

Pressing Needs

Childcare



What we heard

Parents and employers were both concerned about declining childcare availability throughout the Hudson Valley, and the sharply rising cost.

Business owners told CFHV that they were losing employees because of childcare scarcity, and some new parents were not coming back to work after having a child because they could not find an available childcare slot. Many decried the need to travel far to bring their children to the nearest childcare center, or the closest one with an available slot. Aside from being a workforce support, people also acknowledged that childcare is important for the early education and enrichment that it provides to young, growing minds.

Our neighbors also noted the heft of childcare expenses. In the Hudson Valley, the cost of childcare for a family with two children often outpaces housing as the largest household expense. The high cost of childcare puts additional stress on family budgets at a time when households are often thinking about buying a home or paying off college loans, creating a paradox of competing interests for limited income.



Voices of the Hudson Valley

What We Learned From YOU
2025



Center for Creative Education, Kingston

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What we know

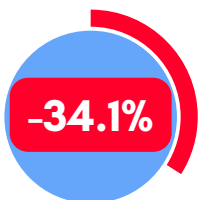
Childcare in the Hudson Valley is dwindling, expensive, and struggling to remain viable under stress from declining youth populations, economic challenges, and shifting public policies.

Dutchess, Putnam, and Ulster counties have lost a total of 233 licensed childcare businesses since 2007 because of these stressors. The following table shows the percent change in childcare businesses in each county, and the current number of licensed childcare slots per the total population of children ages 10 and under.



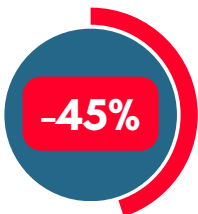
DUTCHESS:

- Loss of 33.1% of childcare businesses since 2007
- 0.29 licensed seats per child



PUTNAM:

- Loss of 34.1% of childcare businesses since 2007
- 0.35 licensed seats per child



ULSTER:

- Loss of 45% of childcare businesses since 2007
- 0.26 licensed seats per child

Childcare is very expensive in the Hudson Valley. Federal standards say that households should spend no more than 7% of their income on childcare. However, median-earning households in Dutchess and Putnam spend 13% of their income on childcare for one child; and Ulster families spend 14%. **The average annual cost of care for one child in 2023 was \$12,220 in Dutchess, \$15,125 in Putnam, and \$12,220 in Ulster**, according to the state Office of Children & Family Services.

