

# Santa Cruz County

**Santa Cruz County**, has been affected by Silicon Valley's economic downturn. "The most striking trend is that some child care centers, which previously had waiting lists, now have vacancies. With the loss of jobs in the tech sector, we think many parents are rearranging their work schedules so that they only need part-time care and this has affected our vacancy rates," says a staff member at Child Development Resource Center, the local resource and referral (R&R) agency. But while some parts of the county have experienced decreased demand, areas surrounding Watsonville in the southern end of the county – where housing is slightly cheaper – has seen an increase in need. And throughout the county, demand for infant care is high. While data from the R&R shows there are no centers offering child care during non-traditional hours, and less than 25 percent of family child care homes are open during these times, staff members say they are seeing more providers willing to expand their hours to accommodate working parents. The R&R also notes a significant increase in the number of Spanish-speaking parents seeking child care, reflecting the nearly 50 percent increase in the number of Spanish-speaking households since 1990.

## Increasing supply and quality

The R&R steers new providers to areas where supply is low and targets its Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) recruitment to those areas. The R&R analyzes trends quarterly and notes the highest vacancy rates within the county.

More than 300 providers participated in CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourages Stability) and state funds have expanded training for providers to accommodate children with special needs.

Finally, the R&Rs partnership with Child Care Ventures, a collaboration of business, government, and community organizations, has promoted information about child care as a vital part of the local economy.

*"The high cost of housing and the increase in unemployment have affected family child care providers, some of whom are worried they may have to close, after serving the communities for over a decade. Yet, affordable, quality child care remains difficult for parents to find."* – R&R Counselor

The People <sup>1</sup>	1990	2000	Change
Total number of residents	229,734	255,602	11%
Total number of employed residents		126,106	
Percent working outside the county		26%	
Percent working non-traditional hours		19%	
Total number of households	84,017	91,244	9%
Speaking English	66,612	68,048	2%
Speaking Spanish	10,595	15,757	49%
Speaking an Asian language	1,821	2,033	12%

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

Total number of children (0–13 years) 46,808

Under 2	2	3	4	5	6–11	12	13
6,077	3,086	3,106	3,275	3,195	21,119	3,520	3,430

Children 0–5 living in poverty (% of total) 2,542 (14%)

Children 0–5 living in single parent household (% of total) 2,945 (19%)

Total number of children (0–13) with parents in the labor force<sup>2</sup> 26,690

Under 2	2	3	4	5	6–13
2,860	1,435	1,575	1,820	1,630	17,370

## 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> \$7,790

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 55%

Annual median family income<sup>5</sup> \$61,941

Annual fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit<sup>5</sup> \$14,100

Salary of entry-level public school teacher<sup>6</sup> \$27,747

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.

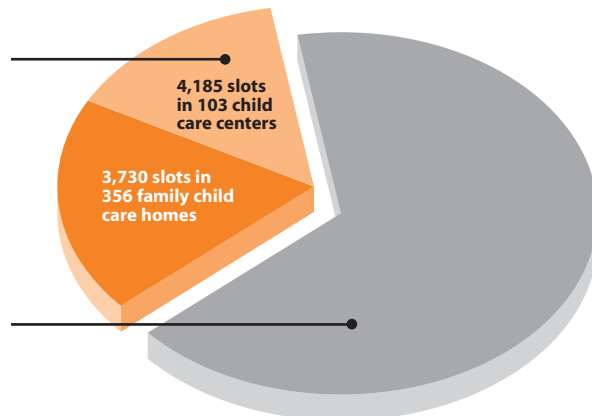
## For more information about child care in Santa Cruz County, call:

Child Development Resource Center –  
Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools 831-479-5282

# Child Care Supply in Santa Cruz County

## Licensed Child Care Supply 7,915 slots

Total number of licensed slots	7,915
Percent of slots in child care centers	53%
% of slots for infants (under 2 years old)	6%
% of slots for preschoolers (2–5 years old)	72%
% of slots for school-age children (6 years and older)	21%
Percent of slots in family child care homes <sup>1</sup>	47%



## Children with Parents in the Labor Force<sup>2</sup> 26,690

Licensed child care is only available for 30% of children with parents in the labor force<sup>2</sup>.

- Licensed center-based care available for 9% of infants<sup>1</sup>
- Licensed center-based care available for 47% 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	103	356
	Total number of slots	4,185	3,730 <sup>1</sup>
	Infant slots	265	
	Preschool slots	3,031	
	School-age slots	889	
<b>Schedules<sup>3</sup></b>	Full-time and part-time	69%	91%
	Only full-time available	0%	0%
	Only part-time available	31%	8%
	Care available during non-traditional hours	0%	24%

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

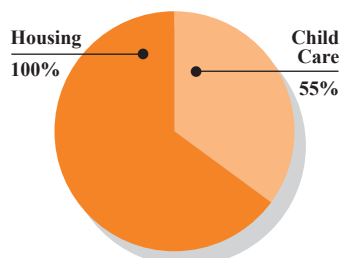
*Type of care:* 5% infant/toddler; 49% preschool; 46% school-age

*Type of facility:* 96% family child care homes; 94% child care centers

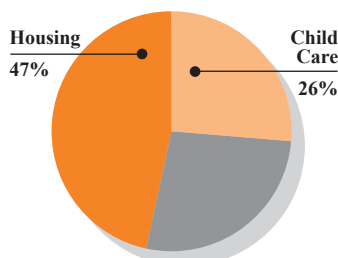
*Schedule of care:* 50% full-time care (0–5 years); 52% part-time care (0–5 years)

*Reasons for needing child care:* 97% employment; 19% school/training; 11% looking for work

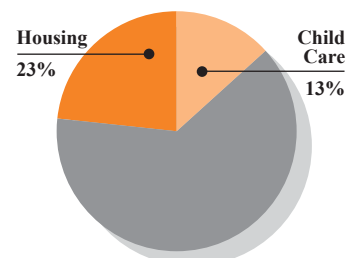
## Portion of Income Needed to Pay for Basic Family Needs: Housing and One Preschooler in a Licensed Center



For a Family at Minimum Wage \$14,040 / year



For a Family Earning \$30,000 / year



For a Family at County Median Income \$61,941 / year

- 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.
- Children (0–13 years old) living with two parents or with a single parent in the labor force. 2000 U.S. Census.
- 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.
- 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.