

Juneau Licensed Child Care Assessment ¹

In February 2019, the State of Alaska, Child Care Program Office (CCPO), in partnership with thread, Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and Association for the Education of Young Children-Southeast Alaska (AEYC-SEA) conducted a child care survey on the Juneau community^A. This survey focused on collecting information on the supply and demand for child care in licensed facilities, as well as information about the workforce and other issues impacting child care in Juneau. Overall, 17 unique facilities were represented (see page 4 for more detailed information on facilities that responded).

Summary of Findings:

- 1) The supply is not meeting the demand for licensed child care in downtown Juneau.
- 2) Lack of space and lack of staff are barriers to increasing the number of children that facilities serve.
- 3) Benefits are rarely provided to staff and salaries are lower than the median income.
- 4) Facility closures have occurred more often in the valley than in downtown. After out-migration, career changes/lack of benefits is the reason for closure reported most often.

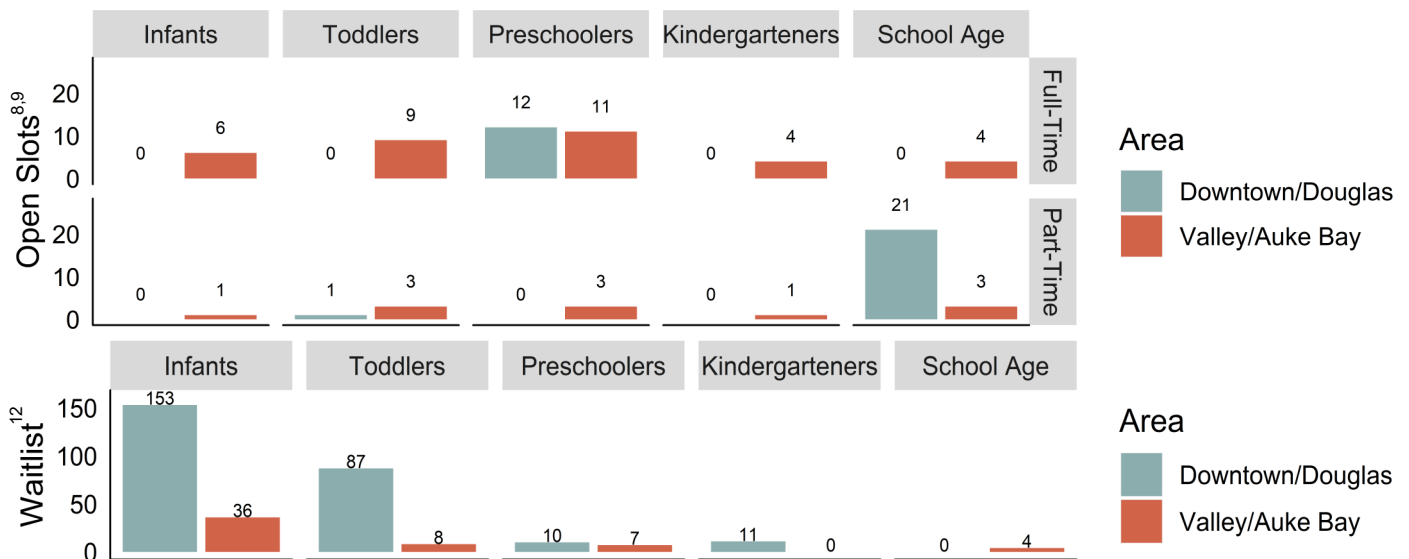
The supply is not meeting the demand for licensed child care in downtown Juneau.

One of the primary goals of conducting an assessment is to better understand the supply and demand for licensed child care in the Juneau area. To achieve this, we examine the number of open full and part-time slots and the number of children waitlisted for each age group and area.

Our findings — seen in the bar charts below — suggest that for full-time care there are more open slots in the Valley/Auke Bay area for all age groups except preschoolers^B.

Waitlists — which serve as one measure of whether there are enough slots — for every age group, except for school age children, are longer in Downtown/Douglas than in the Valley/Auke Bay areas.

Together these findings suggest that there are not enough licensed child care slots in Downtown/Douglas, while there may be too many slots for most age groups in the Valley/Auke Bay. Both the Downtown/Douglas and the Valley/Auke Bay areas could use more slots for infant care.



Lack of space and staff are barriers to increasing the number of children that facilities serve.

For facilities that are operating at full capacity, the most reported barriers are not wanting to increase capacity, a lack of indoor space, and a lack of qualified staff.

For facilities that are not operating at full capacity, the most reported barriers are too many other providers, not wanting to operate at full capacity, and lack of staff and qualified staff.

These findings indicate that for facilities who do want to increase the number of children that they serve, lack of space and lack of staff are the primary barriers. However, it is important to note that many facilities do not want to increase the number of children that they serve. This suggests that solutions that target new facilities may prove more effective than solutions that target existing facilities.

Barriers to Increasing Capacity⁴:

- Do not want to increase child care capacity (4/10 or 40%),
- Lack of indoor space (3/10 or 30%),
- Lack of qualified staff (3/10 or 30%),
- Lack of outdoor space (2/10 or 20%),
- Lack of staff (2/10 or 20%), and
- Not enough families interested in care (1/10 or 10%).

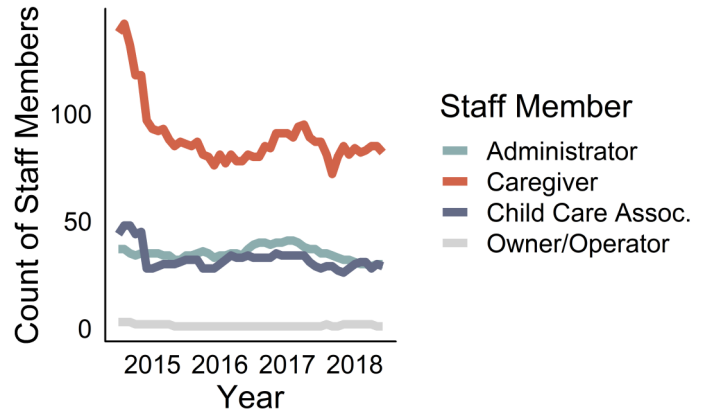
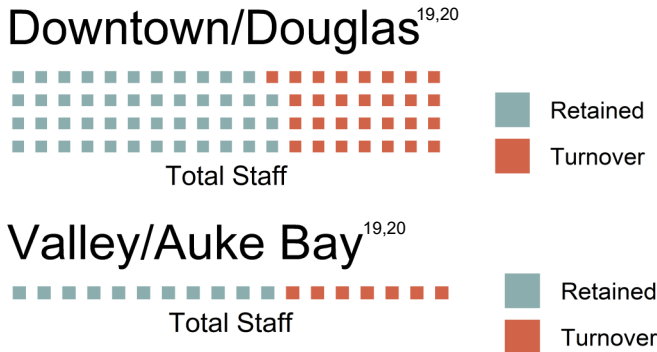
Reasons for not Operating at Full Capacity³:

- Too many other providers (5/7 or 71%),
- Do not want to operate at capacity (2/7 or 29%),
- Lack of staff (2/7 or 29%),
- Lack of qualified staff (2/7 or 29%), and
- Not enough families interested in care (1/7 or 14%).

Staff recruitment and retention continues to be a barrier to providing child care.

There are approximately 135 child care workers in licensed facilities in the Juneau area. Of this population, there were 95 workers represented in the responses that were received. Over the last year, facilities reported a turnover rate of 38% in Downtown/Douglas and 39% in the Valley/Auke Bay areas.

From July 2014 – June 2018, the number of child care associates and caregivers in facilities decreased substantially, while the number of administrators and owner/operators remained relatively stable.



Benefits are rarely provided to staff and salaries are lower than the median income.

Facilities were asked if and why staff are leaving employment²¹. The reason that was reported most often for why staff are leaving is that benefits are not provided to employees.

- No benefits provided for employees (5/6 or 83%),
- Left the child care field (5/6 or 83%),
- Terminated (not known whether voluntary or involuntary)(5/6 or 83%),
- Low wages (4/6 or 67%),
- Relocated (4/6 or 67%),
- Left to work at another facility (2/6 or 33%).

In line with why facilities reported staff are leaving, very few facilities reported providing benefits to their employees aside from paid days or paid time off¹⁸.

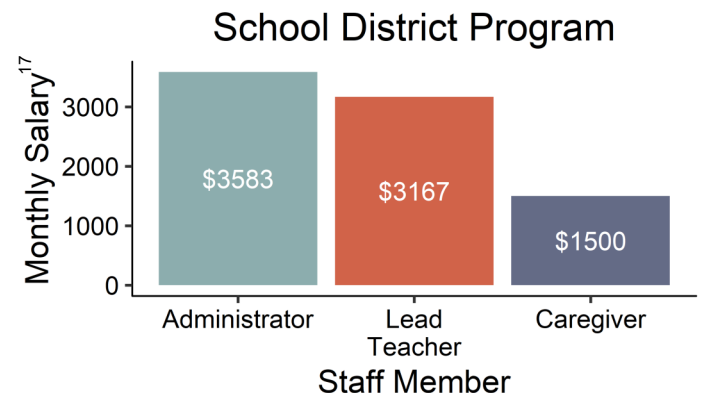
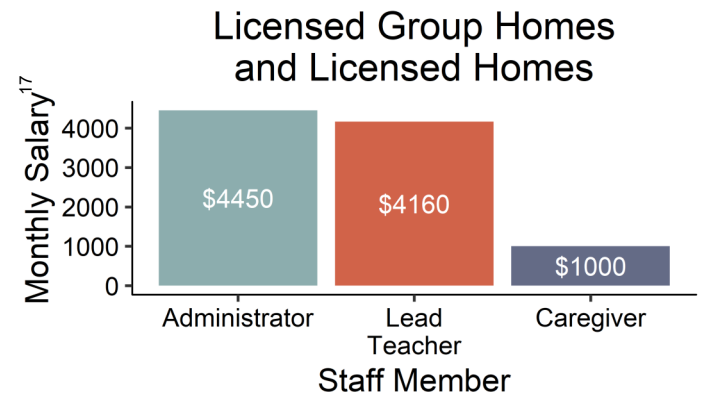
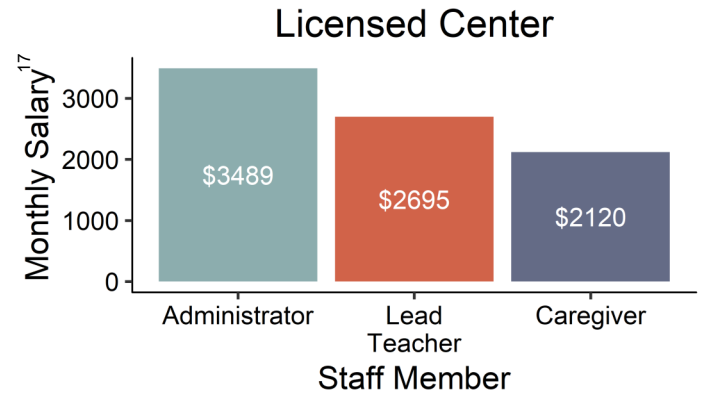
- Paid Days/Time Off: (7/17 or 41%),
- Medical / Dental / Retirement: (1/17 or 6%),
- Medical / Education: (1/17 or 6%).

The decline in child care workers from July 2014 - June 2018 was driven primarily by the decline in the number of caregivers. Caregivers make up the largest group of child care workers and also receive the lowest wages.

In Juneau, the average annual salary for caregivers in licensed centers is \$25,440¹⁷. According to the Juneau Economic Development Council, the average annual salary in 2017 was \$51,063. This means that caregivers make approximately half of the average annual salary in Juneau.

While the difference between salaries for child care workers and the average salary in Juneau is most pronounced for caregivers, lead teachers and administrators also make less than the average annual salary in Juneau. The only child care worker that makes more than the average annual salary in Juneau are administrators in licensed group homes and homes.

These findings suggest that increasing staff salaries and providing benefits may help to increase retention and reduce turnover rates in the child care field.

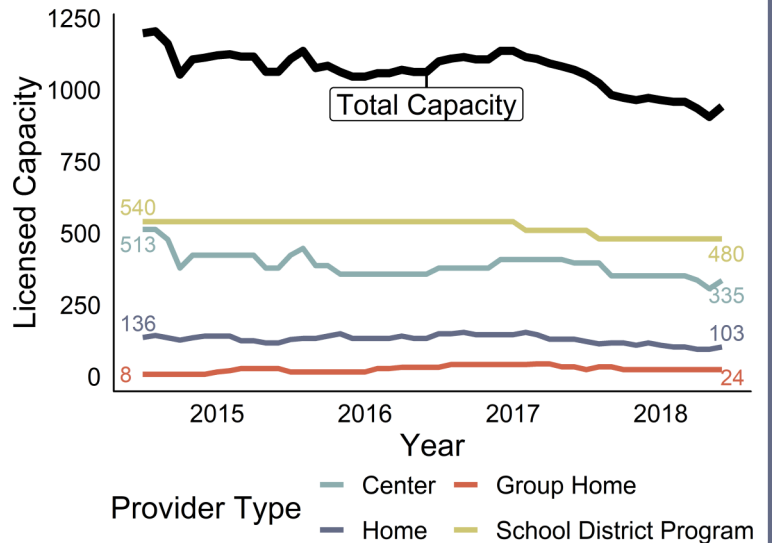


Capacity has been declining. Currently, there is one licensed slot for every five children.

In order to get an idea of facility closures and capacity in the Juneau area, we relied on data from the Juneau Child Care Survey, Child Care Licensing, and the Integrated Child Care Information System (ICCIS).

Data on licensed capacity shows that from July 2014 through June 2018, total licensed capacity declined from 1197 to 942. This drop in capacity seems to be largely driven by centers (-178 capacity) and school district programs (-60 capacity). For group homes and homes, this drop has not been nearly as pronounced with only a net decrease of 17 slots across this time period.

According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, there were an estimated 5,133 children aged 0 through 12 years of age living in Juneau in 2017 (assumes equal distribution of children in each age group). This means that there is approximately 1 licensed child care slot for every 5 children in Juneau^C.



Facility closures have occurred more often in the valley than in downtown.

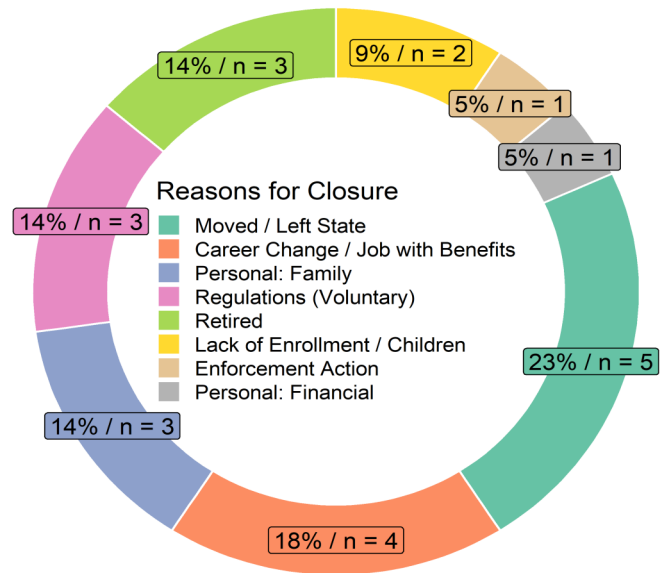
Looking at the map of facility closures, the vast majority of both centers and homes that have closed over this time period have been located in the Valley/Auke Bay, while far fewer have been located in the Downtown/Douglas area.

Data on facility closure reasons indicates that the two most often cited reasons for closure are administrators moving/leaving the state and administrators looking for a career change or a job with benefits^D.

Location of Closed Facilities
July 2014 - June 2018



● Center ● Group Home ● Home



Looking Forward

To summarize, our findings suggest three primary barriers to increasing the number of children served by licensed facilities in Juneau.

The first set of barriers for facilities wanting to increase their capacity is lack of space and staff. Identifying available and affordable space may aid facilities in increasing their capacity.

The second barrier is that facilities experience difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. The number of caregivers has dropped considerably from July 2014 - June 2018. Facilities report that staff quit working for their facility because benefits

are not provided. Indeed, very few facilities reported offering benefits aside from paid days/time off. Staff salaries are also low relative to the average annual salary in Juneau. Increasing staff salaries and providing benefits may reduce the high staff turnover rates experienced by facilities.

Finally, facilities, particularly licensed homes, have closed at a faster rate than they have opened in the valley. After administrators moving or leaving the state, career changes and jobs with benefits are the reason for closure most often reported. This suggests that similar strategies may prove effective for staff retention and facility retention.



Southeast Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children



For more information about this report, contact the Child Care Program Office at ccpo@alaska.gov.

Sample Size Information:

| | Responded | Surveyed | Capacity | At Capacity? |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| Centers | 7 | 7 | 322 | 5/7 or 63% |
| Group Homes | 2 | 2 | 24 | 1/2 or 50% |
| Homes | 7 | 13 | 103 | 4/7 or 57% |
| School District Programs | 1 | 1 | 480 | 0/1 or 0% |

Survey Questions:

) What is the name and address of your child care facility? (free response)

) Is your facility operating at full capacity? Full capacity meaning the number of children you are licensed for as listed on your child care license. (Yes/No)

) If you answered "No" to operating at full capacity, please select all reasons that apply as to why you are not operating at your facility's full licensed capacity. (checkboxes)

Not enough families interested in receiving licensed child care in the community.

Too many other licensed child care providers in the community.

Lack of qualified Child Care Associates to be able to enroll more children.

Lack of child care staff (other than Child Care Associates) to be able to enroll more children.

Do not want to operate to full licensed capacity.

Other (please specify)

) If you answered "Yes" to operating at full capacity, what barriers does your facility have to increasing your child care licensing capacity? (checkboxes)

Not enough families interested in receiving licensed child care in the community.

Too many other licensed child care providers in the community.

Lack of qualified Child Care Associates to be able to enroll more children.

Lack of child care staff (other than Child Care Associates) to be able to enroll more children.

Lack of indoor space.

Lack of outdoor space.

Do not want to increase child care capacity.

Other (please specify)

) What is the desired capacity for your facility? Desired capacity is the maximum number of children that you would like to have in care? (free response)

) If you are not operating at your desired capacity, why? (free response)

) What is your facility's capacity for each age group? (free response, separately for infant, toddler, preschoolers, kindergarteners, and school age)

) How many open **full-time** slots does your facility have available by age group? (free response, separately for infant, toddler, preschoolers, kindergarteners, and school age)

) How many open **part-time** slots does your facility have available by age group? (free response, separately for infant, toddler, preschoolers, kindergarteners, and school age)

0) Does your facility have a waitlist? (Yes/No)

1) If you answered "No" to having a waitlist, please provide a reason why your facility does not have a wait list: (multiple choice)

Do not want to maintain a waitlist.

Not enough families interested in receiving licensed child care in the community.

- Other (please specify)

12) If you answered "Yes" to having a waitlist, please provide the number of children on your facility's waitlist by age group. (free response, separately for infant, toddler, preschoolers, kindergarteners, and school age)

13) If you answered "Yes" to having a waitlist, would you be willing to provide the CCPO a copy of your facility's waitlist to utilize for de-duplication of waitlisted children? (Yes/No)

14) What factors negatively impact the operation of your facility? (free response)

15) Provide the number of employees at your facility with their education attainment. (free response, separately for the categories below)

Related is defined as: Child Psychology, Early Childhood Education, Early Child Development, Early Childhood Special Education, or one of the following with coursework that addresses health and safety, child development and learning from birth through age twelve: social work, human services, nursing, Montessori, infant mental health, elementary education, school-age education, youth development or recreational/outdoor education.

- High School diploma, GED, or the equivalent
- Less than 12 hours of training and/or credits in early childhood or related field
- 12 or more hours of training and/or credits in early childhood or related field
- Certificate in early childhood or related field
- Associate Degree in early childhood or related field
- Bachelor's Degree in early childhood or related field
- Master's Degree in early childhood or related field
- Doctorate Degree in early childhood or related field

16) What is the monthly cost paid by your facility for the child care space covered on your license? (free response)

17) What is the average salary of your employees? (free response, separately for Administrator/Director/Owner, Lead Teacher, Caregiver)

18) What type of benefits does your facility provide employees? (free response)

19) How many employees does your facility employ? (free response)

20) How many employees were employed at your facility in calendar year 2018 but are no longer employed at your facility? (free response)

21) If staff are leaving employment at your facility, why? (free response)

- Staff are not leaving employment
- Low wages
- No benefits
- Terminated
- Relocated
- To work for another facility
- To work in a field outside of child care
- Unknown

Footnotes:

- Online survey links were sent to all licensed providers asking them to participate. After 5 days, the CCPO called providers that hadn't responded and encouraged them to respond. After another 5 days, AEYC-SEA called providers that hadn't responded and again encouraged them to respond.
- Four facilities reported a number of open slots similar to their licensed capacity. These numbers were verified/updated using other data sources.
- It is important to note other provider types offer child care services in Juneau. These include but are not limited to: Child Care Assistance Program participating Approved Relative Providers and InHome Providers; Early Head Start/Head Start Programs; School District Pre-elementary school programs; and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) American Indian/Alaska Native Tribal Child Care Providers.
- Reasons for closure could not be verified for five facilities—these facilities are not included in the percentages and counts reported here.