

2-1-1 Infoline

A Social Barometer for Connecticut

With Infoline receiving close to 315,000 calls annually to all its call centers, the data collected serves as a barometer of human needs in the state. We publish this news bulletin for state leaders and others interested in Connecticut's well-being. This edition concentrates on data derived from calls to Child Care Infoline.

Winter 2002

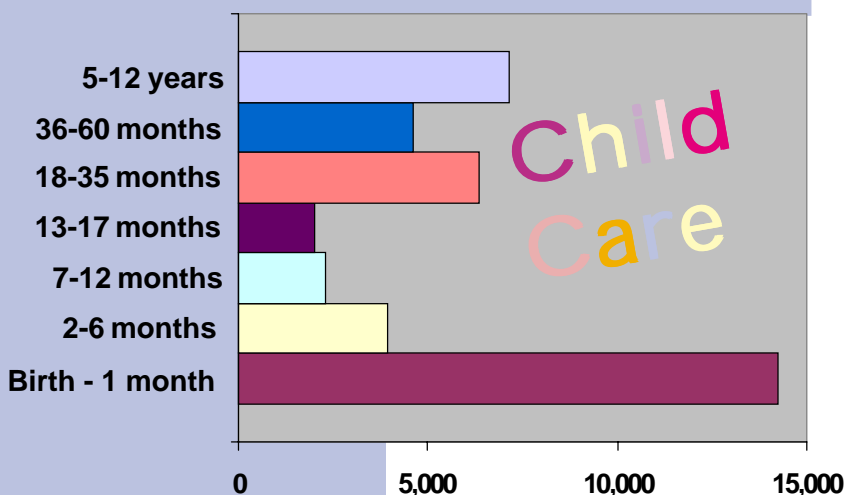
A Snapshot of Child Care Needs in Connecticut's Cities and Towns

Calls to Infoline for child care information and referral are one significant indicator of demand for child care services in Connecticut. A call may include requests for more than one child, so Infoline counts each request. Not all families use paid child care and some families use informal care using a relative or friend as the caregiver. While Infoline responded to over 52,000 requests for child care and child care related services this year, not all families with child care needs call Infoline.

From July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2001, Infoline received requests for child care assistance from 168 (of 169) Connecticut towns. Half of all requests related to an infant under one year of age. Among infants and toddlers, approximately 30% of requests were for full-time care.

Figure 1

Requests for Full-Day Child Care by Age
7/1/00 - 6/30/01



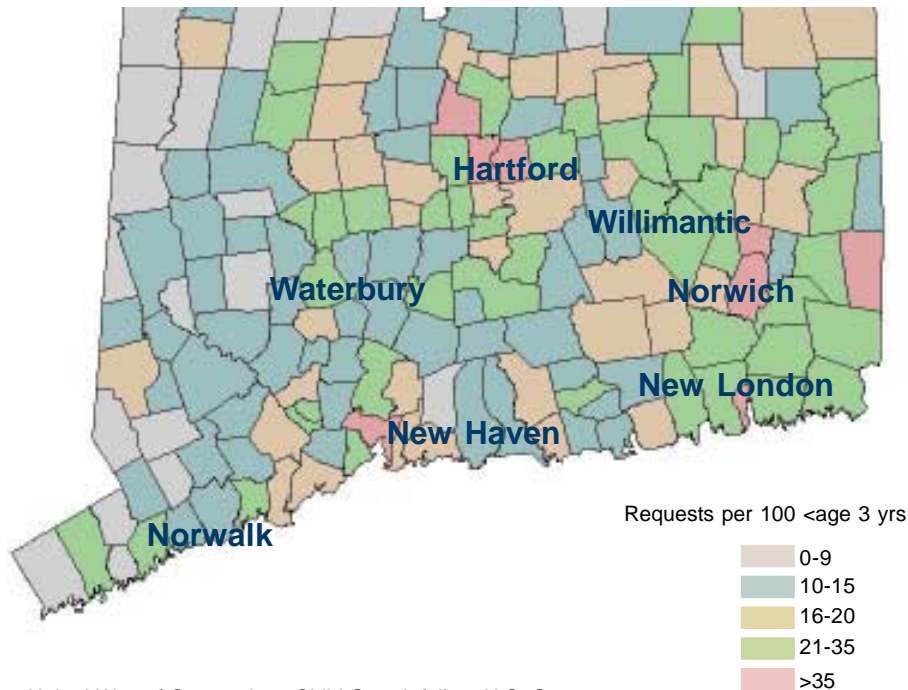
Not surprisingly, the largest number of requests came from the State's higher population areas. In order to better identify child care needs in each town, requests from each town concerning infants and toddlers (under 3 years of age) were compared with that town's population under 3 years of age, using data from the 2000 Census.

The data shown in **Figure 1** indicate that strong demand exists for infant care. Newborns account for 35% of all requests, the largest category among age groups. Over half of all requests were for infants up to one year of age. One-third were seeking full-day infant care.

Figure 2

Child Care Requests for Infants and Toddlers by Town

July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2001



Source: United Way of Connecticut, Child Care Infoline, U.S. Census 2000

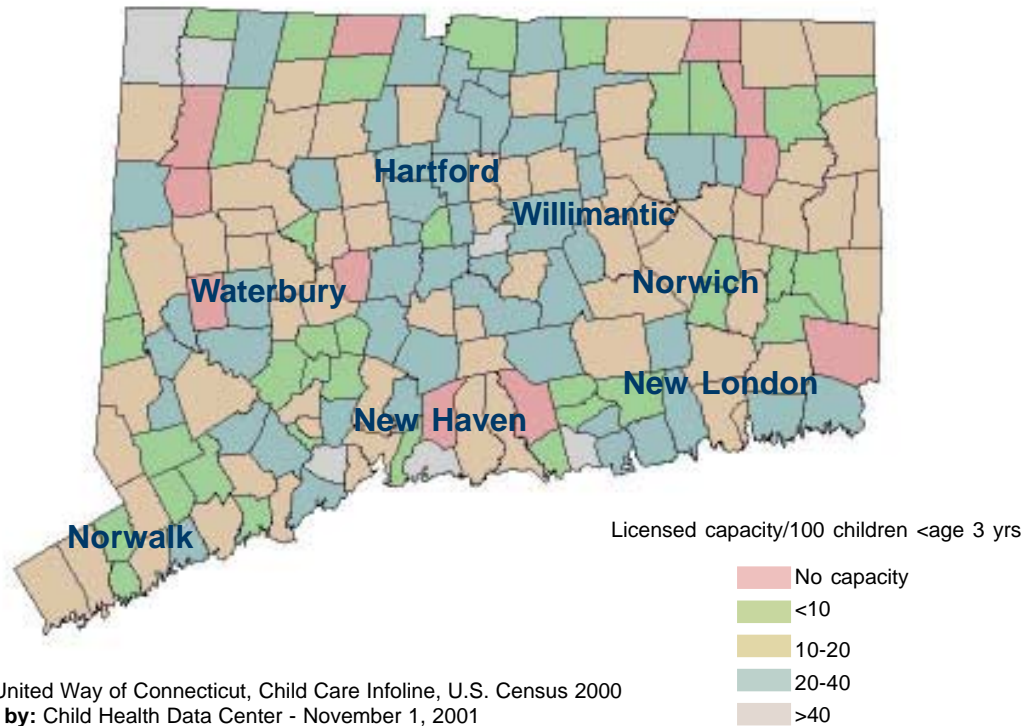
Prepared by: Child Health Data Center - November 1, 2001

Statewide, there were almost 24 infant and toddler care requests for every 100 Connecticut residents under age 3. **Figure 2** shows that among Connecticut towns, requests ranged from 0 to 45 per 100 infants and toddlers residing in the town. Only one town had no requests. Towns shaded pink had the highest proportion of requests for their under 3 year population.

Infoline keeps records on licensed child care facilities in each town, including the ages of children each facility is licensed to accept, the maximum number who can be cared for and the vacancies that exist at various time periods. We have analyzed these provider records to determine capacity and vacancy rates for each town over the 12 month period of July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001.



Figure 3
Infant and Toddler Care Capacity by Town
July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2001



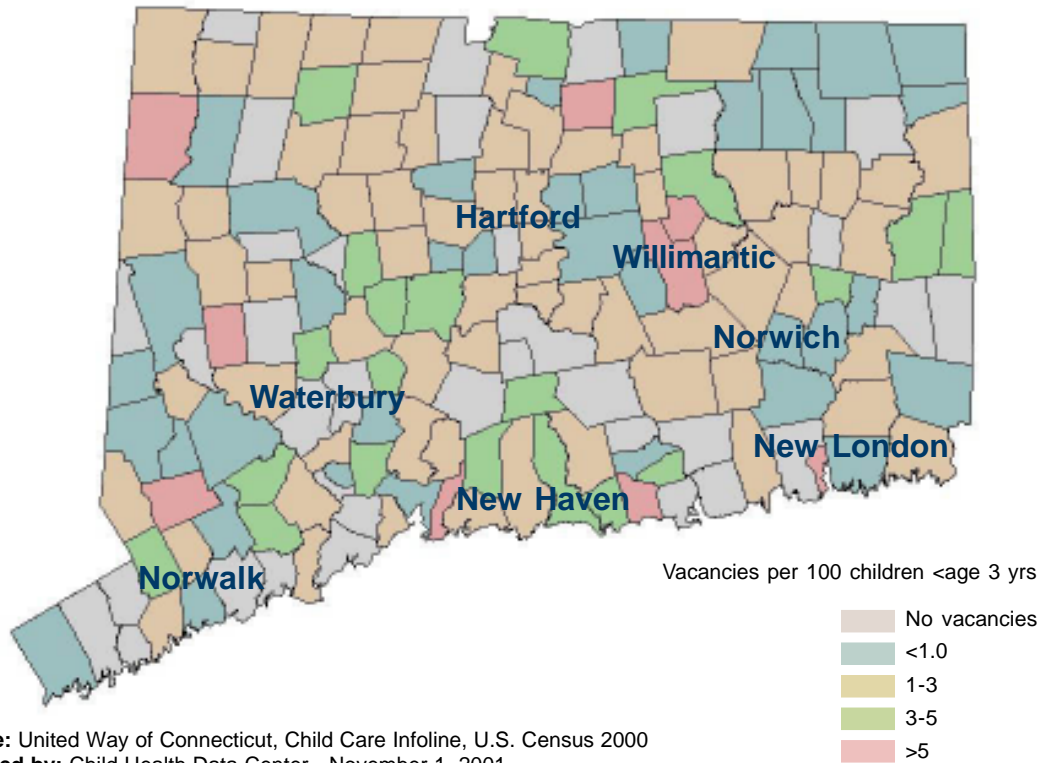
Source: United Way of Connecticut, Child Care Infoline, U.S. Census 2000
Prepared by: Child Health Data Center - November 1, 2001



Figure 3 displays the capacity rate for each of Connecticut's 169 towns. Capacity rates are the total number of infants and toddlers that facilities in the town accept divided by the total number of infants/toddlers living in the town at the time of the 2000 Census. A capacity rate of 1.0 would indicate that there is 1 licensed space per child.

Statewide there are approximately 17 licensed infant/toddler spaces for every 100 infants/toddlers and 4553 providers of infant and/or toddler care. Of course, this capacity varies greatly among towns. Eleven towns have no licensed spaces for infants or toddlers. Residents of towns with low capacity may rely on providers in neighboring towns for child care services. However, as the map indicates, large multi-town areas of the state have fewer than 10 spaces for every 100 infants and toddlers.

Figure 4
Vacancies Among Infant and Toddler Child Care Programs
July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2001



Source: United Way of Connecticut, Child Care Infoline, U.S. Census 2000
Prepared by: Child Health Data Center - November 1, 2001

The number of open, available spaces is far fewer than capacity. Vacancy rates are the total number of spaces that are open to accept infants/toddlers, divided by the total number of infants and toddlers (*under 3 years*). Eight percent of all licensed spaces were vacant at the end of June 30, 2001. Only one quarter of all towns had fewer than 3% of licensed spaces vacant. Thirty-six towns had no openings for infants or toddlers. The statewide vacancy rate was 1.4 openings per 100 infants and toddlers. The highest vacancy rate was 16.7. Vacancy rates for each town are shown on **Figure 4**. Towns shaded grey had no vacancies as of November 1, 2001.

The maps shown in **Figures 3 & 4** depict large geographic areas of the state where child care is either not available or where there are few vacancies. High vacancy and capacity rates may indicate that these towns have more child care programs per child, but they may also mean that there are fewer children in the town. We need better data to estimate demand for child care - not all families in a town may need a child care program. As additional 2000 Census data become available, it will be possible to include in the rate calculations only infants/toddlers who live in households with one or more parents in the workforce.

Child Care Programs by License Type 7/1/00 -6/30/01

Table 1 shows the statewide average for capacity and vacancy analysis according to age and license type.

Age Category	License Type	Providers	Average Capacity (sd)	Average Vacancy (sd)
Infant (0-17 months)	Home	3344	2 (0.3)	0.3 (.6)
	Center	541	11 (8)	0.7 (1)
	Group Home	51	3 (2)	0.3 (.7)
Toddler (18-35 months)	Center	580	16 (12)	1 (2)
	Group Home	48	4 (3)	0.3 (.6)
Preschool (3-5 years)	Home	3643	4 (0.8)	0.7 (1)
	Center	906	39 (32)	3 (5)
	Group Home	54	6 (4)	1 (2)
	Head Start Center	123	52 (45)	2 (7)
	Nursery School Center	632	51 (55)	0.5 (2)
	Nursery School Group Home	15	22 (13)	1.5 (3)

Table 1

If the requests to Infoline are valid indicators of demand, the greatest need for new child care capacity is in infant and toddler care.

sd= Standard Deviation

Statewide Average Costs

Table 2 reflects the average cost of child care as reported to Child Care Infoline. Parents often cite the high cost of child care, particularly infant and toddler care, as a barrier to securing vacant slots. It is often beyond the financial reach of their families.

Table 2

Service Type	Lowest Cost	Highest Cost	Average Cost
Infant/Toddler Center	\$100.00/Week	\$337.25/Week	\$183.32/Week
Infant/Toddler Home	\$75.00/Week	\$320.00/Week	\$143.68/Week
Preschool Center	\$70.00/Week	\$294.42/Week	\$147.86/Week
Preschool Home	\$50.00/Week	\$320.00/Week	\$136.69/Week
School Age Center	\$2.50/Hour	\$8.40/Hour	\$4.45/Hour
School Age Home	\$1.75/Hour	\$10.00/Hour	\$4.16/Hour
School Age Center	\$50.00/Week	\$255.00/Week	\$84.59/Week
School Age Home	\$50.00/Week	\$190.00/Week	\$66.57/Week

- *This fee information is self-reported by the child care facilities to Child Care Infoline and fee information does not include state or federally subsidized programs.*
- *School age programs report their fees either in an hourly or weekly rate. To capture this, both schedules are reported.*
- *Average cost information is also available by Connecticut health and human service region, county, municipality and town.*

What does Child Care Infoline offer?



- Information and Referral (I&R)
 - Child Care
 - Enrichment Programs
 - Summer Programs
 - In Home/Nanny Care
 - Subsidies
 - Food Programs
 - Licensing Regulations
- Consumer education for families choosing early care and education programs
 - Types of programs
 - Quality indicators
 - Licensing Criteria
 - Impact of early care and education on long-term development
- Technical assistance for providers
 - Business Issues
 - Training Opportunities
 - Communication with Parents
 - Child Development Issues
 - Licensing/Regulations
- Recruitment of early care and education professionals
- Data Source for community planners and legislators
- Data/statistics accessible on-line
- Referral database on-line
- Comprehensive website of consumer education materials

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