



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES

Office for Children & Families

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2023

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Child Care Gap for Young Children Forecast to Widen by 2035

Study Finds Challenging Business Climate for Child Care Providers

Frederick, Md. – The child care gap for young children is projected to widen over the next 10 years, at the same time that the business climate for child care providers continues to be challenging, according to preliminary findings from the Frederick County Child Care Market Study. The study led by the Frederick County Office for Children and Families is being conducted by Public Policy Associates and Solomon Evaluation.

The population of young children in Frederick County will increase through 2035, while child care slots decline. The decline is primarily among home-based child care providers, continuing a pre-pandemic trend.

“The greater impact is on families with infants because over 50% of the licensed infant slots are in home-based child care settings. The decline also disproportionately affects different parts of the county. For example 30% of child care slots in the northern part of the county are home-based, but just 17% in the southeastern part” said Shira Solomon, principal of Solomon Evaluation.

Child care businesses are vital for other businesses to have and retain their workforce. But child care providers report a very challenging business climate, according to the Study.

“The pressure on child care business – many of which are very small – is enormous. Thirty-five percent of the providers who responded to the survey said their businesses are not financially stable,” said Shelly Toms, director of the Office for Children and Families.

High quality child care contributes to building healthy brains in young children and prepares them for kindergarten. Formal child care is licensed and required to meet certain staffing and other quality requirements.

“Our analysis has shown that formal care prior to kindergarten can make a big difference in readiness for all children but especially for English Learners and Hispanic children,” said Rebecca Frausel, Ph.D., senior research associate at Public Policy Associates.

The study will identify child care provider and family needs and inform the County on ways to look at innovative strategies to sustain a strong child care system and improve child care access. The study is funded by an American Rescue Plan Act grant. For more information about the project and information on Community Information and Input Sessions scheduled for November 15 for families and December 6 for businesses and employers, see www.publicpolicy.com/FrederickCoStudy.

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