing number of 4-year-olds).

1 in 10 infant-toddlers currently have access to a licensed child care space



7 in every 10 preschool-aged children have access to a licensed child care or TK space



The unmet need for care is most pronounced for infants and toddlers, where one in 10 have access to a licensed child care space in Santa Barbara County, although this ranges from 0% to 13% by location. Approximately 7 in every 10 preschool aged children (ages 3-5) have access to a licensed child care or TK space. As a whole, 4 in every 10 children ages 0-5 have access to either a licensed ECE or TK space in Santa Barbara County, however as previously noted **a licensed space does not always equate to an available space.**

When considering facility expansion in a community, it is recommended that the previously identified factors that impact true capacity are considered in order to determine a more accurate depiction of how many spaces are needed. Additionally, finding ways to track startup and expansion projects early on and track their progress can help adjust the need for child care and allows opportunities to support the project to ensure they are successful.

The community of Guadalupe has had limited child care for the families living there, many of whom are low income. Over the past few years, a number of initiatives have begun to increase child care access. The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara has built a child care center for 70 children (infants through preschool) in its housing redevelopment. Guadalupe Union School District has focused on encouraging families of 4-year-olds to attend TK, and are building preschool classrooms for local children. These projects are all expected to be fully operational in 2025, and all spaces will be free or at a very low cost for residents and those working in the community. The expectation is that, in combination with the family child care homes operating there, the need for child care in the community will be nearly met.

Unmet need for child care for children (ages 0-2) by region

	Number of children (ages 0-2)	Total capacity* (ages 0-2)	Unmet need for children (ages 0-2) (percent of children)
Carpinteria/Summerland	417	42	90%
Goleta	1,375	181	87%
Guadalupe	335	27	92%
Lompoc	2,719	186	93%
New Cuyama/Cuyama	38	-	100%
Orcutt/Los Alamos	2,519	111	96%
Santa Barbara	3,281	415	87%
Santa Maria	5,244	474	91%
Santa Ynez Valley	946	21	98%
Santa Barbara County	16,874	1,457	91%

*Includes licensed centers and licensed FCC spaces.

Note: FCC capacity by age calculation: 15% total FCC capacity allocated to infants and toddlers and 70% total FCC capacity allocated to preschool age children.

Child population data: AIR, 2020; Large FCC and Center data: Community Care Licensing retrieved 10/9/23, Small FCC data: CRR 10/13/23



Unmet need for care for children (ages 3-5)

	Number of children (ages 3-5)	Total capacity* (ages 3-5)	Unmet need for children (ages 3-5) (percent of children)
Carpinteria/Summerland	451	596	0%
Goleta	1,445	1,388	4%
Guadalupe	260	294	0%
Lompoc	2,110	1,311	38%
New Cuyama/Cuyama	30	24	20%
Orcutt/Los Alamos	2,415	986	59%
Santa Barbara	3,536	3,190	10%
Santa Maria	5,000	3,597	28%
Santa Ynez Valley	736	506	31%
Santa Barbara County	15,983	11,892	26%

*Includes licensed center, licensed FCC, and TK spaces.

Note: FCC capacity by age calculation: 15% total FCC capacity allocated to infants and toddlers and 70% total FCC capacity allocated to preschool age children.

Child population data: AIR, 2020; TK data: Data Quest 2021-2022 (based on district), Large FCC and Center data: Community Care Licensing retrieved 10/9/23, Small FCC data: CRR 10/13/23.



CHILD CARE FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

This section highlights, along with key findings from the Child Care Facilities Survey including recent expansion projects, interest in potential future expansion, future needs for renovation and repairs, along with some opportunities and barriers to development. In the last 10 years, 16 child care centers (21% of the center respondents) and 31 FCCs (23% of FCC respondents) expanded and created a total of 587 new spaces. Thirty-seven centers and 96 FCCs indicated they would be interested in increasing their current number of licensed spaces in the next 5 years if support and funding were available. Sites in all regions of the county anticipate the need for facility renovations and repair in the next 5 years.

Providing access to child care in any community requires consideration of facilities - their location and capacity to serve children, and the ability to expand. The complex funding, regulatory and construction processes makes start-up and expansion challenging, yet some programs in the county have been able to expand, many with help from local and State resources. The condition of facilities is also important as it can positively or negatively affect the health and development of children as well as the wellbeing and job satisfaction of teachers. This Facilities Needs Assessment draws on the data collected from the Child Care Facilities and Land Use surveys, which included questions that align with the California Master Plan challenges cited above. The following is an overview of recent local facility expansion experiences, the resources used, and barriers faced as well as interest in potential expansion to serve more children (based on results from the Child Care Facilities Survey).



The physical settings in which children learn, play, and grow have an enormous impact on their development. High-quality and developmentally appropriate early learning facilities promote healthy behaviors, independence, and strong social-emotional skills in young children. Quality environments lead to better outcomes. Yet, too often, the physical condition of child care facilities can be an afterthought.

~BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER, (2023)



[\(Bipartisan Policy Center, 2023\)](#)

Recent Child Care Facilities Expansions

According to the Child Care Facilities Survey, in the last 10 years:

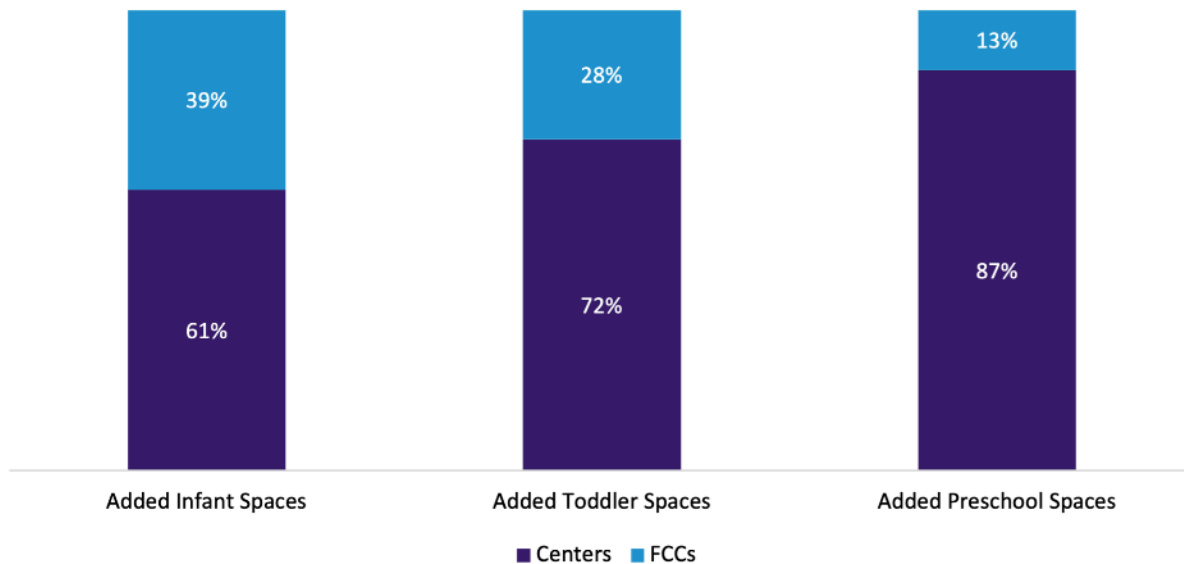
16 child care centers (21% of the center respondents) and 31 FCCs (23% of FCC respondents) expanded to add more licensed spaces. These projects created **587 new spaces**. The majority of these newly added spaces were in center-based programs as illustrated by the following chart.

Newly added spaces by age and type of care

	Newly added Infant spaces	Newly added Toddler spaces	Newly added Preschool spaces
Centers	51	129	307
FCCs	32	39	29
Total	83	168	336

Centers (n = 16); FCCs (n = 31)

Newly added licensed spaces due to expansions by type of care



Expansion projects in the past 10 years created nearly 600 new licensed spaces

	Added Infant Spaces		Added Toddler Spaces		Added Preschool Spaces	
	Centers	FCCs	Centers	FCCs	Centers	FCCs
Carpinteria/ Summerland	10	6	32	0	0	6
Goleta	12	0	12	0	0	0
Guadalupe	0	0	8	4	0	3
Lompoc	0	2	0	9	63	3
New Cuyama	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orcutt/ Los Alamos	0	5	8	4	20	8
Santa Barbara	16	0	48	0	202	0
Santa Maria	13	18	21	18	16	8
Santa Ynez Valley	0	1	0	4	6	1
Santa Barbara County	51	32	129	39	307	29

Time Needed to Complete Expansion Projects Varies

The length of time required to expand or start up can dictate the success of the project, with longer timelines leading to pressures that may halt a project. The Child Care Facilities Survey asked sites how long their expansion projects took to complete

Duration of past facility expansion projects

	Centers	FCCs
Less than 6 months	37.5%	37.0%
Between 6 months and 1 year	25.0%	29.6%
More than 1 year but less than 2 years	12.5%	14.8%
2 or more years	25.0%	18.5%

Centers (n = 16); FCCs (n = 27)

Resources Used for Past Expansion Projects

The most commonly cited community resource used by surveyed centers during facility expansion was the Regional Community Care Licensing Office. The most common resource used by surveyed FCCs was Children’s Resource and Referral of Santa Barbara County. The majority of centers and FCCs who expanded their facility in the past 10 years relied on revenue, donations, and fundraising by their program to fund the expansion project, although some sites noted that they used ARPA funding through Children’s Resource and Referral. Other funding included federal and state tuition contracts (e.g. [California State Preschool Program](#) (CSPP), the [General Child Care and Development Program](#) (CCTR), [Head Start](#), [Early Head Start](#), etc.).

Barriers to Child Care Site Expansion

According to the Child Care Facilities Survey, 5 centers and 23 FCCs wanted to expand, however were not able to do so in the past 5 years. The top ranked barrier for centers was *Lack of available qualified staff to serve additional children* and the top ranked barrier for FCCs was *Lack of adequate funding for the facility expansion/construction*.



The costs of operations have increased significantly over the past couple years. It's hard to operate and not raise my prices.

CHILD CARE FACILITIES SURVEY RESPONDENT



Barriers to site expansion

	Centers	FCCs
Difficulty finding an available site for a new facility	20.0%	15.6%
Lack of adequate funding for the facility expansion/construction	30.0%	57.8%
Uncertainty that subsidy funds would be available to serve additional children	5.0%	29.9%
Concerns about completing the work in the timeframe required by the funder	20.0%	8.9%
Concerns about gaining building owner's approval for expansion	5.0%	13.3%
Concerns about meeting licensing requirements for child care facilities	30.0%	33.3%
Concerns about having adequate time and/or expertise to manage an expansion project	15.0%	13.3%
Challenges with the city/county permitting process	10.0%	24.4%
Challenges with gaining fire clearance/fire marshal approval	10.0%	13.3%
Lack of availability of qualified staff to serve additional children	45.0%	35.6%
Uncertainty that families will enroll their children	5.0%	28.9%

Centers (n = 20); FCCs (n = 45)

133 Child Care Sites are Potentially Interested in Expanding

Thirty-seven centers and 96 FCCs (representing nearly two thirds of the surveyed sites) indicated they would be interested in increasing their current number of licensed spaces in the next 5 years if *support and funding were available*. Thirty-three centers and 12 FCCs would not be interested. The percent that are interested in potentially expanding is similar to the findings within the United Way of Santa Barbara County (April 2022) [report](#), which indicated that more than two thirds of the 72 surveyed child care providers in Santa Barbara and Goleta would consider increasing the number of spaces they offer if funding were available. It is noteworthy that respondents from both studies indicated that insufficient staffing is a limit to growth. The following table illustrates the region in which sites from the Child Care Facilities Survey indicated they would like to expand.

Regions where sites are interested in possible expansion

	Number of Centers interested	Number of FCCs interested
Carpinteria/Summerland	4	1
Goleta	6	2
Guadalupe	0	4
Lompoc	6	5
New Cuyama	2	0
Orcutt/Los Alamos	1	4
Santa Barbara	11	12
Santa Maria	6	64
Santa Ynez Valley	1	1
TOTAL	37	93

Centers (n = 38); FCCs (n = 93)

According to the Operator Survey, the following are the *best options* that respondents indicated would allow them to expand to add more infant-toddler licensed spaces (if financial and other resources were available). The top option selected by centers was *Open an additional site* and the top option selected by FCCs was *Add square footage to the current facility*.

Options that would best allow sites to add infant/toddler spaces

	Centers	FCCs
Convert current facility space (e.g. preschool classroom, office, etc.) into infant and toddler spaces	11.4%	14.1%
Add square footage to current facility	25.7%	31.5%
Relocate to larger facility to accommodate more children	25.7%	16.3%
Open an additional site (for centers only)	37.1%	4.4%
Expand to a center (for FCC only)	NA	12.0%
Expand from a Small FCC to Large FCC (for FCC only)	NA	21.7%

Centers (n = 35); FCCs (n = 92)

Sites Need Support in Order to Expand

The Child Care Facilities Survey asked sites to *select all* of the supports and resources they would need in order to add more infant-toddler licensed spaces. The top support indicated by centers and FCCs was *Help with funding*. In addition to the following top identified supports, operators also noted needing help hiring qualified staff and negotiating a lease.

Support needed to add more licensed infant/toddler spaces

	Centers	FCCs
Help with facility design	50.0%	45.7%
Help with city or county permitting	63.9%	46.7%
Help finding possible sites	52.8%	20.7%
Help with funding	66.7%	72.8%
Help finding families who will enroll their children	19.4%	38.0%
Help with licensing application/transfer	36.1%	22.8%
Help negotiating a lease agreement	38.9%	14.1%
Help buying a home or child care site	22.2%	43.5%
Help with furnishings	38.9%	46.7%

Centers (n = 36); FCCs (n = 92)

Operators also *selected all* of the business support needed to rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic and be ready for future emergencies/disasters. The top ranked response from centers was *Workforce recruitment, retention, and labor policy* and the top ranked response from FCCs was *Health and safety guidelines to remain operational*. The following issues must be addressed if programs are to successfully expand.

Business support needed to rebuild and be ready for future emergencies/disasters

	Centers	FCCs
Workforce recruitment, retention, and labor policy	76.8%	26.7%
Facility management and adaptations	31.9%	23.8%
Outreach and communications with families	29.0%	28.7%
Financial planning and accounting	11.6%	40.6%
Business operations	10.1%	33.7%
Health and safety guidelines to remain operational	55.1%	61.4%

Centers (n = 69); FCCs (n = 101)

Opportunities for Inclusion of Child Care Facilities

Most of the Child Care Facilities Survey center respondents report that their facility is on a school or faith organization property, while others are stand-alone sites. There are creative and efficient ways to incorporate child care into other types of sites as well. The following are three examples.

Colocation of child care and housing - A growing trend in housing development is the inclusion, or colocation, of child care centers and/or family child care. This strategy supports the workforce participation of parents, leading to improved economic security, healthy child development for children and the reduction of racial, economic, and geographic disparities faced by children and communities of color. Proximity to home was the primary factor for families selecting child care, according to the Respondents to the Child Care Facilities Survey. And locating child care with housing reduces carbon emissions by alleviating additional trips to child care programs. A recent, local example of this model is the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara's [Escalante Meadows](#) multi-family housing redevelopment in Guadalupe, California, with a child care center anticipated to serve between 70 and 100 children.

Commercial/Office Park spaces have become more available since the shift in working arrangements since the COVID-19 pandemic, and could be repurposed for child care. Projects could include stand-alone centers, use of the first floor of a building, and could support employees of one or more businesses in the vicinity. A [new facility](#) recently received a conditional use permit to operate in the Riviera Park business complex and will draw families from the surrounding businesses.

Employer sponsored Child Care currently exists in Santa Barbara through the colleges and University, and through two hospitals. United Way of Santa Barbara County, through a project funded through County ARPA dollars, is focusing efforts on encouraging more employers across the county to address the child care needs of employees.

Current Condition of Child Care Facilities

The condition of child care programs affects the health and wellbeing of children and staff, and influences families' selection of a program for their child. According to the Child Care Facilities Survey, a number of facility repairs have been conducted in the past 10 years; 28 centers and 45 FCCs conducted a significant renovation or repair of their facility (not with the aim of expanding to serve more children).

Operators who conducted major renovations and repairs in the past 10 years, as well as the 5 centers and 20 FCCs who wanted to but were unable to do so, reported on *all* of the barriers they faced. The most commonly cited barrier among centers and FCCs was lack of adequate funding for the renovation (centers: 41.9%, FCCs: 60.3%) followed by concerns about completing the work in the timeframe required by the funder (centers: 19.6%, FCCs: 17.2%), and difficulty meeting licensing requirements for child care facilities (centers: 12.9%, FCCs: 12.1%). Some operators commented about the challenge posed by having to relocate children to another site while renovations are in process and how this is particularly difficult for programs that are open year round. A quarter of centers and FCCs indicated that they didn't face any of these barriers while renovating.

As previously mentioned, the majority (66.2%) of centers lease their site whereas the majority (65.4%) of FCC respondents own their child care site. Leasing may impact operators' abilities to make significant repairs and renovations. A provider commented "Since we do not own the building, it is a difficult decision to fund all of the renovations on someone else's building."

Results from the Child Care Facilities Survey indicated providers anticipate the need for facility renovations and repair in all regions of Santa Barbara County in the next 5 years with the majority reporting the need for moderate level repairs.

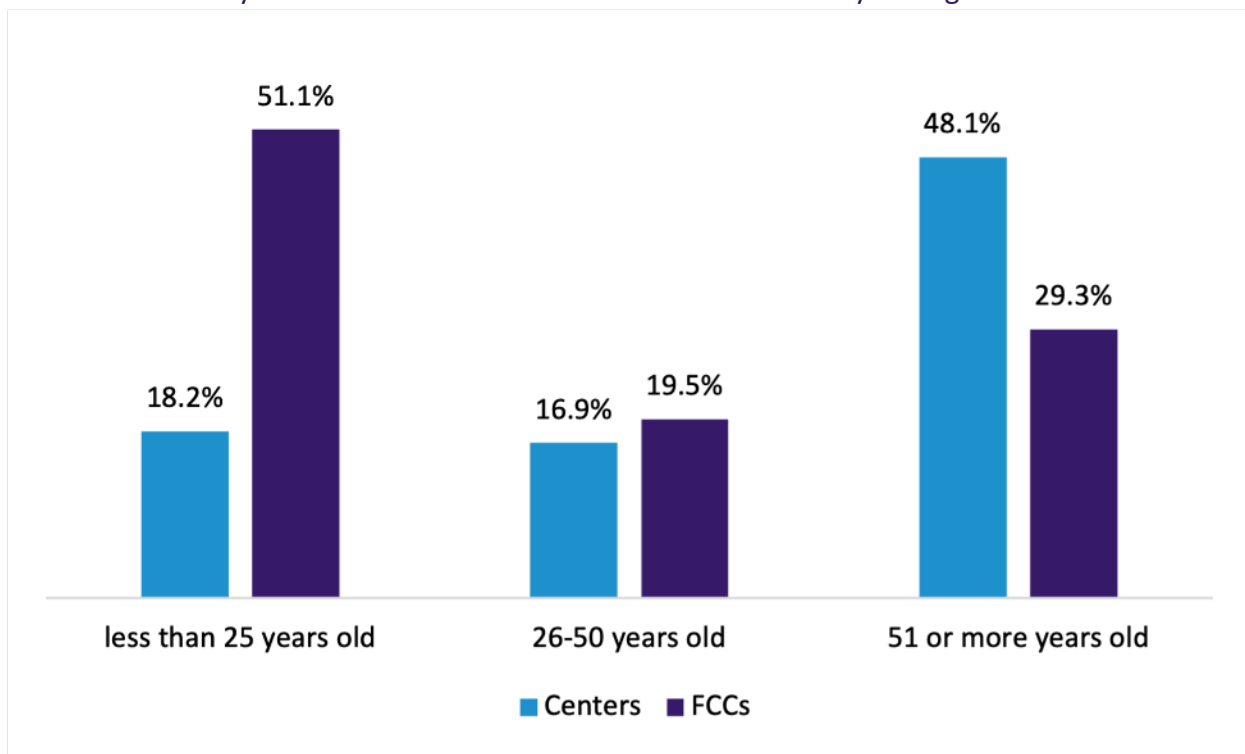
The majority of facilities will need moderate repairs in the next 5 years

	Centers	FCCs
No renovations	8.6%	20.4%
Minimal renovations (e.g. new fire exit, detection, additional storage, etc.)	18.6%	11.7%
Moderate renovations (e.g. lighting, plumbing, such as adding sinks and child-sized toilets, some flooring and windows, some playground upgrades, etc.)	54.3%	42.7%
Major renovations (e.g. complete replacement of ceilings, roof, walls, external window replacement, structural work, seismic work, major playground work, etc.)	18.6%	25.2%

Centers (n = 69); FCCs (n = 102)

The need for renovation is often impacted by the age of the facility. The majority of centers (48.1%) are located in sites that were built more than 50 years ago whereas 51.1% of FCCs are located in sites that were built less than 25 years ago.

Most center facility sites and FCC homes were built more than 50 years ago



Centers (n = 77); FCC (n = 133)

Facility Development Challenges and Opportunities

“The greatest challenge to expanding or renovating early learning and care facilities is lack of adequate funding. Other barriers include finding an available site and project management capacity to complete the work in the timeframe required by a potential funder, meeting licensing requirements, and gaining fire marshal or other regulatory approval.” ([Master Plan for Early Learning and Care](#), 2020, p. 40)

Completing the various regulatory steps involved in starting up child care requires a great deal of time, knowledge, support and money. The process of submitting a child care license through Community Care Licensing involves an orientation, an application, the development of structural program documents such as parent and staff handbooks and policies. 30% of center respondents to the Child Care Facilities Survey, and 33.3% of FCCs interested in opening or expanding had concerns about completing the requirements for licensing. This is likely more true for those starting up the first time than for seasoned operators. Santa Barbara County has the benefit of having a regional licensing office in Goleta, which provides more opportunities for access to materials and staff. In fact, the most commonly cited community resource operators reported using during facility expansion was the regional licensing office.

Another regulatory process, city or county zoning and permitting, is often complex and difficult to follow for someone who does not work in the construction industry, and the costs can be prohibitive for child care providers who operate on thin margins. There are various degrees of land use permitting regulation, and the more restrictive the permit, typically the more time it takes and the more expensive it is. An operator must secure the property (rent or purchase) before applying for a permit or a loan, and cannot begin operations without a permit. This means that during the time the permit takes to obtain, rent or mortgage payments will be made without the ability to provide services and receive revenue. The cost and length of time can slow, and sometimes stop, child care facility growth.

SB234 legislation went into effect in January of 2019, eliminating local regulation of all family child care, making it “by right.”

There was a major change to the responsibility for local jurisdictions across California to regulate child care when the **SB234 legislation went into effect in January of 2019, eliminating local regulation of all family child care, making it “by right.”** Municipalities across the

state are beginning to look at their other child care center policies now, and how they might amend them to remove unintended barriers and encourage child care development.

A local government entity that adopts policies that make expanding and starting up child care facilities easier and less costly can encourage child care development, thus increasing access for families in the community. The 8 city and one county jurisdictions of Santa Barbara have regulated child care facility development in their communities for decades, with varying levels of permitting, cost, processing and documentation required. In the fall of 2023, a survey was conducted of all 9 planning departments, about their child care land use policies, which was followed up by tools to align policies with best practices and “study sessions” with child care land use experts were held for planning department personnel. A full report of findings and recommendations will be available in July of 2024.

Below are some of the highlights of the survey responses and the benefits of each type of policy.

Highlights from Local Child Care Land Use Survey

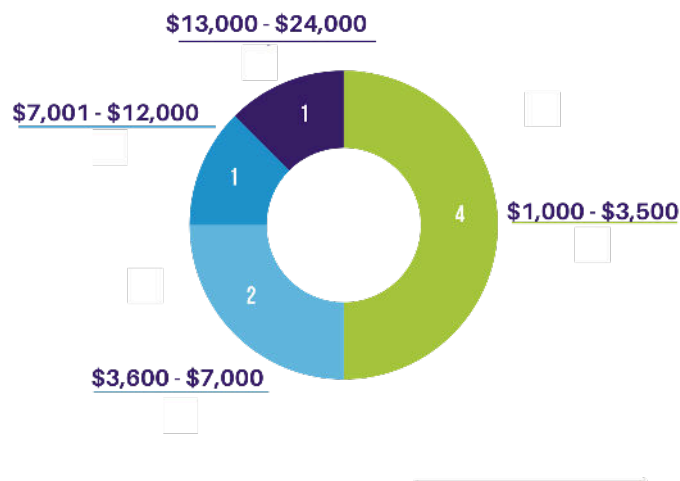
Of the nine jurisdictions in Santa Barbara County:

- 4 **Jurisdictions address child care in their General Plans.** Comprehensively planning for child care through the General Plan process can direct zoning and other policies that can spur the growth of child care facilities.
- 5 **Jurisdictions allow child care centers “by right” in at least one zone.** Facilitating the establishment of child care centers either by right (no permit) or through a streamlined ministerial or administrative permitting process encourages the integration of child care facilities in communities, ensuring families have convenient access to vital child care services.
- 3 **Jurisdictions have made, or are currently making, efforts to streamline the permitting process for child care.** Intentionally encouraging child care facilities development through streamlined and low-cost processes and incentives removes barriers that may slow down or stall projects.
- 6 **Jurisdictions offer at least one incentive or mitigation for child care projects.** Offering incentives, such as a density bonus, parking reduction or traffic mitigation can stimulate interest in child care facilities development by making the project more feasible.
- 9 **Jurisdictions know about SB234** (large family child care “by right”), and all but one have complied, are in the process of complying, or have a plan to do so.

More details can be found in the charts below.

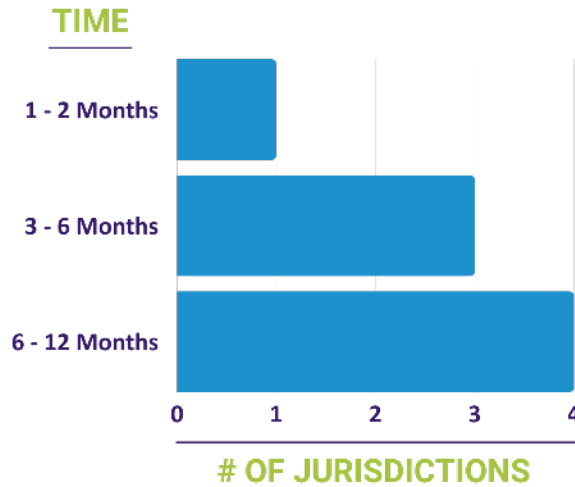
Cost and time to obtain a child care center Conditional Use Permit varies greatly

COST OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS BY JURISDICTION



Local Child Care Planning and Permitting Survey, December 2023

LENGTH OF TIME A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TAKES TO COMPLETE



*1 Jurisdiction noted 2 months to 1 year.

Local Child Care Planning and Permitting Survey, December 2023

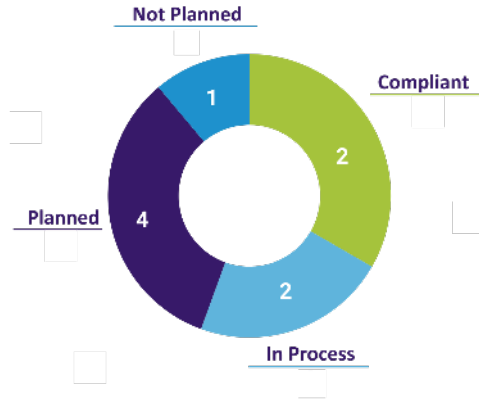
Incentives to include child care in development

	Number of jurisdictions offering incentive
Development Impact Fee reduction for child care projects	2
Developer Impact Fee for child care	0
Inclusion requirement for large projects	0
Density bonus for facility in affordable housing, per government code	3
Density bonus in excess of minimum in government code or in non-residential projects	1
Floor area ratio exclusion	1
Parking reduction at impacted sites (properties where the size does not allow for both the required parking and playground. In these sites, the jurisdiction offers flexibility in finding solutions)	3
Traffic mitigation credit	1
Community benefit points	1
Expedited permit processing	1
Other bonus	1

Local Child Care Planning and Permitting Survey, December 2023

All jurisdictions knew about, and some were actively addressing, changes due to SB234 (Dec 2023)

JURISDICTIONS WITH MUNICIPAL CODE IN COMPLIANCE WITH SB234



Local Child Care Planning and Permitting Survey, December 2023



Child Care Facility Funding

Funding for child care facilities start up and renovation often ranks highest in the list of barriers to development across the country, as it did in the Child Care Facilities Survey conducted for this report. This core piece of the process requires consistent, sufficient resources to be ready when needed so that operators can move through the development process efficiently. Like any other construction, rarely does one funding source cover the entire cost, and instead the owner/developer must find layers of funding and financing to cover the project. This process can be quite complex and time-consuming for a start-up or for major repairs/renovations, as many options limit funding to specific parts of a project, and each has its own timeline.

Typical costs to add on to an existing building or start up a new site are calculated at mid-level residential construction rates per square foot. Child care businesses typically operate at low profit margins, making it difficult to use business reserves to start up or expand facilities. A total of 16 center operators and 31 FCCs who responded to the Child Care Facilities Survey indicated that they successfully expanded in the past 10 years, creating nearly 600 spaces. Of the 47 facilities that recently expanded, 17 sites used funds from their business to partially or fully pay for the facilities expansion, which can be considered an indicator that those programs have built strong business practices leading towards sustainability.

There are a number of external funding sources and mechanisms that can support the start up and development of child care facilities, although not all are ongoing, as many are tied to state and local budgets.

Local Funding

Through Santa Barbara County Child Care ARPA funding, Children's Resource and Referral of Santa Barbara County (CRR) has access to some funds to directly support expansion and new development of child care facilities, specifically for infant-toddler spaces for the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 fiscal years. CRR provides technical assistance and grants based on the number of infants and toddlers to be served, to operators who are increasing the number of spaces in their programs. In the first year, 15 center-based and 56 FCC sites are being supported, with 389 new infant-toddler spaces anticipated by June 30, 2024. There is a potential for 120 more spaces next year. In the parallel ARPA - funded project through United Way of Santa Barbara County, grants will be available to assist with child care initiatives of local employers. The potential of over 500 new infant-toddler spaces could increase the availability of licensed care for this age group by 2%, bringing it to 11% met need.

State Funding

California does not have ongoing dedicated funding sources for child care facilities. State-funded and Head Start programs are able to use some start-up funds for newly funded sites. School districts and County Offices of Education are eligible for a [State Facilities Grant Program](#) for preschool, TK, and full-day Kindergarten classrooms.

In 2021, for the first time, California set aside significant funding for child care facilities through the state [Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grants \(IGP\)](#), for eligible private child care centers and family child care homes, but not to school districts. This funding was first available through a Request For Proposal (RFA) 1 in spring of 2022. A total of \$200.5M in funds were specifically intended for the renovation and repair of child care facilities. Family child care applicants could apply for up to \$75K, and

center-based applicants up to \$250K, in funding to replace or repair items such as doors, windows, flooring and large appliances, as well as outdoor surfacing, playground equipment and shade structures.

The second round - RFA2 in January, 2023 - was dedicated to new construction and major renovation (for structural changes or extensive alterations), with \$150M available. Maximum application was up to \$100K for family child care and up to \$1.5M for center-based applicants. No future funding for this program is assured, but child care advocates across the state are encouraging lawmakers to include funding for the 2024-25 state budget and beyond to continue to address unmet facilities needs.

In addition to the quality facilities upgrades to child care programs across the state that this funding provided, data on how/whether Santa Barbara County operators responded to the RFAs can be helpful to plan future training and support, identification of unfunded needs, fundraising, etc.

Data was requested from the Low Income Investment Fund on Santa Barbara County’s participation in these first two rounds of child care facilities funding, RFA1 and RFA2. The data below shows Santa Barbara, by community, followed by a more recent summary from Build Up California for the whole county.

RFA1 Summary as of December, 2023

- 40 Centers funded, for a total of just under \$2.4M
- 47 FCCs funded, for a total of just under \$1.9M

California IGP Funded Areas in Santa Barbara County - RFA1


	Total Award Amount
Carpinteria/ Summerland	\$104,428.00
Guadalupe	\$0.00
Lompoc	\$531,348.62
New Cuyama/Cuyama	\$0.00
Orcutt/Los Alamos	\$603,996.98
Santa Barbara/Goleta	\$1,289,095.35
Santa Maria	\$1,569,824.61
Santa Ynez Valley	\$153,443.00
	\$4,252,136.56

RFA 2 December 23, 2023

California IGP RFA2 - Number of programs awarded and amount totals

	# Centers	# of FCCs	Total #	Amount to centers	Amount to FCCs	Total Amount
Carpinteria/ Summerland	1	1	2	\$562,481	\$100,000	\$662,481
Guadalupe	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Lompoc	2	3	5	\$2,774,440	\$300,000	\$3,074,440
New Cuyama/Cuyama	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Orcutt/Los Alamos	1	3	4	\$499,998	\$263,232	\$763,230
Santa Barbara/Goleta	1	1	2	\$225,000	\$69,158	\$294,158
Santa Maria	0	15	15	\$0	\$1,467,000	\$1,467,000
Santa Ynez Valley	0	0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	5	23	28	\$4,061,919	\$2,199,390	\$6,261,309

County of Santa Barbara IGP Grant Summary (March 18, 2024)



CALIFORNIA CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM (IGP)
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

ROUND OF FUNDING	PURPOSE OF GRANTS	ECE PROVIDER APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	REQUESTED FUNDING (TOTAL)	ACCEPTED APPLICATIONS	AVAILABLE FUNDING (APPROVED)
Round 1	Minor repairs & renovations <i>Applications closed 3/25/22</i>	Statewide			
		>5,000	\$309.6 million	>3,800	\$200.5 million
		Santa Barbara County			
		115	\$7 million	90	\$5 million
Round 2	New construction & major renovations <i>Applications closed 1/31/23</i>	Statewide			
		1,848	\$666 million	TBD	\$150 million
		Santa Barbara County			
		28	\$6 million	TBD	TBD

In Santa Barbara County:

View IGP 1 Recipients Map [here](#)

Round 1

78 Home-based programs
12 Center-based programs

253 jobs preserved

2.5 % of total funding spent in Santa Barbara County

1,340 children served through enhanced spaces

Payments began late 2022

Projections based on applications:

Construction type	Provider type	Projected new spaces: 356
Expansion - 26	Center-based - 5	Infant - 56
New site - 2	Home-based - 23	Toddler - 66
Relocation - 0		Preschool - 151
		School-age - 83

Payments will be sent on a rolling basis starting in mid-2024



Federal funding:

Head Start programs (including Early Head Start grantees) are allowed to use grant funds to construct or undertake major renovations of Head Start facilities. The funding levels set by the federal government for the comprehensive parent and child program services provided through Head Start, though, typically are not high enough in California for grantees to budget for facilities expansion. This leaves Head Start providers looking for facilities funding through the same sources as non-Head Start providers.

There have been attempts in recent years to provide dedicated funding for child care facilities across the nation, but none have resulted in either policy or a funding stream. Below are examples of ways child care has been incorporated into funding for other budget areas.

- The Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) Incentives Program, leverages public dollars to implement a unique child care requirement. Semiconductor manufacturers that apply for more than \$150 million of CHIPS direct funding must provide access to high-quality child care for facility and construction workers.
- This year, with support from the National Farmers Union, the American Farm Bureau Federation and lawmakers from both parties, the Expanding Childcare in Rural America Act is expected to be included in the next farm bill. That legislation would make loans and grants available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development funds to help child care centers improve their facilities and hire and train more staff.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - provides affordable funding through a small grant or construction loan to develop essential community facilities in rural areas, including child care facilities, for non-profit entities.

Other Potential Funding

Although there are not many consistent, dedicated funding streams for child care facilities start up, renovation, and repair, there have been periodic opportunities for child care providers to access funding specifically for child care facilities, such as:

- **City and County CDBG** (Community Development Block Grant) funding, which originates from the federal HUD budget, provides funding for community development, infrastructure, public facilities, community centers, and other projects. The County of Santa Barbara partners with four cities (Buellton, Carpinteria, Lompoc, and Solvang) to offer grants for these activities every year. The remaining cities (Goleta, Guadalupe, Santa Barbara and Santa Maria) conduct their own CDBG grant processes for their individual communities. Across California there are examples of the use of CDBG funding to build child care facilities. It is helpful if cities and counties specifically include child care in their CDBG plan each year.
- **Employer sponsored child care and colocation of housing and child care** (described in Opportunities for Inclusion of Child Care section above) provide the opportunity to leverage dollars and share the cost of facilities. Through partnerships with child care operators, developers, and employers can contribute resources not directly available to operators. For example, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) are two funding vehicles which may, under the right circumstances, pay for a child care facility.

- **Community and family foundations** often have broad categories of focus for their grants, sometimes including or focusing on capital for community services. Although typically restricted for non profit organizations, such grants can provide start up, bridge, and/or construction grants that can be pivotal to the success of a child care facilities project.
- **Foundations and other financial institutions** oftentimes have financial acumen and connections that, when applied to child care facilities projects, can result in critical funding and can build the business capacity of operators. Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) are specialized community based financial institutions set up to promote economic development by providing financial products and services to people and communities underserved by traditional financial institutions, particularly in low-income communities. Santa Barbara County has one Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) through Women’s Economic Ventures. All of these organizations with financial resources and knowledge may be able to leverage, adapt and create funding products to support child care facilities development.



CHILD CARE FACILITIES ASSET MAP FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Understanding Santa Barbara County’s strengths makes it easier to identify the strategies that will have the most success, and will best address the need for child care facility expansion and development.

Local Assets for Child Care Facilities Development

In Santa Barbara County, child care facilities are supported by state and local agencies that are available to help improve child care access for children and families in our community.

Assets to support the start up, expansion, and renovation of child care facilities

Category	Asset
Influence and systems change	
	Child care and TK teachers and administrators
	Chambers of Commerce and economic development efforts
	City and County managers and staff
	City and County planning and public works departments
	Families
	Local Policy Makers
	State and federal Legislators
	United Way(s)
Funding	
	Children’s Resource and Referral of Santa Barbara County
	County/City ARPA funding
	County/City CDBG
	County/City General Fund
	First 5 Children and Families Commission, Santa Barbara County
	Local Banks
	Local Family and Community Foundations
	Santa Barbara Foundation Child Care Capacity Grants
	State Facilities Infrastructure Funds (IGP)
	United Way(s)

Category	Asset
	Women’s Economic Ventures
Local/State child care facility development initiatives	
	United Way of Santa Barbara County Brighter Futures Childcare Initiative
	Build Up California
	Build Up for San Mateo County’s Children
	Children’s Resource and Referral of Santa Barbara County CCIP program
Potential facilities for use as child care centers	
	Faith organizations
	Schools
	County and city properties
	Commercial buildings
	Housing developments
	Business Parks
Professional Services	
	Planning consultants
	Construction companies and contractors
	Housing developers
	Architects
Support resources for facilities design and development	
	Children’s Resource & Referral of Santa Barbara County
	Women’s Economic Ventures
	Santa Barbara County Education Office – Child Development Programs
	Child care facilities consultants
	Child care operators with experience starting up/expanding
	Employers
	Outdoor Classroom Project
	Build Up California

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Build community knowledge and public will for the expansion of high quality licensed child care facilities in Santa Barbara County. Convene a coalition to address barriers and opportunities with stakeholders from a diverse array of sectors such as local government, urban planning, early childhood education, philanthropy, business/economic development, communications, building and real estate. Set goals for policy, public investment and new or upgraded facilities, and track successes as well as new challenges that arise.

2

Work with communities to add data that further defines regional capacity, unique needs and assets, and to estimate the cost of addressing the child care facilities gap.

3

Expand the Facilities Needs Assessment by gathering additional details and real stories from child care providers about their facilities start up and expansion experiences, prospects, and assistance needed.

4

Support the city and County planning departments to learn more about child care land use best practices, and to consider making changes to current policies and practices in order to increase child care facilities development.

5

Identify facilities development and funding strategies, and gather input from a broad audience on those options that will have the greatest impact. Create a Roadmap for Child Care Facilities for Santa Barbara County, with specific steps and strategies for each community.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Definitions

Age ranges – The primary age groups referred to within this report are infants and toddlers (0-2 years) and preschoolers (3–5 years).

Capacity - The total number of children that are allowed to be in a program at a time.

Child Care Centers - Programs that are licensed to provide group early learning and care services in a nonresidential setting.

- Directors and teachers are required to have educational credits and experience.
- City or county permits may be required, along with fire clearance and business license.

Family Child Care Programs (FCC): Licensed care offered in the home of the provider. A small FCC program may care for up to 8 children, depending on their ages. A large FCC requires at least two adults (one being the provider who lives at the residence). A large FCC cares for up to 14 children depending on their ages.

Licensed Child Care - Child care centers and FCCs must be licensed by the Division of the California Department of Social Services. All programs must meet the regulations and standards specified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 22.

License-exempt Care - Some child care options are not required to be licensed by the state. There are specific instances outlined in law which allow some child care providers to legally operate without a license.

Parent – For the purpose of this report the term parent is used as an inclusive term to represent all primary caregivers and guardians.

Regions - Santa Barbara County zip codes have been grouped for the purpose of reporting:

County	Communities	Zip code
South County	Carpinteria/Summerland	93013, 93067
	Santa Barbara	93101, 93103, 93105, 93108, 93109, 93110, 93111
	Goleta	93106, 93117
Mid County	Lompoc	93436, 93437
	Santa Ynez Valley	93247, 93441, 39460, 93463
North County	New Cuyama/Cuyama	93254
	Guadalupe	93434
	Orcutt/Los Alamos	93440, 93455
	Santa Maria	93429, 93454, 93458

Appendix 2: References

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Appendix 3: Carpinteria/Summerland Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

CARPINTERIA/SUMMERLAND

Regional Snapshot



417 Children Ages 0-2 = For 42 licensed spaces	SPACE FOR 1 IN 10 INFANTS & TODDLERS
451 Children Ages 3-5 = For 551 licensed + 29 TK spaces	SPACE FOR ALL PRESCHOOLERS

Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

4 CENTERS	Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.
1 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM	

Top 3 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Retrofit current facility for infants & toddlers
- Relocate to a larger facility
- Add square footage to current facility



Appendix 4: Goleta Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

GOLETA

Regional Snapshot



1,375 Children Ages 0-2 = For 181 licensed spaces	SPACE FOR 1 IN 8 INFANTS & TODDLERS
1,445 Children Ages 3-5 = For 1,176 licensed + 70 TK spaces	SPACE FOR 9 IN 10 PRESCHOOLERS

6 CENTERS	Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.
2 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS	

Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top 3 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Open an additional site
- Relocate to a larger facility
- Add square footage to current facility



Appendix 5: Guadalupe Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

GUADALUPE

Regional Snapshot



<p>335 Children Ages 0-2 =</p> <p>For 27 licensed spaces</p>	<p>SPACE FOR LESS THAN 1 IN 10 INFANTS & TODDLERS</p>
<p>260 Children Ages 3-5 =</p> <p>For 215 licensed + 60 TK spaces</p>	<p>SPACE FOR ALL PRESCHOOLERS</p>

<p>4 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS</p>	<p>Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.</p>
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Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top 3 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Relocate to larger facility
- Expand from a Small FCC to Large FCC
- Add square footage to current facility



Appendix 6: Lompoc Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

LOMPOC

Regional Snapshot



2,719 Children Ages 0-2 = For 186 licensed spaces	SPACE FOR LESS THAN 1 IN 15 INFANTS & TODDLERS
2,110 Children Ages 3-5 = For 1,061 licensed + 197 TK spaces	SPACE FOR 6 IN 10 PRESCHOOLERS

6 CENTERS	Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.
5 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS	

Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top 4 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Open an additional site
- Relocate to larger facility
- Add square footage to current facility
- Expand from a Small FCC to Large FCC



Appendix 7: New Cuyama/Cuyama Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

NEW CUYAMA/CUYAMA

Regional Snapshot



<p>38 Children Ages 0-2 =</p> <p>For 0 licensed spaces</p>	<p>NO SPACE</p>
<p>30 Children Ages 3-5 =</p> <p>For 24 licensed</p>	<p>SPACE FOR 8 IN 10 PRESCHOOLERS</p>

<p>2 CENTERS</p>	<p>Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.</p>
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Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top expansion option to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Add square footage to current facility to add space for infants and toddlers.



Appendix 8: Orcutt/Los Alamos Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

ORCUTT/LOS ALAMOS

Regional Snapshot



<p>2,519 Children Ages 0-2 =</p> <p>For 111 licensed spaces</p>	<p>SPACE FOR LESS THAN 1 IN 20 INFANTS & TODDLERS</p>
<p>2,415 Children Ages 3-5 =</p> <p>For 838 licensed + 75 TK spaces</p>	<p>SPACE FOR 4 IN 10 PRESCHOOLERS</p>

<p>1 CENTER</p>	<p>Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.</p>
<p>4 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS</p>	

Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top 3 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Add square footage to current facility
- Expand from a Small FCC to Large FCC
- Expand from a FCC to a center



Appendix 9: Santa Barbara Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

SANTA BARBARA

Regional Snapshot



3,281 Children Ages 0-2 = For 415 licensed spaces	SPACE FOR 1 IN 8 INFANTS & TODDLERS
3,536 Children Ages 3-5 = For 2,923 licensed + 1,125 TK spaces	SPACE FOR 9 IN 10 PRESCHOOLERS

11 CENTERS	Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.
12 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS	

Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top 4 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Open an additional site
- Convert current facility space (e.g. preschool classroom, office, etc.) into infant/toddler spaces
- Relocate to a larger facility
- Expand from a Small FCC to Large FCC



Appendix 10: Santa Maria Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

SANTA MARIA

Regional Snapshot



<p>5,253 Children Ages 0-2 =</p> <p>For 474 licensed spaces</p>	<p>SPACE FOR LESS THAN 1 IN 10 INFANTS & TODDLERS</p>
<p>5,008 Children Ages 3-5 =</p> <p>For 2,589 licensed + 386 TK spaces</p>	<p>SPACE FOR 7 IN 10 PRESCHOOLERS</p>

<p>6 CENTERS</p>	<p>Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.</p>
<p>64 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS</p>	

Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top 3 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Add square footage to current facility
- Relocate to a larger facility
- Expand from a Small FCC to Large FCC
- Convert current facility space (e.g. preschool classroom, office, etc.) into infant/toddler spaces



Appendix 11: Santa Ynez Valley Regional Snapshot

Santa Barbara County Child Care Facilities Needs Assessment - April 2024

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

Regional Snapshot



946 Children Ages 0-2 = For 21 licensed spaces	SPACE FOR 1 IN 40 INFANTS & TODDLERS
736 Children Ages 3-5 = For 405 licensed + 54 TK spaces	SPACE FOR 7 IN 10 PRESCHOOLERS

1 CENTER	Would be interested in expanding to serve more infants and toddlers if funding and support were available.
1 FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM	

Community Guide

- Engage with local child care operators, parents and community leaders to identify specific needs regarding the type of care, location, etc. Gather data in preparation for creating a local plan to meet those needs.
- Identify facilities in the community that could be used for child care centers, including housing and other developments where child care can be collocated
- Support child care operators with expansion and renovations that will be needed in the next 5 years, as identified in the Child Care Facilities Survey.
- Provide input to planning departments and commissions on the child care needs in the community. Advocate for strong policies such as those listed in the Highlights from Local Child Care Land use Survey section.

Top 3 expansion options to serve more infants and toddlers in this community are:

- Convert current facility space (e.g. preschool classroom, office, etc.) into infant/toddler spaces
- Add square footage to the current facility

