



News Release

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*Resending to correct the number of participants.

Study Finds Lack of Access to Affordable Quality Childcare Impacts County's Economy, Children's Development

Northern, Southeastern Areas Face Critical Shortage of Slots

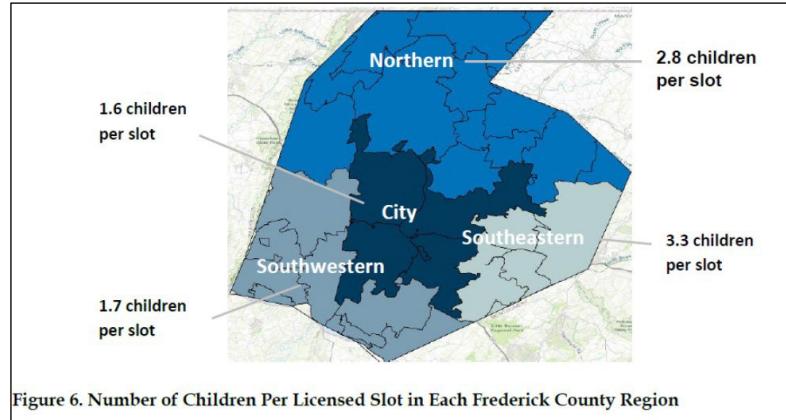
FREDERICK, Md. – For Frederick County's economy to thrive, families must be able to find and afford reliable, high-quality childcare. That is one of the findings of a market [study](#) recently conducted for the Division of Family Services. Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater announced the findings today.

"Childcare affects families' job options, their finances, and children's development," Executive Fitzwater said. "It is vitally important for our economy and our future that we find solutions so everyone in our community can thrive and reach their full potential."

Through its Office for Children and Families, the Division of Family Services commissioned the study to identify strategic steps Frederick County Government can take to help. Consultants Public Policy Associates and Solomon Evaluations conducted research from February 2023 to February 2024.

Key findings of the study include:

- **Demand outstrips supply.** The number of licensed childcare slots in Frederick County is not keeping pace with the need. The northern and southeastern parts of the county are experiencing crisis-level childcare shortages. Countywide, three out of four providers reported a six-month waitlist.
- **Providers face challenges.** Childcare providers struggle with licensing regulations, staffing, and other business challenges that make it difficult to meet the demand. The number of home-based providers has been declining, making it increasingly difficult for families to access affordable, licensed childcare for infants and toddlers.
- **The social impacts are real.**
 - Lost wages and career development: Frederick County's families miss out on \$1 million a year in lost wages due to childcare problems. Women, in particular, lose out on career development. In Maryland, women are returning to the post-pandemic workforce at half the national rate, with childcare being one of the biggest reasons.



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- Children's development: When they arrive at kindergarten, children are not ready to learn. Latino English learners and low-income students show the biggest boost in readiness from formal childcare.
- **Investment pays dividends.** The study found that after recouping expenses, the county is likely to see an additional \$3-\$4 in economic benefits for every dollar invested in improving families' access to quality child care.

More than 1,600 parents and childcare providers in Frederick County participated in the study, offering feedback through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and community input sessions. Additionally, data was collected from federal, state and county agencies. The study, which is available online, was paid for from Frederick County's American Rescue Plan Act funding. It was supported by Federal Award number SLFRP16623, awarded to the county by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The next step is to gather community input on how to move forward. A survey will be available as of April 1, there will be a survey available [online](#) at PublicInput.com/childcareforfrederickcounty. An in-person meeting for families and childcare providers is scheduled for Saturday, April 20, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at the Family Partnership office, located at 8420 Gas House Pike, Suite EE, in Frederick.

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