

OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

Occupational Outlook Handbook > Personal Care and Service >

[PRINTER-FRIENDLY](#) 

Childcare Workers

- [Summary](#)
- [What They Do](#)
- [Work Environment](#)
- [How to Become One](#)
- [Pay](#)
- [Job Outlook](#)
- [State & Area Data](#)
- [Similar Occupations](#)
- [More Info](#)

Summary

Summary

Quick Facts: Childcare Workers	
2019 Median Pay	\$24,230 per year \$11.65 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Work Experience in a Related Occupation	None
On-the-job Training	Short-term on-the-job training
Number of Jobs, 2019	1,146,400
Job Outlook, 2019-29	2% (Slower than average)
Employment Change, 2019-29	19,500



[What Childcare Workers Do](#)

Childcare workers attend to children's needs while helping to foster early development.

[Work Environment](#)

Childcare workers typically work in childcare centers, their own home, or private households. Part-time work and irregular hours are common.

[How to Become a Childcare Worker](#)

Education and training requirements for childcare workers vary by setting, state, and employer. They range from no formal education to certification in early childhood education.

[Pay](#)

The median hourly wage for childcare workers was \$11.65 in May 2019.

[Job Outlook](#)

Employment of childcare workers is projected to grow 2 percent from 2019 to 2029, slower than the average for all occupations. Most of the openings projected each year are expected to come from the need to replace workers who leave the occupation permanently.

[State & Area Data](#)

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for childcare workers.

[Similar Occupations](#)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of childcare workers with similar occupations.

[More Information, Including Links to O*NET](#)

Learn more about childcare workers by visiting additional resources, including O*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

[What They Do](#) ->

What They Do

What Childcare Workers Do

Childcare workers attend to children's needs while helping to foster early development. They may help younger children prepare for kindergarten or assist older children with homework.

[Duties](#)

Childcare workers typically do the following:

- Supervise and monitor the safety of children
- Prepare and organize mealtimes and snacks for children
- Help children keep good hygiene
- Change the diapers of infants and toddlers
- Organize activities or implement a curriculum that allows children to learn about the world and explore their interests
- Develop schedules and routines to ensure that children have enough physical activity, rest, and playtime
- Watch for signs of emotional or developmental problems in children and bring potential problems to the attention of parents or guardians
- Keep records of children's progress, routines, and interests

Childcare workers read and play with babies and toddlers to introduce basic concepts. For example, they teach them how to share and take turns by playing games with other children.

Childcare workers help preschool-age children prepare for kindergarten. Young children learn from playing, questioning, and experimenting. Childcare workers use play and other instructional techniques to help children's development. For example, they may use storytelling and rhyming games to teach language and vocabulary. They may help improve children's social skills by having them work together to build something in a sandbox. Or they may teach about numbers by having children count when building with blocks. They also involve children in creative activities, such as art, dance, and music.

Childcare workers may also watch school-age children before and after school. They often help these children with their homework and may take them to afterschool activities, such as sports practices and club meetings.

During the summer, when children are out of school, childcare workers may watch older children as well as younger ones while the parents are at work.

The following are examples of types of childcare workers:

Childcare center workers work in facilities that include programs offering Head Start and Early Head Start. They often take a team-based approach and may work with [preschool teachers](#) and [teacher assistants](#) to teach children through a structured curriculum. They prepare daily and long-term schedules of activities to

About this section



Childcare workers prepare and organize mealtimes and snacks for children.

stimulate and educate the children in their care. They also monitor and keep records of the children's progress.

Family childcare providers run a business out of their own homes to care for children during standard working hours. They need to ensure that their homes and all staff they employ meet the regulations for family childcare providers. They also prepare contracts that set rates of pay, when payment can be expected, and the number of hours children can be in care. Furthermore, they establish policies such as whether sick children can be in their care, who can pick children up, and how behavioral issues will be dealt with. Family childcare providers may market their services to prospective families.

Nannies work in the homes of the families whose children they care for. Most often, they work full time for one family. They may be responsible for driving children to school, appointments, or afterschool activities. Some live in the homes of the families employing them.

[<- Summary](#)

Work Environment

[Work Environment ->](#)

About this section

Work Environment

Childcare workers held about 1.1 million jobs in 2019. The largest employers of childcare workers were as follows:

Child day care services	27%
Self-employed workers	23
Private households	20
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations	8
Elementary and secondary schools; local	8

Family childcare workers care for children in their own homes. They may convert a portion of their living space into a dedicated space for the children. Nannies usually work in their employers' homes.

Many states limit the number of children that each staff member is responsible for by regulating the ratio of staff to children. Ratios vary with the age of the children. Childcare workers are responsible for relatively few babies and toddlers. However, workers may be responsible for greater numbers of older children.

Work Schedules

Childcare workers' schedules vary, and part-time work is common.

Childcare centers usually are open year round, with long hours so that parents or guardians can drop off and pick up their children before and after work. Some centers employ full-time and part-time staff with staggered shifts to cover the entire day.

Family childcare providers may work long or irregular hours to fit parents' work schedules. In some cases, these childcare providers offer evening and overnight care to meet the needs of families. After the children go home, family childcare providers often have more responsibilities, such as shopping for food or supplies, keeping records, and cleaning.

Nannies work either full or part time. Full-time nannies may work more than 40 hours a week to cover parents' time commuting to and from work.

[<- What They Do](#)

How to Become One

[How to Become One ->](#)

About this section

How to Become a Childcare Worker

Education and training requirements vary by setting, state, and employer. They range from no formal education to a certification in early childhood education.

Education

Childcare workers' education requirements vary. Some states require these workers to have a high school diploma or equivalent, but others do not have any education requirements for entry-level positions. Employers often prefer to hire workers who have at least a high school diploma. However, workers with postsecondary education or an early childhood education credential may qualify for higher level positions.

Childcare workers in Head Start and Early Head Start programs must meet specific education and certification requirements, which vary by work setting and job title.

States do not regulate educational requirements for nannies. However, some employers may prefer to hire workers with at least some formal instruction in childhood education or a related field, particularly when they will be hired as full-time nannies.



Childcare workers may spend part of their day outdoors.



Childcare workers typically need a high school degree or equivalent.

Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

Many states require childcare centers, including those in private homes, to be licensed. To qualify for licensure, staff often must pass a background check, have a complete record of immunizations, and meet a minimum training requirement. Some states require staff to have certifications in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.

Some states and employers require childcare workers to have a nationally recognized credential. Most often, states require the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential offered by the [Council for Professional Recognition](#). Obtaining the CDA credential requires coursework, experience in the field, and a period during which the applicant is observed while working with children. The CDA credential must be renewed every 3 years.

Other organizations, such as The [National Association for Family Child Care](#) (NAFCC) may also offer optional accreditation.

Training

Many states and employers require providers to complete some training before beginning work. Also, many states require staff in childcare centers to complete a minimum number of training hours annually. Training may include information about topics such as safe sleep practices for infants.

Advancement

With a couple of years of experience and a bachelor's degree, childcare workers may advance to become a [preschool or childcare center director](#).

Important Qualities

Communication skills. Childcare workers need good speaking skills to provide direction or information effectively and good listening skills to understand parents' instructions.

Decision-making skills. Good judgment is necessary for childcare workers so they can respond to emergencies or difficult situations.

Interpersonal skills. Childcare workers need to work well with people in order to develop good relationships with parents, children, and colleagues.

Patience. Childcare workers need to be able to respond calmly to overwhelming and difficult situations.

Physical stamina. Working with children can be physically demanding, so childcare workers should have a lot of energy.

[<- Work Environment](#)

Pay

[Pay ->](#)

Pay

The median hourly wage for childcare workers was \$11.65 in May 2019. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$8.65, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$17.21.

In May 2019, the median hourly wages for childcare workers in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Elementary and secondary schools; local	\$13.03
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations	11.31
Child day care services	11.12

Pay varies with the worker’s education level and work setting. Those in formal childcare settings and those with more education usually earn higher wages. Pay for self-employed workers is based on the number of hours they work and the number and ages of children in their care.

Childcare workers’ schedules vary, and part-time work is common.

Childcare centers usually are open year round, with long hours so that parents or guardians can drop off and pick up their children before and after work. Some centers employ full-time and part-time staff with staggered shifts to cover the entire day.

Family childcare providers may work long or irregular hours to fit parents’ work schedules. In some cases, these childcare providers may offer evening and overnight care to meet the needs of families. After the children go home, childcare providers often have more responsibilities, such as shopping for food or supplies, keeping records, and cleaning.

Nannies work either full or part time. Full-time nannies may work more than 40 hours a week to cover parents’ commuting time to and from work.

< How to Become One

Job Outlook

Job Outlook >

Job Outlook

Employment of childcare workers is projected to grow 2 percent from 2019 to 2029, slower than the average for all occupations.

Parents or guardians who work will continue to need the assistance of childcare workers. In addition, the demand for preschools and childcare facilities, and consequently childcare workers, should remain strong because early childhood education is widely recognized as important for a child’s intellectual and emotional development.

However, the increasing cost of childcare may reduce demand for childcare workers.

Job Prospects

Despite limited employment growth, about 160,200 openings for childcare workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade.

Most of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

Workers who attain the Child Development Associate credential should have the best job prospects.

Employment projections data for childcare workers, 2019-29

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2019	Projected Employment, 2029	Change, 2019-29		Employment by Industry
				Percent	Numeric	
Childcare workers	39-9011	1,146,400	1,165,900	2	19,500	Get data

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

< Pay

State & Area Data

State & Area Data >

State & Area Data

Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

The [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) (OES) program produces employment and wage estimates annually for over 800 occupations. These estimates are available for the nation as a whole, for individual states, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. The link(s) below go to OES data maps for employment and wages by state and area.

- [Childcare workers](#)

Projections Central

Occupational employment projections are developed for all states by Labor Market Information (LMI) or individual state Employment Projections offices. All state projections data are available at www.projectionscentral.com. Information on this site allows projected employment growth for an occupation to be compared among states or to be compared within one state. In addition, states may produce projections for areas; there are links to each state’s websites where these data may be retrieved.

CareerOneStop

CareerOneStop includes hundreds of [occupational profiles](#) with data available by state and metro area. There are links in the left-hand side menu to compare occupational employment by state and occupational wages by local area or metro area. There is also a [salary info tool](#) to search for wages by zip code.


< Job Outlook

Similar Occupations

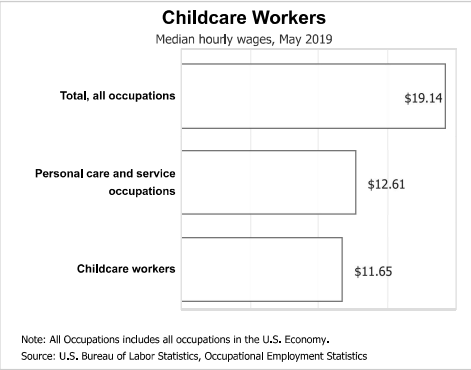
Similar Occupations >

Similar Occupations

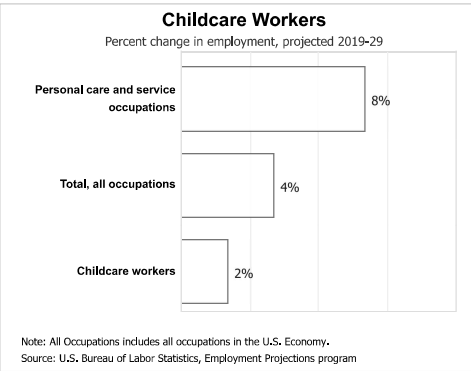
This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of childcare workers.







	OCCUPATION	JOB DUTIES	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION	2019 MEDIAN PAY
	Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers	Kindergarten and elementary school teachers instruct young students in basic subjects in order to prepare them for future schooling.	Bachelor's degree	\$59,420

About this section



About this section



	OCCUPATION	JOB DUTIES	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION 	2019 MEDIAN PAY 
	Preschool and Childcare Center Directors	Preschool and childcare center directors supervise and lead their staffs, design program plans, oversee daily activities, and prepare budgets.	Bachelor's degree	\$48,210
	Preschool Teachers	Preschool teachers educate and care for children younger than age 5 who have not yet entered kindergarten.	Associate's degree	\$30,520
	Special Education Teachers	Special education teachers work with students who have a wide range of learning, mental, emotional, and physical disabilities.	Bachelor's degree	\$61,030
	Teacher Assistants	Teacher assistants work with a licensed teacher to give students additional attention and instruction.	Some college, no degree	\$27,920

[<- State & Area Data](#)

[More Info ->](#)

More Info

Contacts for More Information

About this section

For more information about becoming a childcare provider, visit

[Child Care Aware](#)

For more information about working as a nanny, visit

[International Nanny Association](#)

For more information about family childcare providers, visit

[National Association for Family Child Care](#)

For more information about early childhood education, visit

[National Association for the Education of Young Children](#)

For more information about professional credentials, visit

[Council for Professional Recognition](#)

O*NET

[Childcare Workers](#)

[Nannies](#)

[<- Similar Occupations](#)

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Childcare Workers, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care-and-service/childcare-workers.htm> (visited April 03, 2021).

Last Modified Date: Thursday, January 21, 2021

U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections PSB Suite 2135 2 Massachusetts Avenue NE Washington, DC 20212-0001

Telephone: 1-202-691-5700, www.bls.gov/ooh [Contact OOH](#)