

# Fresno County

**Fresno County**, situated in the most productive farming region in the nation, has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the state. Its agricultural labor force is comprised largely of immigrants, many earning only minimum wage. For most of these families, quality licensed child care is unaffordable. Child care subsidies for the working poor are extremely limited, and some families do not meet the eligibility criteria. With only one percent of licensed centers offering care during evenings and weekends and a shortage of licensed providers in the county's rural areas, many parents make piecemeal child care arrangements with friends, neighbors, and relatives.

A major challenge affecting the supply of licensed child care in Fresno County is turnover among providers. Counselors at Central Valley Children's Service Network, the local resource and referral (R&R) agency, attribute this to low wages and unrealistic expectations providers sometimes have when starting a child care business. "Providers are encouraged to become trained so they can provide quality care, yet the wages don't meet the demands placed on them," says an R&R counselor. In addition, R&R counselors say language barriers and a lack of job skills make it difficult for some potential providers to become licensed.

## Improving supply and quality of care

To address these and other issues, the R&R and other agencies are providing training in Spanish. Through the Children and Families Project, parents – including those becoming licensed caregivers – are attending classes in parenting and early childhood development as well as English classes and literacy programs. In a collaborative effort, representatives from a variety of agencies and disciplines have come together to create Limitless Early Education and Access Delivery System (LEADS), an infrastructure designed to enhance the communication and coordination of existing education and training services for early care and education professionals.

*"A lot has been done to improve the quality of care for children in our county, but much still needs to be done. Concerns about quality in license-exempt care, especially, need to be addressed."*

– R&R Counselor

The People <sup>1</sup>	1990	2000	Change
Total number of residents	667,490	799,407	20%
Total number of employed residents		294,942	
Percent working outside the county		7%	
Percent working non-traditional hours		21%	
Total number of households	221,133	253,304	15%
Speaking English	144,795	150,944	4%
Speaking Spanish	54,631	79,450	45%
Speaking an Asian language	10,108	11,972	18%

## The Children<sup>1</sup> 2000

Total number of children (0–13 years) 200,136

Under 2	2	3	4	5	6–11	12	13
26,555	13,466	13,762	14,044	14,297	89,726	14,240	14,046

Children 0–5 living in poverty (% of total) 27,037 (34%)

Children 0–5 living in single parent household (% of total) 18,658 (28%)

Total number of children (0–13) with parents in the labor force<sup>2</sup> 100,345

Under 2	2	3	4	5	6–13
11,610	6,315	6,470	7,075	7,135	61,740

## Child Care Cost and Family Income 2002

Average annual cost of full-time licensed care for a preschooler, 2–5 years old, in a center <sup>3</sup>	\$5,836
Annual minimum wage of a full-time worker <sup>4</sup>	\$14,040
Care for a preschooler as a percent of income of a single parent household at minimum wage	42%
Annual median family income <sup>1</sup>	\$38,455
Annual fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit <sup>5</sup>	\$6,420
Salary of entry-level public school teacher <sup>6</sup>	\$28,693

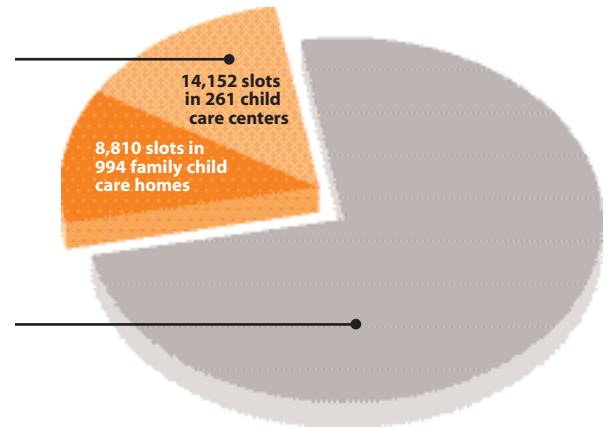
1. U.S. Census Bureau, 1990; 2000.
2. This number reflects children with either two parents or single head of household in the labor force.
3. 2002 Regional Market Rate Survey of California Child Care Providers.
4. California Department of Industrial Relations, Industrial Welfare Commission, 2002.
5. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2002.
6. California Department of Education, 2002-2003.

**For more information about child care in Fresno County, call:**  
 Central Valley Children's Services Network 559-456-1100

# Child Care Supply in Fresno County

## Licensed Child Care Supply 22,962 slots

Total number of licensed slots	22,962
Percent of slots in child care centers	62%
% of slots for infants (under 2 years old)	6%
% of slots for preschoolers (2–5 years old)	73%
% of slots for school-age children (6 years and older)	21%
Percent of slots in family child care homes <sup>1</sup>	38%



## Children with Parents in the Labor Force<sup>2</sup> 100,345

Licensed child care is only available for 23% of children with parents in the labor force<sup>2</sup>.

- Licensed center-based care available for 7% of infants<sup>1</sup>
- Licensed center-based care available for 38% of preschoolers<sup>1</sup>

## Supply of Licensed Child Care and Requests from Parents to the R&R

		Child Care Centers	Family Child Care Homes
<b>Facilities</b>	Total number of sites	261	994
	Total number of slots	14,152	8,810 <sup>1</sup>
	Infant slots	814	
	Preschool slots	10,381	
	School-age slots	2,957	
<b>Schedules<sup>3</sup></b>	Full-time and part-time	60%	74%
	Only full-time available	11%	24%
	Only part-time available	30%	2%
	Care available during non-traditional hours	1%	22%

### Parent Requests to the R&R<sup>4</sup>

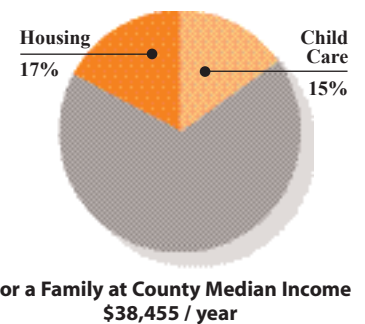
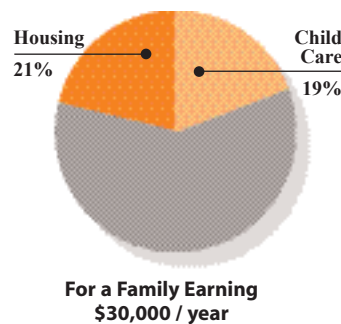
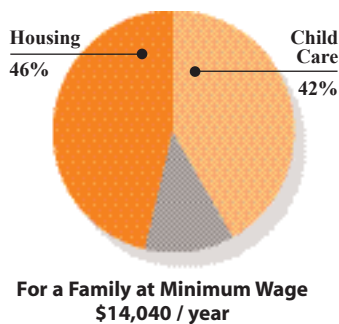
*Type of care:* 35% infant/toddler; 44% preschool; 21% school-age

*Type of facility:* 84% family child care homes; 74% child care centers

*Schedule of care:* 88% full-time care (0–5 years); 16% part-time care (0–5 years)

*Reasons for needing child care:* 80% employment; 11% school/training; 8% looking for work

## Portion of Income Needed to Pay for Basic Family Needs: Housing and One Preschooler in a Licensed Center



1. A breakdown of slots by age is not available for family child care homes because they are licensed to care for children of all ages.
2. Children (0–13 years old) living with two parents or with a single parent in the labor force. 2000 U.S. Census.
3. Full-time and part-time schedules are percentages of total slots. Some centers that are exempt from licensing requirements are included in the percentages related to care during non-traditional hours (evening, weekend, or overnight.) Non-traditional schedules are percentages of total sites.
4. Since some parents find child care without using R&Rs, the calls recorded here do not necessarily represent total demand for child care, although they do reflect trends.