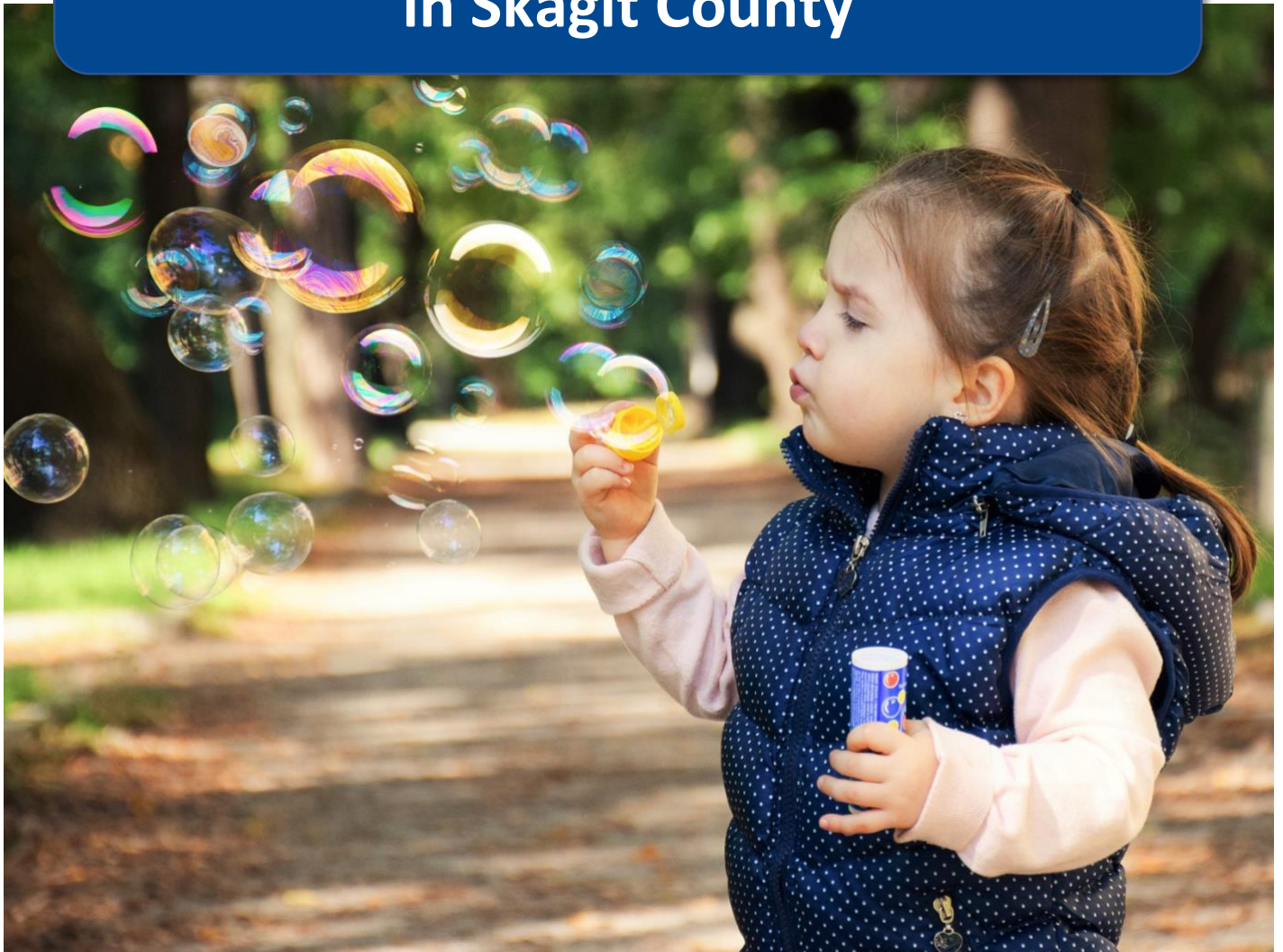


# Child Care Supply, Demand, and Cost in Skagit County



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## Introduction

Adrian and Taylor have three children, Dakota (10 months old), Blair (2 years old), and Kelly (4 years old). Adrian is a part-time community college student and works at a local grocery store, and Taylor works at a local car maintenance shop. Their shared income is \$62,400 and because it is right about the 200% federal poverty threshold, they do not qualify for public benefits, such as the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy (WCCC)<sup>i</sup>. With the high cost of child care expenses, along with other necessities, the budget for their five-person family is tight. They pay \$2,515 per month for care for their three children.

As a working family, they rely on Family Home Child Care because their provider offers infant care, a flexible schedule, and cares for all their children together. However, their child care provider, Maria, recently let the family know that her family was planning to move to another state within the next year and they would have to find a new provider soon. Adrian is very worried that she will have to stop attending classes if she cannot find replacement care.

In preparation for her providers upcoming move, Adrian used her local child care referral line<sup>ii</sup> to contact all the available family child care providers in her area. There are few providers that provide infant care, and their family is on three long waitlists. Their rates may also increase with a new provider, especially if they have to switch to center-based care.

**Adrian and Taylor have a common story. Their experience matches the data surrounding the lack of accessibility of licensed child care.** Child care is both a family issue and a broader economic concern and as such should be addressed both at national and local levels. Child care in Skagit County is expensive and difficult to find. Local investment in child care capacity supports the community as a whole and working families like Adrian and Taylor's.

According to a recent Ready Nation<sup>iii</sup> national survey “[a]lmost two-thirds of parents facing child care struggles report leaving work early and more than half report being distracted or missing full days of work”.<sup>1</sup> In a 2015 *Washington Post* survey, 77% of mothers and 50% of fathers reported having passed up an employment opportunity or switched jobs to allow more time for their children.<sup>2</sup> In a survey by Care.com, 74% of working parents said child care problems affected their jobs, including missing work, falling behind, and losing pay.<sup>3</sup> Employee turnover

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<sup>i</sup> The Washington State Working Connections Child Care Subsidy program assists families with low-incomes to pay for child care if they meet income requirements (less than 200% of federal poverty level), and work or meet WorkFirst requirements.

<sup>ii</sup> Child Care Aware of Washington offers a free referral program for parents to contact licensed child care providers in their area. The phone number is 1-800-446-1114 and the online tool is available at <https://childcareawarewa.org/families>.

<sup>iii</sup> Ready Nation is the business sector of the Council for a Strong America, which is a national, bipartisan nonprofit organization that brings together law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes to promote solutions to domestic public health issues.

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due to child care issues also creates large costs to employers, as studies find it is increasingly expensive to replace employees in the service economy.<sup>4</sup>

Notably, neurological and sociological research has increasingly found child care plays a significant role in a child's development. Quality child care is closely connected with the "soft skills" children build—or their social, emotional, and cognitive development—which greatly impacts their well-being later in life.<sup>5</sup>

Survey results, such as those of the National Association of Colleges and Employers in 2016, show that businesses seek employees who are good communicators, collaborators, and problem-solvers, meaning there is high demand within the labor market for people who possess these essential soft skills.<sup>6</sup> This also coincides with an increased focus on executive functions in the educational and business communities.

**Children who have experienced quality early childhood education not only make more desirable future employees; they also perform better in school, are healthier, earn higher incomes, and are less likely to be convicted of a crime.<sup>7</sup>**

James Heckman, a University of Chicago economist and Nobel Laureate, found every dollar spent on a high-quality early childhood education program in North Carolina produced a benefit to society of \$7.30, after calculating the effects reduced unemployment, crime, and poor health.<sup>8</sup> Investment in high quality care yielded a return of 13% per year—a higher return than most stocks, as Heckman noted in an interview.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, according to this research, children from families experiencing low incomes, compared to children from other income brackets, tend to benefit the most from high-quality child care by improving their school performance and earning higher than projected future incomes.

Increasing the availability of high-quality child care also expands economic opportunity today. Among individuals outside of the workforce with low-incomes raising young children, 70% list "taking care of home/family" as the reason they don't seek employment. Many parents fall into poverty when they cannot find a safe, affordable, quality environment for their children while they work.<sup>10</sup> When high-quality care is accessible, families are able to join the workforce or pursue higher education. However, when licensed child care is difficult to access, families (like Adrian's) struggle to stay employed or enrolled in school.

As a recent US Chamber of Commerce report argues, supporting high-quality child care is "wise investment in America's future," because it helps parents move up the economic ladder today and puts children on the path to success tomorrow.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Ready Nation's survey and analytical data calculates "substantial economic losses when families of children under 3 do not have adequate child care." They found that for families with young children, the impacts of work-time commitment issues, reduced productivity, and long-term career stagnation translate into sizable economic burdens for the families themselves, employers and their firms, and the overall tax system.<sup>12</sup>



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## Child Care Supply and Demand in Skagit County

There are 7,423 children under 5 years old in Skagit County,<sup>13</sup> and 4,952 children with all parents in their households who work full-time.<sup>14</sup> Working families need somebody to take care of their children during the day, and frequently during nights and weekends as well. This care is a responsibility that is often entrusted to a licensed child care provider.

However, with 24 child care centers, 63 family child care providers, and 9 school-age providers in Skagit County, there are only 2,126 licensed child care slots available to children. This means that 2,893 children in Skagit County, or about 58%, are potentially left without the option to attend licensed child care when their family members go to work. Additionally, only 2,059 of those slots accept some form child care of subsidy.<sup>15</sup> This trend is worsening. From January 2013 to December of 2018, the child care capacity of Skagit County decreased by 6 percent.<sup>16</sup>

Unusual hours and overnight care is also a concern for working families. There are no centers in the Northwest Region, which includes Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties, that offer overnight care and only three in the entirety of Washington State. Although there are 23 family child care providers that are licensed for 24-hour care in the NW Region, only 15 of them are currently posting hours after midnight. Of those, only three are in Skagit county, the rest are in Snohomish county.

Due to this shortage, many families spend months—and sometimes years—on waiting lists. **For example, there is a two-year waitlist for the YMCA’s Anacortes Early Learning Center.** There is a six month to one-year waitlist for the YMCA’s Burlington Early Learning Center.<sup>iv</sup> The wait times are the longest for the youngest age group served, Waddlers<sup>v</sup> (10-20 months), and Toddlers (1 year-30 months).<sup>17</sup>

Family, friends, or neighbors (FFN) care is an alternative to licensed child care center and family home care, however access to this resource is dependent on pre-existing relationships. A number of national studies estimate between 33–53% of children under five with working parents or family members receive care through FFN, or through other informal means.<sup>18</sup> However, many families lack the option of using FFN care because they do not have a preexisting relationship with an available caregiver. It is also difficult to assess and improve the quality of this type of care.

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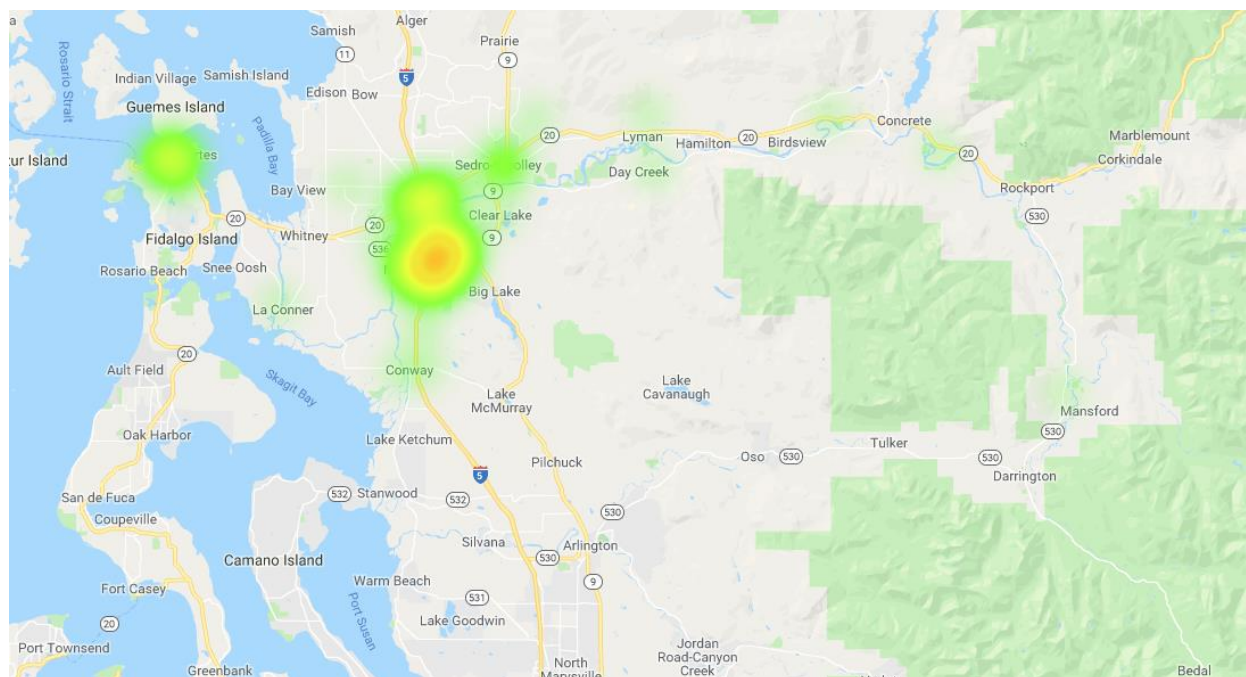
<sup>iv</sup> The increase in Washington State minimum wage has reduced the wait times for families with higher wages within child care centers such as those run by the YMCA. Fewer families qualify for the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy because to qualify a family’s income must be at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. This is one explanation for the shorter wait times in the Mt. Vernon area. **Although this change has opened up slots for families that can afford care, it has intensified the access barriers for ALICE families and families experiencing low incomes.**

<sup>v</sup> Waddlers is a YMCA specific transitional program for children between infancy and toddler ages. The YMCA does not provide infant care.

## Mapping the Gap in Skagit County

This report identifies areas in Skagit County that most lack child care capacity.

### Map A: Location of Child Care Providers in Skagit County



Map A shows a heat-map of current locations of child care centers and family child care homes in Skagit County<sup>vi</sup>. Most providers are clustered in Mount Vernon, with clusters on Fidalgo Island and along WA Highway 20.

The Skagit County child care market is characterized by high costs and low capacity of high-quality care. In particular, infant care is expensive and difficult to find. In Skagit County, the number of licensed child care providers has dropped from 122 with capacity for 2,676 children in 2013, to 97 providers with capacity for 2,459 children in December of 2017<sup>vii, 19</sup>.

While more child care locations are needed throughout the county, Anacortes, Concrete, and Bow in particular suffer the most from a lack of child care capacity. Rural households face especially difficult challenges in terms of child care locations and expenses. Parents in rural areas often have to travel far distances to find care for their children, and low competition in unpopulated area can potentially drive up costs. Parts of Skagit County, especially rural areas, are classified as child care deserts, defined by the Center for American Progress as “areas with an insufficient supply of licensed child care”, or “... a ZIP code with at least 30 children under

<sup>vi</sup> Because this is a heat map utilizing the density of providers, individual provides may not be visible.

<sup>vii</sup> This is the most recent data retrieved from the January 2018 report published data from Child Care Aware of Washington. The report is released annually with the prior year’s data.

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the age of 5 and either no child care centers or so few centers that there are more than three times as many children under age 5 as there are spaces in centers.”<sup>20</sup>

Most Skagit County zip codes have less than .25 slots per child. This means that in these areas, there are four children with working parents for every one licensed child care slot. This number is even more dramatic in areas like Anacortes, Concrete, and Bow. The only areas that have nearly 1 slot per child are Mount Vernon (.65), Burlington (.71), and Darrington (1.28).

Lack of access to child care is made worse by the fact that care is unaffordable where it is offered. The following sections of this report reveal that child care is the biggest expense many families face. According to the United Way of Skagit County’s ALICE report, families that are not income eligible for the Working Connections Child Care subsidy allocate approximately 30% of their budget to child care expenses.<sup>21</sup> Overall, the yearly cost of child care—which is more expensive than tuition at Western Washington University<sup>22</sup> or Skagit Valley College<sup>23</sup>—is unaffordable, even for many middle-class families.



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## Economics of Child Care: Providers

A recent report by Child Care Aware of America ranked Washington as the third most expensive state in the United States for home-based infant child care, and Skagit County follows this trend. In 2018, the median cost of enrolling an infant in family home-based child care in Skagit County was \$910 monthly. For families with two or more young children the financial burden is even higher. The data provided in the section below highlights the fact that infant child care remains prohibitively expensive and rare in Skagit County.

In 2018, Child Care Aware of Washington's Family Call Center referred 205 Skagit County families with 262 children to licensed child care providers; 153 or 74 percent were seeking providers who accept Working Connections Child Care subsidy<sup>24</sup>.

### Monthly cost of center child care – Skagit County, 2018

Center	Median rate	State subsidy rate <sup>viii</sup>	Difference
Infant <sup>ix</sup>	\$1,092	\$986	(-106)
Toddler	\$895	\$822	(-73)
Preschool	\$780	\$710	(-70)
School age	\$689	\$345 (half-day rate)	(-234)

While Working Connections Child Care is an essential program for parents to access child care, the subsidy payments are often lower than median market rates, which presents challenges to providers.

### Monthly cost of family home child care – Skagit County, 2018

Family home	Median rate	State subsidy rate	Difference
Infant	\$910	\$928	(+18)
Toddler	\$823	\$785	(-38)
Preschool	\$780	\$785	(+5)
School age	\$347	320 (half-day rate)	(-27)

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<sup>viii</sup> State subsidy rates include Washington State's contribution, as well as a family's co-pay. For example, if the infant subsidy rate is listed as \$986 and a family has a co-pay of \$65 per month, a child care provider would receive \$921 from the state and \$65 from the family. Families that earn 0%–82% the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) have a \$15 co-pay per month. The Working Connections co-pay increases as a family's income rises, until the subsidy begins to phase out at 201% the FPL.

<sup>ix</sup> According to the Washington Administrative Code, an infant is defined as a child birth through eleven months of age. A toddler is defined as a child twelve months through twenty-nine months (approx. 2.5 yrs.) of age, and Preschool is defined as children thirty months through six years of age not attending kindergarten or elementary school.



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There are currently legislative discussions taking place regarding increasing the subsidy rate closer to that of the median, and although adjustments have been made this goal is not yet realized. Fortunately, the final 2019-21 Washington state operating budget has included an increase to Working Connections Child Care Subsidy rates to the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile<sup>x</sup>. However, advocates are working toward an increase to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile in the future in order to increase access for working families.

Although Child Care providers provide an extremely important service to our communities, they are also businesses and must take expenses into account in order to balance their budgets. For example, consider a center that charges standard market rates. If that provider takes three toddlers and one preschooler who receive the Working Connections Child Care subsidy, it would potentially lose \$289 in revenue per month. **Over the course of one year that deficit is \$3,468<sup>xi</sup>.**

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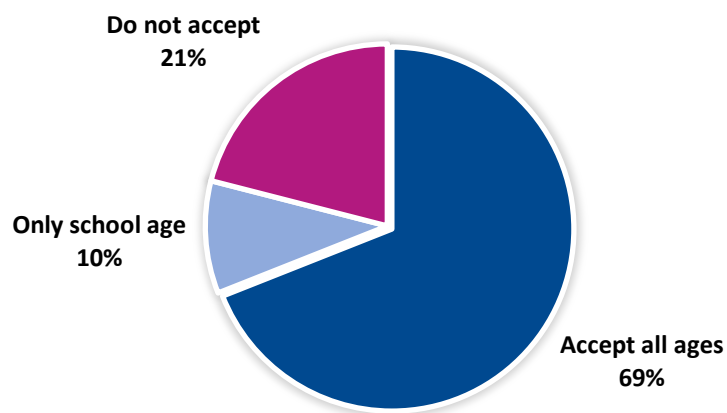
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<sup>x</sup> A percentile is a measurement that indicates the subsidy rates in comparison with the median rates in the state. If the rates are in the 55<sup>th</sup> percentile that means that they are competitive with 55 percent of the market.

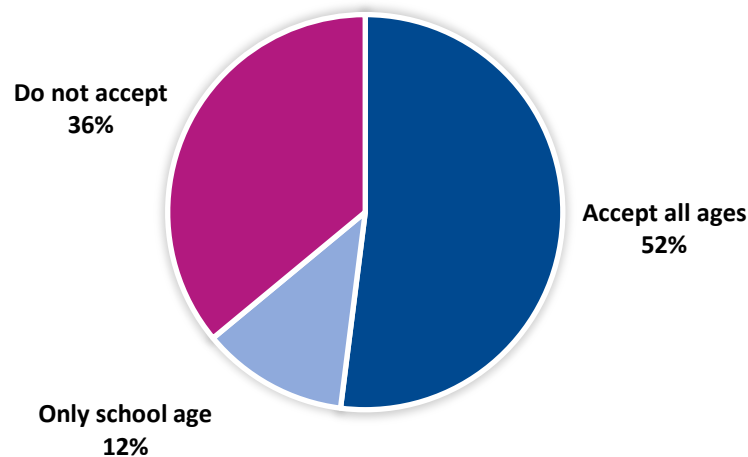
<sup>xi</sup> Depending on their location or their mission, many providers take a greater number of children whose families use the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy program and their financial deficit is even greater.

As noted, with 7,423 young children in Skagit County, there are 2,126 licensed child care slots available and only 2,059 of those slots accept some form child care of subsidy (including local subsidies and other forms of financial assistance). Low subsidy rates may be one reason why many providers may choose not to accept state subsidy—a situation that further limits options families who use the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy program. Only 69% of providers accept subsidy for all ages<sup>25</sup>, and 52% statewide. Child care is difficult for any family to find, but it is especially challenging for families who receive subsidy.

### **SKAGIT COUNTY: PROVIDERS THAT ACCEPT STATE SUBSIDY**



### **WA STATE: PROVIDERS THAT ACCEPT STATE SUBSIDY**

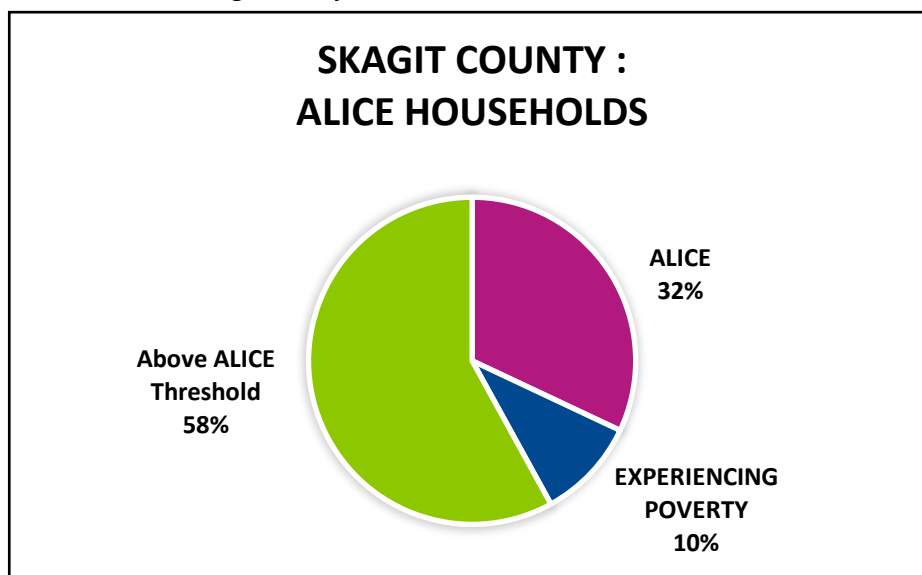


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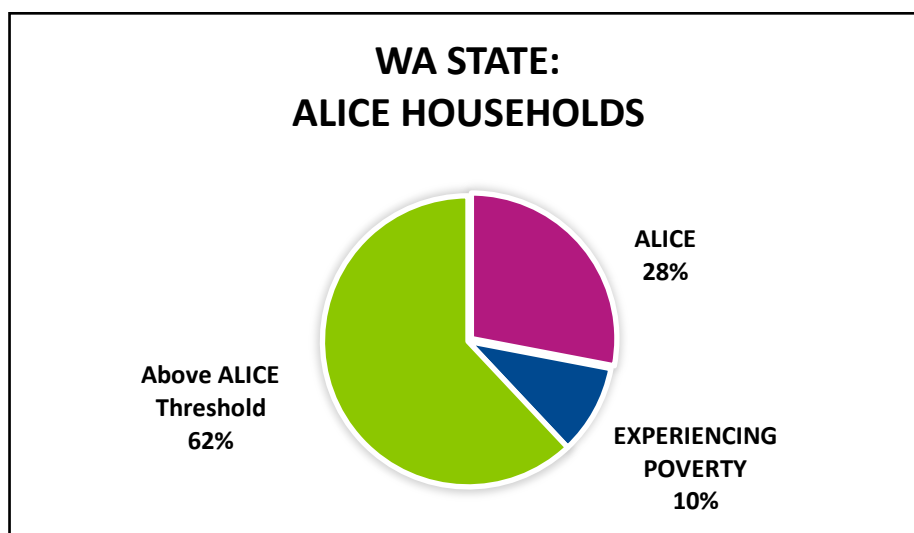
## Economics of Child Care: Working Families

United Way of Skagit County's 2016 ALICE report illuminates some of the hardship working families in this county face. ALICE is an acronym that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed. This is a large proportion of the population that earns more than the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but not enough to balance a needs-based household budget. In other words, ALICE families often struggle to make ends meet yet are not eligible to receive public benefits. Reviewing data from ALICE families provides a broader picture of Skagit County's financial landscape. The number of households experiencing poverty combined with the number of ALICE households equals the total population that struggle to meet basic needs. **As revealed through the figure below, 42% or 4 out of 10 families are facing substantial financial hardship in Skagit County.**

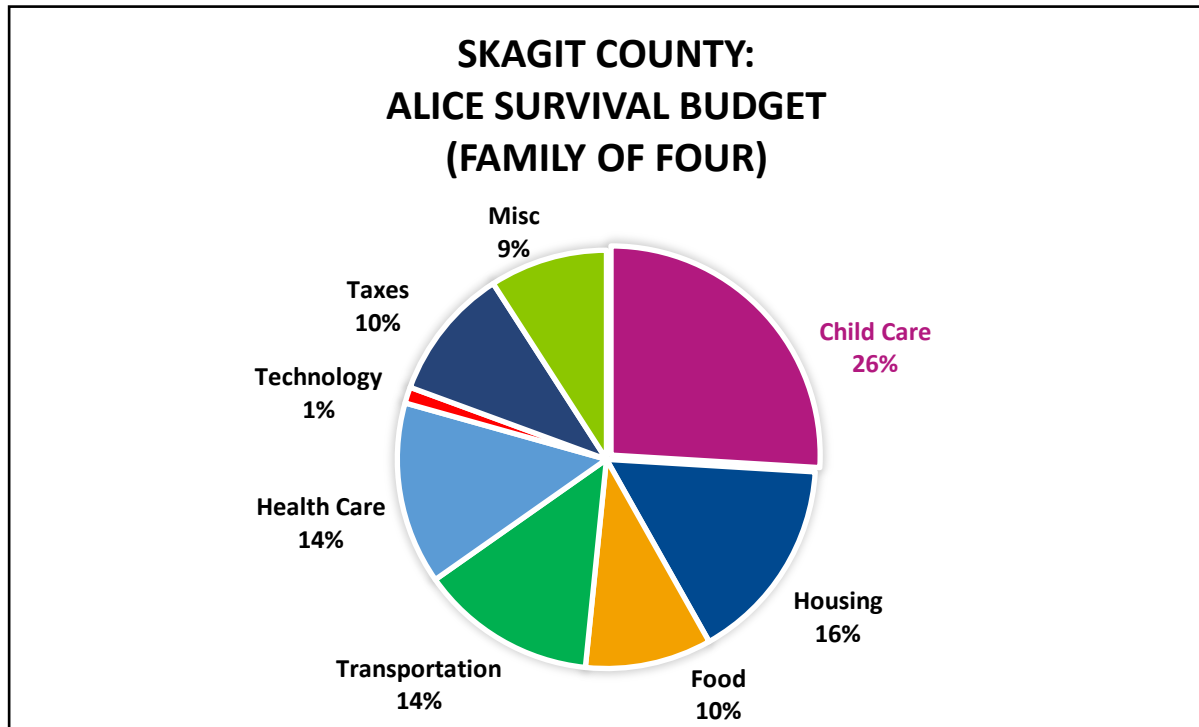
Skagit County Median Household Income: \$60,983



Washington State Median Household Income \$67,106



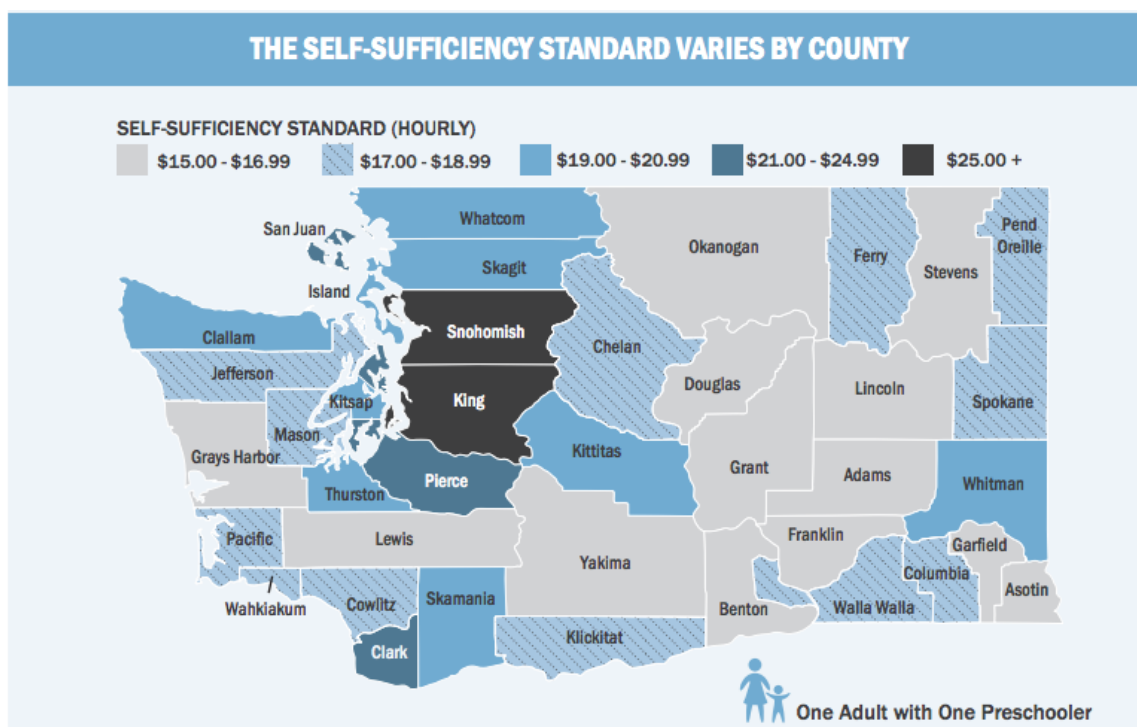
The United Way ALICE report states that a family with two adults, one infant, and one preschooler needs to earn an income \$72,060 per year to meet their basic needs. This correlates with a necessary wage of 36.03 per hour.<sup>26</sup> This figure is \$11,077 more than Skagit County's median income, and child care is the largest expense these families face each month.



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## Economics of Child Care: The Self-Sufficiency Standard

Furthermore, in 2017 the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County calculated a self-sufficiency standard for a range of family models. <sup>27</sup> The report reveals that most families must earn well-above the minimum wage to afford their basic needs. Child care constitutes the largest cost each month for many families with young children—and the financial situation is even more difficult in single parent homes.



Map used with permission from the developers of the Self-Sufficiency Standard at the University of Washington

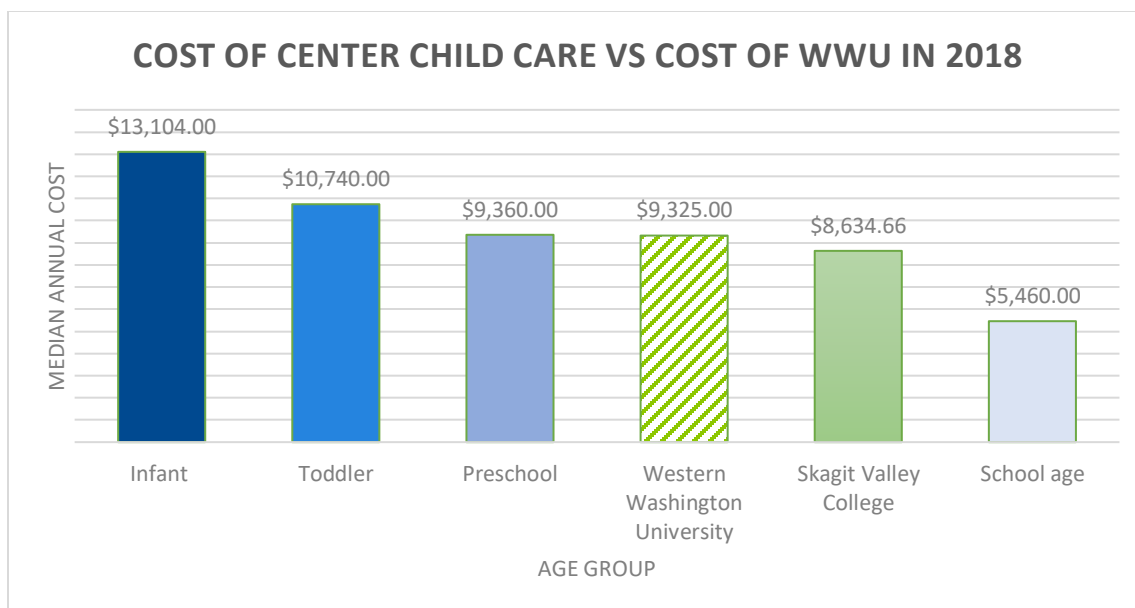
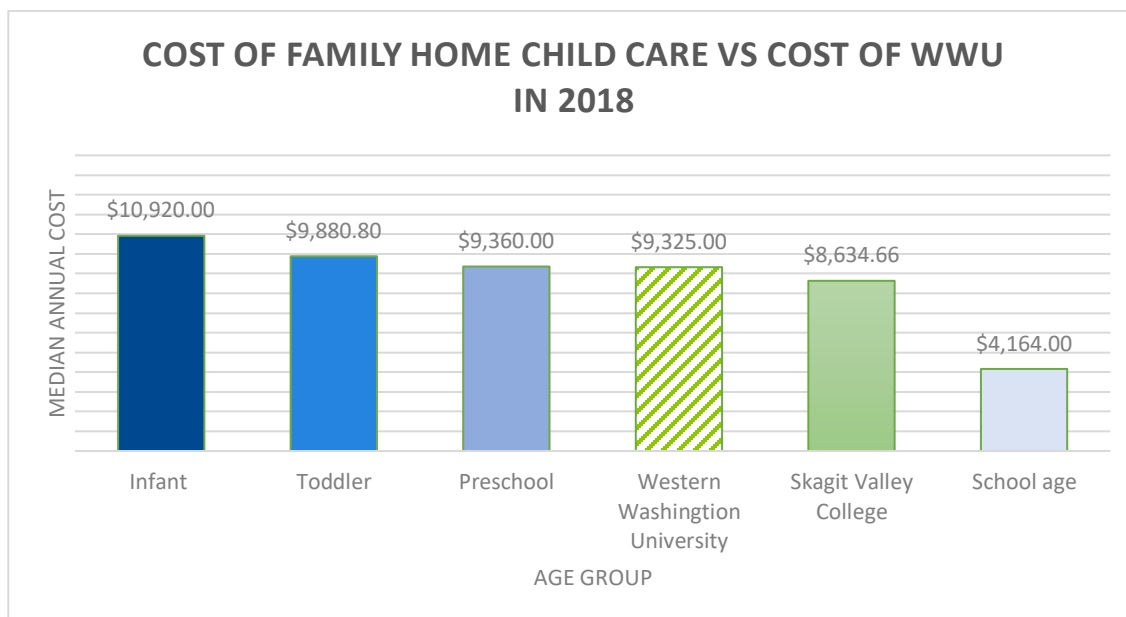
### The Self-Sufficiency Standard: Skagit County, 2017

Family type	Child care costs (per month)	Total monthly costs	Self-sufficiency wage
Adult, preschooler	\$771	\$3,516	\$19.98/ hour per adult
Adult, infant, preschooler	\$1,688	\$4,786	\$27.20 / hour per adult
2 Adults, infant	\$917	\$4,315	\$12.26/ hour per adult
2 Adults, infant, preschooler	\$1,688	\$4,474	\$15.21/ hour per adult



## Economics of Child Care: Comparative Costs

The cost of college tuition is often mentioned in discussions of rising economic inequality. However, the yearly cost of child care is often more expensive than the **combined** cost of tuition, books, and fees at Western Washington University<sup>xii</sup> or Skagit Valley College<sup>xiii</sup>.



<sup>xii</sup> This amount was calculated using the estimated annual expenses for 2018-2019 from Western Washington University. It is a combination of the annual cost of tuition (\$6,387), fees (\$2,014), and books (\$924).

<sup>xiii</sup> This amount was calculated using the upper division tuition table for 2018-2019 from Skagit Valley College. It is a combination of the annual cost of tuition and fees for 18 credits (\$7,434.66), and the cost of books (\$1,200).

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## Quality of Care: Washington Early Achievers

Although child care accessibility involves cost and supply, quality of care is also a vital aspect of this issue. Approximately 90 percent of brain development occurs between ages 0 to 5 and it is important that all children have access to safe and quality early learning opportunities.<sup>28</sup>

Washington State is fortunate to have public programs that work to support high-quality early learning programs. Early Achievers is Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which gives coaching, training, technical assistance, scholarships, and other in-person resources to child care providers in order to improve the quality of their care. It is founded on the premise that highly experienced and well-trained coaches working directly with providers will result in an overall improvement in child outcomes.<sup>29</sup> Early Achievers is also a linguistically inclusive program, which can provide trainings and coaching in the provider's first language.

The Early Start Act, which was passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2015, also requires child care providers who accept the Working Connections Child Care Subsidy and serve ages birth to five, to join Early Achievers<sup>xiv</sup>. Early Achievers rates programs on a scale of one to five and, "[t]he rating system helps families find child care programs that are engaged in continuous quality improvement efforts and have had their quality validated<sup>xv</sup> by the University of Washington."<sup>30</sup>

A Washington state study funded by the Department of Early Learning,<sup>xvi</sup> and the Gates Foundation investigated the impact of coaching on child care quality. According to Ryan Pricco, Policy and Advocacy Director of Child Care Aware of Washington, "The biggest takeaway [of the study] is that using a coaching approach—where programs have a coach on site with them, working hand in hand with them to make daily improvements to their interactions with kids or simple improvements to their environment—very quickly and efficiently improved the quality of care."<sup>31</sup> And as James Heckman's research shows, children who experience high-quality child care, such as those who attend programs that implement Early Achievers coaching, are more likely to be prepared to enter kindergarten at grade level.<sup>32</sup>

Numerically, 89% of rated providers<sup>xvii</sup> in Washington State have reached a Level three or above, and 90% of rated providers in the NW region are Level three or above.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the University of Washington shows significant gains in quality. This is also reflected in the provider survey data. – 43% percent of providers reported significant learning area improvements<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>xiv</sup> Providers must be licensed in Washington State to participate in Early Achievers and by extension accept children whose families are utilizing publicly funded subsidy programs. The only exception to this rule are military and tribal providers who undergo an alternate certification process.

<sup>xv</sup> This evaluation process is provided by the Cultivate Learning team at the University of Washington. To find out more visit <https://cultivatelearning.uw.edu/quality-ratings>.

<sup>xvi</sup> The Washington State Department of Early Learning has reorganized and is now the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

<sup>xvii</sup> Rated providers are participants in Early Achievers that have been rated by Cultivate Learning.

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Statewide, 71% of child care providers are enrolled in Early Achievers. In Skagit County those numbers are even higher. **As of May 2019, 86% of licensed child care providers in Skagit County are enrolled in Early Achievers.**<sup>35</sup>

Through a lot of dedication and hard work, there have been significant and timely gains in child care quality, but more slots are necessary. Overall, its vital that as many families as possible can access these high-quality early learning environments.



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## Recommendations to Increase Child Care Access in Skagit County

Skagit County community partners should prioritize increasing child care capacity—particularly infant care—in Anacortes, and rural areas such as Concrete and Bow. Child care is increasingly expensive and difficult to find, and Skagit County families need support and relief.

Increasing child care access will require collaboration between various community partners, including parents, providers, non-profit organizations, and businesses. This section includes recommendations of ways the community members can effectively increase high-quality, affordable child care capacity throughout Skagit County.

### 1. Public and private investment in early childhood education

Non-profit entities, community business partners, and public funds could be used in tandem to invest in early childhood educational infrastructure. Creative solutions that pool funds have an innovative potential to support mixed income level classrooms, and provide care for families across the economic spectrum.

One example of this could be an Early Learning Hub model that incorporate both publicly funded programs like ECEAP<sup>xviii</sup> and Head start<sup>xix</sup>, and private or non-profit resources such those of a pre-existing provider, or a private investor looking to open up a center. Another example could be a community loan fund aimed at new child care providers, supported by private community members and supplemented by state grants or non-profit coordination.

### 2. Job training and workforce development to increase the number of child care businesses.

The same economic issues that impact other employers such as retention, work-time commitment issues, reduced productivity, and long-term career stagnation affect child care providers as well. Increasing the recruitment, retention and work satisfaction of high-performing early learning staff can produce positive results for not only individual providers, but the economy as a whole.

One issue impacting the employment pipeline of child care providers is access to basic education and English proficiency classes for people who are learning English as a second language. Supporting programs that help people experiencing low incomes and multi-lingual communities complete the necessary courses and educational requirements for child care staff can open up opportunities for diversifying and supporting local licensed child care providers.

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<sup>xviii</sup> ECEAP stands for Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program and is a preschool program funded by Washington State.

<sup>xix</sup> Head Start is a preschool program funded by the United States federal government.

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Perhaps even more important for child care providers than recruitment is retention. Many highly qualified staff leave early childhood educational jobs because of a stagnation in wages and opportunities to make more money elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> Supporting efforts to increase compensation for early childhood educators is a first step to addressing this issue.

Moreover, the increase in public awareness of the importance of child care labor, and the impact of high-quality early learning on future generations and the economy could also play a part in increasing staff retention. Community partners can support programs which provide positive job recognition to child care providers and support conversations around the importance of high-quality child care accessibility.

### **3. Business supports to child care**

Research and survey data confirms child care concerns affect the productivity, happiness, and reliability of workers. Top employers in Skagit County include Skagit Regional Health, Skagit Horticulture, Janicki Industries, Swinomish, Skagit Valley Casino, Draper Valley Farms, and Shell and Tesoro Refineries.<sup>37</sup> By supporting child care, employers can improve employee productivity and retention, while building a strong workforce in the future. As a recent US Chamber of Commerce report demonstrates, “[f]or American business, advancing high-quality child care is a winning proposition.”<sup>38</sup>

Skagit County business leaders and employers can help grow the local economy and benefit employees in the following ways.

#### **Low cost**

- Voice support for early childhood education to elected officials and the wider community
- Direct employees to Child Care Aware’s Family Call Center for referral services
- Promote public program supports to eligible employees
- Advocate for expansion of publicly-financed early childhood options to loosen private market capacity available to other incomes



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## Larger investment

- Offer child care vouchers, subsidy, or stipends for employees
- Reserve child care slots for their employees by contracting with a local provider to pay premium rates even while these slots are unused
- Increase public market supply by financially supporting expansion of publicly funded full or extended day early learning programs
- Assist with costs of conversion of family-friends-neighbor care or licensed-exempt care or unregulated providers to become licensed and offer reserved capacity for employees
- Purchase mixed-income child slots for employees in publicly supported settings
- Make charitable contributions to a donor-advised pooled fund within a local foundation

## Additional cost and higher yield

- Acquire ownership of an existing child care business where the owner is retiring or relocating and turn-key to a new child care operator to serve employees
- Financially support a private or publicly funded hub-satellite early learning model with reserved capacity for company/org to accommodate irregular shift work
- Recruit licensed homes and centers at a premium to exclusively serve employees
- Contractually outsource a company child care to a local or national provider or chain with its own facility
- Construct or remodel space for company facility to be run by outsourced local child care business or national provider
- Own/operate licensed child care facility for employees<sup>39</sup>

For example, the apparel company, Patagonia, provides on-site child care at its corporate headquarters and distribution center. Over the past five years, turnover among Patagonia employees who use its child care program is 25% lower than the turnover rate of the company's overall workforce. After tax benefits and employee retention, engagement, and happiness are accounted for, Patagonia's CEO estimates a 115%–125% return on investment on their child care program. Other companies find similar results: JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A. has estimated a return of 115% on its child care program.<sup>40</sup>

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## Top Priorities

Solutions are needed to strengthen child care access in Skagit County. Community partners can work towards increasing child care capacity and affordability in the County by:

1. Collaborating with the Skagit County's Public Health "First 1,000 Days" initiative to address child care capacity issues in the context of supporting children and families through a child's first 1,000 days of life so they can flourish and be prepared for kindergarten.
2. Collaborating with The Imagine Institute<sup>xx</sup> to recruit and train individuals who show an interest in opening family home child care businesses that would accept state subsidy. This includes finding parents or FFN providers who are curious about becoming fully licensed providers.
3. Investigating and supporting how local school districts can support early learning in Skagit County
4. Supporting the use of the newly available \$18 million in early learning Washington State facilities grants as an opportunity for local investors to become more involved in early childhood education
5. Creating connections with businesses that show interest in supporting child care and providing them resources and recommendations

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<sup>xx</sup> The Imagine Institute is a non-profit organization that works with Family, Friend, and Neighbor, substitute family child care providers, and family child care businesses focusing on professional development. They provide training and a mentorship program for clients interested in entering the child care field. For more information go to: <https://imaginewa.org/who-we-are/>

## More Information: Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington

Funding and resources for this report were provided by Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington and the Opportunity Council.

Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington serves the Northwest Region of Washington State which includes Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, San Juan, and Island Counties. Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington is passionate about advancing high quality early learning opportunities for all families in the region and provides a variety of services. These services include supporting local families in finding quality, licensed child care providers; providing coaching and technical assistance for providers participating in Early Achievers, advocating for high-quality early learning at the local, state, and federal levels, raising awareness about the importance of early learning in the community, and coordinating professional development through the State Training and Registry System (STARS).

To learn more about Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington visit [www.ccanorthwest.org](http://www.ccanorthwest.org).

Location	Address	Phone
<b>Family Call Center</b>	<a href="http://www.childcareawarewa.org/families">www.childcareawarewa.org/families</a>	1-800-446-1114
<b>Regional Office</b>	1111 Cornwall Ave, Suite 200 Bellingham, WA 98225	360-734-8396 x227 1-888-444-1862 x227
<b>Mt. Vernon Office</b>	416 Main Street Mt. Vernon, WA 98273	
<b>Lynwood Office</b>	3400 188th St. SW, Suite 291 Lynnwood, WA 98037	
<b>Everett Office</b>	3900 Broadway Everett, WA 98201	

*CCA of NW WA Team (2018)*



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## Data and Methodology

Using survey data of child care providers collected by Child Care Aware of Washington, this report examines different measures of child care supply, the current locations of center and family child cares, and the cost of family home-based care for infants and toddlers compared to the median income per zip code. The number of children under age five and median income for each zip code was found through the Census 2012–2016 American Community Survey five-year estimates. Maps were created using Google Fusion Tables.

This report examined child care supply in Skagit County using two different metrics: unmet child care slots and unmet slots per child. The number of unmet slots was calculated by subtracting total child care capacity from the total number of children whose available parents are in the labor force in each Skagit County zip code. Slots per child in need of care was calculated by dividing the number child care of slots by the number of children with all available parents in the labor force.

The methodology used to find the number of unmet slots per zip code and slots per child in need followed the methods used in “Mapping the Gap: Examining Child Care Across the County,” a report issued by Child Care Aware of America that analyzed child care capacity in Alaska and Massachusetts. The introduction and the recommendations section drew heavily from the US Chamber of Commerce report, “Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The Business Case for High-Quality Child Care,” authored by Katharine B. Stevens. It was also informed by the conclusions of the Ready Nation report “The Economic Impacts of Insufficient Child Care on Working Families” by Clive R. Belfield.

It is important to note that working families are not geographically isolated. Although it may be more convenient for families to use child care providers that are close to home or their jobs, they sometimes have to travel long distances to find child care. Clusters of supply or demand on the border of a zip code boundary may distort the calculations of both the number of unmet slots and the average slots per child in need of care. A more in-depth estimate of child care supply in the future might include an analysis of drive times in Skagit County or record information on cross county child care commutes.

Zip code boundaries differ slightly from county boundaries. This report used data from each zip code that would at least partially be included in Skagit County. Data was unavailable in some zip codes for the maps showing child care costs.

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Rose Marcotte, Administrative Program Coordinator of the Quality Child Care Division  
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David Webster, Director of Early Learning and Family Services

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