

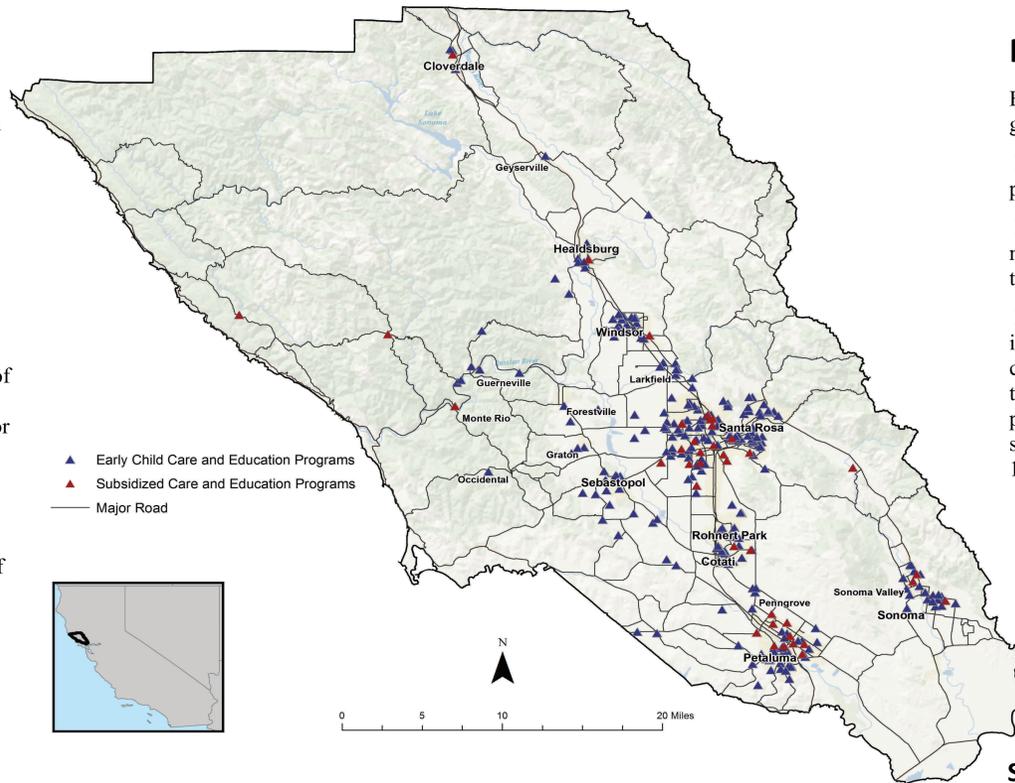
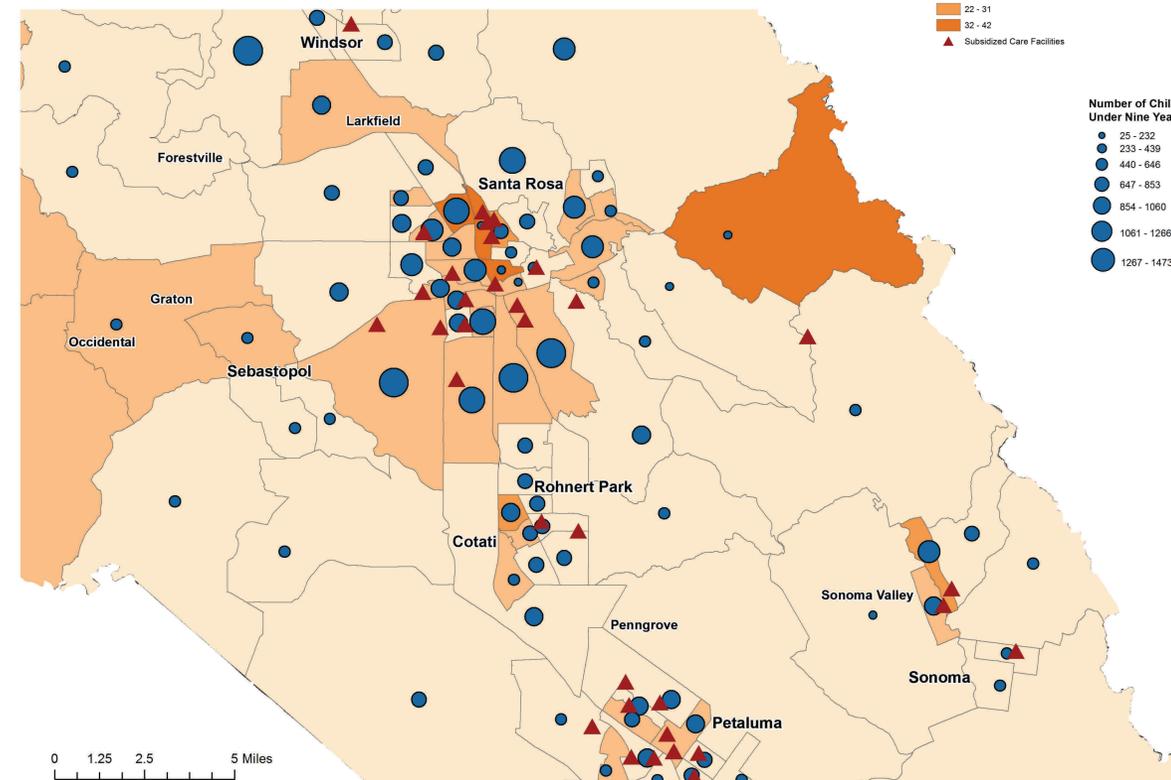
Early Child Care and Education in Sonoma County: A Look at Subsidized Care

INTRODUCTION

Based on data available from the 2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, there are over 56,000 children under nine years of age in Sonoma County, CA. There is an estimated need of 20,000 to 40,000 licensed child care and education slots to serve them. Currently there are 310 preschools and school-age programs, large family child care homes, and children's centers in Sonoma County. [There are also a large number of small family child care homes, but these programs are less likely to be licensed, to employ permitted teachers, or to offer subsidized care.] This represents a 30 percent shortage of licensed early child care and education slots. The greatest shortfall is found in available subsidized care for qualifying low-income families. Among the 310 programs in the county, 42 provide state- or federally-subsidized care for qualifying families. 4,732 children are currently enrolled in these centers, though 13,200 children qualified for subsidized care in 2009 and that number has grown. As the social and economic benefits of high-quality early child care and education are better understood, it becomes increasingly clear that these shortages represent a forfeiture of future stability and gains for the community.

The maps provided here were constructed to help the Sonoma County community visualize the position of programs offering subsidized care, understand where families in need are located, and begin to think about other environmental factors impacting quality of care for all programs. The map to the right denotes all of the licensed child care and education facilities in the county (excluding small family child care), both parent-paid and subsidized. The maps below show the relationships between subsidized care facilities, the number of children with children under 18 years of age that are below the poverty line in each tract. The map on the bottom left compiles this information so that viewers can assess tract-by-tract where there are gaps in care for the children present. Finally, the map to the right reveals the relationship between subsidized care facilities and proximity to preserved green space in Sonoma County. These factors - families living in poverty and children living without green space - contribute to the overall health and vitality of the present community, the children served, and, subsequently, the future of our society.

Subsidized Early Child Care and Education Facilities, Number of Children and Families with Children Living Below the Poverty Line Estimates by Census Tract



METHODOLOGY

Both parent-paid and subsidized Early Child Care and Education Center data was compiled and geocoded.

Data from the 2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates was gathered regarding poverty rates of families with children under 18 by census tract.

Data from the 2010 American Community Survey 5-year estimates was gathered regarding number of children by age group per census tract. This information was reconfigured to deduce the total number of children under nine in each tract.

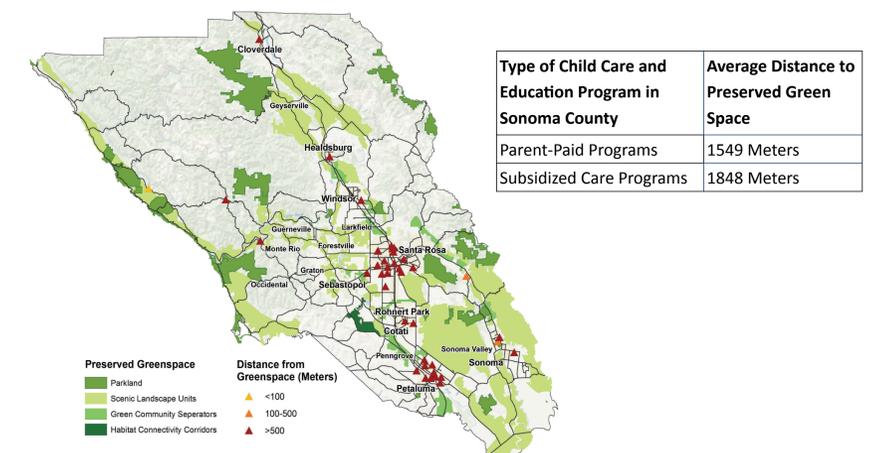
Data regarding preserved green space was gathered from the Sonoma County GIS data portal, including parkland, scenic landscape unites, green community separators and habitat connectivity corridors, as defined by the Open Space and Resource Conservation Element of the Sonoma County General Plan 2020. A proximity analysis based on the 'near' function was performed to deduce the distance between subsidized care facilities and green space. The subsidized care facilities were then reclassified based on whether they were less than <100, 100-500 or more than 500 meters from any of these green spaces.

10% of families with children under 18 in Sonoma County live below the poverty line, based on the 2010 ACS estimates.

Subsidized Early Child Care and Education Facilities and Proximity to Green Space

"Access to nature, whether it is in the form of bona fide natural areas or in bits or views of nature, impacts psychological, as well as social functioning. Greater access to green views and green environments yields better cognitive functioning; more proactive, more effective patterns of life functioning; more self-discipline and more impulse control; greater mental health overall; and greater resilience in response to stressful life events. Less access to nature is linked to exacerbated attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms, more sadness and higher rates of clinical depression. People with less access to nature are more prone to stress and anxiety, as reflected not only in individuals' self-report but also measures of pulse rate, blood pressure, and stress-related patterns of nervous system and endocrine system anxiety, as well as physician-diagnosed anxiety disorders."

Frances E. (Ming) Kuo, National Recreation and Park Association



CARTOGRAPHER: Caitlin Hachmyer
May 10, 2012

Sources: Sonoma County GIS Data Portal; United States Census Bureau; Environmental Systems Resource Institute; Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County; First 5 Sonoma County; River to Coast Children's Services; Child Care Planning Council of Sonoma County; Kuo, Frances E. (Ming). 2010. "Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential components of a Healthy Human Habitat." National Recreation and Park Association. www.NRPA.org