

# Regional System Assessment Summary

## Early Care and Education on Oregon's South Coast

### 2023



In 2022-23 the South Coast Early Learning Hub compiled regional data around access to Early Care and Education (ECE), community and family needs and preferences for care, demographics, and barriers for providers in operating an ECE Business. Below is a summary of our findings.

**Our Region is Childcare Desert:**  
 25% of children ages 0-5 have access to a licensed or school-based slot. (Less than 33% is considered a Childcare Desert)

**Access has increased since 2021:** Overall access to childcare increased by 5 percentage points compared to 2021. However, we still have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

**Preschool Age Care (ages 3-5):**  
 41% of children have access to care in this age group, up 10 percentage points from 2021; an increase of 231 slots, 94 of which are state or federally funded.

**Infant and toddler (ages 0-2):**  
 Only 8% of infants and toddlers have access to licensed or school-based care. Some geographically isolated communities have no infant/toddler care altogether.

### The ECE Workforce

#### Perspective:

Employment levels dropped severely during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Employment in ECE remains low and programs struggle to find qualified staff.

Wages for the Early Care and Education workforce have been rising; however, they remain below a family living wage (MIT Living Wage Calculator). Chart to the Right: Yearly Averages of Childcare Services Employment- Coos and Curry Counties (Quarterly Workforce Indicators, U.S. Census Bureau)

Early Childhood Workforce History Coos + Curry Counties



## Overview of Early Care and Education on the South Coast

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Statewide policies and practices create barriers for program operation including background check backlogs. Additionally, ERDC reimbursement rates do not cover the cost of care (Rural Childcare Study). Economies of scale are not possible in rural communities, and programs struggle to find viable business models.

Providers felt overwhelmed or burdened on the job, and without the skills they needed to effectively support or manage children's behavior. Additionally, providers reported a high rate of anxiety and depression compared to the general population. Professional development, coaching, and access to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation all had a positive impact on childcare provider's experiences. (PDG Provider Survey, 2022).

### **The Parent Perspective:**

Affordable care during working hours is the highest need. The lack of access to high-quality affordable early care and education means families are forced to make difficult choices and compromise working or attending school. Extended care, drop-in, and flexible hours are all greatly needed options for families. Other needs identified by parents include trusted and trained staff, transportation, and smaller class sizes.

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*"It is so frustrating being a heavily qualified, single mom with schedule restrictions due to daycare in today's market. It's like digging a hole that you can't get out of, with no hope in the long run." (Quote from local parent, Facebook)*

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Historically underserved families have an even greater challenge finding care that is inclusive and meets their family's needs. LGBTQIA+ parents have expressed difficulty of finding quality care in which they felt they would not be discriminated against. Additionally, young children in early childhood settings are being expelled or suspended at a high rate, and children of color and children with disabilities are disproportionately affected. (Oregon's PDG Family Survey 2022)

The reality is families cannot afford to pay for the full cost of care. The average annual cost of infant care in Oregon is more than the cost of college tuition, and Infant care for one child would take up 22.2% of a median family's income (Economic Policy Institute). Public and private funding is required to operate a viable childcare business in our communities.

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*"Our current childcare system sets families and childcare providers up to be at odds. Families are working hard to stretch their budgets and the price of ensuring quality childcare for their children often feels out of reach. Providers are working to ensure quality care and family wage jobs for their staff. It's a Catch 22: if you raise the price of childcare, it remains inaccessible to families; if providers can't recoup the cost of providing quality childcare they are forced to operate with insufficient staffing and cannot provide living wages, and rarely have capacity to fund benefits." (South Coast Innovations, Addressing the Childcare Crisis. Common Thread Consulting, 2022).*

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## Overview of Early Care and Education on the South Coast

### What's Helping:

Statewide and South Coast partners have been working hard to stabilize and expand our ECE Programs:

- Funding from the state and federal governments has supported Preschool Promise, Baby Promise, and Head Start expansion and the opening of a new Relief Nursery.
- Workforce partners stood up new programs to expand the workforce including an Apprenticeship Program and a Childcare Accelerator Program.
- Innovative programs such as the Shared Services Alliance have been created to support providers in the administrative side of operating a childcare business and creating shared sub pools.
- Care Connections, our local Childcare Resource and Referral provides professional development and technical assistance to providers.
- School Districts have opened new programs, and local private and public partnerships have been formed to develop new program models.
- Wages for the Early Care and Education workforce have been rising; however, they remain below a family living wage.

Wage increases and increased childcare and preschool availability are positive results from these efforts, and indicate our strategies and efforts are effective, however there is still work to be done.

### ECE Detail by Community:

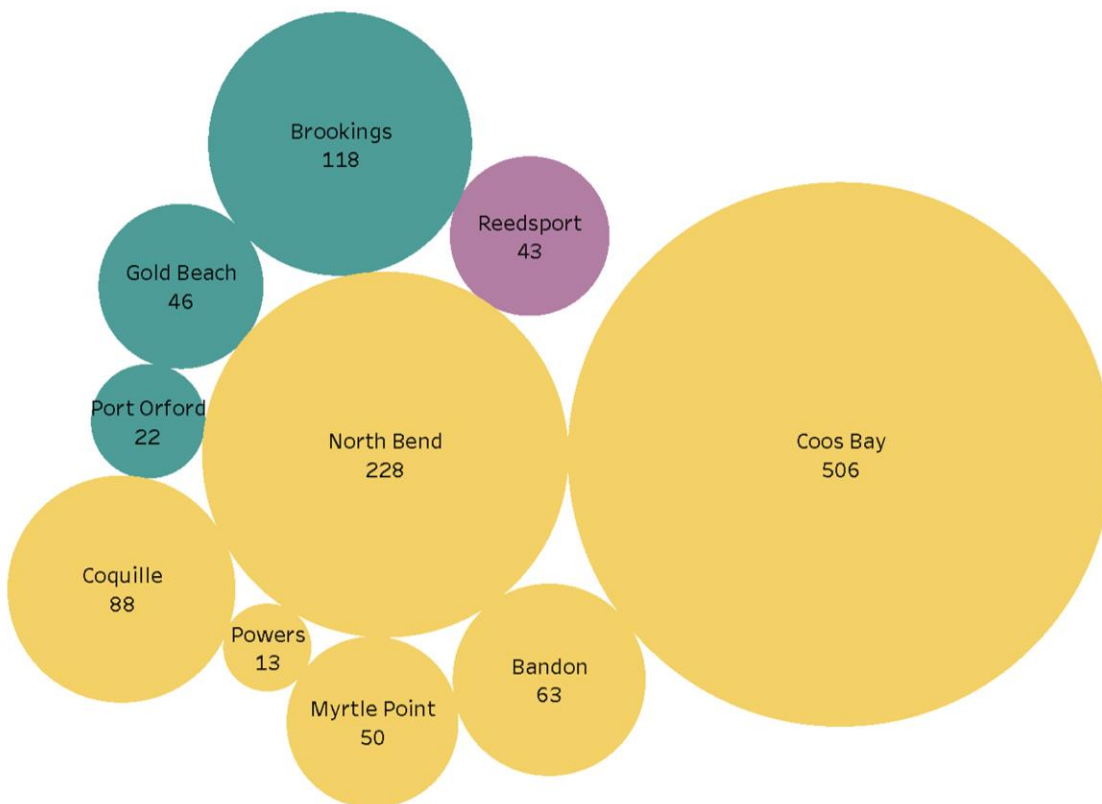
Community	Infant/Toddler Care (Ages 0-2)			Preschool (Ages 3-5)			Overall Childcare/preschool (Ages 0-5)			Difference from 2021
	total 0-2 slots	# of children	% with access	total 3-5 slots	# of children	% with access	Total Slots	# of children	% with access	
Brookings	14	304	5%	104	340	31%	118	644	18%	6%
Gold Beach	2	112	2%	44	109	40%	46	221	21%	0%
Port Orford	0	56	0%	22	66	33%	22	122	18%	2%
Bandon	13	143	9%	50	132	38%	63	275	23%	4%
Coquille	6	197	3%	82	196	42%	88	393	22%	2%
Myrtle Point	10	124	8%	40	129	31%	50	253	20%	10%
Powers	0	29	0%	13	32	41%	13	61	21%	-2%
North Bend	29	415	7%	199	412	48%	228	827	28%	7%
Coos Bay	112	779	14%	394	850	46%	506	1629	31%	4%
Reedsport	8	134	6%	35	142	25%	43	276	16%	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>2293</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>2408</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>1177</b>	<b>4701</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>5%</b>

Highlighted yellow= Childcare Desert (less than 33%). Licensed slots pulled by CARE Connections CCR&R August 2022; State funded slots (PSP/SCHS/BP) slots pulled December 2022. Unlicensed programs not included in these numbers.

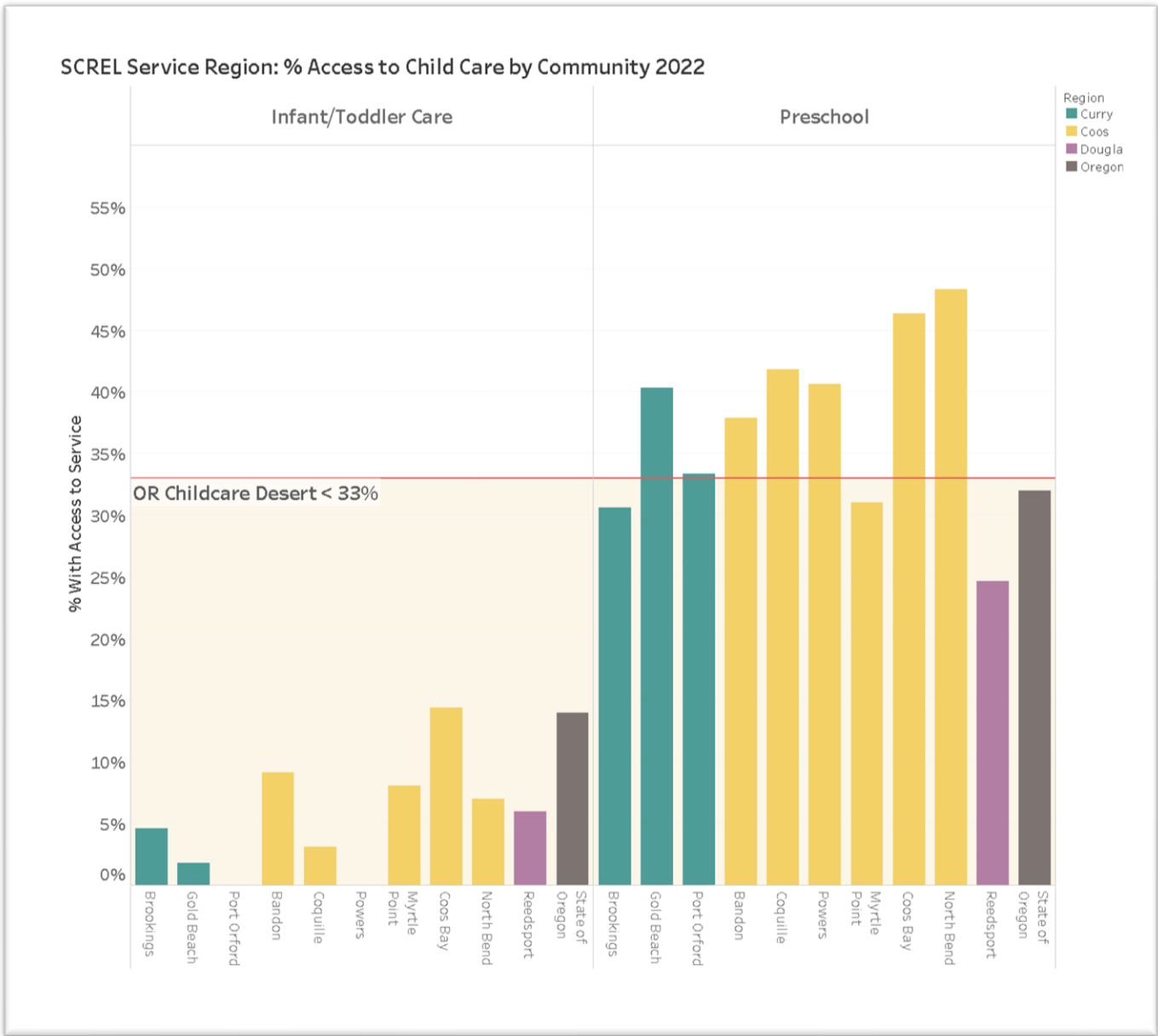
# Overview of Early Care and Education on the South Coast

SCREL Service Region:  
Total Number of Age 0-5 Child Care Slots by Community 2022

County  
■ Curry  
■ Coos  
■ Douglas



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## Root Causes and Conditions impacting our Region’s ability to meet the ECE Needs:

<b>Mindsets</b>	Overall lack of understanding of the importance of quality ECE, and nuances of addressing this problem
	Undervaluing Early Care and Education providers/workers. Not seen as a career option
	Lack of trust between providers and government agencies
<b>Goals</b>	Our region has not identified clear, measurable, shared goals or milestones around this objective
<b>Decision-Making</b>	People in positions of power do not include families in decision making
<b>Policies and Practices</b>	Some state inefficiencies and policies are overburdensome, and disadvantage rural providers
	Some families in need do not qualify for high-quality, state funded programs
	Misalignment of state funded program timelines, eligibility, reporting, etc.
	Licensing Processes governed by state and federally regulated entities are hard to understand.
	Misalignment of rules and regulations for K-12 vs. other ECE programs
	For some organizations, pay equity requirements prevent providers within a larger backbone organization from increasing wages.
<b>Connections</b>	Potential ECE workforce not aware of scholarships, trainings, and opportunities in the ECE sector.
	Families struggle to navigate the complex system of ECE providers and figure out what they are eligible for
<b>Program Components</b>	Hours of Care and program options do not meet family’s needs and preferences.
	Transportation that is developmentally appropriate is expensive and challenging to provide.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Not enough qualified and trained staff to fully staff current programs. Program expansion cannot occur with a limited workforce.
	Low wages and lack of benefits prevent people from joining the workforce and causes burnout. competition with K-12 wages and benefits lead to staff moving to work in k-12 settings
	Staffing shortages lead to program closures, and inconsistent care for families.
	ECE Workforce does not reflect the diversity of the children they serve, and may not be culturally responsive/inclusive
	Not enough specialists to support children’s unique needs (Mental/behavioral health, EI/ECSC)
	Education and Experience requirements are extensive and to become qualified ECE Teacher. It takes time, dedication, and financial resources.
	Small providers struggle to keep up with the administrative side of operating a childcare business
<b>Financial Resources</b>	Parents cannot afford to pay for the full cost of care: State subsidies required to operate an ECE Business. Economies of scale are not possible in small rural communities. Existing Subsidies are not enough.
	State contracting/reimbursement process overburdens providers. Delays in contracts and inconsistent application periods make expansion planning difficult
<b>Environmental</b>	The communities on the South Coast are mostly isolated from each other, and public transportation is extremely limited. Traveling to a neighboring community for care is not an option for most families or workforce.
	Limited Facilities for Childcare/Preschool. Limited Funding to support Facilities improvements

## Overview of Early Care and Education on the South Coast

**Priority Populations:** Children and Families that were identified to as having the greatest opportunity for impact if prioritized for ECE services:

- Children Experiencing Homelessness
- Children not in home of origin
- Children with a Diagnosed Disability or Developmental Delay
- Families experiencing financial instability.
- Children with a primary language other than English
- Black, Indigenous, and Children of Color
- Children with a parent with Mental Illness, Substance Use Disorder, and/or other serious health conditions.
- Children that have experienced trauma, including abuse, domestic violence, or parent death

*Process for selecting Priority Populations: in 2018, 2019, and 2021, SCREL Staff and community partners compiled regional data on community needs, school performance, and access to Early Care and Education. These Priority populations were identified and updated each year. The 2022 changes were identified by SCREL coordinated enrollment staff after conversations with families that had complex needs but did not fit easily into the priority populations that were previously identified. Feedback was then collected by additional SCREL staff and community partners.*

General Demographic Data	Coos	Curry	Coastal Douglas	Oregon
Estimated Number of Children 0-6 <sup>a</sup>	4064	1169	321	
Estimated Number of Children under 5	3438	987	276	
Childhood Poverty Rate (100% FPL, Ages 5-17, 2021) <sup>b</sup>	23.1%	21.7%	24.9%	12.9%
Foster Care Rate (under 18, per 1000) <sup>c</sup>	1.3%	1.1%	1.6% (county)	0.7%

Community	Childhood Poverty Rate (100% FPL)	Free and Reduced Lunch Rate (185%FPL) <sup>d</sup>	K-12 Student Homelessness Rate <sup>e</sup>	% of K-12 students who are BIPOC <sup>f</sup>	% of K-12 students with a disability <sup>g</sup>	Primary Language other than English <sup>h</sup>
Brookings	19%	60%	4%	39%	18%	10.4%
Gold Beach	20%	57%	4%	25%	13%	>5
Port Orford	36%	71%	15%	12%	11%	>5
Coos Bay	23%	84%	10%	25%	17%	16.6 %
Bandon	27%	59%	4%	23%	13%	>5
Myrtle Point	20%	90%	11%	26%	15%	>5
Coquille	19%	66%	7%	47%	15%	2%
North Bend	21%	59%	5%	27%	14%	5.0%
Powers	29%	86%	3%	27%	17%	>5
Reedsport	15%	85%	21%	20%	18%	8.5%

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### Sources:

1. 211 Calls Data Report- South Coast 2022
2. South Coast Head Start Needs Assessment 2022
3. Oregon Family Household Survey 2022
4. Oregon's Early Childhood Care Provider Survey 2022
5. Bandon Community Child Care Center Assessment (East Consulting & Associates) 2020
6. South Coast Innovations: Addressing the Childcare Crisis (Common Thread Consulting) 2022
7. Rural Childcare Study (By Louise Stoney) 2021
8. Care Connections Providers Listening Sessions 2019
9. Workforce, Employment, and Wages Data (US Census Bureau)
10. Economic Policy Institute, [Childcare Costs in the United States](#)
11. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Living Wage Calculator by County.
12. The State of Early Care & Education and Child Care Assistance in Oregon, The Early Learning Division, 2019
13. Oregon's Childcare Deserts, Oregon State University, 2019
14. Early Childhood Service Analysis Report January 2022: Slots and Demographics Data compiled by Care Connections CCR&R and SCREL Hub team.
15. Input from various community partner meetings including but not limited to; SCREL Governance Council and South Coast Early Learning Directors Meetings.

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### Demographic Data Sources

<sup>a</sup> Oregon Health Authority, [Birth by Zip Code](#): 2015-2022

<sup>b</sup> US Census 2021, [Childhood Poverty Rate](#)

<sup>c</sup> Oregon Department of Human Services, [Child Welfare Data Book 2020](#). Children under 18 years old in foster care per 1,000

<sup>d</sup> Oregon Department of Education, [Free and Reduced-Price Eligibility by School District](#), 2020

<sup>e</sup> Oregon Department of Education, [K-12 School District Homeless Count 2019-2020](#)

<sup>f</sup> Oregon Department of Education, [School District Enrollment Data 2020-21](#)

<sup>g</sup> Oregon Department of Education, [School District At-A-Glance Profiles 2020-21](#): Percentage of enrolled students with a disability

<sup>h</sup> ACS 2016-2020 5-year estimates: % of Children 5-17 whose primary language is not English. Pulled from ELMO, 2022.