



Kitsap Early Childhood Health and Development

Key Data from the Kitsap Interagency
Coordinating Council Head Start/ECEAP
Partnership 2024 Updated Comprehensive
Community Assessment



Table of Contents

<u>Background</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Population</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Poverty</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Household composition</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Housing insecurity</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Disability</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Childcare availability</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Childcare cost</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Prenatal care</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Implications for practice</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>References</u>	<u>10</u>

Background

What is the purpose of this report?

This report highlights key risk factors and resource needs among families with young children in Kitsap County.

The report summarizes key findings from the Kitsap Interagency Coordinating Council Head Start/ECEAP Partnership (KICC) 2024 Updated Comprehensive Community Assessment, published in April 2025, which describes the health and wellbeing of Kitsap populations eligible for Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS), and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP).

What are Head Start, Early Head Start, and ECEAP?

HS and EHS are federally funded programs that provide free early learning childcare, preschool, and other services to promote child development and learning to families with low household income and families experiencing homelessness, foster care, or disability. ECEAP provides similar services and is funded by Washington state. Tribal HS/EHS/ECEAP programs additionally serve tribal families and other families regardless of eligibility criteria. HS and ECEAP serve children 3–5 years old, and EHS serves pregnant people and children 0–3 years old.

The four KICC agencies that provide HS/EHS/ECEAP services are Kitsap Community Resources, Olympic Educational Service District 114, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, and Suquamish Tribe. Together, these programs **served 973 children and 36 people who were pregnant in the 2023–24 school year.**

What types of data and methods were used?

Since 2010, the KICC has contracted with Kitsap Public Health District's Assessment & Epidemiology Program to create a comprehensive assessment report every 5 years (most recently, 2023) and an updated report annually with new data.

For the 2024 Updated Comprehensive Assessment report, information was sourced from local, state, and federal agency reports and datasets, KICC agencies, a survey of Kitsap HS/EHS/ECEAP parents (2023), and personal communication with local social service providers.

Data were accessed between December 2024 and March 2025. Due to recent changes in official population estimates from the Washington Office of Financial Management, counts and rates for population subgroups and regions in this report will differ from those in previous reports.

Acknowledgments

We thank each of the KICC agencies for their leadership in producing the Comprehensive Community Assessment every year:

- Jill Brenner, Director, Kitsap Community Resources, Early Head Start/Head Start/ECEAP
- Kristen Sheridan, Director, Olympic Educational Service District 114, Early Head Start/Head Start/ECEAP
- Jacki Haight, Director, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Early Childhood Education Program
- Kayla Wakefield, Director, Suquamish Tribe Marion Forsman-Boushie Early Learning Center

For questions regarding the data or data sources, please contact epi@kitsappublichealth.org.

Population

The population of children under 5 in Kitsap County is decreasing in size and becoming more racially diverse.

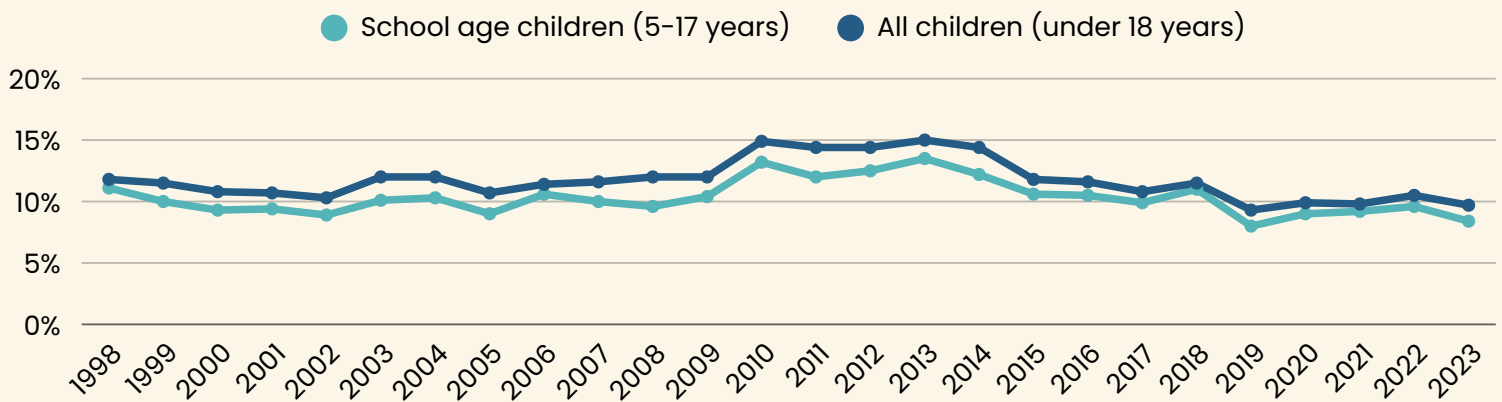
- There were 14,371 children under 5 years living in Kitsap County in 2024, about 5% of the population. [1]
- While the total county population has grown 23% since 2000, the child populations under 5 and 5-19 years have both decreased by 8%. [1]
- The percentage of children under 5 with two or more races grew from 12% in 2010 to 17% in 2023, representing the second-largest minority in Kitsap after Hispanic, which grew from 12% to 19%. [1]
- The percentage of non-Hispanic white children under 5 decreased from 67% in 2010 to 56% in 2023. The percentages of non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native (1%), Asian (3%), Black (3%), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (1%) children under 5 did not change from 2010 to 2023. [1]

Poverty

Approximately 1 in 10 children under 18 years lives in poverty in Kitsap. [2]

- Children have higher rates of poverty: 9.7% of children under 18 years, or 5,066 children, were living in poverty in 2023 (Figure 1). The poverty rate for residents of all ages was 8.7%. [2]
- Young children under 5 years are disproportionately impacted (12% living in poverty in 2019-2023). [3]

Figure 1. Children Living in Poverty, Kitsap County, 2000-2023 [2]



Source: US Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE).

Childhood poverty is concentrated in South Kitsap, Bremerton, and Central Kitsap regions.

- The percentage of children under 18 years living in poverty was highest in South Kitsap (15%) and Bremerton (14%), followed by Central Kitsap (12%), North Kitsap (5%), and Bainbridge Island (<1%) in 2019-2023. [3]
- Out of all children under 5 years who lived in poverty in 2019-2023, 44% lived in South Kitsap, 31% lived in Central Kitsap, and 19% lived in Bremerton in 2019-2023. [3]

Household Composition

More than 1 in 5 Kitsap children live in a single parent household¹.

- 22% of Kitsap children under 18 years lived in a single-parent household¹ in 2023, where 14% lived with a female householder, and 8% with a male householder. [4]
- 6% of all Kitsap households were single-parent households¹ in 2023. [4]
- Single parent households had a substantially lower median income than other households, particularly if the single householder was female (\$45,090 compared to \$95,046 for males in 2023) (Table 1).
- Median income for a single female householder has not increased on pace with other household types (Table 1).

Table 1. Median Income by Household Type, Kitsap County, 2023 and 2019 [4]

Household (HH) Type	2023	2019
Family HH with own children <18	\$118,314	\$82,354
• Married couple	\$149,816	\$95,327
• Male householder, no spouse	\$95,046	\$58,899
• Female householder, no spouse	\$45,090	\$40,413
Family HH with no own children <18	\$113,545	\$100,321
Non-family HH	\$61,370	\$51,242

Housing Insecurity

Kitsap students continue to experience housing insecurity, with the highest percentages in Bremerton and Central Kitsap school districts.

- The percentage of Kitsap public school students from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade experiencing homelessness increased each school year from 1.5% (510 students) in 2020–21 to a high of 2.6% (872 students) in 2023–24. It decreased slightly in 2024–25 to 2.2% (748 students). [9]
- During the January 2024 annual Kitsap County Point-In-Time Homeless Count, 597 individuals were counted, of whom 80 (13%) were children under 18 years. [11] This was similar to counts in 2022 and 2023. Point-in-Time counts are always considered underestimates of the true population experiencing homelessness.
- Housing is unaffordable for many Kitsap residents. In 2023, about 24% of home owners and 54% of renters paid at least 30% of their monthly income on housing. Median gross rent was \$1,808 in 2023, up 22% from the year 2021 and up 223% from 2000. [4]

Children with Disabilities

The percentage of public school students in Special Education has increased over the past two decades for all districts except Bainbridge Island, and most dramatically for Bremerton, which saw a 46% increase from 12% of students in 2004–05 to 18% in 2024–25. [9]

- During the 2023–24 school year, 5,457 (16%) of Kitsap public school students were enrolled in special education. [9] While 7% (382) of these students were 3 to 5 years old[10], young children with disabilities who received educational services elsewhere are not counted in this estimate.

Notes:

1. Single parent household defined as living with own children of the householder and no partner/spouse present.

Childcare Availability

Kitsap families face challenges finding accessible licensed childcare for young children. In Kitsap and Washington, licensed childcare availability is more concentrated at childcare centers as the number of family childcare providers (i.e., home-based) declines [5,6].

- **Childcare providers:** In 2024, there were 134 licensed childcare providers in Kitsap, including 57 childcare centers, 47 family childcare providers, and 30 school-age childcare providers. Over the past decade (2014–2024), the number of licensed family childcare providers declined by about 43%, while the number of licensed childcare centers slightly increased by 26% (Figure 2).
- **Childcare slots:** Across all licensed facilities and age groups, there were 5,470 childcare slots in 2024 (Figure 3). Compared to 2014, there were 327 fewer slots available at family childcare providers and 644 more slots available at childcare centers in 2023.



Figure 2. Childcare provider supply, number of providers by type, Kitsap County [5,6]

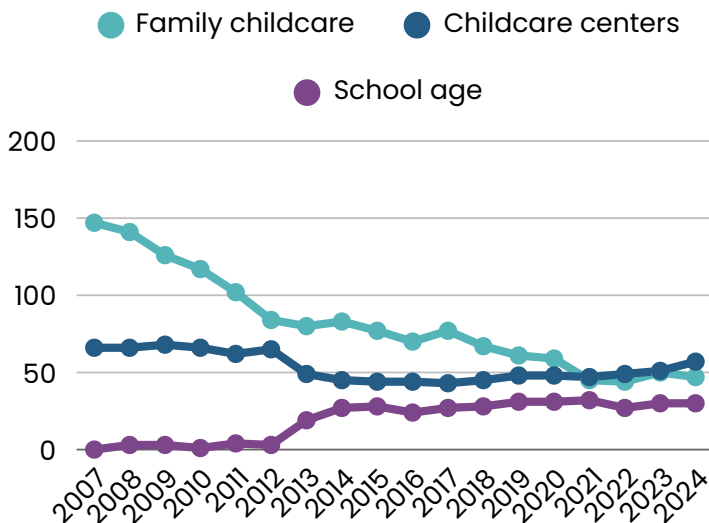
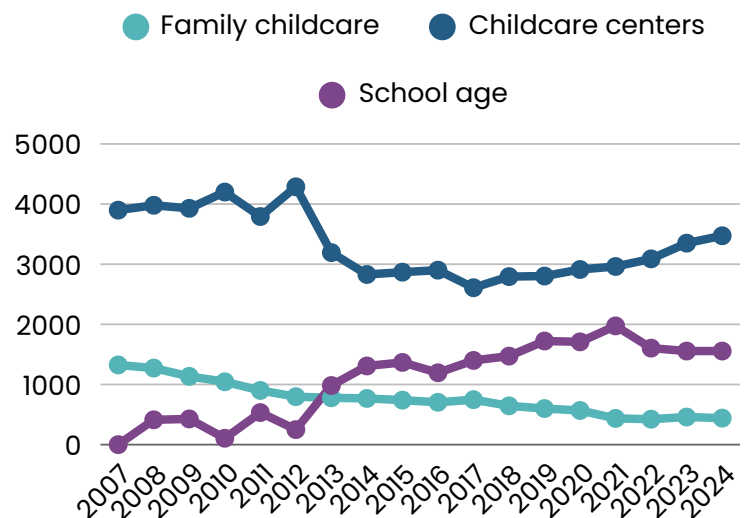


Figure 3. Childcare capacity, number of slots by type of facility, Kitsap County [5,6]

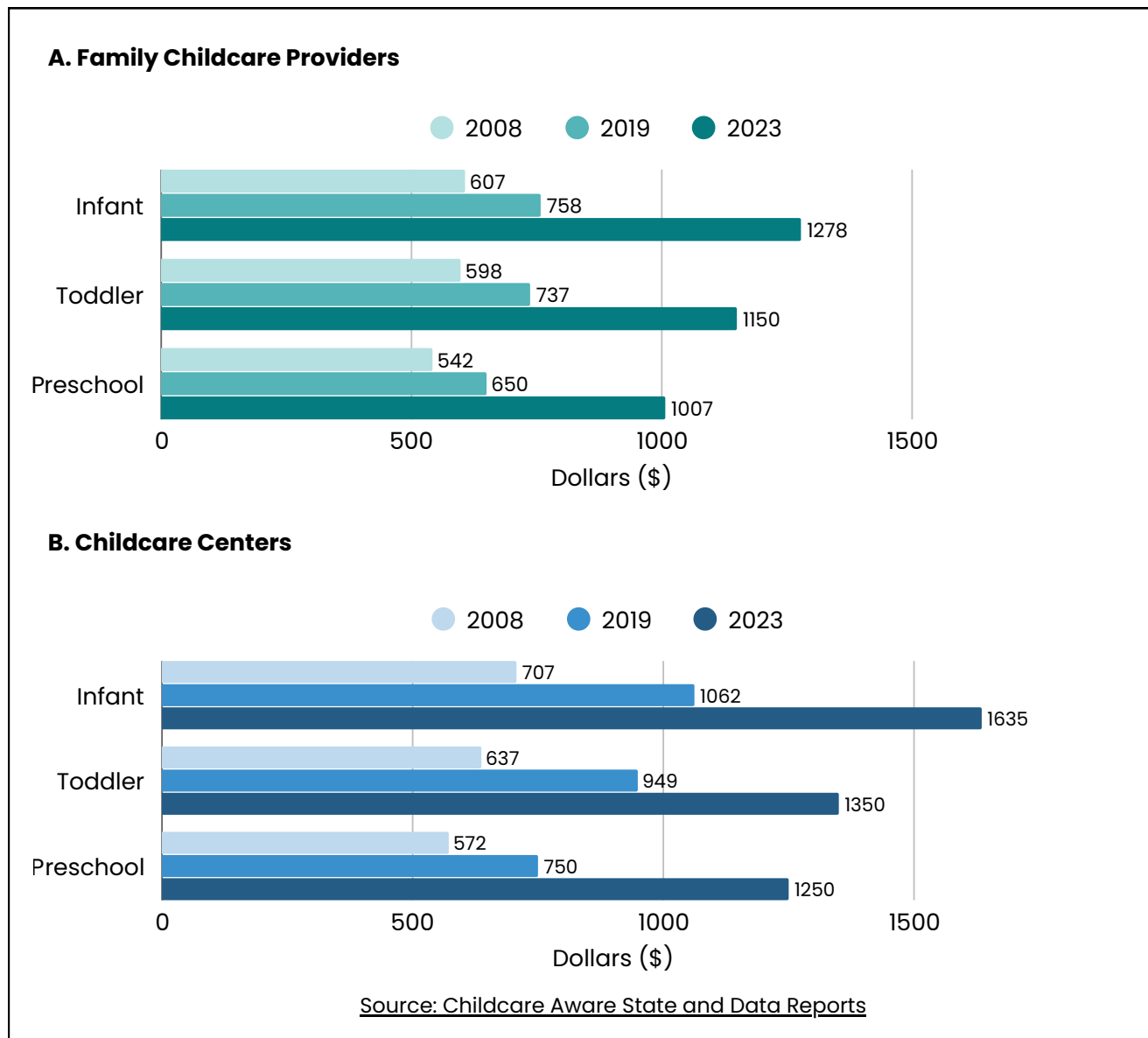


Source: [Childcare Aware Annual Report](#)

Childcare costs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have increased substantially at licensed family childcare providers and childcare centers.

- In 2023, when comparing the median costs of licensed childcare to median household income, Kitsap families paid 16% of their household income on infant care at family childcare providers and 20% at childcare centers. [5]
- Comparing median monthly costs in 2008, 2019, and 2023, the largest increases were from 2019 to 2023 for infant care at a family childcare provider (69%) and preschool at a childcare center (67%) (Figure 4). [5]
- The Working Connections Child Care subsidy is the most common subsidy that families with low income use for paying for childcare. In 2024, only about 11% of eligible Kitsap children were served by this subsidy, lower than Washington's uptake of 17%. [7]

Figure 4. Median Monthly Cost of Childcare by Provider Type and Age Group, Kitsap County [5]



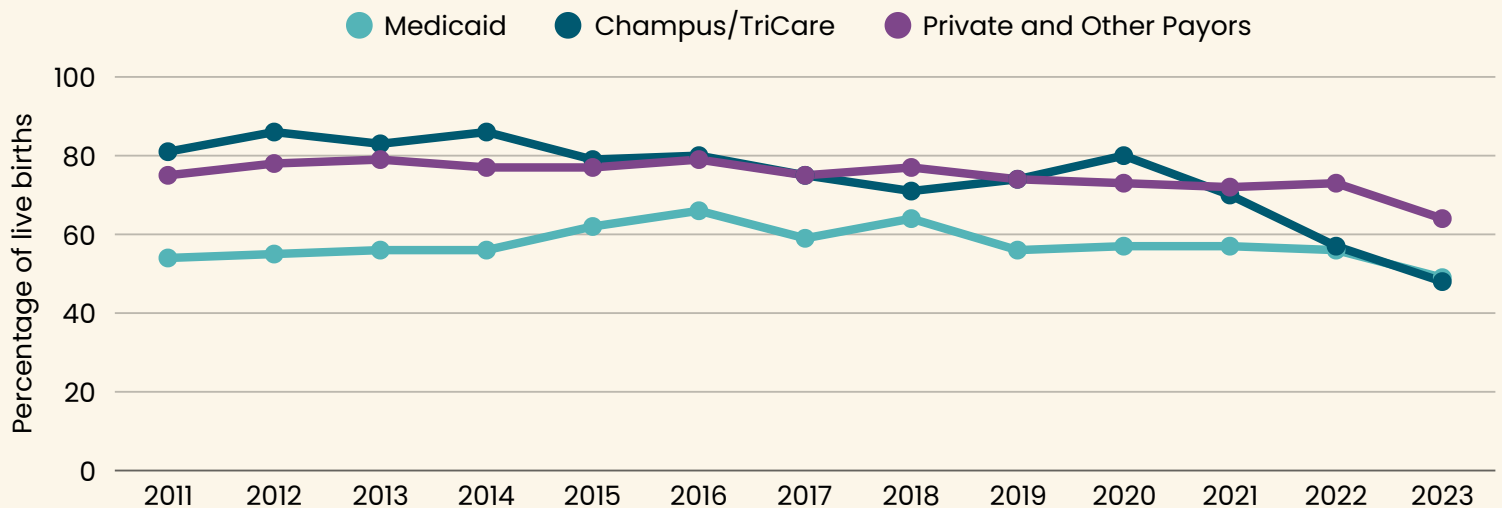
Prenatal Care



Access to prenatal care is challenging, especially for families with low income and military families. Starting prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy helps reduce the risk of complications, such as preterm birth, that affect early childhood health and development.

- Out of all live births in Kitsap, the percentage of mothers who started prenatal care in the first trimester declined over the past decade to the lowest yet in 2023 at 55%. [8] This was substantially lower than Washington (70%).
- Only half (49%) of residents with Medicaid¹ started prenatal care in the first trimester compared to 64% of those with private insurance or other non-military payors in 2023. (Figure 5). [8] Over the past decade, about 29% of all live births in Kitsap were paid by Medicaid¹ each year, with 27% in 2023.
- Only half (48%) of births to military families² started prenatal care in the first trimester in 2023. About a quarter of live births each year in Kitsap are among military families. Since prenatal care services at the Naval Hospital Bremerton have been limited in recent years, most military families seek prenatal care in the community. [8]

Figure 5. Percentage of live births to Kitsap residents who started prenatal care in the first trimester, by primary health insurance payor at delivery, 2010–2023 [8]



Source: Birth Certificates, Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics

Note: Births with missing information about prenatal care are not shown. In 2023, information was missing for 14% of births with Medicaid as the primary payor, 9% for Champus/TriCare, and 8% for Private/Other.

Notes:

1. Medicaid covers pregnant individuals with an income at or below 210% of the federal poverty level, or a monthly income of \$5,590 or less for a four-person household. [12].
2. Defined as births delivered in a federal hospital or paid by TriCare/Champus as the primary payor at delivery.

Implications for practice

Every child deserves to feel healthy, safe, and secure. Some children and families cannot access the resources they need, and this can impact learning and health, especially in early childhood.

This report highlights key risk factors and resource needs among families with young children in Kitsap County.

The key findings reinforce the work of local organizations such as Head Start/Early Head Start/ECEAP, which provide free, essential services to families facing challenges so that each child can learn and grow to their fullest potential. Findings also emphasize the need for policy changes that make it possible for families to access basic needs that matter for lifelong wellbeing. Specifically:

- **There is a growing need for affordable childcare and early learning services in Kitsap County.** As the costs of living (e.g., housing) and childcare have risen sharply in recent years, median household income has not increased on pace and is especially low for female single parent households. Countywide efforts that increase the number and geographic distribution of affordable childcare slots are needed. Additional efforts could focus on increasing uptake of state-provided vouchers and subsidies for childcare. More broadly, widespread adoption of robust parental leave policies can reduce demand for childcare services and promote family financial stability.
- **Programs offering basic needs and early learning services may have the greatest impact by reaching families in Bremerton, South Kitsap and Central Kitsap County.** Considering the high proportion of children living in poverty and recent increases in the proportion of students with disabilities in these school districts, families may be facing a greater need for supportive services. Continued financial support and infrastructure for Special Education in public schools and other early learning providers is critical.
- **Perinatal healthcare providers and policymakers should continue to work towards improving prenatal care access for individuals eligible for Medicaid.** Since 2024, local perinatal providers are collectively working to coordinate services and expand the workforce to address gaps in prenatal care. At the systems level, funding and policy change can support this ongoing work by expanding use of alternative models of care and patient support professionals, such as home visiting programs, group-based prenatal care, and community-based doulas.

References

1. Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, single year preliminary intercensal/postcensal estimates 2010–2023, Community Health Assessment Tool (CHAT), 2024 [accessed 2025 3 7].
2. U.S. Census Bureau. Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2025 [accessed 2025 3 14]. Available from: https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/#/?s_state=53&s_county=53035&s_district=&s_geography=county&s_measures=u18.
3. U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2025 [accessed 2025 2]. Available from: <https://data.census.gov/>.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2025 [accessed 2025 2]. Available from: <https://data.census.gov/>.
5. Child Care Aware of Washington. Child Care in Kitsap County, 2024 [accessed 2025 3 5]. Available from: <https://childcareawarewa.org/data-advocacy/child-care-data-statistics/>.
6. Child Care Aware of Washington. Data Request, 2025.
7. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Subsidy Uptake Data Dashboard, 2024 [accessed 2025 3]. Available from: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports/early-learning-dashboards/subsidy-takeup>.
8. Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics. Birth Certificates. Community Health Assessment Tool (CHAT), 1990–2023.
9. Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Washington School Report Card, 2025 [accessed 2025 1]. Available from: <https://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>.
10. Grummick S. Personal communication and data request. Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2025.
11. Kitsap County Point-in-Time Count, 2024 [accessed 2024 12 10]. Available from: <https://www.kitsap.gov/hs/Pages/HH-Point-in-Time.aspx>.
12. Washington State Health Care Authority. Apple Health for Pregnant Individuals, 2025 [accessed 2025 3 13]. Available from: <https://www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/i-need-medical-dental-or-vision-care/pregnant-individuals#program-requirements>.