



Childcare Accessibility in New Mexico by County

Prepared on Behalf of New Mexico Civil Legal Services

By

Southwest Women's Law Center

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The Southwest Women's Law Center is a non-profit legal advocacy organization in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Founded in 2005, the Center's mission is to provide women in New Mexico with the opportunity to achieve their full economic and personal potential by: eliminating gender bias, discrimination and harassment; lifting women and their families out of poverty; and ensuring access to comprehensive health services and information. SWLC integrates five tools to create social change: legal research; policy analysis; advocacy; community and stakeholder education; and coalition work on local, state and national levels. The Center's goals include ensuring low and middle-income families in the state have access to essential government services such as subsidized childcare. This report outlines several recommendations that would provide greater access to childcare assistance in New Mexico.

I. Introduction

There are many barriers to receiving adequate childcare. A common barrier families must overcome is accessibility. There are many families that cannot access childcare because there are no open childcare seats in their community. When all members of the family caring for a child work, the child needs a facility that can provide childcare. Not all families in New Mexico have a licensed childcare facility available to them. On average, New Mexico has the capacity to care for 40% of children under the age of six with all parentsⁱ in the workforce in a licensed childcare facility.ⁱⁱ

The State of New Mexico is very diverse. The majority of the state's population lives in or near Bernalillo County. The state has seven counties with less than 5,000 residents. Looking at the state as a whole does not accurately reflect the needs of families in different areas.

The Southwest Women's Law Center has analyzed the childcare capacity for all counties in New Mexico. The report utilizes population data from the United States Census Bureau and the New Mexico Indicator-Based Information System to breakdown the available childcare in each

county.ⁱⁱⁱ The report groups counties based on total population to look for trends in childcare access.

II. Parental Participation in the Workforce

When all parents caring for a young child are in the workforce, they only have a few options for childcare. They can leave the child with a trusted friend or family member, place the child in childcare, or a parent can leave the workforce to care for the child. Exiting the workforce to care for a child is not an option for many parents in New Mexico. Leaving the workforce is sometimes harmful to an individual's career and often impossible for families to afford. Many parents do not live close to a trusted friend or family member with the ability to assist with childcare. These parents must have access to a childcare facility.

The majority of parents raising children under the age of 18 are employed or looking for work.^{iv} In 2015, 69.9% of women with children in the United States were employed or looking for employment. Mothers raising children alone had a higher rate of employment or searching for employment than married women. Of these women, 74.8% were employed or looking for work compared to 67.6% of married women living with their spouse. The rate of men in the workforce continues to be higher than women. In 2015, 92.7% of men were either employed or looking for work. Married men had a higher workforce participation rate with 93.7% either working or looking for work, compared to men raising children alone with an 86.7% participation rate.

The number of employed parents mirrored those of parents who were either employed or looking for work.^v In 2015, 60.6% percent of married couples with children under the age of 18 were both in the workforce. Single parent households had a higher workforce participation rate than married couples living together. Women, who were single divorced, widowed, separated, or living apart from a spouse had a workforce participation rate of 70.8%. Men, who were single divorced, widowed, separated, or living apart from a spouse had a higher workforce participation rate with 82.1% employed.

Women with younger children were less likely to be in members of the workforce, specifically women with children under the age of six years old.^{vi} Sixty-four percent of women with young children under the age of six were in the workforce compared to 74% with older children.

III. Need and Availability of Childcare in New Mexico

In New Mexico, there are 173,586 children under the age of six years old.^{vii} Of those children, 106,244 have all parents in the workforce. This leaves 61.2% of children in the state in need of care while their parents work. The United States Census estimates that New Mexico had a population of 2,085,109 as of July 1, 2015.^{viii} Therefore, over 5% of New Mexico's total population is under the age of six years old and has all parents in the workforce. Five percent of New Mexico's population is in need of some form of childcare.

New Mexico has the capacity to care for 56,705 children at a licensed childcare facility.^{ix} This leaves 49,539 children to find another form of childcare. New Mexico does not have the capacity to care for 2.4% of its population in licensed childcare facilities.

Young children have even fewer childcare spots in New Mexico. No data has been collected on the number of children under the age of two per county, nor has any data been collected on the number of working parents with children in this age category. The birth rates in 2014, suggest there would be approximately 51,970 children in this age category.^x

New Mexico has the capacity to care for 9,445 children under the age of two years old in a licensed childcare facility. Based on recent birth rates, 13.2% of children under the age of two can receive care at a licensed childcare facility. The remaining 42,525 young children must receive care from their parents, family, friends, or elsewhere.

A. Higher Population Counties (Population 75,000 and above)

There are seven counties in New Mexico with more than 75,000 residents: Bernalillo, Dona Ana, Santa Fe, Sandoval, San Juan, McKinley and Valencia. These counties have a total of 120,361 children under the age of six years old. On average 59.4% of these children have all parents in the workforce. This leaves 73,890 children needing childcare.

These seven counties vary widely in their childcare capacity. Bernalillo County has the highest capacity for childcare. The county has the capacity to care for 69% of children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce. Meanwhile, McKinley County only has the capacity to care for 13% of children in this category.

These counties have 120,451 children under the age of six years old with all parents working who need some form of childcare. The counties have the capacity to provide childcare for 73,890 children. These seven counties have the capacity to care for 61.3% of the children under six with all parents working. Parents are left to find alternate care for 32,201 children.

All counties have a lower capacity to care for children under the age of two years old. The birth rates in 2014, suggest there would be approximately 35,000 children in this age category.^{xi} These seven counties can care for 6,682 children under the age of two. Only 15.7% of the available childcare spots are allotted to infants and toddlers under the age of two. Approximately, 15% of children under the age of two years old have a spot in licensed childcare facility in these seven counties.

1. Bernalillo County

Bernalillo County has the highest population in New Mexico with 676,685 residents.^{xii} As of 2013, there were approximately 54,652 children under the age of six years old.^{xiii} Of those children, 62.7% have all parents in the workforce. Bernalillo County has 5.1% of its population less than six years old with all parents in the workforce in need of care.

Bernalillo County has 23,533 childcare spots available for children at a licensed facility.^{xiv} With 34,290 children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce, the county has the capacity to provide 69% of these children with childcare, leaving parents of 10,757 children in this category to find care elsewhere.

For children under the age of two, there is a lower capacity. Bernalillo County only has 3,729 spots for children in this age group. Only 16% of the county's total childcare capacity can accommodate these very young children. In 2014, there were 7,967 births in the county. It is very unlikely there are enough childcare spots for young children whose parents need to return to work. However, compared to most counties in the state, Bernalillo has a higher percentage of seats available for young than most other counties. The county has the highest percentage of seats available among the more populated counties and the fourth highest percentage in the state.

2. Dona Ana County

Dona Ana County has 214,295 residents. The County has 18,275 children under six years old. Of those children, 67.5% have all parents in the workforce. In Dona Ana, 5.8% of the population is children under six with all parents in the labor force.

Dona Ana County has 7,053 childcare spots available to residents. The county has 12,337 children under six years old with all parents working. Dona Ana has the capacity to care for 57% of these children in licensed childcare facilities. This leaves 5,284 children without a spot at a childcare facility.

Children age two and below have 1,266 spots available at licensed childcare facilities. Children under two in Dona Ana only have 18% of the available childcare capacity. In 2014, the county had a birthrate of 2,870 children. In one year the county had more than twice as many births as there are childcare spots for children under the age of two. Despite this, Dona Ana actually has a fairly high availability of spots for young children compared to the rest of the state.

3. Santa Fe County

Santa Fe County has 148,686 residents. In Santa Fe County, there are 9,813 children under the age of six, and 70.6% of children in that age category have all parents in the labor force. Santa Fe County has 4.7% of its population less than six years of age with all parents in the labor force.

Santa Fe County has the capacity to care for 54% of the 6,927 children less than six years of age with all parents working. The county has 3,751 childcare spots available at licensed childcare facilities. It has 3,177 children in this age category without a spot at a local childcare facility.

Santa Fe only has the capacity to care for 321 children under the age of two years old at licensed facilities. Only 8.6% of the counties overall childcare capacity is allocated to children under two years old. In 2014 alone, there were 1,325 births in Santa Fe County. A majority of children in this age group cannot receive care at a licensed childcare facility.

4. Sandoval County

Sandoval County has a population of 139,394 people. There are 11,105 children under the age of six living in the county. Of those children, 58.5% have all parents working. In Sandoval, 4.7% of the population is children under six with all parents working.

Sandoval County has one of the lowest capacities for providing childcare out of the urban counties. It has the capacity to care for 2,328 children. The county has 6,492 children under the age of six years old with all parents in the workforce. Sandoval County only has the capacity to care for 36% of these children. This capacity leaves 4,164 children without a seat in a licensed childcare facility.

Twenty-one percent of the county's childcare capacity is for children under the age of two. In 2014, 1,499 children were born in the county. The county has 479 spots available at a licensed childcare facility. New parents in Sandoval County often have to find an alternative to a licensed facility when they are in need of childcare

5. San Juan County

San Juan County has 118,737 residents. It has 12,776 children under the age of six years old, and 52.8% of these children have all parents in the workforce. Children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce are 5.7% of San Juan's population.

San Juan is not in a much better position than Sandoval County for childcare capacity. The county has the capacity to care for 2,672 children of the 6,744 children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce. Only 40% of children have a spot at a licensed childcare facility leaving 4,072 children to get care elsewhere.

San Juan has about the same capacity as Sandoval County for children under the age of two. The county has 548 spots available for children in this age group, which account for 20.5% of the total available childcare spots. The county had more births than Sandoval. There were 1839 children born in 2014. This suggests it is even more difficult to find childcare for young children in San Juan.

6. McKinley County

McKinley County has 76,708 residents. There are 7,492 residents under the age of six. Of those children, 49% have all parents in the workforce. Based on the counties populations, approximately 4.8% of McKinley County residents are under the age of six with all parents in the workforce.

McKinley County has the lowest childcare capacity of any county with a population over 75,000 people. It has one of the lowest childcare capacities in the state regardless of population. The county has 484 childcare seats available, and 3,672 children under the age of six with all parents working. The county only has childcare capacity for 13% of children in this category. The

county has 3,188 children under the age of six with all parents working without access to childcare at a licensed facility.

Of the 484 childcare spots available, only 53 are available to children under the age of two years old. Of all the counties with a population over 75,000 residents, McKinley has the lowest capacity to care for children under the age of two. Infants and toddlers only have 11% of the already low, total childcare capacity in the county. In 2014, the county had 1,141 births. Most new parents have to find alternatives to a licensed childcare facility.

7. Valencia County

Valencia County has a total population of 75,737 people. There are 6,338 children under the age of six living in the county. Of these children, 54.1% have all parents working. This means 4.5% of the county's population are children under the age of six with all parents working.

Valencia County has the same childcare capacity as Santa Fe County. The county has the capacity to care for 54% of children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce. There are 3,428 children in this category and the county has 1,868 childcare spots. This leaves 1,560 children in that category without the ability to receive care at a licensed facility.

The county's capacity to care for children under the age of two years old is also similar to Santa Fe. Eight percent of the total available childcare capacity is available for children under two. The county can care for 286 of these children through a licensed childcare facility. In 2014, 835 children were born. Parents of children under the age of two years old will have a difficult time finding childcare.

B. Lower Population Counties (Population 25,000 – 75,000)

New Mexico has ten counties with populations from 25,00 to 75,000 people: Lea, Chavez, Otero, Eddy, Curry, Rio Arriba, Taos, Grant, San Miguel and Cibola. These counties vary broadly in the availability of childcare spots at a licensed childcare facility. Rio Arriba County can only accommodate 20% of the children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce, while Chavez County has the capacity to care for 70% of these children.

Within these counties, there are 40,365 children under six years old. Sixty-one percent of those children have all parents in the workforce. In these ten counties, 24,458 children will need care while their parents work.

These counties have 11,716 childcare spots available at a licensed childcare facility. This capacity only accounts for 48% of the children under six years old who have all parents working. These ten counties have 12,742 children who need care without a space at a licensed childcare facility. .

Infants and toddlers under two years old have an even small amount of spots in these childcare facilities. Only 2,226 spots or 19% of the available childcare placements are available to children under the age of two years old. In 2014, 6,550 children were born in these counties.

Based on the 2014 birthrate, there are spots at a licensed childcare facility for approximately 16% children under the age of two years old. This capacity is comparable to the more populated counties that have spots for approximately 15% of children under the age of two years old.

1. Lea County

Lea County has a total population of 71,180 people. There are 7,077 children under the age of six residing in the county. Of those children, 54.9% have all parents in the workforce. There is 5.1% of the population that is under six years old and will need some form of childcare.

Lea County has the third lowest capacity for childcare for counties with a population of 25,000 to 75,000. Only 37% of children under the age of six with all parents working have access to a licensed childcare facility. The county has the capacity to care for 1,447 children out of the 3,882 children in this category. This leaves the parents of 2,435 children who need care to find an alternative to a licensed childcare facility.

The county has the capacity to care for 274 children under the age of two years old. That is 19% of total capacity available. In 2014, 1,139 children were born in the county. The majority of the parents with young children living in Lea County must find alternative means of childcare.

2. Chavez County

Chavez County has a total population of 65,764 people. There are 6,302 children under the age of six residing in that county. Of those children, 59.4% have all parents in the workforce. Chavez County has 5.7% of its population in this category of children under six years old who will likely need childcare.

Chavez County has the third highest childcare capacity in the state. The county has the capacity to care for 70% of children under the age of six with all parents working. The county has the capacity to care for 2,630 children of the 3,745 children in this category. The parents of 1,115 children under the age of six must find alternative care.

Chavez County has 274 available spots for children under the age of two years old. These spots for infant and toddlers account for 19% of the total available childcare. The county had a birthrate of 913 children in 2014. The childcare availability for young children leaves many parents without access to a licensed childcare facility.

3. Otero County

Otero County has 64,362 residents. Of those residents, 5,634 are under the age of six. Sixty percent of children fewer than six years old have all parents in the workforce making these children compose 5.3% of the county's total population.

Otero has the capacity to care for 54% of the 3,385 children in this population. The county has 1,811 childcare spots available to residents. There are 1,574 children under six with all parents in the workforce without a spot at a licensed childcare facility.

There are 412 spots or 23% of the total childcare availability for children under the age of two years old. In 2014, the county had 893 births. While many parents of young children will have to seek alternative care, Otero County has the third highest percentage of seats available to these children in this population category and the fifth highest percentage in the state.

4. Eddy County

Eddy County has a population of 57,578 people. Eight percent or 4,611 of those residents are under the age of six. Of those children 64.1%, have all parents in the workforce. In total, 5.1% of the county's population fits this classification.

The county has 1,437 available childcare spots at a licensed childcare facility. Therefore, Eddy County can care for 49% of its 2,957 children under six with all parents working. The county has 1,437 children under the age of six whose parents will have to seek care elsewhere.

The county has 260 spots available for children under the age of two, accounting for 18% of the total spots. In 2014, 884 children were born in the county. A majority of parents in need of childcare will have to find an alternative to a licensed childcare provider in the county.

5. Curry County

Curry County has 50,398 residents, including 5,110 children under the age of six years old. Of this age group, 59.6% of children have all parents working. Therefore, 6% of the county will likely require some form of childcare.

Curry County has the third highest childcare capacity in this population range. The county has the capacity to care for 1,801 children at a licensed childcare facility. That accounts for 59% of the 3,046 children under the age of six with all parents working. The county has 1,245 children in this category needing alternative care.

Curry has the capacity to care for 432 children under the age of two. Infants and toddlers account for 24% of the counties total childcare capacity. The county had 919 births in 2014. The county has the second highest capacity to care for young children in this population range and the third highest capacity in the state.

6. Rio Arriba County

Rio Arriba County has a population of 39,465 with 3,224 children under the age of six years old. Of those children, 66.8% have parents in the workforce. Rio Arriba has 5.5% of its population in need of childcare.

Rio Arriba County does not have adequate childcare facilities. The county has the lowest capacity for childcare in this population range. Rio Arriba has the fourth lowest capacity of all the counties with some childcare available in New Mexico. The county only has the capacity to care for 438 children or 20% of children over six years old with all parents in the workforce at a

license childcare facility. This leaves 1,716 of the 2,154 children in this category without childcare.

The parents of infant and toddlers are even less likely to find childcare. Only 37 spots are available to children at a licensed childcare facility in this age range, accounting for 8% of the total childcare spots. The county had a birth rate of 515 children in 2014. Of counties providing childcare, Rio Arriba has the second lowest capacity to care for children under the age of two and the lowest capacity of counties with a population ranging from 25,000 to 75,000.

7. Taos County

Taos County has a population of 32,907 residents and 2,170 children under the age of six. Of those children, 55.5% have all parents working. This leaves the county with 3.7% needing childcare.

Taos has 511 spots available at a licensed childcare facility for the 1,205 children in this category needing childcare. This accounts for 42% of that population, but leaves 694 children without care. Parents of these children are left to find alternative means of care for their children.

Taos only has the capacity to care for 84 children under the age of two years old, accounting for 16% of the total available childcare seats. The county's birthrate was 313 children in 2014. This childcare capacity forces most new parents to find alternative childcare options.

8. Grant County

Grant County has a population of 28,609 residents. There are 2,086 children under the age of six with 63% of those children having all parents in the workforce. Grant County has 4.6% of its population in need childcare.

Grant County has the second highest childcare capacity in this population range and the fourth highest capacity in the state. The county can accommodate 62% of children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce. The county has 821 spots at a licensed childcare facility for 1,314 children in that category. The county has 493 children without childcare spots at these facilities.

The county also has the highest capacity in this population range and the second highest capacity in the state to care for children under the age of two years old. In 2014, the county had a birthrate of 295 children. The county has 192 spots or 23% of its total capacity available to that age group.

9. San Miguel County

San Miguel County has a population of 27,967 people with 1,917 of those residents being children under the age of six. Of these children, 61.9% have all parents in the workforce. San Miguel has 4.2% of its population in this category of children who need care.

San Miguel has the third lowest capacity for childcare in this population range. The county has 362 spots at licensed childcare facilities for the 1,185 children in this category. Thirty-one percent of children in San Miguel County have access to childcare. There are 823 children without a childcare spot.

Infants and toddlers have access to 86 spots or 24% of the total childcare available in the county. In 2014, the county had 284 births. New parent will likely struggle to get access to childcare at a licensed facility.

10. Cibola County

Cibola County has a total population of 27,329 people. Of those residents, 2,237 are children under the age of six years old. In Cibola County a high percentage of children in this age range with all parents working. Just over 70% of all parents work for this age group of children. The county has 5.8% of its population children in need of childcare.

The county has the second lowest childcare capacity in this population range. Cibola County can accommodate 29% of that need. The county has 458 available childcare spots at a licensed childcare facility for its 1,585 children under six with all parents working. This leaves 1,127 children without childcare.

The county has the capacity to care for children under the age of two years old. Children under the age of two have access 17% of the total available childcare spots. The county had a birthrate of 395 children in 2014. Cibola has the second lowest capacity in this population range to care for children under the age of two years old.

C. Very Rural Counties (Population 500 – 25,000)

New Mexico is an extremely rural state. Nearly half of the counties in New Mexico have less than 25,000 residents. Childcare availability varies widely in these sixteen counties.

Four of these counties have no available childcare seats at a licensed facility. This lack of any childcare leaves all parents working to find an alternative situation for childcare. Other rural counties, such as Los Alamos and Guadalupe County, accommodate a high number of children. Los Alamos has childcare at a licensed childcare facility available for almost all children under the age of six with all parents working. Guadalupe has the capacity to care for 73% of children under the age of six with all parents working. These two counties have the highest capacity of care in the state.

In total, 4,596 children do not have an open spot at a licensed childcare facility in these sixteen counties. Only 41.8% of children in these 16 rural counties have childcare available.

These rural counties have even less availability for young children under the age of two. Five counties have no capacity to care for children in this age group. In 2014, there were 1,959 children born to residence of these counties. There are only 537 spots at a licensed childcare facility available to families with children under the age of two years old. These sixteen counties

have the capacity to care for approximately 10% of the children under the age of two residing in the county.

1. Luna County

Luna County has a population of 24,518 residents. There are 2,158 children under the age of six years old in the county. Two-thirds of those children have all parents in the workforce. This leaves 5.9% of the population needing childcare.

Luna County has the capacity to care for 562 children at a licensed childcare facility. That amounts to 39% of the 1,437 children under six with working parents. The county has 875 children whose parents have to find alternative childcare.

The county can only care for 53 infants and toddlers under the age of two. Of the county's total childcare capacity, 8% is dedicated to these young children. The county had a birthrate of 395 children in 2014. This leaves the majority of new parents without access to a licensed childcare facility.

2. Lincoln County

Lincoln County has a population of 19,420 people. There are 1,183 children under the age of six living in the county. A high percentage of these children have all parents in the workforce. Just under three-quarters (73.2%) of children under the age of six have all parents work. Children under six with all parents working account for 4.6% of the county's populations.

The county has the capacity to care for nearly half (49%) of its 866 children under the age of six with all parents working. The county has 423 childcare spots available at a licensed childcare facility. This leaves 443 children needing alternative childcare.

The county only has 65 spots available for young children under two years old. Fifteen percent of the county's total childcare capacity is allocated to this age group. The county had 35 births in 2014. This leaves the majority of new parent would access to a licensed childcare facility to care for their children under the age of two years old.

3. Roosevelt County

Roosevelt County has a total population of 19,120 people. The county has 1,906 residents under the age of six years old. Of those children, 68.4% have all parents in the workforce. Roosevelt has a 6.8% of its population in need of childcare.

Roosevelt has the capacity to care for 517 children. The county has 1,303 children under the age of six with all parents working. The county can only accommodate 40% of those children with a spot at a licensed childcare facility. This leaves the parents of 786 children to find childcare elsewhere.

The county has the capacity to care for 150 children under the age of two years old. Spots for children under the age of two account for 29% of the total childcare capacity in the county. In 2014, the county had a birth rate of 331 children. The county can provide a spot at a licensed childcare facility for about a quarter of children under the age of two.

4. Los Alamos County

Los Alamos County has a total population of 17,785. There are 1,210 in the county. Half of those children (50.1%) have working parents. Children in need of childcare make up 3.4% of the county's population.

Los Alamos County is the only county in the state that can accommodate all children under the age of six with working parents. The county has 607 children in that category and 604 childcare spots at a licensed childcare facility. Parents of only 3 children need to find alternative care.

Los Alamos also has a higher number of spots for children under the age of two years old. The county has spots for 142 children under two. This accounts for 24% of available childcare in the county. Los Alamos had a birthrate of 173 children in 2014. The county has the capacity to care for just under half of children under the age of two at a licensed childcare facility.

5. Socorro County

Socorro County has 17,256 residents. Of those, 1,422 are children under the age of six. Most parents (72.4%) of these young children work. The county has 6% of its population in need of childcare.

Socorro County has the third lowest childcare capacity for counties with less than 25,000 residents. The county only has the capacity to care for 260 children at a licensed childcare facility. There are 1,029 in the above category in need of care. Only a quarter (25%) of children can be cared for at a licensed childcare facility in Socorro County. This leaves 769 children in need of care.

Young children under two years old have even less chance of getting care at a licensed childcare facility. The county only has the capacity to care for 14 children under the age of two, only 5% of the total seats. Out of counties that care for any children under two years old, Socorro has the lowest percentage of its capacity allocated to caring for these children. Socorro had a birthrate of 214 children in 2014. Nearly all new parents have to find alternative care for their young children.

6. Torrance County

Torrance County has a population of 15,485 people. There are 1,118 children under the age of six years old. Less than half of those children have all parents working (46%). Torrance County needs to provide childcare to 3.4% of its population.

Torrance County has the third highest childcare capacity for counties with less than 25,000 residents. The county has the capability of caring for 330 children at a licensed childcare facility. The county has the capacity to care for 63% of the 521 children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce. There are 191 children who do not have a spot at a licensed childcare facility in Torrance County.

Only 23 children under the age of two years old have childcare spots at a licensed childcare facility. Seven percent of the total child capacity is allocated to these young children. In 2014, the county had a birthrate of 125 children. Approximately 10% of children under the age of two have a spot at a licensed childcare facility. The remainder of parents have to make other arrangements when needing childcare.

7. Colfax County

There are 12,414 people residing in Colfax County. The county has 864 children under the age of six years old. Of those children, 53.4% have all parents in the workforce. The county has 3.7% of its population in need of childcare.

Colfax County has the lowest childcare capacity in the state of any county providing childcare. The county only has childcare available for 11% of the 462 children under the age of six with all parents working. The county only has the capacity to care for 50 children at a licensed childcare facility. The parents of the remaining 412 children have to find alternative childcare.

Of the 50 available spots, 16 can go to children under the age of two years old. While 32% of the available spots can go to young children, the number of children that have childcare available is very low for all ages. The county had a birthrate of 125 children in 2014. The vast majority of parents with young children have to find alternative care for their children.

8. Sierra County

Sierra County has a total population of 11,282 people. The New Mexico Indicator-Based Information System noted the information available for Sierra County is unstable. However, it is projected that there are 651 children under the age of six living in the county, and 57.9% of those children have all parents in the workforce. Children needing care account for approximately 3.3% of Sierra County's population.

Sierra County has 188 childcare spots available at a licensed childcare facility. Half of the 377 children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce have a spot at a licensed childcare facility. The remaining 189 children must receive care elsewhere.

The county only has the capacity to care for 17 children under the age of two years old. Only 9% of the available childcare spots are available to children in this age group. Sierra County had

114 children born to residence in 2014. The majority of these new parents will have to find alternative care for their young children.

9. Quay County

Quay County has a population of 8,455 people. There are 619 children under the age of six years old in the county. Of those children, 73.2% have all parents in the workforce. The county needs to provide childcare for 5.4% of its population.

There are spots at a licensed childcare facility for 151 of the 453 children under six with all parents in the workforce. This leaves 302 children without a spot at a licensed childcare facility. The county only has childcare for one third (33%) of children in this category.

Quay County had a birthrate of 91 children in 2014. The county has the capacity to care for 27 children under the age of two years old. These young children only have 18% of the spots of the total childcare capacity in the county.

10. Mora County

Mora County has a population of 4,596 people. While the calculations are considered very unstable, it is estimated that the county has 299 children under the age of six years old. Of those children, it is estimated that 37.9% of these children have all parents in the workforce. Two and a half percent of Mora's population is in need of childcare.

Mora is one of four counties that do not have any license childcare providers. All 113 children under the age of six with parents in the workforce must make other arrangements to care for their children. The county had a birthrate of 42 children in 2014.

11. Hidalgo County

Hidalgo County has a total population of 4,423 people. There are 381 children under the age of six residing in the county. About 56.8% have all parents in the workforce. Hidalgo County has 4.9% of its population in need of childcare.

The county has the capacity to care for 90 children at licensed childcare facilities. Out of the 216 children likely in need of care, only 42% have a spot at a local childcare facility, leaving the parents of 126 children to find alternative care.

Hidalgo County can provide care for 24 children under the age of two years old. This accounts for 27% of the available childcare seats in the county. The county's birthrate in 2014 was 57 children. Less than one-quarter of children under the age of two have a spot at a licensed childcare facility.

12. Guadalupe County

Guadalupe County has a total population of 4,371 people. The data available indicates there are 324 children under the age of six years old. This data is classified as unstable. It is estimated that 43.8% of these children have all parents in the workforce. Children needing childcare comprise of 3.2% of the county's populations.

Guadalupe County has the second highest childcare capacity in the state and among counties with a population lower than 25,000. There are 103 available childcare spots at a licensed childcare facility in the county. These spots provide care for 72.5% of the county's 142 children under the age of six with all parents working. Only 39 children need alternative childcare.

The county only has six spots available for children under the age of two. Spots for young children under the age of two only comprise 6% of the county's total childcare capacity. In 2014, 36 children were born to residents of Guadalupe County. The majority of parents with young children have to find alternative care.

13. Union County

Union County has a population of 4,201 residents. There are 294 children under the age of six years old in the county. Just over half of those children (51.1%) have all parents in the workforce. These children will need some form of childcare. They make up 3.6% of the county's total population.

Union County is one of the four counties in New Mexico with no childcare capabilities. All 150 children under the age of six with all parents working are left without a childcare spot. In 2014, the birthrate in the county was 34 children. Parents must find alternative childcare options for these children.

14. Catron County

Catron County has a population of 3,456 people. The population estimates for children under the age of six years old and the number of these children with all parents working is very unstable. There are approximately 176 children under the age of six years old. About 80 children (45.1%) have all parents working. This would make children in need of childcare represent 2.3% of the county's population.

Catron County is one of the four counties in New Mexico that does not have any childcare capacity. In 2014, the county had a birth rate of 28 children. Parents of all children in need of childcare must find other options in the county.

15. De Baca County

De Baca County has the second lowest population in New Mexico. There are 1,828 residents in the county. Of these, it is estimated that the county has approximately 135 children under the age of six years old. These estimates are statistically unstable. Of those children, approximately 90.7% have all parents in the workforce. Children in this category make up 6.7% of De Baca County's total population.

De Baca County has the capacity to care for 22 children. This leaves 100 children without a spot in a licensed childcare facility. Only 18% of children in De Baca County have a spot in childcare.

The county does not have the capacity to care for any children less than two years of age. In 2014, the county's birthrate was 12 children. Parents of all young children must find alternative childcare.

16. Harding County

Harding County has the lowest population in the states. A total of 698 people reside in the county. It is estimated there are approximately 30 children under the age of six years old living in the county. Sixty percent of those children have all parents in the workforce. Based on this, 2.6% of the population is children in need of childcare.

Harding County is one of the four counties without the capacity to provide childcare to any residents. There are no licensed childcare facilities in the county to provide for the 18 children under the age of six with all parents in the workforce.

IV. Conclusion

New Mexico does not have enough licensed childcare facilities to care for children. Parents in the workforce are often left to find childcare outside a licensed childcare facility. New Mexico has strict guidelines for licensed facilities.^{xv} These guidelines ensure safety and development of children attending the facility.

The state has four counties with no capacity to care for children at a licensed childcare facility. New Mexico has four additional counties without the capacity to care for a quarter of children under the age of six years old with all parents in the workforce. Over 75% of parents in these counties are left to find alternative childcare. The state only has 13 of the 33 counties with the ability to care for half the children under the age of six years old with all parents working.

Accessible childcare is vital for New Mexico families to thrive. Many families in the state need the income of all parents to provide for their children. Many families in New Mexico are fortunate enough to have trusted friends or family members with the ability to provide childcare. When there is not accessible childcare, parents face a difficult decision of leaving their children at an unlicensed facility or leaving the workforce.

Children under the age of two years old have fewer spots at licensed childcare facilities. New Mexico has limited data on young children who need childcare. No county specific data exists on the number of children in this age group with all parents in the workforce. Based on the

birthrate, only Los Alamos and Grant Counties have the ability to care for more than 25% of the children born in the last two years.

New Mexico needs to have more licensed childcare facilities in almost every county. New incentives and regulations should be adopted to encourage industry growth in the state.

ⁱ Note on language: “All parents” is used to represent all individuals who are raising a child.

These individuals include couples raising children together and single parent households.

ⁱⁱ New Mexico’s Indicator-Based Information System, Health Indicator Report of Child Care, Licensed Provider Total Capacity, All Children (Dec. 2015). Available at <https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/view/ChildCareCapacity.Cnty.html> (last visited: May 9, 2016).

ⁱⁱⁱ All county total population numbers are based on the 2015 population estimates made by the United States Census Bureau. Available at

<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/map/PST045214/35001,35>.

All county population breakdowns for total children under the age of six years old, percentage of children under six years old with all parents in the workforce, number of available childcare seats per county, and number of available childcare seats for children under the age of two years old are based off information provided by New Mexico’s Indicator-Based Information System.

Available at <https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/>.

For calculation, see Appendix A.

^{iv} Press Release, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (April 22, 2016).

Available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/famee.pdf>.

^v *Id.*

^{vi} *Id.*

^{vii} New Mexico’s Indicator-Based Information System, Health Indicator Report of New Mexico Population Demographics – Young Children with Parents in the Workforce (2009-2013).

Available at <https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/view/NMPopDemoWrkngParent.Cnty.html> (last visited: May 31, 2016).

^{viii} New Mexico total population numbers are based on the 2015 population estimates made by the United States Census Bureau. Available at

<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/35>.

^{ix} New Mexico’s Indicator-Based Information System, Health Indicator Report of Child Care, Licensed Provider Total Capacity, All Children (Dec. 2015). Available at

<https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/view/ChildCareCapacity.Cnty.html> (last visited: May 9, 2016).

^x New Mexico’s Indicator-Based Information System, Query Results for New Mexico Birth Data, Years 1990 to 2014 – Birth Rate. Available at

<https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/query/result/birth/BirthPopCnty/BirthRate.html>. (last visited: May 31, 2016).

^{xi} New Mexico’s Indicator-Based Information System, Query Results for New Mexico Birth Data, Years 1990 to 2014 – Birth Rate. Available at

<https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/query/result/birth/BirthPopCnty/BirthRate.html>. (last visited: May 9, 2016).

^{xii} All county total population numbers are based on the 2015 population estimates made by the United States Census Bureau. Available at <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/map/PST045214/35001,35>.

^{xiii} New Mexico's Indicator-Based Information System, Health Indicator Report of New Mexico Population Demographics – Young Children with Parents in the Workforce (2009-2013). Available at <https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/view/NMPopDemoWrkngParent.Cnty.html> (last visited: May 31, 2016)

^{xiv} New Mexico's Indicator-Based Information System, Health Indicator Report of Child Care, Licensed Provider Total Capacity, All Children (Dec. 2015). Available at <https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/view/ChildCareCapacity.Cnty.html> (last visited: May 9, 2016).

^{xv} NMAC 8.16.2.21.