

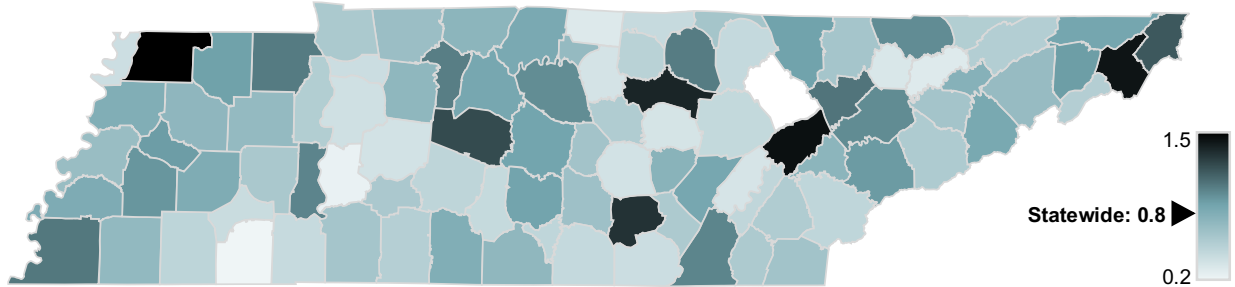
Childcare in Tennessee

April 2024

Childcare is vital infrastructure for Tennessee’s long-term economic success. Childcare enables parents to pursue employment opportunities that fuel the state’s economic growth and stability. Quality early learning also lays the foundation for childhood development and life-long success and well-being. Below are key facts and figures on childcare in Tennessee.

Figure 1. Regulated Childcare Spots Per Child Across Tennessee

Per Child Under Age 5 (2023)

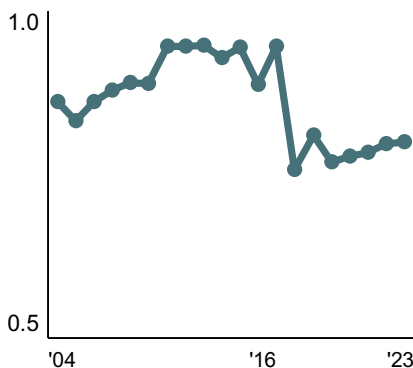


Source: Sycamore’s analysis of data from DHS and U.S. Census

- Tennessee had just over 324,000 regulated childcare spots in 2023. (DHS, Census)
- For context, that’s about 0.8 spots for every child under age 5 — which varied from 1.5 spots per kid in Obion County to 0.21 in McNairy (Fig.1). Statewide, this is about 7% fewer spots per child than 20 years ago and 15% fewer than the peak number in 2016 (Fig. 2). (DHS, Census)
- About 292,000 Tennessee children under age 6 had all available parents in the workforce in 2022. (ACS)
- The annual economic impact of inadequate childcare in Tennessee totals \$2.6 billion in lost earnings and revenue for parents, businesses, and taxpayers. (TQEE)
- More than 80% of Tennessee working parents surveyed in 2022 reported employment disruptions due to inadequate childcare, citing affordability, quality and access as major challenges. (TQEE)
- The median earnings of a Tennessee worker were about \$40,200 in 2022. As of May 2023, the typical childcare worker made just over \$27,000 per year— or \$13.21 per hour. (ACS, BLS)
- In 2022, the average annual price for families in full-time, center-based childcare was about \$15,000 for infants and \$13,000 for children 2 and older. That’s as much as 20% of the 2022 median income of Tennessee families with children and 50% more than average tuition and fees for public college in Tennessee (Fig. 3). (DHS, ACS, THEC)
- Nationally, one in four parents of children under 3 have been fired from or quit a job because of challenges securing childcare, and 41% have turned down a new job offer due to childcare. (Bishop)

Figure 2. Childcare Spots Per Child in TN

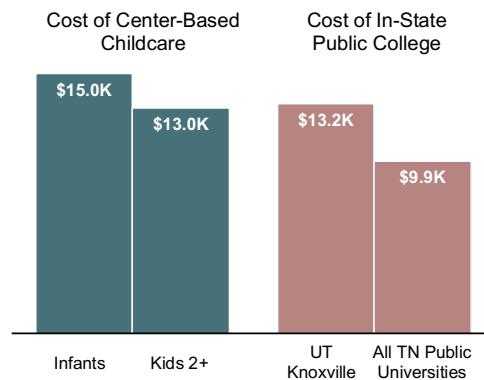
Per Child Under Age 5 (2004-2023)



Source: Sycamore’s analysis of data from DHS and U.S. Census

Figure 3. Cost of Childcare in TN

Full-Time Care by Age vs. In-State Tuition/Fees (2022)



Source: Sycamore’s analysis of data from DHS and THEC

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