

Child Care in Mecklenburg County

www.earlyyearsnc.org
919.967.3272

Did you know that...

- approximately **59,633** children under six in the county live in families where their sole parent or both parents are working? The need for child care is critical to the economic viability of these families.

- the county received and spent **$55,546,150** in federal and state funds (not including Smart Start) to help parents pay for child care in fiscal year 2024? In December, the county served **5,342** different children with child care subsidy and had eligible children on the waiting list for subsidy.

- Mecklenburg County has **533** licensed child care programs? Of these, **430** are centers and **103** are family child care homes. Of all the licensed programs in the county, **77%** of the centers and **64%** of homes have a 4 or 5 star rating. These businesses employ **4,671** people directly, and also contribute to the economy through purchases of goods and services provided by other businesses in their communities and state.

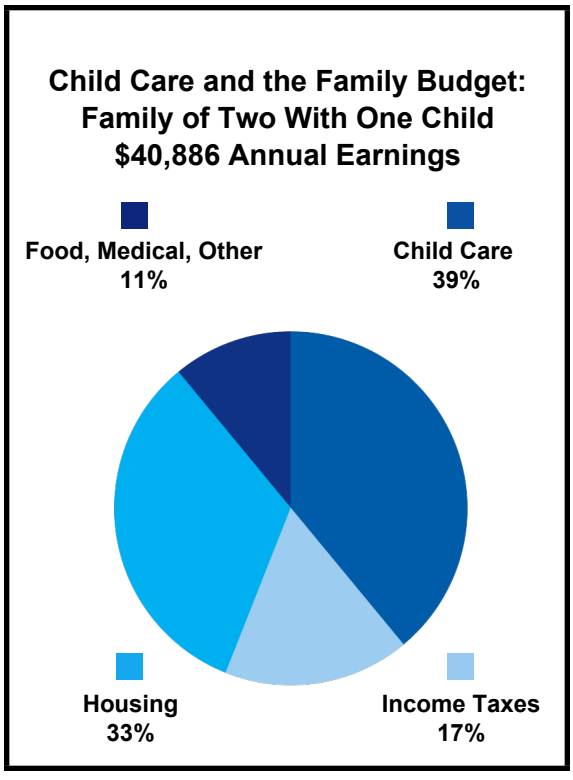
- there are **20,967** birth to five year old and **5,072** school-age children currently enrolled in these child care programs.

- among birth to five year old children enrolled in centers in Mecklenburg County, **70%** are in 4 or 5 star licensed centers. Among birth to five year old children enrolled in homes in Mecklenburg County, **68%** are in 4-5 star licensed homes.

- **255** teachers, directors and family child care providers living in Mecklenburg County participated in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project in fiscal year 2024 with **101** child care programs supporting their employees returning to school through this scholarship program?

- using federal guidelines for setting subsidy payment rates and data from fiscal year 2018 market rate study, the 4-star center market rate for two year olds in Mecklenburg County is **$1345** per month?

- most families in Mecklenburg County cannot afford the full cost of child care? Low-income families and families with more than one child have to pay a high percentage of their income for care. A single mother with one child earning 40885 or less per year can receive child care subsidy as funds are available. If funds are unavailable or if this parent's earnings exceed the income eligibility limit, a parent would pay **39%** of her gross income (see chart) for child care offered at the county rate. Little is left in the family's budget for food, medical, clothing, travel or other basic living expenses. Due to the high cost of child care, parents often make difficult choices. Some may be forced to seek TANF. Others may seek cheaper, often inadequate child care or leave their children unattended.



While considering the data on this factsheet, please note that many of these data points may differ significantly from previous months or years. This may be due to the impacts of COVID-19 on both the information reported and the data collection process.

© 2025 Early Years. Figures derived using the most recent available data from Early Years, Internal Revenue Service, N.C. Budget and Tax Center, N.C. Division of Child Development and Early Education and N.C. State Data Center and U.S. Census Bureau.

Updated January 2025