

Assessing Child Care Access:



Measuring Supply, Demand, Quality, and Shortages in the District of Columbia



Research and Analysis Conducted
by Reinvestment Fund

Commissioned by the
Bainum Family Foundation

January 2024



Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
INTRODUCTION	6
ASSESSING CHILD CARE ACCESS IN D.C.: ABOUT THIS REPORT	8
KEY FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS	11
DEMAND FOR CHILD CARE IN D.C.	13
ECE PROGRAMS IN D.C.	18
QUALITY PROGRAMS	22
CAPACITY BY AGE GROUP	25
MEASURING CHILD CARE SHORTAGES	27
DEVELOPING INVESTMENT AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES	32
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	36
APPENDIX A: SUPPLY DATA SOURCES	38
APPENDIX B: WEVISION EARLYED: THE BASICS	39
ENDNOTES	41




Acknowledgments

The Bainum Family Foundation commissioned Reinvestment Fund to conduct this analysis and is grateful to the Reinvestment Fund research team — Ira Goldstein, Jacob L. Rosch, Maria Bernal, and Emily Dowdall — as well as to all who contributed to writing, reviewing, and producing the report. We also extend our sincere appreciation to our partners and other community stakeholders, including:

- Members of the Under 3 DC Coalition
- Ruqiyah Anbar-Shaheen, Director of Early Childhood, DC Action
- Audrey Kasselmann, Policy Analyst, DC Action
- Rachel Metz, Research and Data Manager, DC Action
- BB Otero, President, Otero Strategy Group

Their thoughtfulness and expertise have guided this research project in a way that uniquely reflects the District of Columbia and has produced findings that will have lasting benefit for residents of the District, including young children and their families.







Introduction

Another Important Step Toward the Ideal Child Care System

Throughout its 55-year history, the Bainum Family Foundation has supported the well-being of children and families. Over the past decade, we have shifted our focus to early childhood, recognizing that a child's first five years establish the foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, and health.

We are committed to creating a society where all children thrive, and we know deeply rooted inequities are the biggest barriers. That's why we turn to our national, state, and local partners — who are experts in their areas and/or are proximate to communities experiencing racial and economic disparities — to guide our investments. Our role is to listen, lean in, and provide the resources they need to create lasting systems change.

This report, "Assessing Child Care Access: Measuring Supply, Demand, Quality, and Shortages in the District of Columbia," was commissioned in response to our early childhood partners in D.C. who wanted to:

- Understand the current supply of and demand for child care in D.C. so that decisions and investments — by early childhood professionals, federal and local governments, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector — can be intentional and thoughtfully targeted for maximum impact
- Reflect on the social and demographic changes that affect families and their child care decisions
- Examine current realities, pivot, and explore new possibilities

The new report follows an initial report, "[Early Learning Supply & Demand in the District of Columbia: Using Data to Identify Critical Gaps](#)," commissioned in 2018 by the foundation and conducted by our partner in this effort, Reinvestment Fund. That study provided the first comprehensive look at what the District has — and what it lacks — in child care capacity and quality across neighborhoods.

Since that moment five years ago, much has changed. The District continues to be a national leader in early childhood investments and innovations. Among other actions, it has passed and funded groundbreaking legislation:

- The Birth-to-Three for All DC Amendment Act of 2018, which created a comprehensive system of supports and services for young children and their families
- The Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, which is designed to narrow the compensation gap between early childhood educators working outside the public school system (where most young children under age 3 are served) and their peers working in public schools
- Expanding the duration and scope of D.C.'s Paid Family Leave program

At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors shifted demographics in the District, introduced new commuting patterns for the labor market, and increased one-time federal investments in child care.

We intend this report to serve as a catalyst that helps move us toward an ideal child care system — one that is more child-centered, effective, and equitable. In this regard, we intentionally introduced new language and framing that challenges outdated mindsets about child care and aligns with our [WeVision EarlyEd](#) initiative. (See Appendix B for more about WeVision EarlyEd.)

I join my Bainum Family Foundation colleagues in thanking the many stakeholders who contributed to this report. We value your continued partnership as we work together to ensure the well-being and success of children and families.

DAVID DANIELS

CEO and President
Bainum Family Foundation



Assessing Child Care Access in D.C.: About This Report

Child care is a critical resource for children and families. Quality environments and experiences help young children reach their fullest potential. A large and growing body of research suggests that quality child care improves the odds of children's future success in many different aspects of life, from academic achievement in grade school to higher earnings and better health outcomes later in life.^{1,2} In addition, most young children also grow up in homes with adults who need to work outside the home, and the economy — both locally and nationally — benefits from the labor and taxes of these adults. For these families, finding safe and reliable child care options for their children can be a precondition to engaging in the workforce or furthering their education.

It is perhaps no surprise that access to quality child care options, which include early childhood education (ECE) programs and/or trusted caregivers, is one of the best investments society can make — producing social returns from improved educational, health, social, and economic outcomes. Quality and stable child care options support the workforce of today and strengthen the workforce of tomorrow. Yet the child care sector is often under-resourced and in crisis. Many families find it difficult to access child care options they need, while many ECE-homes and ECE-centers struggle with low margins, rising operating costs, and persistent staffing shortages. Families cannot afford the true cost of quality child care, and early childhood educators cannot afford to work without compensation that is at least comparable to that of their peers in the K-12 education sector.

In 2018, the Bainum Family Foundation partnered with Reinvestment Fund to commission a [report](#) that studied the supply of and demand for child care, particularly ECE-homes and ECE-centers, across the District of Columbia. Our 2018 report found that the child care crisis made it challenging for families to access quality care and that the District's supply of seats for the youngest children

in these licensed facilities was deeply inadequate.³ This impacted many District families, especially those living in communities that historically have been marginalized.

In response to the findings of the 2018 report and pressure from other sources, four notable improvements were made:

1. **Targeted Funding:** The District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), along with the Bainum Family Foundation, provided funding and resources to increase the number of quality seats in ECE-homes and ECE-centers serving infants and toddlers (ages 0-2) in the District. The foundation invested more than \$20 million in this private-public endeavor.
2. **Aligned Advocacy:** Advocacy organizations in the District, many of which are primarily supported by the Bainum Family Foundation, collaborated initially as the Birth-to-Three Policy Alliance (and now as the Under 3 DC coalition) to increase demand for significant and sustained investments in supports and services for infants and toddlers. The Under 3 DC coalition

Clarifying Our Terms

There are many terms used to describe child care options. This inconsistency in terminology can make it difficult to understand the sector, describe the gaps, and make a case for substantial investments. We use three terms to discuss and assess child care in this report.

CHILD CARE is the umbrella term we use to describe situations in which caregivers (often other than a child’s parents or immediate guardians) are responsible for the care and development of young children from birth to age 5.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAMS are a specific child care option that focuses on supporting and documenting child and program outcomes, typically outside the child’s home. ECE programs’ aims go far beyond keeping children safe while the adults in their families work or attend school. They intentionally support the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of young children through learning facilitated by early childhood educators with industry-recognized credentials and postsecondary degrees.

ECE programs operate under guidelines from professional associations and/or government licensing agencies. ECE programs can be conducted in different settings, and for purposes of this report, we will consistently identify them as ECE-home, ECE-center, and ECE-school (to include both public and private schools) programs. This distinction is particularly relevant in D.C., given that about three-quarters (74%) of 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in public schools.⁴

TRUSTED CAREGIVER is a specific child care option that focuses on supporting the child under the primary direction of the family. Trusted caregivers are sometimes family members or seen as an extension of the family (e.g., a nanny or an au pair). Trusted caregivers typically do not operate under guidelines from professional associations and government licensing agencies. Some families may use a combination of ECE programs and trusted caregivers to support the development of their children.

CHILD CARE LANDSCAPE IN D.C.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs

- ECE-Homes*
- ECE-Centers*
- ECE-Schools (Public and Private)

** OSSE-licensed facilities*

Trusted Caregivers**

- Family Members
- Community Members
- Co-Ops
- Nannies
- Au Pairs

*** Not a focus of this report*

continues to serve as the primary hub for convening and organizing a wide array of child- and family-focused advocacy organizations across the District.

3. **Policy Anchor:** In 2018, the DC Council unanimously passed the Birth-to-Three for All DC Amendment Act. While this groundbreaking act is only partially funded at present, there has been progress on several provisions involving home visiting programs and child care subsidy reimbursement rates. With the Under 3 DC coalition guiding its implementation, the act also paved the way for the DC Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund, which is working toward pay parity for early childhood educators across all settings, starting in 2022 with \$54 million in funding for one-time supplemental compensation of up to \$14,000 per educator.⁵
4. **Paid Family Leave:** D.C. was among the first cities in the nation to adopt universal paid family leave. While the Universal Paid Family Leave Amendment Act was passed in 2016, implementation took place in 2020.

The overall environment and landscape of the child care sector across America have changed substantially over the past five years. The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for the already frail industry and exacerbated an existing staffing shortage across the sector. In response, the federal government provided one-time COVID-19 relief dollars to bolster the child care sector, including ECE-homes and ECE-centers. For example, as part of the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) of 2021, the District received approximately \$38 million in child care stabilization funds to support the child care sector through the pandemic and recovery.⁶ Families with children, young children included, also received much-needed support through the Child Tax Credit.

The Bainum Family Foundation, along with four other foundations, also invested \$1 million in the Child Care Retention and Reopening Fund as a rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund, launched in July 2020, initially provided four months of sustained support for 115 ECE-homes and small ECE-centers in the District through cash assistance and technical assistance to implement new health guidelines, retain staff, adjust to price inflation, and purchase personal protective equipment.

This report provides an update to our 2018 analysis and describes how supply, demand, quality, and shortages have changed over the past five years. The report describes the families with young children searching for child care and the characteristics of the ECE programs that serve them. As before, our analysis seeks to capture the entire market for full-time child care serving young children from birth through age 4 in ECE-homes, ECE-centers, and ECE-schools.

The report does not focus on the supply of and demand for child care provided by trusted caregivers who are family members or an extension of the family. These trusted caregivers — such as grandparents, other family members, community members, co-ops, nannies, and au pairs — operate under the direct auspices of the family. Unlike ECE-homes, ECE-centers, and ECE-schools, trusted caregivers do not typically operate under guidelines from professional associations and government licensing agencies.

This report also analyzes the populations most impacted by the under-resourced and frail child care sector and offers suggestions about how to prioritize investments in building new supply that can meet the needs of the District's most vulnerable residents in keeping with the goals of local stakeholders.

Key Findings and Takeaways

The 2023 analysis identified several important findings and trends impacting access to quality ECE in D.C.:

- **The District experienced a decline in both supply and demand.** Our estimates suggest that the District's supply of ECE programs is smaller than it was five years ago. The total supply has declined by 7%, while the number of children who could use child care has declined by 14%, driven by population trends and less commuting by families into D.C.
- **In the aggregate, the shortages of ECE programs are smaller today than they were in 2018, but challenges remain.** Our previous report found that in 2018, the District had enough capacity for only 65% of children under age 5. Today, we estimate the District has enough capacity to serve 71% of these children. While the overall trend is positive, important access gaps remain, particularly for quality child care, for economically disadvantaged families, and for children who need specialized services such as nontraditional hours and bilingual settings.
- **Despite improvements, infants and toddlers (ages 0–2) remain especially underserved.** Disaggregating the District's supply by age shows that the shortage of ECE programs in the District is really a shortage of infant and toddler seats. Despite improvements since 2018, we estimate that there are enough seats for only 41% of the infants and toddlers in D.C., a 48% increase in seats since 2018.
- **Every ward in D.C. is experiencing shortages, but some are experiencing more than others.** By examining supply and demand at a precise geographic level, we can see that every one of D.C.'s eight wards has at least some areas with child care shortages. While the extent of these shortages varies, access to quality child care is a challenge for families across the District.
- **Only about one-third of the District's programs meet our definition of quality.** Working with local stakeholders, we identified three different markers of quality: earning "High-Quality" and "Quality" ratings from OSSE's "Capital Quality" rating system, participating in the federal Head Start or Early Head Start programs, or holding a national industry-recognized accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). Programs meeting at least one of our criteria had enough capacity to serve just 10,800 children, only a quarter of the children under age 5 living in D.C. (It's important to note that there is no consistent measurement or assessment of ECE quality in public or private schools. Also, some ECE programs may be more suitable and eligible for other quality indicators that were not defined in this report.)
- **Remote work is driving fewer families to seek care near downtown commercial centers.** The share of employees working from home has grown substantially since 2018. While parents who work from home still need child care, where they look for care may change. With fewer workers commuting downtown for jobs every day of the week, we estimated a decline in the demand for care in D.C.'s downtown job centers and an

increase in demand in residential neighborhoods. Still, some demand for care near job centers will remain, particularly near employers in industries that require employees to work onsite (e.g., retail trade, health care, education, hospitality).

- **Some child care usage data remains unknown.** This report did not assess the demand for or use of family, friends, neighbors, nannies, or au pairs as child care alternatives. These trusted (and often unlicensed) caregivers are an important part of the child care ecosystem, offering care that is often more convenient and flexible, more affordable, and culturally aligned with families' needs. The extent to which families choose these options or are compelled to use them because other options are not available is unknown at this time.

Despite improvements, every ward is experiencing shortages. Infants and toddlers remain especially underserved.



Demand for Child Care in D.C.

Understanding the child care sector in the District of Columbia first requires understanding the customers that use or could use child care. Factors such as family composition, economic circumstances, and geographic proximity all play a role in how and where families look for care. This section describes the characteristics of families and children living in D.C., our approach to estimating child care demand, and our estimates of how potential demand for care is distributed across the District.

Characteristics of Children and Families in D.C.

When examining the findings of this study, it's important to consider several economic factors, all of which play into the issue of child care access in D.C.:

- The 2023 median annual household income for District residents (\$104,110) is higher than the national median (\$74,580). However, median household income varies significantly by ward across D.C., ranging from \$47,421 in Ward 8 to \$157,057 in Ward 3.^{7,8}
- The District regularly ranks as one of the most expensive markets in which to live in the United States.⁹
- The cost of child care in the District also is among the highest in the country. According to a survey conducted by Care.com, families in D.C. pay on average \$417 per week, or close to \$22,000 per year, which is 85% higher than the national average.¹⁰

Families that live in D.C. make up the majority of the potential child care customers in the District. Our latest estimates suggest that in 2023, 40,286 child care-age children (children under age 5) lived in the District.¹¹ Infants and toddlers constitute the majority of this population, making up 60% of children under 5.

Figure 1 on Page 14 provides a breakdown of the racial and ethnic composition of children under age 5, which is somewhat different from that of the city as a whole. For example, over half of the child care-age children in D.C. are Black, compared with just 44% of all residents. Language diversity is prevalent as well, with 27.5% of young children having at least one parent who speaks a language other than English at home, suggesting a potential demand for bilingual or multilingual child care services.¹²

Figure 1: Black Children Are Overrepresented in D.C. Population

Demographics of Children Under 5 by Race/Ethnicity and Age

Race/Ethnicity	Children 0-2	Children 3 and 4	City Population
Non-Hispanic Black	53.9%	56.2%	43.9%
Non-Hispanic White	33.5%	30.1%	36.7%
Multiracial and All Other Races	0.4%	2.2%	8.2%
Hispanic	12.3%	11.4%	11.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Many young children in the District live in families that face economic challenges. Among children under age 5, 22% live below the federal poverty line (approximately \$24,800 for a family of three), as shown in Figure 2. Additionally, 8,460 children — 21% of the children under 5 — live in families earning between 100% and 300% of the federal poverty line. This is an important income threshold because families earning less than 300% of the poverty line (approximately \$74,500 for a family of three) are eligible for subsidies to offset the cost of child care.

Figure 2: Forty-Three Percent of D.C. Children Qualify for Subsidies

Population Under 5 by Income-to-Poverty Ratio

Income to Poverty Ratio	Population Under 5	Share of Children
<100%	8,863	22%
100%–300%	8,460	21%
>300%	22,963	57%
Total	40,286	100%

Not every family with young children chooses to use or is able to use ECE-homes, ECE-centers, or ECE-schools. However, our data on characteristics of families in the District suggests that most of D.C.’s families will need some form of child care. The latest American Community Survey estimates that 77% of children under age 5 are in households where every resident parent is employed.¹³ Additionally, approximately 31.5% of children have at least one parent and/or guardian who works nontraditional hours, indicating a demand for flexible options that can accommodate nontraditional work schedules.

In our 2018 analysis of child care supply and demand, we found that a substantial number of families were using child care options near their place of work. Since 2018, the rise of working from home that increased during the pandemic has substantially reshaped the nature of work in D.C. A recent survey found that about 40% of parents with young children in the D.C. metropolitan area work from home for three or more days a week. While parents who work from home likely still need some form of child care, where they look for care may differ.¹⁴

The diverse characteristics of the families seeking child care underscore the unique needs of the region’s children. Building a child care sector that meets the needs of the District’s families will require a multifaceted approach, including affordable and quality ECE programs for families, support for families that prefer trusted caregivers (even when quality ECE programs are accessible and affordable), flexible scheduling to accommodate parents working nontraditional hours, language inclusivity, and consideration of remote work trends.

Estimating Demand for Child Care in D.C.

Our approach to estimating demand begins with the observation that while most families use child care near their home, some families also consider child care near their place of work. This means that children who live in one part of the District may attend a program in a different area of the city or even leave the city for care. Similarly, demand for child care in D.C. will include not only children who live in the District but also some children who live outside D.C. but travel with parents on their way to work. As a result, child care demand tends to be concentrated both in neighborhoods with large numbers of families and in neighborhoods with large job clusters.

This analysis is performed at a block group level, a census-defined geography roughly equivalent to six city blocks. To calculate demand in each block group, we added the number of children under 5 living in each block group and a fraction of the net parental commuters into and out of each block group. To calculate the number of parental commuters, we relied on data from the Census’ Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) and Census micro data. As in 2018, we assumed that only a fraction of parents who commute for work will consider child care near their jobs.¹⁵ For those working in industries eligible for remote work, we further reduced the number of parental commuters by 40% to adjust for the proportion of parents in the D.C. region who work from home at least three days a week.¹⁶

In the end, these adjustments yield a total potential demand for 49,702 child care seats in D.C., including by commuting families from other surrounding states. This year’s figure is approximately 14% lower than our 2018 estimate. Figure 3 compares the 2023 and 2018 demand calculations. The decline in child care demand since 2018 was driven by both a decline in population and a decline in commuting over the past five years.

Figure 3: Overall Demand for Child Care Seats Has Declined 14% Since 2018
Demand Components

	2018	2023	% Change
Population Estimate	43,134	40,286	-6%
Commuter Estimate	14,953	9,416	-37%
Estimated Demand	58,087	49,702	-14%

Geography of Child Care Demand

Two key components influence our estimates of child care demand. Figure 4 showcases where children in the District live. D.C.'s resident child care population is concentrated in the eastern half of the District, stretching from Shepherd Park to Benning Ridge and Douglas. Figure 5 illustrates how commuting impacts demand, highlighting areas many parents commute to (such as Downtown and Southwest) and areas many parents commute from (such as Columbia Heights and Benning Ridge).

Figure 4: Where Children Live Affects Demand
Population of Children Under 5

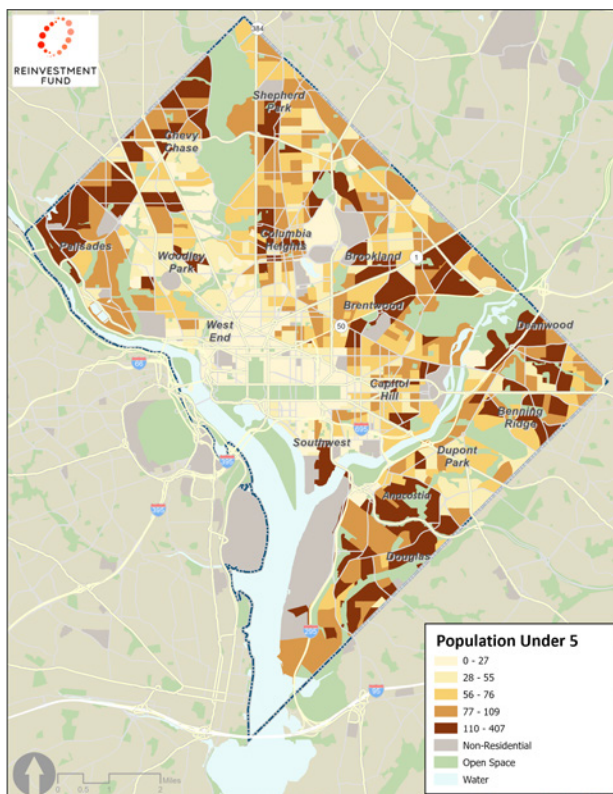
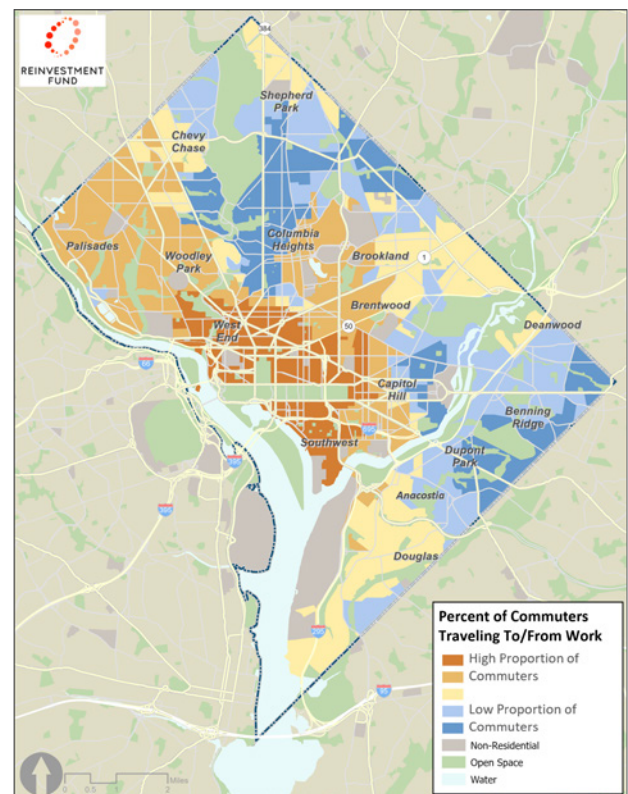


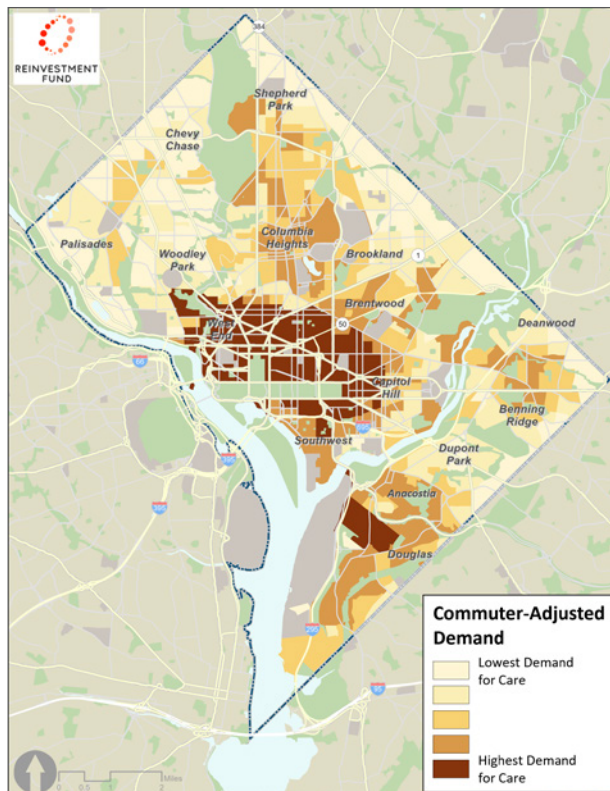
Figure 5: Commuting Also Affects Demand
Commuter Adjustment for Demand



The decline in child care demand since 2018 was driven by both a decline in population and a decline in commuting over the past five years.

Figure 6 illustrates our final demand estimates for each block group. The most substantial child care demand is concentrated in and around Downtown and Anacostia. Additionally, regions with significant resident populations, such as Columbia Heights and Benning Ridge, also demonstrate elevated demand for child care.

Figure 6: Downtown and Anacostia Have the Highest Demand
Commuter-Adjusted Demand



ECE Programs in D.C.

Understanding the location and capacity of ECE programs requires combining multiple data sources. Although most ECE-homes and ECE-centers in D.C. are child development facilities licensed and regulated by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), others are not. ECE programs operated by public or independent schools or ECE-schools, for example, are exempt from OSSE licensing.

To capture the entire supply of ECE programs in the city, we combined data from OSSE, DC Public Schools (DCPS), the DC Public Charter School Board (DCPCS), the Archdiocese of Washington, and other sources to identify the universe of ECE programs operating in the District. To the best of our ability, we filtered our data to exclude part-time programs and programs exclusively serving school-age children (5 or older).¹⁷ In total, we identified just more than 750 full-time ECE programs operating in 2023.

Measuring ECE Program Capacity

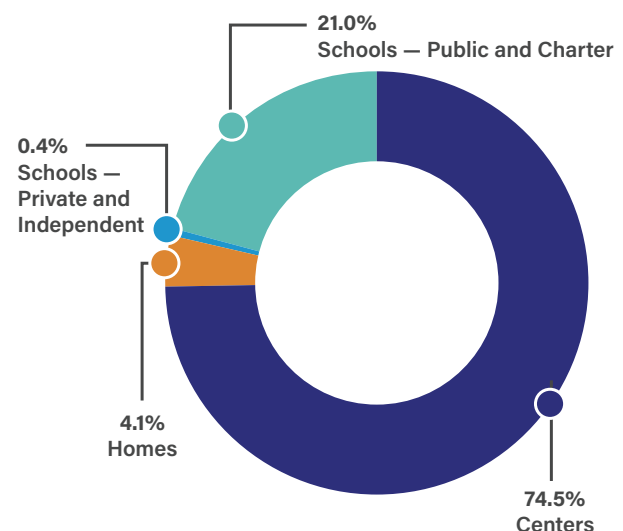
ECE programs vary in size, from small ECE-homes serving four or five children to large ECE-centers with the ability to serve hundreds of children at once. To quantify the availability of seats across the District, we examined each program's licensed capacity — a measure of the maximum number of children a program can serve in the physical space where it operates.¹⁸ For data sources that did not provide licensed capacity figures, we estimated program capacity from reported enrollment or reported employment.

Our estimates show that in 2023, District ECE programs had a total capacity of 35,187 seats. Figure 7 shows the distribution of capacity across programs in ECE-homes, ECE-centers, and ECE-schools. By far the largest proportion of the District's capacity is in ECE-centers (74.5%), followed by ECE-schools operated by DCPS and DCPCS (21%). ECE-homes (4.1%) and ECE-schools operated by independent schools (0.4%) make up the smallest share of District ECE program capacity.

Since our 2018 analysis, the District's overall capacity has declined by about 2,500 seats, or 7%.

The location of ECE programs is especially important for understanding access. Figure 8 shows where ECE program capacity is located across the District. The highest density of ECE program capacity is in the Downtown area. There are also pockets of high capacity around the Columbia Heights neighborhood and in Anacostia.

Figure 7: ECE-Centers Account for 75% of Capacity
Distribution of Capacity Across ECE Programs in D.C.



Program Characteristics

The data we gathered to understand the location of ECE programs also included information about the characteristics of programs. While much of this information is self-reported, it helps provide additional context for our understanding of ECE program accessibility in the District.

ECE-Homes and ECE-Centers Accepting Child Care Subsidy

Like many states, D.C. operates a child care subsidy program that offsets the cost of care for eligible families. In D.C., working families earning less than 300% of the federal poverty rate (approximately \$74,500 for a family of three in 2023) are eligible to participate in the District's subsidy program. However, not all ECE-homes and ECE-centers participate in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program and accept subsidies.

Figure 8: Downtown, Columbia Heights, and Anacostia Have the Highest Share of ECE Programs
Density of Total ECE Program Capacity in D.C.

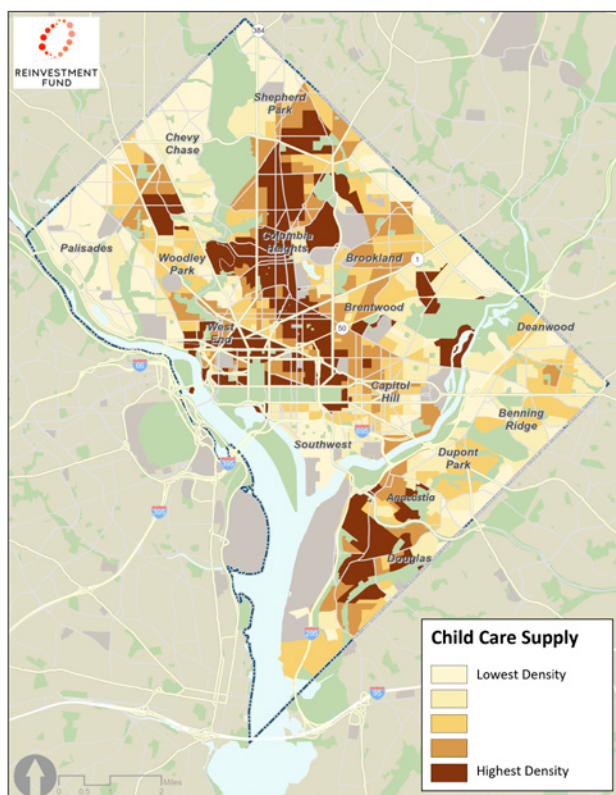
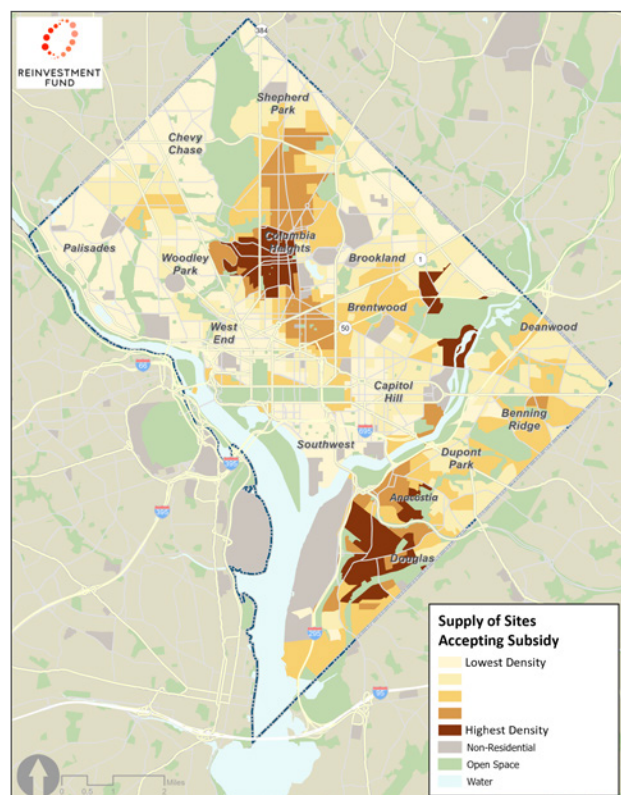


Figure 9: Only About One-Third of ECE-Homes and ECE-Centers Accept Child Care Subsidies
Supply of Sites Accepting Subsidy



Geographic Distribution of Subsidy Participants

Using OSSE licensing data, we estimate that only about one-third of ECE-homes and ECE-centers in the city (36%) accept the District's subsidies. Collectively, these programs have a licensed capacity to serve 15,498 children, meaning that if every program that participated in the District's subsidy program exclusively served subsidy-eligible children, there would be enough seats for 89% of the children in eligible families. In practice, most programs accept a mix of subsidy-eligible and ineligible children, meaning their actual capacity to serve subsidy-eligible children is lower.

As Figure 9 illustrates, ECE-homes and ECE-centers participating in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program are geographically concentrated. Most are located in the Columbia Heights and Anacostia neighborhoods. Despite having the highest concentration of all ECE programs, Downtown largely lacks subsidized capacity.

ECE Programs Open During Nontraditional Hours

Most ECE programs are open only during traditional business hours (7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday). For parents and guardians who work nontraditional hours over nights or weekends, finding ECE programs can be a challenge. A 2018 report by the Urban Institute found that only 177 of 444 ECE-homes and ECE-centers (40%) with a licensed capacity of 10,778 were open outside the traditional 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. workday.¹⁹

Using the same data source as the Urban Institute study (self-reported information from the District's "My Child Care DC" tool), we found that in 2023, only 140 of 473 ECE-homes and ECE-centers (30%) reported offering care before 7:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. These ECE-homes and ECE-centers had a total licensed capacity of just 7,661 (as shown in Figure 10), a 29% reduction since 2018.

ECE-Homes and ECE-Centers Offering Bilingual Services

More than a quarter of D.C.'s young children have at least one parent who speaks a language other than English at home. For families where English is a second language, finding staff at an ECE-home or ECE-center they can easily communicate with or a program that feels culturally aligned might be an important criterion. Yet only 32 ECE-homes and ECE-centers report having staff that speak a language other than English. These programs have a collective licensed capacity of just a little more than 1,000 seats — far fewer than the estimated 11,000 children in the District with a parent who speaks a language other than English at home.

Figure 10: Some Options Are Limited in D.C.

Capacity at ECE-Homes and ECE-Centers for Nontraditional Hours, Bilingual Settings

	Estimated Capacity	Share of Total Capacity
Nontraditional Hours		
Capacity of ECE-homes and ECE-centers offering nontraditional hours	7,661/27,657 seats	28%
Capacity of ECE-schools offering nontraditional hours	0	0%
Bilingual Services		
Capacity of ECE-homes and ECE-centers offering bilingual services	1,088/27,657 seats	4%
Capacity of ECE-schools offering bilingual services	Not measured	Not measured



Quality Programs

Families need and want quality learning environments where children can reach their full potential. For this analysis, we set out to understand the supply of and demand for quality care across the District.

Defining and measuring child care quality is challenging for the ECE sector. Quality standards and regulations vary by program type (ECE-home, ECE-center, ECE-school) and by funding streams. In addition, families define quality based on their values, intuition, and needs. Although OSSE manages a quality rating system, Capital Quality, for ECE-homes and ECE-centers (which comprise the bulk of the District's ECE programs), participation in OSSE's rating system is optional for ECE-homes and ECE-centers that do not receive funding from the DC Child Care Subsidy Program. ECE schools, public and private, are not rated or in Capital Quality's scope.

For the purposes of this study, we worked with local stakeholders and identified three markers of quality programs:

- Participation in the federal Head Start or Early Head Start program
- Industry-recognized national accreditation (specifically NAEYC and NAFCC)
- OSSE's Capital Quality rating system ("High-Quality" or "Quality" ratings)

These quality indicators primarily and historically have targeted ECE-homes and ECE-centers. Because many ECE-schools do not participate in these quality rating systems, this approach may underestimate ECE quality in public, private, and charter schools. Until the District develops a consistent quality measure that includes all schools, the local stakeholder group for this study felt that using these three markers was the best available approach.

In total, we estimate that 175 ECE programs met at least one of our quality indicators. (See Figure 11 on Page 24.) We estimate just under one-third of the District's capacity (31%), or 10,827 seats, are in programs that meet at least one of our quality indicators. These findings mirror those from 2018, when we found that 34% of the District's capacity was in quality programs.

Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

Head Start and Early Head Start are federal programs that support the provision of comprehensive early childhood services for vulnerable young children and their families. ECE-centers, ECE-homes, and ECE-schools that participate in the federal Head Start and Early Head Start programs receive federal funding to provide services that meet rigorous federal program guidelines and standards.

In D.C., we identified 55 full-time ECE-centers that offer Head Start, Early Head Start, or both. In total, these ECE-centers had a capacity of 4,145 seats.

Nationally Accredited Programs

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) are two national membership associations that manage industry-recognized accreditation systems and provide guidance to the ECE field. NAFCC accreditation is designed for ECE-homes. NAEYC early learning program accreditation primarily targets ECE-centers, but ECE-homes and ECE-schools may be eligible. These organizations also develop and maintain standards that guide the practice of early childhood professionals and advocate for their members. Because of their national scope, these accreditation systems can be used to assess and compare quality in and across states and municipalities.

In D.C., we identified 76 full-time ECE-homes and ECE-centers that had earned NAEYC or NAFCC accreditation. In total, these programs had a capacity of 6,643 seats.

D.C.'s Capital Quality System

In D.C., OSSE operates a quality rating system known as Capital Quality. The program assigns a rating to participating programs based on program quality, with a special focus on continuous improvement. Based on feedback from local experts, we identified programs that achieved the system's two highest ratings — "High-Quality" and "Quality" — as having met our threshold for quality. Participation is optional for ECE-homes and ECE-centers that do not receive funding from the DC Child Care Subsidy Program. ECE-schools, public and private, are not rated or in Capital Quality's scope.

In D.C., we identified 98 full-time ECE-homes and ECE-centers with a Capital Quality designation of "Quality" or "High-Quality." In total, these programs had a capacity of 5,320 seats.

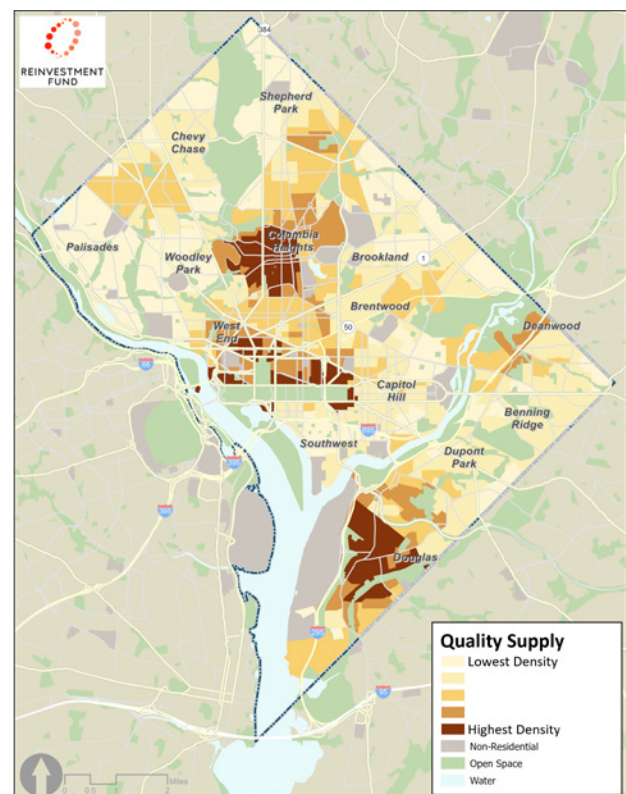
Figure 11: Less Than One-Third of ECE Programs Meet the Quality Indicators Informing This Report
Capacity in Programs by Indicators of Quality Care

	Total Capacity	Share of All Capacity
Unknown quality based on this report's definition of quality	24,360 seats	69%
Meets one quality indicator	6,818 seats	19%
Meets two quality indicators	2,678 seats	8%
Meets three quality indicators	1,331 seats	4%
Total Capacity	35,187 seats	100%

Location of D.C.'s Quality ECE-Homes and ECE-Centers

Quality seats are not evenly distributed across the District, as shown in Figure 12. Quality ECE-homes and ECE-centers are concentrated in Columbia Heights, near Downtown, and in Anacostia, with very little quality supply located in other parts of the city. Neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill, Southwest, Benning Ridge, and Palisades had very few programs that met at least one indicator of quality.

Figure 12: Quality ECE-Homes and ECE-Centers Are Concentrated in Three Areas
Licensed Capacity in ECE-Homes and ECE-Centers Meeting at Least One Quality Criteria



Capacity by Age Group

Our 2018 analysis of D.C.'s child care supply focused on care for infants and toddlers (ages 0–2). At the time, stakeholders were concerned about steady increases in the enrollment of 3- and 4-year-olds at ECE-schools because universal access to public pre-kindergarten (pre-K) would make it difficult for ECE-homes and ECE-centers to adjust their business models (by increasing tuition) and serve mainly infants and toddlers to stay in business, threatening the supply of child care for the District's youngest children. Our analysis found that efforts by stakeholders such as OSSE, the Bainum Family Foundation, and others not only helped stave off the loss of infant and toddler seats but also actually helped grow this sector.

Figure 13 compares the estimated capacity in the District by age group in 2018 and today. Although the number of seats reserved for children ages 3 and 4 has declined, the number of infant and toddler seats has grown by nearly 4,000, or 48%.

Figure 13: Capacity of Infant and Toddler Seats Has Grown 48%

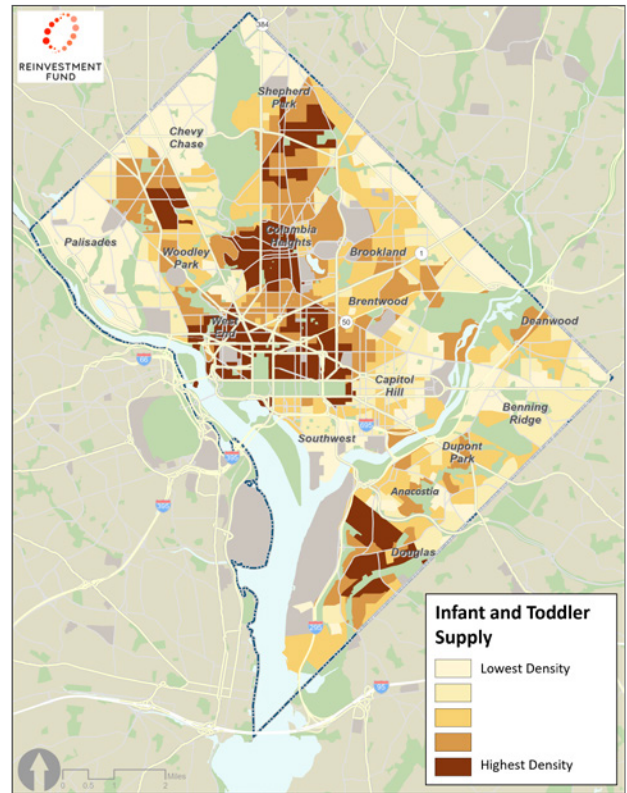
Estimated Capacity by Age Group, 2018 and 2023

	Capacity/Seats in 2018	Capacity/Seats in 2023	Five-Year Change
Infants and Toddlers (Ages 0–2)	8,214	12,163	+48%
Preschoolers (Ages 3 and 4)	29,539	23,024	-22%
Total	37,753	35,187	-7%

Although the number of seats reserved for children ages 3 and 4 has declined, the number of infant and toddler seats has grown by nearly 4,000, or 48%.

Today, infant and toddler seats represent just over one-third of the District's total child care capacity in ECE programs, up from 22% in 2018. The location of infant and toddler seats roughly matches the location of all ECE program seats in the District, with most of the supply concentrated near Downtown, Columbia Heights, and Anacostia, as shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Most Infant and Toddler Seats Are Concentrated in Three Areas
Location of Infant and Toddler Capacity, 2023



Measuring Child Care Shortages

After analyzing the characteristics and locations of families and ECE programs, the final step was modeling areas of shortage where gaps between supply and demand make it difficult for families to find child care. Analyzing how areas with substantial shortages, particularly shortages of quality seats, are distributed geographically throughout the District is instrumental to the strategic allocation of public and private investments aimed at expanding access. Additional analysis of shortages, along with specific characteristics of families and places, can identify areas where strategic investments can meaningfully reduce gaps for priority groups like low-to-moderate-income families, parents working during nontraditional hours, and families with infants and toddlers.

Districtwide Shortages of Child Care

This section compares aggregate capacity (supply) with our estimates of the number of children who could use child care in the District (demand). Where demand exceeds supply, shortages represent the number of new seats the District would need to create to ensure that every child has an opportunity to access ECE programs. In practice, not every family wants to use ECE programs, and the actual level of demand varies based on preferences and needs as well as, to some extent, characteristics of supply such as quality, price, and ease of access.

With a total demand of roughly 50,000 seats and a total supply of 35,000, the District has enough capacity for 71% of children in 2023, up from 2018, when the District's capacity could serve 65% of children. Figure 15 provides an overview of supply, demand, and shortages over the past five years. The gap between supply and demand narrowed primarily as a result of declines in aggregate demand, which declined nearly twice as much as supply between 2018 and 2023.

Figure 15: Overall Shortages Have Declined 29% in D.C.

Gap Between ECE Program Seats and Demand

	2018	2023	Percent Change
ECE Program Seats	37,735	35,187	-7%
Demand	58,087	49,702	-14%
Gap	-20,352	-14,515	-29%

Disaggregating the District’s supply by age shows that D.C.’s ECE program shortage is really a shortage of infant and toddler seats and that the pre-K market, in aggregate, is largely well-served. Figure 16 provides a breakdown of the estimated gap between ECE program supply and demand categorized by age — infants and toddlers (ages 0–2) and children ages 3 and 4.

The youngest children in the District are especially underserved, with only enough supply to serve 40% of infants and toddlers. In contrast, there is a small surplus of about 3,300 seats for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Figure 16: Infants and Toddlers Need About 18,000 More Seats

Estimated Gap Between Supply and Demand, by Age

	Supply	Demand	Gap
Infants and Toddlers (Ages 0–2)	12,163	30,037	-17,818
Preschoolers (Ages 3 and 4)	23,024	19,665	+3,303
Total	35,187	49,702	-14,515

Neighborhoods that were home mostly to Black residents generally had larger shortages than those that were home to mostly white residents. Figure 17 describes the ratio of ECE program supply to the population of children by the predominant race and ethnicity in each block group — that is, the proportion of children who could be served by the existing supply in their community. Higher values indicate greater supply, and lower values indicate larger shortages.

In block groups where more than 50% of the population is Black, which make up 39% of the District, there was only enough ECE program supply for 74% of children, compared with predominantly white block groups, where supply actually exceeded the population of children.

Figure 17: Shortages Particularly Affect Areas With Many Black Families

Ratio of Supply to Demand in D.C.

	Percentage of D.C. Block Groups	Ratio of Supply to Demand
Predominantly White (More Than 50% of Population)	41%	104%
Predominantly Black (More Than 50% of Population)	39%	74%
Predominantly Other Race (More Than 50% of Population)	1%	78%
No Predominant Race	19%	102%
Citywide	100%	87%

Beyond children’s ages, families also have different needs based on their characteristics and income. Low- and moderate-income families often need financial support to afford child care, and parents who work nights and weekends may need care at nontraditional hours.

Figure 18 compares supply and demand for families eligible for subsidized ECE-homes and ECE-centers, families with parents working nontraditional hours, and bilingual families. While there are sufficient seats for eligible families that need subsidized or publicly funded care for 3- and 4-year-olds, the District’s ECE-homes and ECE-centers participating in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program lack sufficient capacity to serve the infants and toddlers who are eligible for subsidies. For families that are seeking ECE programs that provide care during nontraditional hours (before 7:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m.) and families looking for bilingual services, supply is severely limited compared to demand.

Figure 18: ECE Program Shortages Are Particularly Acute for Infants and Toddlers, Nontraditional Hours, and Bilingual Services

Disparity Between Supply and Demand for Additional Priority Groups

	Supply	Demand	Gap
Subsidized ECE Program – Seats for Infants and Toddlers (Ages 0-2)	7,168	10,449	-3,281
Subsidized or Publicly Funded ECE Program – Seats for Children Ages 3 and 4	8,330	6,874	+1,456
Seats Offered During Nontraditional Hours	7,661	12,609	-4,948
Seats Offering Bilingual Services	1,088	11,079	-9,991



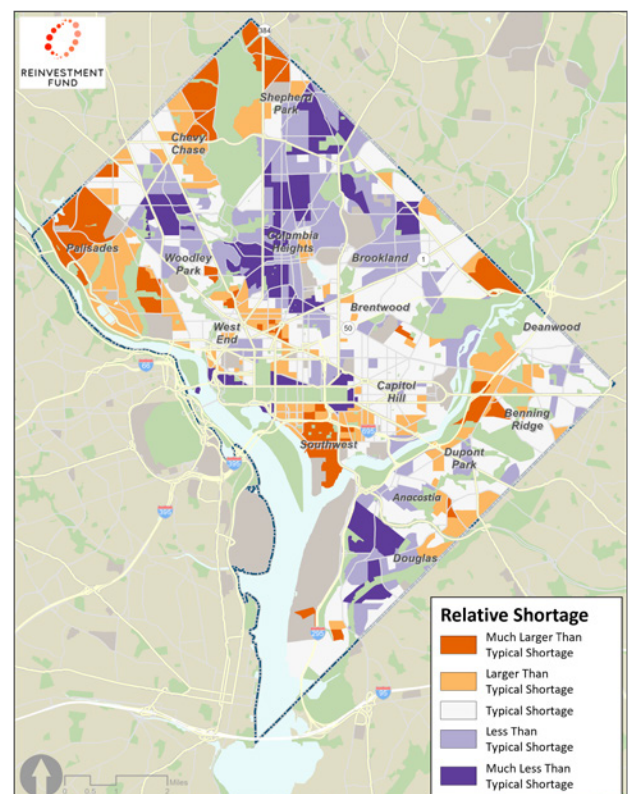
Mapping Relative Market Shortages

To identify where the largest ECE program shortages in the District are located, we created a measure called “relative shortage.” Relative shortage maps identify areas with the largest gaps between ECE program supply and demand. This measure accounts for the fact that not all families use ECE programs by comparing the relationship between supply and demand in each block group with the typical relationship across the District. It is intended to highlight areas where, relative to the District’s market for ECE programs, the gap between supply and demand is especially large or small.

Figure 19 maps this landscape of relative shortage, coloring high-shortage areas in varying shades of orange and areas with less-than-typical shortages in purple. Relative shortages impact families at every part of the income spectrum. Areas with the largest shortages include neighborhoods with some of the highest incomes in the city, such as the Palisades and Chevy Chase. High-shortage areas are also present in neighborhoods with lower and more moderate incomes, such as Southwest and Benning Ridge.

Figure 19: Shortages Affect Some Neighborhoods More Acutely

Map of Relative Shortage in D.C.



Access to child care also varies significantly by age. Figures 20 and 21 compare relative shortages for children ages 0–2 and children ages 3 and 4, respectively. For older children, areas on the map classified as “smaller than typical” may in fact have a surplus of seats. For children ages 0–2, there were only enough seats in the District for 41% of children, so even areas classified as smaller than typical may have a shortage of seats.

Although relative shortage classifications for the two age groups are similar in the northwestern part of the District, shortages for children ages 0–2 are larger in Capitol Hill, while shortages for children ages 3 and 4 are larger near Downtown and Dupont Park.

Figure 20: Shortages of Infant and Toddler Care Exist Across Every Ward
Relative Shortage for Children Ages 0–2

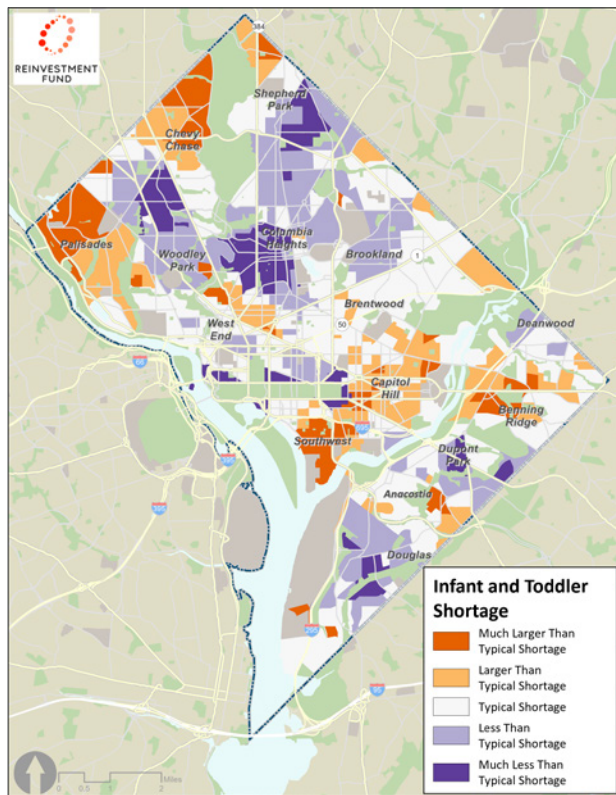
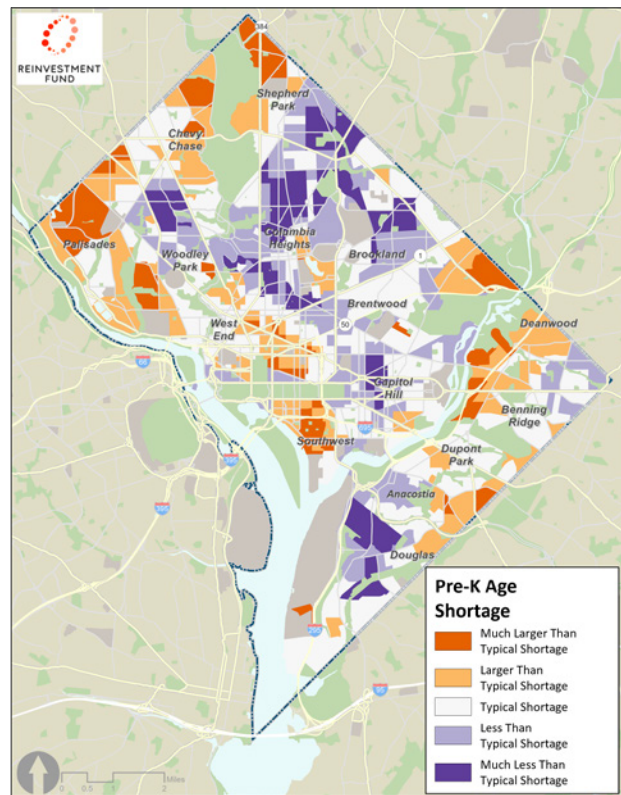


Figure 21: Pre-K Shortages Were Larger Than Infant and Toddler Shortages in Downtown
Relative Shortage for Children Ages 3 and 4



The population living in high-shortage areas is diverse, encompassing families of various backgrounds, some of whom are in economically challenging situations. Nearly 30% of the children under age 5 who live in D.C. (11,800) live in areas with larger-than-typical shortages, including 6,150 single-parent families and 4,230 families living in poverty.



Developing Investment and Intervention Strategies

As is the case in many cities, the investments required to eliminate every child care access gap are substantial, and the resources that are available are limited. Overlaying information about family and neighborhood characteristics with shortages is a simple way to identify areas where investments in supply can support an organization's priorities, such as reaching the District's most vulnerable children or addressing historic patterns of inequality. In this section, we describe different characteristics that stakeholders could use to prioritize neighborhoods for future investments and interventions.

An analysis by the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) quantified the supply of, potential need for, and gaps in child care in 35 states in 2019; D.C. is included as one of the states. It affirms that compared to other major cities, D.C. is in a relatively strong position. Our study estimates that D.C. has enough child care supply for 71% of children, compared to 68% for Boston, 58% for Seattle, 57% for Chicago, 53% for Providence, and 44% for Charlotte, as found in the BPC analysis.²⁰

While D.C. is ahead of most communities, there is still work to do. With additional investments — targeted where the need is greatest — D.C. could strengthen its position to benefit children, families, and ECE professionals across the District, while also serving as inspiration for the nation.

Prioritize Affordability and Access for Low- and Moderate-Income Families

Child care is a substantial expense for families. Although the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines 7% of a family's income as an affordable amount to spend on child care, most families — particularly lower-income families — spend considerably more.²¹ Child care costs in the District are the highest in the United States, according to a survey conducted by Care.com. Too many families pay more for child care than for other basic necessities such as housing and still don't have real options; they must settle for what is convenient and affordable. Families in D.C. pay on average \$417 per week, or close to \$22,000 per year, which is 85% higher than the national average.²² The District's Child Care Subsidy Program helps offset the cost of child care for low- and moderate-income households, but the lack of seats in ECE programs that accept subsidies can be a barrier, particularly for families with younger children.

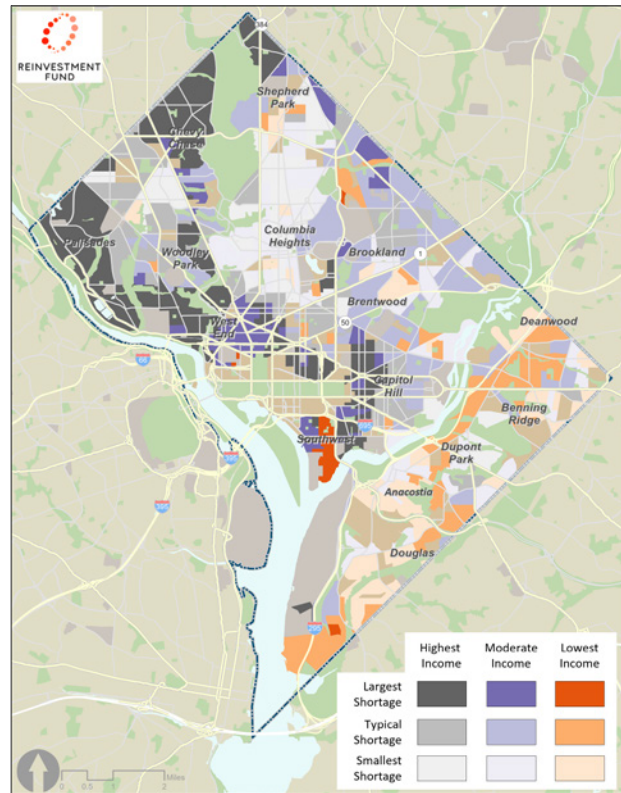
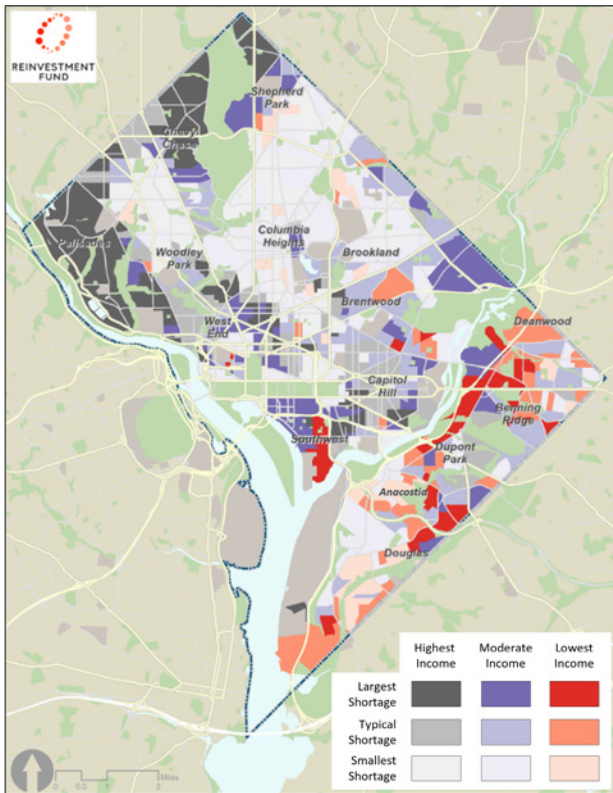
Recent changes to the DC Child Care Subsidy Program expanded the income eligibility threshold for D.C. families to 300% of the federal poverty level, up from 250% previously.²³ While this is helpful, it is not sufficient to meet the needs of families across the District.

These maps combine information about family incomes with shortages of all seats and shortages of seats accepting subsidies to highlight areas where investments in building new supply can target areas with low- and moderate-income households.

In Figures 22 and 23, areas highlighted in dark red and dark orange represent communities where the largest child care shortages and households with the lowest family incomes overlap. Areas in purple represent communities with larger shortages and moderate family incomes.

Figure 22: Largest Gaps Impacting Low-Income Families Concentrated in Wards 7 and 8
All Seat Shortage and Income

Figure 23: Southwest Has the Largest Gaps Impacting Low-Income Families
Subsidy Shortage and Income

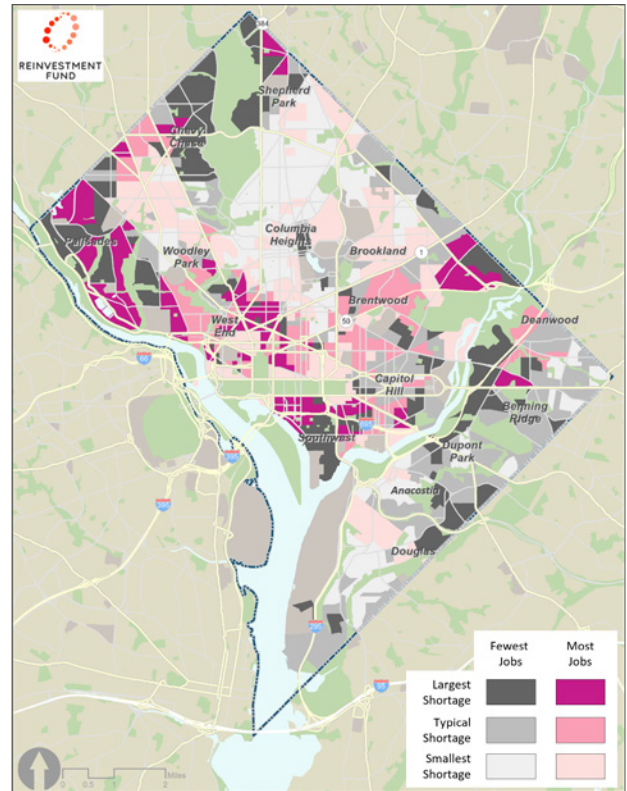


The District’s Child Care Subsidy Program helps offset the cost of child care for low- and moderate-income households, but the lack of seats in ECE programs that accept subsidies can be a barrier, particularly for families with younger children.

Prioritize Affordability and Access Where There Are Job Clusters

Many low- and moderate-income workers in D.C. travel outside their home neighborhood for work. Although focusing on gaps where low- and moderate-income children live is an important intervention strategy, large gaps in communities where these parents work are also worth considering. Figure 24 highlights the areas in the District that have low-wage job clusters and high shortages of ECE programs. The Southwest and areas west of Woodley Park are two such communities, but wealthier neighborhoods close to Chevy Chase also are affected.

Figure 24: A Range of Neighborhoods Have Many Low-Wage Jobs and Little Child Care
Relative Shortages and Job Clusters



Prioritize Racial Equity

Housing patterns in the District, as in many cities, exhibit a high level of racial and ethnic segregation. The history of housing segregation in American cities is long and intersects with many different policy conversations. Although high-shortage areas exist across the city, predominantly Black communities generally have fewer child care seats than do predominantly white communities.

For stakeholders interested in addressing racial and ethnic inequality, overlaying demographic information with child care shortage maps can help spotlight neighborhoods where strategic investments can begin to close racial and ethnic access gaps. Figure 25 highlights areas with the largest shortages based on the predominant race living in each community. Areas highlighted in dark purple, for example, represent communities where more than 50% of the population is Black and where child care shortages are most severe.

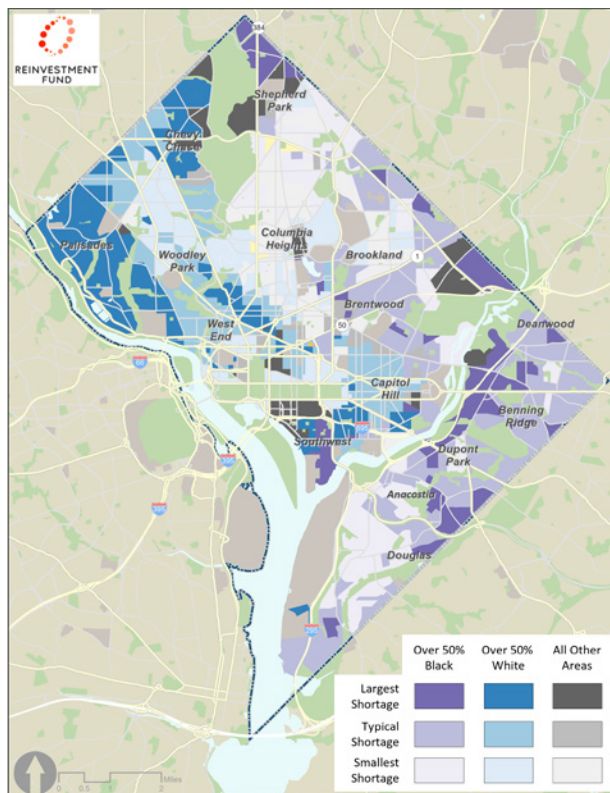
Prioritize Quality

As previously noted, defining and assessing quality is challenging for the ECE sector. Quality standards and regulations vary by program type (ECE-home, ECE-center, ECE-school) and by funding streams.

For the purposes of this study, we worked with local stakeholders and identified three markers of quality programs. These markers were not inclusive of all ECE programs, making it somewhat arbitrary to compare quality across neighborhoods and across the country. Close to 70% of ECE program seats did not meet the three quality indicators defined in this report. (See Figure 11 on Page 24.)

For stakeholders interested in increasing access to affordable and quality ECE programs, it may be helpful to identify a quality baseline for all ECE programs (homes, centers, and schools) and provide resources for programs to meet and sustain that baseline in addition to other quality indicators the staff and families may deem valuable.

Figure 25: Areas of Greatest Shortage Are Scattered Across the District
Relative Shortages and Resident Demographics



Conclusions and Implications

Investments in child care help build a stronger future for children and families. Our analysis of child care supply and demand shows that while the District has made significant progress in increasing access, gaps remain. In particular, although D.C. has added more infant and toddler seats, demand still exceeds supply, and the location of seats makes access easier for some communities than for others. Understanding where ECE program shortages exist is critical for targeting supply-building investments and interventions. To that end, this report provides a guide to identifying neighborhoods where ECE program shortages are likely to disproportionately impact vulnerable families and children, specifically:

- Areas with inadequate access to quality seats
- Areas with inadequate access to subsidized seats
- Areas with concentrations of low-income families
- Areas with concentrations of low-wage jobs
- Areas where residents are predominantly Black

These findings can support both public and private investors as they work to expand quality supply through grants, loans, and technical assistance designed to start or expand programs.

While these kinds of supply-building activities are critical, stakeholders should also consider how other policy factors can support or limit the growth of the sector. Policies for zoning, land use, and development play an important role in supporting the expansion of quality care. Stakeholders should look for ways to understand how future development trends will intersect with gaps in the child care market.

Moreover, although this report focuses primarily on the geographic contours of access, factors such as cost, quality, and curriculum are equally important to consider. Building a better child care system means ensuring families have equitable access to child care programs that are geographically accessible but also affordable, offer a quality learning environment, and meet their specific needs.

The District is a recognized leader nationally in providing access to affordable, quality child care. The sky is not falling here. But with additional, targeted investments, we could do even better. As the first sentence of the 2022 Bainum Family Foundation-funded WeVision EarlyEd [report](#) stated, “Washington, D.C., has a chance to do what no other American jurisdiction has done: get child care right.”

(See Appendix B for more about WeVision EarlyEd.)



APPENDIX A

Supply Data Sources

Data for this analysis was drawn from 10 different data sources, described below.

State-Licensed Programs	OSSE License Database (accessed 04/03/23) D.C. Head Start Enrollment Report (accessed 05/24/23)
School-Based Programs	DCPS 2022-23 School Year Enrollment Audit Report (accessed 04/24/23) Archdiocese of Washington, "Preschool Finder" https://adwcatholicschools.org/find-a-school/?fwp_grade_level=preschool#finder (accessed 03/31/23) Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, "Find a School" https://www.aisgw.org/find-a-school/#/ (accessed 03/31/23)
Alternative Accreditation and Business Listings	Government Services Administration, "Find a Child Care Center" https://www.gsa.gov/resources/citizens-and-consumers/child-care-services/find-a-center-near-you (accessed 03/30/23) National Association for the Education of Young Children, https://www.naeyc.org/ (accessed 04/27/23) National Association for Family Child Care, https://nafcc.org/accreditation/ (accessed 05/05/23) National Establishment Time Series Database (2021) Data Axle (accessed 03/22/23)

APPENDIX B

WeVision EarlyEd: The Basics

The Why: The persistent gaps identified in this report highlight the need to reimagine and transform child care. Families, early childhood professionals, and our partners in and outside D.C. have urged the Bainum Family Foundation to help move from discourse about the gaps in the current child care system to future-facing solutions that define the ideal child care system and make it real.

The What: WeVision EarlyEd is a catalyst for making the ideal child care real, as defined by those closest to the system — families, educators, and administrators.

WeVision features three interconnected components:

1. **Data** from families and early childhood professionals (who are child care “proximity experts”) who have defined the pain points of the current child care system and elements of the ideal child care system.
2. **Core mindset shifts** needed to eliminate the outdated thinking — often based on racial, gender, and class biases — that holds current problems with the child care system in place. Without these critical shifts, transformation cannot happen.
3. An “evergreen” **Ideal Solutions Lab** that builds and tests solutions generated by families and early childhood professionals in real-world settings.

How This Report Informs WeVision EarlyEd

This report serves as yet another data source that makes the case for reimaging and transforming the nation’s child care system.

1. **Data:** The gaps identified in this report mirror the data we’ve received from families and early childhood professionals in D.C. and from across the country navigating the current child care system.
2. **Core Mindset Shifts:** Mindsets about the purpose, quality, family options, accessibility, and costs were implicitly and explicitly examined throughout this report. For example:
 - a. **Core Shift 1: Rethink When Learning Begins** — The report intentionally introduces new labels such as ECE programs, ECE-homes, ECE-centers, and ECE-schools to shift outdated mindsets that elevate “school” over “child care.”
 - b. **Core Shift 2: Rethink Who Needs Child Care** — The data showed that the inaccessibility of quality ECE programs impacts all families and neighborhoods across D.C., some more than others. The child care crisis is a universal issue, and solving it will benefit many.
 - c. **Core Shift 3: Rethink What Child Care Costs ... and Who Pays for It** — The data reinforced that few families can access and/or afford quality ECE programs.

- d. **Core Shift 4: Rethink Quality** — The lack of a baseline definition of quality made it difficult to assess, understand, and compare ECE programs across the District and nationally.
 - e. **Core Shift 5: Rethink Governance and Decision-Making** — Many stakeholders requested and informed this report because of their interest in supporting young children. The report will help guide future decisions and investments in child care.
3. **Ideal Solutions Lab:** To date, two ECE partners in D.C. have been selected to serve as Solutions Lab sites. These partners are addressing the accessibility, affordability, and quality gaps cited in this report. We are eager to share the lessons learned as a resource for the field.

Join the WeVision EarlyEd Community

If you're ready to challenge the status quo in child care and help move it from what it is now to what it should be, you're in the right place. Re-envisioning and re-creating the system takes all of us, and there are many ways for you to get involved. Whether you're an educator, a researcher, a policymaker, or any of the other stakeholders, there's plenty you can do. Start here:

- Download and read the WeVision EarlyEd report: <https://wevisionearlyed.org/>
- Visit the "Get Involved" page of the WeVision EarlyEd website: <https://wevisionearlyed.org/get-involved/>



Endnotes

- ¹ Heckman, J. J. "Invest in Early Childhood Development: Reduce Deficits, Strengthen the Economy." January 2020. Retrieved from The Heckman Equation: <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/invest-in-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-the-economy/>.
- ² Leslie J. Calman, L. T.-W. (2005). Early Childhood Education for All: A Wise Investment. New York: Legal Momentum.
- ³ "Early Learning Supply and Demand in the District of Columbia: Using Data to Identify Critical Gaps." Bainum Family Foundation, 2018. https://bainumfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Bainum_EL-Supply-Demand-Report_FNL_Nov-2018.pdf.
- ⁴ "Fiscal Year 2021 Pre-K Report," District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, April 2022. <https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/FISCAL%20YEAR%202021%20Pre%20K%20Report%20MMB.pdf#:~:text=Of%20the%20District%E2%80%99s%20estimated%2017%2C386%203-%20and%204-year-olds,were%20enrolled%20in%20the%20District%E2%80%99s%20universal%20pre-K%20system>.
- ⁵ "DC lawmakers pass early child care workers," WTOP News, February 1, 2022, <https://wtop.com/dc/2022/02/dc-lawmakers-pass-early-child-care-workers-bill/>.
- ⁶ DC Child Care Stabilization Grant, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education. <https://osse.dc.gov/page/dc-child-care-stabilization-grant>.
- ⁷ Households/Income Data for City: District of Columbia, 2023 Demographics. <https://www.dchealthmatters.org/?module=demographicdata&controller=index&action=index&id=130951§ionId=936>.
- ⁸ Median Household Income, U.S. Census Bureau, September 12, 2023. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2023/comm/median-household-income.html>.
- ⁹ "The 15 U.S. cities with the highest cost of living—San Francisco isn't No. 1," CNBC, August 22, 2023. <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/08/22/us-cities-with-the-highest-cost-of-living.html>.
- ¹⁰ "New Care.com Report Reveals Soaring Childcare Costs Are Crippling Majority of American Families," Care.com, June 13, 2023. <https://www.care.com/c/how-much-does-child-care-cost/>.
- ¹¹ 2023 population estimates for block groups were purchased from Claritas 360. Resident characteristics were estimated using American Community Survey, 5-Year Population Estimates, 2017-2021.
- ¹² Reinvestment Fund Analysis of American Community Survey, 5-Year Population Estimates, 2017-2021.

¹³ Reinvestment Fund Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau. 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year Public Use Microdata. Retrieved from: IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

¹⁴ Reinvestment Fund analysis of Census Household Pulse Survey for the D.C. metro area.

¹⁵ Estimates of the prevalence of commuting for child care vary. As with our 2018 analysis, we started from the assumption that up to one-third of working parents would consider using child care near their place of work. This roughly follows enrollment trends in the District's pre-K program, where a 2018 report showed that 37% of families enroll children in pre-K programs outside their home ward, and parent surveys from other states. For more information about the methodology, see https://www.reinvestment.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Bainum_EL-Supply-Demand-Report_FNL_Nov-2018.pdf.

¹⁶ Employees in some sectors, such as health care or retail trades, are often required to perform their jobs in person. Industry codes from the LEHD dataset were used to identify workers in work-from-home-eligible industries: Information (NAICS 51); Finance and Insurance (NAICS 52); Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (NAICS 53); Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (NAICS 54); Management of Companies and Enterprises (NAICS 55); and Public Administration (NAICS 92).

¹⁷ For more information about data sources, see Appendix A.

¹⁸ Licensed capacity sometimes overestimates the true enrollment capacity in centers. In some centers, for practical or pedagogical reasons, directors choose to enroll fewer children than their license allows. While not ideal, licensed capacity provides the best, most consistent measure of supply available.

¹⁹ Sandstrom et al. "Nontraditional-Hour Child Care in the District of Columbia" (November 2018). Urban Institute. Available at https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99768/nontraditional-hour_child_care_in_the_district_of_columbia_0.pdf.

²⁰ Child Care Gaps Assessment, Bipartisan Policy Center, November 2021. <https://www.childcaregap.org/>.

²¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, "Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program," Federal Register 81 (190) (2016): 67438–67595, available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-09-30/pdf/2016-22986.pdf> (page 3).

²² "New Care.com Report Reveals Soaring Childcare Costs Are Crippling Majority of American Families," Care.com, June 13, 2023. <https://www.care.com/c/how-much-does-child-care-cost/>.

²³ "OSSE Announces Expanded and Improved Access to Child Care Subsidies for DC Families," District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, November 29, 2023. <https://osse.dc.gov/release/osse-announces-expanded-and-improved-access-child-care-subsidies-dc-families#:~:text=1%2C%20the%20income%20eligibility%20threshold,to%20receive%20child%20care%20subsidies>.





7735 Old Georgetown Road
Suite 1000
Bethesda, MD 20814
240.450.0000
bainumfdn.org

ChildCareAccessDC.org

