

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS

DEFINITION: Number of licensed Class A and Class B child care centers (also known as day care centers).

CAPACITY: The maximum capacity of Class A and Class B child care centers.

SIGNIFICANCE

Parents of young children have several different child care options in Louisiana. They may choose to place their child in a child care center, a family child care home (in which a provider cares for up to 6 children in her home), an in-home provider (a.k.a. a nanny), a Head Start center, or a preschool. In Louisiana, the Department of Social Services Bureau of Licensing is responsible for licensing child care centers. Licensed facilities must meet minimum standards for health and safety, program activities, staff training, environment, and child/staff ratios. Some programs serving young children are exempt from the Louisiana DSS licensing regulations and thus may not be reflected in this data.

Exempt facilities include: private or public day schools serving children in grades one and above or operating kindergartens or prekindergarten programs, as well as certified Montessori schools, camps, and some part-day programs.

Louisiana is one of 18 states that has implemented a quality rating system for child care centers.¹ Louisiana's quality rating system, known as Quality Start, is a voluntary rating system that awards centers up to five stars, based on key quality indicators. As of August 2009, 633 centers (34% of centers statewide) had achieved at least one star in Quality Start. The Quality Start (QS) system is complemented by a package of tax credits known as the School Readiness Tax Credits (SRTC), which provide tax incentives for child care center owners to achieve higher levels of quality. Additionally, the SRTC also provides a tax credit for child care workers who attain a certain amount of education and training and work at a QS-participating center. The SRTC encourages parents to choose a star-rated center through an enhanced Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit for families who send their child to a center with two or more stars. Tax credits are also available for businesses that support quality child care by providing child care for their employees or by donating money to



a child care center or child care resource and referral agency.

Louisiana operates the nation's only two-tiered child care licensing system. Centers that hold a Class A license are eligible to accept government funding (in the form of Child Care Assistance payments, grants, etc.), while Class B centers can not receive any government funding. While class is not an indicator of quality, Class B regulations differ from Class A in some areas, including staff training, child/staff ratios, meals, and allowable forms of discipline.

The number of child care centers in a parish is one indicator of child care options in a given parish, while the capacity of licensed centers provides some insight into the amount of licensed care that is

available. The DSS Bureau of Licensing determines a center's licensed capacity based upon a facility's physical characteristics and size. Because many centers do not operate at full capacity for various reasons (including quality, staffing difficulties, low demand, etc.), the actual number of slots in licensed centers available in a parish is typically lower than the maximum capacity.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita severely impacted the child care industry in Louisiana. There were 116 fewer child care centers in 2009 than in 2005. During the same time period, capacity was reduced by 2,852 children. The number of open child care centers in Calcasieu, Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Bernard parishes remains well below pre-Katrina levels. In 2009, 146 child care centers were open in Orleans Parish, about 53% of the number open pre-Katrina. In St. Bernard Parish, which also suffered catastrophic flooding, 13 centers were open in 2009, amounting to half of the 26 centers that were open before the storm.

DATA SOURCE

Louisiana Department of Social Services, Bureau of Licensing, by special request.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, "Quality Rating Systems: Definition and Statewide Systems," 2009, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, retrieved from <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/> on 7/1/2009.

LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS NUMBER AND CAPACITY

	NUMBER OF LICENSED PROVIDERS			LICENSED CAPACITY (NUMBER OF CHILDREN)		
	2005	2009	Change from 2005 to 2009	2005	2009	Change from 2005 to 2009
LOUISIANA	2,002	1,886	-116	144,516	141,664	-2,852
Acadia	21	22	1	1,378	1,276	-102
Allen	4	5	1	253	257	4
Ascension	35	50	15	2,815	3,986	1,171
Assumption	6	7	1	208	213	5
Avoyelles	18	18	0	949	940	-9
Beauregard	8	8	0	625	639	14
Bienville	7	6	-1	305	280	-25
Bossier	45	48	3	4,467	4,989	522
Caddo	98	103	5	9,845	10,576	731
Calcasieu	82	73	-9	6,018	5,489	-529
Caldwell	3	3	0	133	131	-2
Cameron	3	3	0	103	190	87
Catahoula	2	3	1	135	130	-5
Claiborne	5	6	1	279	315	36
Concordia	10	10	0	614	497	-117
De Soto	11	12	1	401	628	227
East Baton Rouge	238	228	-10	21,042	19,669	-1,373
East Carroll	5	5	0	277	303	26
East Feliciana	8	8	0	668	682	14
Evangeline	20	16	-4	684	661	-23
Franklin	10	14	4	581	584	3
Grant	9	8	-1	507	429	-78
Iberia	31	33	2	2,052	2,058	6
Iberville	20	21	1	1,024	1,059	35
Jackson	5	5	0	207	296	89
Jefferson	192	172	-20	13,440	12,845	-595
Jefferson Davis	7	6	-1	429	397	-32
Lafayette	93	98	5	7,043	7,531	488
Lafourche	25	29	4	1,331	1,434	103
La Salle	1	2	1	500	115	-385
Lincoln	18	22	4	1,464	1,632	168
Livingston	38	42	4	3,248	4,009	761
Madison	5	5	0	282	275	-7
Morehouse	17	14	-3	1,327	1,028	-299
Natchitoches	24	26	2	1,570	1,544	-26
Orleans	273	146	-127	16,083	10,068	-6,015
Ouachita	64	63	-1	5,578	5,584	6
Plaquemines	13	11	-2	640	671	31
Pointe Coupee	7	8	1	250	346	96
Rapides	69	70	1	6,213	6,596	383
Red River	3	3	0	160	161	1
Richland	9	9	0	426	426	0
Sabine	7	7	0	366	335	-31
St. Bernard	26	13	-13	1,470	1,116	-354
St. Charles	27	23	-4	1,992	1,818	-174
St. Helena	4	4	0	241	209	-32
St. James	12	12	0	585	568	-17
St. John the Baptist	18	20	2	1,413	1,639	226
St. Landry	37	42	5	2,379	2,414	35
St. Martin	17	12	-5	1,282	994	-288
St. Mary	20	20	0	935	996	61
St. Tammany	75	79	4	5,862	6,856	994
Tangipahoa	60	63	3	4,020	4,365	345
Tensas	5	3	-2	155	170	15
Terrebonne	38	48	10	2,329	2,814	485
Union	7	6	-1	311	275	-36
Vermilion	20	15	-5	1,300	959	-341
Vernon	18	19	1	1,232	1,181	-51
Washington	13	16	3	696	822	126
Webster	13	16	3	870	1,224	354
West Baton Rouge	11	17	6	920	1,252	332
West Carroll	3	3	0	113	145	32
West Feliciana	4	4	0	216	252	36
Winn	5	3	-2	275	321	46