



News Release

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Report Shows Number of Child Care Providers Declining in Michigan

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LANSING – Across Michigan, families rely on child care providers to offer high-quality early learning and care for their children while they work and go to school. A new report shows that in many communities across the state, licensed care is becoming more difficult to find.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) commissioned Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to conduct a study to better understand how the child care market has changed over time – and whether a decline in licensed providers was related to a decline in the number of children in a community.

The report of statewide findings shows that since 2010, the number of child care slots in Michigan has decreased 2.5 percent, while the number of children from birth through age nine in Michigan has decreased by 5.5 percent. These statewide figures, however, mask significant variation by county.

For example, the largest decline in the number of licensed slots was in Oscoda County, which saw a 62 percent decline from 238 slots to 90 – a particularly large figure given that the number of children from birth to age nine was virtually unchanged. The largest increase in the number of slots was Oakland County, which saw an 11-percent increase, compared to a population decline of 4.2 percent.

“Our goal is that every child, in every community, has access to high-quality child-care programs regardless of program type,” said Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles. “The findings in this report show us where continued efforts are needed to ensure that every Michigan family has access to quality child care that meets their unique needs and preferences.”

Michigan is committed to maintaining a child care system that helps families meet their needs and budget. However, the report uncovered significant changes in the number of family and group home providers, severely limiting options in some communities.

From 2010 to 2017, the number of family and group home providers declined dramatically (38.8 percent and 34.1 percent, respectively), while the number of child care centers increased by 5.3 percent. Families who rely on the flexibility of home-based care could be left without any reasonable child care option, particularly those who require evening and weekend care.

Families with infants and toddlers may face even greater shortages in available slots. Ten Michigan counties (Alcona, Alpena, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Keweenaw, Lake, Montmorency, Ontonagon, Presque Isle, and Schoolcraft) do not have any licensed slots at centers that serve children younger than 30 months, suggesting that center-based care for infants and toddlers may be very hard to find in those and other communities, as well.

This study builds on past efforts by MDE to support Michigan’s child care system by improving access, quality, and the credentials of providers. The report was developed by PSC, a nonpartisan public policy research firm in Lansing, under the direction of MDE.

“We knew from statewide data that the number of child care providers was declining,” said Michelle Richard, Vice President at PSC. “This report gives the state, and every county, a detailed look at how the child care market has changed over time. Hopefully, this new information on industry trends and communities struggling with child care shortages will empower early childhood leaders to develop targeted and impactful solutions for Michigan’s child care market.”

To see the *Changes in Michigan’s Child Care Landscape* full report, go to:
www.michigan.gov/greatstart

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