



Report on Child Care in Cook County 2022



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This fact sheet is a bridge between our extensive 2021 Child Care in Cook County report, which examines the impact of COVID-19 on child care in the first year of the pandemic, and our forthcoming 2023 report which will revisit in detail the impact of the pandemic on the supply of and demand for care.¹

¹ See our "Report on Child Care in Cook County during the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021" which can be found at <https://actforchildren.org/about/research-data/reports>

Types of Child Care Available in Cook County

Licensed Home Care

This is care offered in a person's home and regulated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Licensed home providers may care for eight to twelve children. Providers with full-time adult assistants licensed as group homes can care for as many as 16 children. In June 2021 there were 2,606 licensed home providers in Cook County.

Center Care

Most child care centers are licensed through DCFS, though a number connected to schools or religious institutions are exempt from licensing. Centers provide care for dozens or even hundreds of children and must employ a staff and establish formal operating rules. In June 2021, 1,283 full-time centers operated in Cook County.

School-Age Care

In addition to school-age care offered through child care centers, before- and/or after-school care is offered by some schools, park districts, and programs such as the Boys and Girls Clubs. Most of these programs are exempt from licensing, making it difficult to get a complete count of them. In June 2021, 148 programs in Cook County listed with Illinois Action for Children.

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care

This is care provided by friends, neighbors and relatives in either the home of the child or the caregiver. FFN providers are permitted to care for up to three unrelated children at a time without a license. There is no registry of informal care providers and therefore the total number in Cook County is unknown.

Child Care Slots in Cook County Regions²

The formal child care sector comprised of full-day child care centers, school-age programs and licensed child care homes has the capacity to care for approximately 140,600 Cook County children. Not all programs operate at capacity, however, for various reasons including staff shortages. As there are about 581,000 children birth-through-12 in Cook County with all parents working, we estimate that 24 percent of children potentially in need of child care can be served in formal settings.

The remaining 76 percent of children in this category may be cared for by family, friend or neighbor providers, older siblings, license-exempt programs not listed with Illinois Action for Children, babysitters or nannies, public or private preschool programs, parents or guardians who work part-time or stagger their work schedules, or even self-care.

² We divide Cook County into six geographic regions: three in Chicago based on the 77 Chicago Community Areas, and three in suburban Cook County based on suburban municipalities. See the appendix in our Report on Child Care in Cook County 2018 for a list of communities that comprise each region.

Table 1: Formal Child Care Slots in Cook County Regions

June 2021

	Formal Child Care Slots ³						Children potentially in need of child care ⁴		
	Full-day licensed center slots	Full-day license-exempt center slots	School-age only program slots	Licensed home slots	Licensed home extended-care schoolage slots	Total slots	Total children birth through 12	Children birth to 12 with all parents working	Slots as a percent of children with all parents working
Cook County	98,663	6,207	9,862	21,353	4,540	140,625	818,078	580,969	24%
N & NW Chicago	18,113	946	316	2,766	741	22,882	154,909	107,874	21%
Central & West Chicago	14,991	547	968	2,800	521	19,827	79,003	58,153	34%
S & SW Chicago	20,096	1,701	871	8,452	1,894	33,014	170,114	122,061	27%
Chicago Total	53,200	3,194	2,155	14,018	3,156	75,723	404,026	288,088	26%
N & NW Suburban Cook	21,559	1,612	5,589	1,262	149	30,171	200,472	138,119	22%
West Suburban Cook	7,956	610	1,197	2,088	407	12,258	84,485	59,140	21%
S & SW Suburban Cook	15,948	791	921	3,985	828	22,473	129,095	95,622	24%
Suburban Total	45,463	3,013	7,707	7,335	1,384	64,902	414,052	292,881	22%

While not all child care centers report their slots by age to Illinois Action for Children, the data below reflect the capacity of the 71 percent that do. Comparable data for licensed homes are not reported because home providers have more flexibility in the ages of children they can enroll and the ages they serve change frequently.

Table 2: Center Slots by Age in Cook County Regions

June 2021; includes slots in licensed and exempt child care centers and school-age programs that are full-time unless noted.

	Infant (6 weeks to 14 months)	Toddler (15 to 23 months)	2-year-old	3- to 4-year-old	5-year-old to kindergarten	Before & After School (full & part time)	School Age, Summer
Cook County	6,684	9,559	11,188	19,792	15,684	17,793	10,291
N & NW Chicago	1,054	1,524	1,929	3,028	2,539	1,611	2,288
Central & West Chicago	816	1,207	1,605	2,699	2,261	1,958	2,413
S & SW Chicago	1,560	2,275	2,534	4,525	3,662	3,299	2,868
Chicago Total	3,430	5,006	6,068	10,252	8,462	6,868	7,569
N & NW Suburban Cook	1,247	1,758	2,086	4,156	2,907	5,895	941
West Suburban Cook	581	847	935	1,760	1,550	1,970	511
S & SW Suburban Cook	1,426	1,948	2,099	3,624	2,765	3,060	1,270
Suburban Total	3,254	4,553	5,120	9,540	7,222	10,925	2,722

³ Slots represent daytime capacity. Additional license-exempt centers and slots may exist that are not reported to Illinois Action for Children, particularly those serving school-age children.

⁴ American Community Survey 2020 5-year estimates.

Price of Care in Cook County Regions

Each year, Illinois Action for Children's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program surveys providers on the rates they charge parents. The tables below present the rates for both licensed centers and licensed homes for the regions of Cook County based on child age as of June 2021.⁵ The final row of each table shows the maximum weekly reimbursement rate the State will pay on behalf of families eligible to receive assistance through the Illinois Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).⁶

Table 3: Average Weekly Rates: Full-time Child Care in a Licensed Center

	Infant (6 weeks to 14 months)	Toddler (15 to 23 months)	2-year-old	3- to 4-year-old	5-year-old to kindergarten	Before & After School	School Age, Summer
Cook County	\$313	\$294	\$263	\$228	\$225	\$194	\$210
N & NW Chicago	\$360	\$327	\$288	\$252	\$247	\$204	\$229
Central & West Chicago	\$336	\$320	\$279	\$242	\$235	\$195	\$246
S & SW Chicago	\$275	\$264	\$230	\$194	\$193	\$181	\$193
Chicago	\$310	\$292	\$256	\$220	\$217	\$189	\$212
N & NW Suburban Cook	\$377	\$341	\$318	\$281	\$279	\$223	\$275
West Suburban Cook	\$310	\$288	\$255	\$224	\$221	\$194	\$208
S & SW Suburban Cook	\$274	\$266	\$240	\$205	\$202	\$187	\$186
Suburban Cook	\$317	\$296	\$271	\$237	\$234	\$201	\$206
Maximum amount reimbursed by CCAP for full-time care	\$280		\$225	\$190		\$95 (<5 hrs/day) \$190 (5+ hrs/day)	\$190

Table 4: Average Weekly Rates: Full-time Child Care in a Licensed Home

	Infant (6 weeks to 14 months)	Toddler (15 to 23 months)	2-year-old	3- to 4-year-old	5-year-old to kindergarten	Before & After School	School Age, Summer
Cook County	\$213	\$210	\$199	\$186	\$184	\$179	\$183
N & NW Chicago	\$230	\$227	\$219	\$205	\$203	\$195	\$202
Central & West Chicago	\$209	\$205	\$196	\$181	\$180	\$177	\$187
S & SW Chicago	\$206	\$203	\$191	\$177	\$176	\$173	\$177
Chicago	\$212	\$209	\$198	\$184	\$182	\$178	\$185
N & NW Suburban Cook	\$258	\$251	\$249	\$241	\$240	\$236	\$223
West Suburban Cook	\$215	\$210	\$200	\$188	\$185	\$178	\$174
S & SW Suburban Cook	\$202	\$201	\$189	\$174	\$172	\$169	\$172
Suburban Cook	\$215	\$212	\$203	\$189	\$188	\$181	\$178
Maximum amount reimbursed by CCAP for full-time care	\$206.95		\$192.85	\$175.40		\$87.70 (<5 hrs/day) \$175.40 (5+ hrs/day)	\$175.40

⁵ The cost of family, friend and neighbor care is not reported because very little data are available on the rates they charge.

⁶ CCAP reimbursement rates in effect as of January 2021. The weekly rate paid to family, friend and neighbor providers was \$95.10 regardless of the child's age, or \$19.02 per day.



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