

Child Care Costs *Exceed \$1 Billion Annually* for Wisconsin Children Under Age 5



Number of Children Under Age 5 in Group and Family Child Care Programs

There are approximately **84,000 children under age five** enrolled in regulated center or family child care programs in 2025, including children enrolled both full-time (~80%) and part-time (20%).¹

| | Total Family and Group Programs | Family Programs (12%) | Group Programs (88%) |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Under 2 Years (28%) | 23,470 | 3,372 | 20,098 |
| 2 Years (21%) | 17,463 | 2,471 | 14,992 |
| 3 Years (25%) | 21,483 | 2,294 | 19,189 |
| 4 Years (26%) | 21,523 | 1,832 | 19,691 |
| Total Under 5 Years | 83,939 | 9,969 | 73,970 |

NOTE: Enrollment data is based on providers' monthly Child Care Counts applications, with extrapolations for providers not in the program. **Without Child Care Counts applications, DCF would not have enrollment data for child care.**

Median Annual Price of Full-Time Care for Children Under Age 5

The median annual price of child care in 2025 ranges from **nearly \$10,500 for 4-year-olds** in family programs to **over \$16,000 for children under age 2** in group programs.²

| | Family Programs | Group Programs |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Under 2 Years | \$11,479 | \$16,175 |
| 2 - 3 Years | \$10,436 | \$14,662 |
| 4 Years | \$10,436 | \$13,044 |

Annual Child Care Costs for Parents with Children Under 5

Wisconsin families pay over **\$570 million for infants and toddlers under age 3**, and over **\$1 billion for all preschool aged children under age five**.³

| | Total Family and Group Programs | Family Programs | Group Programs |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Under 2 Years | \$342.4M | \$36.5M | \$305.9M |
| 2 Years | \$229.1M | \$24.4M | \$204.7M |
| 3 Years | \$273.4M | \$22.3M | \$251.1M |
| 4 Years | \$232.1M | \$17.2M | \$214.9M |
| Total Under 5 Years | \$1.1B | \$100.3M | \$976.6M |

¹DCF defines full time as 21 or more hours/week in care, and part time as less than 21 hours/week.

²Prices reflect the median (50th percentile) price reported by child care providers from the [2025 Market Rate Survey](#).

³Based on estimates of the number of children enrolled in regulated group and family child care programs and the median annual price of child care from the 2025 Market Rate Survey. Approximately 20 percent of children under age 5 attend child care part-time, defined as less than 21 hours per week. For this analysis, part-time prices are estimated as 50 percent of full-time prices.