

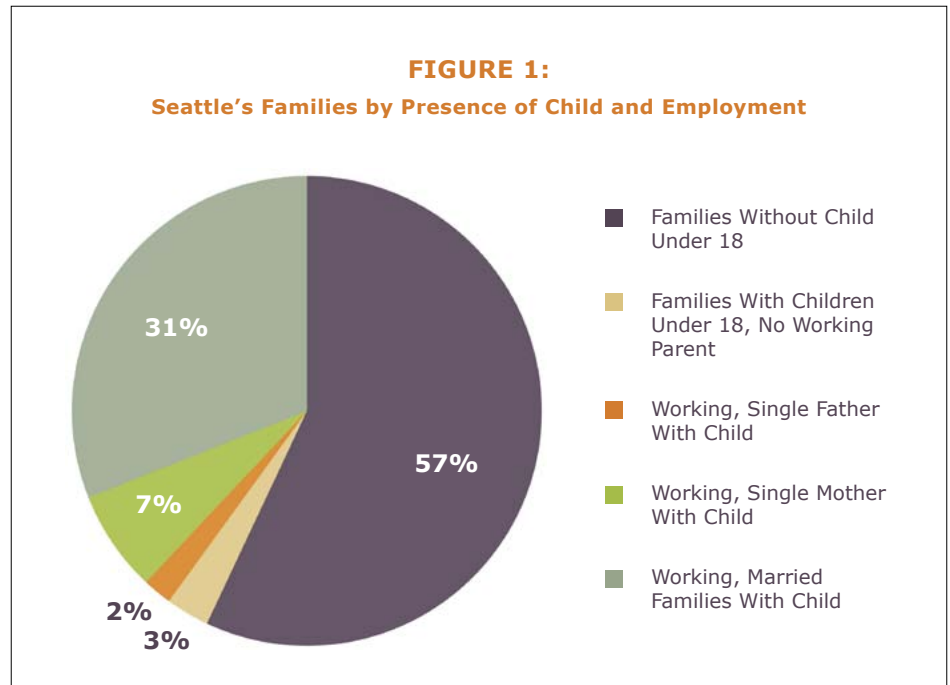
The State of Families and Child Care Access in Seattle

Next month, families throughout Seattle will gather to celebrate Mother’s Day. Reflecting on this day, it is incredible to see the immense changes that families have undergone in the country’s most recent past. Just fifty years ago, only four out of 10 households with a child saw both parents (including married and single parent families) working. In 2014, that number climbed to 6 out of every 10 such households.¹

Figure 1 demonstrates the state of working families in Seattle. The data above was compiled from the 2009 – 2013 American Community Survey 5 – Year Estimate (ACS).² Overall, Seattle had 139,840 families. Of these, 57% were without a child under the age of 18. The next most represented group were married couples with children under 18 where at least one parent is working. This group accounted for 31% of all families with a total of 43,602. Nine percent of families with a child are led by one working parent, while only 3% of such families included no working parents.

One of the most pressing concerns for the thousands of Seattle’s working families is child care. With increasing numbers of working families, it is vital that they be able to find services to care for their children while at work. Without them, parents may be faced with the tough decision to leave their job in order to provide care themselves. Maintaining this work and child care balance is especially difficult for low-income families.

A 2012 report from the Urban Institute found that low-income parents face unique occupational



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013 5-Year Estimates

challenges in meeting their child care needs.³ These include nonstandard and shifting schedules inflexible hours, and few benefits. According to the ACS data, there are nearly 7,000 families with children under 18 living below the poverty line in Seattle. Many areas within Seattle exhibit poverty rates below 5%, but there are zip codes where low-income families are especially concentrated. These include 98118 and 98133 with 1,220 and 754 such families, respectively, shown in **Figure 2**.

Unfortunately, local child care is increasingly unaffordable. The Puget Sound Sage report, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, found that the monthly market rate for full-time infant care at a King County child care center was \$1,445.⁴ Thankfully, subsidy programs help low-income families afford such care. Despite this, the struggle remains. The Urban Institute found that alongside the challenges highlighted above, the supply of child care is limited in low-income communities.⁵

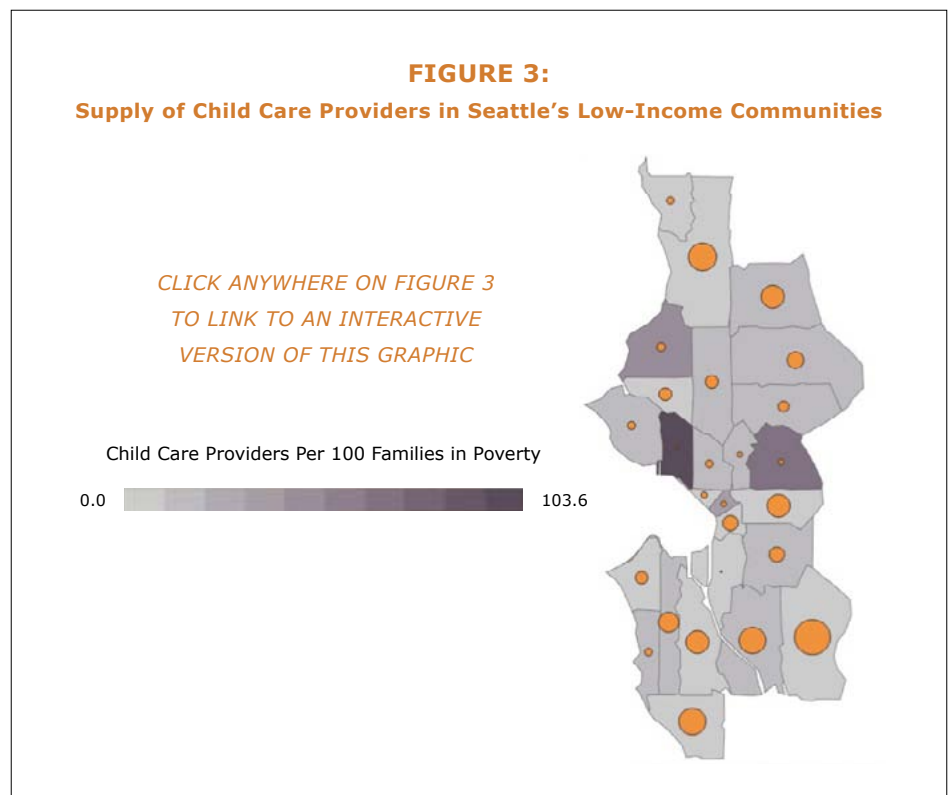
Figure 3 shows us that this is the case as well in Seattle. Each zip code is shaded according to the corresponding number of child care providers per 100 families with children in poverty. Darker shading signifies areas with the greatest number of providers per capita. Data on the number of child care providers per zip code was provided by Child Care Resources. The circles within each zip code represent their share of families in poverty compared to each zip code.

FIGURE 2:
Percentage of Families With Children Under 18 Whose Income Is Below Poverty Line

Poverty Rate Range	Average Poverty Rate	Number of Zip Codes	Number of Families in Poverty	Most Affected Zip Code
0% – 5%	3.1%	12	860	98115 – 265 Poor Families
5% – 15%	9.6%	4	1,031	98125 – 506 Poor Families
15% – 20%	16.7%	5	1,688	98133 – 754 Poor Families
20% – 50%	22.9%	4	3,084	98118 – 1,220 Poor Families
50% & Above	50.7%	1	231	98104 – 231 Poor Families
SEATTLE TOTAL	11%	26	6,894	

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013 5-Year Estimates

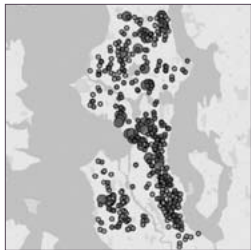
FIGURE 3:
Supply of Child Care Providers in Seattle’s Low-Income Communities



SOURCE: Child Care Resources, and U.S. Census ACS 2013 5-Year Estimates

The zip code with the second least number of poor families, 98119, exhibits the highest ratio of child care providers with 103.6 providers per 100 families in poverty. The ratio for 98112 with only 25 such families is 71.1. Those areas with the highest concentration of poor families with children, however, fare significantly worse. There are only 7.7 providers per 100 poor families in 98118, and 2.3 in 98113. Providers are least concentrated in the 98146 zip code with a shocking 0.6 provider ratio. In this same pocket of Seattle there are 696 families below the poverty line.

Families in poverty face enough difficulties finding child care. These are further compounded when parents must travel significant distances to drop their child/children off before work. Increasing the number of child care providers in our low-income communities is of critical importance.



CHILD CARE LOCATOR

SJI recently worked with the Seattle Housing Authority and Child Care Resources to develop a new interactive tool that can help users view child care providers, housing and other resources in their area. Learn more and view the Child Care Locator **here**.

1. The Council of Economic Advisers, "Nine Facts About American Families and Work," The Executive Office of the President of the United States, June 2014, 11, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nine_facts_about_family_and_work_real_final.pdf.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
3. Ajay Chaudry, Juan Pedroza, and Heather Sandstorm, "How Employment Constraints Affect Low-Income Working Parents' Child Care Decisions," Urban Institute, February 2012, <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412513-How-Employment-Constraints-Affect-Low-Income-Working-Parents-Child-Care-Decisions.pdf>.
4. Nicole Vallesterio Keenan, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: King County's Child Care Crisis," Puget Sound Sage, August 2014, <http://www.pugetsoundsage.org/downloads/Between%20a%20Rock%20and%20a%20Hard%20Place%202014.pdf>
5. Chaudry, Pedroza, Sandstorm, "How Employment Constraints Affect Low-Income Working Parents," Urban Institute, 1.

BEYOND THE HEADLINES: Policy & Labor Market Updates for Those Working to Help Low-Income and Low-Skill Individuals Advance through Education, Training & Living-Wage Jobs

About Seattle Jobs Initiative

Seattle Jobs Initiative creates opportunities for students, workers and business to succeed by helping education and job training programs meet the demands of a new economy. We find and apply solutions for people to gain the skills they need for good jobs that create prosperity for all in today's marketplace.

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