

Essex County Quick Facts: Children, Families, & Child Care

April 2026



Children in Essex County

29,485	Children Under Age 3
53,886	Children Under Age 5
45,121	Children Age 5 - 8 Years
33,360	Children Age 9 - 11 Years
48,761	Children under age 6 with Working Parents
63,639	School-age children (6-12) with Working Parents

Family Economic Status

55%

NJ families who say it is very difficult or somewhat difficult to pay rent or mortgage

Source: Rutgers University – New Brunswick [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#), July 2025

Families in Essex County

106,829	Families with Children Under Age 18
58,783	Married Couples with Children Under 18
2,680	Dads Raising Children Under 18
23,432	Moms Raising Children Under 18
4,287	Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Under 18
34.1%	% of Families working hybrid or remote/NJ 2024

55%

NJ families who say it is very difficult or somewhat difficult to pay for groceries and other food

Source: Rutgers University – New Brunswick [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#), July 2025

Low Income Working Families in Essex County

16.9%	% of Children under Age 5 Living in Poverty
15.8%	% of Children Age 5-17 Living in Poverty
7.6%	% of Families with Children Under 5 in Poverty
12.5%	% of Families with Children Under 18 in Poverty
21.4%	% of Families with Children Under 5 Living with a Single Mom in Poverty
78,795	Children Living Below 200% of Poverty
38.8%	% of Children Living Below 200% of Poverty
44,110	Children under 18/Food Insecurity
21.8%	% of Children under 18/Food Insecurity

50%

NJ families who say it is very difficult or somewhat difficult to pay utility bills such as electricity or water

Source: Rutgers University – New Brunswick [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#), July 2025

Education Related Stats for New Jersey

6,188	Full-day Preschool/County (2024-2025)
12,003	Enrolled in Head Start (includes 3,592 in Early Head Start) State-wide 2025
2019	2024
NJ NAEP 4th Grade Reading Results	
16%	20%
% of White 4 th Graders Reading Below Grade Level	
42%	51%
% of Hispanic 4 th Graders Reading Below Grade Level	
46%	47%
% of Black 4 th Graders Reading Below Grade Level	
45%	51%
% of Low-Income 4 th Graders Reading Below Grade Level	
83,846	NJ Children Age 6-17 Who Repeated a Grade (2022-2023)
6%	% of Age 6-17 Who Repeated a Grade/NJ

County Early Intervention/Special Education

1,829	Part C, Infants & Toddlers with an IFSP
1,755	Section 619, Ages 3-5 with an IEP

County High School Graduation

92.2%	High School on Time Graduate Rate (2024)
90.3%	High School Graduate Rate, Economically Disadvantaged (2024)

Child Care Subsidies in Essex County (2025)

13,896	Number of Children Receiving Child Care Subsidy (Unduplicated)
9,013	Number of Families whose Children Received Subsidy (Unduplicated)

Essex County Child Care Prices (2025)

\$21,000	Center-based Infant Care Annual Fees
\$18,204	Center-based Preschool-age Annual Fees
\$15,600	Family Child Care Home Infant Annual Fees
\$13,200	Family Child Care Home Preschool Annual Fees
\$17,960	NJ Annual Cost of 4-Year Public College Tuition & Related Fees for In-State Residents (2025)
*2023 NJ Child Care Market Rate Survey, 75% Percentile (i.e., parents have choices among 75% of providers in the community)	

Child Care Subsidy Rates

Child care assistance [rates](#) are tiered based on levels within Grow New Jersey Kids (GNJK). The lowest subsidy rate is paid to providers not participating in GNJK. The subsidy rate increases as GNJK levels rise (e.g., higher rates are paid for 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star care).

As of 4/1/26	Center Providers				Family Child Care Providers			
	Licensed Child Care Centers Monthly Rate	State Assistance Monthly Rate (4-Star GNJK)	Licensed Child Care Centers Annualized	State Assistance Rate Annualized (4-Star GNJK)	Registered Family Child Care Homes Monthly Rate	State Assistance Monthly Rate (4-Star GNJK)	Registered Family Child Care Homes Annualized	State Assistance Rate Annualized (4-Star GNJK)
Infant	\$1,591.66	\$1,746.19	\$19,100	\$20,954.28	\$1,217.56	\$1,452.54	\$14,611	\$17,430.48
Toddler	\$1,417.54	\$1,500.55	\$17,010	\$18,006.60	\$1,217.56	\$1,374.11	\$14,611	\$16,489.32
Preschooler	\$1,265.66	\$1,357.41	\$15,188	\$16,288.92	\$1,067.23	\$1,321.83	\$12,807	\$15,861.96
School-age	\$1,193.54	\$0.00	\$14,322	\$0.00	\$1,061.95	\$1,061.95	\$12,743	\$12,743.40

Source: New Jersey Department of Human Services, Maximum Child Care Payment Rates, April 2026

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 Annie E. Casey, Kids Count Data Center, [New Jersey Profile Children Age 6-17 Who Repeated One or More Years of School](#) (2022-2023).
 Rutgers University [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#), July 2025
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 U.S. College Board, Annual Survey of Colleges, Public 4-Year Universities, [Average 2025 Tuition and Fees at Public Four-Year Institutions by State](#)

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