

Early Education

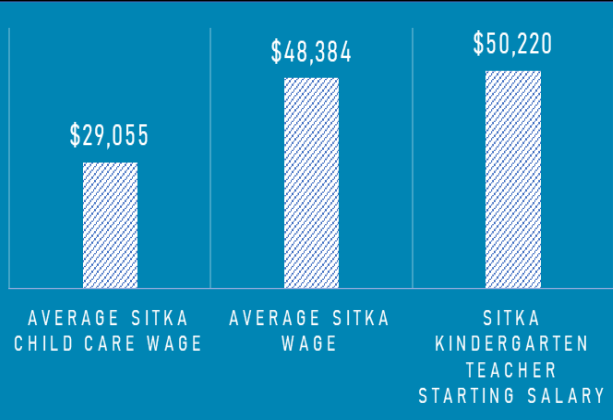
SITKA BY THE NUMBERS 2020

There is not enough child care to meet the needs of the community

There are **394** children in Sitka under the age of 5.5. Approximately **67%** of these children don't have a stay-at-home parent, and there are only enough child care slots for **one out of every two** children in Sitka.

Low Wages Continue for Child Care Workers

In 2020, the average annual wage for child care workers was **\$29,055**. This is significantly lower than the average wage for the city of Sitka and the starting salary for a kindergarten teacher in Sitka. A decrease in enrollment and capacity has caused some programs to decrease the available hours for their workers, meaning 2020 child care wages may be even lower. Also, some providers have added hazard pay to hourly wages, meaning some of these increases are likely temporary. Child care workers don't get summers off, and are often unbenefited.



With an annual income of **\$43,400** needed to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Sitka, child care workers don't earn enough to pay rent. Low wages make it very difficult to attract and retain qualified childcare professionals.

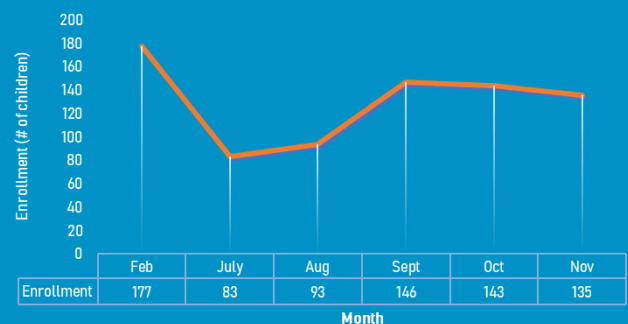
60% of Child Care Programs might have Closed without COVID-19 Funding Support



Fewer Children are Enrolled in Child Care Programs

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in decreased enrollment in child care programs, placing them in financially precarious positions. Enrollment fell by **53%** of capacity from February to July. Enrollment has somewhat recovered since then, with November enrollment only **14%** below February numbers.

2020 SITKA ENROLLMENT RECOVERY



The COVID-19 Pandemic Led to Unprecedented Challenges

Since January, **14** child care workers left their jobs, **4** leaving due to COVID-specific reasons. The staff turnover rate was **58%**. Child care programs faced the financial burdens of heightened health and safety precautions and decreased capacity. On average, programs reported a **44%** reduction in revenue, due largely to reduced enrollment. The Sitka CARES program has put **\$395,000** into the hands of local child care programs. On average, this amounted to **\$620** per child, per month.

Sitka Child Care By The Numbers

394	Population Under Age 5.5 ^{1,3}
130	Estimated Sitka Children Under Age 5.5 with a Stay-At-Home Parent ^{1,3}
264	Estimated Sitka Children Under Age 5.5. with All Parents Working ^{1,3}
6	Total Licensed Child Care Programs in Sitka ²
274	Total Licensed Child Care Slots in Sitka (Includes 70 school aged slots from Venture Program) ²
102	Estimated Sitka Children Under Age 5.5 in Unknown Child Care Situations ^{1,2,3,6}
1 to 2	Ratio of Licensed Child Care Slots to Children Under the age of 5.5 ^{1,2,6}
16	Total Infant/Toddler Licensed Child Care Slots in Sitka ²
215	Infant/Toddler Population (Under 3) ¹
1 to 13	Ratio of Licensed Infant/Toddler Slots to Children under the age of 3 ^{1,2,6}
41%	% of Sitka Preschoolers Ready for Kindergarten ⁷
5	Child Care Workers with Child Development Assoc. or 12+ Credits ²
24	Average # of Child Care Workers During Pandemic (March-December) ²
\$13,512	Average Annual Child Care Cost Per Preschooler (age 3-5.5) ²
\$11,352	Average Annual Child Care Cost Per Toddler (age 0-3) ²
\$29,055	Average Annual Child Care Wage in Sitka ²
\$48,384	Average Annual Wage in Sitka ⁴
\$50,220	Starting Kindergarten School Teacher Wage in Sitka ⁵

Sources: 1-US Census Bureau; 2-AEYC Survey of Childcare Programs; 3-American Community Survey 5-year Estimates Table B23008 2019 Estimates; 4-AK Department of Labor; 5-Sitka School District; 6-JEDC Analysis; 7-2020 Alaska Developmental Profile