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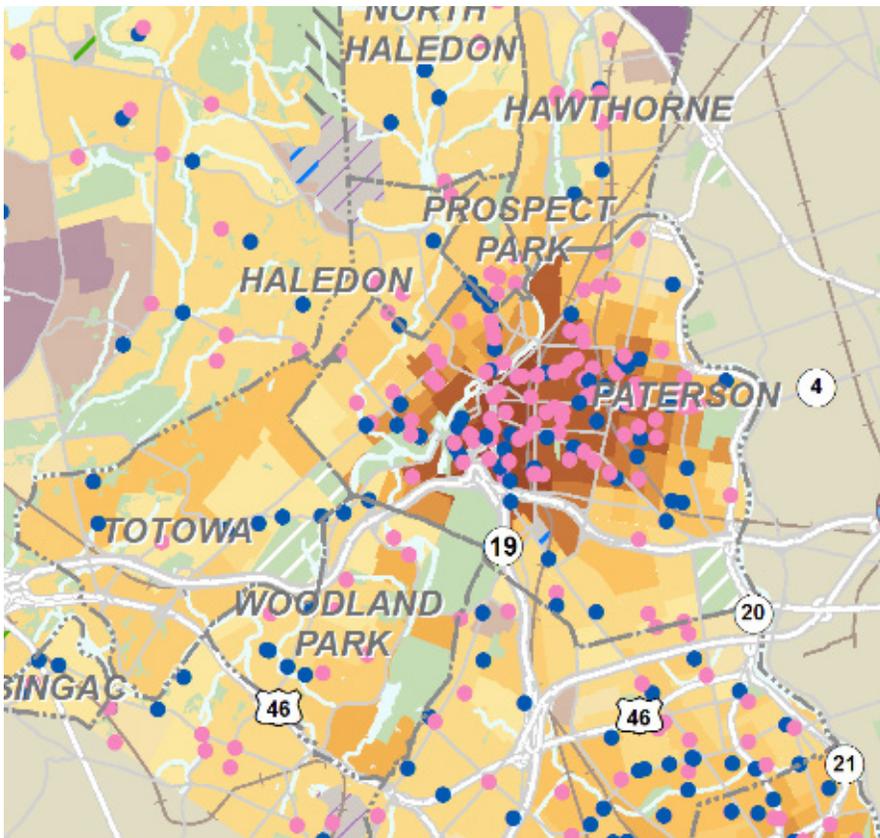


Policy Brief:

Estimating the Supply of and Demand for Early Childhood Education in Passaic County, NJ

Prepared by **REINVESTMENT FUND**

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Introduction

High-quality early childhood education (ECE) helps children grow, and helps prepare them for success in school and beyond. Reliable, quality child care is also important for families; it allows parents to work knowing that their children are in a safe, nurturing place. In 2016, Reinvestment Fund conducted a study to identify shortages in child care in Passaic County, NJ. Using an approach created for a 2014 study of child care in Philadelphia, we learned that in Passaic County, over half of all ECE (57%) is provided in state licensed childcare centers, and 27% is provided in high-quality centers (i.e., centers with National Association for the Education of Youth Children (NAEYC) accreditation, within a Head Start Program, or operated by a Passaic County public school district).

KEY LEARNINGS

- 1) There is much more demand for early childhood education opportunities than there is supply. Most supply is found in cities of Paterson, Passaic City and Clifton.
- 2) Some of the greatest shortages are in the county's poorest communities and in those places where the Hispanic population is large.
- 3) Greatest shortages of high-quality early learning opportunities are found in the areas outside of Paterson.
- 4) There is a large shortage of early childhood education opportunities for infants and toddlers (0-2 years old). These very young children represent almost 60% of demand but 16% of all supply.

With support from the Nicholson and Taub Foundations, Reinvestment Fund created an interactive map to present the results of this analysis, located at passaicchildcaremap.org. The map allows users to see the supply of and demand for early childhood education and where shortages exist. A full report of the study is also available on the site.

A local advisory group helped guide the study to make sure it was accurate and sensitive to local interests. Advisory group members included representatives from: 4CS of Passaic County, Center for Family Resources, Children's Day Nursery, Clifton Public Schools, CUMAC, Gilmore Memorial Preschool, Greater Bergen Community Action/Head Start, Grow NJ Kids, Memorial Day Nursery, New Destiny Family Success Center, Nicholson Foundation, New Jersey Community Development Corporation, Partnership for Maternal and Child Health, Passaic Head Start, Passaic Public Schools, Paterson Alliance, Paterson Education Fund, Paterson Habitat for Humanity, Paterson Housing Authority, Paterson Public Library, Paterson Public Schools, Passaic County Community College, Read to Know, St. Joseph's Hospital, Taub Foundation, United Way of Passaic County, and William Paterson University.

Measuring Supply, Demand and Quality

Measuring the supply of and demand for ECE is complicated. To measure the **supply of child care**, Reinvestment Fund used records from the NJ Departments of Children & Families as well as Education, the Paterson School District, Head Start, NAEYC, InfoUSA, 4Cs of Passaic and Advocates for Children of NJ (ACNJ). All these sources are needed to create a complete picture of ECE options in Passaic County. Note that **supply**, based on licensed capacity, and **enrollment** are not the same. For example, just because a provider has a licensed capacity of 100 children, that doesn't necessarily mean that they serve 100. Oftentimes, based on a survey, providers have fewer children enrolled than their licenses allow.

Several sources were also used to measure the **demand for ECE**. Population records from the US Census' American Community Survey and The Nielsen Company were used to determine where children live. Many parents consider where they live and work when they choose a childcare facility for their

children.¹ Records from the US Census' Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics database were used to estimate parents' selection of ECE options near where they live or work.

Grow NJ Kids, a statewide quality rating system (QRIS) for early childhood education providers, was recently launched in New Jersey and in the process of a multi-year implementation. To date, few centers and homes have been rated. Given the limited number of rated programs, the advisory group suggested that Reinvestment Fund categorize ECE centers as "high quality" if they have NAEYC accreditation, operate as a Head Start program, or are operated by a public school (i.e., Abbott) district.

Figure 1 shows the overall supply of ECE seats in Passaic County. Areas with very few seats are purple and areas with the most seats are brown. Also, each childcare center is shown with a dot; blue dots are licensed and pink dots are non-licensed (including some centers that are not required to be licensed).²

Figure 2 shows the relationship between the supply of and demand for ECE. The lightest tan places are where there is enough supply; brown areas are where there is an unexpectedly large shortage.

Figure 3 shows where the demand for high-quality ECE is far greater than the supply of high-quality seats. The relative shortages for high-quality ECE were most acute in areas surrounding Paterson, including parts of Woodland Park, Totowa, Wayne, North Haledon, and Hawthorne. Those places with a shortage of high-quality care, have relatively few NAEYC accredited centers, Head Start programs, or school districts (Abbott) sites. Abbott preschool programs have a total capacity of about 2,000 in Passaic City and 3,800 in Paterson (2016-2017 school year), but there is an estimated 2,800 children between the ages of 3 and 4 living in Passaic City and 4,700 in Paterson.³

Figure 4 shows shortages in licensed ECE opportunities for infants and toddlers. An estimated demand for 18,960 infant and toddler seats, combined with only 2,130 available seats means there is an overall shortage of 16,830 seats for infants and toddlers. The demand for infant and toddler seats accounts for about 60% of all demand for child care in Passaic County, while most available seats are for children aged 3 or older. Infant and toddler seats make up about 16% of all licensed ECE seats countywide, and less than 9% of licensed seats in Paterson. Shortages for licensed ECE seats for infants and toddlers were most severe in southern, central and northwest neighborhoods of Paterson, the southern part of the city of Passaic, as well as parts of Hawthorne, Clifton, and West Milford.

Conclusion

PassaicChildcareMap.org and these analyses represent Passaic County's first comprehensive look at the availability of and demand for high-quality ECE throughout the county. The results reveal overall shortages for ECE, particularly for high-quality ECE. Importantly, these shortages are not the same across Passaic County or across children's age groups. Places outside the largest cities face big shortages for high-quality options for parents. In addition, ECE options for infants and toddlers are very restricted in many municipalities, particularly in sections of Paterson, Passaic City, Clifton, and Hawthorne. These results can provide actionable insights for policymakers, investors, educators, ECE providers, and parents from across the state and county to meet these needs in an informed way.

¹ Forry, N. D., Tout, K., Rothenberg, L., Sandstrom, H., Vesely, C. (2013). Child Care Decision-Making Literature Review. OPRE Brief 2013-45. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. HHS

² The non-licensed population includes informal care and license-exempt programs that are not required to be licensed by the state, such as programs operated by private schools or religious organizations.

³ Capacity information for Abbott preschool programs in Paterson and Passaic City for the SY16-17 was provided by Paterson Public Schools' Department of Early Childhood Education and Passaic Public Schools' Division of Early Childhood Education, respectively. Data was received after the completion of the study and was not part of the initial data collection, validation, and calculations.

Figure 1: Total Supply of All Early Childhood Education Seats

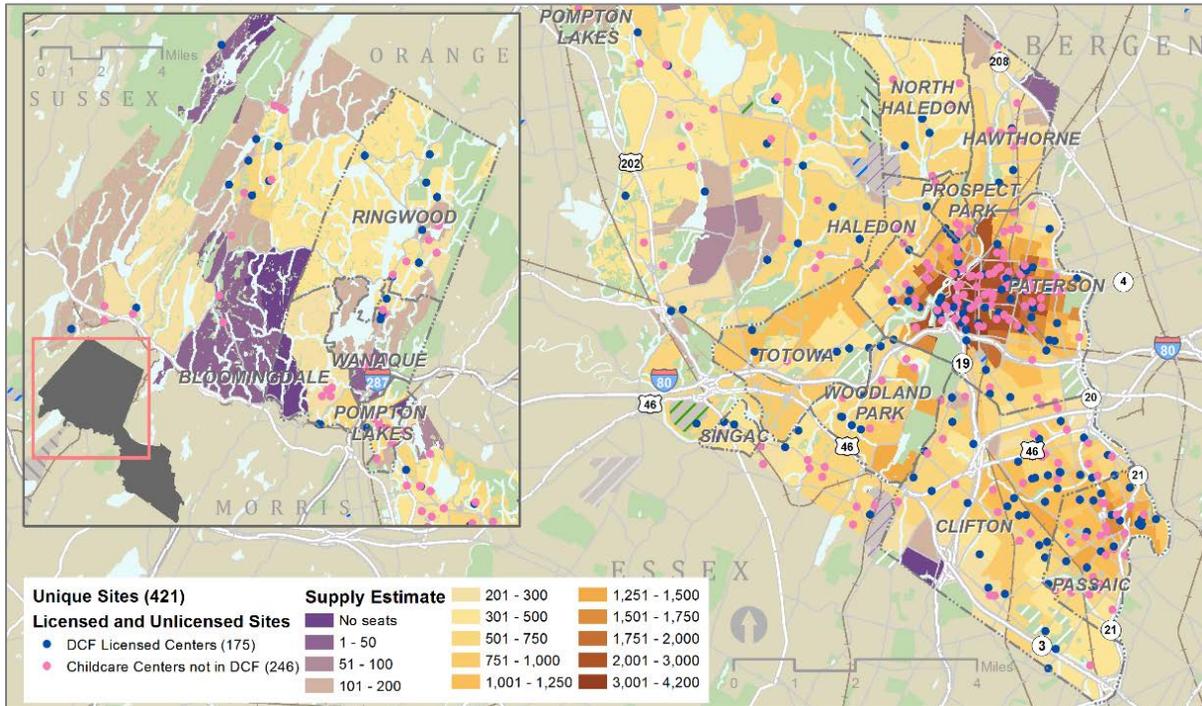


Figure 2: Relative Shortage of All Early Childhood Education Seats

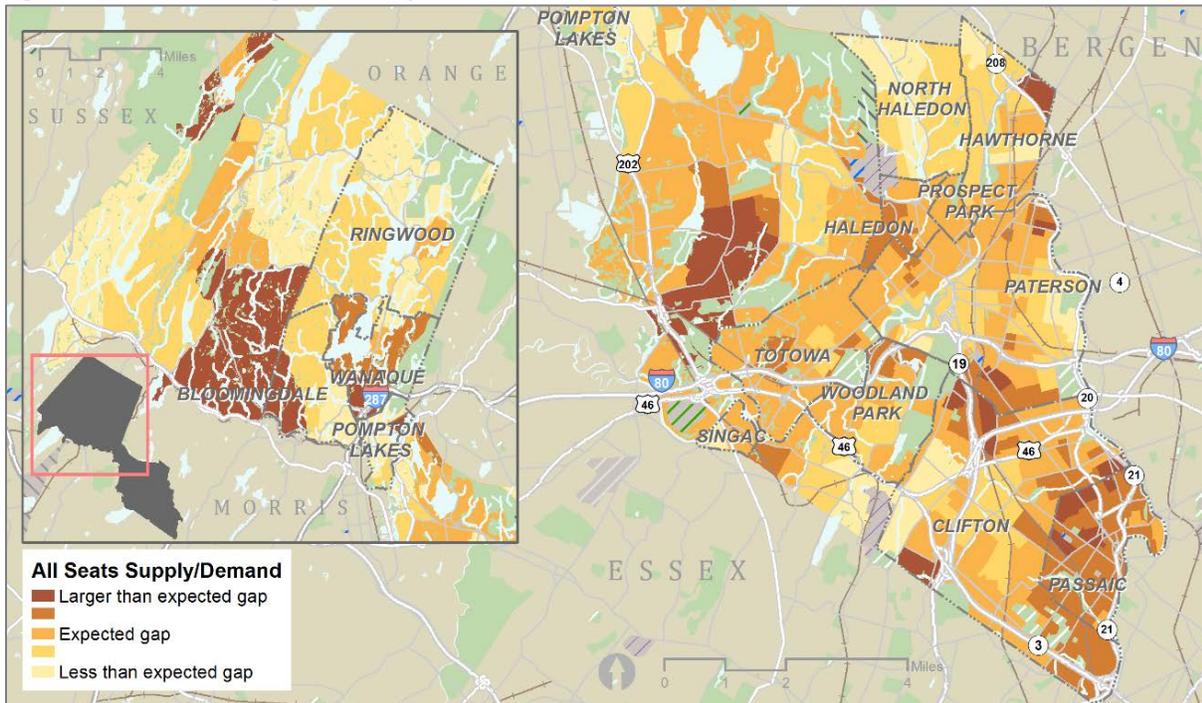


Figure 3: Relative Shortage of High-Quality Early Childhood Education Seats

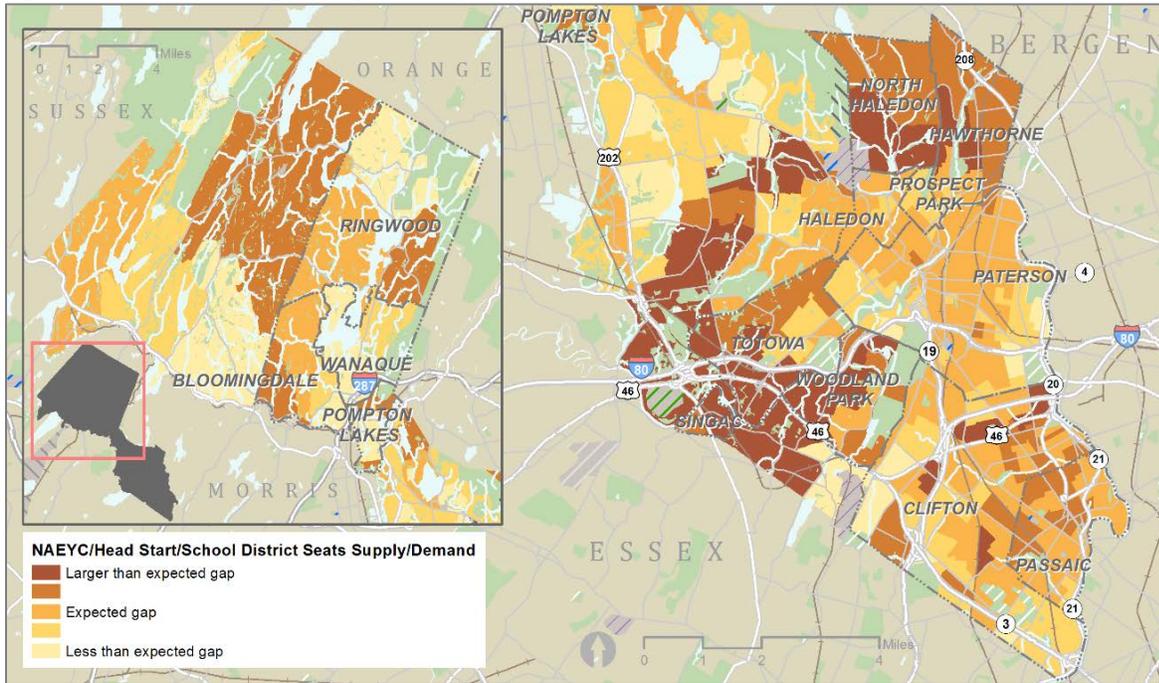
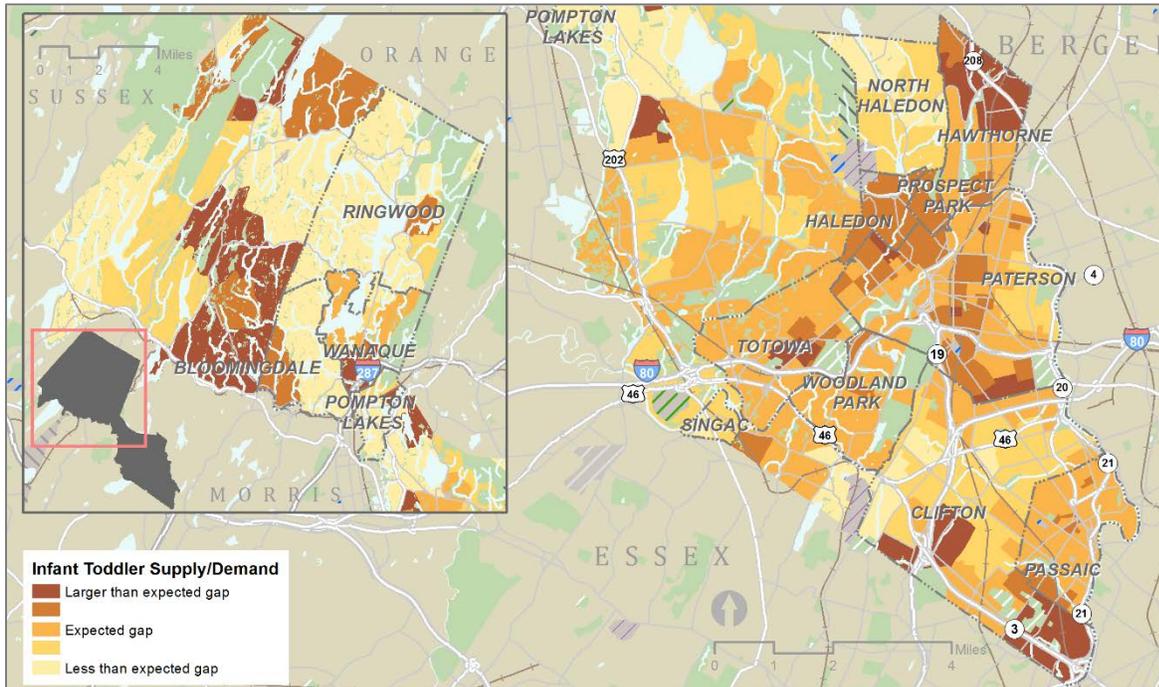


Figure 4: Relative Shortage of Licensed Infant and Toddler Early Childhood Education Seats



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