

2026

First Children's Finance

CHILD CARE NEEDS SUMMARY

Southeast Minnesota

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How First Children's Finance measures the gap between child care supply and demand

Each year, First Children's Finance completes an analysis of child care supply and demand in Minnesota. This analysis can be used to inform strategic supply building efforts and to track year-over-year progress on the availability of full-day, full-year care that supports working families.

To prepare the statewide and regional reports, FCF analyzes population-level data and child care licensing data to estimate both the full-day, full-year child care supply and demand. FCF focuses solely on full-day, full-year care to understand the supply of available care that supports parent and caregiver participation in the workforce and the number of children that are likely to need this kind of regulated child care.

The methodology outlined here is utilized to prepare the statewide Supply Demand Gap Analysis. When working with individual communities through our community consultation processes, FCF utilizes a more targeted methodology that also incorporates data on both the supply of part-day, part-year child care and on parent workforce participation.

How FCF Estimates Child Care Demand

Recognizing that not all children under age 5 need formal child care, FCF uses zip code data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau on the number of children under age six with all available parents in the workforce who are likely to need child care. FCF reduces this number by 15% to estimate the number of children aged five and under with all available parents in the workforce.

How FCF Estimates Child Care Supply

To determine the supply of child care, FCF exports data on currently active child care licenses (including both child care centers and licensed family child care) as of June 1 of each year. While many families utilize part-time child care, or even multiple sources of part-time child care, working families generally need child care options that offer full-day, full-year care to support their participation in the labor force. FCF reviews available licensing data to identify and remove those programs that do not offer full-day, full-year care to better assess the gap in supply that meets the needs of working families.

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While FCF does receive funding from the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth and Families, because FCF is an independent nonprofit organization and not a state agency, FCF does not have access to data that is not publicly available. In Minnesota, the capacity of certified child care centers is not publicly available, and thus certified child care centers are not included in the supply estimates. Capacity data for tribally licensed child care programs within the geography of Minnesota is also not public and is similarly not included in FCF's supply data. FCF also removes programs that are designated as offering only school year or summer-only programs. Finally, as this report is designed to estimate the gap in licensed child care, non-licensed or unlicensed programs, such as family, friend and neighbor care (FFN) and unlicensed pre-school or school-based programs are not considered in FCF's determination of child care supply.

To refine the estimate of child care supply, FCF makes a further adjustment to licensed capacity. It is not feasible for a child care program to always operate at 100% of licensed capacity. Unlike schools, where grade level is determined by children being of a certain age at the beginning of the school year, in licensed child care, whether a child is considered an infant, toddler, preschooler or school-aged is determined by their birthday. Thus, child care programs have children moving between age categories/classrooms throughout the year, creating temporarily open slots across the program. Because of this, as a best practice, FCF considers that 85% of licensed capacity is the functional equivalent of full enrollment. For purposes of these reports, licensed capacity of child care programs is likewise reduced from 100% to 85% to determine child care supply.



Background Information

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

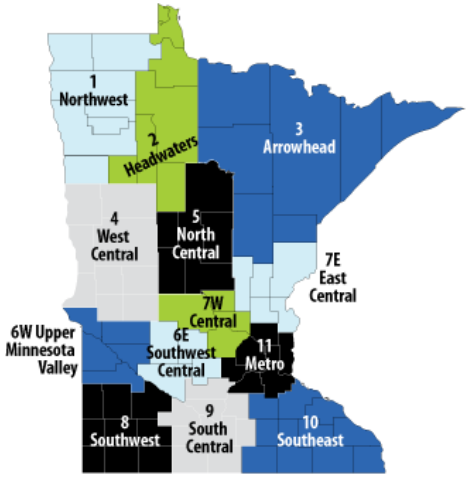
This report was prepared by First Children's Finance through generous funding from the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

This report covers the following geographic area:

MN Economic Development Region 9 & 10 sorted by county

Southeast Minnesota Counties:

Blue Earth	Freeborn	Mower	Steele
Brown	Goodhue	Nicollet	Wabasha
Dodge	Houston	Olmsted	Waseca
Faribault	Le Sueur	Rice	Watonwan
Fillmore	Martin	Sibley	Winona



Data Sources:

2020-2024 U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5-year estimates
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Department of Education
U.S. Postal Service

Assumptions

1. If a zip code falls in more than one city and/or county, data was placed in the primary city and/or county as determined by the U.S. Postal Service.
2. All programs offering less than all day, every-day child care were excluded.
3. Due to lack of publicly available capacity data, all certified and non-certified programs (generally school-based programs) were excluded.
4. Due to lack of publicly available Tribal licensing data, all tribally licensed child care programs are excluded

**Capacity is an internal calculation of First Children's Finance based upon historical data collection*

***Children under 5 is an adjusted calculation from 2020-2024 U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5-year estimates*

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Southeast Minnesota Child Care Needs Summary by County
June 2026

Totals:

Child Care Centers	CCC Capacity	Family Child Care	FCC Capacity	Total Capacity	Capacity*	Under '6' Working	Children Under 5**	Child Care Need
138	12,753	1,048	12,409	25,162	21,388	38,319	32,571	(11,183)

Zip Code	City	County	CCC #	CCC Capacity	FCC #	FCC Capacity	Total Capacity	Capacity*	Under '6' Working	Children Under 5**	Child Care Need
56010	Amboy	Blue Earth	0	0	2	24	24	20	58	49	**-29**
56024	Eagle Lake	Blue Earth	1	62	7	82	144	122	354	301	**-179**
56034	Garden City	Blue Earth	1	42	0	0	42	36	12	10	**26**
56037	Good Thunder	Blue Earth	1	85	0	0	85	72	85	72	**0**
56055	Lake Crystal	Blue Earth	1	90	10	124	214	182	255	217	**-35**
56063	Madison Lake	Blue Earth	1	101	1	12	113	96	162	138	**-42**
56001	Mankato	Blue Earth	11	1171	32	380	1551	1318	2119	1801	**-483**
56065	Mapleton	Blue Earth	1	22	7	86	108	92	195	166	**-74**
56078	Pemberton	Blue Earth	0	0	1	14	14	12	32	27	**-15**
56080	Saint Clair	Blue Earth	0	0	3	32	32	27	28	24	**3**
56090	Vernon Center	Blue Earth	0	0	1	10	10	9	42	36	**-27**
56019	Comfrey	Brown	0	0	2	26	26	22	31	26	**-4**
56030	Essig	Brown	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	**-3**
56041	Hanska	Brown	0	0	1	12	12	10	59	50	**-40**
56073	New Ulm	Brown	5	405	37	454	859	730	746	634	**96**

56085	Sleepy Eye	Brown	0	0	16	200	200	170	306	260	**-90**
56087	Springfield	Brown	1	61	13	152	213	181	225	191	**-10**
55924	Claremont	Dodge	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	43	**-43**
55927	Dodge Center	Dodge	0	0	8	96	96	82	225	191	**-110**
55940	Hayfield	Dodge	0	0	3	38	38	32	160	136	**-104**
55944	Kasson	Dodge	2	170	19	221	391	332	724	615	**-283**
55955	Mantorville	Dodge	0	0	3	40	40	34	99	84	**-50**
55985	West Concord	Dodge	0	0	2	28	28	24	85	72	**-48**
56013	Blue Earth	Faribault	1	72	4	50	122	104	202	172	**-68**
56014	Bricelyn	Faribault	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	26	**-26**
56023	Delavan	Faribault	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	20	**-20**
56025	Easton	Faribault	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	45	**-45**
56027	Elmore	Faribault	0	0	1	12	12	10	30	26	**-15**
56033	Frost	Faribault	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	11	**-11**
56051	Kiester	Faribault	0	0	1	10	10	9	11	9	**-1**
56068	Minnesota Lake	Faribault	0	0	1	12	12	10	59	50	**-40**
56097	Wells	Faribault	1	42	7	82	124	105	243	207	**-101**
56098	Winnebago	Faribault	0	0	2	22	22	19	64	54	**-36**
55922	Canton	Fillmore	0	0	1	12	12	10	40	34	**-24**
55923	Chatfield	Fillmore	1	50	8	92	142	121	291	247	**-127**
55935	Fountain	Fillmore	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	43	**-43**
55939	Harmony	Fillmore	1	99	0	0	99	84	46	39	**45**
55949	Lanesboro	Fillmore	1	95	0	0	95	81	76	65	**16**
55954	Mabel	Fillmore	1	42	2	20	62	53	30	26	**27**
55961	Ostrander	Fillmore	0	0	0	0	0	0	46	39	**-39**
55962	Peterson	Fillmore	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	29	**-29**
55965	Preston	Fillmore	1	80	0	0	80	68	146	124	**-56**

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55971	Rushford	Fillmore	1	66	4	46	112	95	203	173	**-77**
55975	Spring Valley	Fillmore	0	0	11	130	130	111	237	201	**-91**
55990	Wykoff	Fillmore	0	0	3	34	34	29	37	31	**-3**
56007	Albert Lea	Freeborn	1	152	35	434	586	498	1056	898	**-400**
56009	Alden	Freeborn	0	0	1	14	14	12	61	52	**-40**
56016	Clarks Grove	Freeborn	0	0	1	12	12	10	46	39	**-29**
56020	Conger	Freeborn	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	**-4**
56029	Emmons	Freeborn	0	0	1	14	14	12	35	30	**-18**
56032	Freeborn	Freeborn	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	27	**-27**
56035	Geneva	Freeborn	0	0	1	12	12	10	38	32	**-22**
56036	Glenville	Freeborn	0	0	3	34	34	29	73	62	**-33**
56042	Hartland	Freeborn	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	36	**-36**
56043	Hayward	Freeborn	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	14	**-14**
56045	Hollandale	Freeborn	0	0	0	0	0	0	42	36	**-36**
56089	Twin Lakes	Freeborn	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	**-3**
55009	Cannon Falls	Goodhue	2	127	5	58	185	157	341	290	**-133**
55018	Dennison	Goodhue	0	0	2	22	22	19	18	15	**3**
55026	Frontenac	Goodhue	0	0	1	12	12	10	47	40	**-30**
55027	Goodhue	Goodhue	0	0	6	70	70	60	185	157	**-98**
55946	Kenyon	Goodhue	0	0	4	50	50	43	154	131	**-88**
55963	Pine Island	Goodhue	0	0	11	130	130	111	287	244	**-133**
55066	Red Wing	Goodhue	5	453	8	94	547	465	533	453	**12**
55983	Wanamingo	Goodhue	1	103	2	22	125	106	55	47	**60**
55089	Welch	Goodhue	0	0	0	0	0	0	83	71	**-71**
55992	Zumbrota	Goodhue	1	40	8	92	132	112	389	331	**-218**
55919	Brownsville	Houston	0	0	1	12	12	10	27	23	**-13**
55921	Caledonia	Houston	2	132	6	64	196	167	180	153	**14**

55931	Eitzen	Houston	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	24	**-24**
55941	Hokah	Houston	1	35	3	34	69	59	41	35	**24**
55943	Houston	Houston	0	0	8	90	90	77	200	170	**-94**
55947	La Crescent	Houston	3	181	3	30	211	179	322	274	**-94**
55974	Spring Grove	Houston	0	0	5	60	60	51	99	84	**-33**
56017	Cleveland	Le Sueur	1	72	1	12	84	71	143	122	**-50**
56028	Elysian	Le Sueur	0	0	1	12	12	10	77	65	**-55**
56050	Kasota	Le Sueur	0	0	2	26	26	22	64	54	**-32**
56057	Le Center	Le Sueur	0	0	9	110	110	94	138	117	**-24**
56058	Le Sueur	Le Sueur	0	0	9	118	118	100	356	303	**-202**
56069	Montgomery	Le Sueur	0	0	11	134	134	114	220	187	**-73**
56096	Waterville	Le Sueur	0	0	6	78	78	66	156	133	**-66**
56121	Ceylon	Martin	0	0	1	12	12	10	16	14	**-3**
56127	Dunnell	Martin	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	13	**-13**
56031	Fairmont	Martin	1	97	31	370	467	397	650	553	**-156**
56039	Granada	Martin	0	0	3	36	36	31	63	54	**-23**
56075	Northrop	Martin	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	22	**-22**
56162	Ormsby	Martin	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	30	**-30**
56171	Sherburn	Martin	0	0	4	46	46	39	86	73	**-34**
56176	Trimont	Martin	0	0	3	36	36	31	76	65	**-34**
56088	Truman	Martin	0	0	6	74	74	63	167	142	**-79**
56181	Welcome	Martin	0	0	4	48	48	41	50	43	**-2**
55909	Adams	Mower	0	0	2	20	20	17	82	70	**-53**
55912	Austin	Mower	3	421	25	298	719	611	1558	1324	**-713**
55918	Brownsdale	Mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	35	**-35**
55926	Dexter	Mower	0	0	1	12	12	10	63	54	**-43**
55933	Elkton	Mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	**-6**

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55936	Grand Meadow	Mower	0	0	3	32	32	27	88	75	**-48**
55950	Lansing	Mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
55951	Le Roy	Mower	0	0	1	12	12	10	64	54	**-44**
55953	Lyle	Mower	0	0	2	26	26	22	49	42	**-20**
55967	Racine	Mower	0	0	4	46	46	39	47	40	**-1**
55970	Rose Creek	Mower	0	0	4	54	54	46	41	35	**11**
55973	Sargeant	Mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	10	**-10**
55977	Taopi	Mower	0	0	1	12	12	10	14	12	**-2**
55982	Waltham	Mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	17	**-17**
56021	Courtland	Nicollet	0	0	2	24	24	20	66	56	**-36**
56054	Lafayette	Nicollet	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	41	**-41**
56003	Mankato	Nicollet	6	492	13	158	650	553	817	694	**-142**
56074	Nicollet	Nicollet	1	36	3	38	74	63	86	73	**-10**
56082	Saint Peter	Nicollet	4	322	15	180	502	427	494	420	**7**
55920	Byron	Olmsted	2	303	17	202	505	429	534	454	**-25**
55929	Dover	Olmsted	0	0	1	10	10	9	99	84	**-76**
55934	Eyota	Olmsted	2	171	8	92	263	224	218	185	**38**
55960	Oronoco	Olmsted	0	0	0	0	0	0	96	82	**-82**
55901	Rochester	Olmsted	23	2576	90	1049	3625	3081	3779	3212	**-131**
55902	Rochester	Olmsted	6	674	22	250	924	785	1264	1074	**-289**
55903	Rochester	Olmsted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
55904	Rochester	Olmsted	5	284	35	418	702	597	1365	1160	**-564**
55905	Rochester	Olmsted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
55906	Rochester	Olmsted	7	645	11	124	769	654	992	843	**-190**
55976	Stewartville	Olmsted	1	99	18	210	309	263	459	390	**-128**
55019	Dundas	Rice	1	38	5	58	96	82	160	136	**-54**
55021	Faribault	Rice	4	394	32	366	760	646	1500	1275	**-629**

56052	Kilkenny	Rice	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	22	**-22**
55046	Lonsdale	Rice	0	0	17	192	192	163	530	451	**-287**
55052	Morristown	Rice	0	0	4	48	48	41	104	88	**-48**
55053	Nerstrand	Rice	0	0	1	12	12	10	65	55	**-45**
55057	Northfield	Rice	4	394	15	164	558	474	836	711	**-236**
55087	Warsaw	Rice	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	10	**-10**
55088	Webster	Rice	0	0	0	0	0	0	74	63	**-63**
55307	Arlington	Sibley	0	0	6	78	78	66	236	201	**-134**
55334	Gaylord	Sibley	0	0	9	114	114	97	77	65	**31**
55335	Gibbon	Sibley	0	0	1	12	12	10	120	102	**-92**
55338	Green Isle	Sibley	0	0	4	46	46	39	36	31	**9**
56044	Henderson	Sibley	0	0	3	38	38	32	140	119	**-87**
55366	New Auburn	Sibley	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	8	**-8**
55396	Winthrop	Sibley	1	74	5	60	134	114	124	105	**9**
55917	Blooming Prairie	Steele	0	0	10	116	116	99	274	233	**-134**
56026	Ellendale	Steele	0	0	5	60	60	51	84	71	**-20**
56046	Hope	Steele	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	24	**-24**
55049	Medford	Steele	0	0	6	78	78	66	198	168	**-102**
55060	Owatonna	Steele	4	548	59	704	1252	1064	1303	1108	**-43**
55932	Elgin	Wabasha	0	0	12	136	136	116	118	100	**15**
55945	Kellogg	Wabasha	0	0	2	24	24	20	69	59	**-38**
55041	Lake City	Wabasha	1	50	15	178	228	194	381	324	**-130**
55956	Mazeppa	Wabasha	0	0	6	66	66	56	156	133	**-77**
55957	Millville	Wabasha	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	30	**-30**
55964	Plainview	Wabasha	1	63	12	140	203	173	423	360	**-187**
55968	Reads Landing	Wabasha	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
55981	Wabasha	Wabasha	0	0	7	80	80	68	79	67	**1**

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55991	Zumbro Falls	Wabasha	0	0	2	24	24	20	64	54	**-34**
56048	Janesville	Waseca	0	0	8	94	94	80	243	207	**-127**
56072	New Richland	Waseca	0	0	3	32	32	27	110	94	**-66**
56091	Waldorf	Waseca	0	0	2	24	24	20	10	9	**12**
56093	Waseca	Waseca	1	73	15	176	249	212	623	530	**-318**
56120	Butterfield	Watonwan	0	0	1	14	14	12	85	72	**-60**
56022	Darfur	Watonwan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
56056	La Salle	Watonwan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
56060	Lewisville	Watonwan	0	0	1	12	12	10	14	12	**-2**
56062	Madelia	Watonwan	1	63	5	64	127	108	231	196	**-88**
56160	Odin	Watonwan	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	31	**-31**
56081	Saint James	Watonwan	1	138	5	66	204	173	384	326	**-153**
55910	Altura	Winona	0	0	2	20	20	17	40	34	**-17**
55925	Dakota	Winona	0	0	1	10	10	9	79	67	**-59**
55952	Lewiston	Winona	0	0	8	94	94	80	138	117	**-37**
55959	Minnesota City	Winona	0	0	4	46	46	39	94	80	**-41**
55969	Rollingstone	Winona	0	0	1	10	10	9	113	96	**-88**
55972	Saint Charles	Winona	1	101	11	128	229	195	251	213	**-19**
55979	Utica	Winona	0	0	3	34	34	29	69	59	**-30**
55987	Winona	Winona	7	647	43	499	1146	974	1337	1136	**-162**
	Totals		**138**	**12,753**	**1,048**	**12,409**	**25,162**	**21,388**	**38,319**	**32,571**	**(11,183)**

