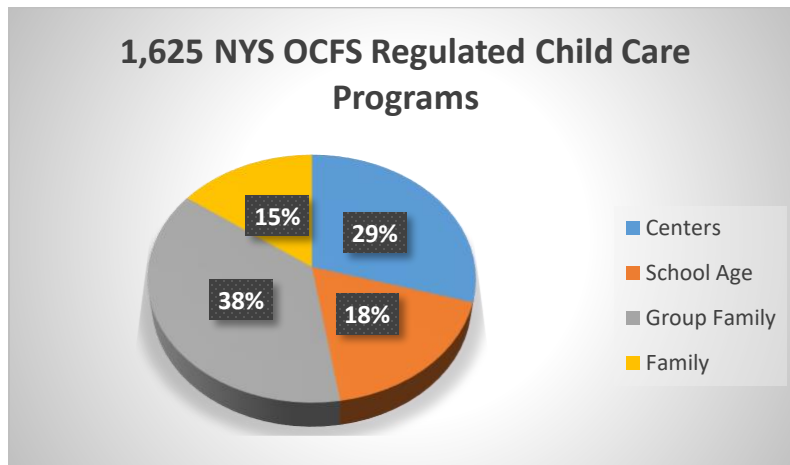


Mid-Hudson Region Child Care Deserts Summary

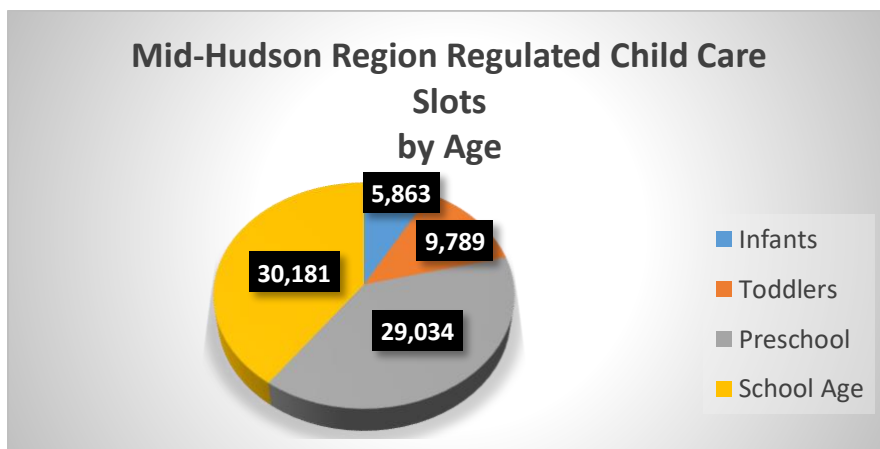
Demographic Overview

The Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council serves Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties, home to a population of over 2.3 million people; nearly 360k are children 12 years and younger, or slightly over 15% of the population (U.S. Census ACS Estimates 2019). The region contains large cities, including Yonkers, the third largest in the state, as well as many suburban and rural areas. The counties vary substantially in population size and density as well as economic landscape. Over 40% of the population resides within Westchester. Mean Household Median Income ranges from \$106k in Putnam to just over \$60k in Sullivan. Four counties have poverty levels of 11% or more though Putnam’s is only 4.1%. Over half of Westchester’s adults 25 and over hold a Bachelor’s degree or above compared with about 26% of those living in Sullivan County. Birth rates also vary, from a low of 2.8 in Ulster to 7.8 in Rockland.

Child Care Landscape



There are 1,625 NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regulated child care programs in the region comprised of 477 child care centers, 287 school age programs, 621 group family child care homes and 240 family child care homes. In total these programs provide 74,867 slots. The region lost over 100 programs since the start of the pandemic.



In each county, infant and toddler slots average 8% and 13% of all slots respectively. The percentage of slots for older children vary more widely with preschool slots ranging from 35% to 46% of all slots and school age slots from 33% to 45%. In some counties, legally exempt child care providers account for a third or more of all child care providers.

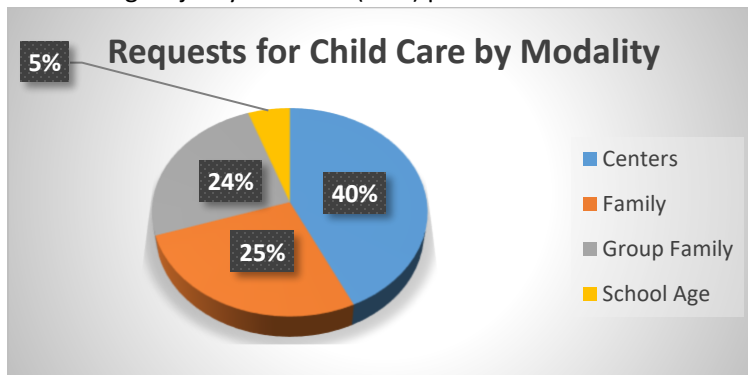


A “child care desert” is defined as a census tract with at least 50 children under 5 years, where there is either no child care at all or more than 3 children for every available slot. New York has one of the highest rates of child care deserts in the U.S. with 64% of its census tracts so designated. The Mid-Hudson Region rate is 60%, from highs of 68% in Orange and 67% in Sullivan to 52% in Dutchess.

Child care in New York is expensive, often an additional barrier to access for working families.

Referral Requests by Type of Care

The six child care resource and referral (CCR&R) agencies covering the Mid-Hudson Region have responded to over 6,100 referral requests in 2021 through mid-November. Around 40% of those requests were for child care center care, 25% for family child care homes, 24% for group family child care homes and about 5% for school age care. Note that some callers inquired about several modalities. Nearly 75% sought full-time care, 11% part-time and 12% were interested in both schedules. Eight percent (8%) inquired about after school care. In the aggregate, requests for evening, overnight and weekend care were less than 4%. An overwhelming majority of callers (82%) preferred care near their home, and 13% near work.



Major Industries

The region’s industries include life sciences, advanced manufacturing, information technology, distribution, financial and professional services, film and television production and tourism.

Conclusion

Region-wide, the existing regulated child care supply meets only 21% of the need for all children 12 years and under. Even if only 60% of those children needed child care, just 35% of that need could be met with the current supply. Every county has a surprisingly high percentage of “child care desert” census tracts, especially Orange at 68% and Sullivan at 67%, both above the state average of 64%. Parents overwhelmingly seek full-time care, close to home. Although requests for non-traditional care remain low, every CCR&R in the region identified this as a need. The 21-22 NYS budget raised the eligibility cap for low income child care subsidy system to 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and reduced the parent share to 10% of income over FPL, making child care more affordable for many more New York families. Additional regulated child care is needed in every county for every age category, but the priority for attention and funding should be to develop infant and toddler slots in center and home-based settings.

