



Methodology

Child care costs are reported at the county-level for infant child care and child care for 4-year-olds where available across the state. Affordability was calculated by dividing the average cost of care in that county by the county's median income as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. County-level data was collected in November 2017.

Findings

New Castle County, the most populous county in Delaware, contains the most unmet need in child care while simultaneously having the highest availability of any county in the state. New Castle County is also the least affordable county for child care in the state. A year of center-based child care costs 14.2 percent of median income, and a year of family child care costs nearly 10 percent. While costs in New Castle County are highest in the state, the median income is higher than both Kent and Sussex Counties, and for the state of Delaware as a whole.

Sussex County, the southernmost county of Delaware, trends closest to the average annual statewide cost of infant care for both center-based and family child care.

Costs differ from the statewide average by less than half of a percentage point across the county. Sussex County also has the highest percentage of children in need of childcare

Kent County is the lowest-population county of the three, and is the most affordable, relative to other areas of Delaware, in terms of both center-based and family child care.

In New Castle County, parents of infant pay around 14% of their income for child care.

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Table 1: Least Affordable Counties for Infant Child Care Costs by Type of Care

Rank	County	Average annual cost of infant care*	Percent median income	Difference between county-level and statewide affordability**
Statewide Center-Based Care Affordability: 11.0%				
1	New Castle County	\$11,924	14.2%	-3.2%
2	Sussex County	\$8,589	10.9%	0.1%
3	Kent County	\$9,051	8.3%	2.7%
Statewide Family Child Care Affordability: 7.9%				
1	New Castle County	\$8,347	9.9%	-2.0%
2	Sussex County	\$6,495	8.3%	-0.4%
3	Kent County	\$6,886	6.3%	1.6%

Note: NR = Not Reported (meaning that data is unavailable for a given county); NA = Not Applicable

*Source: Children & Families First Delaware, Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing, and The Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood

** Affordability, or Percentage Median Income, is a comparison of average cost against county median income

Table 2: County-Level Costs by Age and Type

County	Infant Care			4-Year-Old		
	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average	Cost*	Percentage median income**	Difference to state average
Statewide Center-Based Care Affordability: 11.0%						
Kent County	\$9,051	8.3%	2.7%	\$7,327	6.7%	2.1%
New Castle County	\$11,924	14.2%	-3.2%	\$9,563	11.4%	-2.6%
Sussex County	\$8,589	10.9%	0.1%	\$7,084	9.0%	-0.2%
County	Statewide Family Child Care Affordability: 7.9%					
Kent County	\$6,886	6.3%	1.6%	\$6,345	5.8%	1.2%
New Castle County	\$8,347	9.9%	-2.0%	\$7,548	9.0%	-2.0%
Sussex County	\$6,495	8.3%	-0.4%	\$5,536	7.0%	0.0%

Note: NR = Not Reported (meaning that data is unavailable for a given county); NA = Not Applicable

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