South Carolina

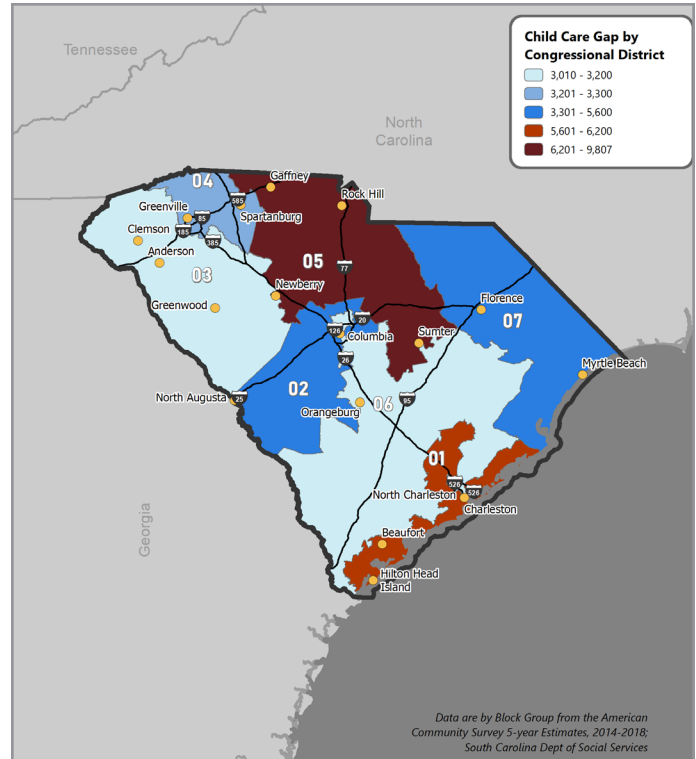## THE SUPPLY OF, POTENTIAL NEED FOR, AND GAPS IN CHILD CARE IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN 2019

In recent years, there has been increasing bipartisan support at all levels of government to ensure working parents have access to high-quality, affordable child care. But amid these efforts, an important underlying question has yet to be answered: **how much additional child care does the country need?**

Without a clear understanding of the actual supply versus the need for care—the child care gap—it is impossible to quantify either the actual child care spaces needed or the corresponding costs associated with closing that gap. Without this information, America is unable to develop a plan to ensure that all families have access to affordable, reliable, and quality care for their children.

Incorporating the most comprehensive child care supply data collected from **South Carolina** to date, and an advanced methodology incorporating parent choice, this analysis provides a long overdue starting point from which the country can understand how much child care is needed. With such data, policymakers can produce evidence-based strategies to improve the supply of child care in a manner that reflects the quantity and type of child care communities actually need.
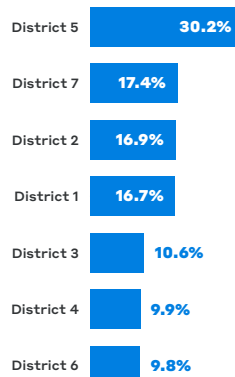
UNDERSTANDING PARENT CHOICE

As policymakers review this data and consider how and where to address child care gaps in their communities, it is especially important to consider parent choices and preferences. While this data can be used to calculate the amount of child care needed, the *potential need* for child care should not be construed with the *actual demand* for care. These findings offer a starting point from which **South Carolina** can work to close its child care gaps, but more work needs to be done to both understand parent preferences and incorporate them into policy decisions at the federal, state, and local levels.

Data are by Block Group from the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates, 2014-2018; South Carolina Dept of Social Services

Supply	Number of slots offered by legally operated and state-recognized providers
Potential Need	Number of children aged birth through five with all available parents in the labor force
Gap	Number of children who potentially need care but whose families cannot reasonably access formal child care

Percent Gap by Congressional District

District	Percent
District 5	30.2%
District 7	17.4%
District 2	16.9%
District 1	16.7%
District 3	10.6%
District 4	9.9%
District 6	9.8%

Bipartisan Policy Center

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Child Care Gap Findings

Potential Need[1]	225,040 children
Supply[2]	195,020 slots
Gap	36,250 children
Percent Gap	16.1% of children

Child Care Supply Across South Carolina

Facility Type	Count	Capacity
Child Care Center	1,662	188,000
Family Child Care Home	678	3,990
Group Child Care Home	76	920
Additional facilities from Office of Head Start	9	400
Department of Defense	4	1,710

NATIONAL COMPARISONS

BPC performed a child care gap analysis in 25 states. **South Carolina's** statewide gap of **16.1%** is **lower** than the 25-state average. Rural communities in **South Carolina** are **less underserved** than urban communities— **inconsistent** with trends across the 25-states.
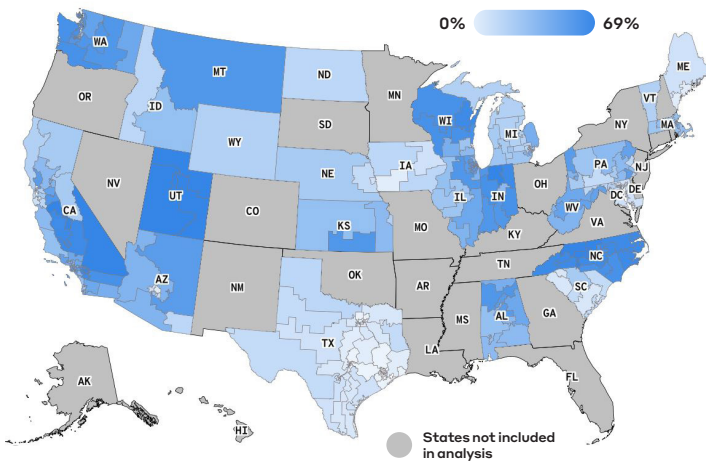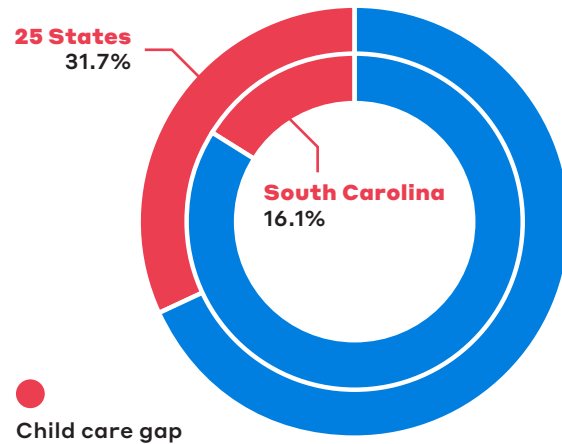
8,449,000 children
have the potential need for child care.

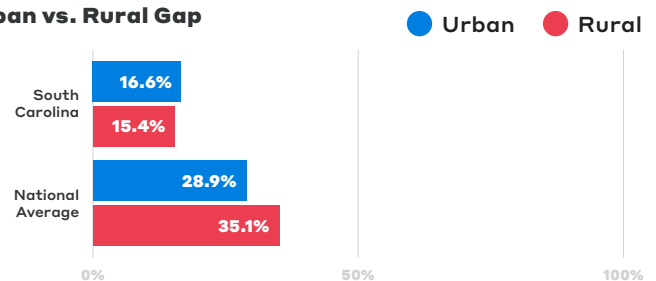There is a supply of **5,901,320** child care slots.

Child care gap: **31.7%** of the potential need.

Percent Gap by District

0% — 69%

States not included in analysis

South Carolina vs. National Percent Gap

25 States 31.7%

South Carolina 16.1%

● Child care gap

See the full report for additional data, the methodology, a discussion about how to properly interpret these findings, and to view an interactive map detailing child care access data by a number of other geographies.

https://childcaregap.org/
https://bipartisanpolicy.org/early-childhood/
https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/parent-survey-resource-center/

Urban vs. Rural Gap

● Urban ● Rural

South Carolina (Urban)	16.6%
South Carolina (Rural)	15.4%
National Average (Urban)	28.9%
National Average (Rural)	35.1%

0%   50%   100%

1   U.S. Census Bureau. *2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year Public Use Microdata Samples.* December 17, 2019. Available at: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/access.html

2   BPC worked directly with state child care and education agencies to build comprehensive datasets of each provider's location and capacity, as well as the federal Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Defense to incorporate Head Start and military child care data.