



# KCSOS

**Kern County  
Superintendent  
of Schools**

**Early Childhood and Education  
Needs Assessment Report 2024**

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## Introduction & Key Findings

### Introduction

The [Early Childhood Council of Kern \(ECCK\)](#) and the [Kern County Superintendent of Schools](#) Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK) and Early Education Supports and Child & Family Services Departments engaged the [Glen Price Group \(GPG\)](#) in 2023 to conduct a countywide child care needs assessment for a variety of purposes. Local Planning Councils like ECCK are required to conduct a needs assessment no less than every five years in order to plan for early child care and education services based on the needs of families in the local community. In addition, updated information is needed to help develop a countywide UPK Mixed Delivery Plan and to align early child care understanding of needs across county decision makers.

GPG gathered data on the demographics of children under five and their families, the licensed capacity of providers, the need for early child care and education, and the regional market rate for childcare subsidies. GPG used the most currently available data and disaggregated data by zip code when possible.

GPG also developed and analyzed surveys of families of children five and under, early child care and education (ECE) provider organizations, and the ECE workforce in order to fill in data gaps and better understand issues around ECE workforce retention and recruitment and facilities. Additionally, GPG conducted two online ECE workforce focus groups, and three parent interviews to dig deeper into some of the survey responses. Below are the key findings from these activities.

### Key Findings

- In 2022, approximately 88% of the need for subsidized infant and toddler spaces was unmet, and 60% of the need for subsidized preschool spaces was unmet. This equates to 25,197 infants and toddlers and 12,245 preschool age children in Kern County who were eligible for but unable to access subsidized ECE programs due to a lack of availability.
- There are 66,329 children under age five in Kern County which accounts for 7.3% of the total population.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly two-thirds (36,780) of all children birth to four in Kern County live in families with at least one working parent. Approximately half (19,858) of these children live in families with both parents in the workforce.
- The largest percentage (31%) of families responding to the survey selected “Child care/preschool was expensive / not affordable” as the biggest issue in finding child care.
- As of February 2024, 4,831 students are enrolled in transitional kindergarten (TK) in Kern

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S0101?q=S0101: Age and Sex&g=050XX00US06029&d=ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables>. Accessed on March 7, 2024.

County. This represents a 27% increase over six years (since 2018-2019) when 3,819 children were enrolled in TK (California Department of Education, 2020).

- During the 2022-23 school year, there were 2,153 children between the ages of 3-5 enrolled in special education.<sup>2</sup>
- Eighty-three percent of ECE workforce survey respondents have an Associate's degree or higher. Thirty-eight percent of respondents have a Bachelor of Arts or higher. Four percent of respondents did not have a GED or high school diploma.
- Seventy-eight percent of ECE workforce survey respondents speak English fluently and 60% speak Spanish fluently.
- Ninety - eight percent of workforce survey respondents reported that they planned on staying in the field, with only 2% planning to leave because of insufficient pay and/or family reasons and/or retirement.
- Slightly more than one-third of ECE providers reported in the survey that they are not fully staffed. ECE workforce focus group members also noted that part-time or assistant/aide positions are the hardest to fill.
- Just over half of the providers responding to the survey provide health coverage (55%) and paid vacation days (53%). Half of organizations indicated they provide paid holidays. Nearly a third (29%) do not provide any benefits.
- When asked about improvements in the field over the last two years, ECE workforce survey respondents cited: 1) professional learning opportunities, 2) developmentally appropriate practices, 3) increased funding and pay, 4) support for ECE educators, and 5) classroom resources (curriculum, materials and supplies, technology).
- The majority (84%) of ECE providers reported a variety of renovation needs, including expanding play areas, adding more storage and classrooms, updating facilities, and improving outdoor spaces. Specific needs include age-appropriate playgrounds, more furniture suitable for children, indoor playgrounds, and updated restrooms.

## About the Data

### Publicly available data

The data used to inform the Kern County Needs Assessment Report was sourced from the Census Bureau, the California Department of Education, the Kern County Human Services Department, the Kern County Consortium, the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, the Kern County Superintendent of Schools - Kern Integrated Data System (KiDS), the United Ways of California, the California Department of Social Services, surveys, focus groups, and interviews. An

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<sup>2</sup> California Department of Education. DataQuest. 2022-23.

explanation of the surveys, focus groups, and interviews conducted for the needs assessment is provided in the section following this section.

Some of the challenges of the resources used for the needs assessment pertain to the limitations of available data. Limitations included:

- Data from the California Early Learning Needs Assessment Reports (CELNAR), included in [Appendix B](#) as a required source for the Local Planning Council Needs Assessment, is from 2017 and does not reflect any changes since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is used throughout the needs assessment to provide current demographic data for Kern County. When possible and relevant, the 5-Year ACS (2018-2022) is used to provide the most current data. For the number of children birth to four in working families in Kern County, data for 2022 is not available therefore data from 2021 was used.
- For children receiving special education services in Kern County, the available data from the California Department of Education only indicates the total number of children ages three to five receiving special education and does not include younger children.
- A Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) oversees student Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individualized Education Plans (IEP), outlining how special education services will be provided. There are four SELPAs serving children ages birth to four in Kern County. To obtain a count of the number of IFSP and IEPs in the county, it requires requesting data that is not publicly available from each SELPA. The needs assessment includes limited data from the Kern County Consortium SELPA and Sierra Sands Unified School District SELPA who only serve a portion of children with an IFSP and IEP.
- Addressing the unmet need for state and federally subsidized programs is a challenge due to the limited data on the availability of state and federally subsidized ECE programs. This challenge stems from varying eligibility criteria, limited details within available data, and limited information on the use of subsidies.

Despite the limitations, the data from several resources are used throughout the needs assessment to provide a current picture of the child care needs in Kern County.

### Surveys (organizations, workforce, family)

KCSOS emailed an online organization survey to child development centers in Kern County listed in Kern County's Resource and Referral Agency, Community Connection for Child Care database. All programs represented are licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing. Organization surveys were also emailed to all school districts.

KCSOS requested these organizations also share the workforce and family surveys with their

clients. In addition, the family surveys were advertised to Kern County residents with children through paid Facebook advertisements.

The online surveys were live from mid-November through mid-December 2023.

- 306 individuals began the family survey, with 174 completing most questions (some questions were optional).
- 281 individuals began the workforce survey, with 235 completing most questions (some questions were optional).
- 59 organizations began the provider survey, with 36 completing most questions (some questions were optional).<sup>3</sup>

### ECE Workforce Focus Groups

The workforce survey asked participants if they would be willing to participate in a 60-90 minute focus group. The Glen Price Group (GPG) invited everyone who indicated interest and listed their email address. The stated purpose of the focus groups was to help Kern County leaders better understand 1) strategies to help with retention and recruitment of workforce and 2) improvements in the ECE field over the past two years.

GPG offered two opportunities (a morning and evening session) for online participation with Spanish translation. There were 11 participants in the morning session and 9 participants in the early evening session. GPG shared select workforce survey results with participants and they were asked follow up questions related to the responses.

### Key Interviews (Parents)

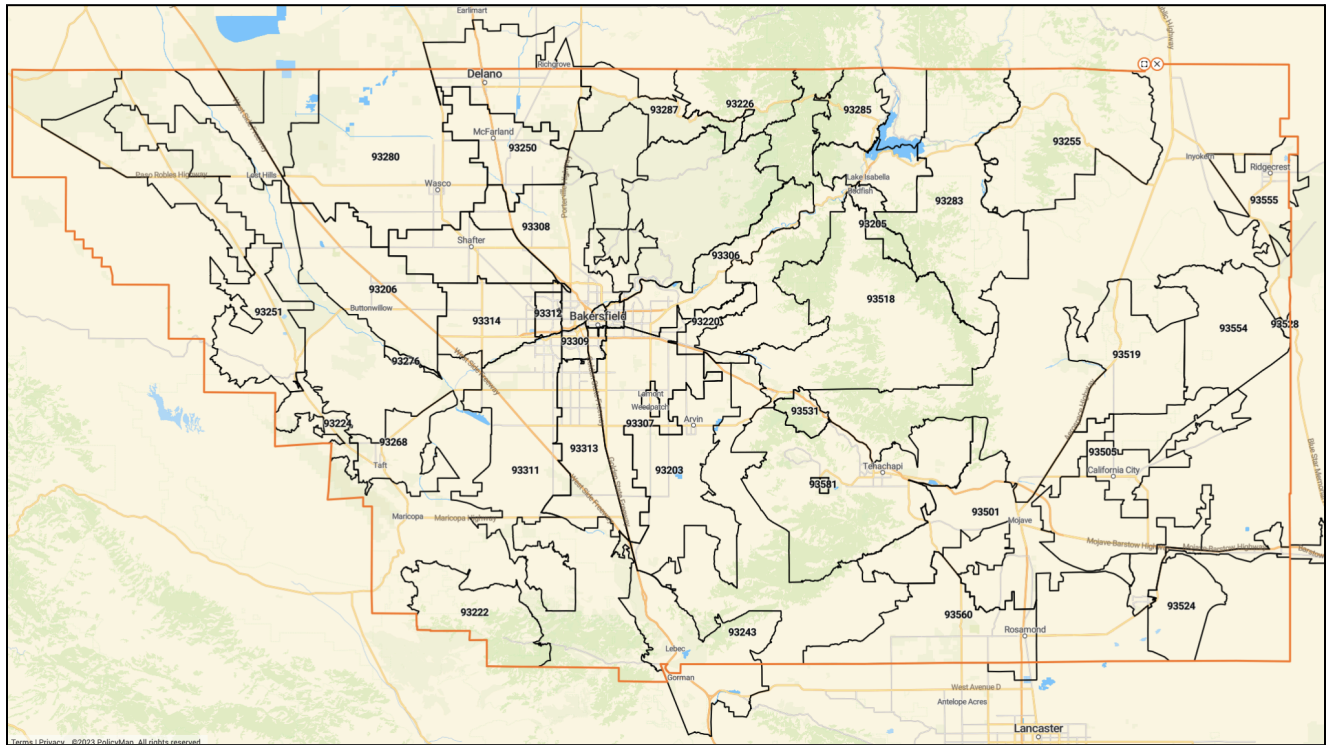
As a follow up to the family survey, GPG talked in depth with a small group of parents to learn more about challenges that families face in Kern County, including finding childcare and what they are looking for in a quality early learning and care program. These interviews informed the interpretation and analysis of the family survey results. Some quotes are included in the report.

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed breakdown of providers responding to this survey please see Appendix A.

## Geography

Below is a map of ZIP codes for Kern County to provide an overview of the county's geographic area.



[Link to Interactive Map](#)

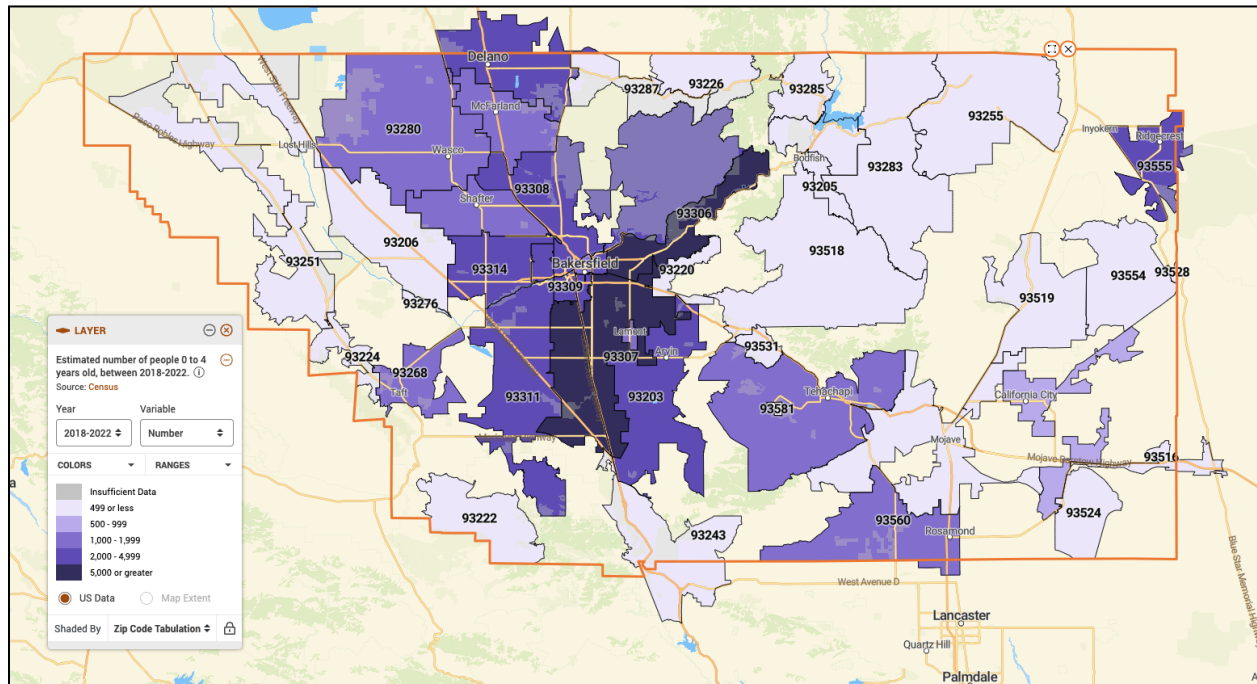


## Count and Demographics of Children

### Number of Children (under 5) by Kern County Zip Code

The 5-Year American Community Survey of the United States Census Bureau estimates that there are 66,329 children under age five in Kern County which account for 7.3% of the total population.<sup>4</sup> Of this population, 37,139 are under age three and 29,190 are three and four years of age.<sup>5</sup>

The map reflects the number of children in Kern County under age four. As depicted by the map, ZIP codes surrounding the cities of Bakersfield and Arvin have the greatest number of children under four-years-old in Kern County (93307, 93313, 93306, 93309, 93312, 93304, 93308, 93311, 93305, 93314, and 93203).



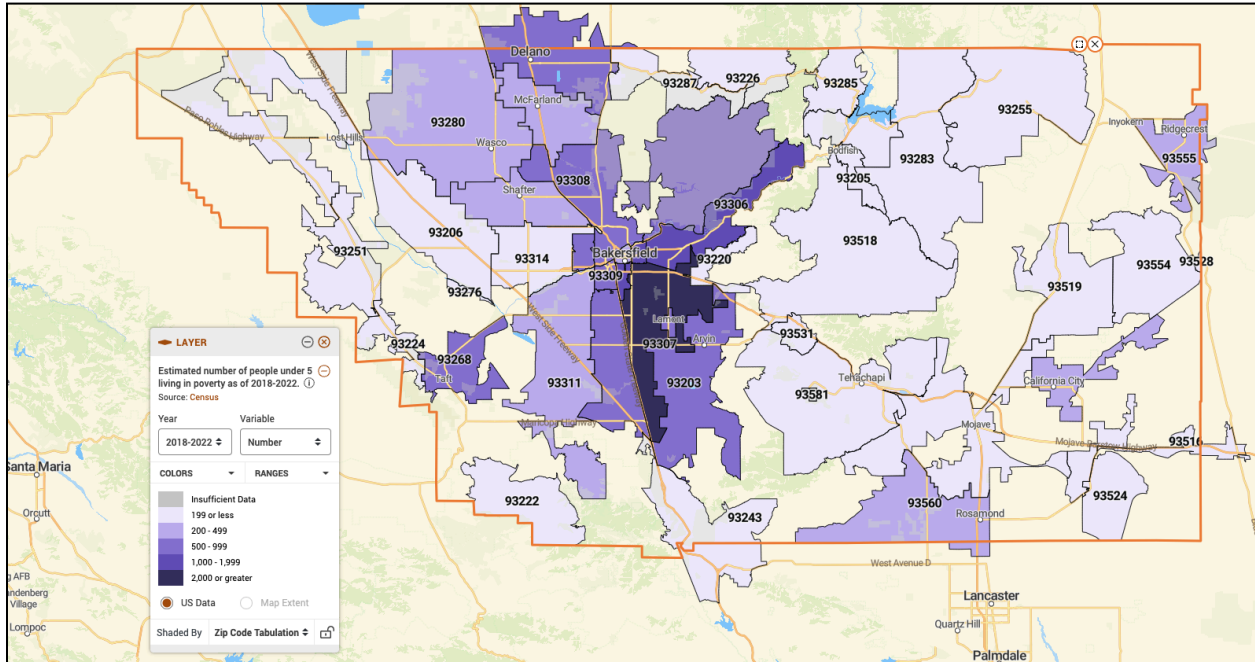
[Link to Interactive Map](#)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "Age and Sex." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101, 2022, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S0101?q=S0101: Age and Sex&g=050XX00US06029&d=ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S0101?q=S0101:Age%20and%20Sex&g=050XX00US06029&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Subject%20Tables). Accessed on March 7, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "Population Under 18 Years by Age." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B09001, 2022, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B09001?q=children under age 6&g=050XX00US06029&d=ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B09001?q=children%20under%20age%206&g=050XX00US06029&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables). Accessed on March 7, 2024.

## Number of Children Living in Poverty in Kern County

The 5-Year American Community Survey of the United States Census Bureau estimates that 16,561 children under age five in Kern County live below the poverty level,<sup>6</sup> which accounts for approximately one-fourth of children under age five. The map below reflects the number of children under age five living below the poverty level. As indicated by the map, ZIP codes with a greater number of children living below the poverty level are mostly within the cities of Bakersfield, Arvin, Lamont, and Taft (93203, 93241, 93268, 93304, 93305, 93306, 93307, 93308, 93309, 93312, and 93313).



[Link to Interactive Map](#)

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Sex by Age." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B17001, 2022, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACS5Y2022.B17001?q=poverty status&t=Income and Poverty&q=050XX00US06029&d=ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables&moe=true](https://data.census.gov/table/ACS5Y2022.B17001?q=poverty%20status&t=Income%20and%20Poverty&q=050XX00US06029&d=ACS%205-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables&moe=true). Accessed on March 7, 2024.

## Race/Ethnicity of Children (under 5) in Kern County

<b>Table 1: Demographics of Children Under Age 5 in Kern County<sup>7</sup></b>		
<b>Race</b>	<b># Children Under Age 5</b>	<b>% Children Under Age 5</b>
American Indian and Alaska Native	506	1%
Asian	2,505	4%
Black or African American	3,589	5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	49	>1%
White	14,939	23%
Two or More Races	13,759	21%
Other	10,187	15%
<b>Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic or Latino <sup>8</sup>	42,772	64%
Not Hispanic or Latino	23,557	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,329</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Number of Migrant Children (birth to five) in Kern County

According to the California Department of Education (CDE), “migratory youth are children who change schools during the year, often crossing school district and state lines, to follow work in agriculture, fishing, dairies, or the logging industry.”<sup>9</sup> There are 390 identified migrant kindergarten students in Kern County.<sup>10</sup>

## Languages Spoken By Kern County Households and Kindergarteners

Of the 277,499 households in Kern County, 149,989 (54%) only speak English. Of the remaining 127,510 households, 24,706 are limited English speaking households. Of these households, 90% speak Spanish, 2% speak other Indo-European languages, 2% speak other Asian and Pacific Island languages, and 6% speak other languages.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates. Tables B01001A-I

<sup>8</sup> Includes individuals of all races who identify ethnically as Hispanic or Latino.

<sup>9</sup> California Department of Education, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/me/mt/>, accessed March 2024.

<sup>10</sup> California Department of Education. Data Quest. [2022-23 Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade](https://data.cde.ca.gov/2022-23/Enrollment-by-Ethnicity-and-Grade).

<sup>11</sup> Of the households that comprise the 6% of other languages, .03% speak French, Haitian, or Cajun, .2% speak German or other West Germanic languages, .7% speak Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages, .7% speak Korean, 1% speak Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese), 1% speak Vietnamese, 1% speak Tagalog (including Filipino), .8% speak Arabic, and .3% speak other and unspecified languages.

U.S. Census Bureau. "Detailed Household Language by Household Limited English Speaking Status." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B16002, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B16002?q=B16002>: Detailed Household Language by Household Limited English Speaking Status&g=050XX00US06029&d=ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed

During the 2022-23 school year, there were 4,067 kindergarten English Learner students in Kern County, approximately 1% of all kindergarten students.<sup>1213</sup> Spanish, Punjabi, Arabic, Filipino (Filipino or Tagalog), Vietnamese, and Mandarin (Putonghua), and other non-English languages were spoken by 10 or more kindergarten English Learner students in Kern County.

<b>Table 2: Languages Spoken by English Learner Kindergarteners in Kern County<sup>14</sup></b>		
<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percent of EL Kindergarteners</b>
Spanish	3,712	91%
Punjabi	173	4%
Arabic	73	2%
Vietnamese	23	1%
Mandarin (Putonghua)	11	<1%
Filipino (Filipino or Tagalog)	10	<1%
Other non-English Languages	10	<1%
Armenian	4	<1%
Cantonese	2	<1%
Russian	2	<1%

### Number of Children Receiving Special Education Services in Kern County

According to the California Department of Education's DataQuest report, "2022-23 Special Education Enrollment by Program Setting," there were 2,153 children between the ages of three to five enrolled in special education with 1,157 enrolled in a preschool setting.<sup>15</sup>

An Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed for children under the age of three, and those aged three and older receive either an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or an Individualized Service Plan (ISP). The Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) oversees these plans, outlining how special education services will be provided. Kern County has four SELPAs serving children under the age of 12.

The following data is from the Kern County Consortium SELPA and Sierra Sands Unified School District SELPA who only serve a portion of children with an IFSP and IEP.

As of October 2023:

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Tables. Accessed on December 14, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> California Department of Education. DataQuest. 2022-23 English Learner Students by Language by Grade.

<sup>13</sup> California Department of Education. DataQuest. 2022-23 K-12 Enrollment by Age Group and Grade.

<sup>14</sup> California Department of Education. DataQuest. 2022-23 English Learner Students by Language by Grade.

<sup>15</sup> California Department of Education. DataQuest. 2022-23 .

- Per the Kern County Consortium, 164 children under three years of age have an IFSP and 100 children ages three to four have an IEP.
- Per Sierra Sands Unified School District SELPA, 11 children under three years of age have an IFSP and 14 children ages three to four have an IEP.

### Number of Children (birth to five) Under Protective Services in Kern County

As of October 1, 2023, there were 692 children (birth to five) in foster care in Kern County. The table below indicates the number of children per age group, as well as a comparison to the previous year.

Table 3: Kern County Children in Foster Care by Age <sup>16</sup>		
Age Group	Point in Time	
	October 1, 2022	October 1, 2023
Under 1	172	130
Ages 1 to 2	258	283
Ages 3 to 5	274	279
<b>Total</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>692</b>

### Number of Children (birth to five) in Kern County Families Receiving CalWORKS, CalFresh and Medi-Cal

In November 2023, there were 8,349 children (birth to four) in families in Kern County receiving CalWORKS, 22,009 children in families receiving CalFresh and 36,506 children in families receiving Medi-Cal. As mentioned above, there are 66,329 children under age five in Kern County. This means that of all children under age five in Kern County, 13% are in families receiving CalWORKS, 33% are in families receiving CalFresh, and 55% are in families receiving Medi-Cal.

Table 4: Kern County Children in Families Receiving CalWorks, CalFresh and MediCal <sup>17</sup>							
Program	Age of Children						% of population
	0	1	2	3	4	Total	
CalWORKS	1,371	1,549	1,708	1,773	1,948	<b>8,349</b>	<b>13%</b>
CalFresh	3,886	4,478	4,493	4,541	4,611	<b>22,009</b>	<b>33%</b>
Medi-Cal	6,036	7,382	7,464	7,616	8,008	<b>36,506</b>	<b>55%</b>

<sup>16</sup> CCWIP reports. Retrieved Dec 21, 2023, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <https://ccwip.berkeley.edu>

<sup>17</sup> As of November 2023 as reported by Kern County Human Services.

### Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Students in Kern County

As of February 2024, the KCSOS internal database, KiDS, showed that 4,831 students were enrolled in transitional kindergarten (TK) in Kern County. This represents a 27% increase since 2018-2019 when only 3,819 children were enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten (CDE, 2020).

Based on the KiDS February 2024 data:

- There are slightly more males (2,480) in TK than females (2,351).
- 3,536 (73%) TK students are considered socio-economically disadvantaged.
- There are 1,149 (24%) TK students classified as English Learners.

In addition, 471 (10%) TK students have identified disabilities; 166 (3%) TK students are classified as homeless; 37 (1%) TK students are foster youth; and 148 (3%) TK students come from migrant families.

The racial/ethnic breakdown of TK students is listed below in the chart.

<b>Table 5: Transitional Kindergarten Students (Race/Ethnicity)</b>		
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percent</b>
African American	215	4%
American Indian	8	Less than 1 percent
Asian	169	3%
Filipino	42	Less than 1 percent
Hispanic/Latino	3,382	70%
Pacific Islander	5	Less than 1 percent
White	811	17%
Two or More Races	122	3%
Unknown, declined to state or left blank	77	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,831</b>	

### Family Demographics and Needs

#### Number of Children (birth to four) in Working Families in Kern County

Nearly two-thirds (36,780) of all children birth to four in Kern County live in families with at least

one working parent. Approximately half (19,858) of these children live in families with both parents in the workforce.

<b>Table 6: Number of Children in Working Families for Kern County<sup>18</sup></b>				
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Children in Working Families (Both parents in the labor force)</b>	<b>Children in Working Families (Only father in the labor force)</b>	<b>Children in Working Families (Only mother in the labor force)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Infants (less than one year old)	2,774	3,002	159	5,935
One-Year-Olds	3,764	2,799	222	6,785
Two-Year-Olds	4,575	2,967	143	7,685
Three-Year-Olds	3,596	3,036	246	6,878
Four-Year-Olds	5,149	3,999	349	9,497
TOTALs	19,858	15,803	1,119	36,780

### Median Family Income in Kern County

According to the American Community Survey (2018-2022) 5 year estimates, the median income in Kern County was \$63,883.<sup>19</sup>

### Cost of Living in Kern County

According to “How Much it Costs to Struggle: The Real Cost Measure in California 2023,”<sup>20</sup> a family of four (2 adults, 1 infant, 1 school-aged child) in Kern County requires \$74,376 just to make ends meet. This same family would need to hold more than two full-time, minimum-wage jobs to achieve economic security.<sup>21</sup>

Sixty-two percent of households with children under six struggle with making ends meet, a rate much greater than that of the rest of the county.<sup>22</sup>

Fifty-one percent of Latino families fall below the Real Cost Measure, while 45% of African

<sup>18</sup> The data on the number of children in working families in Kern County was pulled from the American Community Survey 5-Year data for 2021. The 2022 data for children in working families in Kern County is not currently available. The data in the chart is of children in Kern County living with two parents. ACS 5-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata Sample (2021)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/kerncountycalifornia/INC110222>

<sup>20</sup> The Real Cost Measure in California 2023 by United Ways of California. Data calculated for this geographic profile is from 2021. For detailed methodology, please visit <https://www.unitedwaysca.org/realcost>.

<sup>21</sup> Minimum wage jobs based on \$13.00 per hour, 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year.

<sup>22</sup> The Real Cost Measure in California 2023 by United Ways of California.



American families and 26% of white families fall below this measure.<sup>23</sup>

### Challenges Faced by Family Survey Respondents

When asked about challenges families face, the largest percentage of responses (32%) was that they did not have a challenge or concern. For those facing challenges, the most common responses were lack of quality time to spend with children (29%), lack of access to affordable childcare/preschool (27%), lack of stable or affordable housing (25%), and lack of access to preferred type of childcare/preschool/transitional program (24%).

<b>Table 7: Parent Needs and Concerns</b>		
<b>Challenge or Concern</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
No challenge or concern	32%	56
Lack of quality time to spend with children	29%	50
Lack of access to affordable childcare/preschool	27%	47
Lack of stable or affordable housing	25%	43
Lack of access to preferred type of childcare / preschool / transitional program	24%	42
Negative effects of technology use among child(ren)	17%	30
Lack of money to meet basic needs	16%	28
Lack of access to transportation	15%	26
Lack of access to healthcare	11%	20
Lack of high-quality service in childcare or preschool program where my child is enrolled	9%	15
Language barriers accessing services	6%	10
Lack of food	6%	10
Other	5%	9
Immigration issues	5%	8
Alcohol / drug use	3%	5
Abuse in the home (witnessing or experiencing domestic violence or abuse, including child abuse)	2%	3

Families were asked if they have any of the following issues in finding child care or preschool. Thirty-one percent of respondents said that childcare/preschool was expensive and/or not affordable. Seventeen percent need transportation and another 17% said there are no openings

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



for their child's age.

<b>Table 8: Issues in Finding Child Care or Preschool</b>		
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Child care/preschool was expensive / not affordable	31%	54
Needed transportation for my child	17%	30
No openings for my child's age	17%	29
Could not find a program at which I felt comfortable leaving my child	16%	27
Could not find care in needed location (close enough to home)	16%	27
Did not need child care or preschool for my child(ren)	11%	20
Could not find a program that was open when I work (hours of operation)	11%	19

As a follow up to the family survey, GPG talked in depth with three parents to learn more about challenges that families face in Kern County, including finding childcare. The quotes below are taken from those interviews.

"Transportation is difficult because most families depend on family members or friends to drop off their children. I wouldn't trust my two year old with a bus. As an owner of a school bus company, I wouldn't be comfortable transporting preschoolers. Most of the programs don't match the parents work schedule or the parents are working two different jobs or shifts. They don't have someone else to bring their child." - Family member interview

"It is hard to trust someone with your baby." - Family member interview

"[I worry about] physical, emotional, and mental safety. If a teacher is yelling, I don't feel comfortable leaving [my child] there."- Family member interview

### Goals for Quality Early Learning and Care from Family Survey Respondents

Families were asked what they are looking for in a quality early learning and care program. Of the 141 survey respondents, the following reflect the top responses. The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of respondents who mentioned this criteria.

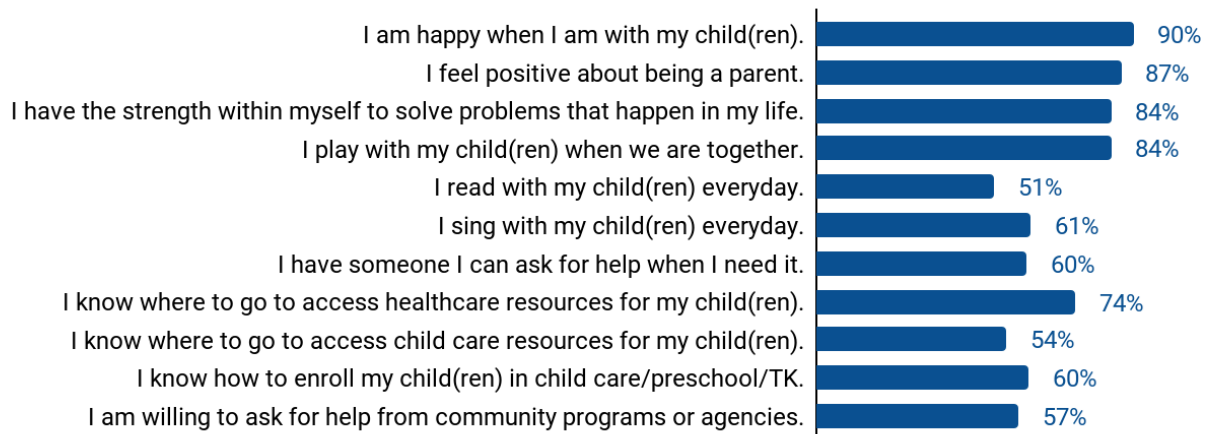
- Fosters child development (play-based, programs that foster social and emotional development) (45)
- Attentive, Caring, and Loving Staff/Positive Learning Environment (41)
- Safety (Cleanliness, Security, Trustworthy Staff) (24)

- Accessibility (Available Slots, Proximity, Hours of Operation/Schedule) (18)
- Educated, Experienced, and Qualified Staff (18)
- Developmentally Appropriate Activities, Curriculum, and Learning Materials (15)
- Affordability (15)

## Protective Factors

The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework from the Center for the Study of Social Policy defines protective factors as “characteristics or strengths of individuals, families, communities or societies that act to mitigate risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development.”<sup>24</sup> Families were asked to indicate how much they agree with the following statements. Below are the weighted averages of the 174 responses.

**Chart 1: Percentage of Family Survey Respondents that Agree or Strongly Agree with the Following Statements.**



## Early Child Care and Education

### Number of Licensed Child Care Centers in Kern County

As of Friday, March 8th, 2024, there are 203 active or pending licensed child care centers for children birth to age 5, including 33 infant centers, providing 10,882 spaces in Kern County. There are 32 licensed child care centers for school-age children providing an additional 1,393 spaces.<sup>25</sup> In addition, 326 licensed large family child care homes (i.e., those serving more than eight

<sup>24</sup> <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf>

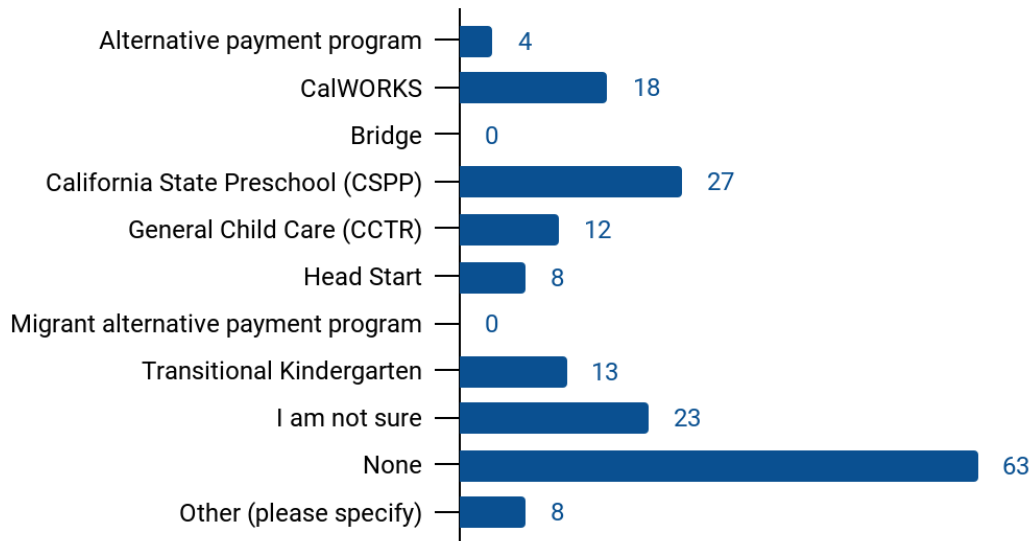
<sup>25</sup> <https://www.cclcdss.ca.gov/carefacilitysearch/DownloadData>

children) provide capacity to serve 5,246 more children.<sup>26 27</sup> Small family child care homes (FCCs) may serve additional children in the county, but data on the number of licensed small FCCs is not published on the CDSS licensed facility website in order to protect provider privacy.

### ECE Program Participation

In the family survey, families were asked to select any or all of the following programs that their child participates in. Out of 147 responses, 63 (43%) said “none” and 23 (16%) were unsure. The two programs with the most responses were the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) (27) and CalWORKs (18).

**Chart 2: Please select any of the following programs that your children participate in. (Select all that apply)**



### Improvements in the ECE Field

Surveyed ECE providers were asked about improvements they have seen in the ECE field over the past two years. Of the 221 survey respondents, the following reflect the top responses. The number in parenthesis indicates the number of times this response came up.

- Professional Learning Opportunities (59)
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices (23)
- Increased Funding and Pay (18)
- Support for ECE Educators (17)
- Classroom Resources (Curriculum, Materials and Supplies, Technology) (16)
- General Improvement of the ECE Field (16)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Children not limited to those under age 5.

During the focus group sessions, some of the topics that ECE providers voiced regarding improvements in the ECE field include professional learning opportunities, an increased focus on social-emotional development, and a focus on child development.

"CCCC offering Zoom training instead of face to face training has assisted many of us daycare owners to attend training, especially when Kern County is so large and we would have to drive to Bakersfield."

"From my public educational experiences, social-emotional learning development has been increased dramatically. SEL was never heard of when I started teaching in 1997. I like it because this is something many students need."

"It's been amazing to see the shift for social emotional learning being [viewed] as important."

"[One thing that is getting better] is that people are noticing the importance of child development, socializing with other kids the same age."

-ECE focus group participants

### Approximate Hourly Wage Paid by Organization Survey Respondents

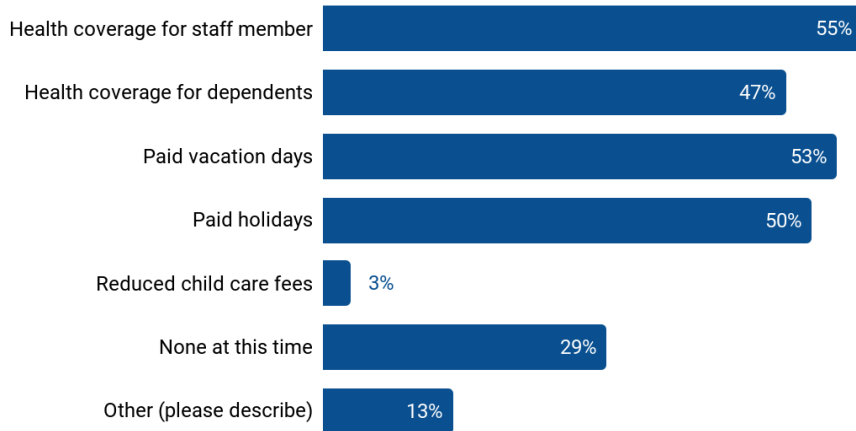
The organization survey included an optional question about hourly wage paid per position. Eighteen organizations responded. Below are the range of responses per position.

Table 9: Hourly Wage Paid Per Position (Organization Survey)				
	Assistant Teacher/ Aide	Teacher	Site Director	Administrator
Hourly rate (range)	\$14 - \$25/hr	\$16 - \$28/hr	\$23 - \$48/hr	\$48 - \$82/hr

### Benefits Provided by Organization Survey Respondents

Just over half of the responding 36 organizations provide health coverage (55%) and paid vacation days (53%). Half of organizations provide paid holidays. Nearly a third (29%) do not provide any benefits.

Chart 3: Benefits Provided By Survey Respondents



### Regional Market Rate Ceilings Allowed for State Subsidy

Table 10 indicates the “Regional Market Rate Ceilings Allowed for State Subsidy” by age and type of care.

Table 10: Kern County Regional Market Rate Ceilings Allowed for State Subsidy <sup>28</sup>							
	Age Group	Full-time Daily	Full-time Weekly	Full-time Monthly	Part-time Hourly	Part-time Weekly	Part-time Monthly
Child Care Centers	Birth to 24 Months	81.32	324.67	1,337.34	15.79	228.12	885.67
	2 Through 5 Years	51.28	262.66	872.91	10.07	160.63	646.17
	School Age	49.10	189.98	741.17	10.29	141.45	473.66
Family Child Care Homes	Birth to 24 Months	46.93	204.09	818.00	10.61	154.78	649.41
	2	42.22	183.32	749.11	9.18	146.64	562.52

<sup>28</sup> The rates included in this table were effective January 1, 2022.  
 California Department of Social Services. Reimbursement Ceilings for Subsidized Child Care.  
<https://rcscc.adm.dss.ca.gov/index.aspx>

**Table 10: Kern County Regional Market Rate Ceilings Allowed for State Subsidy<sup>28</sup>**

	Age Group	Full-time Daily	Full-time Weekly	Full-time Monthly	Part-time Hourly	Part-time Weekly	Part-time Monthly
	Through 5 Years						
	School Age	40.24	166.28	682.12	9.49	131.68	521.22
TrustLined / Relative	Birth to 24 Months	32.85	142.86	572.60	7.43	108.34	454.58
	2 Through 5 Years	29.55	128.33	524.38	6.43	102.65	393.76
	School Age	28.17	116.40	477.48	6.64	92.17	364.86

### Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Programs

Data on the availability of state and federally subsidized ECE programs is limited. Analysis of available data is complicated by multiple factors, including varying eligibility criteria (including ages served) across programs, limited detail within available data (e.g., full-day vs. part-day), and minimal information about how providers blend or otherwise combine subsidies to serve children. Despite these limitations, it is clear that there are far more infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in low-income households than the number of subsidized child care and preschool programs.

In its *2021 Child Care Portfolio* report, the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (R&R Network) published data sheets for every county in the state. For Kern County, this report indicates a 2021 total of 11,443 children (birth to age 12) in subsidized care, just over half of the number of children in poverty (22,270).<sup>29</sup>

The California Early Learning Needs Assessment Reports (CELNAR), which are referenced as a required source in the LPC needs assessment template, provide data across subsidy programs and by age group. However, the most recent data available in CELNAR at the time of writing this report is from 2017. For completeness and to be responsive to the LPC needs assessment prompts, data tables from the CELNAR are included in [Appendix B](#). According to these reports, in 2017 in Kern County 90% of the need for subsidized infant and toddler spaces was unmet and 65% of the need for subsidized preschool spaces was unmet.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> [https://rrnetwork.org/assets/general-files/Kern\\_2023-01-25-040404\\_tnta.pdf](https://rrnetwork.org/assets/general-files/Kern_2023-01-25-040404_tnta.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> [AIR. CELNAR](#)

The table below provides more recent available data about the need and availability of state and federally subsidized ECE programs. Need for subsidized ECE is estimated using the number of infants, toddlers, and preschool age children in families below 344% of the federal poverty level (approximately 85% of the 2022 California State Median Income, which is used as the income eligibility threshold for many state subsidized programs). While this provides a useful estimate of the number of children in need, it is important to note that different subsidized ECE programs have different income (and other eligibility) criteria. For example, income eligibility for Head Start is 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (with allowances to enroll a certain percentage of “over income” families), and for State Preschool (CSPP), the income eligibility was expanded from 85% State Median Income (SMI) to 100% SMI in July 2022.<sup>31</sup>

As indicated in Table 11, in 2022 approximately 88% of the need for subsidized infant and toddler spaces was unmet and 60% of the need for subsidized preschool spaces was unmet. This equates to 25,197 infants and toddlers and 12,245 preschool age children in Kern County who were eligible for, but unable to access subsidized ECE programs due to a lack of supply. Additional data and analysis are needed to better understand how the unmet need for subsidized ECE is distributed across the County.

<b>Table 11: Unmet Need for Subsidized Spaces, 2022 data (unless otherwise specified)</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Infants &amp; Toddlers (Under Age 3)</b>	<b>Preschool Age (Ages 3 and 4)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Population <sup>32</sup>	39,110	25,400	64,510
Below 100% FPL <sup>33</sup>	8,649	6,127	14,776
<b>Below 344% FPL (approximately 85% of 2022 California SMI)<sup>34</sup></b>	<b>28,608</b>	<b>20,312</b>	<b>48,920</b>
State Preschool (CSPP) <sup>35</sup>	NA	2,947	2,947
TK (socioeconomically disadvantaged cumulative enrollment, 2021-22) <sup>36</sup>	NA	1,925	1,925
Head Start (center-based funded enrollment) <sup>37</sup> <i>Note: not de-duplicated from CCTR, CSPP, or other programs that may be combined with Head Start</i>	653	1,251	1,904

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/mb2205.asp>

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 1-Year Estimates Public Use Microdata Sample, 2022.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> CSPP Enrollment by Provider County, October 2022. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/csppdatareports.asp>.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filestckdata.asp>

<sup>37</sup> <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/grantee-profiles/community-action-partnership-of-kern-ca>

Table 11: Unmet Need for Subsidized Spaces, 2022 data (unless otherwise specified)			
Item	Infants & Toddlers (Under Age 3)	Preschool Age (Ages 3 and 4)	Total
CalWORKs Stage 1 <sup>38</sup>	361	324	685
CalWORKs Stage 2 <sup>39</sup>	296	315	611
CalWORKs Stage 3	331	380	711
Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)	812	674	1,486
General Child Care (CCTR)	667	13	680
Migrant Alternative Payment (CMAP)	166	143	309
Family Child Care Home Education Networks (CFCC)	-	-	-
Migrant Child Care (CMIG)	125	95	220
Programs for Children with Severe Disabilities (CHAN)	-	-	-
<b>Total Capacity/Served</b>	<b>3,411</b>	<b>8,067</b>	<b>11,478</b>
% of Children Below ~85% SMI Served	12%	40%	23%
Unmet Need for Subsidized Spaces	88%	60%	77%

### Number of Children on Waiting Lists of Organization Survey Respondents

There is no consolidated wait list for all of Kern County. In the organization survey, more than half (53%) of the total 53 respondents<sup>40</sup> indicated that they were fully enrolled, while the other 47% were not.

### Facilities Needs by Organization Survey Respondents

Out of the 36 complete organization survey responses, the majority (84%) of organizations reported a variety of needs for renovation, including expanding play areas, adding more storage and classrooms, updating facilities, and improving outdoor spaces. Specific needs include age-appropriate playgrounds, more furniture suitable for children, indoor playgrounds, and updated restrooms.

Twenty-one percent of organizations report that renovation activities are already underway. Thirteen percent of organizations report that they were renovated in the past two years.

<sup>38</sup> [CW 115 - Child Care Monthly Report - CalWORKs Families 2022-23](#), October 2022. The estimate assumes that one-fourth of the enrollment for 2-5 year olds were in each age between 2 to 5.

<sup>39</sup> Data on the number of children served in CalWORKs Stages 2 and 3, CAPP, CCTR, CMAP, CFCC, CMIG, and CHAN were provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) via email.

<sup>40</sup> Many of the questions in the organizational survey were optional resulting in differing response totals per question.



## ECE Workforce

### Descriptive Statistics of Survey Respondents

#### Highest Level of Education Completed by Workforce Survey Respondents

A majority of ECE workforce survey respondents (83%) have education above a high school diploma or GED. The top responses were some college education (22%), an associate's degree in Child Development/Early Education (20%), or a Bachelor's degree in Child Development/Early Education (19%).

<b>Table 11: Highest Level of Education Completed</b>		
<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
Some college education	22%	52
Associate's degree in Child Development/Early Education	20%	46
Bachelor's degree in Child Development/Early Education	19%	44
Master's degree in Child Development/Early Education	7%	16
High school diploma or GED	7%	17
Bachelor's degree in another field	7%	17
Master's degree in another field	5%	12
Some high school education	4%	10
Associate's degree in another field	3%	6
None of the above	2%	5
Other (please specify)	4%	10

#### Credentials Received by Workforce Survey Respondents

Credentials received by respondents varied with the largest percentages holding a Teacher's Permit (27%), Site Supervisor Permit (21%), or Multiple Subject Teaching Credential (16%). Nearly 20% do not currently have a permit or credential.

<b>Table 12: Credentials Received</b>		
<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
Teacher Permit	27%	63
Site Supervisor Permit	21%	50
Multiple Subject Teaching Credential	16%	37
Child Dev. Associate (CDA) Credential	10%	23

**Table 12: Credentials Received**

Answer Choices	% of Respondents	# of Respondents
Associate Permit	10%	24
Master Teacher Permit	7%	17
Assistant Permit	6%	13
Program Director Permit	6%	13
Other (please specify)	6%	15
In the process of obtaining a permit or credential	5%	11
<b>None of the above</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>45</b>

### Languages Spoken by Workforce Survey Respondents

The majority of workforce respondents speak English (55%) and 42% speak Spanish fluently.

**Table 13: Languages Spoken Fluently**

Answer Choices	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Arabic	0%	0
Chinese (including Mandarin, Cantonese)	0%	1
English	55%	182
Hindi	1%	2
Punjabi	1%	2
Russian	0%	0
Spanish	42%	139
Tagalog	0%	0
Vietnamese	0%	0
Other (please specify)	1%	3

### Race/Ethnicity of Workforce Survey Respondents

The majority of workforce respondents identify as Hispanic or Latino (62%) followed by White (27%).

**Table 14: Race/Ethnicity**

Answer Choices	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents
African American or Black	4%	9

American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	2
Asian	2%	4
Filipino	0%	0
Hispanic or Latino	62%	144
Pacific Islander	0%	0
White	27%	63
Two or More Races	2%	4
Other race(please specify)	2%	5

### Gender of Workforce Survey Respondents

The majority of workforce respondents (99%) identify as woman/female.

Table 15: Gender		
Answer Choices	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Woman/female	99%	229
Man/Male	1%	2
Prefer not to answer	0%	1

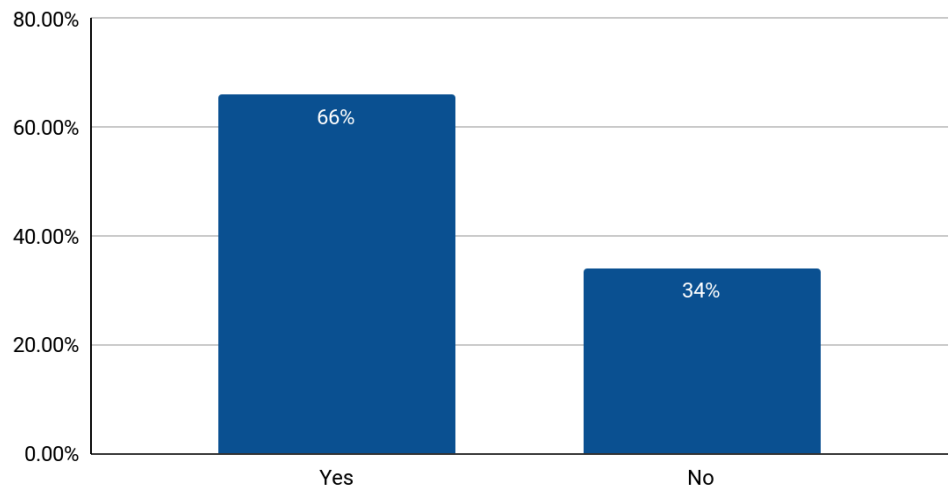
### Workforce Retention and Recruitment

Organization survey respondents (43) reported employing a total of 656 individuals broken down by categories indicated below.

Table 16: Number of Current Staff Members (from 43 organizations)	
Answer Choices	Number of Staff
Transitional Kindergarten Teacher, Assistant Teacher or Aide	64
Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten Teacher, Assistant Teacher or Aide	383
Infant/Toddler Teacher, Assistant Teacher, or Aide	62
Owner, Director, or Administrator	50
Before or After School Care Teacher	81
Sole provider	9
Other	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>656</b>

Slightly more than one-third of ECE organizations (44 respondents) reported in the survey that they are not fully staffed.

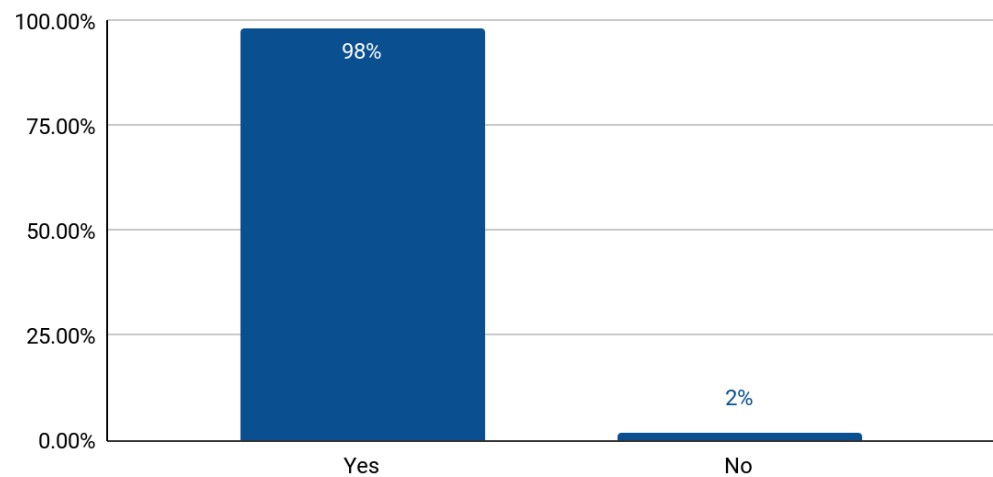
Chart 4: Is your program fully staffed?



To better understand these needs, we asked ECE workforce focus group participants **“which positions are the hardest to fill?”** There was general consensus that part-time and/or assistant/aide positions are often the hardest to fill. One reason offered for this is low pay and lack of benefits combined with relatively high education and/or credential requirements.

When the ECE workforce were asked in the survey if they planned to stay in the field, 98% reported that they would, with only 2% indicating that they are planning to leave because of insufficient pay and/or family reasons and/or retirement.

Chart 5: Are you planning to continue to work in the early care and education field beyond this year?



When asked **why they stay in the ECE workforce**, focus group participants said:

"I have found a sense of purpose working with children, especially special needs. I find joy and fulfillment when working and helping children."

"It is rewarding to see the students grow. The foundational skills built to bridge to the next grade level is vital for early childhood education."

"Helping the families in the community so there is somewhere for [their children] to go. There aren't a lot of opportunities for licensed safe spaces. [I enjoy giving parents] the peace of mind that I am licensed and that they can work and know that their child is safe."

### Ways to Retain or Recruit ECE Workers

When organizations (38 responses) were asked what changes would help retain or recruit workers, the most common answer was higher wages (58%). In addition, organizations reported the need for more full-time positions with benefits (29%).

Some of the other ideas from organization survey respondents included: maintaining manageable class sizes, reducing the workload caused by state mandates, and providing affordable education to obtain credits and permits.

Workforce focus group respondents also mentioned the need for more training and in classroom support for working with children with behavioral issues or other needs that require more attention.

Another idea that was mentioned to recruit new workers was providing stipends for those interested in the field to obtain certifications and/or advanced education.

## Appendix A

Appendix A includes additional descriptive details from the Organization Survey.

### Type of Facilities Operated by Organization Survey Respondents

Of the 59 respondents that answered the question:

- Family Child Care Home = 18
- Licensed Child Care Center (CSPP, CCR, or private) = 18
- License-Exempt Child Care Center = 1
- School District = 20
- Other = 2
  - Pediatric Day Health Facility
  - Charter School

Of the 59 respondents that answered the question:

- Public = 40
- Nonprofit = 8
- For-profit = 11

### Number of Children Served by Organization Survey Respondents

Of the 54 respondents that answered the question:

- Birth to 2 = 44
- Ages 3 to 5 = 53
- Ages 6 to 12 = 36

## Appendix B

### CELNAR Tables

The information in Appendix B is sourced from the California Early Learning Needs Assessment Reports (CELNAR). The data included in the tables is from 2017.

**Table 1: Number of Children Under Age Five in Kern County<sup>41</sup>**

Number of children	Birth to 35 months <sup>42</sup>	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
	42,388	15,088	14,226	71,702

**Table 2: Demographics of Children Under Age 5 in Kern County<sup>43</sup>**

Race/Ethnicity	Birth to 35 months	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
American Indian	139	40	0	179 (0.25%)
Asian	1,083	368	252	1,703 (2.38%)
Black / African American	1,835	1,099	546	3,480 (4.85%)
Filipino	460	111	109	680 (0.95%)
Hispanic	27,585	10,068	8,694	46,347 (64.46%)
Other Race/Ethnicity	67	51	17	135 (0.19%)
Two or More Races	1,423	252	251	1,926 (2.69%)
White	9,796	3,099	4,357	17,252 (24.06%)

**Table 3: Kern County Regional Market Rate Ceilings Allowed for State Subsidy by Age and Type of Care<sup>44</sup>**

<sup>41</sup> CELNAR <https://reports.elneedsassessment.org/LPCReports.aspx> 2017

<sup>42</sup> For the total number of children aged to three-years-old, the number of children ages birth to 11 months, 12 to 23 months, and 24-35 months were combined. CELNAR <https://reports.elneedsassessment.org/LPCReports.aspx>

<sup>43</sup> CELNAR <https://reports.elneedsassessment.org/LPCReports.aspx> 2017

<sup>44</sup> CELNAR <https://reports.elneedsassessment.org/LPCReports.aspx> 2017

Type of Care	Age	
	Birth to 24 Months	Age 2 to 5
Center weekly, full-time	\$312.24	\$262.66
Center weekly, part-time	\$215.22	\$160.63
FCCH weekly, full-time	\$190.02	\$172.58
FCCH weekly, part-time	\$143.38	\$125.13

Table 4: Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Programs for Infants and Toddlers <sup>45</sup>					
		Age			
		Birth to 11 Months	12 to 23 Months	24 to 35 Months	Total
Number of children	Total children	12,757	14,223	15,408	42,388
	Income- eligible and qualifying need for care (eligibility)	5,490	6,061	7,076	18,627
	Percentage of children income-eligible and qualifying for need for care (eligibility)	43%	43%	46%	44%
Number of children enrolled by program type	Alternative payment	17	65	114	196
	CalWORKs stage 1	134	134	201	469
	CalWORKs stage 2	37	97	140	274
	CalWORKs stage 3	25	36	45	106
	Head Start (2016-17)	71	165	283	519
	Received Head Start funding only (2016-2017)	48	112	192	352
	Title 5 center-based	26	87	297	410
	Title 5 family child care home network	0	0	0	0
	Title 5 migrant child care program	9	43	70	122
	Title 5 state preschool	0	0	0	0

<sup>45</sup> CELNAR <https://reports.elneedsassessment.org/LPCReports.aspx> 2017



**Table 4: Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Programs for Infants and Toddlers<sup>45</sup>**

		Age			
		Birth to 11 Months	12 to 23 Months	24 to 35 Months	Total
	program				
	Total enrollment in publicly subsidized programs	296	574	1,059	1,929
Unmet need-based on children eligible for subsidized care (income-eligible and need for care)	Unmet need in publicly subsidized programs	5,194	5,487	6,017	16,698
	Percentage unmet need in publicly subsidized programs	95%	91%	85%	90%

**Table 5: Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Programs for Preschool (Age 3-4)<sup>46</sup>**

		Age		
		3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
Number of children	Total Children	15,088	14,226	29,314
	Income-eligible for subsidy early learning and care (85% SMI)	12,473	11,278	23,751
	Percentage of children income-eligible for subsidized early learning and care (85% SMI)	83%	80%	82%
Number of children enrolled by program type	Alternative payment	112	113	225

<sup>46</sup> CELNAR <https://reports.elneedsassessment.org/LPCReports.aspx> 2017

**Table 5: Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Programs for Preschool (Age 3-4)<sup>46</sup>**

		Age		
		3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
	CalWORKs stage 1	201	201	402
	CalWORKs stage 2	180	165	345
	CalWORKs stage 3	80	99	179
	Estimated TK students income-eligible for Title 5	0	2,359	2,359
	Head Start (2016-2017)	708	1,023	1,731
	Received Head Start funding only (2016-2017)	481	696	1,177
	Title 5 center-based	55	1	56
	Title 5 family child care home network	0	0	0
	Title 5 migrant child care program	101	87	188
	Title 5 state preschool program	1,173	2,379	3,552
	Total enrollment in publicly subsidized programs	2,383	6,100	8,483
	Transitional Kindergarten		2,976	2,976

Table 5: Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Programs for Preschool (Age 3-4) <sup>46</sup>				
		Age		
		3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
	(2017-2018)			
Unmet need-based on all income-eligible	Unmet need in publicly subsidized programs	10,090	5,178	15,268
	Percentage unmet need in publicly subsidized programs	81%	46%	65%