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UNH Research Finds Access to Early Childhood Education Lacking

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DURHAM, N.H. – The number of slots offered by licensed early childhood education providers in the Upper Valley of New Hampshire and Vermont is 2,000 short of the estimated number of young children whose parent or parents are in the labor force, according to new research released by the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire.

The research also found that the cost of licensed care for an Upper Valley family with one infant is equivalent to 16 percent of median family income, more than twice the 7 percent the federal government considers affordable. Finding quality, affordable care that matches family schedules is a persistent challenge for Upper Valley families with 55 percent of those surveyed needing more care than they can access or afford.

Child care challenges are not unique to the Upper Valley. “The nationwide lack of early childhood care and education slots, giving rise to what some call ‘child care deserts,’ and the need for flexibility in meeting child care needs requires multipronged strategies and policies,” said Jess Carson, research assistant professor with the Vulnerable Families Research Program at Carsey. “We need to involve business leaders, state social service workers, early childhood professionals, parents, educators and philanthropists in order to address child care issues in the Upper Valley and beyond.”

The full report can be found here: <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/child-education-nh-vt> (<https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/child-education-nh-vt>)

The Carsey School of Public Policy conducts research, leadership development, and engaged scholarship relevant to public policy. They address pressing challenges, striving for innovative, responsive, and equitable solutions at all levels of government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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