2026 Washington State Cost of Quality Child Care and Market Rate Study

Washington State Department of CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RESEARCH | WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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Report prepared for the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) by Western Washington University's Center for Economic and Business Research.

Executive Summary

Study Purpose

The purpose of the 2026 Washington State Child Care Market Rate & Cost of Quality Child Care Study is to examine (1) the prices charged by child care providers in the private market, and (2) the estimated "per child cost" of operating quality child care providers. The study reviews these costs across provider types, age of children served, and geographic regions. The Washington State Legislature then considers this information when establishing subsidy base rates paid to providers who serve children enrolled in Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), Washington's child care subsidy program.[1]

The study is also required under federal and state law and rules.

Child Care Development Fund Requirements

To meet requirements set forth by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for receiving their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grants, every three years states must conduct either a child care market rate survey (MRS), or an alternative methodology, such as a cost estimation model (CEM).

An MRS gathers data on rates families pay in the private market for licensed child care throughout the state, which can then be used to set WCCC provider reimbursement rates. Alternatively, a CEM gathers data to estimate the per-child costs of operating a child care program, such as staff wages, rent, and utilities, which can then be used to set subsidy base rates.

State Requirements

RCW 43.216.829 requires the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to publish a Cost of Quality Child Care and Market Rate Study and submit it to the Legislature by June 1 of every even-numbered year.

[1] The "per child cost" estimates used in the study reflect assumption on provider staff wages and program characteristic baselines recommended by the Early Educator Design Team in their Early Educator Design Team Cost of Quality Care Recommendations Full Report. They should not be interpreted as the full cost structure of an individual provider business model. Child care is a highly fixed-cost and capital-intensive industry, where providers must maintain staffing ratios, facility costs, licensing compliance, insurance, and operational overhead regardless of day-to-day enrollment fluctuations.

Washington state has received approval from ACF to use the state's CEM, called the Cost of Quality Child Care Rate Model (Cost Model), as an alternative methodology. The Cost Model, as described in the Cost of Quality Child Care section, is designed to recommend base rates that support a living wage for all provider staff, as well as very high-quality program characteristics. However, subsidy base rates in Washington are determined based on market rates until the Legislature decides otherwise. The information provided by this study allows the Legislature to consider either option.

Survey Summary

DCYF contracted with Western Washington University's Center for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) to conduct a Cost of Quality Child Care and Market Rate Study surveying Washington State's licensed child care providers. The study covered all topics and data required for an MRS or the Cost Model to support the state's option to use either for setting subsidy base rates for WCCC.

A total of 2,536 providers responded to the survey out of the 6,556 licensed providers contacted by CEBR, for a response rate of 38.52%. This gives the survey results a margin of error of plus or minus 1.53% at a 95% confidence level. Response rates varied by provider type, with 65.76% of Licensed Child Care Centers and 29.03% of Licensed Family Home providers completing the survey.

Findings on Market Rates

Tables 1 through 4 at the end of this section provide a summary of current subsidy base rates – which are set at the 85th percentile of 2024 market rates – and the 75th and 85th percentile of reported 2026 market rates by provider type, region, and child age group. Regions are county groupings described below.

The 85th percentile shown in this report indicates that the private-pay rates of 85% of child care slots in a region are less than or equal to that rate. In other words, a rate listed as the 85th percentile for center-based toddler care in Spokane means that an estimated 85% of families with toddlers in Spokane licensed centers pay the amount listed for the 85th percentile, or less.

Due to provider cost structures and the amount of supervision needed for younger children, rates steadily decrease as children age. Licensed Centers tend to have higher rates than Licensed Family Homes.

As seen in the "Comparison: Current Subsidies to Private Pay Rates" section, Washington's current subsidy base rates are almost all below the 85th percentile of 2026 market rates. Most subsidy base rates are also at or below the 75th percentile of 2026 market rates, demonstrated

in this same section. Bolded entries in grey are instances where current rates exceed 2026 market rates.

Findings on Cost of Quality Child Care

Tables 5 and 6 at the end of this section provide base rates based on the Cost Model. Except for the rates for Licensed Child Care Centers in Regions 3 and 4, Cost Model rates increased between the 2024 and 2026 evaluation. Rates for Licensed Family Homes increased an average of $122.14 per month, with a range between $14 and $304. Rates for Licensed Child Care Centers increased an average of $40.32 per month, ranging between -$1 and $162.

Summary of Gap Analysis

As seen in Tables 7-10, with a few exceptions, Cost Model rates exceeded rates based on 2026 market rates. Bolded entries in grey are instances where 2026 market rates exceed Cost Model rates. The largest gap, where Cost Model rates exceed 2026 85th percentile rates, was for Licensed Family Home infant rates in Region 3 at $1,552. In some regions, mostly for school age children, 2026 85th Percentile Market Rates exceed Cost Model rates, indicating that the most expensive private pay rates are already at or above the cost of quality child care. However, most 2026 85th percentile market rates are still well below the cost of quality care generally. This pattern was also consistent for the 2026 75th percentile analysis, with fewer instances of 2026 75th Percentile Market Rates exceeding Cost Model rates.

Conclusions

Based on the gap analysis, a substantial investment would be necessary to bring current subsidy base rates up to 2026 85th percentile rates. An even greater investment would be needed to align them with the cost of quality child care. Current subsidy base rates are generally below 2026 75th and 85th percentile market rates, which are generally well below Cost Model rates. Typically, the younger the child, the bigger the gap between market rates and Cost Model rates.

Note: Gray cells indicate when a current subsidy rate is higher than the 75th or 85th percentile of market rate.

Table 1: Current Licensed Child Care Center Provider Subsidy Base Rates as of July 1, 2026, and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates

Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Infant Subsidy Rate	$2,100	$1,674	$2,320	$2,975	$1,910	$1,930	$1,720
Infant 85th Percentile	$2,200.00	$1,800.00	$3,117.60	$3,300.00	$2,100.00	$1,970.00	$1,850.00
Toddler Subsidy Rate	$1,510	**$1,510**	$2,160	$2,660	$1,795	$1,768	$1,430
Toddler 85th Percentile	$1,820.00	$1,500.00	$2,598.00	$3,130.00	$1,978.00	$1,900.00	$1,750.00
Preschool Subsidy Rate	$1,170	$1,340	**$1,910**	**$2,350**	$1,645	$1,605	$1,380
Preschool 85th Percentile	$1,700.00	$1,848.00	$1,848.00	$2,200.00	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$1,640.00
School-Age Subsidy Rate	$1,025	$1,245	**$1,745**	**$1,773**	$1,470	$1,455	$1,100
School-Age 85th Percentile	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,732.00	$1,571.79	$1,600.00	$1,732.00

Table 2: Current Licensed Child Care Center Provider Subsidy Base Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates

Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Infant Subsidy Rate	**$2,100**	**$1,674**	$2,320	$2,975	$1,910	**$1,930**	$1,720
Infant 75th Percentile	$1,899.00	$1,600.00	$2,860.00	$3,000.00	$1,995.00	$1,809.94	$1,785.00
Toddler Subsidy Rate	$1,510	**$1,510**	$2,160	$2,660	$1,795	$1,768	$1,430
Toddler 75th Percentile	$1,800.00	$1,300.00	$2,215.00	$2,800.00	$1,850.00	$1,809.94	$1,675.00
Preschool Subsidy Rate	$1,170	$1,340	**$1,910**	**$2,350**	$1,645	**$1,605**	$1,380
Preschool 75th Percentile	$1,600.00	$1,600.00	$1,700.00	$1,800.00	$1,700.00	$1,600.00	$1,600.00
School-Age Subsidy Rate	$1,025	$1,245	**$1,745**	**$1,773**	$1,470	$1,455	$1,100
School-Age 75th Percentile	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,700.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50

Table 3: Current Licensed Family Home Providers Subsidy Base Rates and 2026 85th Percentile Pay Rates

Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Infant Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,760.00	$1,804.00	$2,124.10	$2,000.02	$2,000.02	$1,232.00
Infant 85th Percentile	$1,760.00	$2,100.00	$2,598.00	$2,500.00	$2,200.00	$2,200.00	$2,150.00
Toddler Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,600.06	$1,699.94	$2,166.78	$1,540.00	$1,516.68	$1,210.00
Toddler 85th Percentile	$1,760.00	$1,871.02	$2,200.00	$2,381.50	$1,830.00	$2,000.00	$1,380.00
Preschool Subsidy Rate	$1,125.08	$1,400.08	$1,540.00	$1,980.00	$1,430.00	$1,400.08	$1,100.00
Preschool 85th Percentile	$1,500.00	$1,700.00	$2,000.00	$2,200.00	$1,725.00	$1,632.41	$1,950.00
School-Age Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,100.00	$1,650.00	$1,733.38	$1,083.28	**$1,516.68**	$1,100.00
School-Age 85th Percentile	$1,476.53	$1,600.00	$2,078.40	$1,900.00	$1,550.00	$1,400.00	$1,210.00

Table 1: Current Licensed Family Home Providers Subsidy Base Rates and 2026 75th Percentile Pay Rates

Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Infant Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,760.00	$1,804.00	$2,124.10	$2,000.02	$2,000.02	$1,232.00
Infant 75th Percentile	$1,600.00	$1,948.50	$1,900.00	$2,381.50	$2,100.00	$2,000.02	$1,375.00
Toddler Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,600.06	$1,699.94	$2,166.78	$1,540.00	$1,516.68	$1,210.00
Toddler 75th Percentile	$1,500.00	$1,760.00	$2,000.00	$2,250.00	$1,750.00	$1,818.60	$1,320.00
Preschool Subsidy Rate	$1,125.08	$1,400.08	$1,540.00	$1,980.00	$1,430.00	$1,400.08	$1,100.00
Preschool 75th Percentile	$1,350.00	$1,600.00	$1,750.00	$2,130.00	$1,540.00	$1,516.00	$1,320.00
School-Age Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,100.00	$1,650.00	$1,733.38	$1,083.28	**$1,516.68**	$1,100.00
School-Age 75th Percentile	$1,400.00	$1,320.00	$1,750.00	$1,755.00	$1,500.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00

To restate the conclusions above, current subsidy base rates are almost all below the 2026 85th percentile rates. Most subsidy base rates are also at or below the 2026 75th percentile rates. They are even farther below Cost Model rates, depicted below.

Table 2: 2026 Licensed Family Home Cost Model Rates

Region	**Infants**	**Toddlers**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Region 1	$3,061.00	$2,363.00	$1,945.00	$1,666.00
Region 2	$3,199.00	$2,469.00	$2,031.00	$1,739.00
Region 3	$3,759.00	$2,898.00	$2,381.00	$2,036.00
Region 4	$4,052.00	$3,122.00	$2,565.00	$2,193.00
Region 5	$3,460.00	$2,669.00	$2,194.00	$1,878.00
Region 6	$3,402.00	$2,624.00	$2,158.00	$1,847.00
Spokane	$3,116.00	$2,405.00	$1,979.00	$1,695.00

Table 3: 2026 Licensed Child Care Center Cost Model Rates

Region	**Infants**	**Toddlers**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Region 1	$3,107.00	$2,335.00	$2,026.00	$1,373.00
Region 2	$3,227.00	$2,421.00	$2,098.00	$1,419.00
Region 3	$3,720.00	$2,771.00	$2,391.00	$1,604.00
Region 4	$3,978.00	$2,954.00	$2,545.00	$1,701.00
Region 5	$3,457.00	$2,584.00	$2,235.00	$1,505.00
Region 6	$3,406.00	$2,548.00	$2,204.00	$1,486.00
Spokane	$3,152.00	$2,369.00	$2,055.00	$1,391.00

Table 4: Gap between 2026 Cost Model Rates and 2026 85th Percentile Market Rates for Licensed Family Homes

Region	**Infants**	**Toddlers**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Region 1	$1,301.00	$603.00	$445.00	$189.47
Region 2	$1,099.00	$597.98	$331.00	$139.00
Region 3	$1,161.00	$698.00	$381.00	**$42.40**
Region 4	$1,552.00	$740.50	$365.00	$293.00
Region 5	$1,260.00	$839.00	$469.00	$328.00
Region 6	$1,202.00	$624.00	$525.59	$447.00
Spokane	$966.00	$1,025.00	$29.00	$485.00

Table 5: Gap between 2026 Cost Model Rates and 2026 75th Percentile Market Rates for Licensed Family Homes

Region	**Infants**	**Toddlers**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Region 1	$1,461.00	$863.00	$595.00	$266.00
Region 2	$1,250.50	$709.00	$431.00	$419.00
Region 3	$1,859.00	$898.00	$631.00	$286.00
Region 4	$1,670.50	$872.00	$435.00	$438.00
Region 5	$1,360.00	$919.00	$654.00	$378.00
Region 6	$1,401.98	$805.40	$642.00	$547.00
Spokane	$1,741.00	$1,085.00	$659.00	$495.00

Table 6: Gap between 2026 Cost Model Rates and 2026 85th Percentile Market Rates for Licensed Child Care Centers

Region	**Infants**	**Toddlers**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Region 1	$907.00	$515.00	$326.00	**$359.00**
Region 2	$1,427.00	$921.00	$250.00	$120.00
Region 3	$602.40	$173.00	$543.00	$88.50
Region 4	$678.00	**$176.00**	$345.00	**$31.00**
Region 5	$1,357.00	$606.00	$535.00	**$66.79**
Region 6	$1,436.00	$648.00	$504.00	**$114.00**
Spokane	$1,302.00	$619.00	$415.00	**$341.00**

Table 7: Gap between 2026 Cost Model Rates and 2026 75th Percentile Market Rates for Licensed Child Care Centers

Region	**Infants**	**Toddlers**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Region 1	$1,208.00	$535.00	$426.00	**$359.00**
Region 2	$1,627.00	$1,121.00	$498.00	$120.00
Region 3	$860.00	$556.00	$691.00	$88.50
Region 4	$978.00	$154.00	$745.00	$1.00
Region 5	$1,462.00	$734.00	$535.00	**$10.50**
Region 6	$1,596.06	$738.06	$604.00	**$29.50**
Spokane	$1,367.00	$694.00	$455.00	**$124.50**

Introduction and Background

In Washington and across the nation, communities face an inadequate supply of affordable, quality child care. Like many states, Washington sets reimbursement rates for providers who serve families receiving child care subsidies according to the rates families pay in the private market using a market rate survey (MRS).

In 2018, the Legislature created a Child Care Collaborative Task Force to begin addressing the access issue. In 2020, the Task Force recommended adoption of a Cost Estimation Model, which we refer to as the Cost of Quality Child Care Cost Model (Cost Model), instead of an MRS, to better reflect providers' costs. Then, in 2021, the Legislature enacted the landmark Fair Start for Kids Act to improve affordability and accessibility of child care, and to support child care providers. The Task Force later in 2021 produced a report fully detailing the Cost Model and recommending its adoption as the basis for setting subsidy rates.

The intent of this study is to provide market rate information as required by law to meet state statutory requirements around funding WCCC base rates. In addition, as ACF has approved the Cost Model, inclusion of information about it allows decision makers to know the gap between market rate and cost of care. It covers current market rate data and the cost of quality child care for providers and then compares the gap between the two. It also updates the data supporting the Cost Model and supports compliance with federal requirements for both an MRS or alternative methodology.

Child Care Market Rates

When a state opts to use an MRS, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) requires them to conduct a statistically valid and reliable survey of child care market rates prior to submitting their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plan every three years.[2]

Specific to the MRS aspects of this study, rate information was collected from providers within Washington state. Tuition information was collected for both Licensed Centers and Licensed Family Homes. While School Age Only Center providers participated, we did not collect rate information from them because their rate structures cannot be generalized to programs that serve other age groups in addition to school age. However, rate information was collected from providers who serve school age children, in addition to other age groups, so the study supports rate-setting for this age group.

CEBR surveyed licensed child care providers and disaggregated the resulting data by geography and regional rate groups as follows:

[2] National Center on Subsidy Innovation and Accountability. "Ensuring a Statistically Valid and Reliable Market Rate Survey: A Checklist." Early Childhood National Centers, February 2020.

- Region 1: Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Orielle, Stevens and Whitman counties
- Region 2: Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Kittitas, Walla Walla, and Yakima counties
- Region 3: Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties
- Region 4: King County
- Region 5: Kitsap and Pierce counties
- Region 6: Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Skamania, Thurston, and Wahkiakum counties
- Spokane: Spokane County

Alternative Methodology

When a state opts to use an alternative methodology such as the Cost Model, federal rules require states to analyze the estimated cost of care (including any relevant variation by geographic location, category of provider, or age of child) in two areas:

1. The cost of child care providers' implementation of health safety, quality, and staffing (i.e., applicable licensing and regulatory requirements, health and safety standards, training and professional development standards), appropriate child to staff ratio, group size limits, and caregiver qualification requirements.
2. The cost of higher-quality care, as defined by the state using a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality indicators, at each level of quality.

Regardless of which approach is used, the state must also ensure the MRS or Cost Model reflects variations by geographic location, category of provider, and age of child. It must also track information on the extent to which child care providers participate in the subsidy program and any barriers to participation, including barriers related to payment rates and practices.

Child Care Landscape in Washington State

DCYF administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program, including child care subsidy programs, eligibility, payments, child care licensing and background checks, and the Early Achievers quality recognition and improvement system.

This study directly addresses two of DCYF's focused priorities:

- 80% of Washington children will be ready for kindergarten.
- High quality child care is available and affordable to all in Washington.

The child care subsidy program embodies these priorities. Decisions on base rates, whether driven by market rates or the Cost Model, impact provider decisions on whether to serve children receiving WCCC benefits. This, in turn, impacts access to quality child care that supports kindergarten readiness.

The child care discussion is complex because families use many different types of care, and these services can be counted in different ways. The analysis in this report focuses on the following types of care: Licensed Centers and Family Homes.

As of early 2026, there are approximately 1,169,403 children birth through age 12 in Washington. Of that total, 434,366 children are age birth through 5 years old. From 2022-2025, the population of children aged 0-12 decreased by 6,510, and children age birth through five years old decreased by 14,732.[3]

It is estimated that 302,000 (or 69.5%) of children birth through 5 years are within households where all caregivers work outside the home.[4] This could include dual-income or single-income households but indicates that some form of child care is likely needed for 69.5% of households. The actual number requiring care is likely less given that each household may have unique needs. For example, many school-age children may be in school all hours that primary caregivers are unavailable to provide care and therefore do not need child care.

The subsidy program currently serves 67,571 children (age birth through 12 years) per month in Licensed Child Care Centers and Family Homes. The state-funded preschool Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) serves an additional 14,346 children.[5]

As of March 2025, Head Start (preschool-age) and Early Head Start (infants and toddlers) served 11,918 children, according to data provided by the Office of Head Start. Transition to Kindergarten programs operated by public schools serve another 7,234 children.[6]

Licensed child care, the subject of this report, consists of two categories of providers:

1. Licensed Centers (which include School Age Only and Outdoor Nature-Based programs for this study's purpose)
2. Licensed Family Homes (which provide care in a provider's residence and typically serve smaller groups of children in a home-based setting)

[3] DCYF Early Learning Data Store (ELDS) 9/15/2025 load, accessed Dec. 29, 2025.
[4] DCYF Early Learning Data Store (ELDS) 9/15/2025 load, accessed Dec. 29, 2025.
[5] From Early Learning Management System School Year 2022/2023, 2024/2025, and 2025/2026 site list ECEAP report, accessed December 2025.
[6] From Transition to Kindergarten Headcount List, OSPI, September 2025 headcount, accessed January 2026. By the time of this report's publishing, the number of children in transition to kindergarten programs may have substantially changed.

Statewide, there are 2,439 Licensed Centers and 4,117 Licensed Family Homes. Combined, they are licensed to serve about 209,722 children of different ages (i.e. statewide licensed capacity).[7]

This means the current licensed capacity is insufficient to meet demand for care. Specifically, licensed capacity can only serve 48% of the birth through 5 years population, and about 69% of young children estimated to need care.

In 2025, there were 6,556 providers statewide, an increase of 658 from the 5,898 reported in the 2024 DCYF study. Many child care providers and staff are paid below what is needed to meet basic living costs, and many earn wages close to minimum wage. As demonstrated in the "Barriers to Accepting Subsidies" section, many providers struggle with the low subsidy rate. In areas where operating costs have risen faster than subsidy payments, this discourages providers from accepting subsidies.

Study Methodology

A survey was built in Qualtrics, an online survey tool, using questions from the 2024 survey, feedback from DCYF, and lessons learned from the 2024 prior survey. The survey was sent to currently licensed child care providers in Washington using DCYF provided contact list.

The contact list, last updated on Sept. 9, 2025, included 6,556 child care providers. The survey asked providers questions about their business operations, staffing costs, facilities expenses such as rent and utilities, and other day-to-day operating activities. CEBR also gathered program data such as type, location, child enrollment, and rates charged by age group. Questions varied between multiple choice, check-all-that-apply, and fill-in-the-blank.

Respondents were able to ask questions via phone call or email. Demographic information was collected to ensure a full range of provider experiences were captured. Public-school based programming (like Transition to Kindergarten), Head Start, Early Head Start, or ECEAP-only programs were excluded from the sample. Survey respondents with multiple locations were given the option to complete the survey via spreadsheet. However, some providers chose to fill out the survey with a single response for all locations.

A full description of methodologies for both market rate and Cost of Quality Child Care aspects of this study can be found in the appendix of this report.

[7] From Early Start Act | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Data as of 7/30/25, accessed December 2025.

Results

This section summarizes the survey results by provider type and survey question to help describe the current child care landscape. The number of providers who responded varies by question and is noted in Tables 11, 14, 16, 19, and 21.

Provider Detail and Specialization

Of the 2,536 providers who responded to the survey, 46% were Licensed Centers and 47% were Licensed Family Homes. The remaining 7% were School-Age programs or Outdoor Nature-based (ONB) programs. Table 11 shows the number of survey respondents by program type and the share each group represents.

Table 811: Percent of Respondents by Provider Type

Provider Type	**Number of Responses**	**Percentage of Responses**
Child Care Center	1,176	46.37%
Licensed Family Home	1,195	47.12%
Outdoor Nature-Based Programs	11	0.43%
School-Age Only Child Care Center	4	6.11%

Licensed Capacity

The following table shows the number of Licensed Family Home providers and the number of children enrolled (or Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment), based on each provider's licensed capacity. FTE enrollment counts full-time children plus half of part-time enrollments. Most Licensed Family Home providers are authorized to have a capacity of 6 to 12 children, which is why most enrolled children are in programs of that size.

Table 12: Percent of Respondent Licensed Family Homes and Enrollment by Provider Capacity

Capacity	**Percentage of Respondent Providers with this Capacity**	**Percentage of Children in this grouping**
5 or less	0.68%	23.54%
6 to 12	99.14%	60.51%
More than 12[8]	0.18%	15.95%

Table 13 shows the percentage of licensed centers and enrollment by program size (i.e. licensed capacity). Enrollment was calculated using FTE children, which counts part-time enrollment as half full-time enrollments. Most center providers sampled were licensed to serve between 26

[8]Under licensing rules, licensed family home licensed capacity is limited to 12, but these rules also allow DCYF to issue waivers to allow capacity to exceed 12 if circumstances warrant.

to 50 children, likely a reflection of the types of providers who responded to the survey. However, most children were enrolled in larger facilities with a licensed capacity to serve 76 to 100 children.

Table 13: Percent of Respondent Licensed Child Care Centers and Enrollment by Provider Capacity

Capacity	**Percentage of Respondent Providers with this Capacity**	**Percentage of Children in this grouping**
25 or Less	13.17%	13.1%
26 to 50	30.76%	17.2%
51 to 75	22.86%	22.57%
76 to 100	17.4%	41.31%
101 to 125	9.5%	4%
More than 126	6.3%	1.82%

Staffing and Compensation

Licensed Family Homes

The table below shows average hourly wages for different child care positions, including providers/owners, lead teachers, assistant teachers, aides, and floater positions. Providers were asked if they employed staff. Of 879 respondents, 553 reported that they employed at least one staff member. The “Number of Respondents” shows how many providers reported wage information for each position. Only wages at or above Washington’s statewide minimum wage of $17.13 per hour were included in the analysis.

Table 14: Wages for Licensed Family Homes

Wages	**Provider/Owner**	**Lead Teacher**	**Assistant Teacher**	**Aides**	**Floater**
Average Wage (Hourly)	$27.50	$24.87	$21.59	$20.73	$21.37
Minimum Wage	$17.32	$17.32	$17.32	$17.32	$17.50
Salary	$57,200	$51,729	$44,907	$43,118	$44,449
Number of Respondents	475	340	198	61	55

Respondents were asked to rate the following question on a scale from 0 to 10: "How well do your current salaries and pay attract and keep the staff you need to provide a high-quality program?" The table below shows how providers responded to the question. A rating of “0” means salaries and pay are **not** enough to attract and retain staff, while a rating of “10” means that pay is fully meeting staffing needs. Licensed Family Homes providers gave an average rating was 5.04, suggesting that current salaries and pay are only moderately effective in attracting and keeping staff.

Table 15: Average Salary and Pay Effectiveness Ratings for Licensed Family Homes

Region	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Average Rating	4.93	4.96	4.70	5.55	4.76	4.84	5

Licensed Family Home providers in Region 4 gave the highest rating for how well salaries help attract and retain staff, with an average score of 5.55. Providers in Region 3 gave the lowest rating, with an average score of 4.70.

There were 951 usable responses from Licensed Family Home providers to the question: "How many hours per week do you spend on your child care business beyond the hours providing direct care to children?"

The table below shows the responses. Most providers reported spending additional **unpaid** time managing their business:

- 403 providers reported spending 0 and 10 hours per week; and
- 312 providers reported spending 10 and 20 hours per week.

On average, providers reported spending 23.48 hours per week on business-related work outside of direct child care.

Table 16: Average Hours Spent on Child Care Beyond Direct Care to Children in Licensed Family Homes

Average Hours	**0-10**	**11-20**	**21-30**	**31-40**	**41-50**	**51-60**	**61-70**	**71-80**	**More than 80**
Number of Respondents	403	312	88	36	19	24	25	25	21

Licensed Child Care Centers

The table below shows average hourly wages by position and age group served. This includes lead teacher, assistant teacher, aides, and floater positions for the age groups of infants, toddlers, preschool, and school-age children. The table also includes the average wage of directors, whose pay does not vary by age group served. Among classroom staff, lead teachers typically earned the highest wages across age groups, except in infant classrooms where aides reported slightly higher wages. Responses reporting wages below the state minimum were not included in the analysis.

Table 17: Wages of Licensed Center Staff

Child Age	Director	Lead Teacher	Assistant Teacher	Aides	Floater
Infant	$40.90	$22.17	$20.27	$23.59	$21.87
Toddler	$40.90	$21.29	$20.83	$20.97	$19.88
Preschool	$40.90	$21.59	$21.05	$20.93	$20.01
School-Age	$40.90	$20.78	$20.17	$19.06	$19.42

Table 18 shows the average and highest (maximum) number of staff reported by providers. It also includes an average that only looks at providers who reported employing that specific type of staff, excluding providers that reported zero staff in the position. Some providers reported having no staff counts in certain positions. The smallest total staff size reported was two employees, while the largest total staff was 240 employees. On average, providers reported having nine staff members. The unusually high maximum staff count may reflect a single survey response that included multiple child care centers.

Table 18: Average and Maximum Staffing Levels in Licensed Child Care Centers

Staff per Facility	Lead Teacher	Assistant Teacher	Aides	Floater	Total Classroom Staff Count
Maximum	46	92	44	60	214
Average	4	2.7	1.32	1.35	9.35
Average excluding 0	8.74	6.39	3.84	3.68	20.59

The table below shows how Licensed Child Care Centers responded to the question, "How well do your current salaries and pay attract and keep the staff you need to provide a high-quality program?" A rating of 0 means salaries and pay are **not** enough to attract and keep staff, while a rating of 10 means that pay is fully meeting staff needs. Among the 1,058 Licensed Child Care Centers respondents, the average rating was 6.97. This suggests that current pay levels are somewhat effective but still leaves challenges in attracting and retaining staff.

Table 19: Scale Rating of How Well Current Salaries and Pay Attract and Keep Staff Needed to Provide a High-Quality Program

Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
Frequency	14	14	16	30	22	59	89	369	312	83	50	6.97

School-Age Programs

The table below shows the average hourly wages and annual salaries for Director, Lead Teacher, and Assistant Teacher. Wage information was provided by 135 Directors, 131 Lead Teachers, and 91 Assistant Teachers. Smaller numbers of respondents also reported wages for Aides (16 responses) and Floaters (12 responses).

Table 20: Wages of School-Age Programs Staff

Wages	**Director**	**Lead Teacher**	**Assistant Teacher**	**Aides**	**Floaters**
Wage	$ 29.83	$ 22.85	$ 21.76	$ 18.95	$ 18.91
Salary	$ 62,046.40	$ 47,528.00	$ 45,260.80	$ 39,416.00	$ 39,332.80

Table 21 shows how School Age Only providers responded to the question "How well do your current salaries and pay attract and keep the staff you need to provide a high-quality program?" A rating of 0 means salaries and pay are **not** enough to attract and keep staff, while a rating of 10 means that pay is fully meeting staff needs. Among the 136 School-Age Only respondents, the average rating was 6.85. This suggests that current salaries and pay are generally helping programs attract and retain staff.

Table 21: Salary and Pay Effectiveness Ratings for School-Age Programs

Rating	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**Average**
Frequency	5	2	2	4	5	10	20	32	24	12	20	6.85

The table below shows the average salary and pay effectiveness ratings reported by School-Age Only programs in each region. Programs in Region 2 gave the highest rating for how well pay helps attract and retain staff, with an average of 7.75. Programs in Region 6 gave the lowest rating, with an average of 6.16.

Table 22: Salary and Pay Effectiveness Ratings for School-Age Programs by Region

Region	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Average Rating	7	7.75	7.04	6.57	6.46	6.16	7.3

Overhead Costs

Facility Landscape and Costs for Licensed Family Homes

The table below estimates the portion of monthly mortgage costs used for child care operations in Licensed Family Homes, based on home size and mortgage expenses.

Region 4 providers reported the highest monthly mortgage costs for operating child care from their homes, averaging $2,187 per month. Providers in Region 2 reported the lowest average mortgage costs at $1796 per month.

This is different from the cost per square foot used for child care center space. Spokane reported having the lowest cost per square foot, followed by Region 1, while Region 2 reported the highest cost per square foot.

Table 23: Licensed Family Home Rent/Mortgage Costs

Costs	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Average total square footage for Child Care	1,265	1072	1320	1290	1337	1209	1532
Average total square footage of home	2034	1796	2181	2220	2015	2044	2531
Average percent used for child care	66%	68%	61%	60%	61%	62%	62%
Average monthly mortgage or rent payment	$1,087	$1,553	$2,122	$2,187	$1,962	$1,550	$1,122
Cost of section of home for Child Care	$732.84	$1,039.95	$1,137.38	$1,203.18	$1,157.83	$773.41	$631.39
Average cost per square foot of Child Care area	$1.47	$17.09	$12.64	$4.72	$9.53	$3.95	$1.53

Facility Landscape and Costs for School-Age and Child Care Centers

Child Care Centers and School-Age Only programs were asked: "Do you own your space or do you rent/lease?" Responses were received from 1,085 child care centers and 141 School Age Only programs.

Among those who responded:

- 27.37% of Child Care Center reported owning their space; compared to
- 54.61% of School-Age Only programs reported owning their space.
- The remaining providers reported renting or leasing their facility.

The table below shows the average monthly mortgage costs for Child Care Centers that own their facility. Providers in Region 4 reported paying the highest average monthly mortgage at $2,187 per month, while Region 1 reported the lowest at $1,087 per month.

Table 24: Child Care Centers Average Mortgage Costs

Region	**Average Monthly Mortgage Costs**
Region 1	$1,087.00
Region 2	$1,553.00
Region 3	$2,122.00
Region 4	$2,187.00
Region 5	$1,962.00
Region 6	$1,550.00
Spokane	$1,122.00

The next table shows the percentage of child care centers that reported receiving free or reduced rent. Providers were asked, “Do you receive free or reduced rent for your space?” Response options were: “Yes, No, or Unsure.” The table shows the percentage of responses for each answer by region and the total number of respondents (last column to the right). In most regions, most providers reported that they do **not** receive free or reduced rent. Providers who reported paying no rent or mortgage were **not** included in the calculations.

Table 25: Child Care Centers Free/Reduced Rent Evaluation

Region	**No**	**Unsure**	**Yes**	**Count of Responses**
Region 1	85.71%	9.52%	4.76%	21
Region 2	84.09%	2.27%	13.64%	44
Region 3	64.71%	2.35%	32.94%	170
Region 4	89.31%	1.38%	9.31%	290
Region 5	91.11%	1.11%	7.78%	90
Region 6	89.02%	1.22%	9.76%	82
Spokane	92.77%	0.00%	7.23%	83

The table below shows how School-Age Only programs responded to the question, “Do you receive free or reduced rent for your space?”

Out of 56 total responses:

- 34 said “Yes”;
- 20 said "No”; and
- Two said they were "Unsure”.

The table also shows the percentages for each response by region.

Table 26: School-Age Only Programs Free/Reduced Rent Evaluation

Region	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**
Region 1	89%	0%	11%
Region 2	60%	0%	40%
Region 3	38%	8%	54%
Region 4	65%	6%	29%
Region 5	75%	0%	25%
Region 6	0%	0%	100%
Spokane	50%	0%	50%

The table below shows the average monthly mortgage costs reported by School-Age Only programs. Because participation from this group was limited, the results are based on only 41 responses. Programs in Region 5 reported the highest monthly mortgage cost, while Spokane had the lowest. The lowest monthly mortgage payment across all regions was $100, which may reflect programs operating in shared or reduced-cost spaces within another business or organization.

Table 27: School-Age Only Programs Average Monthly Mortgage Costs

Region	**Average Monthly Mortgage Costs**
Region 1	$2,000.00
Region 2	$2,033.33
Region 3	$3,165.00
Region 4	$3,036.00
Region 5	$3,542.86
Region 6	$1,890.00
Spokane	$1,825.00

Utilities for Licensed Family Homes

Licensed Family Home providers were asked how much they spend each month on utilities, including gas, water, and electricity. Of the 2,386 respondents, 901 reported monthly utility costs greater than zero. The table below shows the minimum, maximum, and average utility costs reported by providers. When responses reporting zero costs are excluded, the average monthly utility expenses were about $484.85. The survey responses suggest that electricity was the largest utility expense for most providers.

Table 28: Monthly Utility Costs for Licensed Family Homes

Licensed Family Homes Utility Costs	**Gas**	**Water**	**Electric**	**All Utilities**
Minimum excluding 0	$6.00	$10.00	$20.00	$50.00
Maximum	$1,500.00	$3,600.00	$5,000.00	$9,300.00
Average	$100.26	$152.50	$219.00	$183.00
Average excluding 0	$135.93	$162.13	$226.08	$484.85

Utilities for Licensed Child Care Centers

Child care centers were asked how much they spend each month on utilities, including gas, water, and electricity. Of the 1,075 respondents, 914 reported utility costs greater than zero.

The table below shows the results. When responses reporting zero costs are excluded, the average monthly utility expense was about $956.77. The survey responses suggest that electricity was the largest utility expense for most centers.

Table 29: Monthly Utility Costs for Licensed Child Care Centers

Child Care Center Utility Costs	**Gas**	**Water**	**Electric**	**All Utilities**
Minimum excluding 0	$10.00	$14.00	$15.00	$100.00
Maximum	$3,500.00	$3,000.00	$6,500.00	$9,500.00
Average	$201.23	$208.22	$407.58	$368.11
Average excluding 0	$264.14	$250.94	$479.37	$956.77

Utilities for School-Age Only Programs

School-Age Only programs were asked about their utility costs as well. Providers were asked to report their annual utility costs. Of the 155 respondents, 112 reported utility costs greater than zero. The table below shows the results. When responses reporting zero are excluded, the average monthly utility expense was about $573.78. The analysis also excluded one unusually low response of $1.66.

Table 30: Monthly Utilities for School-Age Only Programs

School-Age Only Utility Costs	**Monthly Utilities**
Minimum excluding 0	$25
Maximum	$6000
Average	$414.6
Average excluding 0	$573.78

Subsidy Saturation: Provider Participation in Child Care Subsidy and Barriers

Provider Participation in Child Care Subsidies

Based on survey responses, WCCC subsidy was the most commonly accepted subsidy program. About 78% of Licensed Family Homes and 84% of Licensed Child Care Centers reported accepting WCCC subsidy.

Acceptance of other subsidy programs varied. Only 17% of Licensed Family Homes and 10% of Licensed Child Care Centers reported that they do **not** accept families receiving subsidies. Providers also reported offering or accepting other forms of financial assistance and discounts, including:

- Staff Discounts
- Tuition Assistance or Financial Aid
- USDA Scholarships
- United Way Scholarships
- County specific Subsidy Programs
- Sibling Discounts
- ECEAP
- Church Scholarships
- Federal Subsidies
- Military Assistance
- Sliding scale
- Best Starts for Kids

Table 31: Types of Subsidies Frequently Accepted

Type of Subsidy or Discount	Licensed Child Care Centers	Licensed Family Homes
Facility does not accept families who receive subsidies	10.39%	17.11%
Working Connections Child Care	84.81%	77.87%
Child Welfare Child Care	0%	39.86%
Tribal Subsidy	20.34%	23.05%
County, City, or Other Local Subsidy	20.34%	31.45%
Other Discounts or Subsidies	14.74%	9.63%
Total Respondents	1126	976

Among providers that accept WCCC subsidies, most reported they **do not limit** enrolling the number of children accessing subsidies. Only 35% of Licensed Family Homes and 20% of Licensed Child Care Centers reported limiting the number of subsidized slots they offer to families.

Barriers to Accepting Subsidies

Among providers that reported not accepting families receiving WCCC subsidies, the most common reason was that subsidy payments were too low or reimbursement payments took too long to receive. Many providers also reported that the administrative workload associated with subsidies discourage participation.

Providers could select more than one reason for not accepting subsidies. Additional reasons providers reported:

- Not wanting or being unable to participate in Early Achievers
- Not exploring the subsidy program
- Operating as a private school
- Difficulty planning around subsidy payments and/or budget impacts
- The process requires too much work

Table 32: Reasons for Not Accepting WCCC Subsidies

Reason	**Licensed Child Care Centers**	**Licensed Family Homes**
The reimbursement rate is too low	45.56%	33.49%
Delay in Reimbursement	46.75%	25.58%
Not many families qualify for WCCC	40.83%	20.47%
Few Families request WCCC	42.60%	26.51%
I cannot handle the administrative burden	30.18%	27.44%
Communication from the state is poor	10.06%	36.28%
Unaware of WCCC Subsidy	0%	11.63%
Required participation in Early Achievers	0%	13.02%
Other Discounts or Subsidies	14.20%	9.77%
Total Responses	169	215

Cost of Quality Child Care

The Cost Model used in this report is based on the calculator developed for the Child Care Collaborative Task Force by Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies (P5FS). Detailed in the Task Force's 2021 report, this excel-based tool models the cost for Licensed Child Care Centers and Licensed Family Homes to provide child care within our state context, and considers differences in program size, location, and service model. The model was originally built using provider survey data collected in 2022 and federal child care cost tools (ACF's Provider Cost of Quality Calculator or PCQC). This study updates those calculations using new survey data from providers across Washington.

The model includes major costs that affect the price of providing quality child care, including fixed operating costs like rent or mortgage, utilities, and other factors that can change over time and increase costs. Child care is a fixed cost-intensive business model, meaning providers must pay many large expenses regardless of enrollment, while also managing variable costs that rise as staffing, materials, and service needs increase. These cost drivers include:

- Staff salaries and benefits
- Family engagement practices
- Professional development supports
- Education materials and curriculum
- Planning release time

Fixed costs are expenses that generally stay the same regardless of how many children are enrolled, such as rent, mortgage payments, insurance, utilities, and licensing costs.

Variable costs are expenses that change based on the number of children served or the level of services provided, such as staffing, food, classroom supplies, and educational materials.

Within each cost driver category, the calculator includes cost projections for different options, called "selection points." These are the baseline assumptions that drive the Cost Model. The selections assumed in this report are based on the recommendations of the Early Educator Design Team, including that base rates should be sufficient to support the MIT living wage standard.[9] A living wage, as defined by the MIT Living Wage Institute, is what one full-time worker must earn on an hourly basis to cover the cost of their family's minimum basic needs where they live without additional public or private assistance.[10]

[9] The recommendations for the Early Educator Design Team can be found at the Early Educator Design Team Cost of Quality Care Recommendations Full Report.

[10] Living wage definition sourced from the Living Wage Institute via https://livingwage.mit.edu/pages/faqs.

To calculate the Cost of Quality Child Care by child age and subsidy region, we developed separate scenarios for Licensed Child Care Centers and Licensed Family Homes. While the model can run multiple scenarios, these example scenarios use a default program size to show the impact of different variables on the cost of care. We used the same child care center scenario as used by P5FS.

P5FS' family home scenarios produced the same estimated costs across infant, toddler, and preschool-child age groups. However, these results do not reflect the realities of child care operations, as infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have different staffing ratios, supervision needs, developmental needs, and licensing requirements that affect the cost of care. DCYF developed scenarios based on the typical licensed capacity of family home providers to better reflect that the cost of care varies by each age group.

The scenarios were:

- Child care center: a program serving 72 children, birth through school age, with one classroom of each age group (infant, toddler, preschooler, school-age).
- Family home programs:
    - To determine cost of care for infants, we assume two infants, two toddlers, and two preschool-age children.
    - To determine cost of care for toddlers, we assume eight toddlers.
    - To determine cost of care for preschoolers we assume 10 preschoolers.

In each scenario, the default program included $6,000 per employee in discretionary benefits and a 6% contribution to retirement, as well as 10 days paid sick leave and 10 days paid vacation.

The cost per child data presented in Tables 5 and 6 (2026) and below (2024) are full-day, monthly rates for a program that pays applicable taxes and makes a 5% contribution to an operating reserve. The calculations also assume the program operates at 85% of licensed capacity and collects 97% of expected revenue.

Across both Licensed Family Homes and Licensed Child Care Centers, Region 4 remains the highest for subsidy rates. See "Comparison: Current Design Team Recommendations to 2024 Design Team Rates Current Cost Model Recommendation Rates to 2024 Cost Model Recommendation Rates for more analysis.

Table 33: 2024 Licensed Family Home Cost Model Recommendations

Region	Infants	Toddlers	Preschool	School Age
Region 1	$2,878.00	$2,224.00	$1,931.00	$1,569.00
Region 2	$2,990.00	$2,310.00	$1,901.00	$1,628.00
Region 3	$3,648.00	$2,814.00	$2,313.00	$1,979.00
Region 4	$3,975.00	$3,050.00	$2,506.00	$2,143.00
Region 5	$3,328.00	$2,568.00	$2,113.00	$1,809.00
Region 6	$3,219.00	$2,485.00	$2,045.00	$1,751.00
Spokane	$2,812.00	$2,173.00	$1,790.00	$1,534.00

Table 34: 2024 Licensed Child Care Center Cost Model Recommendations

Region	Infants	Toddlers	Preschool	School Age
Region 1	$3,048.00	$2,284.00	$1,979.00	$1,345.00
Region 2	$3,147.00	$2,355.00	$2,038.00	$1,382.00
Region 3	$3,726.00	$2,766.00	$2,382.00	$1,600.00
Region 4	$3,997.00	$2,959.00	$2,544.00	$1,702.00
Region 5	$3,444.00	$2,566.00	$2,214.00	$1,494.00
Region 6	$3,348.00	$2,498.00	$2,157.00	$1,458.00
Spokane	$ 2,990.00	$ 2,243.00	$ 1,944.00	$ 1,323.00

Comparison: Current Subsidies to Private Pay Rates

For this comparison, we use survey data on private-pay rates and the most recent WCCC subsidy base rates, which are based on the 85th percentile of 2024 market rates. Note that these base rates do not include tiered reimbursement or any other add-ons. Please see the "Market Rate Methodology" section for process on percentile distribution.

The subsidy percentile was determined by comparing the WCCC subsidy rate to the private pay percentile tables presented later in this report.[11] Subsidy percentiles are displayed in five percentage point increments. Some subsidies fell into a range of percentiles, which are presented as a range within the table. To create these percentiles, we removed outliers based upon the existing subsidy rates.[12] Rates below a third of the current subsidy rate value, or more than twice the current subsidy rate value, were removed from the analysis. Each outlier was unique to the region, provider type, and age group. Region 3 required additional data cleaning due to a number of responses researchers were unable to validate.

Full-time School-Age Only program rates are used to derive the tables below. Part time rates are part of a separate analysis, as one provider may have four different prices for school-age care depending on full-time vs. part-time care, and nuances within part-time care.

Additionally, recent legislation, SHB 2689, will change how child care subsidy base rates are determined, beginning July 1, 2027.[13] The law changes the requirement from using the 85th percentile of market rates to the 75th percentile. Because these changes were made shortly before this report was completed, the following tables include information using both methods. The percent increase noted in the tables is the difference between the 2026 market rate and current subsidy rates, which are based on 2024 market rates, for that percentile.

Table 35: Licensed Family Home Infant Subsidy Rates and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Infant Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,760.00	$1,804.00	$2,124.10	$2,000.02	$2,000.02	$1,232.00
Subsidy Percentile	25-40%	60-65%	65-70%	55-60%	60-70%	70-75%	10-15%
85th Percentile	$1,760.00	$2,100.00	$2,598.00	$2,500.00	$2,200.00	$2,200.00	$2,150.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$440.00	$340.00	$794.00	$375.90	$199.98	$199.98	$918.00
% Increase	33%	19%	44%	18%	10%	10%	75%

[11] A percentile measures a value's ranking or position within a population or group, and a percentage measures a portion or share of a population (i.e., out of 100).
[12] Outliers are unusually high or low values that are very different from most of the data collected.
[13] 2689-S.SL.pdf

Table 36: Licensed Family Home Toddler Subsidy Rates and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Toddler Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,600.06	$1,699.94	$2,166.78	$1,540.00	$1,516.68	$1,210.00
Subsidy Percentile	50%	50-55%	50-55%	65-70%	55-60%	45-50%	30-35%
85th Percentile	$1,760.00	$1,871.02	$2,200.00	$2,381.50	$1,830.00	$2,000.00	$1,380.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$440.00	$270.96	$500.06	$214.72	$290.00	$483.32	$170.00
% Increase	33%	17%	29%	10%	19%	32%	14%

Table 37: Licensed Family Home Preschool Subsidy Rates and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Preschool Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,125.08	$1,400.08	$1,540.00	$1,980.00	$1,430.00	$1,400.08	$1,100.00
Subsidy Percentile	35-40%	45-50%	60%	60%	40-50%	60-65%	25-35%
85th Percentile	$1,500.00	$1,700.00	$2,000.00	$2,200.00	$1,725.00	$1,632.41	$1,950.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$374.92	$299.92	$460.00	$220.00	$295.00	$232.33	$850.00
% Increase	33%	21%	30%	11%	21%	17%	77%

Table 38: Licensed Family Home School Age Subsidy Rates and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

School Age Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,100.00	$1,650.00	$1,733.38	$1,083.28	$1,516.68	$1,100.00
Subsidy Percentile	50%	45-55%	65-70%	70-75%	25-30%	95%	60-65%
85th Percentile	$1,476.53	$1,600.00	$2,078.40	$1,900.00	$1,550.00	$1,400.00	$1,210.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$156.53	$500.00	$428.40	$166.62	$466.72	($116.68)	$110.00
% Increase	12%	45%	26%	10%	43%	-8%	10%

Table 39: Licensed Family Home Infant Subsidy Rates and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Infant Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,760.00	$1,804.00	$2,124.10	$2,000.02	$2,000.02	$1,232.00
Subsidy Percentile	25-40%	60-65%	65-70%	55-60%	60-70%	70-75%	10-15%
75th Percentile	$1,600.00	$1,948.50	$1,900.00	$2,381.50	$2,100.00	$2,000.02	$1,375.00

Infant Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	$280.00	$188.50	$96.00	$257.40	$99.98	$0.00	$143.00
% Increase	21%	11%	5%	12%	5%	0%	12%

Table 40: Licensed Family Home Toddler Subsidy Rates and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Toddler Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,600.06	$1,699.94	$2,166.78	$1,540.00	$1,516.68	$1,210.00
Subsidy Percentile	50%	50-55%	50-55%	65-70%	55-60%	45-50%	30-35%
75th Percentile	$1,500.00	$1,760.00	$2,000.00	$2,250.00	$1,750.00	$1,818.60	$1,320.00
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	$180.00	$159.94	$300.06	$83.22	$210.00	$301.92	$110.00
% Increase	14%	10%	18%	4%	14%	20%	9%

Table 41: Licensed Family Home Preschool Subsidy Rates and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Preschool Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,125.08	$1,400.08	$1,540.00	$1,980.00	$1,430.00	$1,400.08	$1,100.00
Subsidy Percentile	35-40%	45-50%	60%	60%	40-50%	60-65%	25-35%
75th Percentile	$1,350.00	$1,600.00	$1,750.00	$2,130.00	$1,540.00	$1,516.00	$1,320.00
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	$224.92	$199.92	$210.00	$150.00	$110.00	$115.92	$220.00
% Increase	20%	14%	14%	8%	8%	8%	20%

Table 42: Licensed Family Home School Age Subsidy Rates and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

School Age Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,320.00	$1,100.00	$1,650.00	$1,733.38	$1,083.28	$1,516.68	$1,100.00
Subsidy Percentile	50%	45-55%	65-70%	70-75%	25-30%	95%	60-65%
75th Percentile	$1,400.00	$1,320.00	$1,750.00	$1,755.00	$1,500.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	$80.00	$220.00	$100.00	$21.62	$416.72	($216.68)	$100.00
% Increase	6%	20%	6%	1%	38%	-14%	9%

Table 43: Licensed Child Care Center Infant Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Infant Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3[15]**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$2,100	$1,674	$2,320	$2,975	$1,910	$1,930	$1,720
Subsidy Percentile	30-35%	25-30%	20-25%	50-55%	20-25%	55-60%	45-50%
85th Percentile	$2,200.00	$1,800.00	$3,637.20	$3,300.00	$2,100.00	$1,970.00	$1,850.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$100	$126	$1,317	$325	$190	$40	$130
% Increase	5%	8%	57%	11%	10%	2%	8%

Table 44: Licensed Child Care Center Toddler Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Toddler Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3[15]**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,510	$1,510	$2,160	$2,660	$1,795	$1,768	$1,430
Subsidy Percentile	40-45%	15-20%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%	45-50%	35-40%
85th Percentile	$1,820.00	$1,500.00	$3,117.60	$3,130.00	$1,978.00	$1,900.00	$1,750.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$310	($10)	$958	$470	$183	$132	$320
% Increase	21%	-1%	44%	18%	10%	7%	22%

Table 45: Licensed Child Care Center Preschool Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Preschool Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3[15]**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,170	$1,340	$1,910	$2,350	$1,645	$1,605	$1,380
Subsidy Percentile	35-40%	10-15%	40-45%	75-80%	5-10%	25-30%	15-20%
85th Percentile	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$2,251.60	$2,200.00	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$1,640.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$530	$360	$342	($150)	$55	$95	$260
% Increase	45%	27%	18%	-6%	3%	6%	19%

Table 46: Licensed Child Care Center School Age Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 85th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

School Age Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3[15]**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,025	$1,245	$1,745	$1,773	$1,470	$1,455	$1,100
Subsidy Percentile	35-40%	30%	50-55%	95-100%	15-20%	25-30%	5-10%

School Age Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3[15]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
85th Percentile	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,732.00	$1,732.00	$1,571.79	$1,600.00	$1,732.00
Difference-Subsidy and 85th	$707	$54	($13)	($41)	$102	$145	$632
% Increase	69%	4%	-1%	-2%	7%	10%	57%

Table 47: Licensed Child Care Center Infant Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Infant Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3[16]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Current Subsidy Rate	$2,100	$1,674	$2,320	$2,975	$1,910	$1,930	$1,720
Subsidy Percentile	30-35%	25-30%	20-25%	50-55%	20-25%	55-60%	45-50%
75th Percentile	$1,899.00	$1,600.00	$2,860.00	$3,000.00	$1,995.00	$1,809.94	$1,785.00
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	($201)	($74)	$540	$25	$85	($120)	$65
% Increase	-10%	-4%	23%	1%	4%	-6%	4%

Table 48: Licensed Child Care Center Toddler Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Toddler Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3[16]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,510	$1,510	$2,160	$2,660	$1,795	$1,768	$1,430
Subsidy Percentile	40-45%	15-20%	25-30%	40-45%	20-25%	45-50%	35-40%
75th Percentile	$1,800.00	$1,300.00	$2,215.00	$2,800.00	$1,850.00	$1,809.94	$1,675.00
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	$290	($210)	$55	$140	$55	$42	$245
% Increase	19%	-14%	3%	5%	3%	2%	17%

Table 49: Licensed Child Care Center Preschool Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

Preschool Rate	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3[16]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,170	$1,340	$1,910	$2,350	$1,645	$1,605	$1,380
Subsidy Percentile	35-40%	10-15%	40-45%	75-80%	5-10%	25-30%	15-20%
75th Percentile	$1,600.00	$1,600.00	$1,700.00	$1,800.00	$1,700.00	$1,600.00	$1,600.00
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	$430	$260	($210)	($550)	$55	($5)	$220
% Increase	37%	19%	-11%	-23%	3%	0%	16%

Table 50: Licensed Child Care Center School Age Subsidy Rates as of July 1, 2026 and 2026 75th Percentile Private Pay Rates Summary Table

School Age Rate	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**[16]	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Current Subsidy Rate	$1,025	$1,245	$1,745	$1,773	$1,470	$1,455	$1,100
Subsidy Percentile	35-40%	30%	50-55%	95-100%	15-20%	25-30%	5-10%
75th Percentile	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,700.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50
Difference-Subsidy and 75th	$707	$54	($230)	($73)	$46	$61	$416
% Increase	69%	4%	-13%	-4%	3%	4%	38%

Comparison: Current Cost Model Recommendation Rates to 2024 Cost Model Recommendation Rates

The tables that follow show the difference between current Cost Model recommendation rates and those of the 2024 study.[14] The difference between the two models is primarily based on updated information from this study about provider operating costs, including fixed costs (rent, mortgage, and utilities), and updated data from MIT Living Wage Institute.

Dollar amounts shown in parentheses mean the 2024 Cost Model recommended a higher rate than the 2026 Cost Model recommended. Dollar amounts not shown in parentheses mean the 2026 Cost Model recommended a higher rate than the 2024 model.

In Table 51 below, we can see that 2026 Cost Model rates for Licensed Family Homes increased between $14 and $304 from the 2024 study, with an average increase of $122.14. Region 4 remains the region with the highest recommended rates, while Spokane had the largest difference between 2024 and 2026 recommended rates.

Table 51: Difference in 2026 Cost Model Recommended Rates and 2024 Cost Model Recommended Rates for Licensed Family Homes

Region	**Infants**	**Toddlers**	**Preschool**	**School Age**
Region 1	$183.00	$139.00	$14.00	$97.00
Region 2	$209.00	$159.00	$130.00	$111.00
Region 3	$111.00	$84.00	$68.00	$57.00
Region 4	$77.00	$72.00	$59.00	$50.00
Region 5	$132.00	$101.00	$81.00	$69.00
Region 6	$183.00	$139.00	$113.00	$96.00
Spokane	$304.00	$232.00	$189.00	$161.00

Using Table 52, we can see that rates for Licensed Child Care Centers increased between $4 and $162, with an average increase of $40.32. Region 4 remains the region with the highest recommended rates, while Spokane had the largest difference between 2024 and 2026 recommended rates. Unlike Licensed Family Homes, some of the 2024 recommended rates exceed the 2026 recommended rates in Regions 3 and 4.

[14] ChildCareMarketRateStudy2024

Table 52: Difference in 2026 Cost Model Recommended Rates and 2024 Cost Model Recommended Rates for Licensed Child Care Centers

Region	Infants	Toddlers	Preschool	School Age
Region 1	$59.00	$51.00	$47.00	$28.00
Region 2	$80.00	$66.00	$60.00	$37.00
Region 3	$(6.00)	$5.00	$9.00	$4.00
Region 4	$(19.00)	$(5.00)	$1.00	$(1.00)
Region 5	$13.00	$18.00	$21.00	$11.00
Region 6	$58.00	$50.00	$47.00	$28.00
Spokane	$162.00	$126.00	$111.00	$68.00

Conclusions

Subsidy Saturation

WCCC subsidy is the most commonly accepted subsidy program by providers. Programs accepting WCCC subsidy include 78% of Licensed Family Homes and 84% of Licensed Child Care Centers.

Of the 17% of Licensed Family Homes and 10% of Licensed Child Care Centers that reported they do not accept families receiving subsidies, the most common reason they gave was that subsidy payments were too low or reimbursement payments took too long to receive.

Market Rates

Tables 1 through 4 summarize current subsidy base rates and the 75th and 85th percentile of reported 2026 market rates by provider type, region, and child age group. Tables 35-50 further compare current subsidy base rates to them. They indicate Washington's current subsidy base rates are almost all below the 85th percentile, several by a wide margin. Most subsidy base rates are also at or below the 75th percentile, with exceptions. Based on the gap analysis, a substantial investment would be necessary to bring current subsidy base rates in line with 75th and 85th percentile rates.

Cost of Quality Child Care

Tables 5 and 6 provide regional base rates by child age based on the Cost Model. These rates increased with few exceptions between the 2024 and 2026 evaluation. As indicated in Tables 7-10, Cost Model rates mostly exceeded rates based on 85th Percentile Market Rates. The 75th Percentile Market Rates were even more consistently below Cost Model rates. A landmark investment in subsidy base rates would be necessary to achieve Cost Model rates but would provide reimbursement at an amount calculated to support a living wage for all workers in child care settings.

Appendix 1: Percentile Rate Charts

2026 Child Care Center Rates

Table 53: Weighted Monthly Rate Percentiles by Region: Licensed Child Care Centers: Full-Time Infant

Percentile	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3 [15]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Minimum	$887.65	$900.00	$850.00	$844.35	$950.00	$900.00	$660.00
5	$952.60	$1,000.00	$1,400.00	$909.30	$1,082.50	$1,200.00	$1,181.00
10	$1,120.00	$1,039.20	$1,500.00	$1,400.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00	$1,360.00
15	$1,120.00	$1,200.00	$1,558.80	$1,515.50	$1,385.60	$1,250.00	$1,360.00
20	$1,120.00	$1,200.00	$1,600.00	$1,800.00	$1,450.00	$1,400.00	$1,360.00
25	$1,200.00	$1,200.00	$1,800.00	$2,100.00	$1,623.75	$1,500.00	$1,385.60
30	$1,364.00	$1,299.00	$1,800.00	$2,200.00	$1,623.75	$1,500.00	$1,430.00
35	$1,365.10	$1,300.00	$1,971.00	$2,200.00	$1,650.00	$1,500.00	$1,430.00
40	$1,500.00	$1,320.00	$2,048.00	$2,320.88	$1,650.00	$1,500.00	$1,430.00
45	$1,500.00	$1,350.00	$2,131.07	$2,350.00	$1,688.70	$1,500.00	$1,500.00
50	$1,500.00	$1,450.00	$2,210.00	$2,400.00	$1,690.00	$1,600.00	$1,646.00
55	$1,680.00	$1,450.00	$2,305.00	$2,550.00	$1,800.00	$1,690.00	$1,695.00
60	$1,680.00	$1,521.00	$2,598.00	$2,800.00	$1,890.00	$1,750.00	$1,728.00
65	$1,680.00	$1,530.00	$2,598.00	$2,800.00	$1,890.00	$1,750.00	$1,740.00
70	$1,680.00	$1,530.00	$2,598.00	$2,900.00	$1,900.00	$1,770.00	$1,750.00
75	$1,899.00	$1,600.00	$2,860.00	$3,000.00	$1,995.00	$1,809.94	$1,785.00
80	$1,899.00	$1,800.00	$3,117.60	$3,247.00	$2,021.00	$1,850.00	$1,800.00
85	$2,200.00	$1,800.00	$3,117.60	$3,300.00	$2,100.00	$1,970.00	$1,850.00
90	$2,200.00	$1,900.00	$3,117.60	$3,478.86	$2,200.00	$2,100.00	$2,000.00
95	$2,250.00	$2,100.00	$3,117.60	$3,626.00	$2,225.62	$2,300.00	$2,078.40
Maximum	$2,420.00	$2,598.00	$3,355.75	$3,810.40	$3,000.00	$2,598.00	$2,500.00

[15] Region 3 required additional data cleaning compared to other regions due to an unverifiable cluster of rates that can be attributed to data entry error.

Table 54: Weighted Monthly Rate Percentiles by Region: Licensed Child Care Centers: Full-Time Toddler

Percentile	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3 [16]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Minimum	$801.05	$900.00	$800.00	$757.75	$887.65	$850.00	$770.00
5	$897.00	$900.00	$1,200.00	$1,250.00	$1,200.00	$1,000.00	$1,155.00
10	$1,109.56	$1,000.00	$1,300.00	$1,500.00	$1,299.00	$1,076.00	$1,155.00
15	$1,125.00	$1,079.98	$1,350.00	$1,726.00	$1,300.00	$1,150.00	$1,155.00
20	$1,180.00	$1,100.00	$1,407.25	$1,950.00	$1,380.00	$1,200.00	$1,155.00
25	$1,200.00	$1,100.00	$1,500.00	$1,991.00	$1,450.00	$1,250.00	$1,155.00
30	$1,200.00	$1,100.00	$1,600.00	$2,000.00	$1,500.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00
35	$1,200.00	$1,100.00	$1,690.00	$2,040.00	$1,550.00	$1,320.00	$1,200.00
40	$1,232.00	$1,190.75	$1,840.25	$2,150.00	$1,580.00	$1,395.00	$1,339.00
45	$1,235.00	$1,200.00	$1,900.00	$2,250.00	$1,645.40	$1,465.00	$1,375.00
50	$1,295.00	$1,250.00	$1,914.00	$2,374.00	$1,700.00	$1,500.00	$1,550.00
55	$1,400.00	$1,250.00	$2,000.00	$2,420.00	$1,743.00	$1,560.00	$1,555.00
60	$1,400.00	$1,265.00	$2,050.00	$2,500.00	$1,785.00	$1,600.00	$1,581.00
65	$1,500.00	$1,300.00	$2,078.40	$2,605.00	$1,785.00	$1,650.00	$1,650.00
70	$1,600.00	$1,300.00	$2,165.00	$2,680.00	$1,810.00	$1,700.00	$1,650.00
75	$1,800.00	$1,300.00	$2,215.00	$2,800.00	$1,850.00	$1,809.94	$1,675.00
80	$1,820.00	$1,395.00	$2,500.00	$2,865.00	$1,900.00	$1,865.00	$1,695.00
85	$1,820.00	$1,500.00	$2,598.00	$3,130.00	$1,978.00	$1,900.00	$1,750.00
90	$1,820.00	$1,584.00	$3,074.30	$3,310.00	$2,000.00	$1,950.00	$1,800.00
95	$2,000.00	$1,732.00	$3,117.60	$3,350.00	$2,199.64	$2,200.00	$1,805.00
Maximum	$2,000.00	$1,980.00	$3,117.60	$3,897.00	$2,199.64	$2,904.00	$2,350.00

[16] Region 3 required additional data cleaning compared to other regions due to an unverifiable cluster of rates that can be attributed to data entry error.

Table 55: Weighted Rate Percentiles by Region - Licensed Child Care Centers: Full-Time Preschool

Percentile	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3 [17]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Minimum	$433.00	$515.00	$649.50	$660.00	$704.00	$433.00	$800.00
5	$789.00	$700.00	$1,000.00	$1,300.00	$1,150.00	$850.00	$1,087.90
10	$900.00	$970.00	$1,200.00	$1,400.00	$1,299.00	$1,000.00	$1,087.90
15	$1,000.00	$1,000.00	$1,290.00	$1,400.00	$1,365.00	$1,095.00	$1,087.90
20	$1,050.00	$1,000.00	$1,400.00	$1,500.00	$1,400.00	$1,100.00	$1,200.00
25	$1,100.00	$1,082.50	$1,400.00	$1,500.00	$1,400.00	$1,225.00	$1,340.00
30	$1,120.00	$1,100.00	$1,408.00	$1,500.00	$1,400.00	$1,295.00	$1,380.00
35	$1,166.00	$1,150.00	$1,500.00	$1,600.00	$1,400.00	$1,400.00	$1,400.00
40	$1,240.00	$1,210.00	$1,500.00	$1,600.00	$1,450.00	$1,400.00	$1,400.00
45	$1,243.00	$1,210.00	$1,500.00	$1,600.00	$1,500.00	$1,450.00	$1,400.00
50	$1,400.00	$1,400.00	$1,600.00	$1,600.00	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$1,450.00
55	$1,400.00	$1,400.00	$1,600.00	$1,700.00	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$1,500.00
60	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$1,600.00	$1,700.00	$1,590.00	$1,509.00	$1,500.00
65	$1,600.00	$1,500.00	$1,697.00	$1,700.00	$1,600.00	$1,600.00	$1,500.00
70	$1,600.00	$1,500.00	$1,700.00	$1,734.00	$1,650.00	$1,600.00	$1,550.00
75	$1,600.00	$1,600.00	$1,700.00	$1,800.00	$1,700.00	$1,600.00	$1,600.00
80	$1,700.00	$1,600.00	$1,727.00	$2,000.00	$1,700.00	$1,623.75	$1,600.00
85	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$1,848.00	$2,200.00	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$1,640.00
90	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$1,943.00	$2,367.00	$1,700.00	$1,700.00	$1,700.00
95	$1,880.00	$1,700.00	$2,039.43	$2,634.00	$1,761.00	$1,700.00	$1,700.00
Maximum	$2,220.00	$1,760.00	$2,598.00	$3,464.00	$2,280.00	$2,250.00	$1,854.00

[17] Region 3 required additional data cleaning compared to other regions due to an unverifiable cluster of rates that can be attributed to data entry error.

Table 56: Weighted Rate Percentiles by Region - Licensed Child Care Centers: Full-Time School Age

Percentile	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3[18]	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Minimum	$649.50	$400.00	$555.00	$673.20	$692.80	$433.00	$500.00
5	$800.00	$400.00	$750.00	$1,082.50	$850.00	$551.00	$900.00
10	$800.00	$427.00	$822.70	$1,299.00	$850.00	$800.00	$1,251.37
15	$1,025.00	$440.00	$975.00	$1,299.00	$1,000.00	$867.00	$1,299.00
20	$1,082.50	$600.00	$1,043.00	$1,299.00	$1,299.00	$1,000.00	$1,299.00
25	$1,140.00	$700.00	$1,125.80	$1,299.00	$1,299.00	$1,050.00	$1,299.00
30	$1,166.00	$720.06	$1,280.00	$1,299.00	$1,299.00	$1,160.44	$1,299.00
35	$1,166.00	$748.00	$1,299.00	$1,299.00	$1,299.00	$1,220.00	$1,299.00
40	$1,299.00	$750.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,300.00	$1,299.00	$1,299.00
45	$1,300.00	$850.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,299.00	$1,299.00
50	$1,496.00	$850.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,299.00	$1,299.00
55	$1,515.50	$950.00	$1,300.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,299.00	$1,515.50
60	$1,515.50	$990.00	$1,407.25	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,300.00	$1,515.50
65	$1,515.50	$1,190.75	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,500.00	$1,515.50
70	$1,515.50	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50
75	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,700.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50
80	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,732.00	$1,515.50	$1,515.50	$1,515.50
85	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,515.50	$1,732.00	$1,571.79	$1,600.00	$1,732.00
90	$1,732.00	$1,299.00	$1,720.00	$1,732.00	$1,732.00	$1,732.00	$1,732.00
95	$2,112.00	$1,299.00	$1,732.00	$1,863.00	$1,732.00	$1,732.00	$1,732.00
Maximum	$2,112.00	$1,320.00	$1,732.00	$3,250.00	$2,251.60	$1,850.00	$2,078.00

[18] Region 3 required additional data cleaning compared to other regions due to an unverifiable cluster of rates that can be attributed to data entry error.

2026 Licensed Family Home Rates

Table 57: Monthly Rate Percentiles by Region - Licensed Family Home: Full-Time Infant

Percentile	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Spokane
Minimum	$700.00	$660.00	$866.00	$770.00	$880.00	$700.00	$1,082.50
5	$1,000.00	$990.00	$866.00	$1,100.00	$1,200.00	$990.00	$1,082.50
10	$1,100.00	$1,100.00	$990.00	$1,300.00	$1,300.00	$1,000.00	$1,210.00
15	$1,150.00	$1,250.00	$1,250.00	$1,450.00	$1,400.00	$1,200.00	$1,300.00
20	$1,200.00	$1,320.00	$1,320.00	$1,515.00	$1,450.00	$1,277.35	$1,300.00
25	$1,320.00	$1,320.00	$1,407.25	$1,600.00	$1,500.00	$1,400.00	$1,320.00
30	$1,320.00	$1,416.78	$1,500.00	$1,650.00	$1,540.00	$1,400.00	$1,320.00
35	$1,320.00	$1,450.00	$1,500.00	$1,740.00	$1,600.00	$1,500.00	$1,320.00
40	$1,320.00	$1,550.00	$1,500.00	$1,840.25	$1,675.00	$1,500.00	$1,320.00
45	$1,350.00	$1,600.00	$1,537.15	$1,936.00	$1,732.00	$1,500.00	$1,320.00
50	$1,400.00	$1,650.00	$1,650.00	$2,000.00	$1,732.00	$1,590.00	$1,342.00
55	$1,450.00	$1,700.00	$1,732.00	$2,100.00	$1,840.00	$1,600.00	$1,342.00
60	$1,476.53	$1,760.00	$1,732.00	$2,150.00	$2,000.00	$1,760.00	$1,342.00
65	$1,500.00	$1,760.00	$1,732.00	$2,165.00	$2,000.00	$1,900.00	$1,364.00
70	$1,500.00	$1,900.00	$1,840.00	$2,300.00	$2,000.00	$1,926.85	$1,375.00
75	$1,600.00	$1,948.50	$1,900.00	$2,381.50	$2,100.00	$2,000.02	$1,375.00
80	$1,650.00	$2,000.00	$2,090.00	$2,400.00	$2,200.00	$2,165.00	$1,375.00
85	$1,760.00	$2,100.00	$2,598.00	$2,500.00	$2,200.00	$2,200.00	$2,150.00
90	$1,760.00	$2,200.00	$2,598.00	$2,598.00	$2,200.00	$2,222.00	$2,200.00
95	$2,000.00	$2,677.00	$2,598.00	$2,860.00	$2,400.00	$2,400.00	$2,200.00
Maximum	$2,500.00	$3,212.00	$3,464.00	$3,810.40	$3,810.40	$3,564.00	$2,200.00

Table 58: Monthly Rate Percentiles by Region - Licensed Family Home: Full-Time Toddler

Percentile	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Minimum	$750.00	$695.00	$660.00	$800.00	$880.00	$650.00	$770.00
5	$850.00	$900.00	$866.00	$1,100.00	$1,100.00	$850.00	$1,000.00
10	$952.60	$1,000.00	$1,000.00	$1,250.00	$1,104.15	$948.00	$1,000.00
15	$990.00	$1,166.00	$1,150.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00	$990.00	$1,100.00
20	$1,000.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00	$1,500.00	$1,220.00	$1,100.00	$1,155.00
25	$1,050.00	$1,342.00	$1,299.00	$1,600.00	$1,250.00	$1,200.00	$1,200.00
30	$1,200.00	$1,400.00	$1,320.00	$1,700.00	$1,300.00	$1,250.00	$1,210.00
35	$1,250.00	$1,400.00	$1,409.00	$1,750.00	$1,320.00	$1,350.00	$1,210.00
40	$1,300.00	$1,452.00	$1,500.00	$1,850.00	$1,450.00	$1,400.00	$1,276.00
45	$1,300.00	$1,540.00	$1,540.00	$1,885.00	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$1,276.00
50	$1,320.00	$1,600.00	$1,550.00	$1,935.00	$1,515.50	$1,580.00	$1,276.00
55	$1,385.60	$1,630.00	$1,700.00	$2,000.00	$1,515.50	$1,600.00	$1,300.00
60	$1,400.00	$1,650.00	$1,732.00	$2,100.00	$1,600.00	$1,650.00	$1,320.00
65	$1,430.00	$1,700.00	$1,800.00	$2,165.00	$1,623.75	$1,760.00	$1,320.00
70	$1,500.00	$1,750.00	$1,850.00	$2,180.00	$1,700.00	$1,818.60	$1,320.00
75	$1,500.00	$1,760.00	$2,000.00	$2,250.00	$1,750.00	$1,818.60	$1,320.00
80	$1,675.00	$1,800.00	$2,100.00	$2,300.00	$1,760.00	$1,900.00	$1,380.00
85	$1,760.00	$1,871.02	$2,200.00	$2,381.50	$1,830.00	$2,000.00	$1,380.00
90	$2,090.00	$2,070.00	$2,598.00	$2,580.00	$1,850.00	$2,150.00	$1,380.00
95	$2,250.00	$2,090.00	$2,598.00	$2,640.00	$2,200.00	$2,600.00	$1,380.00
Maximum	$2,250.00	$3,080.00	$2,926.00	$3,464.00	$2,948.00	$2,658.00	$2,050.00

Table 59: Monthly Rate Percentiles by Region - Licensed Family Home: Full-Time Preschool

Percentile	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Minimum	$704.00	$500.00	$519.60	$660.00	$500.00	$550.00	$600.00
5	$880.00	$780.00	$692.80	$900.00	$1,000.00	$880.00	$980.00
10	$900.00	$880.00	$900.00	$1,000.00	$1,082.50	$900.00	$990.00
15	$950.00	$1,000.00	$1,000.00	$1,299.00	$1,104.15	$900.00	$1,000.00
20	$990.00	$1,082.00	$1,100.00	$1,400.00	$1,200.00	$990.00	$1,082.50
25	$1,000.00	$1,082.50	$1,190.75	$1,515.50	$1,250.00	$1,000.00	$1,100.00
30	$1,050.00	$1,200.00	$1,225.00	$1,620.00	$1,300.00	$1,100.00	$1,100.00
35	$1,125.00	$1,232.00	$1,320.00	$1,700.00	$1,330.00	$1,232.00	$1,100.00
40	$1,150.00	$1,300.00	$1,400.00	$1,750.00	$1,400.00	$1,290.00	$11,192.00
45	$1,200.00	$1,400.00	$1,425.00	$1,800.00	$1,400.00	$1,300.00	$1,210.00
50	$1,210.00	$1,400.08	$1,430.00	$1,870.00	$1,475.00	$1,300.00	$1,210.00
55	$1,260.16	$1,430.00	$1,500.00	$1,948.50	$1,500.00	$1,375.00	$1,210.00
60	$1,300.00	$1,470.00	$1,540.00	$1,980.00	$1,515.50	$1,400.00	$1,210.00
65	$1,300.00	$1,500.00	$1,600.00	$2,000.00	$1,515.50	$1,430.00	$1,320.00
70	$1,320.00	$1,519.79	$1,700.00	$2,056.75	$1,530.00	$1,498.18	$1,320.00
75	$1,350.00	$1,600.00	$1,750.00	$2,130.00	$1,540.00	$1,516.00	$1,320.00
80	$1,400.00	$1,640.00	$1,780.00	$2,200.00	$1,650.00	$1,632.41	$1,400.00
85	$1,500.00	$1,700.00	$2,000.00	$2,200.00	$1,725.00	$1,632.41	$1,950.00
90	$1,540.00	$1,732.00	$2,078.40	$2,340.00	$2,065.75	$1,800.00	$1,970.00
95	$1,650.00	$2,140.00	$2,100.00	$2,420.00	$2,260.00	$1,980.00	$1,990.00
Maximum	$2,165.00	$2,420.00	$2,640.00	$3,464.00	$2,500.00	$2,598.00	$2,200.00

Table 60: Monthly Rate Percentiles by Region - Licensed Family Home: Full-Time School Age

Percentile	**Region 1**	**Region 2**	**Region 3**	**Region 4**	**Region 5**	**Region 6**	**Spokane**
Minimum	$500.00	$440.00	$550.00	$600.00	$649.50	$541.25	$500.00
5	$800.00	$649.50	$692.80	$700.00	$649.50	$700.00	$500.00
10	$880.00	$660.00	$750.00	$700.00	$800.00	$779.40	$500.00
15	$900.00	$750.00	$800.00	$800.00	$822.70	$800.00	$710.00
20	$950.00	$770.00	$900.00	$800.00	$950.00	$880.00	$900.00
25	$1,000.00	$880.00	$1,082.50	$850.00	$1,000.00	$900.00	$900.00
30	$1,200.00	$887.48	$1,100.00	$1,000.00	$1,150.00	$900.00	$900.00
35	$1,200.00	$924.00	$1,299.00	$1,100.00	$1,200.00	$900.00	$900.00
40	$1,300.00	$950.00	$1,300.00	$1,299.00	$1,200.00	$950.00	$974.25
45	$1,300.00	$1,000.00	$1,400.00	$1,400.00	$1,300.00	$100.00	$974.25
50	$1,320.00	$1,000.00	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$1,300.00	$1,012.00	$974.25
55	$1,350.00	$1,100.00	$1,500.00	$1,500.00	$1,300.00	$1,190.75	$1,000.00
60	$1,350.00	$1,122.00	$1,500.00	$1,533.00	$1,320.00	$1,200.00	$1,100.00
65	$1,350.00	$1,210.00	$1,515.00	$1,650.00	$1,320.00	$1,200.00	$1,100.00
70	$1,400.00	$1,232.00	$1,732.00	$1,709.00	$1,400.00	$1,200.00	$1,155.00
75	$1,400.00	$1,320.00	$1,750.00	$1,755.00	$1,500.00	$1,300.00	$1,200.00
80	$1,430.00	$1,400.00	$2,000.00	$1,800.00	$1,500.00	$1,400.00	$1,200.00
85	$1,476.53	$1,600.00	$2,078.40	$1,900.00	$1,550.00	$1,400.00	$1,210.00
90	$1,500.00	$1,650.00	$2,251.60	$2,000.00	$1,600.00	$1,420.00	$1,210.00
95	$1,650.00	$1,809.00	$3,117.60	$2,600.00	$1,700.00	$1,516.00	$1,850.00
Maximum	$2,090.00	$2,070.00	$3,247.50	$3,464.00	$2,165.00	$2,640.00	$1,930.00

Appendix 2:

Full Time vs Part Time Analysis

Comparing full-time and part-time rates is difficult because part-time care does not follow one standard schedule or pricing structure. Because of this, part-time enrollment was not included in the subsidy rate analysis, consistent with prior studies. The analysis below was completed to better understand the relationship between part-time and full-time care. This work helps to better understand how providers adjust their services to meet community needs.

To evaluate part-time and full-time rates, providers were asked to provide the full-time and part-time rates for each age group separately. Some providers view part-time as half a day (equivalent to 4 hours, whether that's after lunch, after school, before school or work, etc.), while other providers view part-time care as half a week (reflected as non-school days up to four days a week). Future iterations of this survey recommend asking providers to specify their metric for part-time care. To compare full-time and part-time care, it was necessary that providers answer both questions. This unfortunately significantly narrowed the available responses for analysis. All data was converted into a monthly rate to compare the differences in rates based on care.

The table below compares part-time to full-time rates for infant care in Licensed Family Homes. Providers that charge the same, or more, for part-time care likely define part-time as fewer days per week rather than fewer hours overall. Most providers reported part-time rates that were between half of their full-time rate and equal to their full-time rate. This suggests that part-time rates do not reflect exactly half the cost of full-time care.

The inefficiencies related to part-time care such as juggling staffing or inconsistent schedules may contribute to higher pricing for part-time care. However, within the survey data for this report there is a pattern of lower ratios, potentially indicating that part-time is a smaller amount of time for these providers. This pattern can be observed across all age groups for Licensed Family Homes and Licensed Child Care Centers. The tables for the infant age group are included below. However, without further data on what providers consider full-time, it is difficult to confirm these ratios. Sharp deviations from the ratios included in the last report may also be a result of differing response rates among participants.

Table 61: Licensed Family Home Infant Ratio of Part Time to Full Time Monthly Rates

Infant PT to FT Ratio	Providers	Percentage of Providers
0.50 or less	206	26.65%
0.51-0.75	307	39.72%
0.76-0.99	119	15.39%
1	122	15.78%
>1	19	2.46%
Total	773	100.00%

Table 62: Child Care Centers Infant Ratio of Part Time to Full Time Monthly Rates

Infant PT to FT Ratio	Providers	Percentage of Providers
0.50 or less	52	13.54%
0.51-0.75	181	47.14%
0.76-0.99	106	27.60%
1	29	7.55%
>1	16	4.17%
Total	384	100.00%

Appendix 3: Study Methodology and Reliability

Market Rate Methodology

The methodology of the 2026 Market Rate Survey was consistent with the 2024 report:

- Reported rates were weighted by full-time enrollment to determine percentiles.
- Percentiles used subsidy regions rather than licensing regions.
- In comparing subsidy base rates to market rate percentiles, tiered reimbursement for participation in Early Achievers was excluded.

The 85th percentile shown in this report indicates that the private-pay rates of 85% of child care slots in a region are less than or equal to that rate. In other words, a rate listed as the 85th percentile for center-based toddler care in Spokane means that an estimated 85% of families with toddlers in Spokane licensed centers pay the amount listed for the 85th percentile, or less. The weighting is based on full-time enrollment, not on full-time equivalent (FTE). Full-time equivalent is the sum of full-time plus half of part-time. This is consistent with the 2024 report, which transitioned to this methodology.

This report also includes the 75th percentile, as required by SHB 2689, 2026.[19] This bill requires utilizing the 75th percentile to set base rates, effective July 1, 2027, rather than the 85th percentile.

Cost of Quality Child Care Methodology

The methodology of the Cost of Quality Child Care is largely consistent with the methodology used for the Child Care Collaborative Task Force Cost of Quality Child Care Report and P5FS' calculator, with the following exceptions.

The original calculator's methodology produced the same cost of care for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children for Licensed Family Homes. For this study, we used the following scenarios to determine costs specific to each age group:

- To determine cost of care for infants, we assume two infants, two toddlers, and two preschool age children.
- To determine cost of care for toddlers, we assume eight toddlers.
- To determine cost of care for preschoolers, we assume 10 preschoolers

The original Cost Model further accounts for the part-time and/or seasonal nature of school-age care by reducing costs by 40% for these children, annually. This is unsuitable for

[19] 2689-S.SL.pdf

comparison to full-day subsidy base rates that characterize Washington's subsidy programs, and the half-day rates it derives from them. To account for this and produce more meaningful and comparable costs for these children, we use separate school-age scenarios for both provider types to model 100% of their costs. As in the original calculator, for non-personnel costs we used most categories from the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC). However, whereas the original calculator used PCQC data and values supplied by provider focus groups for critical pieces like mortgage, rent, and utility costs, we used data gathered from this survey.

Statistical Validity of the Study Survey

While the survey did not meet the target 50-65% response rate, each region had a response rate between 26.7 to 59.8%. See the table below for response rates by region and provider type.

Table 63: Response Rate by Region or Provider Type

Region or Provider Type	**Response Rate**
Region 1	45.52%
Region 2	38.22%
Region 3	48.95%
Region 4	26.66%
Region 5	46.17%
Region 6	57.86%
Spokane	59.83%
Statewide	38.52%
Licensed Child Care Center	65.75%
Licensed Family Home	29.03%

CEBR offered participants a $50 Amazon gift card to thank them for completing the survey. Offering an incentive can create the possibility of response bias, meaning child care providers with greater financial need may have been more likely to participate. At the same time, providers with limited time and staff capacity may have been less likely to complete the survey. During follow-up reminder calls, many providers said they did **not** participate because they were too busy. Based on this, we do not believe the incentive created a significant bias.

After the gift card incentive was shared on social media, including a Facebook post on Oct. 28, 2026, CEBR received a large number of suspicious responses. To address this, CEBR developed a stringent protocol (i.e., screening tool and review process) to identify potentially fraudulent responses. This included checking provider IDs, reviewing center and provider names, and

identifying duplicate or unusual response patterns. CEBR manually reviewed the dataset to remove suspicious responses and keep verified survey data.

CEBR also worked to make the survey accessible and equitable by offering it in English, Spanish, and Somali. However, translation errors affected the Spanish and Somali versions during the first four weeks of the survey period. Once the issue was identified, the translations were corrected and the affected providers were contacted and offered an additional gift card to complete the updated survey. Even with these efforts, some providers may still have faced language or accessibility barriers that affected participation.

Provider Data Collection

Outreach Efforts

The survey was distributed in English, Somali, and Spanish. Data collection occurred from Oct. 1 through Dec. 12, 2025. Outreach included emails, mailings, DCYF communication strategy efforts, and phone calls. An outline of the outreach efforts is included below:

- Emailed invite to survey on Oct. 1, 2025, at 7:30 a.m.
- Letters mailed week of Oct. 7, 2025.
- CEBR employees began calling Oct. 14, 2025. Calling continued until end of survey.
- Reminder email sent to non-respondents on Oct. 17, 2025, at 7:30 a.m.
- Reminder postcard mailed week of Oct. 21, 2025.
- Reminder email sent to non-respondents on Nov. 1, 2025, at 7:30 a.m.
- Second postcard mailed week of Nov. 7, 2025.
- Survey closed on Dec. 15, 2025.

The $50 gift card incentive helped increase survey participation. DCYF also helped support the survey by sending survey reminder emails to providers through its GovDelivery system before the survey launched in late September, and again in late November.

Sampling Protocols

The provider contacts were provided by DCYF and last updated Sept. 9, 2025. DCYF provided contact information for all licensed child care providers in Washington. The provider contact list was last updated on Sept. 9, 2025. Using this information, CEBR invited all licensed providers statewide to participate in the survey and regularly conducted outreach to encourage responses. Providers were removed from the contact list once they completed the survey.

Survey Instrument

The survey was created and distributed using Qualtrics, an online survey tool. It asked providers about business operating costs, including staff salaries and benefits, rent, mortgage, utilities, transportation, field trips, and other operational activities. The survey also collected information about provider type, location, enrollment, and rates by age group. Questions included multiple choice, check-all that-apply, and fill-in-the-blank.

The survey grouped questions into different sections based on the type of provider responding. Some questions only appeared depending on how the respondent answered earlier questions. All respondents were asked "which of these best describes your program," including:

- Licensed Child Care Center;
- Licensed Family Home;
- School Age Only child care center; and
- Outdoor Nature-Based programs.

Public school-based programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, and ECEAP-only programs were not included in the study because they do not serve private-paying families or do not have certain fixed costs that are examined in the survey. After selecting their program type, providers were shown survey questions specific to their type of child care programs.

Data Cleaning Process

The survey data was reviewed and cleaned by removing duplicate responses and responses that did not contain enough usable information, as described below. To make it easier for providers to complete the survey, private-pay rates and salaries could be entered as hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly amounts based on how providers bill families. To compare the data consistently, all responses were converted into the same units using standard assumptions:

- 12 months in a year
- 52 weeks in a year
- 4.33 weeks in a month
- 22 days in a month
- 40 hours in a week[20]

[20] Formulas – Weekly: (weekly rate * 52 weeks/year) / (12 months/year) = monthly rate
Daily: (daily rate * 22 days/month) = monthly rate
Hourly: (hourly rate * 40 hours/week * 52 weeks/year) / (12 months/year) = monthly rate

Employee pay information was converted into hourly wage rates using the above assumptions and the formulas in the footnote below. For private-pay child care rates were converted into monthly amounts because monthly rates were the most commonly reported format. If a provider has multiple rates for one age group, the rates were averaged.

Responses and Rate Diversity

Of the 6,556 providers contacted, 2,536 child care providers completed and submitted survey responses during the two-and-a-half-month survey period. This is an overall response rate of **38.68%**.

The actual level of participation was higher than the response rate suggests for several reasons:

- Some providers with multiple locations submitted one survey covering multiple program or site locations.
- The contact list provided by DCYF included some programs that were not eligible for the survey, such as public school-based programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, or ECEAP-only programs.

Because of this, the total number of eligible providers was likely less than the total contact list used to calculate the response rate.

This survey achieved a higher response rate than the 2024 survey and produced statistically reliable results. The survey data has a margin of sampling error of 1.53% at a 95% confidence level. This matters because it means the survey results are statistically reliable and are likely to closely reflect the experiences and conditions of child care providers across Washington.

There were several challenges affecting data collection:

- Many child care providers are experiencing staffing shortages and rising cost of living operating costs.
- Some provider expressed frustration with current child care environment.
- The survey was estimated to take 20 minutes to complete, which may have discouraged participation.
- Some providers found questions about rates difficult and frustrating to answer if they had unique rate structures or served limited age groups.
- Some outreach efforts reached providers that were not eligible to participant in the survey.

Despite these challenges, survey participation and response rates were strong. On average, respondents completed 92% of the survey questions. Complete responses were especially

valuable because they provided more consistent information across a range of topics and ensured more equitable data across all topics.

Table 64: Respondents by Provider Types

Provider Type	Respondents	Total Providers	Response Rate	Margin of Error at 95% Confidence Interval	Completed Surveys	Percent Completed
Licensed Child Care Center	1175	1787	65.75%	+/- 1.67%	1061	90%
Licensed Family Homes	1195	4117	29.03%	+/- 2.39%	852	71%
School-Age Only Program	155	625	24.8%	+/- 6.88%	153	98%

Survey response rates and data reliability varied by region. In general, higher response rates lead to more reliable results. However, a smaller population requires a higher share of responses to maintain a low margin of error and strong statistical confidence.

Licensed Child Care Centers had higher response rates than Licensed Family Homes, with some regional response rates reaching 50%. Providers were assigned to the appropriate DCYF Region based upon their reported zip codes. Some providers in the original contact list had missing, unclear, or out-of-state addresses. This was often because some child care businesses operate in multiple states and are headquartered outside of Washington. The table below compares survey responses by provider type and region to the total provider population statewide.

Table 65: Respondents vs Total Provider Population by DCYF Region

Region	Licensed Child Care Center	Licensed Family Home	School-Age Only Program
Region 1	51	150	4
Region 1 population	68	371	6
Region 2	91	195	12
Region 2 population	127	599	24
Region 3	264	206	44
Region 3 population	297	592	101
Region 4	372	339	28
Region 4 population	663	1874	132
Region 5	126	126	13
Region 5 population	203	284	57
Region 6	162	151	18
Region 6 population	204	286	57
Spokane	109	28	23
Spokane population	136	65	27

The table below shows the language used by respondents who took the survey based upon the translated survey versions that were available. This may not reflect all languages, as other languages spoken by providers, as additional languages, including Arabic and Russian were identified during outreach calls with providers.

Table 66: Respondents by Survey Language[21]

Respondents	English	Spanish	Somali
# of Providers	3270	783	262
# of Responses	2294	245	1
Child Care Center	1135	41	0
Licensed Family Home	991	203	1
School Age	154	1	0
Percentage of Providers	72%	17%	5.80%
Percentage of Respondents	90%	10%	0.04%

[21] Of the contact list provided by DCYF, only 4,547 providers had a listed Primary Language. As a result, this table is representative of the providers with a known primary language and does not include the remaining providers.

The table below shows demographic information for survey participants. These questions were asked at the end of the survey because asking personal questions at the beginning often reduces response rates. Answering these questions was voluntary, and the responses reflect only the individual who completed the survey.

Table 67: Response Rate by Ethnicity

Provider Type	**# of Responses**	**Child Care Center**	**Licensed Family Home**	**School-Age**
Alaska Native/Native American	20	7	13	0
Asian	81	20	61	1
Black/African American	165	45	119	14
Hispanic/Latino/Latinx	303	61	240	9
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	11	6	5	0
North African/Middle Eastern	24	2	22	0
Two or More Races	30	12	18	1
White	1207	870	328	100
Other	25	7	18	0
Don't Know or Prefer Not to Say	48	22	26	1