

Early Care and Education Services Data Dashboard Methodology

thread contracted with McKinley Research Group, formerly McDowell Group, to analyze and present data on the need for and availability of early care and education (ECE) services for Alaska children from birth through 5 years of age. This dashboard describes the status of early care and education in Alaska through the following indicators.

- Demand for early care and education services
- Supply of early care and education services
- Affordability of care
- School readiness

The sources for each data point in the dashboard are described below, along with notes about methodology where applicable. Data included in this dashboard was selected according to relevance, quality, and availability over time.

Early Care and Education Indicators - Sources and Notes

Indicator	Source	Notes
Population of Children Under 6 Years of Age		
Population	Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (2024)	Assumes equal distribution of children in each age group.
Supply and Demand for Early Care and Education Services		
Children potentially in need of ECE services	American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019-2023)	Children who live in households in which all available parent/caregivers are in the workforce.
Not in Need – Children typically not in need of ECE services	American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019-2023)	Children who live with at least one parent/caregiver who is not in the workforce.
Regulated ECE capacity	Alaska Department of Health (2025), Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (2025), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2025), Department of Defense (2023)	This estimate includes capacity or enrollment, depending on data availability, for licensed centers, group homes, and homes; approved relatives and in-home care; Early Head Start/Head Start; tribally-approved; and public pre-elementary programs. Approved relatives data does not indicate age of children (up to 12 years of age may be in approved relative care). Children in military care is based on data received through special requests. Note: capacity does not necessarily equate with enrollment or availability. For example, facilities may not be at capacity, or one child may be enrolled in more than one spot.

Indicator	Source	Notes
Need beyond regulated capacity	American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019-2023), Alaska Department of Health (2025), Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (2025), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2025), Department of Defense (2023)	This estimate subtracts the number of children who live in households in which all available parent/caregivers are in the workforce from the number of slots in regulated capacity.
Employment-constrained adults	McKinley Research Group, <i>Early Care and Education Statewide Survey Findings</i> (2023), American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019-2023)	Survey results reported in this data point show the percentage of households with children under 6 years of age in which a member was not employed, or working less hours than they would otherwise because of a lack of access to child care.
Cost of Licensed Early Care and Education Services		
Average annual cost of licensed ECE services	Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, <i>2020 and 2021 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Reports</i>	Cost data is presented as an average based on full and part-time enrollment for licensed centers, group homes, and homes.
Cost of licensed ECE services as a percentage of household income	Alaska Department of Health and Social Services <i>2023 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report</i> , American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2019-2023)	Presented for all households with own children, married households, single male, and single female households.
School Readiness		
Kindergarten readiness	Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Alaska Developmental Profile (2022-2023)	Percentage of students who consistently demonstrated 11 of the 13 goals.
Learn & Grow		
Learn & Grow enrollment	thread Learn & Grow program (2025)	ECE programs enrolled in Learn & Grow as of May 2025.

ABOUT MCKINLEY RESEARCH GROUP

McKinley Research Group specializes in interpreting complex data for clients and community members in meaningful ways that assist decision-making. Our project team offers years of relevant experience in early care and education sector research and analysis, including economic impact analysis; child care center feasibility studies; community needs assessments; collection, analysis, and reporting of related socioeconomic and community-level indicators; community and stakeholder discussion groups and interviews; evaluation; and community planning processes. McKinley Research Group's mission is to enhance the economic, social, and cultural well-being of our clients and our clients' communities.