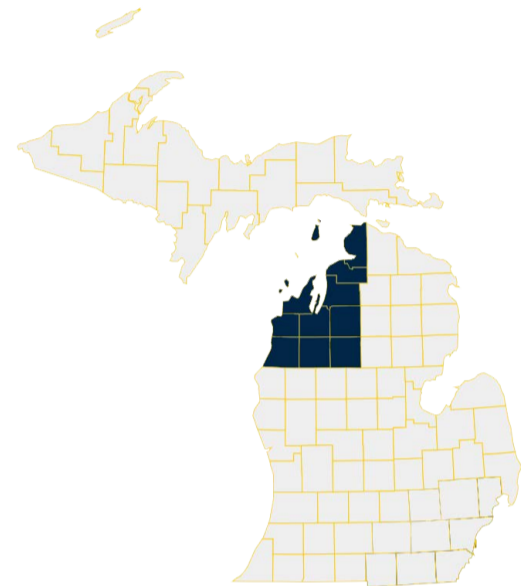


Michigan Poverty & Well-being Map: Northwest

The Northwest region includes: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. Learn more about the map at poverty.umich.edu.

Quality Child Care as an Economic Mobility Issue

Quality child care is integral to the economic development of the Northwest region. Outside of the metropolitan Grand Traverse and Petoskey areas, childcare is scarce.¹ In Benzie and Missaukee counties, around 2.5 kids compete for a single spot.² Child care is widely recognized as a key piece in economic mobility – it enables parents to work and improves early brain development and later educational outcomes, as well as benefits the larger economy in the long run. A \$1 investment in child care provides roughly \$8.60 in benefits to society.³ While the benefits and needs of child care are clear, child care can be prohibitively expensive for families with low incomes, costing, on average, more than \$10,000 a year.⁴ While Child Development and Care (CDC) vouchers are available, income eligibility criteria are very low, which means this assistance is only available for the poorest families. Furthermore, less than 50% of families who have vouchers use them in any given month, which is partially a reflection of a lack of supply of child care in the area.⁵



Luckily, the Michigan Legislature made child care a priority for the 2021 budget, investing \$1.4 billion over the next two budget years.⁶ Included in this investment are grants to increase the supply of providers and raise the income eligibility thresholds for child care subsidies. The Northwest region is also participating in the Tri-Share Child Care Pilot, an innovative program where child care costs are shared by parents, their employers, and the government.

Additionally, the pandemic has challenged child care providers and regulators to develop alternate models of child care to increase supply in “child care deserts.” Rethinking traditional child care models to provide care during non-traditional work hours, streamlining licensing for home-based child care facilities that can often provide more flexible care, creating cooperative workspaces that combine child care and work, and supporting flexible options for occasional care can help create child care that better meets the needs of parents.⁷

County	Ratio of Children to Child Care Slots	Percent of Children (Aged 0 to 5) Eligible for Subsidy
Benzie	2.6	2.2%
Missaukee	2.5	3.5%
Wexford	2.3	5.0%
Leelanau	2	2.0%
Manistee	1.9	3.1%
Emmet	1.9	2.4%
Michigan	1.9	5.3%
Kalkaska	1.8	4.4%
Charlevoix	1.4	4.7%
Antrim	1.4	3.5%
Grand Traverse	1.4	2.8%

References

¹ Center for American Progress. "U.S. Child Care Deserts, 2020." Accessed March 21, 2022.

<https://childcaredeserts.org/>

[lat=45.044277133907485&lng=-85.50054825920182&zm=8.20379675183334&lyr=ccpoverty](https://childcaredeserts.org/?lat=45.044277133907485&lng=-85.50054825920182&zm=8.20379675183334&lyr=ccpoverty)

² James, Parker. "Child Care: A Critical Need in Michigan." (Michigan League for Public Policy, 2021) <https://mlpp.org/child-care-in-michigan-by-county>.

³ Council of Economic Advisors. "The Economics of Early Childhood Investments." (Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2015). https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/early_childhood_report_update_final_non-embargo.pdf.

⁴ State of Michigan. "Annual Report of Key Statistics, 2020." https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73970_61179_56550---,00.html.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Michigan League for Public Policy. "Legislature Approves Largest Increases in Early Childhood Services in Decades." <https://mlpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/early-childhood-investments.pdf>

⁷See: <https://www.detroitparentcollective.com/>, <https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/nutrition-physical-activity/breastfeeding/infant-at-work/index.php>, <https://www.childtime.com/educational-programs/drop-in-care/>

⁸James, Parker. "Child Care: A Critical Need in Michigan." (Michigan League for Public Policy, 2021) <https://mlpp.org/child-care-in-michigan-by-county>.