



Child Care Market Analysis and Strategic Plan Summary for Knoxville, IA

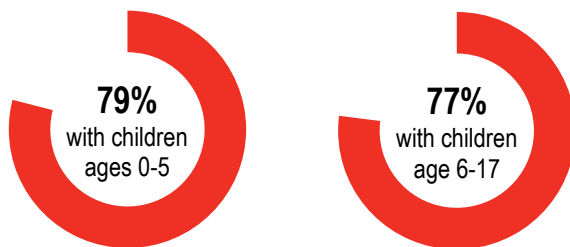
Eight Key Findings

1. Population Ages 0 to 9 is Decreasing

1,598 children ages 0 to 9 living in the Knoxville area in 2000
1,444 children ages 0 to 9 living in the Knoxville area in 2017

2. Knoxville Area Parents are in the Labor Force and Need Child Care

Knoxville Area Families with All Parents in the Labor Force



3. Parents Prefer Regulated Child Care Settings

According to a 2018 child care needs survey conducted by First Children’s Finance, Knoxville area parents that would use “outside” child care prefer DHS regulated settings. Overall, 40% would prefer a DHS licensed center and 13% prefer a DHS regulated home, while 31% prefer themselves or their spouse/partner care for their children.

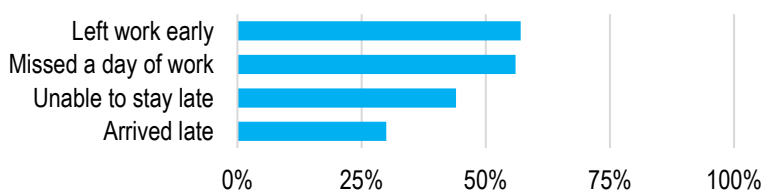
4. Median Family Incomes are Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold

The median annual income for families in the Knoxville area is \$67,624, and the average family size is 2.93, according to the US Census Bureau. To be eligible for the Iowa Child Care Assistance program under the 2019 eligibility criteria, a family of 3 must have an annual household income below \$30,928.

5. Child Care is Affecting the Labor Force

Parents in the Knoxville area that participated in the 2018 child care needs survey indicated they had their jobs affected because of child care challenges during the prior 12 months. Of those whose jobs were affected, 57% left work early, 56% missed a day of work, 44% were unable to stay late, and 30% arrived late.

Labor Force Affects Due to Child Care Challenges



About this Analysis

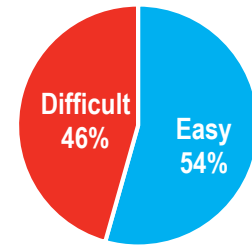
For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they make. According to longitudinal research, the child care environment they choose will have lasting effects on their child. When there are not enough child care spaces in a community, finding *any* care is a challenge; and options for *quality* child care that meets the needs and preferences of families can be even more challenging.

In 2018, a study was commissioned by Marion County Development Commission and community partners to help better understand the supply and demand for child care across Marion County, and to gain insight to any child care challenges experienced by the residents and workforce. This document is a summary of the full *Child Care Gap Analysis and Strategic Plan for Marion County* report, which was completed in March 2019. For a copy of the full report contact Carla at carla@redrockarea.com.

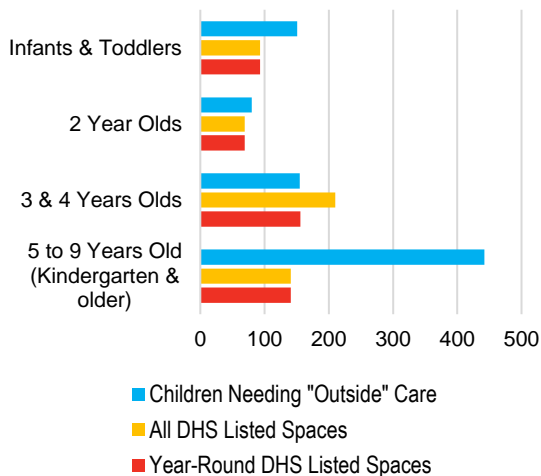
To better identify child care gaps and needs, the county was divided into five markets. The Knoxville market reflects the townships of Clay, Knoxville, and Washington, including the communities of Knoxville and Harvey.

6. Finding Child Care is Difficult

The child care needs survey conducted in conjunction with this study, indicates that 46% of Knoxville area parents found it difficult to find child care. Obstacles named by Knoxville parents included lack of openings within existing programs, child care costs, and providers not being open early enough for their work schedule.



Children Needing "Outside" Care vs. DHS Listed Spaces in Knoxville



7. Marion County's Child Care Supply is Declining

According to Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral data, as of July 2018 there were 1,438 spaces within DHS Licensed Child Care Centers, Department of Education Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes in Marion County. This is down from 1,512 spaces reported in July 2013.

8. Shortage of Child Care Spaces

There are 1,235 children ages 0 to 9 in the Knoxville area that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences, First Children's Finance estimates 828 children need some type of "outside" child care. With only 513 spaces, (enough to serve 62%), there is a gap of 315 spaces. There is a gap among each age group except three- and four-year-olds which has a surplus due to preschool spaces. If the part-time school-year only preschool spaces are removed, the gap grows to 369.

Knoxville Child Care Initiatives

The following goal and projects were identified through input and interactions at a series of strategic planning sessions, in which participants were encouraged to develop ideas about how to address the child care challenges in Knoxville.

Goal: Share and Develop resources that will provide access to quality child care for Knoxville families.

Project One: Explore ways the Knoxville Chamber and its members can support families who need child care.

- The Chamber will establish a new webpage with child care information for parents.
- A local child care scholarship fund will be explored to assist those that do not qualify for DHS tuition assistance.

Project Two: Provide resources and educational opportunities related to child care to local employers, to be shared with their workforce.

- The Chamber will encourage employers to provide local child care information with their employees.
- The Chamber will coordinate educational opportunities for employers to learn about child care related benefits for their employees.

Project Three: Engage local child care providers with the Chamber and the community.

- The Chamber will host opportunities for local child care providers to meet and establish a peer network.
- Child Care will be incorporated as a topic for Chamber Lunch and Learn or other local meetings.

This project was made possible through funding received from the Marion County Development Commission, PACE Alliance, Pella Corporation and Weiler Corporation.

First Children's Finance, a national nonprofit organization, believes access to quality early care and education is essential for all communities, and that early care and education is the foundation of individual success and the engine of regional economic growth. First Children's Finance provides financing, training and business-development assistance to child care businesses. First Children's Finance also provides consulting and planning assistance to government agencies, intermediaries and regional child care organizations.

For more information on these and other topics, contact Heidi Schlueter, Regional Director Heidi@FirstChildrensFinance.org.