

Twin Cities Metro Area Minnesota – Child Care Overview



Population

The Twin Cities Metro Area planning region includes a total of seven counties, covering one Economic Development Region (EDR 11). In sum, the Metro Area was home to over 3,225,000 people in 2025, comprising 55.3% of the state's total population. The region's population grew by 2.0% between 2020 and 2025, adding just under 63,000 people. In comparison, the state of Minnesota experienced a 2.2% population gain.

The Twin Cities Metro Area has a diverse age demographic, with a total population of 3,226,013 people. Among these, the youngest age group, under 5 years old, comprises just over 191,300 individuals, accounting for 5.9% of the region's population. In comparison, Minnesota's statewide percentage of children under 5 years old is slightly lower at 5.8% (Figure 1). Additionally, the number of children under 5 in the Twin Cities Metro Area has grown by 1.6% since 2000, compared to a growth rate of 2.8% for this age group in Minnesota as a whole (Figure 2). This segment is significant as it highlights the importance of early childhood services and education, but also reflects the region's future potential workforce.

Figure 1. Percentage of the Population by Age Group, 2025

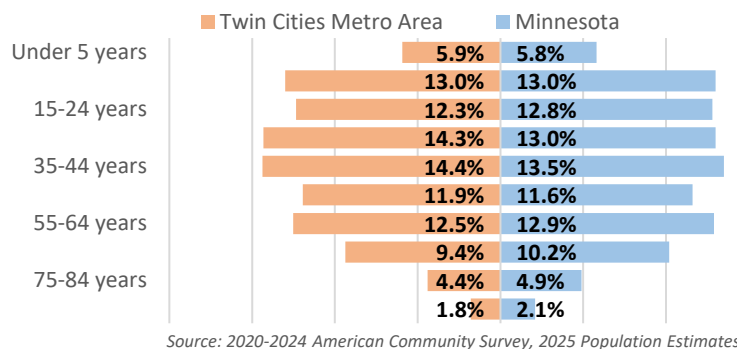
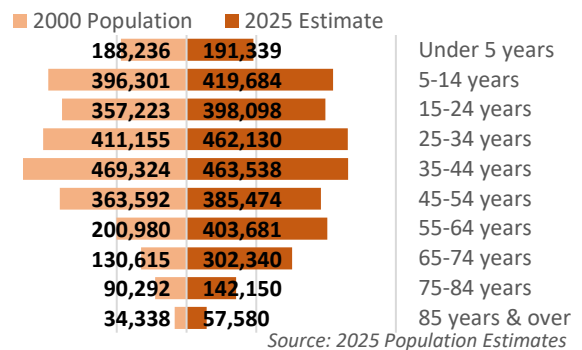


Figure 2. Population Pyramid, 2000-2025



Population Projections

Newly released data from the [Minnesota State Demographic Center](#) projects that the population in the Twin Cities Metro Area will increase by around 178,000 people, a projected 5.6% increase from 2025 to 2045. That is a bit above the statewide projected growth rate which sits at 5.5%. The number of children under 5 years old are projected to increase by about 2,000 people, or a 1.1% increase. In comparison, children under 5 in Minnesota are expected to increase by just 2.7% (Table 1).

Table 1. Population Projections, 2025-2045

Twin Cities Metro Area	2025 Projection	2045 Projection	2025-2045 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
Under 5 years	186,777	188,814	+2,037	+1.1%
5-14 years	397,483	384,696	-12,787	-3.2%
15-24 years	401,059	378,177	-22,882	-5.7%
25-34 years	447,036	460,936	+13,900	+3.1%
35-44 years	460,530	478,451	+17,921	+3.9%
45-54 years	387,364	442,901	+55,537	+14.3%
55-64 years	379,953	403,884	+23,931	+6.3%
65-74 years	315,113	287,542	-27,571	-8.7%
75-84 years	169,255	232,713	+63,458	+37.5%
85 years & over	61,799	126,301	+64,502	+104.4%
Total	3,206,369	3,384,415	+178,046	+5.6%

Source: [Minnesota State Demographic Center](#)

Of the 7 counties in Twin Cities Metro Area, five counties—Washington, Anoka, Scott, Carver, and Dakota—are expected to see an increase in the population of children under the age of 5 from 2025 to 2045. Washington stands out with the highest percentage increase, adding 3,510 children, a 22% rise. Anoka, Scott, Carver, and Dakota counties are projected to have significant gains, ranging from 13% to 16%. Conversely, two counties are projected to experience a decrease in the number of children under 5. Ramsey is expected to see the largest decline at -19.5%, followed by Hennepin County at -6.1% (Table 2).

Table 2. Population Projections for People Under the Age of 5, 2025-2045

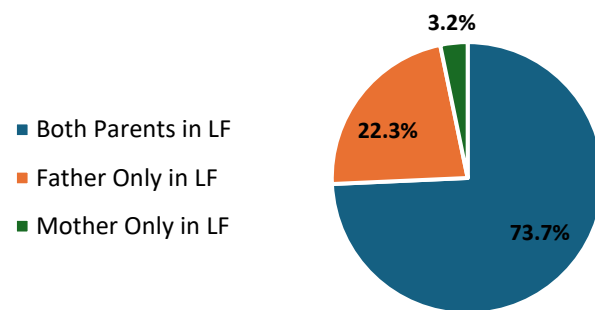
Counties	2025	2045	2025-2045 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
Washington	15,922	19,432	+3,510	+22.0%
Anoka	22,409	26,058	+3,649	+16.3%
Scott	9,403	10,758	+1,355	+14.4%
Carver	6,557	7,408	+851	+13.0%
Dakota	27,043	30,545	+3,502	+12.9%
Hennepin	72,654	68,209	-4,445	-6.1%
Ramsey	32,789	26,404	-6,385	-19.5%
7-County Metro	186,777	188,814	+2,037	+1.1%

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

Family Arrangements & Employment

In the Twin Cities Metro Area, there are approximately 220,500 children under the age of 6, accounting for about 31.4% of the population under 18. Among these youngest children, 74.8% (164,881) live with two parents. Of those living with two parents, 73.7% have both parents in the labor force, 22.3% have only the father in the labor force, 3.2% have only the mother in the labor force, and the remaining 0.8% have neither parent in the labor force (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Children Under 6 Living with Both Parents Labor Force Participation, 2024



One-fourth (25.2% or 55,609) of children under 6 live with a single parent, which is slightly below the statewide rate of 25.6%. Of these children, 71.4% live with their mother, while 28.6% live with their father. Among children living with their father, 92.6% of these fathers are in the labor force, whereas 81.5% of mothers in single-parent households are in the labor force. In Minnesota, 68.7% of children living with a single parent reside with their mother, while 31.3% live with their father. Statewide, about 93.2% of single fathers are in the labor force and 80.5% of mothers are in the labor force.

It is evident that a significant portion of parents with young children are actively participating in the labor force. This highlights the crucial need for accessible and affordable child care services. Reliable child care enables parents to maintain their employment and contribute to the economy, ensuring they can support their families. Without adequate child care options, parents, particularly those with young children, may struggle to remain in the workforce, leading to financial instability and potential skill loss. Therefore, investing in child care is not only beneficial for families, but also vital for sustaining a strong and stable labor force in The Twin Cities Metro Area.

Cost & Availability of Child Care

The cost of child care is a significant and widely discussed topic. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that [child care should not exceed 7% of a family's annual income](#). Regional average child care rates from [Child Care Aware of Minnesota](#) and median household income data from the [American Community Survey](#) offer a closer look at affordability in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

Table 3. Average Annual Child Care Costs in Twin Cities Metro, 2023

Type	Infant	Toddler	Preschool
Child Care Centers	\$23,140	\$20,748	\$17,888
Family Child Care	\$11,856	\$11,336	\$10,660

Source: Child Care Aware Minnesota and American Community Survey, 2020-2024

Table 4. Child Care Costs as a Percentage of Median Household Income, Twin Cities Metro, 2023

Type	Infant	Toddler	Preschool
Child Care Centers	23.2%	20.8%	17.9%
Family Child Care	11.9%	11.4%	10.7%

Source: Child Care Aware Minnesota and American Community Survey, 2020-2024

Child care costs in the Twin Cities Metro area exceed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services affordability benchmark regardless of provider type or age group. For families using child care centers, annual costs range from \$17,888 for preschool-age children to \$23,140 for infants, representing 17.9% to 23.2% of the region's median household income of \$99,814. Family child care offers a more affordable alternative, with annual costs ranging from \$10,660 for preschool to \$11,856 for infants, or 10.7% to 11.9% of median household income. While family child care falls closer to the 7% benchmark, it still exceeds it across all age groups. Infant care carries the highest burden for families regardless of provider type, and costs decrease as children age into toddler and preschool settings.

Industry Trends in Employment & Firms

According to data from the [U.S. Census Bureau's Nonemployer Statistics](#), there were 3,989 self-employed child daycare providers in the Twin Cities Metro Area in 2023. Part of a longer-term downward trend, the region experienced a rapid decline of 1,201 non-employing daycare providers from 2019 to 2023. The largest percentage decreases occurred in Ramsey County (-27.7%), Scott County (-25.9%), and Washington Counties (-24.6%). All counties in the Twin Cities Metro area experienced a decline in non-employing daycare providers between 2019 to 2023 (Table 5).

Table 5. Nonemployer Child Daycare Providers in Twin Cities Metro Area, 2019-2023

County	2023	2019	2019-2023 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
Anoka	536	707	-171	-24.2%
Carver	157	179	-22	-12.3%
Dakota	671	814	-143	-17.6%
Hennepin	1,391	1,815	-424	-23.4%
Ramsey	556	769	-213	-27.7%
Scott	283	382	-99	-25.9%
Washington	395	524	-129	-24.6%
Twin Cities Metro	3,989	5,190	-1,201	-23.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Nonemployer Statistics

Data from [DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#) provides insight into employment in Child Day Care Services in the Twin Cities Metro Area. In 2025, there were 810 Child Day Care Services firms providing 13,480 jobs. The average annual wage in this sector was \$35,672 approximately \$48,000 less than the average annual wage across all industries (Table 6).

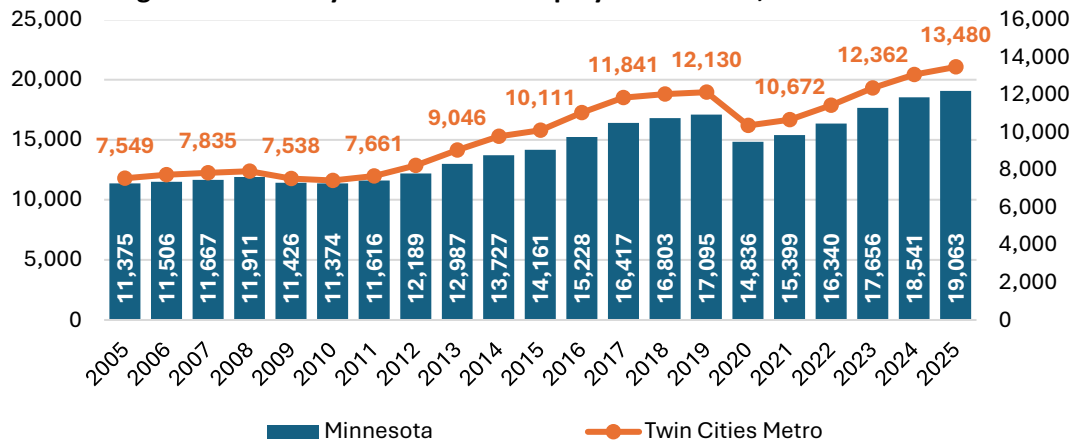
Table 6. Child Day Care Services Employment in Twin Cities Metro Minnesota, 2025

NAICS Code	Industry	Number of Jobs	Number of Firms	Average Annual Wages	2005-2025 Change Numeric Percent	
0	Total, All Industries	1,771,774	93,678	\$83,668	+177,812	+11.2%
6244	Child Day Care Services	13,480	810	\$35,672	+5,931	+78.6%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

The number of jobs in the Child Day Care Services sector in the Twin Cities Metro Area has generally increased from 2005 to 2025 (Figure 4). The data shows a gradual rise from 7,549 jobs in 2005 to a peak of 13,480 jobs in 2025. Notably, there was a significant increase from 10,111 jobs in 2015 to 12,130 jobs in 2019, likely reflecting economic growth and increased demand for child care services. However, the sector experienced a decline in 2020 to 10,359 jobs, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to economic disruptions and closures of child care facilities. Since 2020, the industry has shown resilience, gaining 3,121 jobs, a 30% increase.

Figure 4. Child Day Care Services Employment Trends, 2005-2025



Occupational Employment & Wages Statistics

DEED's
Occupational
Employment and
Wage Statistics
(OEWS) program

provides detailed

employment and wage data for a wide range of occupations in the region. According to the program, there were an estimated 7,000 people working as Child Care Workers in the Twin Cities Metro Area. In 2026, the median hourly wage for Child Care Workers in the region was \$17.89, which is about \$11.50 less than the median wage across all occupations. The statewide median wage for Child Care Workers was \$17.51, about 40 cents lower than in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

In addition to Child Care Workers, Child Care businesses also require the services of workers in several other occupations such as Teach Assistants (Except Postsecondary), Education and Child care Administrators (Preschool and Daycare), Cooks (Institution and Cafeteria), Office Clerks, General Operations Managers, and Child, Family, and School Social Workers (Table 7).

Table 7. Twin Cities Metro Area Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, Q1 2026

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Estimated Regional Employment	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Statewide Employment	Statewide Median Wage
0	Total, All Occupations	1,780,910	\$29.43	2,949,820	\$27.97
399011	Child Care Workers	7,000	\$17.89	11,570	\$17.51
252011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	6,750	\$21.74	10,320	\$21.46
119031	Education & Child care Administrators, Preschool & Daycare	740	\$31.68	1,010	\$30.32
211021	Child, Family, & School Social Workers	3,750	\$34.51	6,540	\$33.34
352012	Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria	3,900	\$22.13	7,890	\$21.43
439061	Office Clerks, General	32,410	\$24.07	55,530	\$23.54
111021	General & Operations Managers	41,200	\$50.92	72,860	\$48.56
259045	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary*	20,090	\$46.691	38,540	\$41,223

Source: Occupational Employment & Wage Statistics, 2026; *Only median annual wages available

The wages for Child Care Workers are insufficient to cover the cost of living for both single individuals and families in the Twins Cities Metro Area. For a single person, the cost of living is \$20.40 per hour, nearly \$2.50 higher than the median wage for Child Care Workers. For a typical family (one full-time worker, one part-time worker, and one child), the required wage to meet a basic needs cost of living in the region is \$26.28 per hour, significantly above what Child Care Workers earn.

This wage disparity highlights the financial challenges faced by those in the child care profession. It is difficult for workers to remain in jobs that do not meet the cost of living in the region. As a result, many Child Care Workers may struggle to make ends meet, which can lead to high turnover rates and a shortage of qualified caregivers.

Child Care Workers in the Twin Cities Metro Area are among the lowest-paid professionals, earning wages that fall short of meeting the region's basic [Cost of Living](#). These workers receive lower pay than many other occupations, such as Cooks, Fast Food (\$18.48), Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks (\$18.79), Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Workers (\$18.98), and Telemarketers (\$19.33).

Occupational Demand

Overall, there has been a significant demand for Child Care Workers in the Twin Cities Metro Area. In 2024, there were just over 660 job vacancies for Child Care Workers, resulting in a job vacancy rate of 10.1%. This is higher than the 3.8% job vacancy rate across all occupations. When examining job vacancy data from 2013 to 2024, 15 out of 20 surveys showed that Child Care Workers had a higher job vacancy rate than the overall average, indicating higher demand for this occupation.

Moreover, data from the most recent [Job Vacancy Survey](#) for the Twin Cities Metro Area indicates that the median hourly wage offer for Child Care Workers was \$15.61, which is about \$6.69 less than the median wage offer for all occupations. Additionally, 62% of the vacancies were part-time, and 8% were temporary or seasonal. Approximately 10% of these positions required postsecondary education, compared to 41% across all occupations. Lastly, only 17% of the job vacancies required one year of experience, compared to 52% for all occupations (Table 8).

Table 8. Job Vacancies in Twin Cities Metro Area, 2024

SOC Code	Occupational Title	Number of Job Vacancies	Job Vacancy Rate	Median Wage Offer	Percent Part-Time	Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 Plus Years of Experience
0	Total, All Occupations	66,411	3.8%	\$22.30	27%	7%	41%	52%
399011	Child Care Workers	663	10.1%	\$ 15.61	62%	8%	10%	17%

Demand can be impacted by turnover within the industry. According to the most Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey [Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators](#) data tool, the turnover rate in the Child Care Services industry in the Twin Cities Metro Area was 11.5% in quarter 1 of 2025, meaning that about 11.5% of the workforce left their jobs in that time period. In comparison, the turnover rate across all industries was 8.3%.

High turnover in the child care industry can be driven by factors such as low wages, which make it difficult for workers to stay in these positions long-term and make a family-sustaining wage. For businesses, high turnover is costly as they must invest in recruiting and training new employees. This increased cost can lead to higher child care expenses for families as providers pass on the costs associated with maintaining a stable workforce.

Industry & Occupational Outlook

According to DEED's [2022 to 2032 Employment Outlook data](#), the Twin Cities Metro Area Child Day Care Services industry is projected to gain 986 jobs over the next decade, an 8.7% increase. The increase in Child Day Care Services was significantly higher than the overall projected growth rate of 4.9% across the total of all industries in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

The Twin Cities Metro Area is projected to see an increase in Child Care Worker jobs from 2022 to 2032. During this period, an increase of 342 jobs, or 3.5%, is expected (Table 9). In addition, there will still be numerous job openings due to labor market exits (when individuals leave the labor force) and occupational transfers (when individuals move to different jobs). In total, there are projected to be 16,721 Child Care Worker job openings from 2022 to 2032. This also suggests that other jobs will become more prominent in the industry, rather than just direct service Child Care Workers.

Table 9. Employment Outlook in the Twin Cities Metro, 2022-2032

SOC Code	Occupation	Estimated Employment 2022	Projected Employment 2032	Percent Change	Total Change	Labor Force Exit Openings	Occupational Transfer Openings	Total Hires
0	Total, All Occupations	1,927,280	2,022,157	+4.9%	94,877	921,025	1,165,418	2,181,320
399011	Child Care Workers	9,729	10,071	+3.5%	342	7,148	9,231	16,721

Source: Employment Outlook

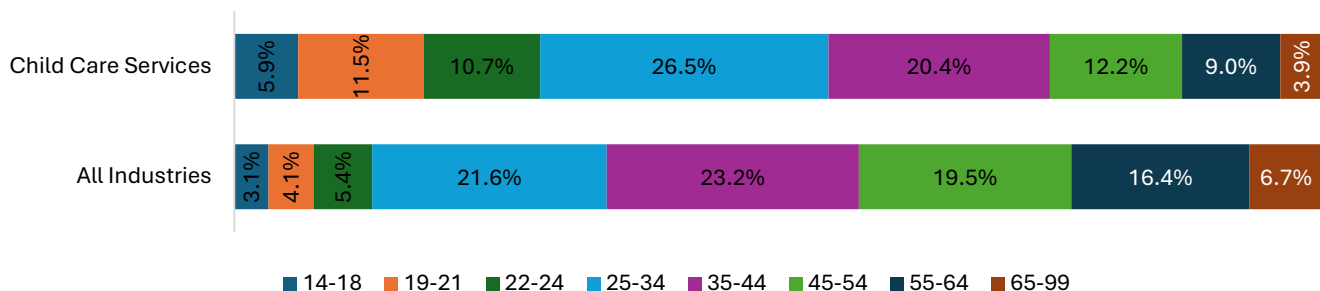
Workforce Characteristics

In The Twin Cities Metro Area, the Child Care Services sector exhibits a notable gender imbalance, with women constituting 90.2% of its workforce as of 2024. This contrasts sharply with the overall workforce composition where women comprise 50.8% of jobholders across all industries.

Additionally, the workforce in the Child Care Services industry is more racially diverse compared to all industries. In 2024, 70.6% of workers in this industry were white, whereas 78.4% of workers across all industries were white. Black or African American jobholders comprised the second largest racial group in the industry, making up 18.8% of the workforce. Additionally, 5.4% of jobholders identified as Asian, 3.8% identified as Two or More Race Groups, and 1.1% identified as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Data from [Quarterly Workforce Indicators](#) for 2024 also highlights the age distribution of workers in the Child Care Services industry compared to all industries. The Child Care Services industry in the Twin Cities Metro Area tends to employ a younger workforce compared to the total of all industries. Notably, younger age groups (14-24 years) have a significantly higher representation in Child Care Services, with a combined percentage that is over double that of all industries. On the other hand, middle-aged and older workers (25-54 years) are more prominently represented in all industries, suggesting that Child Care Services may attract or be more suited to younger workers. This trend shows a higher concentration of younger employees in Child Care Services compared to the total of all industries (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Twin Cities Metro Child Care Services Industry Workforce Demographics by Age, 2024



Source: Quarterly Workforce Indicators