

# Licensed child care access in Toronto\*<sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online [PDF]<sup>[2]</sup>

## Introduction

Access to child care is vital to the social and economic health of a community such as the City of Toronto. Accessible child care has been shown to influence occupational and educational opportunities for parents, especially those in low-income situations (Gunaseelan 2021). This leads to increased economic prosperity for parents and families which in turn, brings positive impacts to their physical and social well-being (Gunaseelan 2021). Child care access also has an impact on the health and development of children who attend these facilities (Rhijn et al. 2021). Vulnerable children greatly benefit from child care access as these centers help to facilitate early intervention methods (Underwood and Frankel 2012). Equitable access to child care is therefore an important facet of community health and development. This paper explores data made available by opendatatoronto (Gelfand 2022) related to licensed child care facilities and city ward profiles to explore the relationship between child care access and ward demographics. The data was analyzed and processed with the programming language R (R Core Team 2022). Various packages were also used in the processing, cleaning, and presentation of this information such as tidyverse (Wickham et al. 2019), here (Müller 2020), knitr (Xie 2023a), tinytex (Xie 2023b), dplyr (Wickham et al. 2023), and janitor (Firke 2023). This analysis shows a negative correlation between the number of children in a ward per existing child care space and average household income (see Section 3). This suggests that lower income wards experience greater competition for child care access and higher income wards experience less competition. This finding demonstrates a trend of inequitable access to child care across the city of Toronto. As child care access plays a central role in the social and economic well-being of communities, and has an especially positive impact on vulnerable children and low-income families, these findings support measures and initiatives aimed at ensuring more equitable access to child care in the City of Toronto (see Toronto 2017). The remainder of this paper demonstrates the data, data analysis, an investigation, and discussion surrounding the findings. Section 2 contains three sub-sections. Section 2.1 outlines the “Licensed Child Care Centres” data set (Toronto Children’s Services 2024) provided by the opendatatoronto (Gelfand 2022). Section 2.2 explores the “Ward Profiles (25-Ward Model)” data set (Toronto City Planning 2024) also provided by the opendatatoronto (Gelfand 2022). Section 3 investigates aspects of both data sets and their relationship. This is followed by a discussion surrounding the findings in Section 4.

**Related link:** ‘We are in a perfect storm’: Toronto faces child care space crisis, advocates say<sup>[3]</sup>

Where are private equity-backed child care programs located?<sup>[4]</sup>

**Region:** Ontario<sup>[5]</sup>

**Tags:** access<sup>[6]</sup>

inequity<sup>[7]</sup>

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