Does Child Care Capacity Meet the Needs of Working Parents in North Dakota?
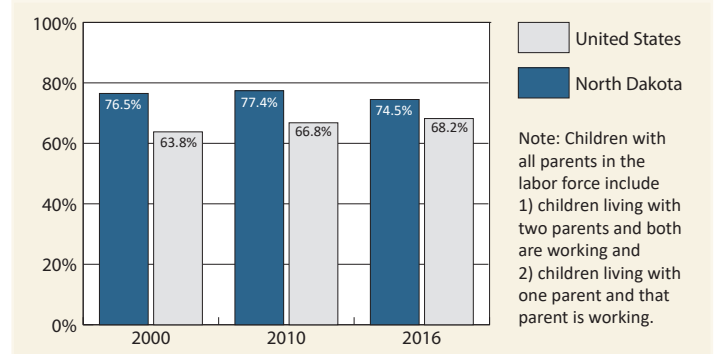
Having an employed parent is a major contributor to financial stability and well-being for families. Parental employment is associated with higher family income, which in turn, is associated with many positive child outcomes including better health, behavior, academic achievement, and financial well-being as adults[1]. Parental employment also brings challenges relating to the care of children.

North Dakota has the largest percentage of working adults in the nation (80% in 2017)[2] and the second lowest unemployment rate among states (2.6% in 2017)[3]. In addition, 85 percent of North Dakota parents are employed, which is the second largest percentage among states (behind Iowa and Minnesota which are tied for first)[4]. This suggests that most children in North Dakota may be in need of quality early care and education opportunities.

In fact, 75 percent of North Dakota children ages 0 through 13 lived in families where all the parents were in the labor force in 2016 (i.e., 96,010 children statewide) - which was larger than the national average of 68 percent (Figure 1 and Table 1) and was the ninth largest percentage among states[5].

The distribution of children with working parents differs by age. As children become older, parents are more likely to enter/re-enter the labor force. Thus, older children ages 6 through 13 are more likely than younger children ages 0 through 5 in North Dakota to live in households with all parents working (78% and 70%, respectively in 2016)[5]. Differences exist with respect to geography as well. In six North Dakota counties, at least 90

Figure 1. Percent of Children Ages 0 through 13 with All Parents in the Labor Force, 2000, 2010, and 2016: ND & U.S.[5]

Note: Children with all parents in the labor force include 1) children living with two parents and both are working and 2) children living with one parent and that parent is working.

percent of young children ages 0 through 5 lived in households where all parents were working in 2016 (Griggs, Divide, Golden Valley, Eddy, Ramsey, and Bowman)[5] (Table 1).
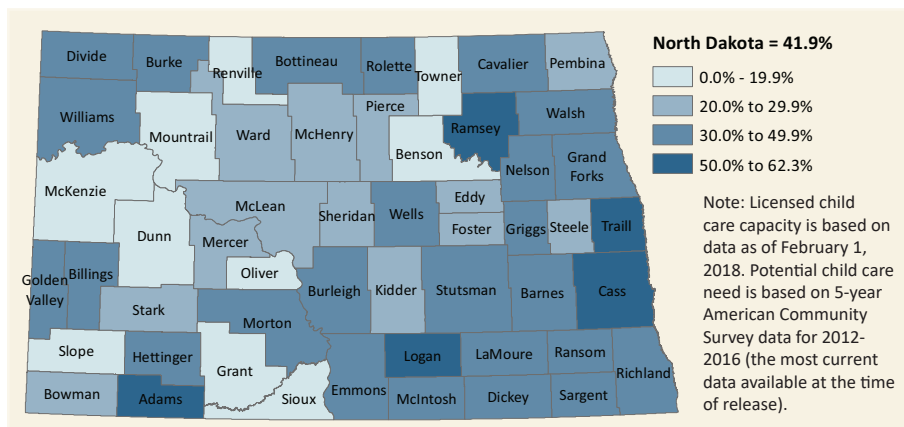
With most parents working, reliable and affordable child care can help provide parents with greater opportunity to be productive at work and school. In addition, high-quality child care nurtures, stimulates, and supports children as they build the confidence and critical capacities they need to thrive in school and in life[6].

As of February 2018, there were 1,470 licensed child care providers in North Dakota with the capacity to care for 40,228 children[7]. As there are 96,010 children potentially needing care, this means that licensed child care programs in the state have the ability to meet approximately 42 percent of potential need. According to Child Care Aware of North Dakota, national child care standards recommend that licensed care should meet at least 50 percent of potential need[8]. Currently, only five counties in North Dakota meet this recommended minimum (Adams, Cass, Logan, Ramsey, and Traill)[8] (Figure 2).

Strong labor force participation is indicative of vibrant local and regional economic development. When parents have secure employment and earn enough to meet their families' basic needs, children benefit. In many cases, secure employment often means having access to reliable and affordable child care. Understanding how North Dakota is meeting the needs of working parents is critical to providing greater opportunities for quality early child care.

Figure 2. Children Ages 0 through 13 with All Parents in the Labor Force (i.e., potential child care need) as a Percent of Licensed Child Care Capacity in North Dakota by County[5,8]

North Dakota = 41.9%

0.0% - 19.9%
20.0% to 29.9%
30.0% to 49.9%
50.0% to 62.3%

Note: Licensed child care capacity is based on data as of February 1, 2018. Potential child care need is based on 5-year American Community Survey data for 2012-2016 (the most current data available at the time of release).

[1]Child Trends (2015). *Secure parental employment*. Retrived from https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/secure-parental-employment [2]North Dakota Compass (2018). Workforce. Proportion of Adults Working. Retrieved from http://bit.ly/2c0IWXu [3]U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018). Unemployment Rates for States. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/lau/lastrk17.htm [4]Institute for Child, Youth, and Family Policy. (2018). The Heller School. Brandeis University. Retrieved from http://www.diversitydatakids.org/ [5]U.S. Census Bureau (2018). Census 2000, Table P046; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008; and calculations by North Dakota KIDS COUNT. [6]The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006). Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care. Retrieved from http://www.aecf.org/ [7]Child Care Aware of North Dakota (2010). 2010 Activity Report. Retrieved from http://bit.ly/2a1uCzm [8]Child Care Aware of North Dakota (2017). Child Care Profile. Retrieved from http://www.ndchildcare.org/data-pub/data.html

TABLE 1. POTENTIAL CHILD CARE NEED AND LICENSED CHILD CARE CAPACITY IN NORTH DAKOTA BY COUNTY, 2016[5,8]

| Area | Potential Child Care Need | | | | | | Licensed Child Care Capacity, Feb. 1, 2018 | Children 0 to 13 with All Parents in Labor Force as a Percent of Capacity |
| | Children 0 to 5 with All Parents in Labor Force | | Children 6 to 13 with All Parents in Labor Force | | Children 0 to 13 with All Parents in Labor Force | | | |
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
United States	14,968,587	65.0%	21,955,621	70.6%	36,924,208	68.2%	na	na
North Dakota	41,674	70.4%	54,336	78.0%	96,010	74.5%	40,228	41.9%
Adams	74	69.2%	167	67.9%	241	68.3%	121	50.1%
Barnes	543	75.5%	864	86.4%	1,407	81.9%	556	39.5%
Benson	334	54.5%	546	57.1%	880	56.1%	124	14.1%
Billings	62	77.5%	36	55.1%	98	67.4%	33	33.7%
Bottineau	296	62.8%	410	70.0%	706	66.8%	295	41.8%
Bowman	254	89.8%	311	92.0%	565	91.0%	148	26.2%
Burke	92	51.1%	181	72.4%	273	63.5%	93	34.1%
Burleigh	5,749	77.6%	7,220	85.0%	12,969	81.6%	5,320	41.0%
Cass	11,250	78.0%	12,019	80.4%	23,269	79.2%	14,501	62.3%
Cavalier	219	77.7%	234	72.4%	453	74.9%	172	38.0%
Dickey	273	83.7%	495	90.4%	768	87.9%	312	40.6%
Divide	171	95.5%	147	84.2%	318	89.9%	135	42.4%
Dunn	207	67.4%	313	76.5%	520	72.6%	77	14.8%
Eddy	188	91.7%	176	87.4%	364	89.6%	80	22.0%
Emmons	147	66.8%	238	68.7%	385	68.0%	118	30.6%
Foster	125	60.4%	255	77.5%	380	70.9%	99	26.0%
Golden Valley	122	93.1%	157	86.2%	279	89.1%	102	36.6%
Grand Forks	3,819	74.7%	4,718	80.2%	8,537	77.6%	3,258	38.2%
Grant	114	76.0%	139	82.1%	253	79.2%	48	19.0%
Griggs	147	98.7%	154	80.8%	301	88.6%	91	30.2%
Hettinger	119	53.8%	166	73.3%	285	63.7%	115	40.4%
Kidder	109	69.0%	141	84.1%	250	76.8%	57	22.8%
LaMoure	157	68.9%	305	78.2%	462	74.8%	169	36.6%
Logan	80	80.0%	143	84.1%	223	82.6%	124	55.6%
McHenry	296	67.9%	453	73.3%	749	71.0%	160	21.4%
McIntosh	127	83.0%	184	83.9%	311	83.5%	148	47.7%
McKenzie	605	51.4%	837	64.8%	1,442	58.4%	247	17.1%
McLean	411	69.4%	723	78.9%	1,134	75.2%	285	25.1%
Mercer	445	74.3%	640	75.7%	1,085	75.1%	251	23.1%
Morton	1,995	84.8%	2,324	85.7%	4,319	85.3%	1,330	30.8%
Mountrail	416	53.7%	770	71.4%	1,186	64.0%	202	17.0%
Nelson	138	76.7%	172	74.7%	310	75.6%	141	45.5%
Oliver	85	82.5%	131	71.4%	216	75.4%	37	17.1%
Pembina	336	72.7%	497	82.4%	833	78.2%	243	29.2%
Pierce	215	61.6%	277	79.6%	492	70.6%	115	23.4%
Ramsey	719	91.4%	1,017	88.8%	1,736	89.8%	891	51.3%
Ransom	233	70.4%	373	66.0%	606	67.6%	261	43.1%
Renville	172	63.5%	188	76.0%	360	69.4%	62	17.2%
Richland	743	71.9%	1,298	80.9%	2,041	77.4%	934	45.8%
Rolette	797	49.8%	1,279	66.8%	2,076	59.1%	641	30.9%
Sargent	185	83.7%	295	86.5%	480	85.4%	158	32.9%
Sheridan	31	30.1%	40	54.7%	71	40.3%	17	24.0%
Sioux	268	58.5%	441	68.8%	709	64.5%	78	11.0%
Slope	52	73.2%	24	50.0%	76	64.0%	0	0.0%
Stark	1,574	60.9%	2,301	72.1%	3,875	67.1%	952	24.6%
Steele	86	80.4%	121	72.3%	207	75.4%	59	28.5%
Stutsman	896	66.0%	1,318	75.7%	2,214	71.5%	966	43.6%
Towner	78	42.4%	144	51.8%	222	48.0%	44	19.8%
Traill	434	74.6%	548	71.7%	982	73.0%	553	56.3%
Walsh	499	62.5%	764	74.9%	1,263	69.4%	462	36.6%
Ward	3,774	62.3%	5,326	79.1%	9,100	71.2%	2,620	28.8%
Wells	150	67.6%	257	73.2%	407	71.0%	145	35.7%
Williams	1,263	42.3%	2,061	63.6%	3,324	53.4%	1,015	30.5%

Note: na Data not available