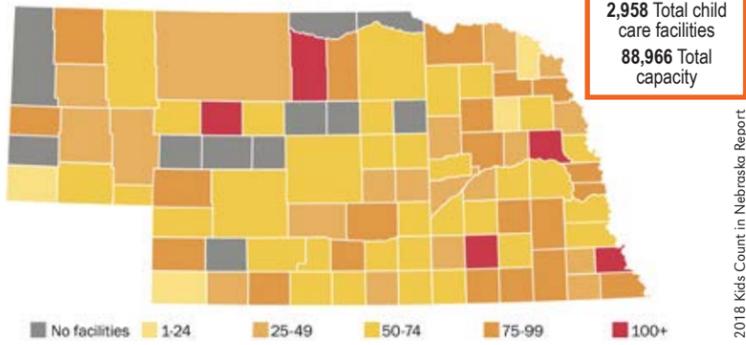


High-Quality Early Child Care Is Important to Children and Communities

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Capacity of licensed child care facilities per 100 children under 6 with all available parents working, by county*



* Does not include School-Age-Only Child Care Centers.
Source: "Early Childhood Capacity by County," DHHS (Report run Oct. 5, 2018), U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, Table B23008.

In Lancaster County, as in most of Nebraska, there are more children needing child care than there are licensed facilities.

Early Care Matters to Children

The first 1,000 days of a child's life have a profound impact on their brain development. Research shows 90% of brain development occurs before age 5. Early relationships, environments and experiences affect all aspects of a child's development.

In Nebraska, 77.3% of children ages 0–18 have all available parents in the workforce and 75% of children ages 0–6 have all available parents in the workforce. Without a doubt, Nebraskans are hard workers — but they are also family oriented.

This high percentage of parents in the workforce confirms that young children require some form of non-parental early child care. A high-quality early-child care workforce is vital to care for our youngest population while their parents are working.

A Smart Investment in Nebraska's Future

The 2018 Kids Count in Nebraska Report states that well-educated children are more likely to become successful adults. Access to high-quality early childhood and pre-kindergarten programs

provide an important foundation for children as they move through their school years and into adulthood. Well-educated children grow up to have better job satisfaction, earn higher income, lower divorce rates and lower crime rates. By ensuring that all children have access to high-quality educational opportunities, we are investing in the future of Nebraska.

The cost of child care continues to rise and that cost averages more than \$12,000¹ per year, per child. In Nebraska, nearly 80% of children ages 0–5 are in some form of paid child care. In 2016, there were 132,809 children under age 5 living in Nebraska. A total of 20,277 of these children lived in Lancaster County.

The Heckman Equation has found nationally the annual return on investment for each dollar spent on high-quality preschool programs for children living in poverty is 7–10%. Investment returns increase to 13% annually when early

childhood programs span birth through age 5.

Nebraska has 2,985 licensed child care facilities and 337 of those are currently participating in Step Up To Quality, which is Nebraska's quality rating and improvement scale. Child care centers can participate in Step Up To Quality at no cost. Participation gives licensed child care providers (homes and centers) access to coaching and resources to support them as they work to take the quality of their program to the next level. Step 5 is the highest rating.

Creating equal opportunities for all children to learn and grow in their early years — regardless of race, gender or socioeconomic background — is vital to a community's prosperity. Access to high-quality early childhood experiences enables children to be kindergarten-ready and to develop into successful community citizens.

1. Child Care Aware, *Child Care in America: 2017 Fact Sheets*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nebraska Extension has information about choosing quality child care at <https://child.unl.edu/quality-child-care>.

See related article
LINCOLN LITTLES on page 5

Taking part is your civic duty.

After each census, state officials use the results to redraw the boundaries of their congressional and state legislative districts, adapting to population shifts.

United States
Census
Bureau



2020 Census

Census results affect your voice in government, how much funding your community receives and how your community plans for the future. In 2020, for the first time ever, the U.S. Census Bureau will accept responses online, but you can still respond by phone or mail if you prefer. Multiple languages are available.

Confidential and Secure

By law, your information is confidential! No law enforcement agency (not the DHS, ICE, FBI or CIA) can access or use your personal information at any time.

4 Ways to Respond

- Secure internet:** New and quick, respond online at <http://2020census.gov> starting March 23. It's user-friendly — offering you help screens and the ability to review your answers.
- Respond by phone:** Number will be listed on invitation.
- Respond by mail:** If you haven't responded online by early April, a paper questionnaire will be mailed to you.
- In-person interview:** If you have not responded by May, a census worker will follow up in person.

Timeline

When you respond to the census, use the address where you live as of April 1, 2020.

On or between:	You'll receive in the mail:
March 12–20	An invitation to respond online (some households will also receive paper questionnaires).
March 16–24	A reminder letter.
If you haven't responded yet:	
March 26–April 3	A reminder postcard.
April 8–16	A reminder letter and paper questionnaire.
April 20–27	A final reminder postcard before census workers follow up in person.

For more information:
2020CENSUS.GOV

Follow on social media:
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United States
**Census
2020**

“The most important people in a child's life are the child's parents and teachers. That means parents and teachers are the most important people in the world.”

—Fred Rodgers

CONNECT WITH US

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