



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON RELEASES 2017 STATEWIDE COUNTY-SPECIFIC
CHILD CARE DATA**

TACOMA, WA – April 7, 2017 – Child Care Aware of Washington announces the release of its 2017 county-specific child care data, providing the latest information about the supply, demand and costs of child care in every county in Washington. With approximately 60% of all WA children under age 6 residing in families where all parents are working, Washington’s child care system is a key component of our state’s economy. Our data provide an important glimpse into the state of our child care system, and includes demographic information about each county, such as the percentage of children living in poverty, child care workforce wage information and the average cost of child care. You can find the data on our website here:

<http://wa.childcareaware.org/about-us/data>.

Child Care Aware of Washington provides this important data twice a year, combining data it collects with information from a variety of other sources. It is used by state and federal agencies, the media, academic institutions and advocacy groups across the country. In addition to providing much-needed data about the status of WA’s child care system, the data also show the success of our state’s child care quality-improvement efforts, with more than 70% of licensed child care programs statewide enrolled in the Department of Early Learning’s Early Achievers, Washington’s Quality Rating and Improvement System.

“A high-quality child care system is essential to Washington’s economy. Our child care data reports provide

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the information Washington’s community and business leaders, early learning partners, policy-makers and the media need to stay informed about this critical field,” said Robin Lester, chief executive officer of Child Care Aware of Washington. “Right now, our child care system is struggling due to years of low state child care assistance reimbursement rates and the impact of Washington’s recently increased minimum wage. Our data makes it easy for anyone to see how their county is being affected.”

Key findings among the statewide data show that:

- Child care workers continue to earn extremely low wages in WA – a teacher in a child care center earns on average less than half the salary of the average K-12 public school teacher.
- Child care is very expensive in our state. In most counties, center-based care for an infant accounts for 15 – 22% *or more* of the median household income.

Some of the county-specific data highlights include*:

- In **Clark County** the number of licensed child care providers and total child care capacity declined from 297 providers with capacity for 8,799 children in 2012, to 234 providers with capacity for 8,618 children in December 2016.
- In **King County** 67% of licensed child care providers are participating in Early Achievers.
- In **Pierce County** nearly 17% of children under age 18 are living in poverty, and 63% of the families CCA of WA served in 2016 to help find child care relied on child care assistance.
- In **Snohomish County** 50% of providers accept child care assistance for young children, while 60% of families seeking child care referrals in 2016 relied on child care assistance.
- In **Spokane County** almost 20% of children under age 18 are living in poverty, and 72% of the families CCA of WA served in 2016 to help find child care relied on child care assistance.
- In **Thurston County** the number of licensed child care providers and total child care capacity

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declined from 268 providers with capacity for 6,965 children in 2012, to 202 providers with capacity for 6,796 in December 2016.

- In **Yakima County** approximately 86% of licensed child care providers are participating in Early Achievers.

Child Care Aware of Washington is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to connecting families to local, high-quality, licensed child care and early learning programs, and to supporting providers who deliver high-quality care. As a statewide network of six regional agencies, we work side-by-side with child care providers, offering professional development services and higher education scholarships to help them integrate research-based, best practices into their programs. We are committed to ensuring that each and every child in Washington has access to the quality care and education they need to succeed in school and life. For more information, please visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org> and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/> and on Twitter @childcarewa.

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*Includes licensed child care (centers and family child care) and exempt school-age programs only as of Feb. 28, 2017.