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The Geography of Child Care in Oregon

Place matters. The number and incomes of families with children affects how much and the type of child care and education that exists in a community. It also affects the prices that parents are willing to pay and thus that providers charge for their services. A final factor is how much public investment there is in the community's child care and early learning. Public investments reduce the financial barriers for parents and increase financial stability of providers so they increase both the number of slots and the number of children who participate but do not increase prices.

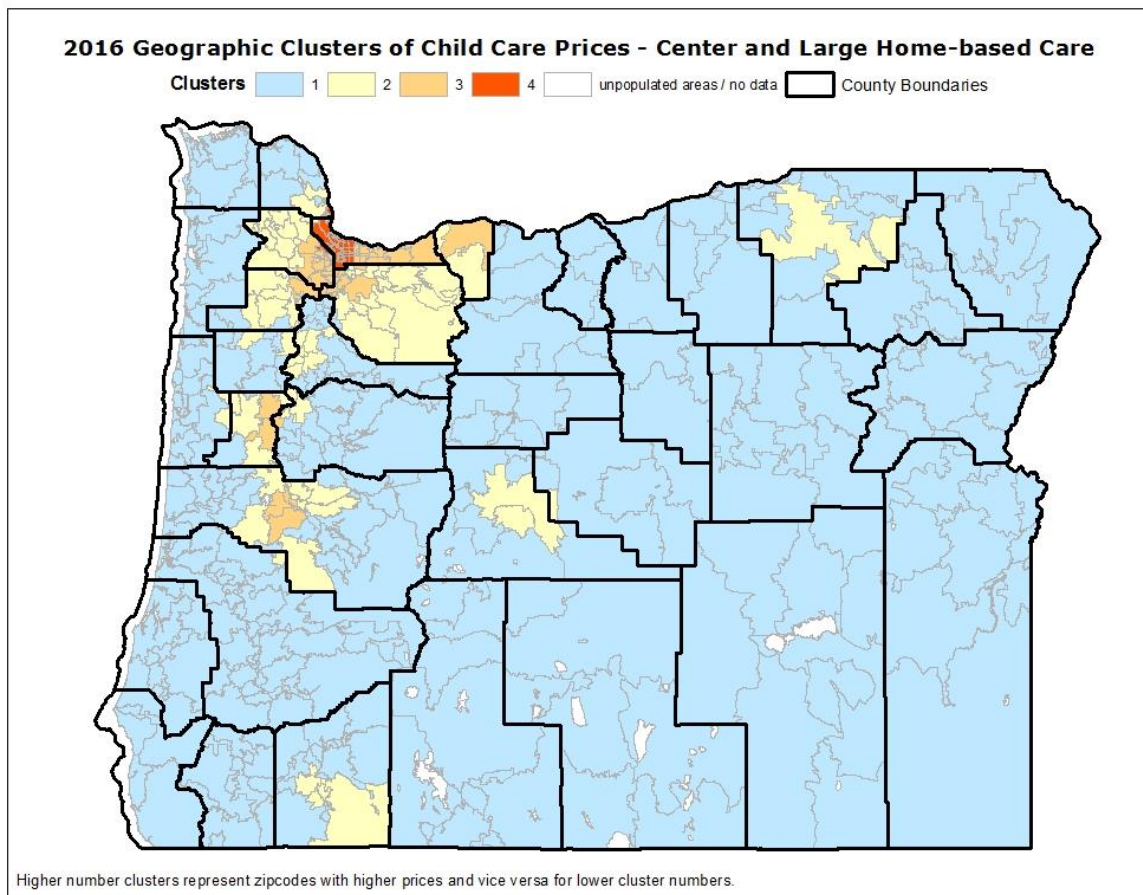
In Oregon as in the rest of the nation, child care and early education is predominantly a market system with parents being the major funder. In Oregon, 72% of system revenue comes directly from parents, 9% from the state, and 19% from the federal government. Eighty percent of the public dollars come in the form of tax credits to parents. Thus, only a small percentage of children are in publicly funded services: 2% of Oregon children under age 13. Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten, Preschool Promise, and Early Head Start fund 7% of the slots for children under age 5. Thus, parents fully pay the fees of the vast majority of children in care. With parents paying the major share of the cost, the number of children and the household income of their families shape what exists in a community. Although the child care subsidy program serves 18% of eligible children this represents only 2% of all Oregon children.

The resulting pattern observed in Oregon is that the supply is typically greatest in counties in the Willamette Valley plus Jackson and Deschutes. An important exception is seen in the counties of Gilliam, Wheeler, and Sherman that have amongst the highest number of child care slots per 100 children. In these three counties, a number of forces come together and result in available and accessible options for families with young children. All three County Commissions invest in child care as does the Four Rivers Early Learning Hub. In addition, these communities have developed mixed delivery programs that blend funding from Oregon Prekindergarten, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Intervention dollars with parent fees. As a result, these programs serve high percentages of children from a range of backgrounds and their services meet the higher standards required for a Head Start program.

Child care supply is typically more limited in rural than urban and suburban communities although local investments can change that as is the case in Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties.

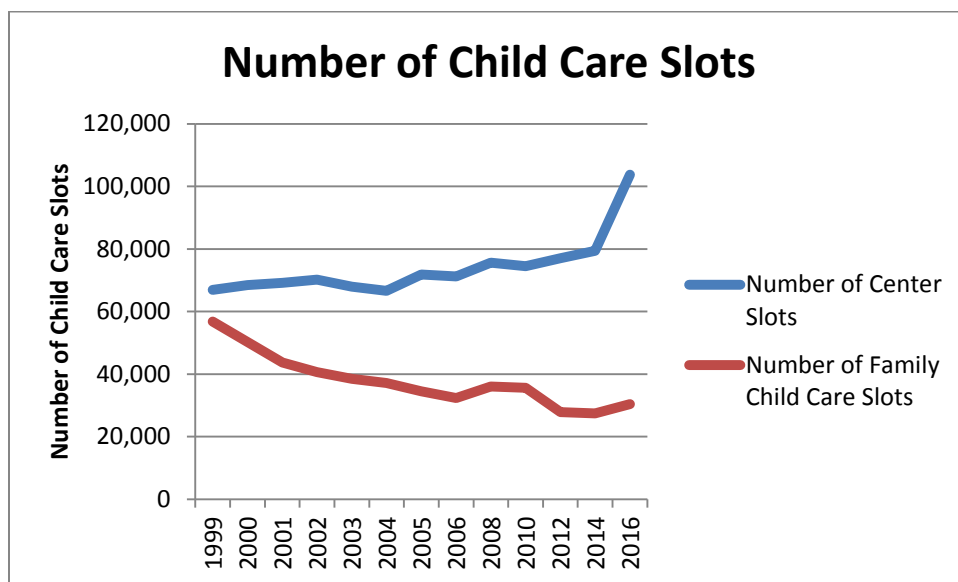
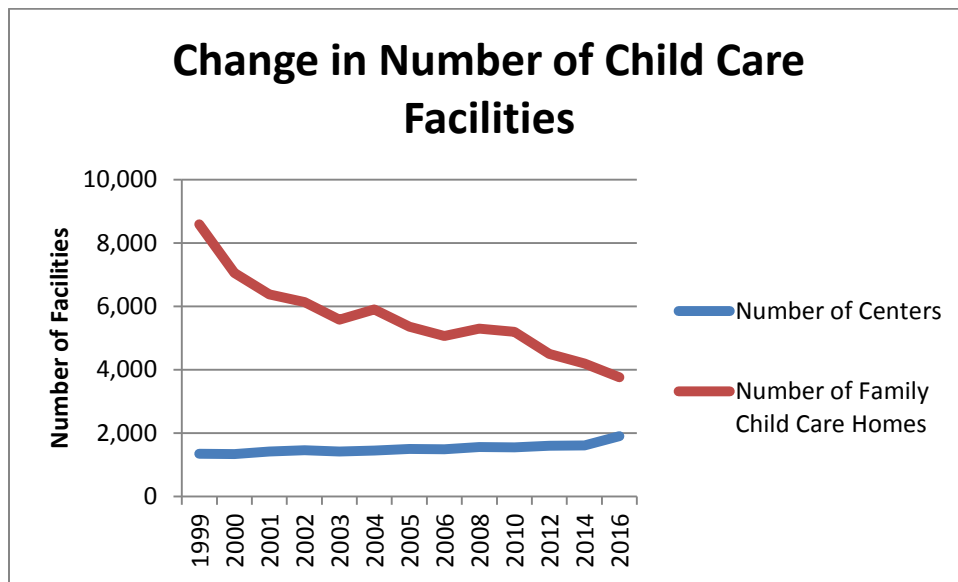
Child care supply and other community characteristics can be seen on the interactive map that enables the user to find programs in any part of the state. The 2016 map can be found at: <http://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5242e1c28751484fa5887c4767bf6a79> Instructions on how to use the map are attached. The Office of Forecasting Research and Analysis works with members of the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership to create the map.

Prices are typically highest in the same areas in which supply is greatest as can be seen in the map of child care prices from the 2016 Market Price Study.

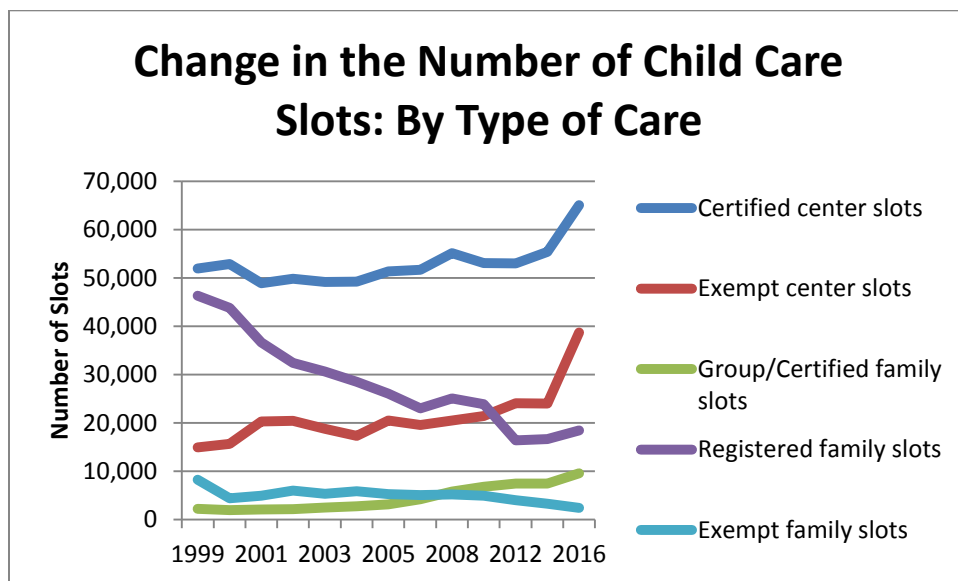
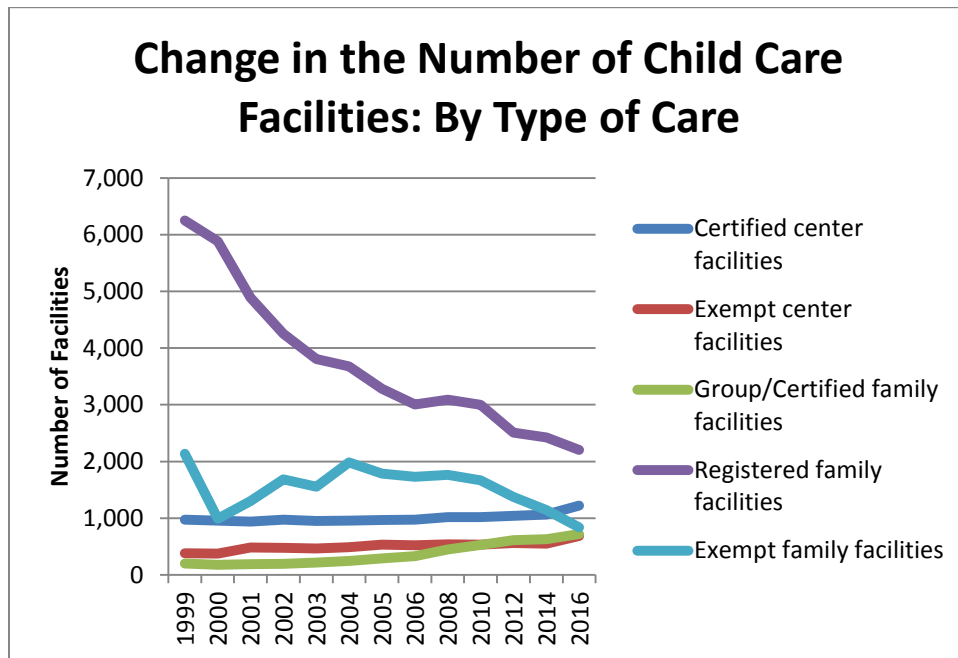


Change in Oregon Child Care Supply: 1999 to 2016

Although the number of facilities has decreased over time, the amount of available child care has increased. This is because centers care for larger numbers of children than do homes and the number of centers has increased while the number of homes has decreased. Declines in the number of family child care homes appears to be due to market forces that include both less demand for family child care and less willingness to provide small family child care homes.



Viewing the change in the numbers of both facilities and slots by type of child care provides more detail on what accounts for the change in numbers in the earlier tables.



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Glossary:

Certified Centers: Oregon certifies programs that serve children in a building constructed as other than a single family home for more than four hours per day.

Exempt Centers: This category includes programs that are exempt from regulation. Some are recorded which means that a facility provides care that is primarily educational for preschool age children for four hours or less per day or provides youth development activities during hours school is not in session and does not take the place of a parent's care.

Group/Certified family: Oregon currently certifies home-based providers who care for no more than 16 children. Prior to having certified family homes, Oregon had group homes that cared for up to 12 children.

Registered family homes: Oregon registers home-based providers who care for a maximum of 10 children under 13 years of age.

Exempt family homes: Home-based providers that care for fewer than four children or children from a single family are exempt from regulation.