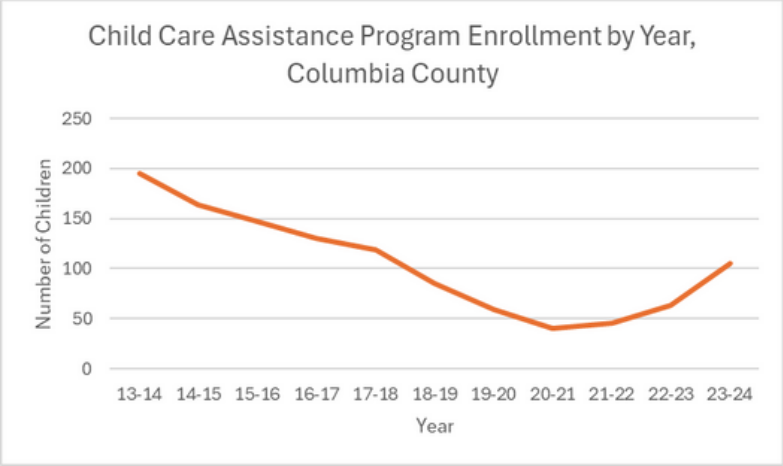
Child Care Factsheet

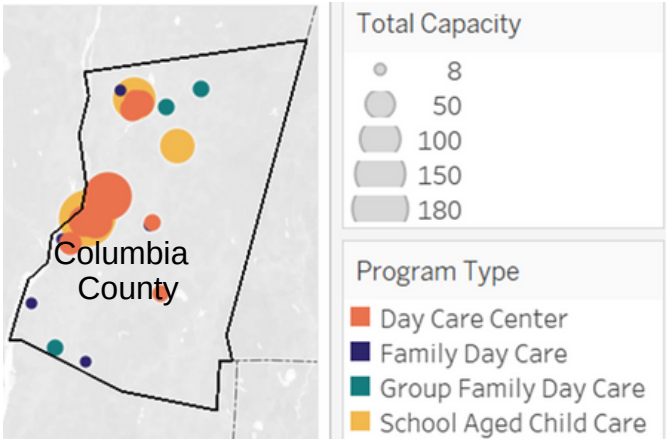
Columbia County

Child care is a critical support for families with young children, employers, and New York State's economy. New York has made substantial investments in the child care system over the past few years, but more is needed to help the sector thrive. The supply of child care is not large enough to meet the needs of families, care is too expensive for many families to afford out-of-pocket, and the child care workforce is underpaid.

Columbia County has 2,400 children under the age of 5 and 4,124 children between 5 and 12 years old out of a total population of 61,587 . In the county, 66% of families with children under 6 have all adults in the workforce, and 67% of mothers with children under 6 are in the workforce across the county.

In Columbia County, there were 38 child care programs in 2020 and 25 programs in 2025, a change of -34% over five years.





Capacity Change by Setting

Year	Day Care Center	Family Day Care	Group Family Day Care	School Aged Child Care
2020	525	56	186	768
2025	458	56	64	506
Change	-13%	0%	-66%	-34%

The ratio of children under the age of 5 per child care slot is **5.9 :1.**

The ratio of children aged 6-12 per child care slot is **7 :1.**

There is not enough child care to support the needs of families.

Average Annual Cost of Infant Care in Columbia County

Day care center ***$16,666***

Family day care ***$11,554***

> *SUNY Tuition* ***$7,070***

In New York, it is cheaper to go to college than to pay for child care.

Child Care in Columbia County

The Progress

Policy changes over the past several years have dramatically lowered child care costs for families enrolled in the Child Care Assistance Program. From 2020-2025, the **annual copayment** amount for a family of four making $50,000/year **decreased from $10,000 to $188.**

NYS allocations to the County for the Child Care Assistance Program, from 2020-2025, have changed by **-12% from $1,386,810 to $1,221,095.**

The Challenges

Over 60% of children living in Columbia County qualify for some form of child care assistance. **However, only 4% of eligible families were enrolled in 2023-2024.**

On average, child care workers in Columbia County earn **$17.18 /hour, or $35,057 /year.**

96% of jobs in Columbia County earn more than the average child care provider.

Child care workers earn less than most other jobs, even though they serve a vital role to children and families. High turnover in the child care workforce increases the cost of care for providers and limits the quality of care for families.

To learn more about child care in your region and statewide, visit thechildrensagenda.org/reports/ or scan the QR code

Child Care Assistance Eligibility Level by Family Size

Family Size	Income Level (85% of State Median Income)
2	$73,870
3	$91,251
4	$108,632
5	$126,013

Notes and References

Data to inform this fact sheet was derived a number of different sources, including the US Census Bureau, the Office of Children and Family Services, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the Department of Labor, and from national child care researchers. All references and methodologies are available upon request.

January 2025
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