

Seward County: The Childcare 'Desert'

- **Seward County is currently classified as a childcare 'desert'**
 - This is defined as areas where there are too few licensed slots for the number of children who need care.
 - The current Seward County gap number for full-time care for children under 6 is 284
 - Milford's specific full-time care gap number is 52
 - Currently, only 2 infant spots in Milford
 - The waitlist exceeds the infancy timeframe
- **Economic impacts to Seward County total over \$4.3 million annually****
 - According to the 2022 Economic Impacts of Inadequate Childcare Access report, this includes almost \$2.7 million of lost household income and over \$1.6 million of added costs to Seward County area businesses.
 - Nebraska suffers at a rate of \$1.4 billion annually due to gaps in childcare availability.
 - These economic impacts are seen in the following:
 - Mobilized workforce
 - Increase household income
 - Business Productivity
 - State revenues
- **Strategic investments in high-quality early childhood programs have significant impacts*****
 - Children who were part of the study experienced the following:
 - More inclined to achieve advanced levels of education
 - Higher earning potential
 - Positive social behaviors
 - Lower likelihood of chronic health issues
 - Benefits to parents seen in this study include:
 - facilitated workforce reentry
 - improved social mobility
 - improved economic mobility
 - demonstrated economic gains

52+ children
No spots, ages 6 weeks-5 years

\$4.3 million
Current annual Seward County
economic impact due to childcare gap

*<https://www.americanprogress.org/series/child-care-deserts/>, Seward County Childcare Survey Datasheet

**2022 Economic Impacts of Inadequate childcare Access report, www.firstfive-nebraska.org/blog/what-is-access-to-reliable-quality-child-care-really-worth-to-nebraska-2/

*** "The Dual Return on Investing in High-Quality Early Childhood Programs" by Professor James Heckman, Nobel Laureate economist with the University of Chicago's Center for the Economics of Human Development. Dr. Eric Thompson and Dr. David Rosenbaum of the University of Nebraska's Bureau of Business Research, Study on the economic impacts of childcare gaps in our state.