

PITKIN COUNTY CHILD CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an age with more single parent families and families with both parents holding full time jobs, child care for infant, toddler, and pre-school age children has moved from a useful convenience to a practical necessity. This assessment estimates current and future demand for licensed child care in Pitkin County. The assessment focuses on child care for children ages 0 to 5.

Based on Kids First data and the child care demand model developed for this assessment, the demand for child care in Pitkin County is 95% of current capacity. Although the State Demographer will be examining sub-group population trends and projections in Pitkin County over the next year, this analysis shows some findings relative to child care demand that are unlikely to change with further analysis:

- Pitkin County's population is aging. The median age in the county is roughly 40 and will likely rise with the retirement and relocation of additional Baby Boomers over the next two decades.
- Pitkin County Residents are having children below the replacement rate so the number of children ages 0-5 is decreasing.
- Projections for employment indicate more commuters coming into Pitkin County for employment over the next 20 years. These commuters are more likely to be younger and have children than residents of Pitkin County.
- The number of children of out-of-county commuters will likely increase in Pitkin County child care facilities, while the number of Pitkin County children will likely decrease.
- The increases in the numbers of commuters with children ages 0 to 5 will increase the demand for child care services beyond current capacity by approximately 2012 if no waitlist information is considered.
- Considering the current waitlist information, the child care system is at capacity and an increase in the number of child care slots will lead to an increase in enrollment.
- Not all families eligible for tuition assistance from Kids First access the funds. Only 15% of families with children currently in childcare receive tuition assistance. Given the number of single parent households in the county (20%) and the number of two parent households with two working parents (43%), this number seems low.

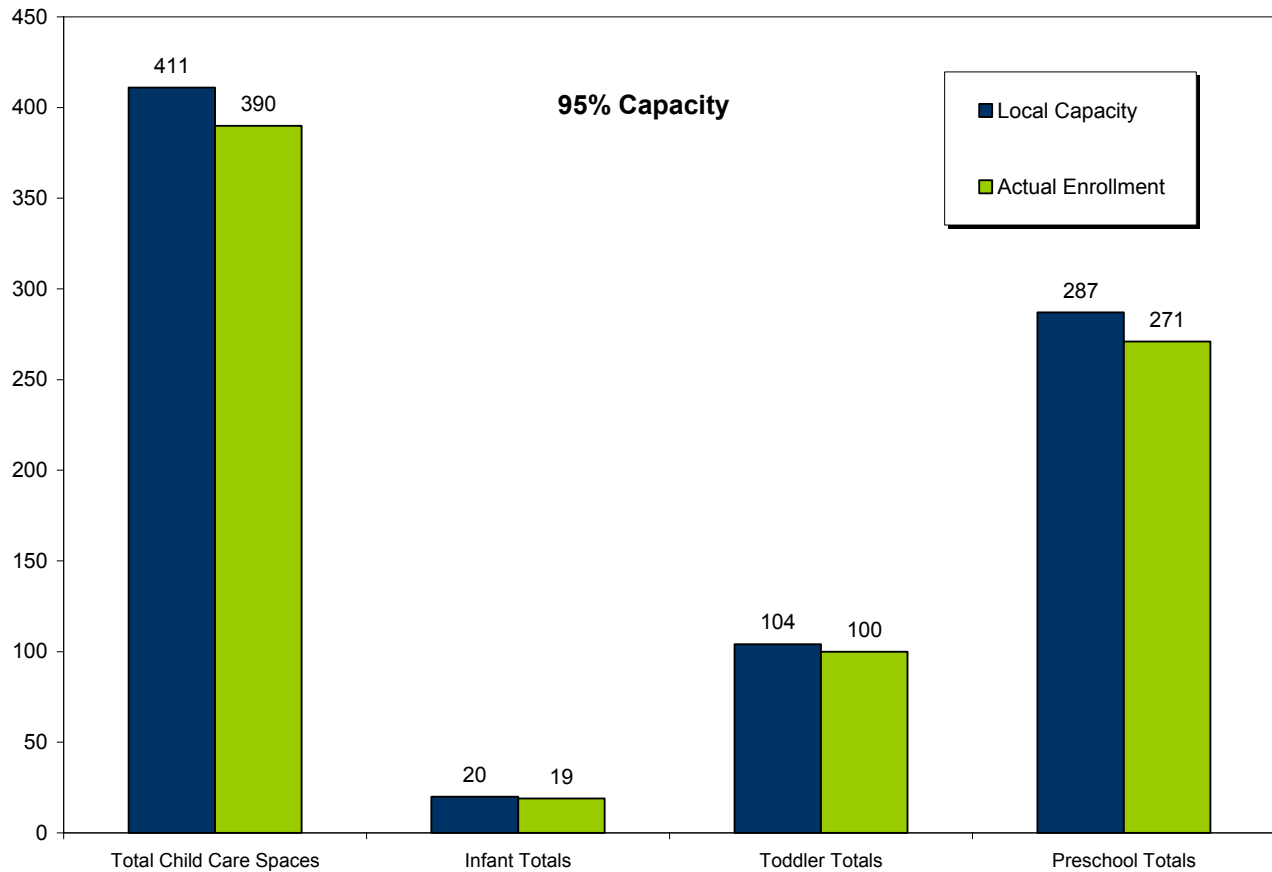
Based on these conclusions, Pitkin County should consider the following actions:

- With more commuters commuting into the county and few residents having children, Pitkin County should consider ways to locate and boost child care capacity to meet commuters' needs.
- Explore possible ways to create space in City and County capital improvement plans that could be used for a child care program, especially if Pitkin County develops a downvalley facility; and,
- Explore space possibilities for child care programs in publicly funded affordable housing programs (existing or new). Although the median age of county residents is increasing and county residents are having fewer children, affordable housing is precisely the location of most of the families with children.

CURRENT CHILD CARE PICTURE

In an age with more single parent families and families with both parents holding full time jobs, child care for infant, toddler, and pre-school age children has moved from a useful convenience to a practical necessity. This assessment estimates current and future demand for licensed child care in Pitkin County. The assessment focuses on child care for children ages 0 to 5.

Figure 1 Pitkin County Child Care Enrollment (Age 0-5) - March 2006



Child care providers in Pitkin County are at 95% capacity for ages 0-5. There are currently 411 child care slots for ages 0-5 (as of Mar. 2006) and 390 children enrolled in child care programs in this age category. Seventeen of the openings are at the pre-school level. There is only one opening for infants and four openings for toddlers.

Table 1 below, illustrates the distribution of Pitkin County child care providers by program age as well as whether the provider operates as a nonprofit or for profit organization. Half of the 16 child care providers in Pitkin County are for-profit ventures, however, non-profit providers serve over twice the number of children (280 to 110).

Table 1 - Child Care providers in Pitkin County - (For profit and Non profit, March 2006)

Name	X = For Profit	Program/Age	Local Capacity	Actual Enrollment	% Capacity
Crystal Daycare*	x	Infant	2	2	100%
Early Learning Center*		Infant	8	8	100%
Roaring Fork Kids*		Infant	8	7	88%
Simone Grogan*	x	Infant	2	2	100%
Aspen Mountain Tots	x	Toddler	8	8	100%
Columbine Kids*	x	Toddler	8	8	100%
Crystal Daycare*	x	Toddler	2	2	100%
Early Learning Center*		Toddler	22	22	100%
Ellyn's House*	x	Toddler	2	2	100%
Growing Years*		Toddler	8	8	100%
Little Red Schoolhouse*		Toddler	10	10	100%
Roaring Fork Kids*		Toddler	30	27	90%
Simone Grogan*	x	Toddler	4	3	75%
Early Childhood Center*		Toddler 2 days/week	10	10	100%
ASD Preschool		Preschool	25	25	100%
Aspen Country Day		Preschool	30	29	97%
Aspen Sprouts	x	Preschool	15	13	87%
Columbine Kids*	x	Preschool	36	30	83%
Early Learning Center*		Preschool	30	30	100%
Ellyn's House*	x	Preschool	4	4	100%
Growing Years*		Preschool	14	14	100%
Little Red Schoolhouse*		Preschool	20	17	85%
Mare's Playgroup	x	Preschool	32	32	100%
Rhoda Campbell	x	Preschool	4	4	100%
Roaring Fork Kids*		Preschool	14	13	93%
Roaring Fork School District		Preschool	15	12	80%
Wildwood		Preschool	32	32	100%
Early Childhood Center*		Preschool 2 -3 days	16	16	100%
Infant Totals			20	19	95%
Toddler Totals			104	100	96%
Preschool Totals			287	271	94%
Total Child Care Spaces			411	390	95%

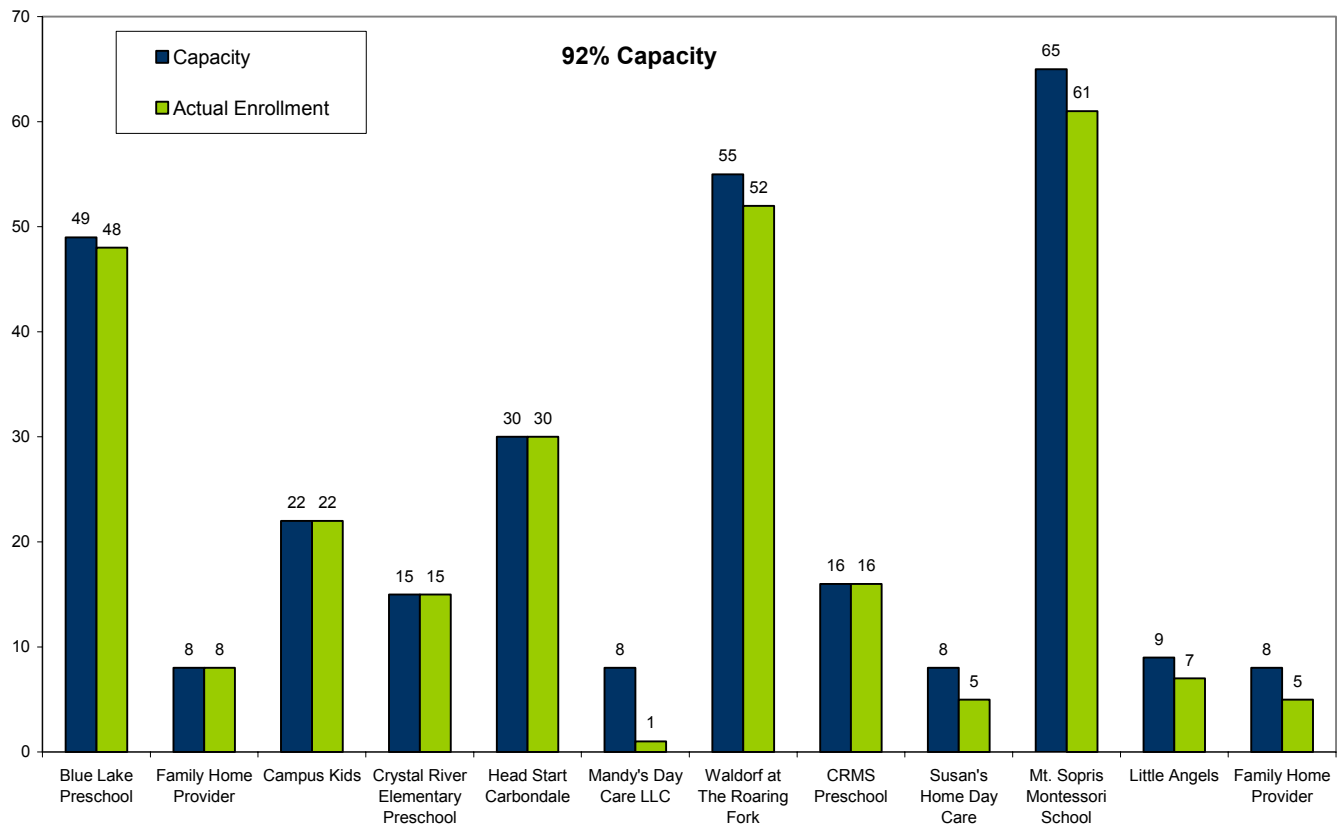
* indicates the provider serves multiple program age groups (e.g. infant and toddler)

Child care in the Roaring Fork Valley (Outside of Pitkin County)

There are a number child care programs outside Pitkin County, in the Roaring Fork Valley (including the RF portion of Eagle County and Garfield County). The programs in the Mid-Valley (Basalt and Carbondale) show roughly the same level of capacity as the programs in Pitkin County. As Figure 2 illustrates, the child care programs in Basalt (Eagle County) and Carbondale are at 92% capacity.

Figure 2

Carbondale/Basalt Child Care Programs - Ages 0-5 (as of 5/06)



Meanwhile, Figure 3 on the following page, shows that there are many more child care programs in Glenwood Springs as well as and more current local capacity. Glenwood Springs' child care programs are currently at 82% capacity. This excess capacity is due to for-profit providers creating roughly 100 new spaces over the last year. KidsPlex opened a 40-space the child care facility in Glenwood Springs six months ago.

Figure 3

Glenwood Springs Child Care Programs - Ages 0-5 (as of 5/06)

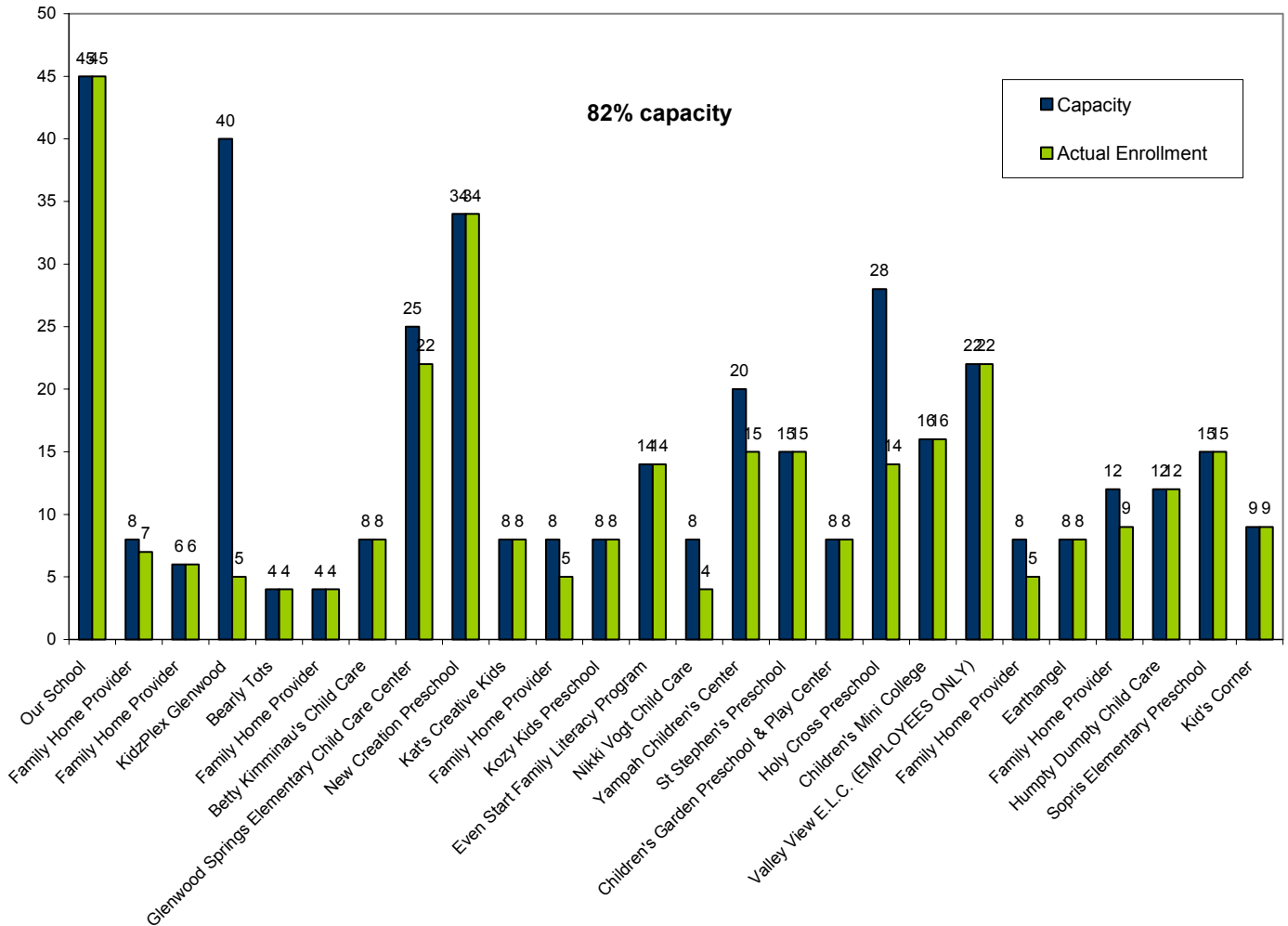


Table 2 on the following page, shows Glenwood Springs has, in contrast to Pitkin County and the Midvalley, more for-profit providers. Of the 26 child care providers, only 16 are for-profit ventures. However, as in Pitkin County, non-profit providers serve twice as many children as for-profit child care providers.

Table 2 -Child Care providers in Basalt (Eagle County), Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs (March 2006)

Program	X = For profit	Capacity	Actual Enrollment	% Capacity
Carbondale				
Blue Lake Preschool		49	48	98%
Family Home Provider	x	8	8	100%
Campus Kids		22	22	100%
Crystal River Elementary Preschool		15	15	100%
Head Start Carbondale		30	30	100%
Mandy's Day Care LLC	x	8	1	13%
Waldorf at The Roaring Fork		55	52	95%
CRMS Preschool		16	16	100%
Susan's Home Day Care	x	8	5	63%
Mt. Sopris Montessori School		65	61	94%
Little Angels	x	9	7	78%
Subtotal		285	265	93%
Basalt (Eagle County)				
Family Home Provider	x	8	5	63%
Subtotal		8	5	63%
Glenwood Springs				
Our School		45	45	100%
Family Home Provider	x	8	7	88%
Family Home Provider	x	6	6	100%
KidzPlex Glenwood	x	40	5	13%
Bearly Tots	x	4	4	100%
Family Home Provider	x	4	4	100%
Betty Kimminau's Child Care	x	8	8	100%
Glenwood Springs Elementary Child Care Center		25	22	88%
New Creation Preschool		34	34	100%
Kat's Creative Kids	x	8	8	100%
Family Home Provider	x	8	5	63%
Kozy Kids Preschool	x	8	8	100%
Even Start Family Literacy Program		14	14	100%
Nikki Vogt Child Care	x	8	4	50%
Yampah Children's Center		20	15	75%
St Stephen's Preschool		15	15	100%
Children's Garden Preschool & Play Center	x	8	8	100%
Holy Cross Preschool		28	14	50%
Children's Mini College		16	16	100%
Valley View E.L.C. (EMPLOYEES ONLY)		22	22	100%
Family Home Provider	x	8	5	63%
Earthangel	x	8	8	100%
Family Home Provider	x	12	9	75%
Humpty Dumpty Child Care	x	12	12	100%
Sopris Elementary Preschool		15	15	100%
Kid's Corner	x	9	9	100%
Subtotal		393	322	82%

POPULATION ASSESSMENT

Pitkin County’s population is aging. The state demographer expects total population growth within the county to be skewed to ages over 55+ (beyond historic childbearing age) as nationally more Baby Boomers retire and relocate to communities with many natural and cultural amenities. Although Pitkin County will also attract a “special population” of ski workers, this population tends to replace itself year after year rather than permanently settling in the area and becoming part of the typical survival / death / fertility patterns (and resulting kids) in the general population. The ski worker population is expected to increase in the future, however, its impact on the number of children ages 0-5 is expected to be minimal given the historic patterns of out-migration by people just before having kids (most likely due to the high cost of living and housing) in the County.¹



Figures 4 and 5 illustrate some of these trends and the impact on the number of children age 0-5. The median age of Pitkin County increased from 1990 and 2000 from 35 to 39. During this same time, the total number of children under 5 increased slightly, while the percentage of the population in the 0-5 age group decreased.

Garfield County, by comparison, is much more like the State of Colorado with a median age of 35 (the Colorado median age is 35.15 (up from 32.42 in 1990). Garfield County also has a population age distribution more conducive to growth of the population from internal factors rather than in-migration from retirees (Figure 6). Additionally, Garfield County’s population has been and will continue to be more impacted by an increase in Latino immigration than Pitkin’s population (Figures 7, 8, & 9) and will be one of the reasons Garfield County’s median population age will continue to be lower than Pitkin County’s.

¹Existing published projections for Pitkin almost certainly overestimate number of kids in future (projections do not reflect factors above); State Demographer will revise their projections in the next 12 months.

Figure 4

Pitkin County's Population is Aging

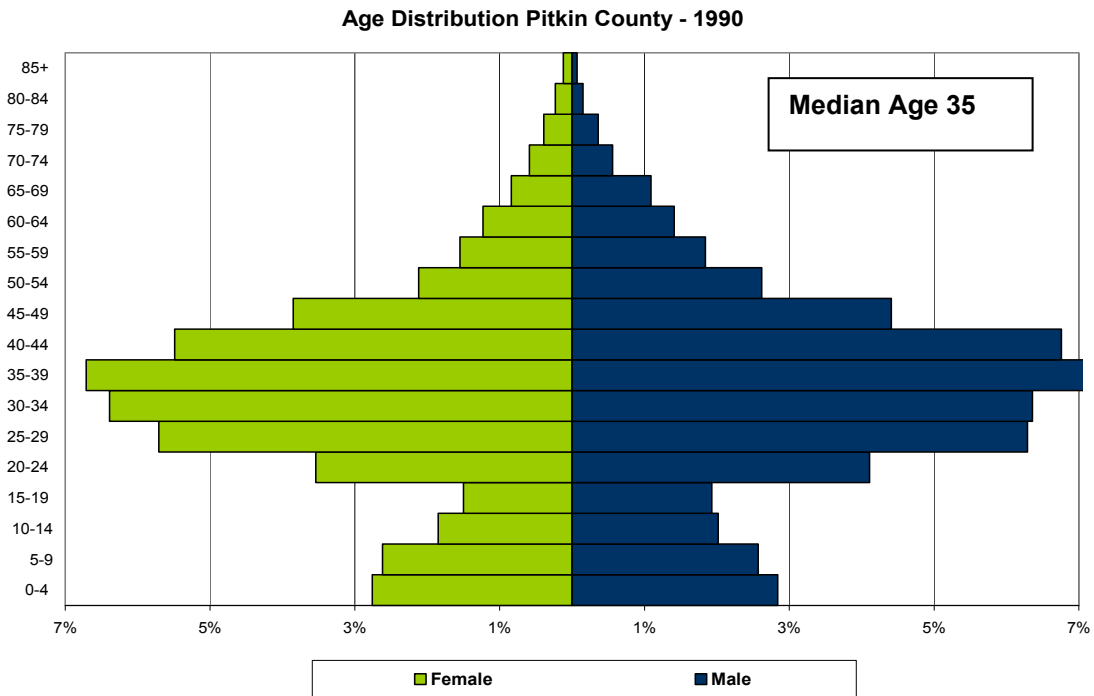
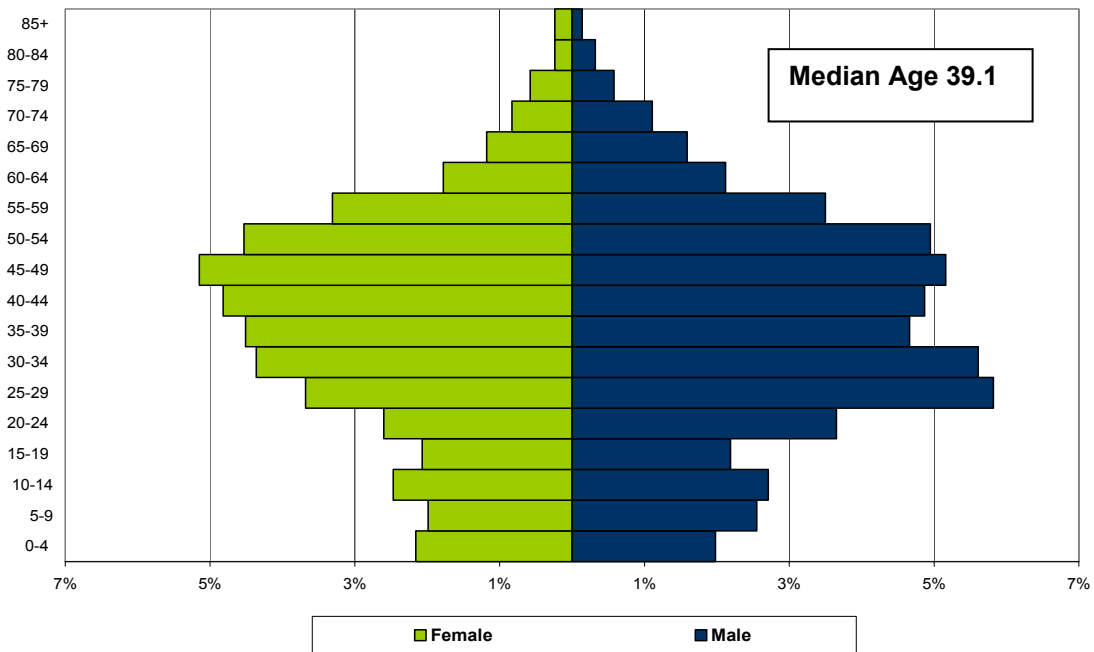


Figure 5

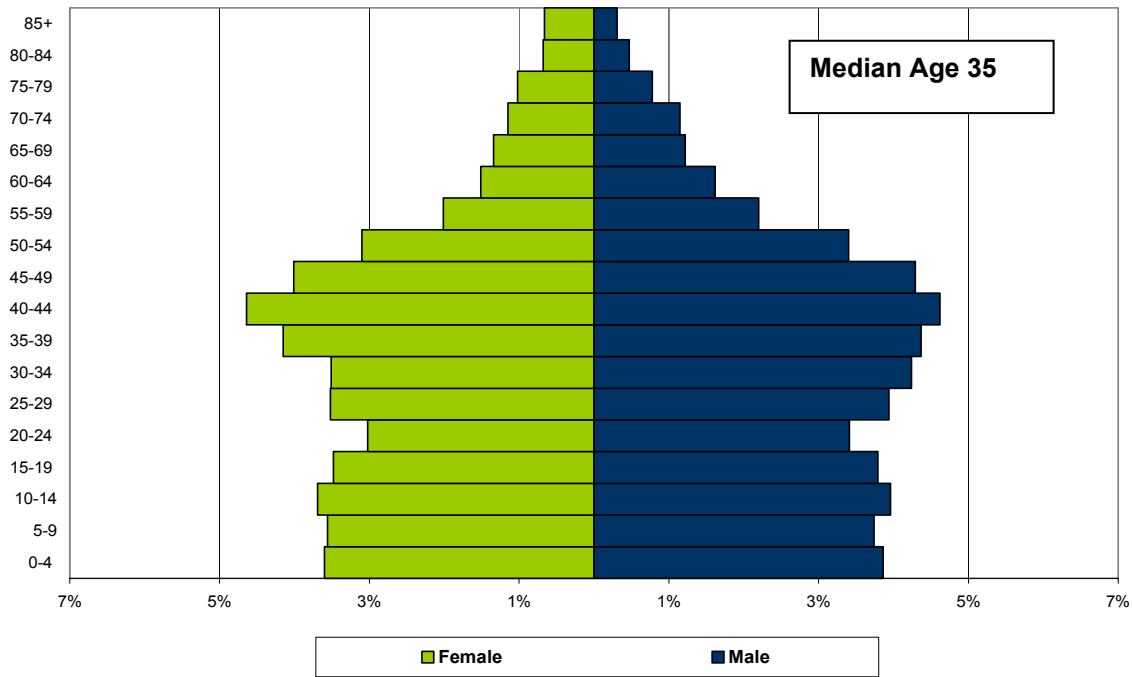
Age Distribution Pitkin County - 2000



Garfield County's Population is likely to get younger from immigrant births²

Figure 6

Age Distribution Garfield County - 2000



² Eagle County's population pyramid is more like Garfield Counties, despite the influence of second home owners coming to the county, because it is larger (35,000+) and includes a higher percentage of Latinos than Pitkin County does. It is difficult to break out the Roaring Fork portion of Eagle County into a population pyramid, but population projections by the State Demographer for this section of Eagle County show the area's population growing from 7,410 in 2000 to 11,206 in 2025.

Latino Population growing outside of Pitkin County

The population group likely to contribute the most to births in the region is the growing Latino population, which is settling outside of Pitkin County. Figures 7 & 8 illustrate how the Latino population has increased in number and as a percentage of the total population in both Pitkin and Garfield Counties, but the increase has been greater in Garfield County.

This trend will likely continue since the number of children born to Latino mothers has grown, from 51 in 1990 to 351 in 2004. Hispanic births have also represented more and more of the overall births, from 10.5 percent in 1990 to 43.7 percent in 2004.³ Figure 9 illustrates where the Latino population resides by community.

Figure 7

Pitkin County
Hispanic / Latino Population and % of Total County Population 1980-2000

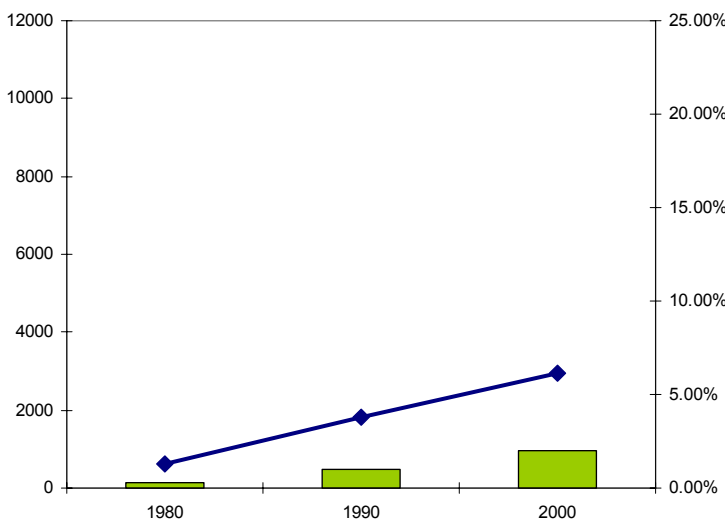
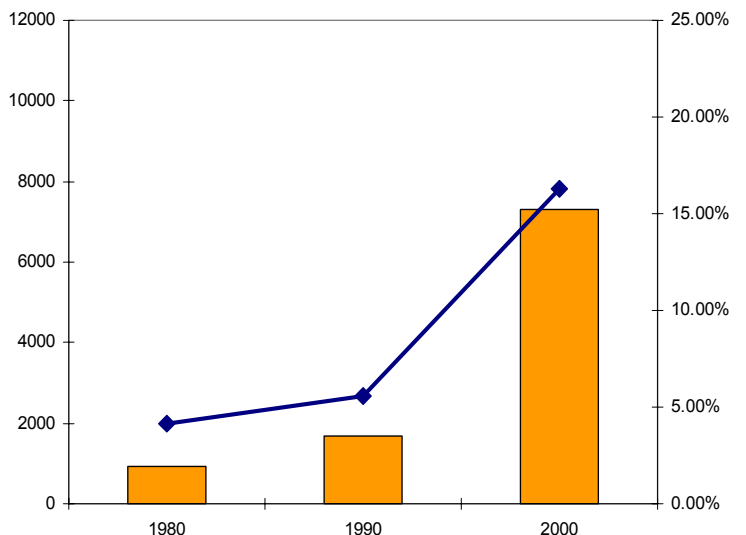


Figure 8

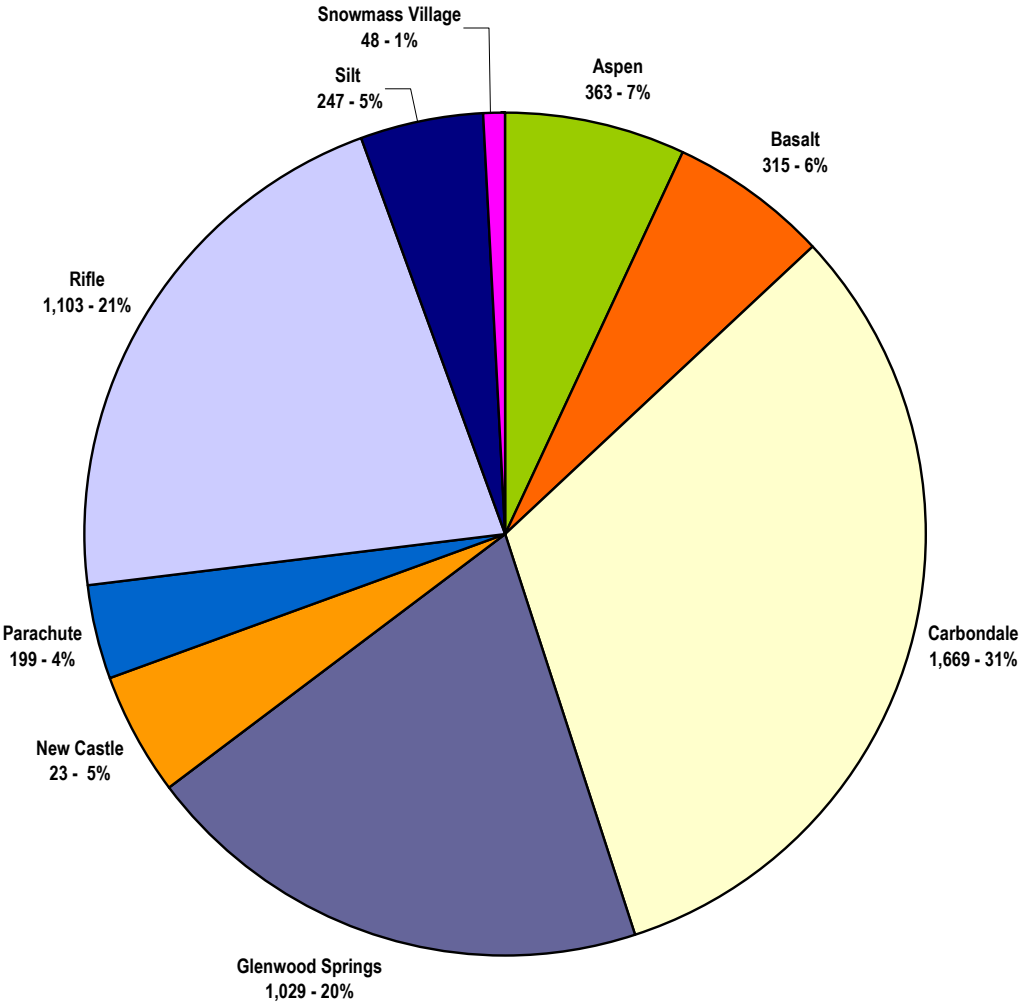
Garfield County
Hispanic / Latino Population and % of Total County Population 1980-2000



³ "Hispanics make up nearly half of GarCo births," David Frey, Aspen Daily News, 12.20.2005

Figure 9

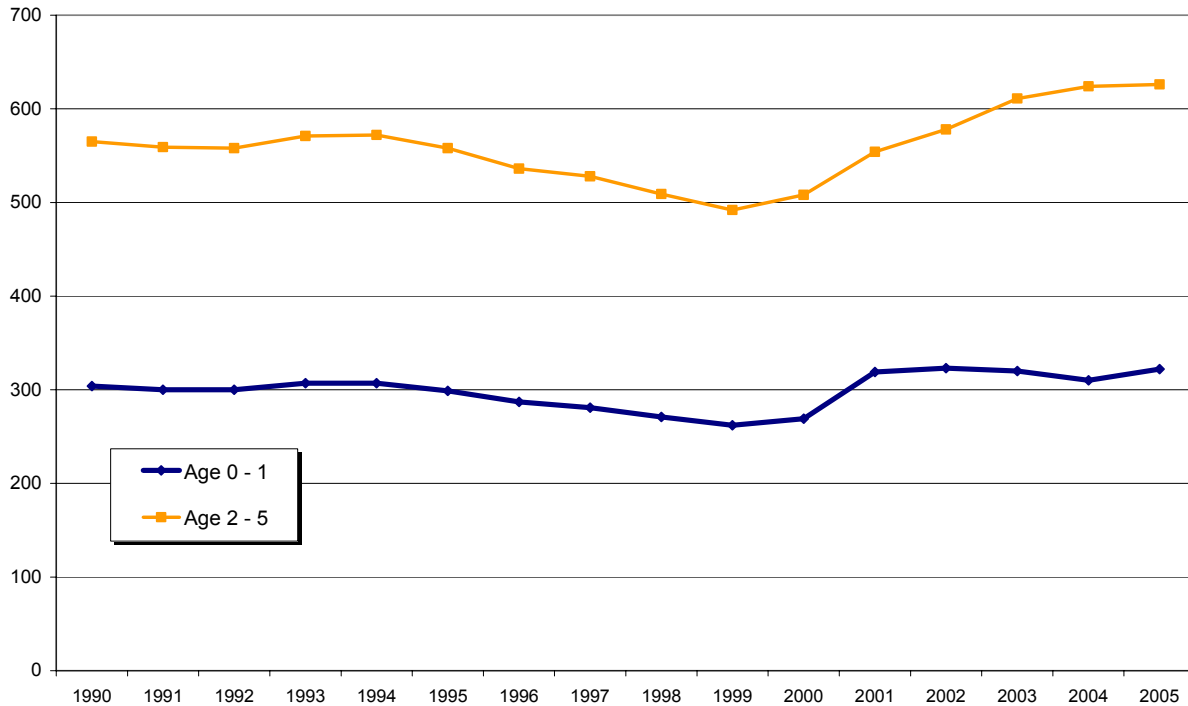
Percentage Hispanic / Latino by Community, 2000 US Census



UNDERSTANDING CHILD CARE NEED

The population trends for children ages 0-5 living in Pitkin County show a slight increase over the last 15 years increasing from 869 in 1990 to 948 in 2005 (Figure 10). However, this increase of 79 children or just over 5 children a year) is slight.

Figure 10 Pitkin County population trends / Ages 0-5

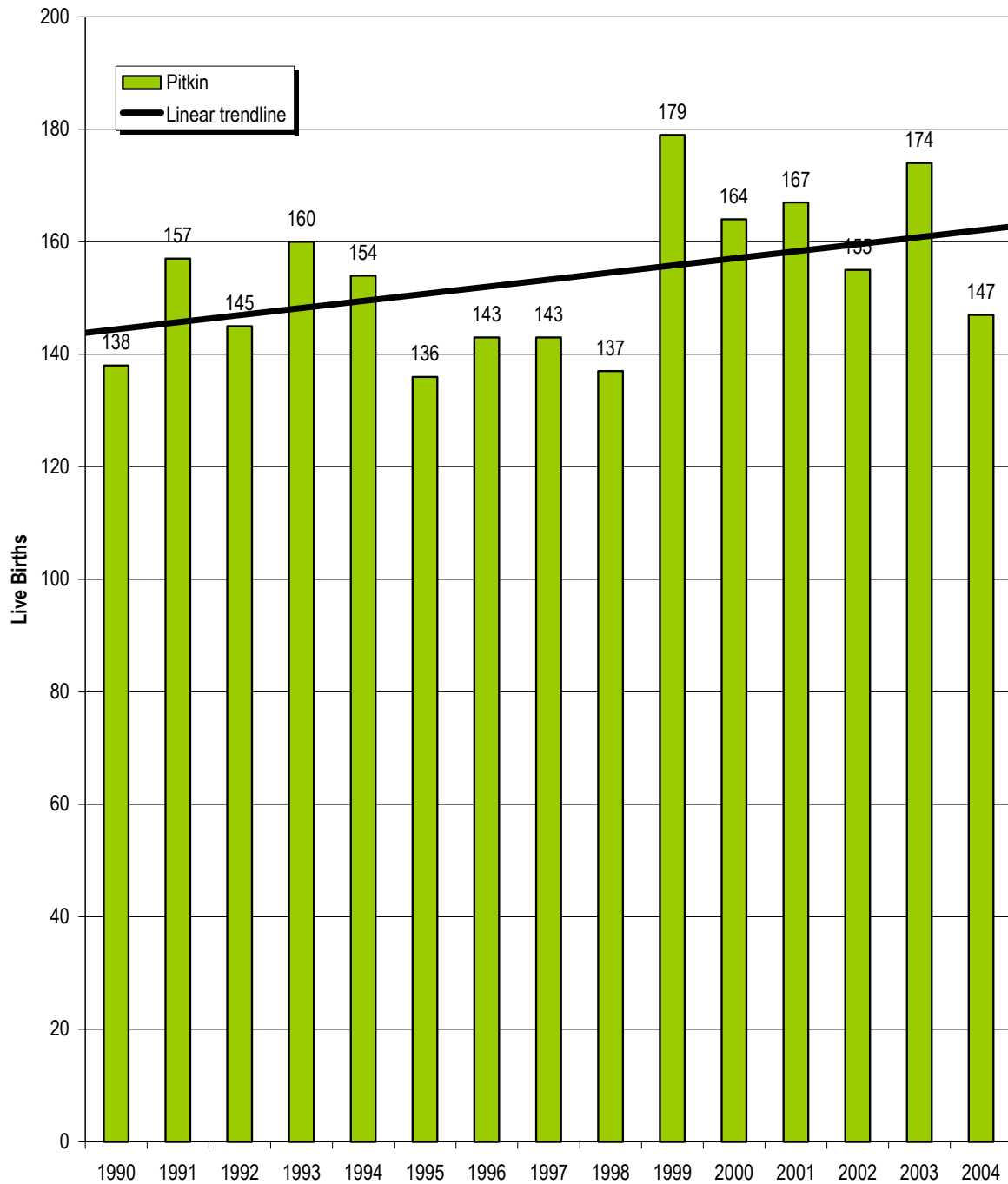


Live Births in Pitkin County are relatively flat (Figure 11 next page), despite a growing countywide population. In fact, Figure 12 on page 16 shows that the slight increase in births in Pitkin County actually comes from Garfield County Residents. Births to Pitkin County residents are actually decreasing.

Figure 13 (on page 17) illustrates both of trends in action over the years. As Pitkin County’s population has increased, the percentage of births to residents has become a smaller percentage of the overall county population, which further supports the State Demographers understanding that Pitkin County’s population growth will not be from resident births but from the in-migration of older adults.

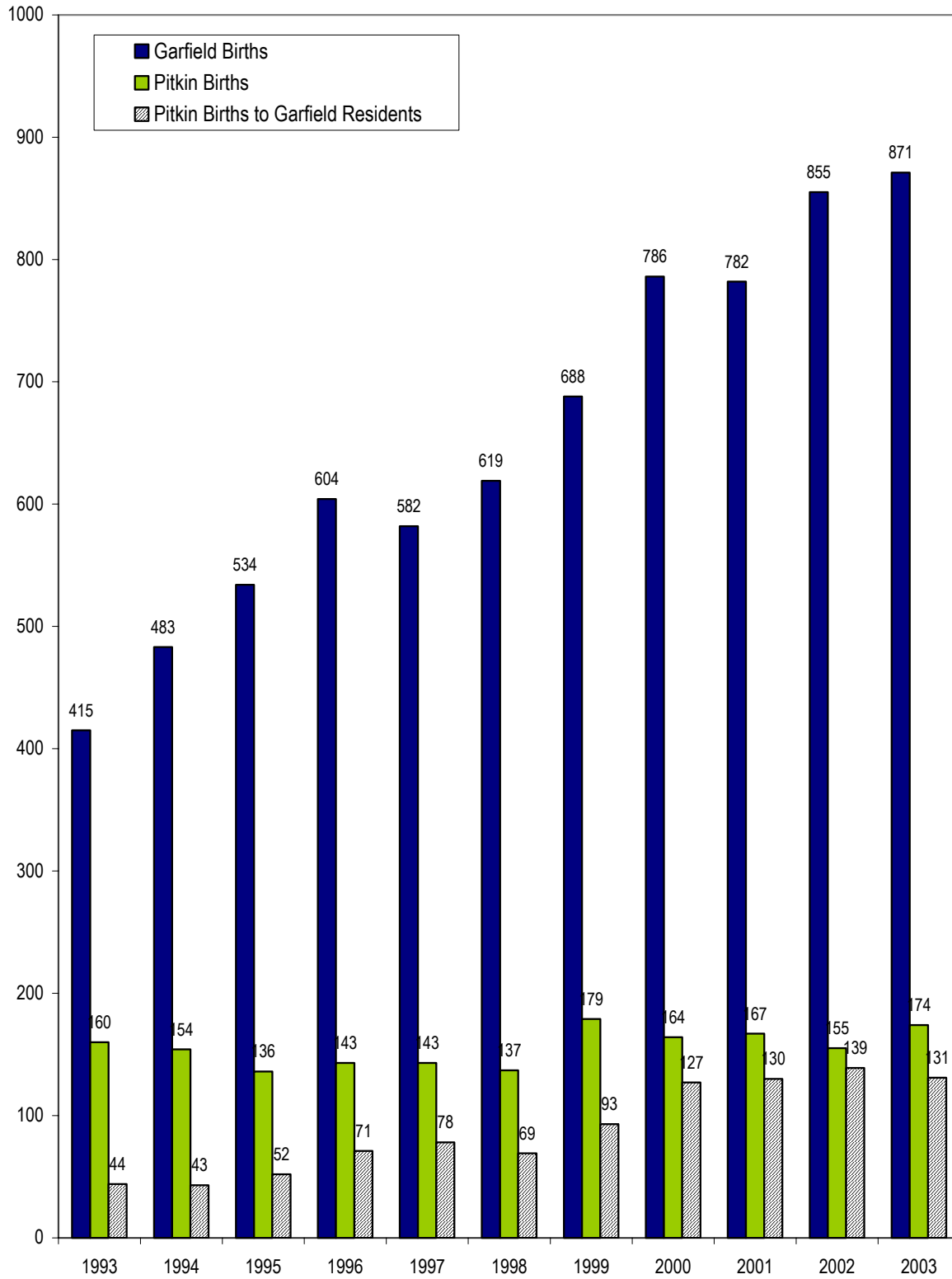
Figure 11

Live Births in Pitkin County (Aspen Valley Hospital), 1990 - 2004



Source: Children's Campaign.

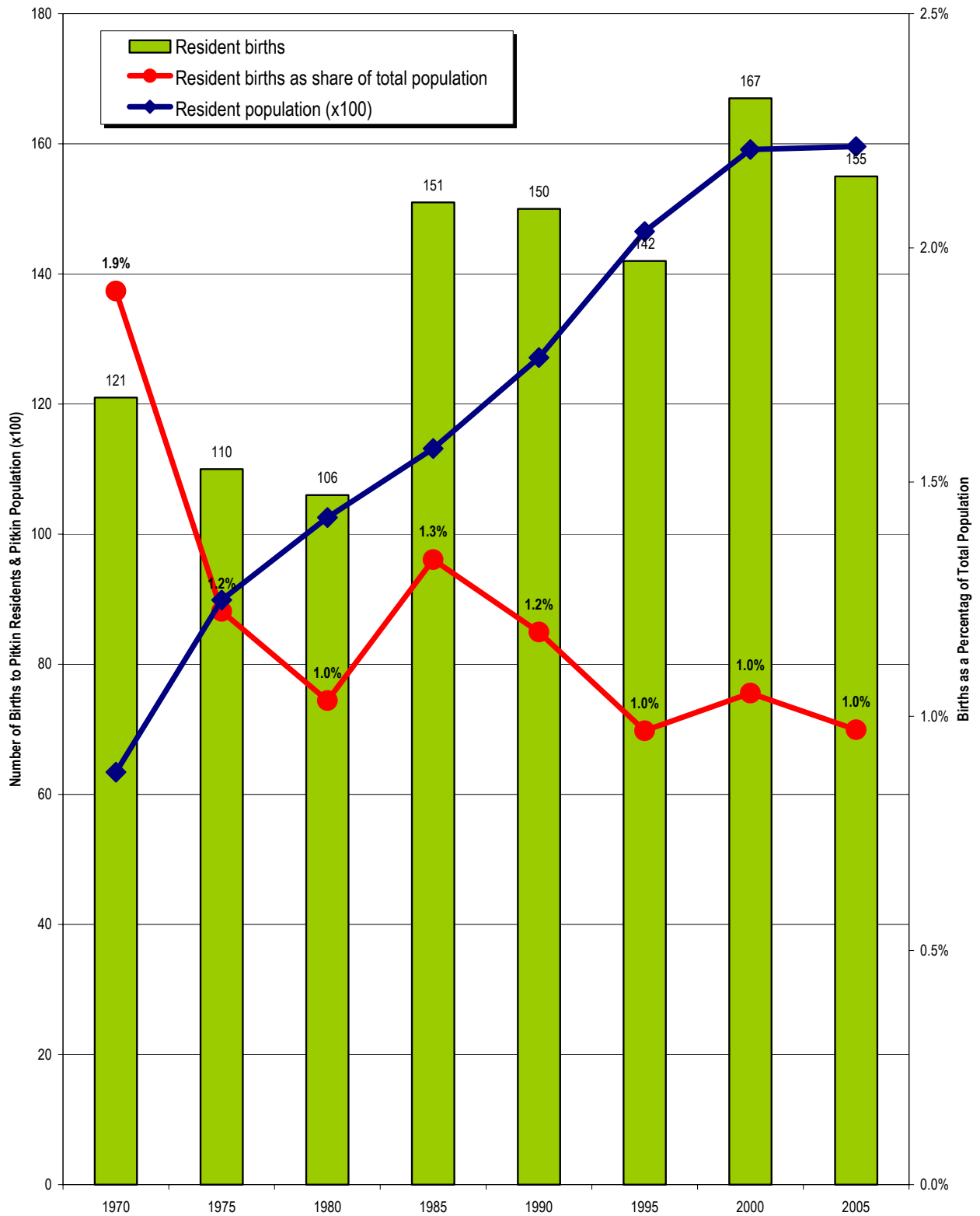
Figure 12 Pitkin County Births to Garfield County Residents



Source: Aspen Valley Hospital - Data gathered by Mick Ireland

Figure 13

Pitkin County Births & Population History, 1970 - 2005



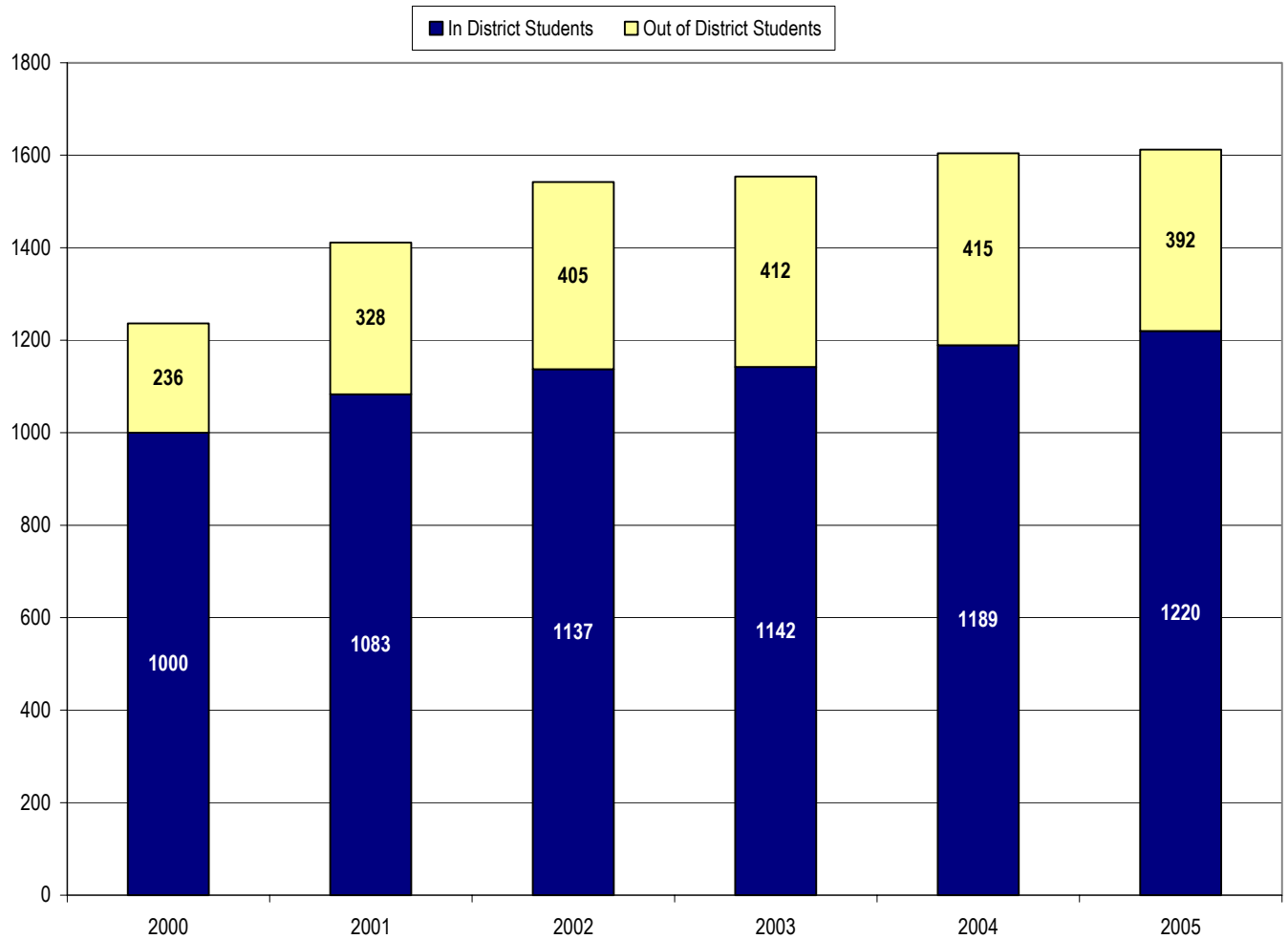
Source: Colorado State Demographer.

School Enrollment Trends

A similar trend is evident in the Aspen School District enrollment, particularly over the last five years. Although overall district enrollment has increased, more than ½ the increase has come from children living out-of-district enrolling in Aspen School District Schools (a small percentage of these children do live in Pitkin County, however a larger percentage live in Eagle and Garfield Counties) (Figure 14). The School District Board recently capped out-of district student due to space constraints.

Figure 14

Aspen School District Enrollment: Out-of-District & In-District Students



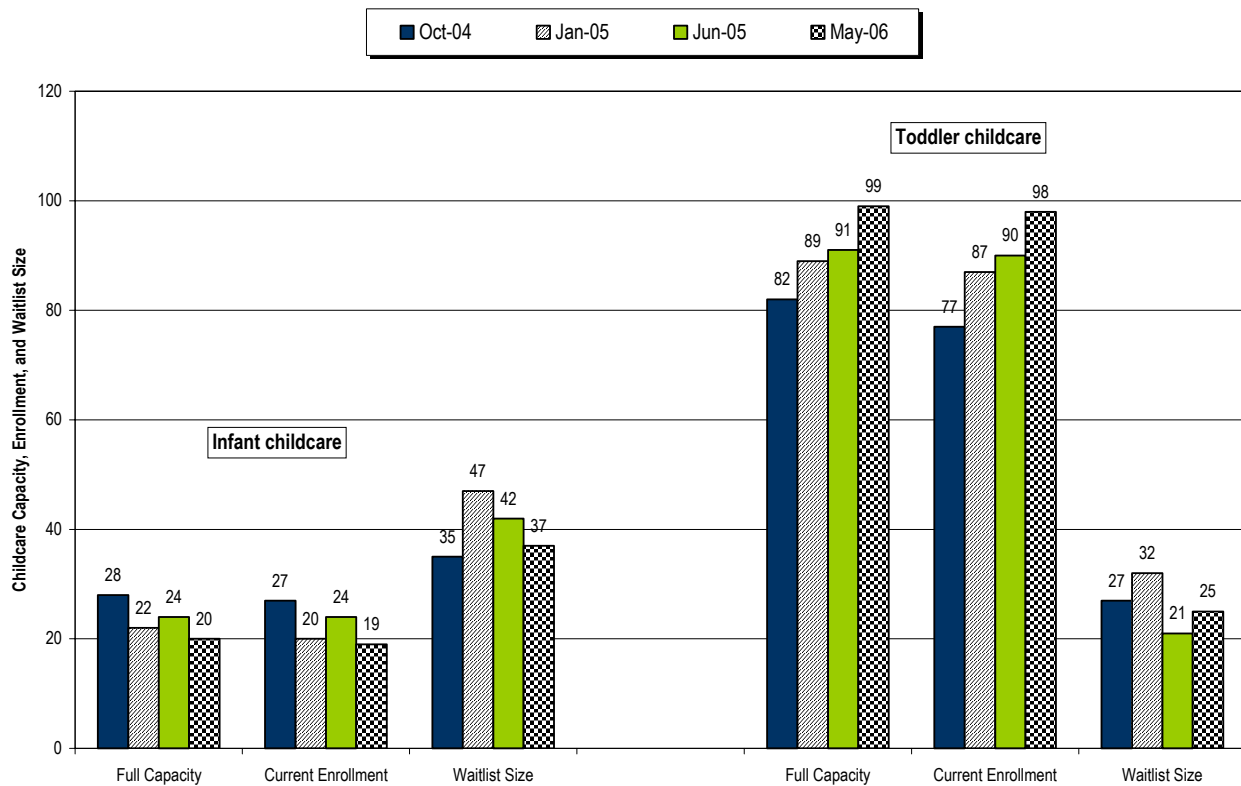
UNDERSTANDING CURRENT CHILD CARE DEMAND

The current enrollment in licensed child care and the waiting lists for infant and toddler spaces is one indication of the current need for child care. Current and historic enrollment trends show that the current system of child care facilities in Pitkin County is at capacity in the Infant and Toddler age groups (Figure 15).

Waitlist information is limited in that the information has not been consistently gathered annually, does not account for residence of the family, and there is currently no system-wide check for duplication between provider waitlists. However, the information available does reflect current high demand for infant and toddler child care beyond the current supply of spaces.⁴

Figure 15

**Pitkin County Childcare Capacity, Enrollment, and Waitlist Size
October 2004, January 2005, June 2005, May 2006**



Estimating current child care demand

Another way to estimate current need is to estimate the Pitkin County child care service population, which this study defines as Pitkin County children (ages 0-5) plus the children of commuter families living outside Pitkin County. This approach also provides the basis for projecting how the need for child care could change in the future.

The basis for the assumptions to estimate current child care demand in Table 3 (next page) are based on the survey results, socioeconomic research, and projections in the *2004 Local and Regional Travel Patterns Study* (which is available online at www.hmcnews.org), and information from Kids First

⁴ Checking for duplicate names between various provider waitlists does not occur on a regular basis. A recent review by Kids First in May 2006 found about half the names appeared on both the Early Learning Center and Roaring Fork Kids lists.

There are a number of assumptions that shape our understanding of current child care use. They include:

- Nationally, 29% of children aged 0-4 in the US attended an organized care facility or family day care home.⁵ This **percentage is close to 30% (2,021) of all children**, age 0-5 in the Roaring Fork Valley, which currently attends licensed child care.⁶
- Kids First database of Pitkin County childcare providers by Kids First suggests that more than 1/3 (37%) of kids families enrolled in Pitkin County childcare facilities are non-Pitkin kids.⁷ %
- The survey results for the Local and Regional Travel Patterns Study show that 16% of the children of commuters are ages 0-5.

Using these assumptions in the following calculations offers an estimate of current demand for child care services in Pitkin County.

Table 3

Estimating current child care demand (revised)	Year 2005
<i>People in Pitkin County</i>	15,983
<i>Children 0 to 5 in Pitkin County</i>	948
<i>Commuters into Pitkin County</i>	8,404
<i>Children ages 0-5 of commuters</i>	$8404 \times 0.16 =$ 1344.64
<i>Children who are candidates to use child care in Pitkin County (residents & commuters)</i>	$948 + 1345 =$ 2293
<i>Pitkin County children in child care</i>	$948 \times .25 =$ 237
<i>Commuter children in child care</i>	$1345 \times .30 =$ 403.5
<i>Commuter children in Pitkin County child care</i>	$403 \times .37 =$ 149.11
<i>Estimate total number of children in Pitkin County child care</i>	$237 + 149 =$ 386
<i>Current child care spaces in Pitkin County (ages 0 to 5)</i>	411
<i>Estimated capacity (Enrollment as a percent of total child care spaces)</i>	$386 / 411 =$ 94%

Through this methodology we come very close to estimating current demand for child care based on the population service area, number of commuters and who uses the services. This results in an estimate total of 386 children (versus the 390 children actually enrolled) from Pitkin County and down-valley commuters that would need a licensed child care provider in Pitkin County in 2005.⁸ Given the 411 child care spaces currently available for children 0-5, this analysis projects demand for child care in Pitkin County in 2005 to be at 95% capacity - independently reaching an estimate of demand for child care similar to the data in Kids First enrollment database for March 2006.

⁵ "Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Winter 2002", US Census, 2005.

⁶ NACCRA database for Roaring Fork Valley (access from Kids First).

⁷ Kids First, based on data collected from a sample of childcare providers.

⁸ This estimate has 37% of children using child care in Pitkin County coming from outside of the county. This percentage is similar to limited information in the Kids First database.

PROJECTING FUTURE TRENDS

Using the methodology to estimate current demand, we can examine how demand might change in the future when combined with population and job projections and local information on birth rates. Because of the inherent challenges forecasting the future (including the impact of unforeseen events and how people shape the future with their current actions), this analysis includes several potential scenarios of future child care demand.

The assumptions for each scenario of future child care demand in Pitkin County are summarized in Table 4 (next page) and the numerical results are in a graph on page 23 (Figure 19). The scenarios in this analysis do not include any current waitlist information since such information is limited, not consistently gathered annually, and does not account for residence of the family or if the waitlist is for a specific provider or for any provider. However, waitlist information compiled by Kids First from providers contains the names of 40-50 children, making the projections in these scenarios initially conservative.⁹

Scenario Overview

The first two scenarios (1 & 2) plot state demographer populations and employment projections for Pitkin County. These projection may seem aggressive, but the annual growth rate is actually lower than historic growth rates that have occurred in the county during the past thirty years. These projections take into account the increase in the number of retiring Baby Boomers retiring moving to Western states and the related increase in demand for services.

Although the State Demographer projections for county population and job growth are straight forward, the details of how the 0-5 age group will grow are not. For instance, recent discussions with the State Demography office last fall and local planners resulted in revisions to the population and job projections for the region (particularly Garfield County). Again, such analysis has yet to reach the sub-population level (Age 0-5).

Consequently, scenarios 3-6 combine different assumptions about the growth of the child age population (age 0-5) in Pitkin County in an effort to reconcile large population and job projections and the current declining local birth rates of Pitkin county residents.

Scenarios 3 & 4 plot child care demand under different assumptions about the percentage the 0-5 age group makes up of the total overall population, while the last two scenarios (5 & 6) build off current birth trends in Pitkin County and project them out along with different rates of commuter growth.

⁹ Kids First does not keep a waitlist. Waitlist information is kept by individual providers.

Table 4 summarizes the name, assumptions, and projected results for six child care demand scenarios. Figure 19 illustrates these scenarios in graphic format. The scenarios are color coded to help match information between Table 4 and Figure 19.

Table 4 Child Care Demand Scenarios & Assumptions

SCENARIO	ASSUMPTIONS	PROJECTED CHILD CARE DEMAND
Scenario 1 2004 Travel Patterns Study Projections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population projections from State Demographer's website¹⁰ Commuter projections from 2004 Travel Patterns Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for licensed child care for 0 to 5 year olds exceeds current capacity (411) next year (2006) and increases an average of 3.2% each year. Demand almost doubles to 721 child care slots in twenty years.
Scenario 2 Watershed Collaborative Study Projections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised population and job projections with Pitkin County seeing slight higher number of each.¹¹ Commuter projections from 2005 Watershed Collaborative Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for licensed child care for 0 to 5 year olds exceeds current capacity (411) in 2007 and increases an average of 3.2% each year. Demand almost doubles to 734 child care slots in twenty years.
Scenario 3 Increasing Pitkin kids (4.8%-7.8%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitkin-population and in-commuters continue to grow at same linear rate as from 1990 through 2005 (more conservative than scenarios 1 & 2) Proportion of Pitkin residents who are age 0 to 5 is projected to rise to from 4.8% in 2000 to 7.8% in 2030, based on State Demographer projections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for licensed child care for 0 to 5 year olds exceeds current capacity (411) in 2007 and increases an average of 2.2% each year. Demand increases 55% to 583 child care slots in twenty years.
Scenario 4 Constant Pitkin Kids (5.9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitkin-population and in-commuters continue to grow at same linear rate as from 1990 through 2005 (more conservative than scenarios 1 & 2) Proportion of Pitkin residents who are 0 to 5 is projected to remain constant at 2005 level of 5.9%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for licensed child care for 0 to 5 year olds exceeds current capacity (411) in 2012 and increases an average of 1.5% each year. Demand increases 30% to 490 child care slots in twenty years. 0 to 5 age group must grow to remain a constant percentage of the growing overall population
Scenario 5 Current Pitkin Kids w/ Watershed Study commuter trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenario 5: Pitkin kids projected at current trends, which is a declining trend and commuters grow per 2005 Watershed Collaborative study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for licensed child care for 0 to 5 year olds exceeds current capacity (411) in 2012 and increases an average of 1.5% each year. Demand increases 50% to 517 child care slots in twenty years. Overall demand for child care from Pitkin residents declines but demand from commuters increases.
Scenario 6 Current Pitkin Kids with current commuter trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenario 6: Pitkin kids projected at current trends, which is a declining trend and commuters grow at 1990 - 2005 trend rate. 	Overall demand does not increase past current capacity (411) as commuter children (out of county children) fill slots left unfilled by fewer Pitkin kids.

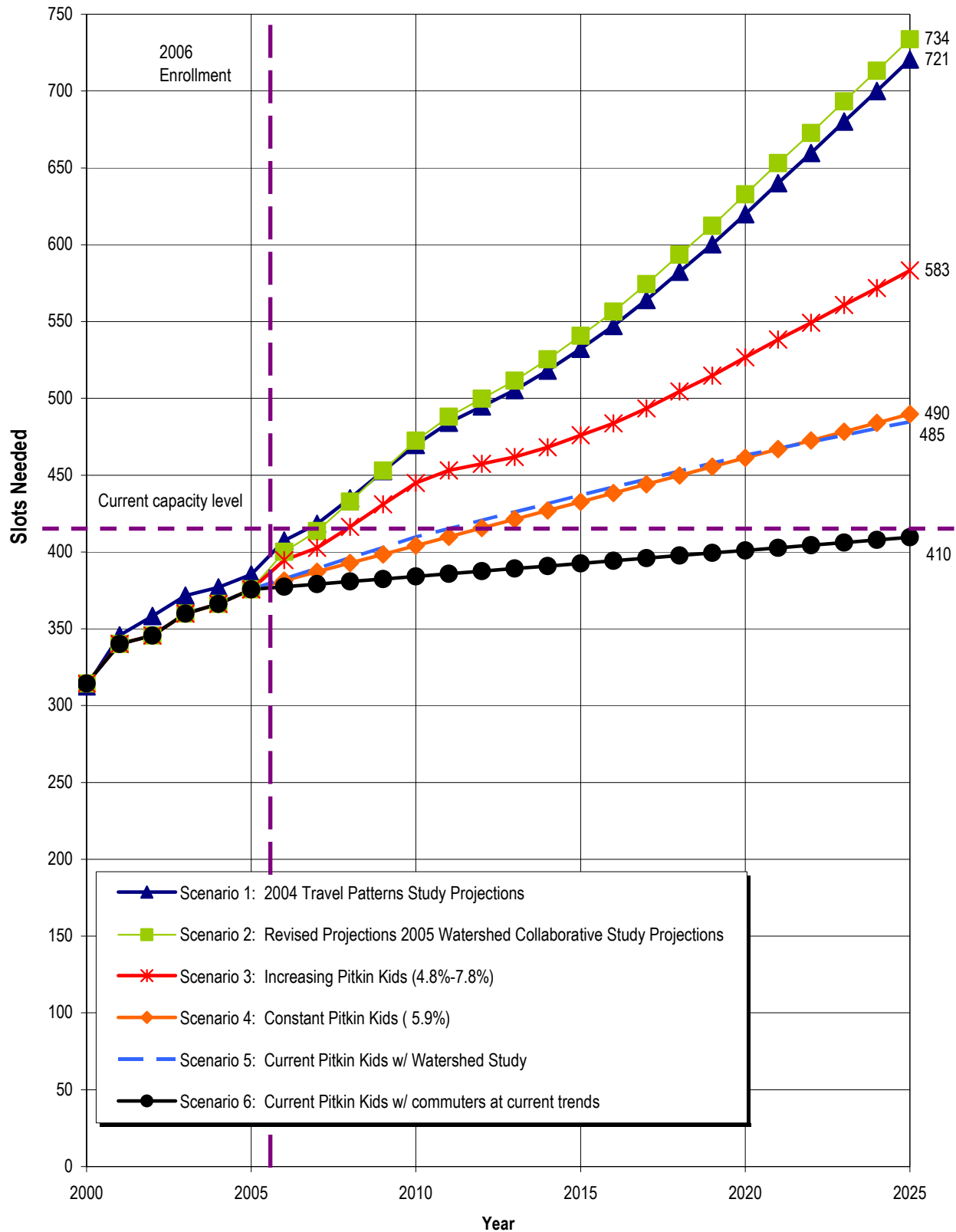
¹⁰ <http://dola.colorado.gov/demog/PopulationTotals.cfm>

¹¹ <http://www.hmccolorado.org/watershedcollaborative.htm>

Figure 19

Pitkin County Childcare Slots Needed by Children Aged 0 - 5: Six Scenarios 2000-2025

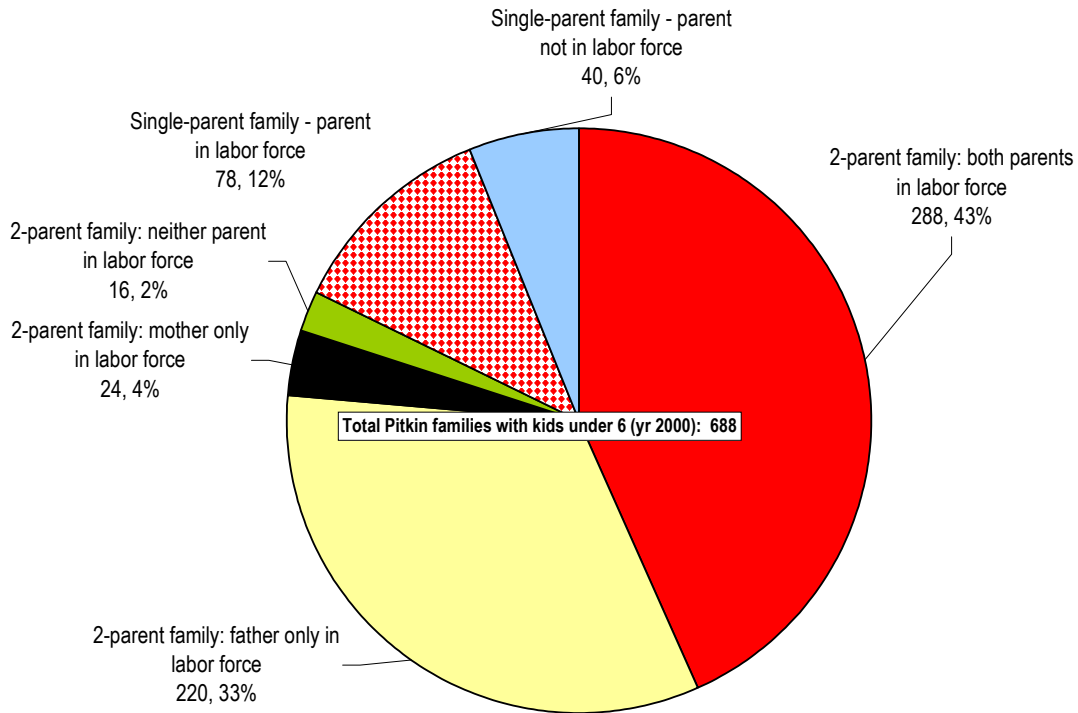
(Note: Scenarios assume no existing waitlists, i.e. all demand is currently being satisfied; although some kids are currently waitlisted)



FAMILY ECONOMICS

Of the families with children age 5 and under in Pitkin County, fully 55 percent have all available parents in the labor force (either two-parent families with both spouses working – 43 percent of families; or single-parent households with the parent working – 12 percent). An additional 6 percent of Pitkin families with young children are headed by single parents not in the labor force. In these families, and in the case of single-parent families, childcare is a likely prerequisite to being able to participate in the labor force. (Figure 20)

Figure 20 Labor force status of Pitkin County households with children under 6 years old (2000 Census)



Although two parent families with children have incomes slightly higher than County median income, single parent families make significantly less. Childcare is an absolutely essential to this group of single parent families (16% of all families).

As illustrated in Figure 21 on the next page, two-parent households with children under 18 have a higher median household income (\$79,117) than the total county (\$75,048), while the income of single-fathers and mothers with children under 18, predictably, earn less. Single-mother households earn 21% less (\$37,069) than single-father households (\$46,563).¹²

Currently, 15% of the children enrolled in child care programs in Pitkin County receive financial assistance from Kid First (between \$5 and \$45 per day). This percentage is comparable to the 16 percent of Pitkin County families that are led by one working parent, but seems low given the that over 75 families are in this category and that roughly half of the families with two working parents over (100 families with children) have incomes under the county median income of \$75,000.

¹² These figures are from 1999 (as reported in 2000 Census), the last time household median income was broken down by family type with children. HUD currently estimates the median household income in Pitkin County for a family of four to be \$97,600.

Figure 21

Pitkin County Median Income by family type with children under 18

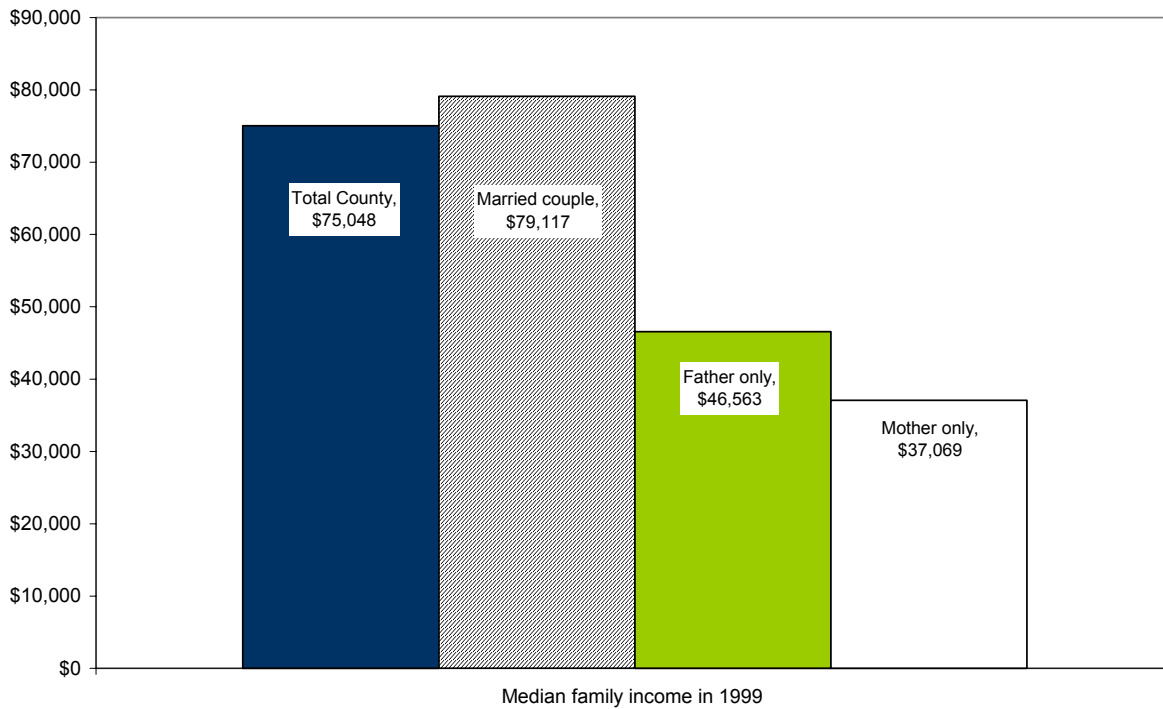
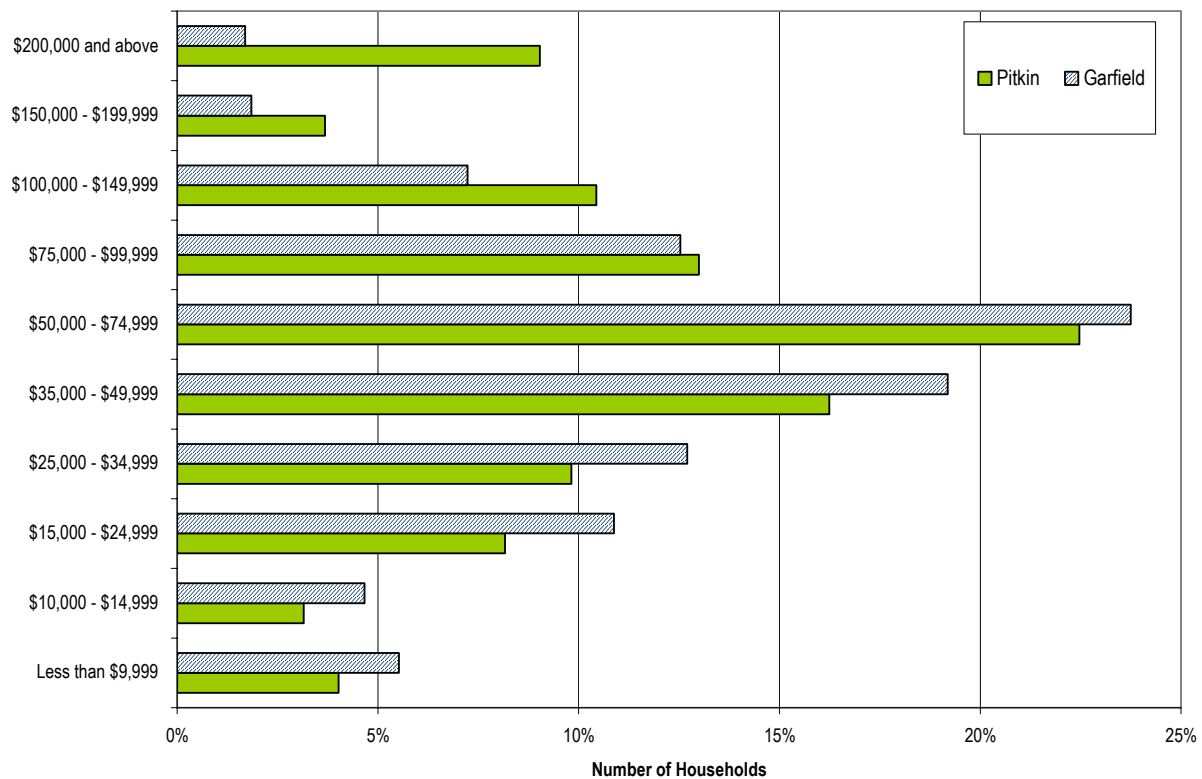


Figure 22

Percent of Households by Income - Pitkin County and Garfield County, 2000



CHILDCARE ECONOMICS

Given current demand for childcare in Pitkin County and the projected growth in the number of children in need of childcare, it would seem that childcare providers should be able to expand their programs to meet this demand. Unfortunately, the economics of operating a childcare facility in Pitkin County often requires public investment.

The following table includes estimated costs related to operating a child care facility. The numbers are pulled from real examples of facilities working with Kids First. The tables break down the costs and potential revenues associated with day care for infants, toddlers, and preschool age children and the annual public investment required to ensure the service is affordable to median income families. The age groups are separated out for illustration purposes. Many providers in Pitkin County offer care for 2 and sometimes all three of these age groups.

Table 5 on the next page offers a rationale for why in Pitkin County over 68% of all child care spaces are in the preschool age category and why despite full capacity, it may be cost prohibitive to increase the number of toddler and infant care spaces, given current and projected demand. As illustrated in the Table 5, the amount of annual public investment required to keep child care affordable is inversely proportional to the age of the child. Infant care is very expensive and requires more adults per child (1 adult for every 4 infants). Both factors contribute to limit the amount of infant care the market (supplemented with public funding or not) currently provides.

The same situation affects toddler care, but to a lesser amount. Toddler care is slightly less expensive since fewer adults (1:5) and less space is needed for the same number of children. It is not until Pre-school age that the economics of childcare reach a point that a facility could run with little or no significant public investment. In fact, the majority of private for profit childcare providers are in this age category.

Table 5 is one way to illustrate the costs associated with providing childcare, however, the comparisons between different age groups are not linear. For instance, the enrollments in the different age categories differ because of the state required adult: child ratios. The enrollments for infant, toddler, and pre-school represent a "common" and "reasonable" size given the current size of many of the providers in the region. For example, there is no infant care facility with 20 infants so using such an example stretches the illustration beyond current realities. The example in these calculations assumes an infant care facility with only 8 infants. The toddler and pre-school calculations follow a similar rationale.

PITKIN COUNTY CHILD CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Table 5

Infant Care Scenario					
Expenses	Adult/Child (4:1)	wages /hour	hrs / week	salary	total
Assistant Teachers		\$12.00	36	\$ 22,464.00	\$0.00
Teacher	1	\$17.00	36	\$ 31,824.00	\$31,824.00
Director	1	\$22.00	40	\$ 45,760.00	\$45,760.00
Benefits (33% of wages)					\$25,602.72
				subtotal	\$103,186.72
Rent/sq. ft.		required sq.ft.	space required sq.ft.	monthly rent	
Infants enrolled	8	50	400	\$2,800.00	\$33,600.00
				subtotal	\$136,786.72
Revenue		ave. daily cost per infant	annual revenue/child		total
Infants	8	\$47.50	\$12,350.00		\$98,800.00
Annual public investment needed					\$37,986.72
per child					\$4,748.34

Toddler Scenario					
Expenses	Adult/Child (5:1)	wages /hour	hrs / week	salary	total
Assistant Teachers		\$12.00	36	\$ 22,464.00	\$0.00
Teacher	1	\$17.00	36	\$ 31,824.00	\$31,824.00
Director	1	\$22.00	40	\$ 45,760.00	\$45,760.00
Benefits (33% of wages)					\$25,602.72
				subtotal	\$103,186.72
Rent/sq. ft.		required sq.ft.	space required sq.ft.	monthly rent	
Toddlers enrolled	10	45	450	\$3,150.00	\$37,800.00
				subtotal	\$140,986.72
Revenue		ave. daily cost	annual revenue/child		total
Toddlers	10	\$45.75	\$11,895.00		\$118,950.00
Annual public investment needed					\$22,036.72
per child					\$2,203.67

Pre-School Scenario					
Expenses	Adult/Child (7.5:1)	wages /hour	hrs / week	salary	total
Assistant Teachers		\$12.00	36	\$ 22,464.00	\$0.00
Teacher	1	\$17.00	36	\$ 31,824.00	\$31,824.00
Director	1	\$22.00	40	\$ 45,760.00	\$45,760.00
Benefits (33% of wages)					\$25,602.72
				subtotal	\$103,186.72
Rent/sq. ft.		required sq.ft.	space required sq.ft.	monthly rent	
Pre-schoolers enrolled	15	30	450	\$3,150.00	\$37,800.00
				subtotal	\$140,986.72
Revenue		ave. daily cost per infant	annual revenue/child		total
Pre-schoolers	15	\$43.00	\$11,180.00		\$167,700.00
Annual public investment needed					\$26,713.28
per child					\$1,780.89

Kids First Economics

Kids First is a program of the City of Aspen that provides coordination, resources, and funding to support early childhood education in Pitkin County. The Kids First Aspen office is funded 98% by a dedicated sales tax in the City of Aspen.

In 2005 Kids First contributed \$716,000 to childcare programs, in the form of direct infant /toddler operational funding; grants to programs; financial aid to families; incentives to staff; professional development reimbursement for staff; and other awards, emergency needs etc.

The amounts in Table 6 do not include what Kids First has paid for the Qualistar ratings, Month of the Young Child activities, substitute teacher provided to the programs, trainings, EAP programs, TEACH contributions (also for professional development), and early childhood mental health observations.

Table 6

Kid First Grants 2005	Amt.	% of total
Infant operations	\$58,360	8%
Toddler operations	\$144,264	20%
Quality Improvement grants	\$117,573	16%
Incentives to staff (retention and education)	\$108,400	15%
Professional development	\$21,900	3%
Other (Accreditation awards, emergency funding, bus passes etc.)	\$49,471	7%
<i>Subtotal</i>	\$499,968	
Financial Aid to providers for families	\$216,050	30%
Total Grants	\$716,018	

Kids First financial aid budget provides support to families based on family income and ranges from as little as \$5 a day up to \$44 a day per child. The last two years Kids First came in under budget for financial assistance expenditures, while in previous years they have gone slightly over budget in this category (with city council's approval). City Council has historically directed Kids First to fully fund the need for financial assistance and not to have a wait list.¹³ Based on information gathered for this analysis, there are likely more families eligible to seek financial assistance than actually do – roughly 15% of families using childcare.

¹³ Kids First uses a spreadsheet to determine financial eligibility. It considers the gross household income, number of children in the family, number of children in care, and cost of childcare. It also determines that Social Services Childcare Assistance Program (CCCAP) uses 11% of gross household income as the amount assumed that families can afford to pay for childcare at a very low income level. Kids First calculator begins 12% (at the top of CCCAP range) and goes up to 16% at the highest income level. If you try some number variations, you can see how it determines the parents' ability to pay and the gap that Kids First will fund. This model was based on models for financial aid for higher education.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on Kids First data and the child care demand model developed for this assessment, the demand for child care in Pitkin County is 95% of current capacity. Although the State Demographer will be examining sub group population trends and projections in Pitkin County over the next year, this analysis shows some findings relative to child care demand that are unlikely to change with further analysis:

- Pitkin County's population is aging. The median age in the county is roughly 40 and will likely rise with the retirement and relocation of additional Baby Boomers over the next two decades.
- Pitkin County Residents are having children below the replacement rate so the number of children ages 0-5 is decreasing.
- Projections for employment indicate more commuters coming into Pitkin County for employment over the next 20 years. These commuters are more likely to be younger and have children than residents of Pitkin County.
- The number of children of out-of-county commuters will likely increase in Pitkin County child care facilities, while the number of Pitkin County children will likely decrease.
- The increases in the numbers of commuters with children ages 0 to 5 will increase the demand for child care services beyond current capacity by approximately 2012 if no waitlist information is considered.
- Considering the current waitlist information, the child care system is at capacity and an increase in the number of child care slots will lead to an increase in enrollment, particularly at the infant and toddler age levels.
- Not all families eligible for tuition assistance from Kids First access the funds. Only 15% of families with children currently in childcare are eligible to receive tuition assistance. Given the number of single parent households in the county (20%) and the number of two parent household with two working parents (43%), this number seems low.

Based on these conclusions, this assessment makes the following recommendations for Pitkin County to consider:

1. With more people projected to commute into the county and fewer residents having children, Pitkin County should consider two ways to boost child care capacity to meet commuters' needs: 1) Locating child care facilities closer to commuters' place of residence or place of work. This approach would allow more people with young children to use transit for their daily commute; and, 2) Increasing the capacity of child care facilities in downvalley locations where most commuters live. Basalt's efforts to renovate the old middle school into a community center maybe one short-term opportunity, while future transit centers may present opportunities in the near future.
2. The City of Aspen's dedicated sales tax continues to generate significant funding for affordable housing and child care. Despite increasing revenues, space is a premium in Pitkin County. Consequently, Pitkin County and the City of Aspen should both explore possible ways to create space that could be used for a child care program as they conduct their individual capital plans. This employer-based program approach is already becoming a practical necessity of the local school districts and Valley View hospital as a tool to recruit and keep quality employees.
3. Pitkin County and the City of Aspen and Snowmass Village should all consider space possibilities for child care programs in publicly funded affordable housing programs. Although the median age of county residents is increasing and county residents are having fewer children, affordable housing is precisely the location of most of the families with children. Not all affordable housing projects will lend themselves to an associated child care space within them, but child care should be a consideration with as much standing as environmental concerns.