Caring for Our Future: A Regional Action Plan to Expand Child Care Access in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties

Addressing a Key Barrier to Regional Economic Growth

Spring 2024

ANN ARBOR
SPARK

PSC

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Executive Summary

The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, composed of prospective and current child care providers, economic development professionals, policymakers, family representatives, and others, has been working to engage the community to better understand child care challenges facing the region and identify solutions.

Some of the key challenges identified through this work include:

The Care Families Need Is Not Available

1 to 8

There is one licensed child care slot for every eight children under the age of five.

59%
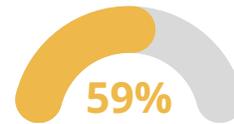
Approximately three out of five families surveyed said they did not have access to child care that meets their needs. This rate was higher for families making less than $100,000 a year and nonwhite respondents.

Child Care Is Unaffordable for Families

57%

More than half of families surveyed reported cost as a barrier for finding care.

1st in the state

This region has the most expensive child care in the state, on average, with costs for center-based care for infants and toddlers being approximately $14,000 a year.

Providers Face Challenges Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Staff

< $12.50

The average child care worker's wage in the region is less than $12.50 an hour.

$39–$42

The hourly wage considered livable for a household with one adult and one child in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties—more than three times the average hourly rate for child care workers.

Child Care Is Negatively Impacting Area Employers

$2.8 billion

The economic impact of the lack of child care in Michigan.

59%

A majority of employers surveyed reported the lack of adequate child care for their employees having a negative impact on their business.

Many of these are driven by root causes, such as **market failure and underinvestment**, a **challenging regulatory and business environment for providers**, and a **lack of community coordination and engagement.** The coalition, informed by their community engagement efforts, identified the following action areas and objectives:

Promoting Equitable and Adequate Funding for Child Care to Encourage an Increase in Licensed Child Care Slots

- **Advocate for state-level reform related to child care funding**
- **Bring together local funding partners to support child care providers and families**

Market failure and underinvestment have resulted in an overreliance on family contributions to cover provider costs. However, despite the high rates being charged to families, relying on family contributions alone is not sufficient to adequately pay employees and be sustainable as a business or nonprofit. Immediate and long-term funding are needed to expand the number of available child care slots in the region.

Advocating for Local Polices to Make It Easier for Providers to Open and Expand Programs

- **Advocate for local governments to adopt the coalition's regional action plan and recognize child care as a pressing economic crisis**
- **Advocate for local policy change related to zoning and development**

While working toward long-term structural change, certain short- and medium-term policy changes can promote a friendlier environment for child care providers. These policies will not only improve the current environment, but also better position the region for future investment.

Providing Resources and Supports to Enable Child Care Providers to Thrive as Businesses

- **Develop a regional resource hub to support child care providers**
- **Connect providers with training institutions to address staff capacity issues**

Resources and partnerships can help providers address business-related challenges. Making these resources more accessible and tailored to child care providers can help current providers maintain or expand operations and help new providers establish new centers.

Supporting the Child Care Workforce Through Expanded Training and Increased Resources

- **Increase visibility and public funding for area training programs to increase the number of child care workers**
- **Support expanded resources and partnerships to improve the salaries and benefits provided to child care workers**

Staffing shortages prevent potential child care providers from opening programs and current providers from operating at their full capacity. Increasing training resources, salaries, and benefits will increase satisfaction among current child care workers and encourage prospective workers to see the field as a viable career.

Empowering Area Employers to Be Child Care Champions

- **Develop a certification to recognize area employers that are child care friendly**
- **Foster connections between local employers and child care providers**

Engaging employers is essential to approaching this issue as a critical economic development initiative. Empowering employers to support their employees will position the region as a leader in preventing employees from leaving the workforce due to not having child care that meets their needs.

Fostering an Informed and Engaged Community That Is Ready to Take Acton to Support the Child Care Field

- **Develop visionary shared language for increased and improved messaging and outreach**

Having policymakers, businesses, and community members understand the impact of child care—even if they have not personally had to interact with the child care system—is necessary to ensuring the coalition's advocacy efforts are successful.

Child Care Needs in the Region

Background and Context

In 2022, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced Regional Child Care Planning Grants — coordinated by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) — to accelerate community-level efforts to develop new partnerships and implement action plans to address the child care crisis by engaging economic development partners. Ann Arbor SPARK received a grant to lead this work for the Livingston and Washtenaw County region and partnered with Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to convene area businesses, child care providers, municipal partners, education partners, and families to form a regional coalition in spring 2023. Through the remainder of 2023, the group gathered data and had a series of focused conversations resulting in an action plan that, if implemented, can help improve the state of child care in the region.

Region

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties are located in southeast Michigan, to the west and northwest of the Metro Detroit area and are home to 562,537 people—including 74,369 children under the age of 13—according to the U.S. Census Bureau (Exhibit 1) (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.a). Livingston County has two major cities—Howell and Brighton — and many smaller cities, villages, and townships comprising a total population of 196,161 people. Livingston County is predominantly white (94 percent) (Exhibit 2). It is estimated that 11,556 children five years old and under reside in Livingston County, as well as 15,598 children between the ages of six and 12 (Exhibit 3).
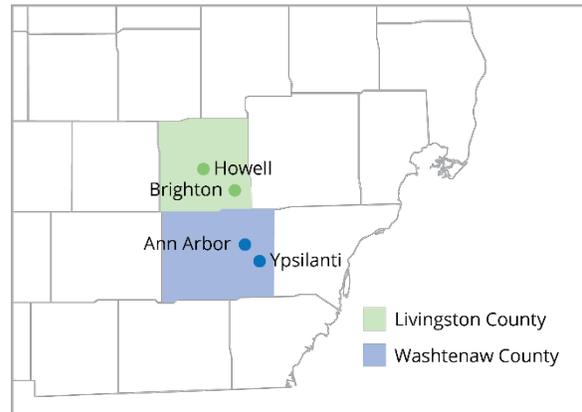
Washtenaw County includes major cities like Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, as well as smaller cities, villages, and townships that all comprise a total population of 366,376. Washtenaw County is also a majority white county (69 percent) but has more racial diversity than Livingston County, with larger populations of Black or African American residents (11 percent), Asian residents (9 percent), and Hispanic or Latino residents (5 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.b). The census estimates 20,868 children five years old and under and 26,347 children between the ages of six and 12 reside in Washtenaw County (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.c). Residents in both Livingston and Washtenaw Counties are more likely to have a bachelor's degree and higher incomes than the state average — Livingston County has the highest median household income in the state — with both counties having substantial healthcare, technology, manufacturing, and higher education sectors.

EXHIBIT 2. Racial Demographics of Livingston and Washtenaw Counties
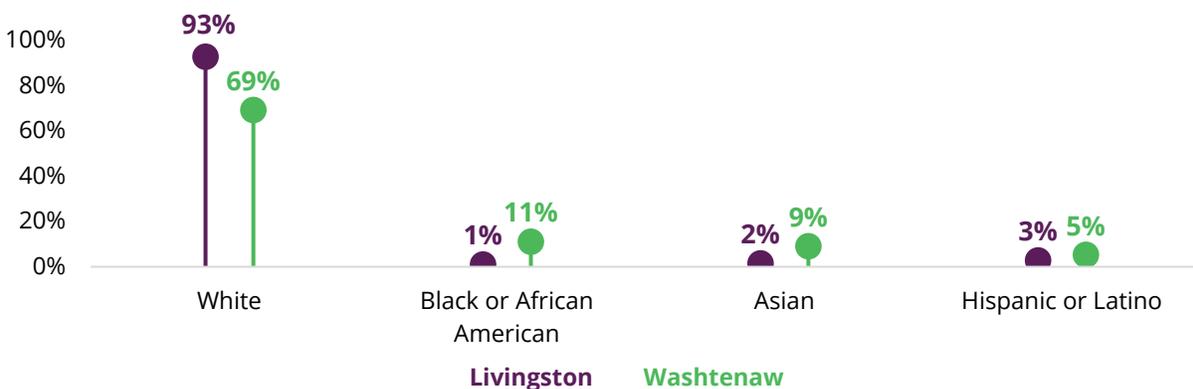
Source: U.S. Census Bureau n.d.b.

EXHIBIT 3. Breakdown of the Ages of Children in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties
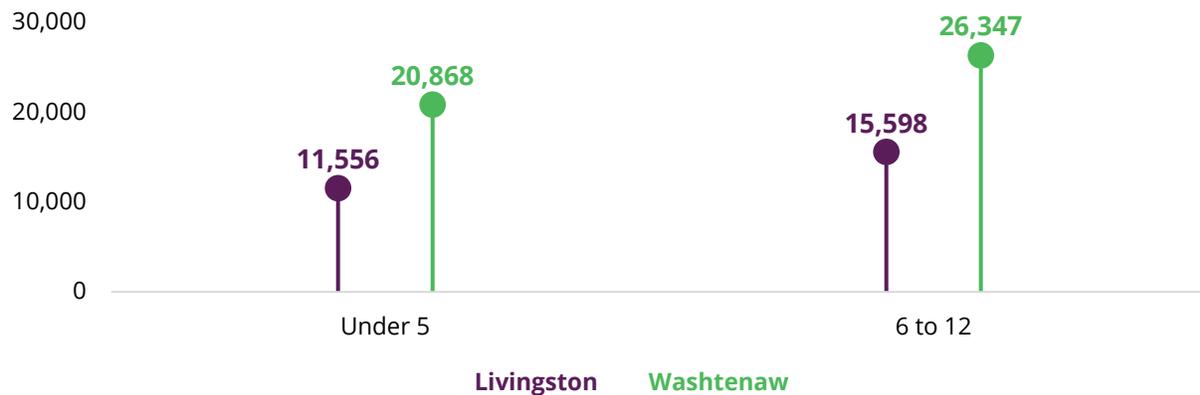
Source: U.S. Census Bureau n.d.c.

Coalition

Ann Arbor SPARK invited prospective, new, and established child care providers, economic development professionals, policymakers, community philanthropic entities, workforce development representatives, child care experts, and family representatives to form the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition. The coalition hoped to learn about region-specific barriers that are impacting parents and child care providers, in addition to barriers that exist across the entire state, and identify steps to reducing those barriers. This report details the coalition's data-collection process, summarizes findings, and presents the coalition's goals, objectives, and strategies to expand access to affordable, quality child care.

Organizations represented included:

- Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber
- Apple Playschools
- Bottles-N-Backpacks
- Child Care Network
- Community Day Care
- Great Start Collaborative of Livingston County

- Little Angels Preschool and Daycare
- Michigan Works! Southeast
- Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development
- Washtenaw County Racial Equity Office
- Washtenaw County Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative
- United Way for Southeastern Michigan

This coalition was led by a project leadership team that included Ann Arbor SPARK and Child Care Network. PSC was engaged to facilitate the coalition, collect and analyze primary and secondary data, and assist in the action-planning process. A roster of active members is included in Appendix A.

Methodology

Guided by the coalition, PSC's team of consultants and data analysts collected primary and secondary data through a variety of methods to understand how the cost and availability of child care affect families, providers, and employers in the region. Each of these data-collection methods, their outcomes, and implications are detailed in the following sections.

Data Collection

Secondary Research

PSC collected and analyzed publicly available data to create a baseline understanding of the region and its specific child care needs. This data included information on the demographics of families with children in the region, the number of child care providers across the two counties, the slots available for children, costs, hours, and quality. Additionally, PSC included data on staffing, such as educational requirements, salaries, and workforce shortage data, in the research analysis. PSC used sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, Great Start to Quality, Lightcast, and licensing data from the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). A summary of this research is attached in Appendix B.

Family Survey

The coalition created and distributed an online survey via Qualtrics to gather input from families who need child care, whether they receive it or not. The survey, which is included in Appendix C, was active in June and July 2023. PSC created a social media and promotions toolkit, which the co-leads and members of the coalition used to recruit parents and caregivers in their respective networks to take the survey. The survey was developed to gather information about families' current child care circumstances, ideal child care arrangements, needs and barriers to finding child care that fits their needs, and the impact of unmet child care needs.

Upon the survey's close, PSC completed a data-cleaning process, which verified the authenticity of the responses based on factors such as IP addresses and location data. After the data cleaning, PSC recorded a total of 341 responses. This included 232 families in Washtenaw County and 96 families in Livingston County. A full summary of survey results is in Appendix D.

Provider Survey

The coalition created and distributed another online survey via Qualtrics to gather input from child care staff and business owners. The survey, which is included in Appendix E, was active in July of 2023. PSC's outreach strategy leveraged the existing networks of coalition members and licensing data from the State of Michigan to reach out to all child care providers in the region. The survey was developed to gather information from child care owners and administrators about their current capacity for providing care, challenges facing their organizations (e.g., staff recruitment, funding), future plans, and needed supports. It also collected information from child care staff about their current circumstances, challenges facing them in their positions, and their future in the child care field.

After the same data-cleaning process as used for the family survey, PSC recorded a total of 232 responses. This included 150 child care staff and 123 child care owners or administrators. A full summary of survey results is in Appendix F.

Employer Survey

The coalition created and distributed a final online survey via Qualtrics to gather input from area employers. The survey, which is included in Appendix G, was active in September of 2023. PSC's outreach strategy for this survey also leveraged the existing networks of members of the coalition, including Ann Arbor SPARK, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, and chambers of commerce in the region. The survey was developed to gather information from employers about the perceived impact child care is having on their workers and their business, along with their willingness to adopt policies and practices to become a more child care–supportive workplace.

 PSC again leveraged their process to clean data. This survey recorded a total of 51 responses. A full summary of survey results is in Appendix H.

Strategic Planning

From September through December 2023, the coalition participated in a series of strategic planning activities at hybrid and virtual meetings. These sessions leveraged coalition expertise and the data collected throughout the earlier stages of the process to identify and build consensus around priority action areas. Following a series of meetings to develop the action areas, the coalition reconvened in a series of small group, focused conversations to discuss how to begin implementing the overarching plan.

Defining the Challenges and Impacts of Child Care

Access to child care is a worsening crisis across the state of Michigan and within the Livingston and Washtenaw County region and will continue to have broad impact on local families and the local economy. While full summaries of challenges are in the appendices, the most pressing challenges shown by primary and secondary data — availability, costs, staffing, and impact — are outlined in the following sections.

The Care Families Need Is Not Available

There are not enough licensed child care slots in the region based on the current population to provide the type of care families need. There are 24,715 licensed child care slots across the two counties. That means there is only one licensed slot for every three children under the age of 13. This gap grows even wider for children five and under, as there are 32,424 children in the region, compared to only 4,147 licensed slots for that age group (Exhibit 4). This represents a ratio of almost eight children per licensed slot. Compared to the rest of the state, the ratios in this region are not as drastic as others, but still are considered to be child care deserts. There are some limitations to this data, as not every child in the region needs child care. However, another limitation is that not all licensed slots are currently available. Providers who completed the provider survey reported that they are only able to provide care for 78 percent of their slots. Nearly half of child care providers (45 percent) indicated they did not have enough staff to operate at full capacity.

EXHIBIT 4. Gap Between Number of Children and Number of Licensed Child Care Slots in the Livingston and Washtenaw County Region
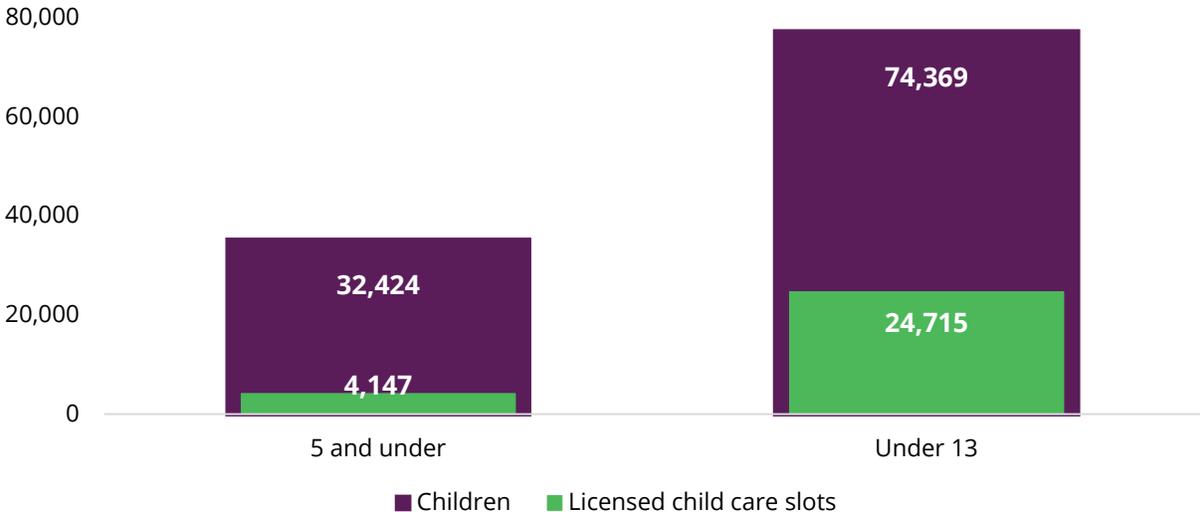
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau n.d.c.; Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs.

This regional ratio also does not reflect differences within the two counties. Cities in the region, such as Ann Arbor and Brighton, might have more open slots, but they also have a higher population density of children. Additionally, the families of those children must compete with people who live elsewhere but work in the cities and might want child care close to their place of employment. Another way to consider gaps within the region is looking at areas considered child care deserts, which is determined based on the ratio of children to slots within a specific census tract. This shows that areas in and around Ypsilanti, Pinckney, and the townships north of Howell have particularly high ratios for toddlers. Pittsfield Township and southwest Livingston County join this list when looking at ratios for preschool students. Outside of Ann Arbor, Brighton, Pinckney, and Whitmore Lake, most areas across the two counties are considered a desert for school-age children (ages six to 11).

According to the parent and caregiver survey, 59 percent of families seeking care did not have child care that meets their needs. This number was slightly higher in Washtenaw County (61 percent) than in Livingston County (52 percent). There were also disparities by income and race. Families with a household income of less than $100,000 a year were less likely to have care that meets their needs (29 percent) than families with a household income of more than $100,000 a year (47 percent). Likewise, nonwhite respondents were less likely to have care that meets their needs (32 percent) than white respondents (43 percent) (Exhibit 5).

EXHIBIT 5. Disparities in Families Having Care That Meets Their Needs by Race, Income, and County
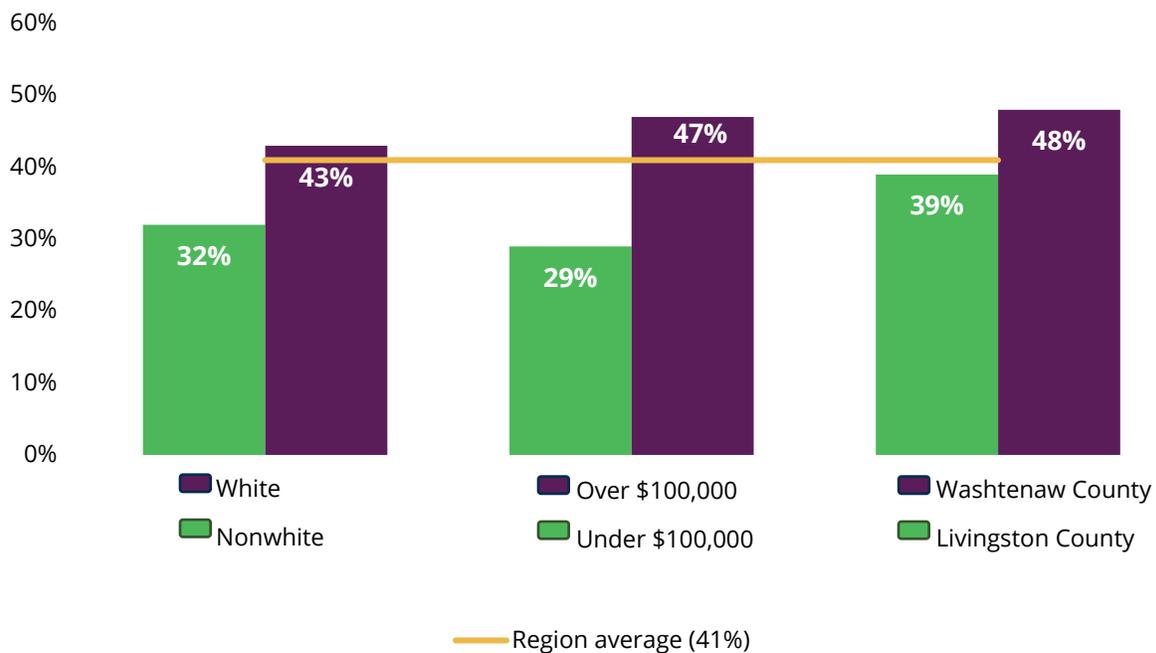
Sources: Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Family Survey. N= 319.

Another factor that contributes to the lack of availability of child care in the region is that not all licensed slots are providing the types of care that families require. For example, over a third of families reported needing child care when their child is sick, 84 percent of whom reported not having access to this type of care. Other notable gaps in the types of care families reported needing but not having access to include drop-in or emergency care, care during overnight hours, weekend care, and after-school care (Exhibit 6).

EXHIBIT 6. Comparing Access to Care with Care Needs
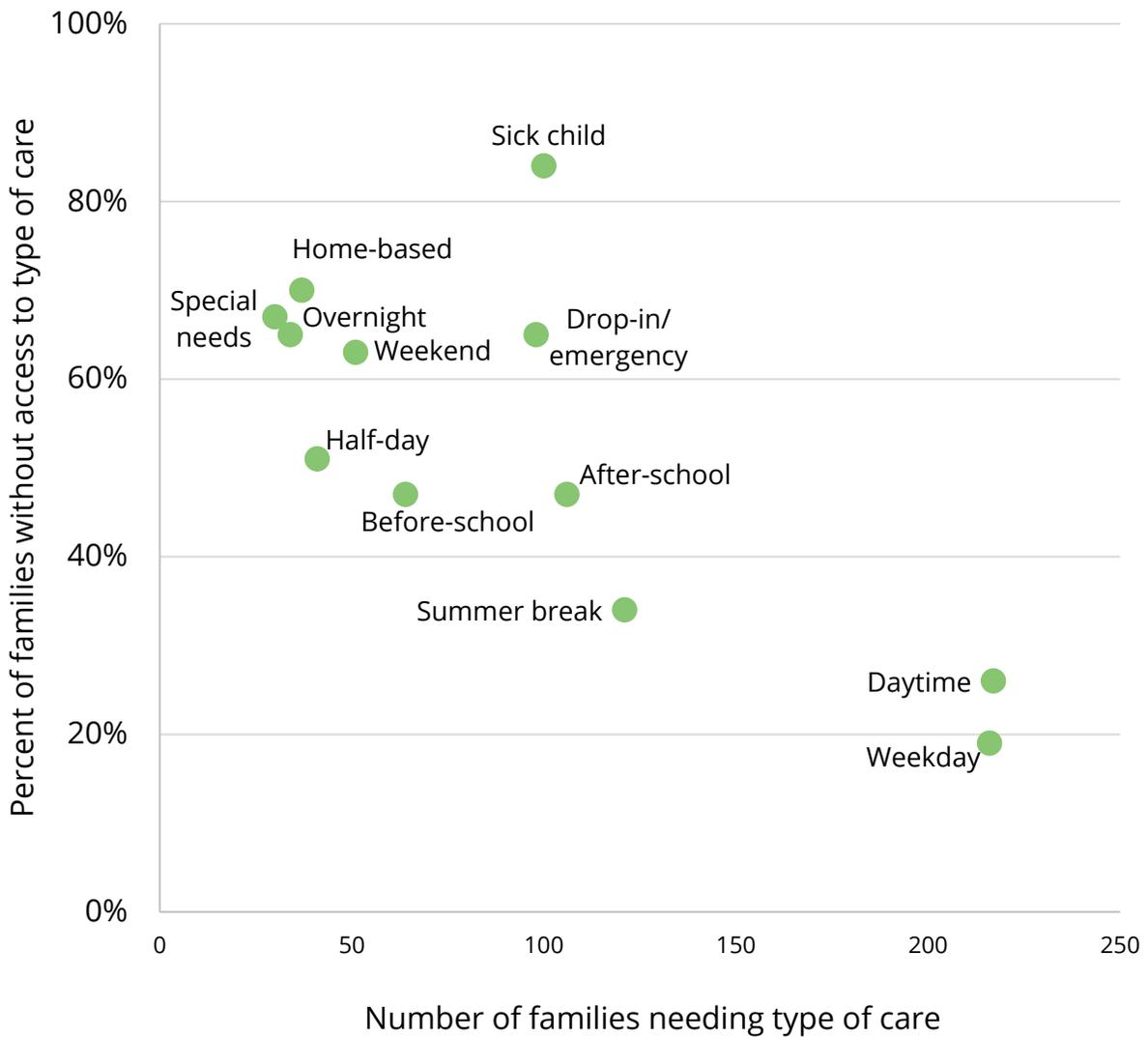
Source: Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Family Survey. N = 341.

Another type of care need that emerged through conversations with the coalition is care for children with special needs. Of the 341 families who completed the survey, only 30 reported needing special needs care. However, of those 30 families, 67 percent reported not having access to care. Discussions at the coalition highlighted that challenges related to child care providers having funds to adequately pay their staff are exacerbated for providing care to children with special needs, often making it financially unfeasible to provide care to them.

"As a child care provider, we are committed to offering inclusive care to as many children as possible, including those with special needs who have the same right to access care as any other child. However, the significant financial challenges we face in adequately compensating our classroom teachers—let alone staff able to offer individualized care—makes it extremely difficult to provide the level of support some children need to be safe, happy, and successful in our program.”." – Etta Heisler, Executive Director, Apple Playschools

Child Care Is Unaffordable for Families

Family survey respondents reported that the number one barrier to accessing care was cost (57 percent). This number was even higher among families in Livingston County (61 percent), families making less than $100,000 as a household (77 percent), and nonwhite families (68 percent) (Exhibit 7). Factoring in the high cost of living in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties and that families often need to pay for child care for more than one child, the cost of care is extremely prohibitive for families. The result is that families, particularly families who make near or below the median area household income, must consider sacrificing their current or prospective employment to take care of their children because they cannot afford the cost of care.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the average cost of home-based child care is over $9,000 per year for children of all ages in the region (U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau n.d.). For center-based child care, the cost for infants and toddlers is almost $14,000 a year, and only slightly lower for preschool-age ($12,000) and school-age children ($11,000). These regional costs equate to the most expensive child care in the state.

Exhibit 7. Percent of Families Identifying Cost as a Barrier for Finding Care
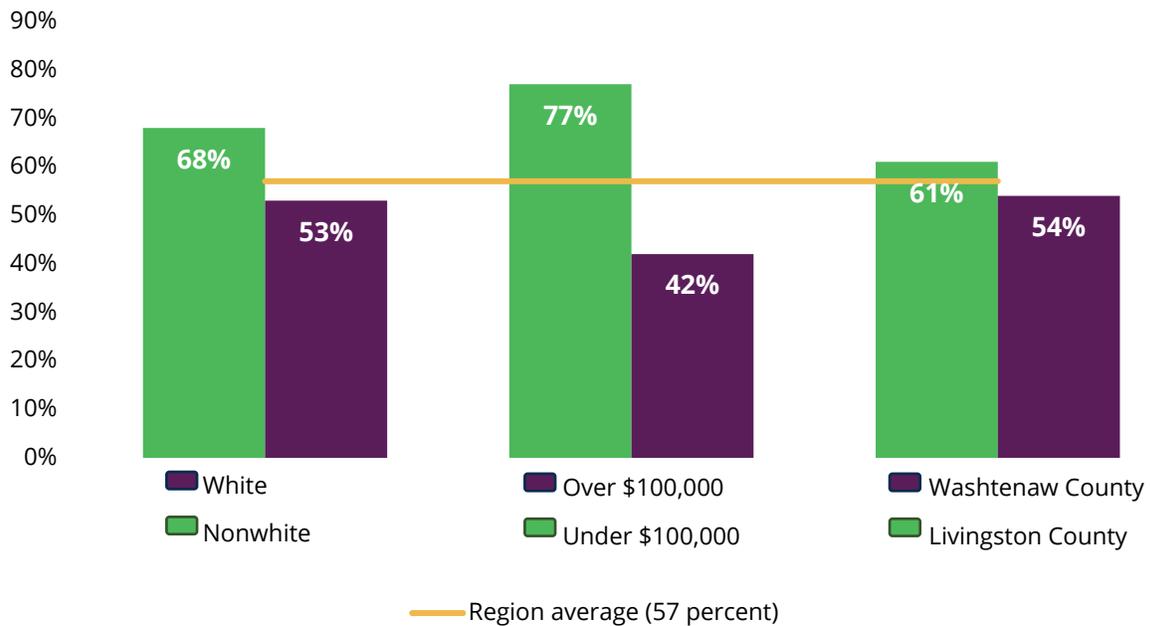
Source: Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Family Survey. N = 338.

Providers Face Challenges Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Staff

As previously mentioned, child care owners and administrators identified staffing shortages as the number one challenge related to enrollment and capacity. They also reported that support for staff recruitment, retention, and training were all needed to help providers succeed as businesses. Owners and administrators also identified the need for additional staff as the top barrier that prevents them from expanding the number of slots for which they provide care. Staffing is likely a top concern due to the estimated 17 percent shortage in the number of child care workers in the region to staff the number of licensed slots, let alone the number of slots needed to adequately provide care for all families in the region. According to the provider survey, this situation could worsen soon, with over a quarter of child care workers surveyed reporting that they are considering leaving the field in the next year.

The top two factors that could lead to workers leaving the field were wages and burnout. About 71 percent of child care workers reported often or sometimes struggling to make ends meet, which may not be surprising considering that the median hourly wage for child care workers in the region is less than $12 an hour. This wage barely keeps workers above the federal poverty line as an individual, let alone if they have multiple members in their household, and is less than a third of what is estimated as a living wage in the two counties based on cost-of-living estimates for a household with one adult and one child (Exhibit 8). Over 30 percent of workers surveyed indicated often or always working more hours than they are scheduled to work, which would be exacerbated by a staffing shortage increase.

EXHIBIT 8. Child Care Worker Hourly Wages

Legend: ■ Average child care worker wage ■ Poverty wage ■ Living wage

	Livingston	Washtenaw
Average child care worker wage	$11.31	$12.23
Poverty wage	$8.80	$8.80
Living wage	$39.00	$42.00

Sources: Lightcast 2022. Glasmeier 2024a. Glasmeier 2024b.
Note: Living wage is calculated based on a household with one adult and one child.

Owners and administrators surveyed overwhelmingly agreed with the statements "I am worried about staffing recruitment" and "I am concerned about retaining the employees I do have." They cited low wages, underqualified candidates, and unsatisfactory benefits as a key challenge for recruitment (Exhibit 9). Wages and benefits were also listed as retention challenges, as was burnout (Exhibit 10).

EXHIBIT 9. Recruitment Challenges Reported by Child Care Providers
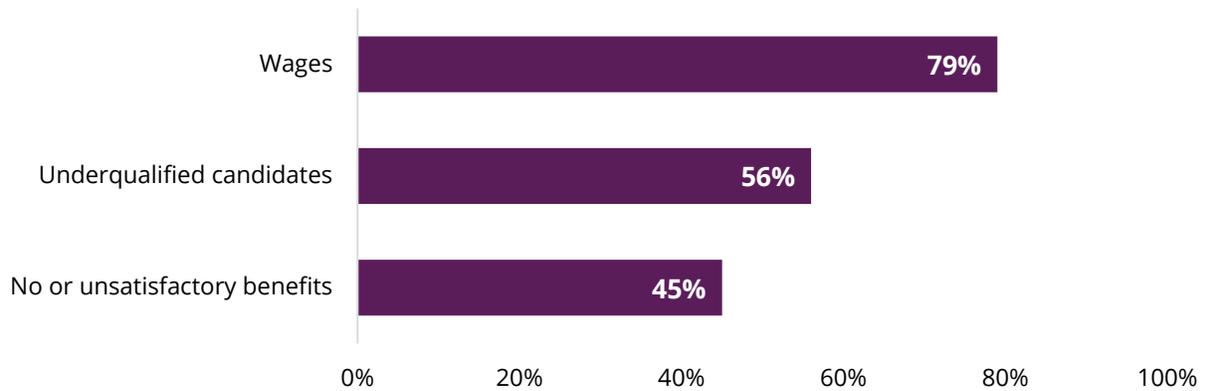
Source: Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Child Care Provider Survey. N = 121.

EXHIBIT 10. Retention Challenges Reported by Child Care Providers
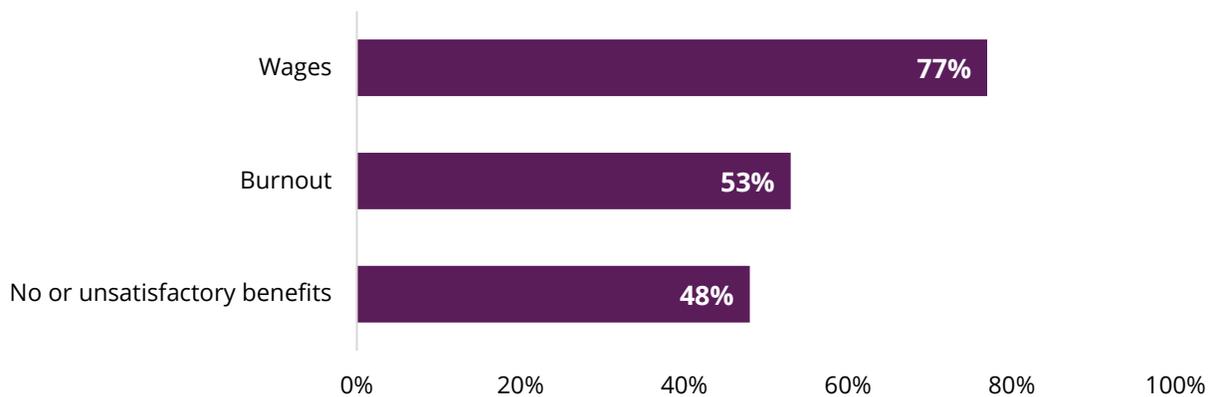
Source: Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Child Care Provider Survey. N = 118.

Child Care Is Negatively Impacting Area Employers

Fifty-nine percent of employers surveyed reported that child care issues negatively impact their business. Nearly three-quarters of employers indicated that lack of child care limited their ability to recruit and retain staff to varying degrees. Nearly three-quarters of employers also said their employees either frequently or occasionally were distracted, stressed, or worried at work as a result of having a child care issue, and 72 percent said employees frequently or occasionally missed work, arrived late, or left early due to problems with child care. Nearly half said their employees frequently or occasionally reduced regular work hours or changed from full- to part-time, and 45 percent said employees frequently or occasionally turned down a job offer, promotion, reassignment, or further education or training as the result of a child care issue (Exhibit 11).

EXHIBIT 11. Percentage of Area Employers Reporting Business Challenges Due to Child Care
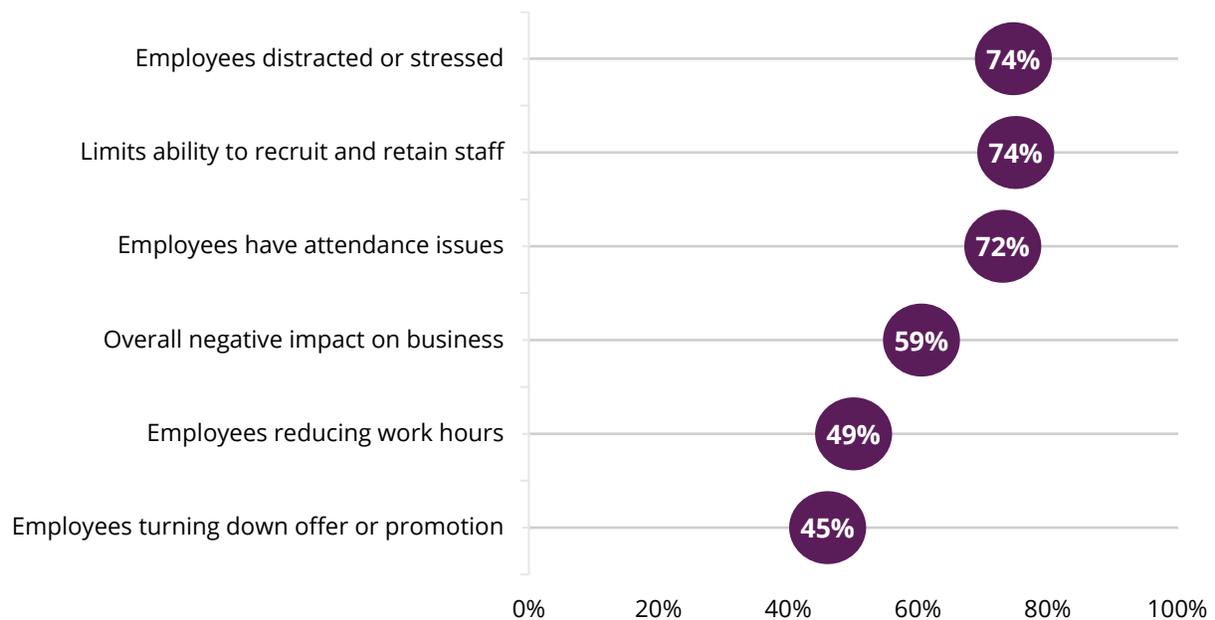
Source: Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Child Care Employer Survey. N = 51.

This data was also reflected in family survey responses. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported employment-related troubles due to not having child care that meets their needs. The most frequently reported challenges were job attendance (65 percent) and productivity (54 percent). A contingent of families (9 percent) reported needing to resign due to child care needs.

Two recent reports...

...estimate that Michigan loses $3 billion annually because parents are struggling to find care. (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation 2023)	...found that for every $1 employers spend on child care benefits, they saw a net gain of between $0.90 and $4.50 through reduced absenteeism, less lateness, and lower rates of attrition (Boston Consulting Group and Moms F1rst 2024).

Framing the Root Causes of the Problem

The previous section details challenges and impacts identified through the coalition's primary and secondary data collection. These findings stem from a series of root causes, including market failure and underinvestment, regulatory burden and lack of business support resources, and a lack of community coordination and engagement.

Market Failure and Underinvestment

Families spend so much on child care, yet child care centers are struggling to stay open, and child care workers make a near poverty wage with little to no employment benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement savings plans). Child care provision is labor intensive, requiring a low teacher-to-child ratio to ensure quality and safety. Child care also has high operational costs to keep facilities in good condition and allow for time to support staff and families. As providers are faced with increasing costs of labor, they increase the costs of care that are passed to families, thus making child care unaffordable for many families that need care the most. Further, slim profit margins make the capital costs of expansion or opening a new center financially unfeasible for most providers.

Public investment by the state or federal government, potentially supported by investment of other funding organizations, is desperately needed to address the market failures driving this untenable situation. Recent investments in scholarships for families and to provide additional operating funding to providers have shown success at limiting some of the challenges and impacts related to accessing child care. However, those short-term solutions do not address the root causes of this issue. Long-term, equitable, and adequate child care funding that accounts for the true cost of child care is necessary to address market failures. Failing to do so will continue to put providers trying to pay their staff what they deserve, and the cost families are being asked to pay, at odds.

Challenging Regulatory and Business Environment

Several coalition members expressed that limited understanding of how to navigate state licensing regulations, local zoning ordinances, and the challenges of running a business on a tight margin is a key barrier to establishing new and expanding existing child care centers. At least 20 child care owners or administrators who responded to the survey reported needing assistance with beginning or advancing Great Start to Quality recognition levels (which is tied to how much funding a provider receives), business management, licensing, cash-flow challenges related to accessing state and federal dollars, and understanding municipal policies. While many business support services are available through various entities locally and at the state level, most are not tailored to child care services. Further, awareness of these services is low and many providers do not have the time or funding needed to access them.

Examples of this root cause were present throughout the coalition meetings. Members highlighted several concerns related to local zoning ordinances, commonly citing the complicated requirements and the intimidation that accompanies approaching municipal leaders without a clear understanding of the ordinance. A child care provider spoke of challenges supporting families who received a subsidy from the state, saying they had not received that funding from the state for several months. This resulted in them effectively providing care for free because they did not want to turn the family away.

Together, this makes child care a type of enterprise with low margins and high risk. With these low margins, to be profitable child care businesses must operate on a large scale. However, most providers are small businesses and due to the high level of risk, they do not have the investors or shared capital backing necessary to expand and grow to that larger scale.

For child care providers to be able to thrive as businesses, regulatory burdens must be reduced or made easier to navigate through the provision of tailored business development support. Further, the organization and communication of existing resources and support would address the number one barrier that providers reported keeping them from doing so: lack of awareness.

Lack of Community Coordination and Engagement

At the first coalition meeting, members were asked to identify what success would look like for the coalition over the next 12 months. After collecting answers, members conducted a vote to prioritize the envisioned outcomes; the item that received more votes than any other was the phrase "people who don't care about child care, caring about child care." Many community members, businesses, and organizations do not understand the downstream impacts of families not having their child care needs met, such as reduced worker productivity for local employers or having employees leave the workforce altogether. The lack of community coordination around this issue and the isolation of those impacted by it have made it hard to address the aforementioned challenges. Child care access often ends up being a secondary or tertiary priority of local and state policymakers, economic development officials, and the private sector despite its interconnection with so many other facets of community well-being. The result of this under prioritization is the continued exacerbation of these issues.

Those who need child care typically only need that service for a certain period in their lives, there are large swaths of the community that do not realize how pressing the need is for quality and affordable child care.

Developing Key Action Areas

As described in the methodology section, from September through December 2023, the coalition participated in a series of strategic planning activities at hybrid and virtual meetings. These sessions leveraged coalition expertise and the data collected throughout the earlier stages of the process to identify and build consensus around priority action areas. Following a series of meetings to develop the action areas, the coalition reconvened in a series of small group, focused conversations to discuss how to begin implementing the overarching plan.

The following section details the results of these planning conversations. All action areas are informed by the following principles.

Equity: Disparities exist in child care access. Families with lower incomes, people living in areas of the Livingston and Washtenaw County region that are considered child care deserts, and nonwhite families are all more likely to face challenges finding affordable care. While everyone is affected by child care, and all actions included in this plan attempt to improve child care access for everyone in the community, understanding that some segments are particularly impacted currently can inform how limited resources can be leveraged most effectively in the short term.

Accessibility: Not every family has the same child care needs. Whether it's families with parents or guardians who work irregular schedules or those who have children with special needs, families with diverse needs must not be forgotten when making investments and policy change. Funding that results in an increase in child care slots only offered during the traditional work day does not help a parent who needs child care while they work the night shift. Policy changes that do not consider the extra care and coordination with partners who specialize in working with children with special needs will further isolate and alienate some of the members of this community most in need of support. Weaving accessibility into these actions is critical for the outcomes from these action areas to be felt by all area families.

Promoting Equitable and Adequate Funding to Encourage an Increase in Licensed Child Care Slots

Root Cause Addressed

Market failure and underinvestment

Challenges Addressed

- Unaffordable child care
- Challenges recruiting and retaining staff

Rationale

From day one, the coalition discussed market failure and underinvestment as a leading cause to the community challenges of unaffordable child care and providers' difficulties recruiting and retaining staff, resulting in a dearth of child care slots. When analyzing strategies to address these challenges, the coalition determined that promoting equitable and adequate funding for child care providers would lead to an increase in licensed slots. The group aligned in identifying this as a high-priority action area, one that all members are ready to launch and support and the effects of which will reverberate to address many of the challenges highlighted in this report. Given Child Care Network's experience working with statewide advocacy groups and the existing network of local funders who have shown willingness to support early childhood education programming, the coalition felt the region is ready to launch these efforts soon.

Community Objectives

1. Advocate for state-level reform related to child care funding
2. Bring together local funding partners to support child care providers and families

Advocate for State-level Reform Related to Child Care Funding

Priority: High | Time frame: Ongoing

Description

Market failure and underinvestment has directly caused most of the challenges and impacts outlined in this report. A key step to addressing this root cause is advocating for more public investment in child care.

Key Parties

- Child Care Network (lead)
- Region's state-level elected representatives
- Child care providers
- Great Start Readiness Program
- Family coalitions
- General public

Potential Activities

- Continue to develop and refine the list of advocacy priorities listed below
- Identify opportunities to engage policymakers, such as Child Care Network's existing public policy program, and work to bolster the impact of those opportunities through promotion, outreach, and engagement of interested parties
- Support ECIC's and other statewide policy efforts related to increasing public funding for child care

Supports Needed

While local efforts exist to communicate with area policymakers, a coordinated statewide effort is needed to ensure all state-level policymakers are educated and engaged on this issue. To that end, this coalition requests that ECIC develop consistent advocacy materials that support the following priorities and provide cohesive messaging across all of the state's regions to increase impact of advocacy efforts.

Advocacy Priorities

- Increasing overall investment to support child care
- Expanding the eligible uses of public dollars, including who can use that money and how funding can be used to support the providers as a business, workers seeking more livable wages, and families in need of financial assistance
- Reforming the current definition of the cost of care to capture the operational and organizational expenses of providing care more accurately
- Prioritizing funding that addresses current geographic gaps or gaps in types of care provided (e.g., overnight care, weekend care)
- Reforming the funding distribution through Great Start to Quality to ensure equitable disbursement of dollars to providers of different sizes and ratings
- Expanding successful programming that reduces costs for families, such as Tri-Share or the Child Development and Care program
- Streamlining reporting requirements tied to state funding sources

Key Considerations

The governor and legislature are actively working to develop a state budget for fiscal year 2025. As the current governor, who is midway through her final term, has expressed support for previous public investment in child care, opportunities for advocating for state funding opportunities could be time sensitive.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of policymakers educated and informed on the need for increased public investment in child care
- The number of advocacy events or efforts supported
- The total allocation of the State of Michigan budget going to support child care

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of licensed slots in the region
- Increase in the sustainability of child care providers by reducing the number of owners concerned with keeping their organization operational
- Reduction in the economic burden on families by decreasing the cost of child care charged to families
- Reduction in the disparities in having child care that meets the needs of families between different income levels, racial and ethnic groups, and location within the region

Bring Together Local Funding Partners to Support Child Care Providers and Families

Priority: Medium-high | Time frame: Ongoing

Description

While achieving adequate and equitable funding requires state reform, there are a variety of funders in the Livingston and Washtenaw County region that can help support child care providers and families seeking child care immediately. By coordinating efforts, local funders can make a substantial impact.

Key Parties

- Child Care Network (lead)
- Community and private foundations
- United Way for Southeastern Michigan
- Michigan Works! Southeast
- County governments
- Municipal governments

Potential Activities

- Develop a list of private and public funders currently supporting child care providers, scholarships, and training programs in the region
- Support local funders in partnering with area experts to understand current funding gaps and learn how future funding rounds can most effectively support child care in the region

Supports Needed

Given the local focus of this work, the only statewide support needed at this time is the sharing of best practices for other regions that successfully foster effective coordination among different funders that build upon the examples below.

Examples of What Local Funders Can Do

Local funders can connect with Child Care Network to learn about what types of funding are needed in their communities, including:

- Contributing to child care scholarship programs that make care more affordable for families
- Supporting the creation of new child care centers or expansion of existing centers through capital investments
- Supporting local child care development and training programs
- Prioritizing investments that address geographic gaps or gaps in types of care provided (e.g., overnight care, weekend care, special needs care)
- Participating in statewide discussions related to coordinated funding efforts on a larger scale

Key Considerations

Coordination is key. Investing only in scholarships, while great at making care affordable for families, does not address the significant gaps in the number of slots available; that can only be increased through capital investments. Understanding what funders are currently supporting is critical to informing how funders new to the space or looking to expand their investment can best leverage their resources.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of local funders educated and informed on the need for increased investment in child care
- The total number and amount of funding opportunities that are available to child care providers by local governments, area foundations, and other potential funders

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of licensed slots in the region
- Increase in the sustainability of child care providers by reducing the number of owners concerned with keeping their organization operational
- Reduction in the economic burden on families by decreasing the cost of child care charged to families
- Reduction in the disparities in having child care that meets the needs of families between different income levels, racial and ethnic groups, and location within the region

Advocating for Local Policies to Make It Easier for Providers to Open and Expand Programs

Root Cause Addressed

- Challenging regulatory and business environment
- Lack of community coordination and engagement

Challenges Addressed

Care families need is not available

Rationale

While many long-term structural changes are needed to how child care is funded, there are short- and medium-term steps that the region can take to begin addressing the root causes and resulting impacts of the challenging regulatory and business environment and the lack of community coordination and engagement. The strategies in this section, which leverage already engaged and motivated individuals and organizations, can begin moving forward in the first half of 2024. While longer-term funding questions identified in the previous action area are still needed to open centers and ensure they are financially viable, the strategies of this section can facilitate quicker, more efficient use of future dollars earmarked for child care.

Community Objectives

1. Advocate for local governments to adopt the regional action plan and recognize child care as a pressing economic crisis
2. Advocate for local policy change related to zoning and development

Advocate for Local Governments to Adopt the Regional Action Plan and Recognize Child Care as a Pressing Economic Crisis

Description

Many strategies in this plan will require interest and action by local entities in the region moving forward. As local governments serve a significant role as a funder and convener of much of this work, getting the counties, cities, and townships in the region to adopt this plan is an important first step when laying the groundwork for future activities.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Coalition members
- Local governments

Potential Activities

- Create a contact list of local governments to reach out to and share the plan with upon its publication
- Develop a brief advocacy tool kit that members of the coalition or other interested parties can use to encourage local governments to adopt the plan and take initial action in line with the plan
- Track local governments who have adopted the plan to keep them engaged and informed about other steps they can be taking in line with this plan

Supports Needed

Given the local focus of this work, there is no statewide support needed at this time.

Why Is This Important?

Elsewhere in the plan, local governments are identified as key partners to make important policy and funding decisions to support child care in the region. To increase buy-in for those efforts, ensuring local policymakers are educated and engaged on current state of child care and impacts of child care on several aspects of our community is critical. Sharing this plan directly with local governments and then encouraging coalition members and concerned community members to use their voices to amplify importance will greatly increases the likelihood of immediate and long-term action.

Key Considerations

There is a wide variety of local governments in the region. The two counties, while sharing many characteristics, also have their own unique challenges related to child care. Further, within counties, cities and townships vary greatly in how much their municipality is impacted by child care and the capacity they have as an entity make significant impact on any of these issues. Ensuring that outreach and engagement is tailored to engage local governments in a meaningful and relevant way will be critical to creating a broad base of support.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of local municipalities sent the regional action plan
- The number of local municipalities that adopt the regional action plan and recognize child care as a priority issue

Advocate for Local Policy Change Related to Zoning and Development

Priority: Medium | Time frame: December 2024

Description

Multiple conversations at coalition meetings highlighted stories from providers struggling to establish or expand their business due to zoning laws that were not made with child care providers in mind. The result is a taxing and slow process that stifles the increase in the number of slots available while also making it hard for providers to stay up to date. Additionally, with municipalities lacking consistency in their planning processes, even individuals who are well informed can struggle to navigate the system themselves or support others to do the same.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK (lead)
- Coalition members
- Local government planning entities
- Public Sector Consultants

Potential Activities

- Host a preliminary meeting with local providers, policymakers, and planning entities in spring 2024 to start a process and identify individuals or organizations to lead this work moving forward
- Identify a list of best practices to develop draft zoning language that can be adopted by local governments in the region
- Reach out to local governments and planning entities to educate them on child care–specific topics and encourage the adoption of draft zoning language
- Keep group of local providers, policymakers, and planning entities engaged to identify other local zoning or municipal policies that could be enacted, such as incentivizing the development of child care facilities as part of new developments or redevelopments, as is sometimes done in affordable housing policies

Supports Needed

Given the local focus of this work, the only statewide support needed at this time is the sharing of local policies identified elsewhere that could be applicable in the Livingston and Washtenaw County region.

Key Considerations

While the above steps detail how action can happen locally, reform is also needed at the state level to reduce regulatory burden. To that end, in addition to these actions, people living and working in the area who care about improving the state of child care must also be ready to advocate and support policy solutions identified by other coalitions and statewide efforts to ensure a broad base of support to increase the speed and priority of those policies moving forward.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of local municipalities with whom example policies and ordinances are shared
- The number of local municipalities that adopt the example policies and ordinances

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of licensed slots in the region
- Increase in the sustainability of child care providers by reducing the number of owners who identify regulatory burden as a business challenge

Providing Resources and Supports to Enable Child Care Providers to Thrive as Businesses

Root Cause Addressed

- Challenging regulatory and business environment
- Lack of community coordination and engagement

Challenges Addressed

- The care families need is not available
- Providers face challenges recruiting and retaining qualified staff

Rationale

Even with high demand for child care services and a high cost of care, child care providers are still struggling to succeed as businesses due to several factors. With the staff, tools, and resources to succeed, new and existing providers will not only be able to fully operate and offer care for the total number of slots they are licensed for, but they will also be able to scale their programming to serve more families. While many of the resources connect to funding, there are other partnerships and resources that can be developed and leveraged to support providers in the current funding environment and set them up for success should funding increase.

Community Objectives

1. Develop a regional resource hub to support child care providers
2. Connect providers with training institutions to address staff capacity issues

Develop a Regional Resource Hub to Support Child Care Providers

Priority: Medium | Time frame: June 2024

Description

A resource hub is essential for regional child care providers, as it centralizes access to crucial information, tools, and support services, enabling providers to efficiently navigate business challenges and regulatory environments. This facilitates improved service quality, sustainability, and growth in the region's child care sector.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK (co-lead)
- Child Care Network (co-lead)
- Entrepreneurship Center at Washtenaw Community College
- Michigan Works! Southeast

Potential Activities

- Host a meeting with area organizations that offer small business supports, along with child care providers and Child Care Network, to identify how best to organize, share, and manage a resource hub
- Review existing resources to understand what is currently available and what can be included in the local regional resource hub
- Develop and maintain the resource hub to ensure entities that offer small business support are aware of the resources and how to help child care providers access support and navigate operating a child care center or home
- Communicate directly to child care providers to ensure they are aware of available resources to help them operate
- Identify gaps in the resource hub to locate additional resources, or request the development of new resources, that can be added to the hub in future years

Supports Needed

Many of the technical assistance resources needed will be consistent with those needed throughout the state. While work is done on the regional level to organize, share, and identify gaps in the available resources, ECIC can continue to develop, organize, and share state-level resources to make the regional resource hub more effective and easier to maintain and keep relevant to the changing needs of child care providers.

Examples of Resources

- Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) technical assistance and navigators
- Child Care Network technical assistance supports
- Wonderschool
- TOOTRiS
- List of child care–friendly developers to assist with construction projects
- A list of other child care providers willing to share lessons learned or partner to create shared service networks

Key Considerations

For a resource hub to be successful, it must be maintained, which will require some level of ongoing resources beyond the initial work to develop the resource list. Identifying local funding that can help support the maintenance of the resource list can ensure the sustainability of this activity as an effective mechanism for helping child care providers.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The development of a resource hub that is easily available to current and prospective child care providers
- The number of technical assistance or navigation services rendered by child care providers

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of available licensed slots in region by reducing the number of providers not able to fully staff or expand their program
- Reduction in the number of owners who identify business management practices as a challenge

Connect Providers with Training Institutions to Address Staff Capacity Issues

Priority: Medium-high | Time frame: Ongoing

Description

Strengthening the connection between providers and training institutions is crucial, as it can help address immediate capacity concerns of child care providers through fully funded apprenticeship and work study programs or volunteering. Collaboration will also promote a well-trained workforce, directly impacting the success and sustainability of child care businesses.

Key Parties

- Michigan Works! Southeast
- Area school districts
- Local community colleges
- Eastern Michigan University
- University of Michigan
- Child Care Network

Potential Activities

- Host a meeting with area organizations that are involved in the training of child care workers to identify how those organizations can best connect with child care providers
- Develop a process or identify a key organizational partner that can serve as a connection between child care providers and training organizations
- Create a centralized list of training and financial assistance programs that child care providers can access to connect with training institutions effectively

Supports Needed

No need for external support at this time.

Existing Resources

There are a variety of child care training programs locally, as well as programs that can assist employers with onboarding new hires and associated training costs. These include:

Michigan Works! Southeast programs:
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult Program
- Going PRO Talent Fund program

Child Care Network's Early Care and Education (ECE) Registered Apprenticeships

Key Considerations

Several organizations are already doing work in this area, which sets this objective up for immediate success if they are able to coordinate and communicate effectively. Entities that can bridge training institutions and providers, such as Child Care Network and Ann Arbor SPARK, can play a key role in ensuring that these efforts to connect the two groups are sustained over time.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of new child care provider and educational institution partnerships
- The number of child care workers able to pursue training opportunities as a result of partnerships

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of available licensed slots in the region by reducing the number of providers not able to fully staff their program, or who identify staffing as a barrier to expansion
- Increase the number of child care workers in the region by getting individuals who attend local training programs to stay by fostering connection with child care providers as prospective employers

Support the Child Care Workforce Through Expanded Training and Increased Resources

Root Cause Addressed

Market failure and underinvestment

Challenges Addressed

- The care families need is not available
- Providers face challenges recruiting and retaining qualified staff

Rationale

Staffing shortages are a central driver of many of the region's child care challenges. The current licensed slots are not all available due to lack of staff. Providers are not able to increase their available slots because of challenges recruiting staff. They are also not able to offer care at different times of day and different days of the week because they do not have the staff to do so. Even if public investment drastically increases in the form of scholarships for families or capital funds to build new or expand existing centers, the lack of available child care slots will persist if the challenges facing child care workers, who cannot afford to live in the region, continue.

Community Objectives

1. Increase visibility and public funding for area training programs to increase the number of child care workers
2. Support expanded resources and partnership to improve salary and benefits for child care workers

Increase Visibility and Public Funding for Area Training Programs to Increase the Number of Child Care Workers

Priority: Medium-high | Time frame: Ongoing

Description

As listed in the previous action area, there are many training programs in the region, as well as financial assistance programs to support them. However, to adequately train the number of staff required to fill the immediate staffing shortage and be able to staff an increase in the number of licensed slots in the region, there will need to be a significant increase in the number of people completing training programs.

Key Parties

- Michigan Works! Southeast
- Eastern Michigan University
- University of Michigan
- Child Care Network

Potential Activities

- Host a meeting with area organizations that are involved in the training of child care workers to identify how best to communicate availability of training programs to prospective students
- Identify how local funders could help supplement existing programs to increase capacity
- Conduct outreach to local funders to generate buy-in and support for these local programs
- Support ECIC's and other statewide policy efforts related to continuing and expanding existing training programs and resources

Supports Needed

This coalition requests that ECIC supports training programs in their advocacy efforts and identifies ways that local entities can support these statewide advocacy efforts.

Key Considerations

Both this and the "Providing Resources and Supports to Enable Child Care Providers to Thrive as Businesses" action area related to connecting providers and training institutions. Partners could explore how they could pursue both of these simultaneously given the overlap between involved parties.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of child care workers able to pursue training opportunities as a result of increased supports

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of child care workers in the region
- Increase in the number of available licensed child care slots in the region
- Reduction in the number of families that do not have care that meets their needs

Support Expanded Resources and Partnership to Improve Salary and Benefits for Child Care Workers

Priority: Medium-low | Time frame: 2025 and beyond

Description

As long as average child care wages are so low relative to the regional cost of living, the ability to increase the number of child care workers in the region is going to be an exceptional challenge. To that end, any advocacy efforts toward increased funding for child care centers must ensure that those funding increases result in higher wages. Beyond wages, improved benefits are needed to communicate to future generations that becoming a child care worker can not only be a fulfilling career, but one that is financially feasible.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Child Care Network
- Child care providers

Potential Activities

- Engage a local convener, e.g., Ann Arbor SPARK, Child Care Network, or another organization, to assist interested providers in developing a shared-service network
- Incorporate language that prioritizes child care worker salaries when advocating for increased funding locally and statewide
- Support ECIC's and other statewide policy efforts related to increasing funding and protections for child care workers

Supports Needed

This coalition requests that ECIC includes protections and resources for child care workers in their advocacy efforts and identifies ways local entities can support these statewide advocacy efforts.

Key Considerations

This objective should coexist with other action areas, as child care worker compensation needs to be part of the conversation related to increased funding or supporting child care providers to succeed as businesses.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- Inclusion of child care worker wage increases on local and state advocacy priority lists
- Inclusion of fostering collaborations to improve child care worker benefits in the regional resource hub

Outcomes

- Increase in the number of child care workers in the region
- Decreased turnover of child care workers
- Increase in the number of available licensed child care slots in the region

Empowering Area Employers to Be Child Care Champions

Root Cause Addressed

Lack of community coordination and engagement

Challenges Addressed

- Child care is negatively impacting area employers
- The care families need is not available

Rationale

Not having access to child care that meets a family's needs results in caretakers facing challenges in their employment, ranging from struggling to be productive at work to needing to leave the workforce to focus on caregiving. In short, child care is greatly impacting local businesses' ability to thrive. While there are a number of actions that the state and local government, providers, and other partners can take to help improve child care in the region, employers have a unique opportunity to add significant value through partnership and collaboration.

Community Objectives

1. Develop a certification to recognize area employers that are child care friendly
2. Foster connections between local employers and child care providers

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Develop a Certification to Recognize Area Employers That Are Child Care Friendly

Priority: Medium-low | Time frame: June 2024

Description

Employers indicated they were overwhelmingly open to sharing resources and better supporting their workers who have child care needs when responding to the coalition's employer survey. Developing a list of best practices that lead to an employer being child care friendly and offering a local certification that incentivizes employers to adopt these best practices can help area families continue their careers while bolstering employers' ability to recruit and retain high-quality employees.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Local business groups (e.g., business associations, chambers of commerce)
- Area employers
- Child care providers
- Public Sector Consultants

Potential Activities

- Host a series of meetings with key parties to identify how best to develop and maintain a certification
- Develop branding and communication materials related to the certification to increase visibility and understanding of what the certification entails
- Promote certification through local business groups to generate interest and buy-in

Supports Needed

While this could start as a locally recognized certification, a statewide certification could increase the likelihood of adoption by employers throughout the region. To that end, the coalition requests that ECIC explores the feasibility and potential impact of a statewide certification to identify child care–friendly employers.

Examples of Potential Best Practices

- Help working families find child care by offering a list of nearby child care providers and potential resources to help afford child care
- Offer flexible scheduling to allow caretakers to work hours that make sense with their child care situation
- Offer financial support as a benefit for employees with child care needs (e.g., Tri-Share program, onsite care, dependent care spending accounts, sponsoring slots at a nearby provider to get discounted rates for employees)
- Join advocacy list to learn how employers can support policies and investments that improve regional child care

Key Considerations

Achieving buy-in from well-known and respected groups will be paramount to creating a certification that employers will be likely to pursue. However, the maintenance and quality assurance of this certification will be needed, so this process will require a conversation around who will manage this objective moving forward.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of employers who are engaged and educated on child care–friendly policies and practices
- The number of employers who adopt child care–friendly policies and practices

Outcomes

- Decrease in the number of individuals leaving the workforce due to not having child care that meets their needs
- Reduction in the number of employers identifying child care–related issues negatively impacting their ability to recruit and retain employees

Foster Connections Between Local Employers and Child Care Providers

Priority: Medium-high | Time frame: Ongoing

Description

By fostering connections between local employers and child care providers, these parties can share resources and pursue activities that will improve the workforce access to child care.

Key Parties

- Ann Arbor SPARK (co-lead)
- Child Care Network (co-lead)
- Local business groups (e.g., business associations, chambers of commerce)
- Area employers
- Child care providers
- Public Sector Consultants

Potential Activities

- Host meeting(s) with key parties to identify strategies for fostering connections between providers and area employers
- Share information via local employer groups so these groups and their members know how to connect with providers through reaching out to a central, engaged entity, such as Ann Arbor SPARK or Child Care Network

Potential Partnership Model

An emerging model, where employers sponsor a handful of slots, or even a full center, is showing promise in addressing challenges faced by child care providers and employers. The employers pay a fee per slot to reserve them for current or prospective employees. The employee then gets access to that slot at a discounted rate. The combination of the sponsorship and employee fee provides adequate funding for providers and the reservation of the seat ensures employees have access to affordable, easy-to-find care should they need it.

Key Considerations

Fostering connections can happen as part of the development of the certification or outside of the certification. Much of this work can happen organically between providers and employers to identify how best to partner, and the work of Ann Arbor SPARK, Child Care Network, and local business groups will be more focused on facilitating those initial connections.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of partnerships between child care providers and area employers

Outcomes

- Decrease in the number of individuals leaving the workforce due to not having child care that meets their needs
- Reduction in the number of employers identifying child care–related issues as negatively impacting their ability to recruit and retain employees

Fostering an Informed and Engaged Community That Is Ready to Take Action to Support the Child Care Field

Root Cause Addressed

Market failure and underinvestment

Challenges Addressed

- Unaffordable child care
- Challenges recruiting and retaining staff

Rationale

At the first meeting of the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, the question was asked, "What is the most important thing for this group to accomplish?" The most common answer was getting members of the community who are not impacted by child care to care about child care. Through the promotion of the findings in this report, and a coordinated effort to build public support for the advocacy and actions detailed through different action areas, this coalition can have a much greater and more sustained impact on child care in the region.

Community Objectives

1. Develop visionary shared language for increased and improved messaging and outreach

Develop Visionary Shared Language for Increased and Improved Messaging and Outreach

Priority: High | Time frame: June 2024

Description

The sharing of this report and <u>associated short reports</u> will help increase the understanding of the wide-ranging impact of child care on the community. The next step is capitalizing on that increased understanding to generate the broad community support that will encourage the key parties identified throughout this report to take action.

Key Parties

- Coalition members (lead)
- Public Sector Consultants
- Child care providers
- Ann Arbor SPARK
- Child Care Network

Potential Activities

- Publish the report on the <u>coalition's website</u>
- Promote the publishing of this report via local media
- Directly share this report with policymakers, local employer groups, and community groups through attending community meetings and other outreach efforts

Supports Needed

No need for external support at this time.

Tracking Progress

Outputs

- The number of media stories about the state of child care in the region
- The number of community meetings at which this report, or findings related to it, are presented

Outcomes

- There are no direct outcomes of an engaged community, but it can lead to success in other areas

Maintaining Momentum

The above action areas and objectives detail many things that can be done, how to begin to implement those ideas, and how to measure success. This action plan, which includes advocacy efforts; change by state and local governments; investments by a variety of funding partners; the facilitation of partnerships between employers, providers, and other partners; and the organization and creation of resources, will only be successful if the momentum built by these conversations is maintained. While key parties have been identified and potential next steps are identified, other individuals and groups have the opportunity to support this work by beginning conversations about how they can best support each objective and action area.

The members of this coalition will begin working on these issues in 2024, while also continuing to support and collaborate with coalitions from other regions and ECIC to maximize impact for the region and the state of Michigan as a whole.

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Appendix A. Coalition Roster

Phil Santer	Ann Arbor SPARK
Marcia Gebarowski	Ann Arbor SPARK
Annette J. Sobocinski	Child Care Network
Jillian Rosen	Ann Arbor Community Foundation
Frances Todoro-Hargreaves	Ann Arbor Community Foundation
Pam Smith	United Way of Washtenaw County
Cheranissa Williams	Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development
Andy LaBarre	A2Y Chamber of Commerce
Akintunde Oluwadare	Washtenaw County Racial Equity Office
Etta King Heisler	Apple Playschools
Diana Kontoyiannakis	Little Angels Preschool and Daycare
Mary Anna Dickinson	Community Day Care
Margy Long	Washtenaw Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative
Richard Scott	Michigan Works! Southeast
Will Williamson	Michigan Works! Southeast
Misty Shulters	Michigan Works! Southeast
Deata McLemore	Bottles-N-Backpacks
Robin Schutz	Great Start Livingston
Megan Witt	Little Sunflowers Learning Academy
Stephanie Williams	Family representative
Cristin Piskorowski	Family representative
Alisha Spencer	Family representative
Ashley Eddy	Family representative
Megan Crainer	Family representative
Madeline Garcia	Family representative

Appendix B. Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Regional Data Report

Livingston and Washtenaw Child Care Coalition Regional Data Report

Background

Ann Arbor SPARK was awarded a grant by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) to conduct research on child care needs and convene a coalition that will work together to improve child care in Livingston and Washtenaw counties. Public Sector Consultants (PSC), a nonpartisan research and evaluation public policy firm, conducted preliminary desktop research on the child care environment in Livingston and Washtenaw counties to inform the coalition and guide meaningful discussion. This research included, but was not limited to, the following topic areas: early childhood education requirements and career paths, child care quality, child care cost, supply and wages of child care providers, and family demographics.

Regional Demographics

Within Livingston and Washtenaw counties, there are approximately 101,877 children under the age of 18, comprising three distinct age groups (Exhibit 1). There are approximately 54,581 married-couple or single-parent households in the region. While a majority of children in the region likely reside in these households, which represent marriages between a man and a woman or single mothers or fathers, many likely live in homes with parenting arrangements that are not well represented in Census data. These could include same-sex couples, the presence of other family members (e.g., grandparents) in the home, nonmarriage partnerships, foster care, and other arrangements.

One of the many reasons why households need child care is so parents and caregivers can work. Across married-couple households, it is most common for both a husband and wife to be in the workforce (70 percent). The majority of single parents also participate in the labor force, with 86 percent of single mothers and 51 percent of single fathers working (Exhibit 2).

EXHIBIT 1. Age Distribution of Children in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties

- Children birth to 5
- Children 6 to 11
- Children 12 to 17
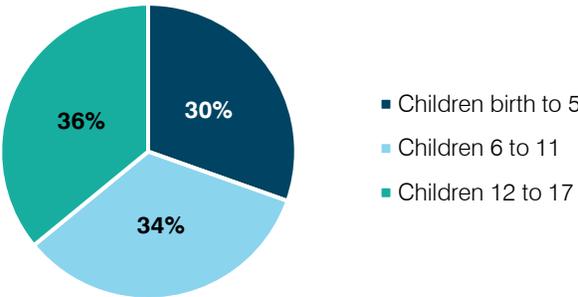
N = 101,877
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. n.d. "ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates Table B09002: Own Children Under 18 Years by Family Type and Age—Livingston, Washtenaw." *U.S. Census Bureau*. Accessed July 12, 2023.
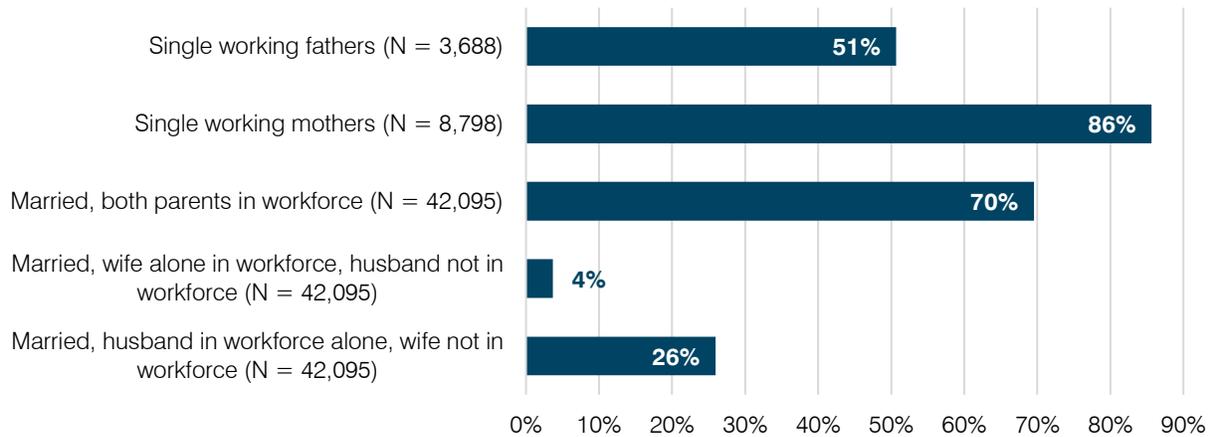
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. n.d. "ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates Table S2302: Employment Characteristics of Families—Livingston, Washtenaw." *U.S. Census Bureau*. Accessed July 12, 2023.

Child Care Providers

PSC used data from the Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Agency (LARA) to determine the number of child care providers in the region and their licensed capacity to determine how many children may be without care. As of spring 2023, there are approximately 398 registered, licensed child care providers across Livingston and Washtenaw counties with a total licensed capacity of 25,338 according to Great Start to Quality (GSQ).[1]

PSC used data from the American Community Survey (ACS) to find the number of children under five in each county in the region, as this age group is most likely to need year-round care, and compared that number to the number of child care slots (licensed capacity) for that age group (Exhibit 3). While not all families with children under the age of five need or desire child care, neither Livingston nor Washtenaw County have enough child care spots to support the majority of children under the age of five.

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[1] Great Start to Quality is Michigan's system of setting and evaluating quality standards in early childhood care and education programs. For more information, visit https://greatstarttoquality.org/.

EXHIBIT 3. Child Care Provider Capacity in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties
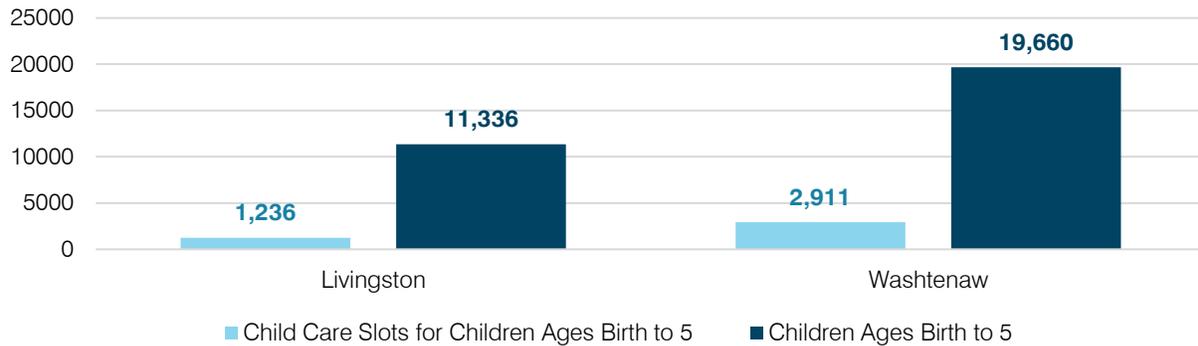
Bar chart legend: ■ Child Care Slots for Children Ages Birth to 5 ■ Children Ages Birth to 5

Livingston: 1,236; 11,336. Washtenaw: 2,911; 19,660.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. n.d. "ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates Table B09002: Own Children Under 18 Years by Family Type and Age—Livingston, Washtenaw." *U.S. Census Bureau*. Accessed July 12, 2023.
GSQ data analyzed by PSC.

Further access to availability of licensed seats is not equal across the region. The cities of the region, such as Ann Arbor, Brighton, and Ypsilanti, may have more open seats, but also have a higher density of children (Appendix 1). Another way to consider the gaps within the region is looking at child care deserts, which calculate the ratio of children to licensed seats. Areas in and around Ypsilanti, Pinckney, and the townships north of Howell have some of the highest ratios for toddlers. For preschool-age students, the highest ratios exist in Ypsilanti, Pittsfield Township, the townships north of Howell, and in southwest Livingston County. For school age, the ratios outside of Ann Arbor and Lodi, Northfield, and Scio townships in Washtenaw County are all extremely high. In Livingston, the same is true of areas outside of the Whitmore Lake, Brighton, Pinkney, and Hartland Township areas (Exhibit 4).

EXHIBIT 4. Highest Child-to-Spot Ratios Zip Codes by Age Group

Infant/Toddler (Ages 0–2)	Pre-School (Ages 3–5)	School Age (Ages 6–11)
48137	48137	48137
48855	48855	48855
48169	48198	48108
48198	48108	48836
48158	48160	48118

Source: American Community Survey, 2021. Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs 2023.

While these data provide a good estimate to the capacity gap in the child care system, there are limitations to using these data points. First, not all licensed child care spots are actively open due to factors such as staffing shortages keeping classrooms closed. Second, not all children under the age of five need child care.

In addition to the gap in capacity, there is likely to be a mismatch between the availability of specific types of child care providers and those that parents or caregivers are seeking.

Quality

Parents and caregivers may choose to use GSQ's quality recognition system, which has replaced the star ranking system, as a means to select a provider that meets their needs. PSC examined data from GSQ to determine how many providers were recognized as having achieved each level of quality included in the GSQ system (Exhibit 5). Of note, the levels do not necessarily reflect the ability of a child care provider to safely and effectively care for children, but rather where they are in the process of continuous quality improvement.

EXHIBIT 5. Child Care Providers by County and Level of Quality
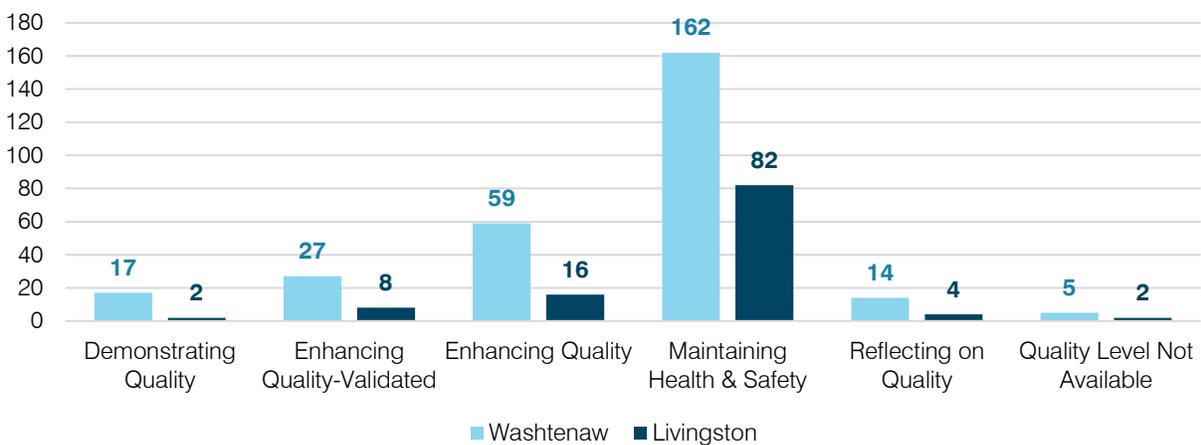
Source: GSQ data analyzed by PSC.

Availability

Parents and caregivers may also require child care during nonstandard hours, such as overnight or on weekends. This may be especially prominent among individuals in the service industry or manufacturing who sometimes cannot afford to miss a shift for child care. Exhibit 6 shows the percentage of child care providers by license type that offer various shift options.

EXHIBIT 6. Child Care Providers Offering Shift Options by License Type

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Drop-In/Hourly	After School	Evening	Overnight	24 Hours	Weekend
Licensed Centers	70%	31%	10%	46%	17%	0.4%	0.4%	1%
Licensed Group Homes	82%	27%	18%	42%	37%	20%	17%	17%
Licensed Family Homes	84%	19%	16%	41%	33%	10%	9%	19%

Note: Percentages do not equal 100 because providers may offer multiple shift options.
Source: GSQ Data Analyzed by PSC.

Cost of Care

One of the barriers that families may face when seeking child care is cost. The average median household income in Livingston and Washtenaw counties is $84,053[2] (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). Using data from the Center for Neighborhood Technology[3] (2023) and the United Way's Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) research[4] (2021), PSC calculated the average cost of living for a two-parent family with two children. This cost-of-living calculation includes the costs of housing, transportation, utilities, food, health care, technology, and miscellaneous but necessary costs. Not including possible child care expenses, the estimated regional average cost of living for these families is $67,183.

Exhibits 7 and 8 show the average costs of home-based and center-based care, respectively, by age group. As an example of how unaffordable child care may be for many families in the region, a household that needs child care for an infant may pay $9,515 (rounded) for home-based care annually, or $13,897 (rounded) for center-based care. When accounting for the cost of living, this means a two-parent family with two children with one of their children being an infant in child care may have basic expenses ranging from $76,698 to $81,080. This gives families who make the median income little to possibly no additional money for other expenses; families who need to enroll both of their children may be unable to afford care completely. Families who earn less than the median area household income may have to sacrifice their current or prospective employment to take care of their children because they cannot afford other care.

EXHIBIT 7. Annual Median Cost of Home-based Child Care in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties in 2022 Adjusted Dollars
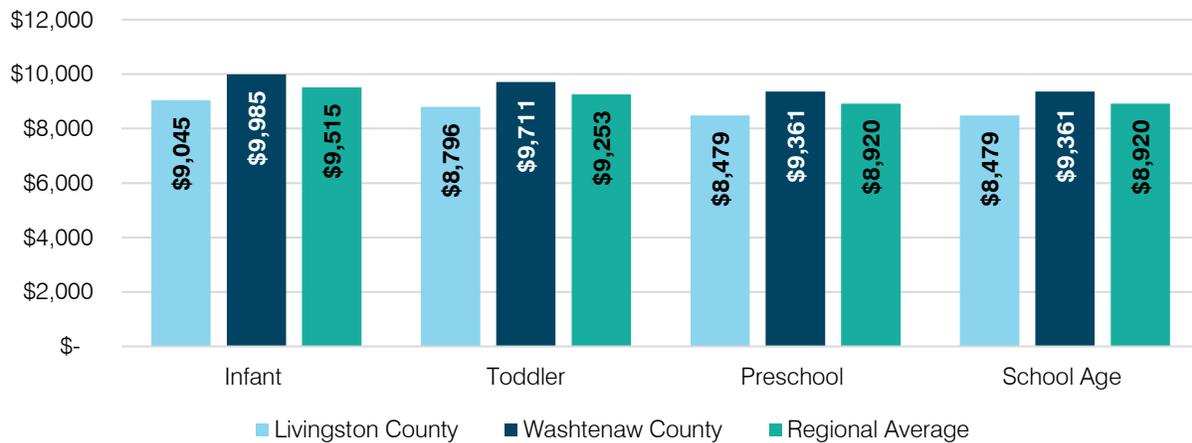
Source: National Database of Childcare Prices 2016–2018, Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor.

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[2] U.S. Census Bureau. n.d. "ACS 2021 5-Year Estimates Table B1903: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2021 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)—Washtenaw and Livingston." U.S. Census Bureau. Accessed August 1, 2023.

[3] Center for Neighborhood Technology. n.d. *Housing and Transportation Index*. Accessed August 1, 2023.

[4] United for ALICE. 2021. "Michigan County Reports 2021." United for ALICE. Accessed August 1, 2023.

Source: National Database of Childcare Prices 2016–2018, Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor.

Education

Varying levels of education are required for different positions within the child care industry. Data from the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MIAEYC) illustrates the number of early childhood-centered degrees offered throughout Michigan. The most common credential type is an associate degree, with 27 colleges or universities offering a degree at an average cost of $7,344. The least common credential type is a master's degree, with fewer than ten universities offering this credential type (Exhibit 9).

EXHIBIT 9. Number of Early Childhood Education Certifications and Median Program Cost in Michigan
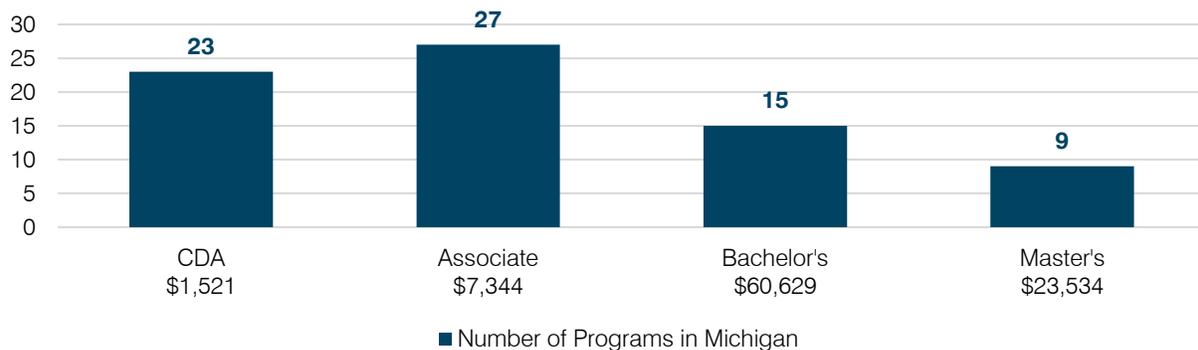
Source: Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children, analysis by PSC.

Career Paths

A variety of career paths are available to early childhood educators based on their credentials. The following breakdown provides an overview of child care career paths based on credential type.

Child Development Associate Credential

A Child Development Associate credential (CDA) can be obtained by completing 12 semester credit hours in early childhood education (ECE), child development (CD), or another child-related field. Professionals who earn this credential type can work as Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) associate teachers, Head Start assistant teachers, a lead teacher in a child care center, and trainers.

Associate Degree

To achieve an associate degree in ECE or CD, early childhood education professionals must, on average, complete 60 credit hours with at least 18 hours in ECE or CD. This degree allows staff to work as child care center program directors, CDA professional development specialists, Head Start lead teachers, or assessors at the Great Start to Quality program.

Bachelor's Degree

Professionals who complete a bachelor's degree program in ECE, CD, other child-related fields, a teacher certification with an early childhood endorsement, or a bachelor's degree in a related or unrelated field with at least 30 semester credits hours in ECE or CD can work as lead teachers in GSRP, early childhood special education teachers, school-age multisite directors, or quality improvement specialists at GSRP.

Master's Degree

Professionals who complete a master's degree in ECE or CD have several career options available to them. They can work as community college faculty/university adjunct faculty, research and policy associates, child care licensing consultants, and agency or program directors at MIAEYC and other education-related organizations.

PhD or Higher

Professionals who complete an EdD or PhD in ECE or CD, and other child-related fields, can work as university staff at higher education institutions.

Early Childhood Education Salaries

To better understand earning potential for early childhood education staff, PSC analyzed data from Lightcast, a data-reporting tool available to Ann Arbor SPARK, and examined earnings in the ECE industry and in specific positions.

Overall, ECE staff in the region earn, on average, $32,769 annually across all position types (Exhibit 10). The regional average is over $10,000 less than the estimated cost of living for a single adult living in Washtenaw or Livingston counties, which shows that working in child care is likely not feasible for many individuals who live across the region.

EXHIBIT 10. Median Annual Earnings of All Child Care Professionals by County
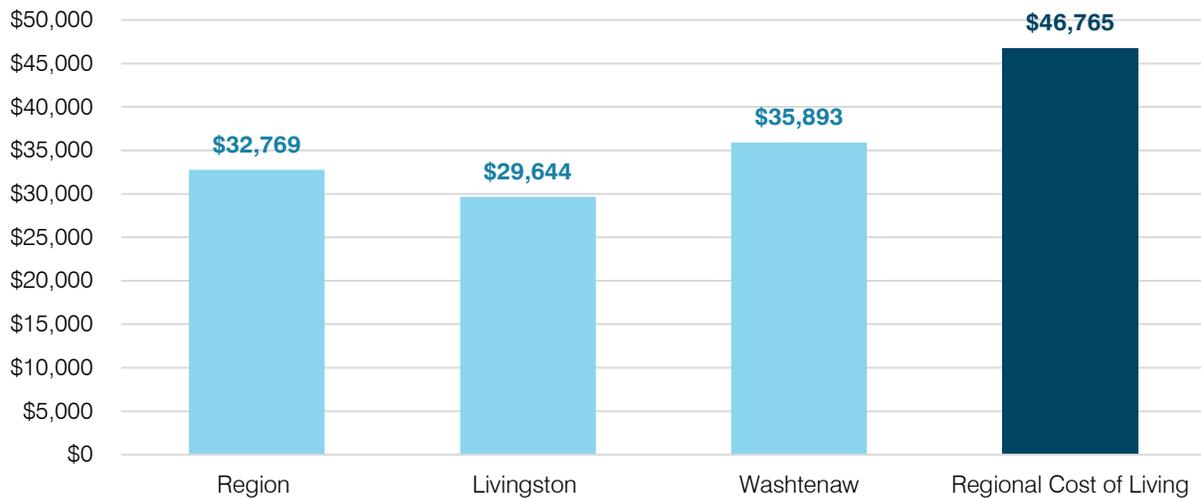
Source: Lightcast Q1 2023 Data Report.

Child care administrators and early childhood education staff across the region earn, on average, $43.49 and $11.77 per hour, respectively (Exhibits 11 and 12). If staff in either role works an average of 40 hours per week in a 52-week year, the approximate annual salary is $90,459 for administrative staff and $24,482 for early childhood staff. The average regional wage for early childhood staff, specifically, is especially concerning; their salary is approximately $40,000 less than the area median household income. In addition, the federal poverty guideline for a family of three is $24,860, meaning that a single parent with two children of their own working in child care would be living in poverty.

EXHIBIT 11. Median Hourly Wage for Child Care Administrators by County

Source: Lightcast 2022 Data Report.

EXHIBIT 12. Median Hourly Wage for Early Childhood Education Staff by County

Source: Lightcast 2022 Data Report.

Turnover rates among all occupations within the early childhood education industry are quite high in the region. However, the turnover rate specifically for child care workers is exceptionally high at 88 percent and 84 percent, respectively, in Livingston and Washtenaw counties (Exhibit 13).

EXHIBIT 13. Child Care Turnover Rates by Occupation and Location

Occupation	Livingston County	Washtenaw County
Preschool teachers, except special education	56%	56%
Teaching assistants, except postsecondary	46%	46%
Child care workers	88%	84%
Education and child care administrators	31%	26%

Notes: The turnover rates for these roles in a self-employed capacity were excluded due to insufficient data.
Source: Lightcast 2022 Data Report.

Conclusion

PSC's examination of child care data and trends in the Livingston and Washtenaw County region highlights several key trends within the child care market. There are not enough child care slots for the number of children in our region, nor is child care affordable for most parents. Additionally, salaries for early childhood staff, such as child care staff, are significantly less than the median area household income and, in some cases, may be below the poverty level. Data from this preliminary research will be used alongside data from family, provider, and local business surveys to inform a strategic planning process to identify actionable steps to increase the supply of child care providers in the region.

Appendix 1. Child Care Location Map

This map shows the locations of child care providers in the region (green circles) compared to the density of children 14 and under in the region. The larger the radius of the circle, the more seats that provider is licensed to serve. An interactive version of this map that allows you to isolate these layers will be made available at annarborusa.org.
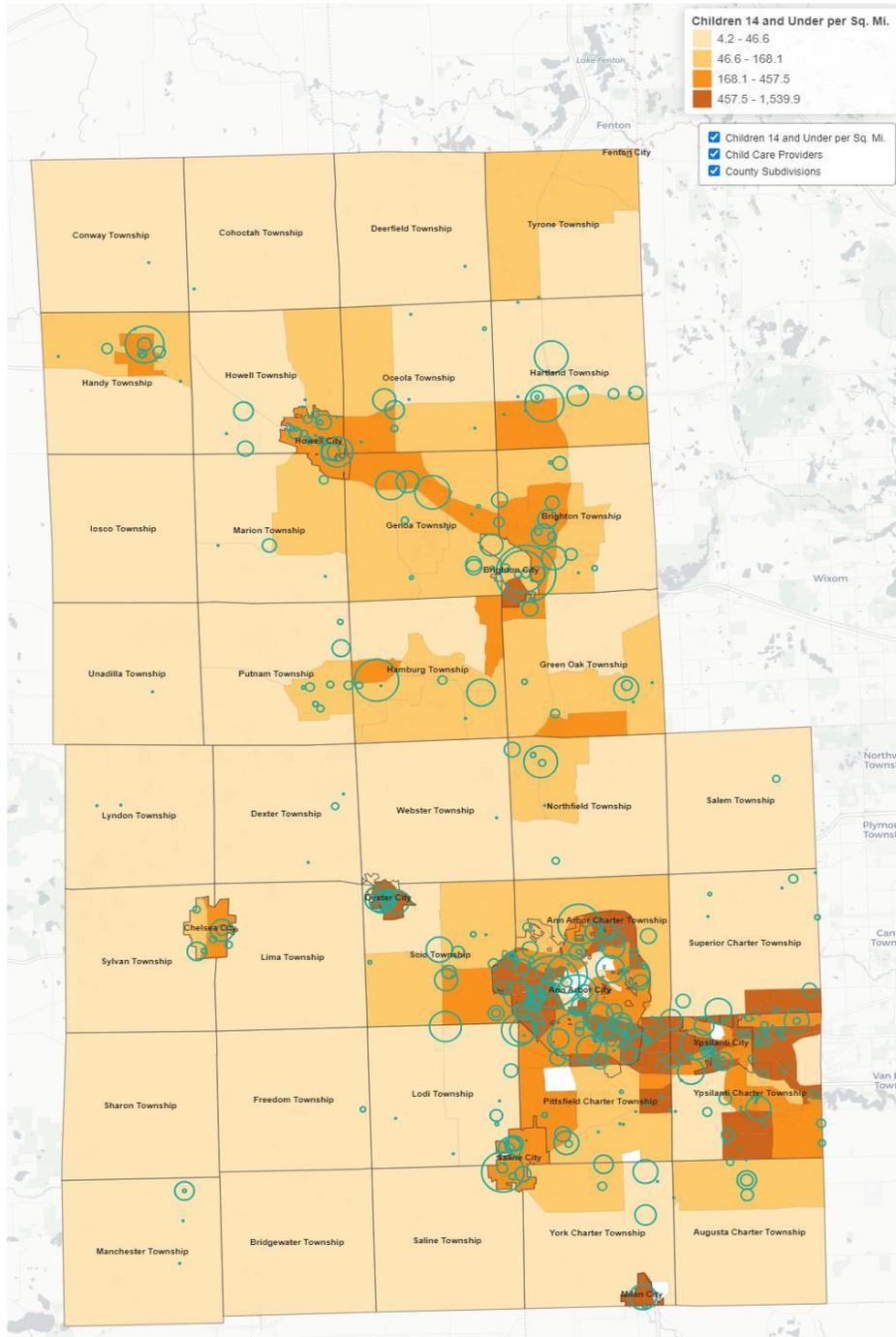
Appendix C. Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Parent Survey

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition

Parent Survey

The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition is a group of community leaders in each county who want to increase the supply of high-quality child care. The coalition is using survey research to inform data-driven decisions as they create an action plan to improve child care in the region. We want to hear from parents in the community what their experiences have been accessing, or struggling to access, child care to ensure our work is centered on parent needs.

Anything you share in the survey will remain anonymous and will be combined with answers from other individuals taking the survey.

Current Child Care Circumstances

1. Which of the following best fits your current child care situation?

- I have access to child care that meets my family's needs
- I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs
- I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking
- I do not have access to child care, and I am not actively looking

2. By age group, please check all of the child care arrangements you have used on a regular basis over the past 12 months.

	Infant or Toddler (0–2)	Preschooler (3–5)	School Age (6–12)
Licensed child care center			
Early Head Start/Head Start/Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)			
Licensed home-based care			
Private pre-K program			
Tribal child care services			
Relative care (e.g., grandparent, aunt/uncle)			
Friend, neighbor, or other unlicensed nonrelative care			

Nanny or nanny share			
Community-based before-/after-school program			
School-based before-/after-school program			
Summer camps/programs			
Other, please describe:			

3. Rather than utilizing one of the above options, have you (or your child's other parent) served as a child care provider (e.g., stay-at-home parent, started an at-home daycare center to watch your and other kids, etc.)? (Y/N)

4. How far away is your current child care arrangement from **your home**?
- Less than 5 miles away
- 5–10 miles away
- 11–15 miles away
- More than 15 miles away
- Not applicable

5. How far away is your current child care arrangement from **your workplace**?
- Less than 5 miles away
- 5–10 miles away
- 11–15 miles away
- More than 15 miles away
- Not applicable

Child Care Needs and Barriers

6. Which of the following describe the kinds of child care you need and do or don't have access to?

For each kind of care you select in the first column, please indicate in the second column if you have access to that kind of care. If you do not see the second column, please scroll right.

	I need this kind of care	I have access to this kind of care	
	Select if this kind of care is needed	Yes	No
Weekday care			
Weekend care			
Full-day care			
Half-day care			
Care five days per week			
Care more than five days per week			

Care fewer than five days per week			
Care during daytime hours (6:00 AM–6:00 PM)			
Care during overnight hours (6:00 PM–6:00 AM)			
Before-school care (6:00–9:00 AM)			
After-school care (3:00–6:00 PM)			
Drop-in/emergent care			
Special needs care			
Sick child care			
Summer break care			
Home-based care			
Center-/school-based care			
Other, please describe: [text box]			

7. Which of the following have prevented you from accessing the child care you need? Check all that apply.

- Cost of care
- Open spots are not available
- Hours/days of care offered
- Finding care that matches work schedule
- Location/distance from home or work
- Transportation to/from care
- Dependability of care
- Lack of care that I consider to be high quality
- Lack of paid time off work to care for own children
- Finding care for child with additional needs
- Finding backup care (e.g., sick child, school/center closures, caregiver unavailability)
- Lack of care that meets my family's preferences (e.g., language spoken, faith-based, nature-based)
- I have not experienced any barriers to accessing the child care I need
- Other, please describe: [text box]

Paying for Child Care

8. For each age level, indicate the number of children who live in your household who are currently in active child care (whether they live there all or some of the time). [numerical entry]

- Aged 0–2
- Aged 3–5
- Aged 6–12
- Aged 13–18
- Aged 19+

9. How much does your family currently spend on child care per month per age group in your family? **Please round to the nearest dollar.** [numerical input per age group]
   • Aged 0–2
   • Aged 3–5
   • Aged 6–12
   • Aged 13–18
   • Aged 19+

10. To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of your household income goes to child care costs? [numerical input]

11. Which of the following best reflects your financial situation?
   • My family struggles to make ends meet, and the cost of child care is a big reason why
   • My family struggles to make ends meet regardless of the cost of child care
   • My family is not currently struggling to make ends meet

Priorities

12. How important are each of the following when considering your child care arrangement? [Not at all important, Slightly important, Important, Very important]

   • Cost
   • Location/proximity
   • Safety
   • Cleanliness
   • Curriculum/learning environment
   • Cultural diversity
   • Caregivers that share our family's culture or language
   • Staff qualifications
   • Healthy eating
   • Religious teachings
   • Trust
   • Having a prior relationship with the caregiver/educator

Impact

13. Which of the following have you experienced because your child care needs were not fully met? Check all that apply.

   • Job attendance trouble (missing work, arriving late, leaving early, etc.)
   • Productivity/performance trouble (distracted, worried, etc.)
   • Employment loss due to firing
   • Employment loss due to needing to resign

- Underemployment (working fewer hours or at a position you are overqualified for)
- Missing appointments and/or engagements (health, personal, social)
- Missing important payments (e.g., mortgage, rent, bills) due to cost of childcare
- Other, please describe: [text box]
- I have not experienced any issues because of unmet child care needs

Ideal Child Care Circumstances

Earlier in this survey, you were asked about your current or recent child care situations. These next few questions will ask you about what your ideal child care scenario would look like if costs were not a constraint.

14. In your ideal scenario, what type of child care arrangement(s) would you most prefer?

	Infant or Toddler (0–2)	Preschooler (3–5)	School Age (6–12)
Licensed child care center			
Early Head Start/Head Start/Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)			
Licensed home-based care			
Private pre-K program			
Tribal child care services			
Relative care (e.g., grandparent, aunt/uncle)			
Friend, neighbor, or other unlicensed nonrelative care			
Nanny or nanny share			
Community-based before-/after-school program			
School-based before-/after-school program			
Summer camps/programs			
Parent care (myself or the child's other parent)			
Other, please describe:			

15. In your ideal scenario, what best describes the location/proximity of care?
- My child care is close to my child's home
- My child care is close to my (or my partner's/coparent's) workplace
- I do not have a strong preference to where my child care is located

Demographics

16. Where do you live?

- Livingston County
- Washtenaw County
- Somewhere else, please describe

If Livingston, drop down of Livingston municipalities
If Washtenaw, drop down of Washtenaw municipalities
    If Somewhere else, open response option

17. Where do you work?

- Livingston County
- Washtenaw County
- Somewhere else

  If Livingston, drop down of Livingston municipalities
  If Washtenaw, drop down of Washtenaw municipalities

18. How many adults live in your household? (Numerical value input)

19. How many of these adults take an active or supportive role parenting your child? (Numerical value input)

20. What is your annual household income (before taxes)?

- Less than $25,000
- $25,001–$50,000
- $50,001–$100,000
- $100,001–$150,000
- $150,001–$200,000
- More than $200,000
- Prefer not to answer

21. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender male
- Transgender female
- Gender variant/nonconforming
- Prefer to self-describe: [text box]
- Prefer not to answer

22. What is your racial or ethnic identity? Check all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Arab or Middle Eastern/North African
- Asian
- Black or African American

- Hispanic, Latinx, or of Spanish origin
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Some other race: [text box]
- Prefer not to answer

Conclusion Page

Thank you for sharing your feedback and time today. Please click here to indicate your interest in participating in future conversations on this topic and to enter a raffle to win a $25 Visa gift card to thank you for completion of this survey.

If you would like to learn more about the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, please visit annarborusa.org/childcare email plindeman@publicsectorconsultants.com

Separate Survey

Enter me in the drawing for a $25 Visa gift card. <Checkbox>

I am willing to be contacted about future opportunities to give input. <Checkbox>

Please enter your email address. The coalition may contact you in the coming weeks if you win the raffle or are selected to participate in future discussions on this topic. This field is not connected to your answers on the survey, so entering your email address does not compromise your survey response anonymity.

<short answer to enter email>

If you would like to learn more about the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, please visit annarborusa.org/childcare or email plindeman@publicsectorconsultants.com

Appendix D. Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Parent Survey Summary

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition

Parent Survey Summary

July 2023

Introduction

To improve and increase the availability of high-quality child care, the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, a group of community leaders, engaged Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to assist them to create a plan for their region. To support data-driven decisions for the plan and ensure the coalition's work centers on parent needs, the coalition and PSC developed and fielded a survey of parents in the two counties to learn about their experiences accessing child care. This report shares PSC's analysis of the 341 survey responses.

Respondent Demographics

All respondents either live and/or work in Livingston or Washtenaw Counties, with the largest percentage living or working in Washtenaw County (Exhibits 1 and 2).

EXHIBIT 1. County Lived In

Washtenaw County 68%
Livingston County 28%
Another county 3%
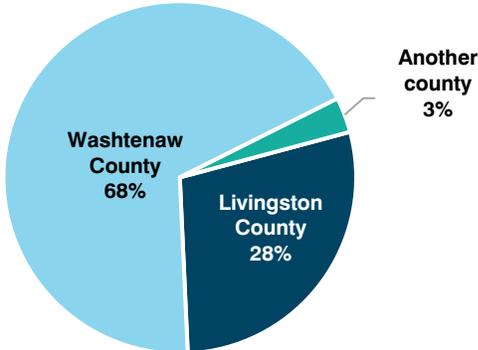
N = 341

EXHIBIT 2. County Worked In

Washtenaw County 69%
Livingston County 18%
Another county 13%
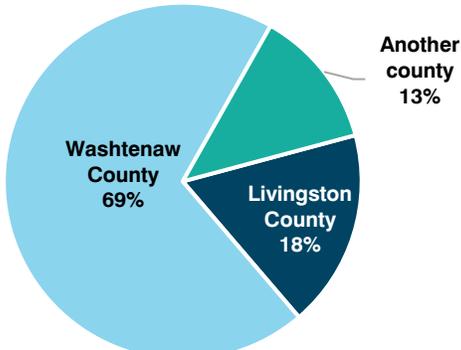
N = 324

Respondents reported an average of 2.1 adults living in their households, with roughly the same number of adults in the household (2.0) taking an active or supportive role in parenting (Exhibit 3). The average number of children in active child care in the households varied very little by age group, ranging from 1.1 to 1.3.

	Number of Respondents	Average	Range
Number of adults living in household	341	2.1	1–6
Number of adults taking an active or supportive role in parenting a child	340	2.0	1–5
Number of children age 0–2 in active care	132	1.1	1–3
Number of children age 3–5 in active care	187	1.2	1–4
Number of children age 6–12 in active care	125	1.3	1–3
Number of children age 13–18 in active care	14	1.1	1–2
Number of children age 19 and older in active care	3	2.0	1–4

N = 341

Nearly 60 percent of respondents had annual household incomes of more than $100,000; 23 percent had incomes between $50,001 and $100,000; and 19 percent had annual household incomes of $50,000 or less (Exhibit 4).

EXHIBIT 4. Income
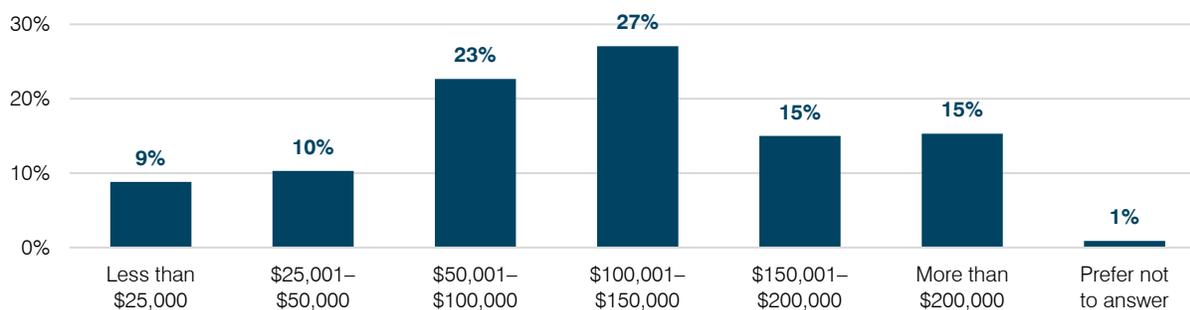
N = 340

Most respondents were female (86 percent) and white (78 percent). Twelve percent were male and 13 percent were Black or African American (Exhibits 5 and 6).

EXHIBIT 5. Gender

Male 12%

Gender variant/
nonconforming
1%

Prefer not
to answer
1%

Female
86%
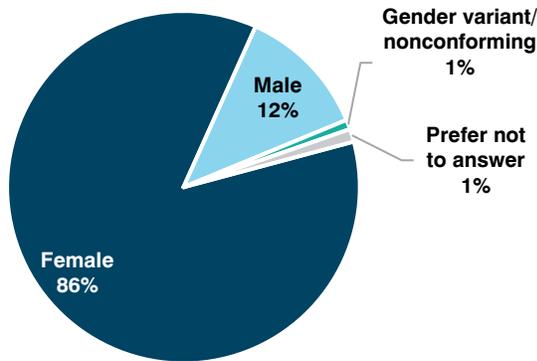
N = 340

EXHIBIT 6. Race and Ethnicity

White	78%
Black or African American	13%
Asian	5%
Hispanic, Latinx, or of Spanish origin	4%
Arab or Middle Eastern/North African	2%
Prefer not to answer	2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Some other race	1%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%
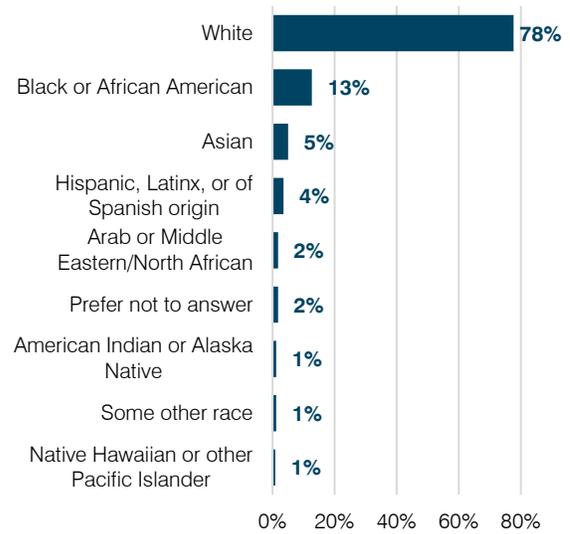
N = 340

Child Care Circumstances

Most respondents (80 percent) said they had access to child care; however, 41 percent said child care did not fully meet their family needs. Additionally, 14 percent said they did not have access to child care and were actively looking (Exhibit 7).

EXHIBIT 7. Percentage with Current Access to Child Care

I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs	41%
I have access to child care that meets my family's needs	39%
I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking	14%
I do not have access to child care, and I am not actively looking	6%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%
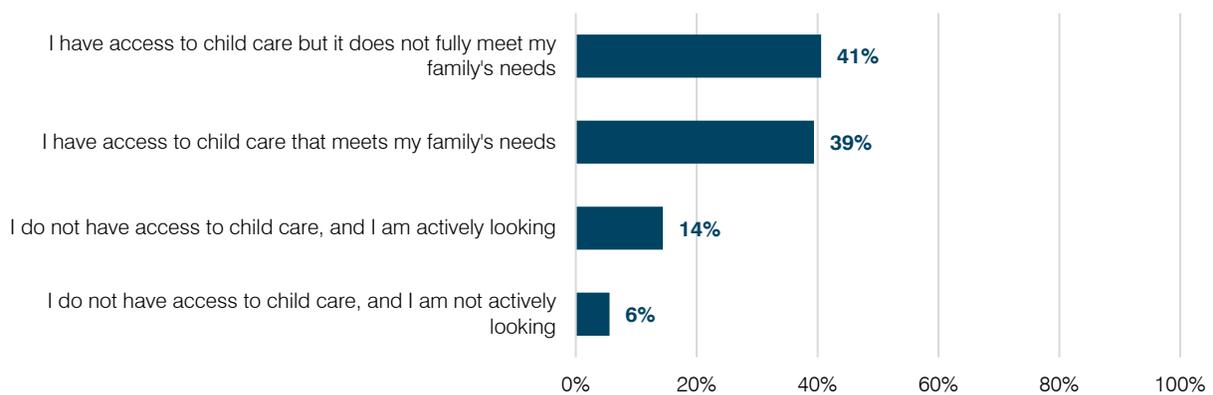
N = 340

At the time of the survey, 59 percent of respondents in Washtenaw County and 46 percent in Livingston County said they either had care that did not fully meet their family's needs or they did not have care and were actively looking for care (Exhibit 8).

EXHIBIT 8. Percentage with Current Access to Child Care by County

County	I have access to child care that meets my family's needs	I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs	I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking	I do not have access to child care, and I am NOT actively looking
Livingston County	42%	37%	9%	11%
Washtenaw County	38%	43%	16%	3%

- ■ I have access to child care that meets my family's needs
- ■ I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs
- ■ I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking
- ■ I do not have access to child care, and I am NOT actively looking

N = varied by county

A higher percentage of nonwhite respondents reported either having care that did not fully meet their needs or did not have care and were actively looking for care than white respondents—66 percent compared to 51 percent (Exhibit 9).

EXHIBIT 9. Percentage with Current Access to Child Care by Race

Race	I have access to child care that meets my family's needs	I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs	I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking	I do not have access to child care, and I am NOT actively looking
Nonwhite respondents (N = 68)	32%	40%	26%	1%
White respondents (N = 251)	43%	40%	11%	6%

- ■ I have access to child care that meets my family's needs
- ■ I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs
- ■ I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking
- ■ I d not have access to child care, and I am NOT actively looking

N = varied by race

Additionally, a higher percentage of respondents with $100,000 or less in annual household income either had care that did not fully meet their needs or did not have care and were actively looking for care than respondents with an annual household income of more than $100,000—63 percent compared to 50 percent (Exhibit 10).

	I have access to child care that meets my family's needs	I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs	I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking	I do not have access to child care, and I am NOT actively looking
$100,000 or less (N = 142)	29%	40%	23%	8%
More than $100,000 (N = 194)	47%	41%	9%	3%

■ I have access to child care that meets my family's needs

■ I have access to child care but it does not fully meet my family's needs

■ I do not have access to child care, and I am actively looking

■ I d not have access to child care, and I am NOT actively looking

N = varied by household income

Current and Ideal Child Care Arrangements

By age group, respondents shared which child care arrangements they used on a regular basis over the past 12 months (current circumstances) and their most preferable type of child care arrangements (ideal circumstances).

Infants and Toddlers

At the time of the survey, a greater percentage of respondents used licensed child care centers (60 percent), relative care (50 percent), and unlicensed nonrelative care (24 percent) than other types of care for their infant or toddler. However, under ideal circumstances, nearly three-quarters of respondents (73 percent) preferred to have their infant or toddler in a licensed child care center and only 27 percent and 12 percent, respectively, preferred to have their infants or toddlers in the care of a relative or unlicensed nonrelative (Exhibit 11).

Licensed child care center — 60% / 73%
Relative care — 50% / 27%
Friend, neighbor, or other unlicensed nonrelative care — 24% / 12%
Nanny or nanny share — 17% / 26%
Early Head Start/Head Start/Great Start Readiness Program — 14% / 23%
Licensed home-based care — 10% / 18%
School-based before-/after-school program — 4% / 6%
Summer camps/programs — 3% / 10%
Private pre-K program — 3% / 9%
Tribal child care services — 2% / 3%
Community-based before-/after-school program — 1% / 9%

■ Current circumstances (N = 155) ■ Ideal circumstances (N = 164)
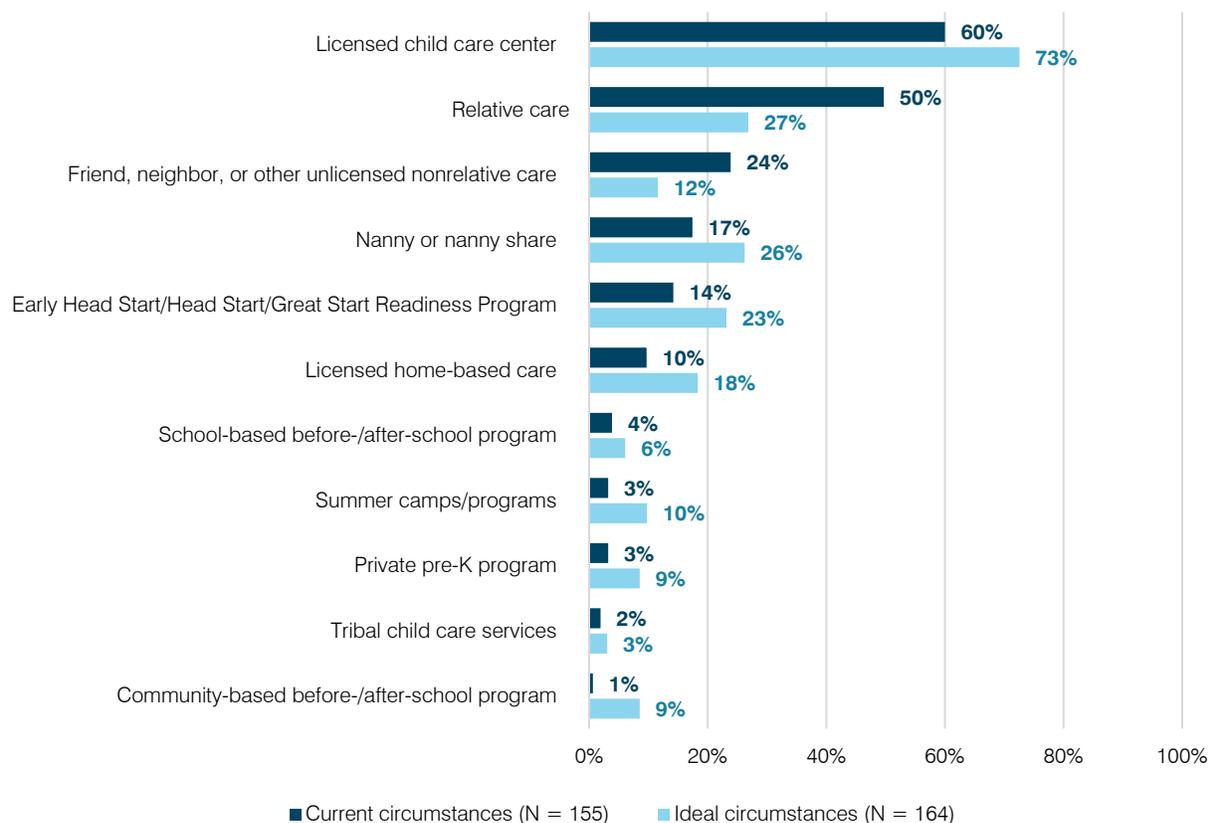
N = varied by circumstance
Note: Percentages may total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Preschool-age Children

The percentage of respondents who at the time of the survey used licensed child care centers and those who would ideally use licensed child care centers for their preschool-age children was nearly equal (75 percent and 76 percent, respectively). Larger percentages of respondents reported currently using relative care (45 percent) or unlicensed nonrelative care (30 percent) for care of their preschool-age children than reported either of those as their ideal child care setting (24 percent and 17 percent, respectively) (Exhibit 12).

EXHIBIT 12. Current and Ideal Child Care Circumstances for Preschool-age Children

Circumstance	Current	Ideal
Licensed child care center	75%	76%
Relative care	44%	24%
Friend, neighbor, or other unlicensed nonrelative care	29%	17%
Early Head Start/Head Start/Great Start Readiness Program	22%	31%
Private pre-K program	15%	24%
Summer camps/programs	15%	23%
Licensed home-based care	12%	19%
Nanny or nanny share	11%	19%
Community-based before-/after-school program	7%	16%
School-based before-/after-school program	7%	21%
Tribal child care services	4%	5%

■ Current circumstances (N = 207)   ■ Ideal cirrcumstance (N = 221)

N = varied by circumstance
Note: Percentages may total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

School-age Children

For school-age children, the largest percentage of respondents (57 percent) said that their current child care circumstances included summer camps and programs, and even more (64 percent) said that was their ideal type of care for this age group. While nearly half (47 percent) reported using relative care for their school-age children, only 24 percent indicated that was their ideal scenario (Exhibit 13).

Summer camps/programs — 57% / 64%
Relative care — 47% / 24%
Licensed child care center — 36% / 37%
Friend, neighbor, or other unlicensed nonrelative care — 35% / 17%
School-based before-/after-school program — 33% / 57%
Community-based before-/after-school program — 15% / 30%
Licensed home-based care — 6% / 11%
Nanny or nanny share — 6% / 15%
Early Head Start/Head Start/Great Start Readiness Program — 6% / 8%
Private pre-K program — 4% / 8%
Tribal child care services — 4% / 8%

■ Current circumstances (N = 144)   ■ Ideal circumstances (N = 169)
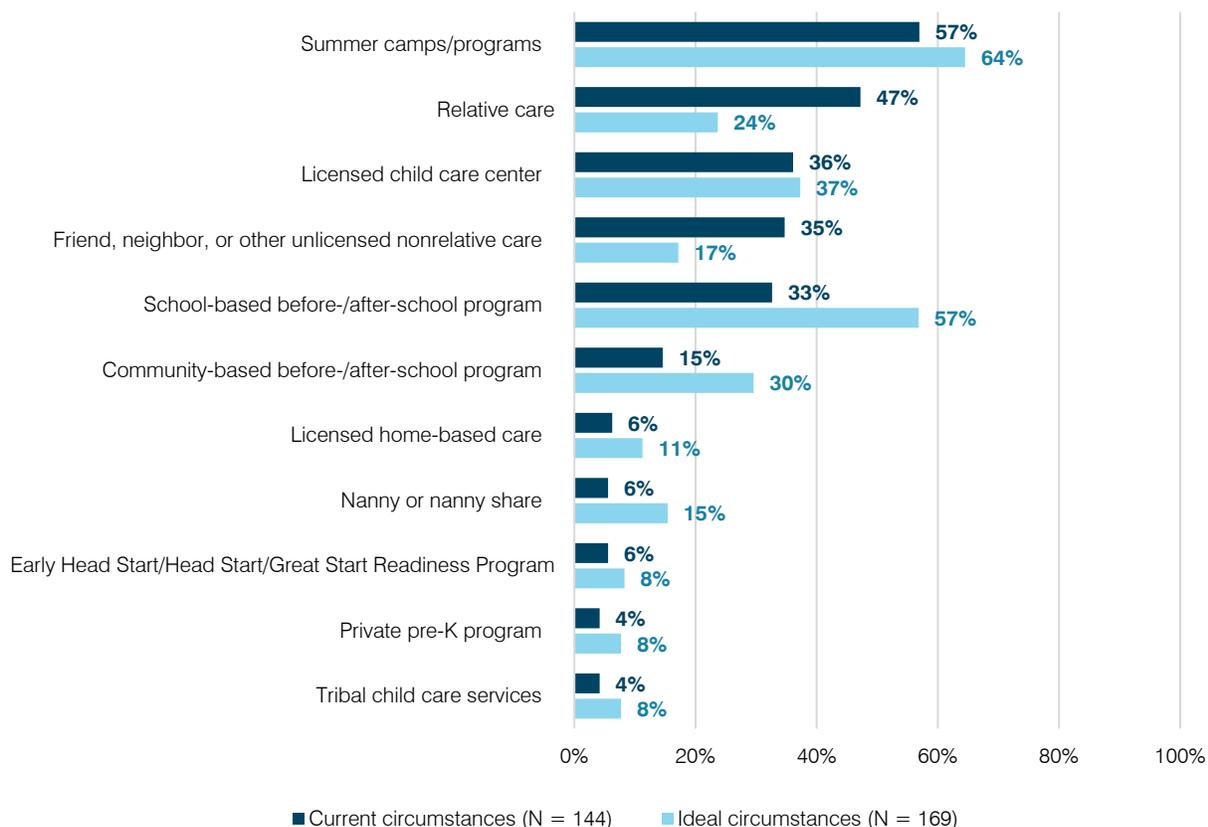
N = varied by circumstance
Note: Percentages may total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Parent Care

Nearly half (47 percent) of all respondents said they were currently their child's care provider. More than one-quarter of respondents with infants or toddlers said that their ideal care was parent care—that is, care from themselves or the child's other parent, as did 26 percent of respondents with preschoolers and 31 percent of respondents with school-age children (Exhibit 14).

EXHIBIT 14. Percentage of Respondents Using Parent Care in Lieu of Other Care or Who Would Ideally Use Parent Care

Current circumstances (N = 327) — 47%
Ideal circumstances Infants and toddlers (N = 164) — 27%
Ideal circumstances Preschoolers (N = 221) — 26%
Ideal circumstances School-age children (N = 169) — 31%
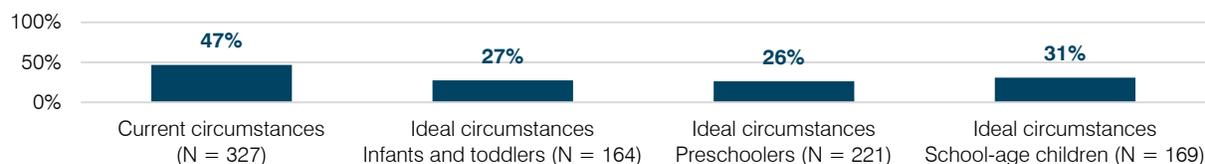
N = varied between current and ideal circumstances

Distance Between Home or Workplace and Child Care Setting

More than 70 percent of respondents said their current child care arrangement was ten miles or less away from their home, and just over half said their current arrangement was ten miles or less from their workplace (Exhibit 15). One-fifth of respondents, however, had a child care arrangement more than 15 miles away from their workplace.

EXHIBIT 15. Distance of Current Child Care Arrangement from the Home or Workplace

	Less than 5 miles away	5–10 miles away	11–15 miles away	More than 15 miles away
Distance from home (N = 340)	38%	33%	9%	6%
Distance from workplace (N = 338)	32%	22%	10%	20%
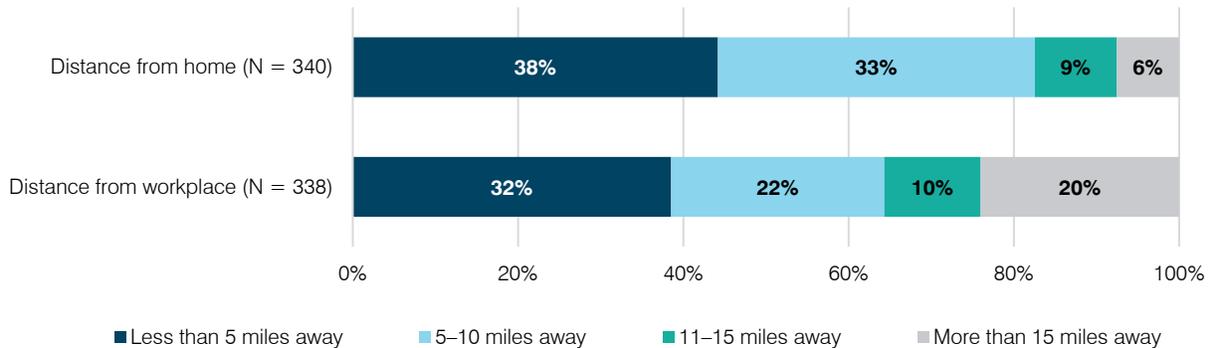
N = varied by factor

Nearly three-quarters of respondents said that they preferred their child care to be close to the child's home and 19 percent said preferred care close to the parent's workplace (Exhibit 16).

EXHIBIT 16. Ideal Location of Child Care

- 72% — My ideal child care is close to my child's home
- 19% — My ideal child care is close to my (or my partner's/coparent's) workplace
- 8% — I do not have a strong preference to where my ideal child care is located

N = 337
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Priorities For Child Care Arrangements

The top five factors for child care arrangements that families rated as very important were safety, trust, cleanliness, staff qualifications, and curriculum/learning environment (Exhibit 17). Less importance was placed on religious teachings, having a prior relationship with the provider, and the caregiver sharing the family's culture or language.

EXHIBIT 17. Importance of Factors when Considering Child Care Arrangements

Factor	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Safety	88%	10%	2%	0.3%
Trust	82%	15%	3%	
Cleanliness	72%	24%	4%	
Staff qualifications	56%	36%	7%	0.3%
Curriculum/learning environment	53%	38%	8%	1%
Location/proximity	41%	45%	14%	1%
Cost	41%	37%	20%	3%
Healthy eating	36%	48%	13%	3%
Cultural diversity	25%	46%	24%	5%
Caregivers that share our family's culture or language	16%	31%	35%	18%
Having a prior relationship with the caregiver/educator	14%	24%	34%	29%
Religious teachings	10%	13%	15%	61%

■ Very important ■ Important ■ Slightly important ■ Not at all important

N = varied by factor
Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Across many of these factors, importance was relatively consistent between the counties, though there were some differences (Exhibit 18). Livingston County families placed a higher importance on cost and healthy eating, whereas Washtenaw County families were more likely to place added importance on cultural diversity.

EXHIBIT 18. Percentage Rating Factors Important or Very Important by County

Factor	Livingston County (N ranged from 95–97)	Washtenaw County (N ranged from 230–233)
Cleanliness	00%	94%
Safety	98%	97%
Trust	98%	97%
Staff qualifications	96%	91%
Healthy eating	93%	81%
Curriculum/learning environment	91%	90%
Cost	86%	72%
Location/proximity	84%	85%
Cultural diversity	53%	78%
Caregivers that share our family's culture or language	53%	43%
Having a prior relationship with the caregiver/educator	38%	39%
Religious teachings	24%	24%

■ Livingston County (N ranged from 95–97) ■ Washtenaw County (N ranged from 230–233)

N = varied by factor and county

When looking at responses by race, the largest differences in the relative importance of child care arrangement considerations were cultural diversity, having a prior relationship with the care provider, cost, caregivers who share the family's culture or language, and religious teachings (Exhibit 19). A greater percentage of nonwhite respondents rated each of these factors as important or very important than white respondents; the percentage point difference ranged from 10 to 14 percent.

EXHIBIT 19. Percentage Rating Factors Important or Very Important by Race

Factor	Nonwhite respondents	White respondents
Cleanliness	100%	95%
Trust	98%	96%
Safety	97%	98%
Curriculum/learning environment	96%	90%
Staff qualifications	95%	92%
Healthy eating	90%	84%
Location/proximity	87%	84%
Cost	85%	75%
Cultural diversity	82%	68%
Caregivers that share our family's culture or language	55%	45%
Having a prior relationship with the caregiver/educator	49%	35%
Religious teachings	31%	21%

■ Nonwhite respondents (N ranged from 66–68)   ■ White respondents (N ranged from 249–251)

N = varied by factor and race

By income, the largest differences in importance when considering child care arrangements were cost, caregivers who share the family's culture or language, having a prior relationship with the care provider, and healthy eating (Exhibit 20). Respondents with household incomes of $100,000 or less were more likely to rate these factors as important or very important than respondents with a household income greater than $100,000.

EXHIBIT 20. Percentage Rating Factors Important or Very Important by Income

Factor	$100,000 or less	More than $100,000
Safety	98%	97%
Trust	98%	96%
Cleanliness	97%	95%
Staff qualifications	97%	90%
Curriculum/learning environment	94%	88%
Healthy eating	91%	80%
Cost	91%	66%
Location/proximity	85%	85%
Cultural diversity	71%	71%
Caregivers that share our family's culture or language	54%	41%
Having a prior relationship with the caregiver/educator	44%	32%
Religious teachings	28%	20%

■ $100,000 or less (N ranged from 138–142)   ■ More than $100,000 (N ranged from 192–195)

N = varied by factor and income

Paying for Child Care

The percentage of household income that respondents said they spend on child care ranged from zero to 100 percent, with an average of 17 percent (Exhibit 21).

EXHIBIT 21. Percentage of Household Income Spent on Child Care

Average	Median	Range
17%	15%	0%–100%

N = 336
Note: Two respondents said the percentage of their household income spent on child care was more than 100 percent (480% and 2,000%). These were removed from the analysis as outliers.

Respondents also shared how much they spend on child care per month by age group. This information, combined with the number of children respondents had in active child care by age group, allowed for the calculation of and average cost of child care per child by age group. The average monthly cost per child ranged from $86 for aged 13 to 18 years old to $943 for children 0 to 2 years old (Exhibit 22).

EXHIBIT 22. Per Child Amount Spent Monthly on Child Care

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Average Cost per Child	Range
0 to 2 years old	132	$943	$0–$5,040
3 to 5 years old	187	$878	$0–$5,277
6 to 12 years old	125	$415	$0–$2,500
13 to 18 years old	5	$86	$0–$600

Note: Only respondents who provided a number of children in active care by age group were included in this analysis. If respondents had more than one child per age group in active care, an average per child cost was calculated.

Just over half of respondents said their family was not currently struggling to make ends meet; however, one-quarter said their family struggled to make ends meet, and the cost of child care was a major factor (Exhibit 23).

EXHIBIT 23. Percentage of Household Income Spent on Child Care

- 25%
- 51%
- 24%

- My family is not currently struggling to make ends meet
- My family struggles to make ends meet regardless of the cost of child care
- My family struggles to make ends meet, and the cost of child care is a big reason why
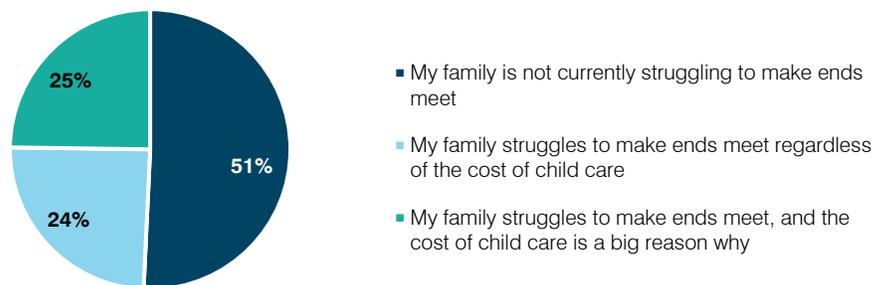
N = 335

Respondents living in Livingston County, nonwhite respondents, and respondents with an annual household income of $100,000 or less were more likely to say that their family struggled to make ends meet than their counterparts (Exhibits 24–26). This difference was considerable when considering the data by income: 73 percent of households with incomes more than $100,000 reported their family **is not** struggling to make ends meet compared to only 19 percent of households with incomes of $100,000 or less (Exhibit 26).

EXHIBIT 24. Percentage of Household Income Spent on Child Care by County

	My family struggles to make ends meet, and the cost of child care is a big reason why	My family struggles to make ends meet, regardless of the cost of child care	My family is not struggling to make ends meet
Livingston County (N = 94)	26%	32%	43%
Washtenaw County (N = 230)	23%	23%	54%

- My family struggles to make ends meet, and the cost of child care is a big reason why
- My family struggles to make ends meet, regardless of the cost of child care
- My family is not struggling to make ends meet

N = varied by county

EXHIBIT 25. Percentage of Household Income Spent on Child Care by Race

Nonwhite respondents (N = 67)	30%	34%	36%
White respondents (N = 248)	23%	22%	55%

- My family struggles to make ends meet, and the cost of child care is a big reason why
- My family struggles to make ends meet, regardless of the cost of child care
- My family is not struggling to make ends meet
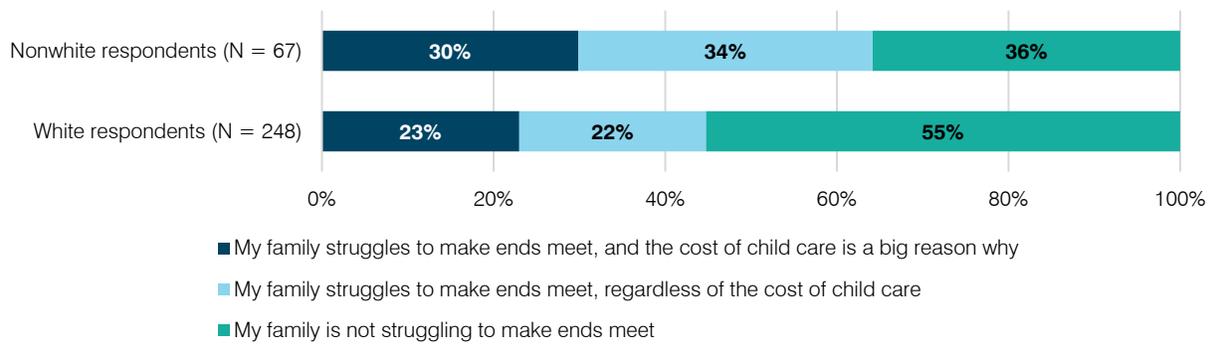
N = varied by race

EXHIBIT 26. Percentage of Household Income Spent on Child Care by Income

$100,000 or less (N = 139)	37%	43%	19%
More than $100,000 (N = 192)	16%	11%	73%

- My family struggles to make ends meet, and the cost of child care is a big reason why
- My family struggles to make ends meet, regardless of the cost of child care
- My family is not struggling to make ends meet
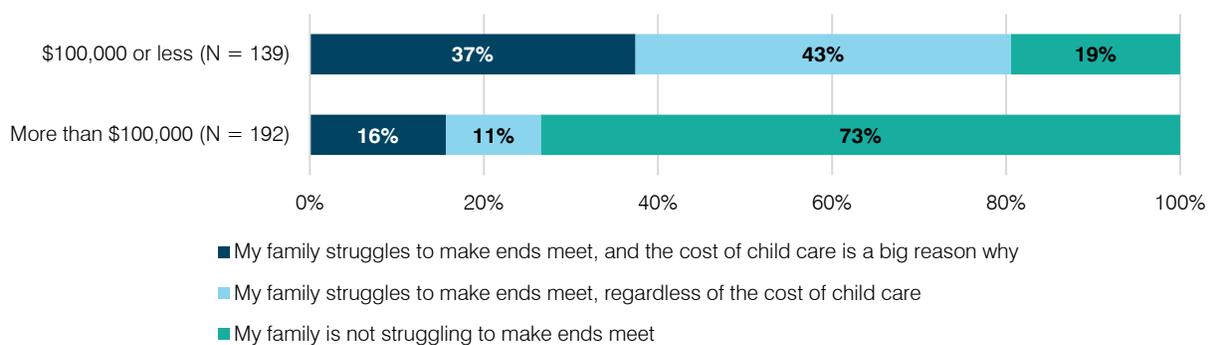
N = varied by income

Child Care Needs and Barriers

The top five kinds of care needed among survey respondents were care during daytime hours (76 percent), weekday care (76 percent), full-day care (60 percent), care five days a week (49 percent), and summer break care (44 percent). More than one-third of respondents needed after-school care, drop-in/emergent care, sick child care, or center-/school-based care (Exhibit 27).

EXHIBIT 27. Kinds of Child Care Needed

Kind of Care	Percent
Care during daytime hours (6:00 AM–6:00 PM)	76%
Weekday care	76%
Full-day care	60%
Care five days per week	49%
Summer break care	44%
After-school care (3:00–6:00 PM)	40%
Drop-in/emergent care	37%
Sick child care	36%
Center-/school-based care	34%
Before-school care (6:00–9:00 AM)	26%
Care fewer than five days per week	22%
Weekend care	21%
Half-day care	16%
Home-based care	15%
Care during overnight hours (6:00 PM–6:00 AM)	13%
Special needs care	12%
Care more than five days per week	9%

N = 328
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

A larger percentage of Livingston County residents needed summer break care than Washtenaw County residents. A larger percentage of Washtenaw County residents needed weekday and full-day care than Livingston County residents (Exhibit 28).

EXHIBIT 28. Kinds of Child Care Needed by County

Kind of care	Livingston County (N = 91)	Washtenaw County (N = 227)
Care during daytime hours (6:00 AM–6:00 PM)	70%	78%
Weekday care	68%	78%
Summer break care	54%	41%
Full-day care	49%	63%
Care five days per week	49%	48%
Drop-in/emergent care	37%	37%
Sick child care	37%	35%
After-school care (3:00–6:00 PM)	36%	42%
Center-/school-based care	36%	33%
Before-school care (6:00–9:00 AM)	27%	26%
Care fewer than five days per week	26%	20%
Weekend care	23%	21%
Half-day care	20%	14%
Special needs care	18%	10%
Home-based care	14%	15%
Care during overnight hours (6:00 PM–6:00 AM)	14%	13%
Care more than five days per week	7%	10%

■ Livingston County (N = 91)   ■ Washtenaw County (N = 227)

N = varied by county
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

A larger percentage of nonwhite respondents needed care during overnight hours and on weekends than did white respondents. More white respondents needed care fewer than five days per week than nonwhite respondents (Exhibit 29).

EXHIBIT 29. Kinds of Child Care Needed by Race

Kind of Care	Nonwhite respondents (N = 66)	White respondents (N = 242)
Care during daytime hours (6:00 AM–6:00 PM)	74%	78%
Weekday care	71%	78%
Full-day care	52%	62%
Care five days per week	45%	51%
Drop-in/emergent care	41%	36%
Summer break care	39%	45%
Sick child care	38%	37%
After-school care (3:00–6:00 PM)	35%	41%
Center-/school-based care	32%	35%
Weekend care	29%	19%
Before-school care (6:00–9:00 AM)	24%	26%
Care during overnight hours (6:00 PM–6:00 AM)	23%	9%
Home-based care	20%	14%
Half-day care	17%	15%
Special needs care	14%	10%
Care more than five days per week	14%	7%
Care fewer than five days per week	12%	25%
Other, please describe	0%	2%

■ Nonwhite respondents (N = 66)   ■ White respondents (N = 242)

N = varied by race
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

A larger percentage of respondents in the lower income range need care during overnight hours and summer break care than those with higher annual household incomes (Exhibit 30).

EXHIBIT 30. Kinds of Child Care Needed by Income

Kind of Care	$100,000 or less (N = 135)	More than $100,000 (N = 189)
Care during daytime hours (6:00 AM–6:00 PM)	71%	80%
Weekday care	67%	81%
Full-day care	56%	64%
Summer break care	50%	39%
Care five days per week	44%	52%
Drop-in/emergent care	37%	37%
After-school care (3:00–6:00 PM)	35%	43%
Center-/school-based care	32%	35%
Sick child care	31%	40%
Before-school care (6:00–9:00 AM)	26%	26%
Weekend care	24%	19%
Care during overnight hours (6:00 PM–6:00 AM)	21%	6%
Care fewer than five days per week	20%	24%
Half-day care	19%	14%
Home-based care	18%	12%
Special needs care	16%	8%
Care more than five days per week	10%	7%
Other, please describe	1%	2%

■ $100,000 or less (N = 135) ■ More than $100,000 (N = 189)

N = varied by income
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Care Access

A higher percentage of respondents have access to more traditional types of child care, while fewer have access to care outside of weekday, full-time, daytime care arrangements. For example, most respondents (80 percent) said they do not have access to sick child care, 73 percent do not have access special needs care, and more than 60 percent do not have access to care more than five days per week, home-based care, drop-in/emergent care, or care during overnight hours (Exhibit 31).

EXHIBIT 31. Access to Needed Kinds of Care

Kind of Care	Have access to needed care	Do not have access to needed care
Sick child care (N = 123)	20%	80%
Special needs care (N = 66)	27%	73%
Care more than five days per week (N = 52)	35%	65%
Home-based care (N = 64)	36%	64%
Drop-in/emergent care (N = 123)	37%	63%
Care during overnight hours (N = 67)	39%	61%
Weekend care (N = 86)	41%	59%
Before-school care (N = 96)	49%	51%
Half-day care (N = 73)	52%	48%
After-school care (N = 136)	54%	46%
Care fewer than five days per week (N = 94)	62%	38%
Center-/school-based care (N = 123)	64%	36%
Summer break care (N = 144)	65%	35%
Care five days per week (N = 172)	73%	27%
Full-day care (N = 190)	76%	24%
Care during daytime hours (N = 240)	76%	24%
Weekday care (N = 243)	82%	18%

■ Have access to needed care ■ Do not have access to needed care

N = varied by kind of care
Note: The analysis included all responses to the survey question about access to needed care, regardless of whether the respondent said they needed the type of care for which they were answering the access question. An analysis of the matched data pairs is shown in Exhibit 31.

Of those who stated a need for sick child care, 84 percent said they did not have access to this kind of care. Among those who need home-based care, 70 percent do not have access to it. Around two-thirds of those needing access to special needs care, drop-in/emergent care, or care during overnight hours did not have access to those child care arrangements. Additionally, more than half of those who needed care more than five days per week or half-day care did not have access (Exhibit 32).

EXHIBIT 32. No Access to Needed Kinds of Care

Kind of care	Percentage
Sick child care (N = 100)	84%
Home-based care (N = 37)	70%
Special needs care (N = 30)	67%
Drop-in/emergent care (N = 98)	65%
Care during overnight hours (N = 34)	65%
Weekend care (N = 51)	63%
Care more than five days per week (N = 19)	58%
Half-day care (N = 41)	51%
After-school care (N = 106)	47%
Before-school care (N = 64)	47%
Care fewer than five days per week (N = 64)	36%
Summer break care (N = 121)	34%
Center-/school-based care (N = 97)	31%
Care during daytime hours (N = 217)	26%
Full-day care (N = 166)	25%
Care five days per week (N = 140)	24%
Weekday care (N = 216)	19%

N = varied by kind of care
Note: Only those respondents who provided responses to both the need and access questions for each kind of care were included in the analysis.

Barriers to Accessing Care

More than half of respondents (56 percent) said the cost of care had prevented them from accessing the child care they needed. Additionally, 44 percent said that finding back up care was an issue and 44 percent said that open spots were not available to meet their needs. More than two-thirds said that the hours and days of care offered prevented them from accessing the care they needed, and the same percentage said they had difficulty finding care that matched their work schedule. Only 9 percent of respondents said they had not experienced any barriers to accessing the child care they needed (Exhibit 33).

EXHIBIT 33. Barriers to Care Access

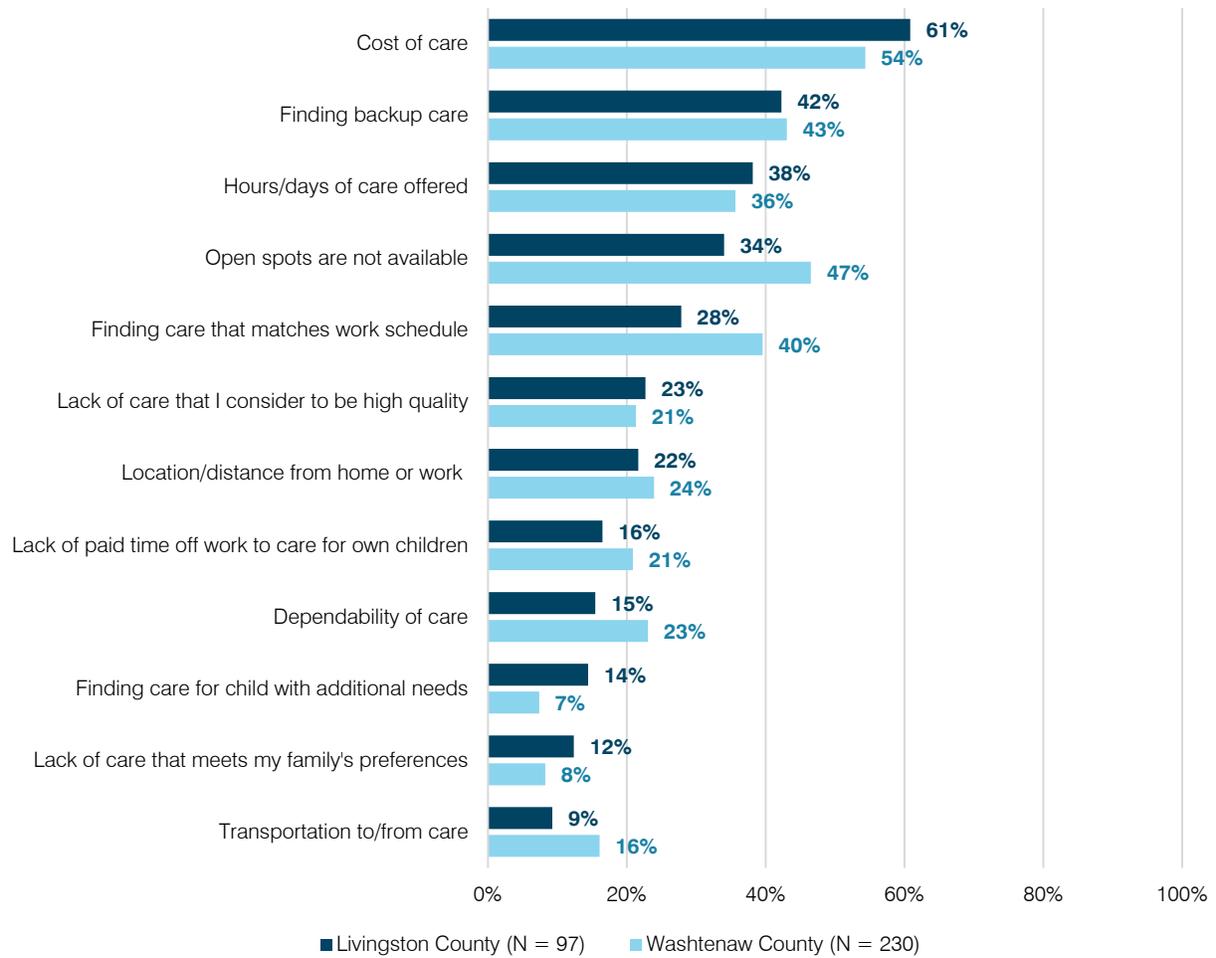| Barrier	Percentage
Cost of care	57%
Finding backup care	44%
Open spots are not available	44%
Hours/days of care offered	36%
Finding care that matches work schedule	36%
Location/distance from home or work	24%
Lack of care that I consider to be high quality	23%
Dependability of care	21%
Lack of paid time off work to care for own children	20%
Transportation to/from care	14%
Finding care for child with additional needs	10%
Lack of care that meets my family's preferences	9%
Other	2%
Has not experienced any barriers to accessing needed care	9%

N = 338
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

A larger percentage of Washtenaw County respondents than Livingston County respondents said unavailable open spots and finding care that matches their work schedule were barriers they experienced trying to access child care (Exhibit 34).

EXHIBIT 34. Barriers to Care Access by County

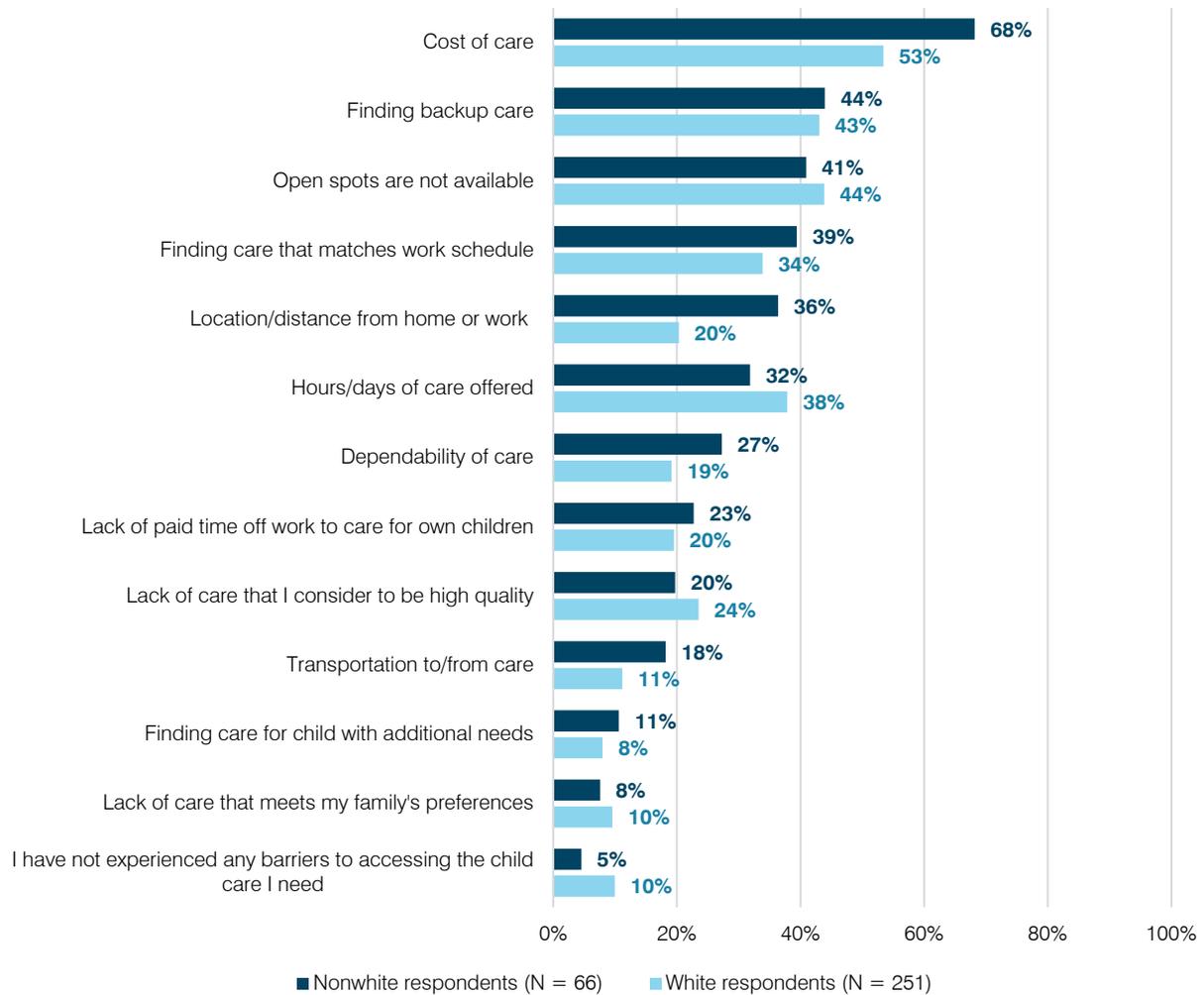| Barrier	Livingston County (N = 97)	Washtenaw County (N = 230)
Cost of care	61%	54%
Finding backup care	42%	43%
Hours/days of care offered	38%	36%
Open spots are not available	34%	47%
Finding care that matches work schedule	28%	40%
Lack of care that I consider to be high quality	23%	21%
Location/distance from home or work	22%	24%
Lack of paid time off work to care for own children	16%	21%
Dependability of care	15%	23%
Finding care for child with additional needs	14%	7%
Lack of care that meets my family's preferences	12%	8%
Transportation to/from care	9%	16%

N = varied by county
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

A larger percentage of nonwhite respondents than white respondents said the cost of care and the location or distance of care from their home or work were barriers to accessing care (Exhibit 35).

EXHIBIT 35. Barriers to Care Access by Race

Barrier	Nonwhite respondents (N = 66)	White respondents (N = 251)
Cost of care	68%	53%
Finding backup care	44%	43%
Open spots are not available	41%	44%
Finding care that matches work schedule	39%	34%
Location/distance from home or work	36%	20%
Hours/days of care offered	32%	38%
Dependability of care	27%	19%
Lack of paid time off work to care for own children	23%	20%
Lack of care that I consider to be high quality	20%	24%
Transportation to/from care	18%	11%
Finding care for child with additional needs	11%	8%
Lack of care that meets my family's preferences	8%	10%
I have not experienced any barriers to accessing the child care I need	5%	10%

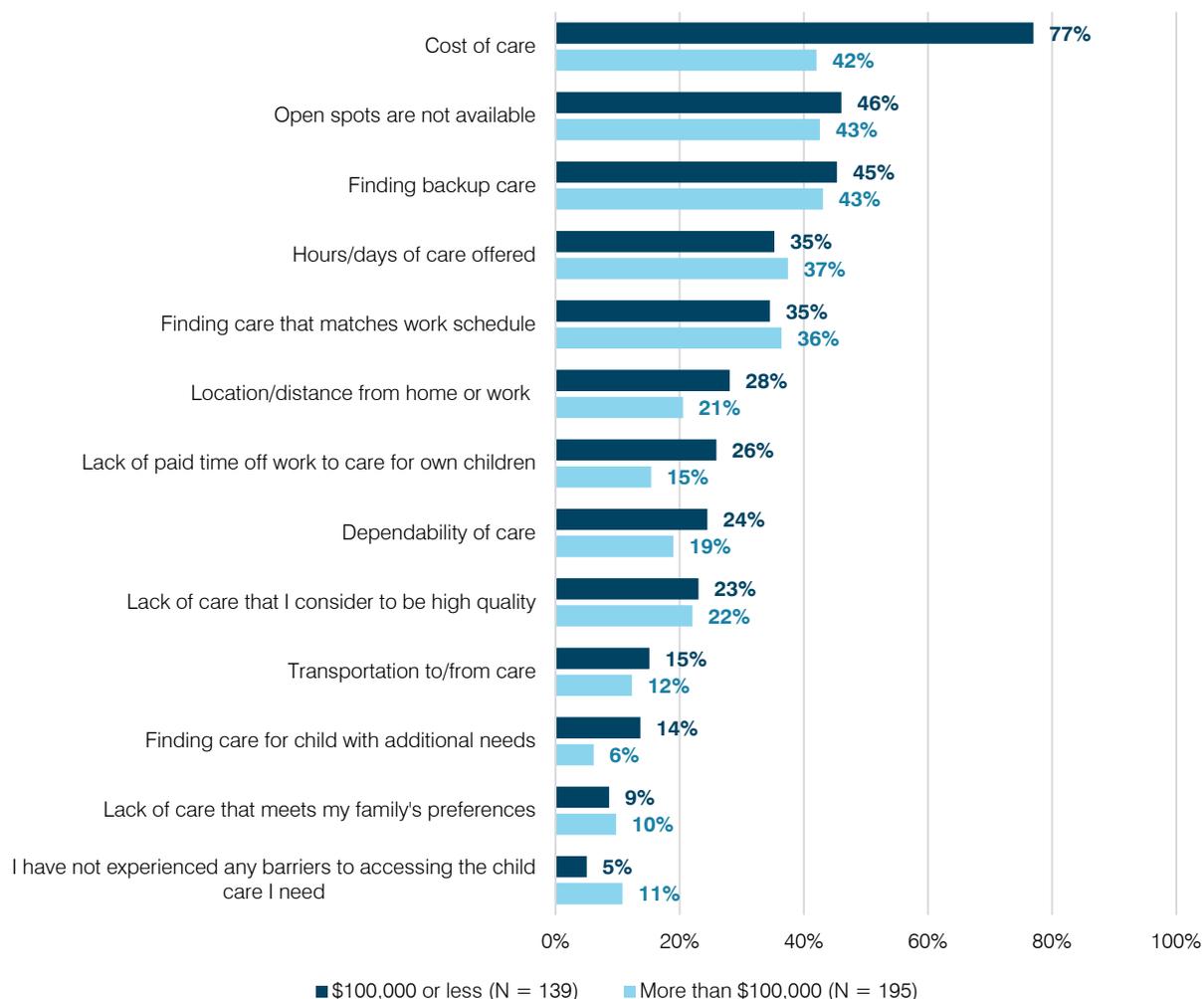■ Nonwhite respondents (N = 66) ■ White respondents (N = 251)

N = varied by race
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Those with an annual household income of $100,000 or less where much more likely than those making more than $100,000 to say that cost of care was a barrier—77 percent compared to 42 percent (Exhibit 36).
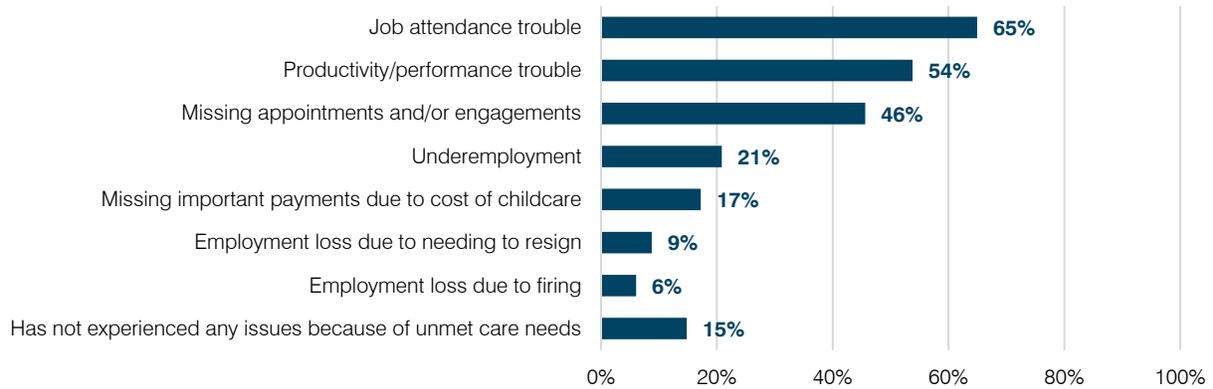
EXHIBIT 36. Barriers to Care Access by Income

Barrier	$100,000 or less (N = 139)	More than $100,000 (N = 195)
Cost of care	77%	42%
Open spots are not available	46%	43%
Finding backup care	45%	43%
Hours/days of care offered	35%	37%
Finding care that matches work schedule	35%	36%
Location/distance from home or work	28%	21%
Lack of paid time off work to care for own children	26%	15%
Dependability of care	24%	19%
Lack of care that I consider to be high quality	23%	22%
Transportation to/from care	15%	12%
Finding care for child with additional needs	14%	6%
Lack of care that meets my family's preferences	9%	10%
I have not experienced any barriers to accessing the child care I need	5%	11%

■ $100,000 or less (N = 139)   ■ More than $100,000 (N = 195)

N = varied by income
Note: Responses total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Impact of Unmet Child Care Needs

More than two-thirds of respondents reported job attendance trouble—such as missing work, arriving late, or needing to leave early—due to child care needs not being fully met, and more than half have experienced productivity or performance trouble. Nearly half (46 percent) also said they had missed appointments or engagements because of unmet child care needs (Exhibit 37).
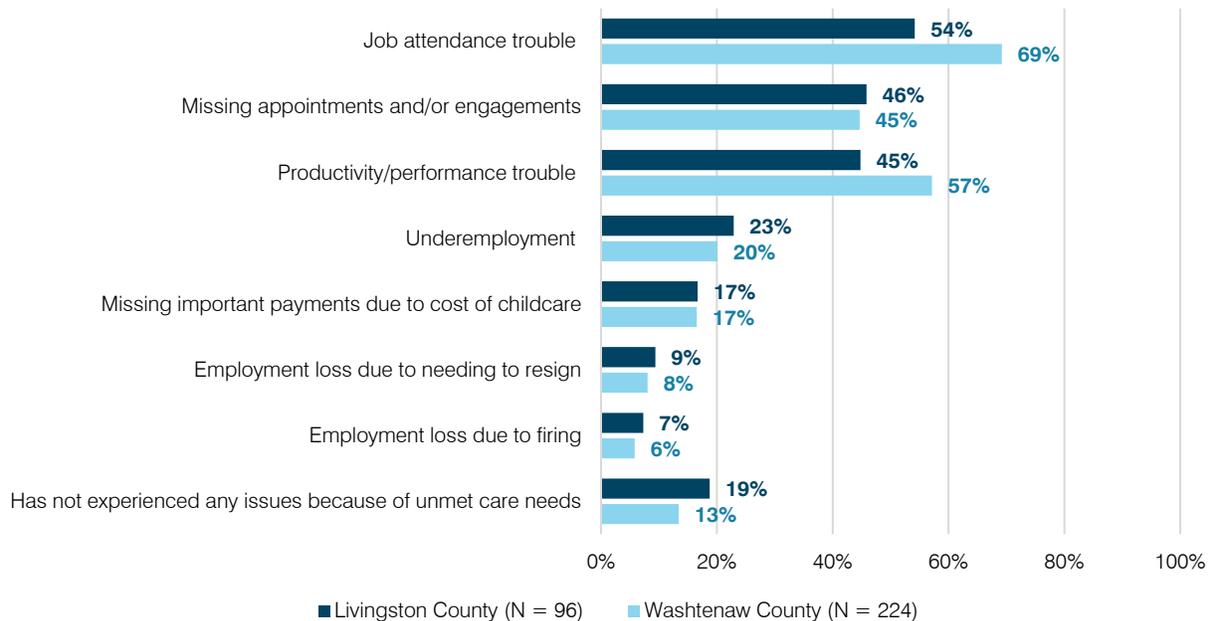
EXHIBIT 37. Impacts of Unmet Child Care Needs

Impact	Percentage
Job attendance trouble	65%
Productivity/performance trouble	54%
Missing appointments and/or engagements	46%
Underemployment	21%
Missing important payments due to cost of childcare	17%
Employment loss due to needing to resign	9%
Employment loss due to firing	6%
Has not experienced any issues because of unmet care needs	15%

N = 331
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Respondents residing in Washtenaw County were more likely to say they experienced job attendance trouble or production and performance trouble because of unmet child care needs than those living in Livingston County (Exhibit 38).

EXHIBIT 38. Impacts of Unmet Child Care Needs by County

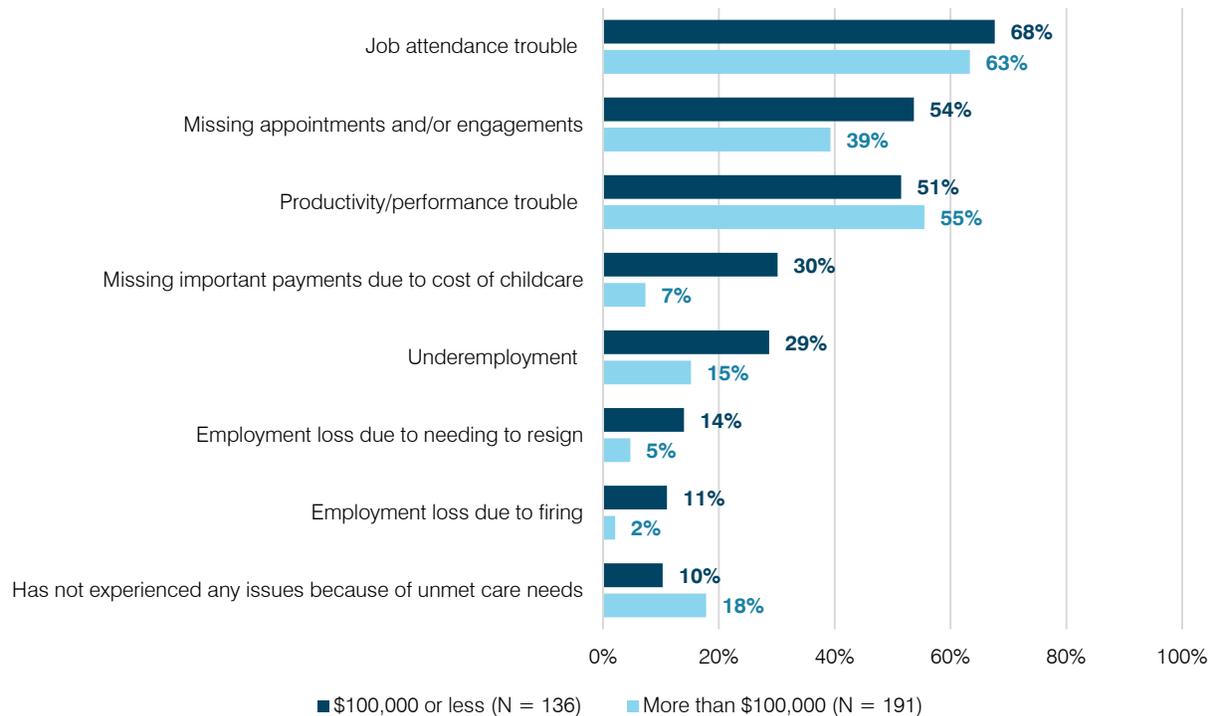| Impact	Livingston County (N = 96)	Washtenaw County (N = 224)
Job attendance trouble	54%	69%
Missing appointments and/or engagements	46%	45%
Productivity/performance trouble	45%	57%
Underemployment	23%	20%
Missing important payments due to cost of childcare	17%	17%
Employment loss due to needing to resign	9%	8%
Employment loss due to firing	7%	6%
Has not experienced any issues because of unmet care needs	19%	13%

■ Livingston County (N = 96) ■ Washtenaw County (N = 224)

N = varied by county
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

A higher percentage of nonwhite respondents experienced job attendance trouble, missed important payments, and experienced employment loss due to firing than white respondents (Exhibit 39).

Impact	Nonwhite respondents (N = 63)	White respondents (N = 248)
Job attendance trouble	75%	62%
Productivity/performance trouble	57%	53%
Missing appointments and/or engagements	51%	44%
Missing important payments due to cost of childcare	30%	13%
Underemployment	22%	20%
Employment loss due to firing	14%	4%
Employment loss due to needing to resign	8%	7%
Has not experienced any issues because of unmet care needs	11%	16%

■ Nonwhite respondents (N = 63) ■ White respondents (N = 248)
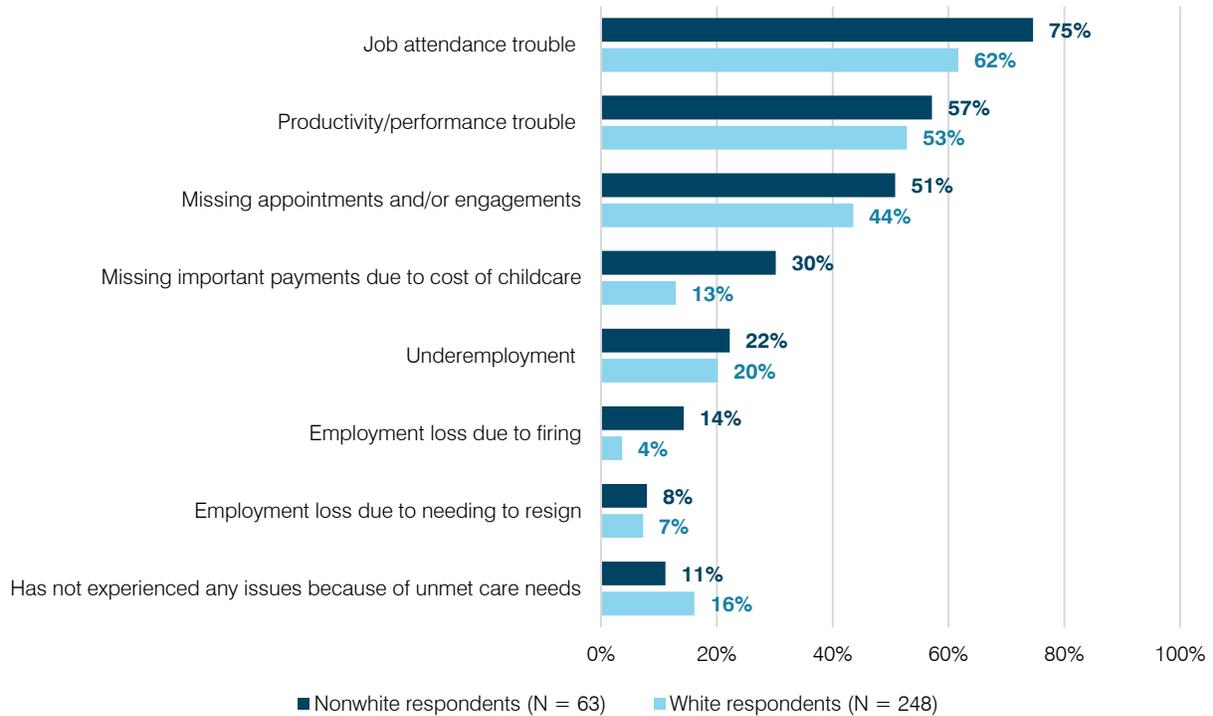
N = varied by race
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

A larger percentage of those with an annual household income of $100,000 or less missed appointments, missed important payments, and were underemployed due to unmet child care needs than those with an annual income of more than $100,000 (Exhibit 40).

EXHIBIT 40. Impacts of Unmet Child Care Needs by Income

Impact	$100,000 or less (N = 136)	More than $100,000 (N = 191)
Job attendance trouble	68%	63%
Missing appointments and/or engagements	54%	39%
Productivity/performance trouble	51%	55%
Missing important payments due to cost of childcare	30%	7%
Underemployment	29%	15%
Employment loss due to needing to resign	14%	5%
Employment loss due to firing	11%	2%
Has not experienced any issues because of unmet care needs	10%	18%

■ $100,000 or less (N = 136) ■ More than $100,000 (N = 191)

N = varied by income
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Conclusion

The parent survey data highlights several key trends within Washtenaw and Livingston Counties' child care markets. Most families in the region do not have access to the child care they need, particularly in lower-income populations and families of color. This gap in care is caused by many factors, most notably the cost of care, the availability of open slots, care not being available all the times and days that families need, and care not being available to respond to immediate needs (e.g., sick care, emergent care). The gap in care also negatively impacts families struggling to make ends meet and local businesses, as families report job attendance trouble, lower productivity, and sometimes needing to resign due to a lack of child care that meets their needs.

Insight gleaned from the parent survey will be used alongside data collected from provider and local business surveys, as well as secondary desktop research. The research and feedback will inform a strategic planning process that identifies actionable steps to increase the supply of child care providers in the region.

Appendix E. Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Provider Survey

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition

Provider Survey

The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition is a group of community leaders in each county who want to increase the supply of high-quality child care. The coalition is using survey research to inform data-driven decisions as they create an action plan to improve child care in the region. We want to hear from owners and staff providing child care services about their experience operating and/or working in our community.

Anything you share in the survey will remain anonymous and will be combined with answers from other individuals taking the survey. Please share to ensure all staff at your child care organization complete this survey.

Introductory Questions

1. Please describe your child care program. Check all that apply.

   - Child care center
   - Family child care home
   - Group child care home
   - School-based pre-K
   - Nonlicensed, home based (e.g., parent, family member, nanny, family friend)
   - Out-of-school program (e.g., before/after school, summer care)

2. What ages do you provide care for? Check all that apply.

   - Infants (birth to less than one year)
   - Toddlers (one to less than two-and-a-half years)
   - Preschool (two-and-a-half years to kindergarten entry)
   - School age (kindergarten and older)

3. What best represents your position at your organization?

   - Owner or administrator
   - Staff (SKIP LOGIC to Staff Section)

Owner and Administrator Section

Organizational Information

4. How many years has your organization been operating? <numeric entry>

5. What scheduling options do you offer for families? Check all that apply.

- Full time (five or more days a week)
- Part time (less than five days a week)
- Evenings
- Overnights
- Weekends
- School-age summer care
- School-age breaks and school closures
- School-age before- and/or after-school care
- Drop-in/flexible scheduling (e.g., can accommodate changes in times/days of week based on family's work schedule)

6. How many slots are you licensed to provide care for? If you are an unlicensed provider, please enter 0. <numeric entry>

7. How many slots are you currently able to provide care for (i.e., what is your current maximum capacity for children)? <numeric entry>

8. Do you currently have a waitlist for services? <Yes/No> If so, how many children are on the waitlist? <numeric entry>

9. What challenges do you face with enrollment/capacity?

- Not enough staff to operate at full capacity
- Difficulty filling open slots
- Not enough space for expansion at current location
- Unable to find a new location that would allow for expansion
- Licensing challenges related to expanding into new spaces
- Insufficient capital to expand business
- Competition with other programs
- Other (please specify): _____
- None of the above

Staffing Recruitment and Retention

10. Is the center/program where you work currently experiencing staffing shortages? [Yes/No/I don't know/Not applicable]

(If yes to the prior question) What impact has the staffing shortage had on your experience at work?
    (Select up to five options)
- I am unable to provide care at my program's full capacity due to limited staffing.
- I have less time to prepare for the day.
- I cannot complete my usual duties.
- I have taken on additional tasks, on top of my usual duties.
- I have less time to support staff and families.
- I spend more time in the classroom providing care.

- I work longer hours.
- I am less able to take time off.
- I have less time for self-care.
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- None of the above

11. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements: [Not applicable, Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree]

- I am worried about staffing recruitment.
- I am concerned about retaining the employees I do have.

12. In your opinion, what are the main challenges to **recruiting** qualified staff? Check all that apply.
- Wages
- No benefits or unsatisfactory benefits
- Health and safety concerns
- Lack of child care for own children
- Regulations (federal and state)
- Underqualified candidates
- I don't know/Not applicable
- Other (please specify) [text box]

13. In your opinion, what are the main challenges to **retaining** qualified staff? Check all that apply.
- Wages
- No benefits or unsatisfactory benefits
- Health and safety concerns
- Burn out or exhaustion
- Lack of child care for own children
- Regulations (federal and state)
- Uncertainty about how to gain credentials and/or degrees
- I don't know/Not applicable
- Other (please specify) [text box]

Business Needs and Supports

14. What kind of challenges have you experienced as a child care business owner or administrator? Select all that apply.
- Understanding municipal policies that impact my business
- Business ownership/management support (mentoring, small business resources, planning, etc.)
- Cash-flow challenges related to caring for children who receive state or federal dollars
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Identifying additional funding sources
- Fund development

- Licensing support
- Identifying and/or implementing curriculum
- Helping families apply for child care subsidy support
- Bookkeeping
- Early childhood development resources
- Staff training
- Family recruitment and retention
- Food service
- Beginning or advancing Great Start to Quality rating
- Contract management
- Parent communication
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- Not applicable/No challenges faced

15. Which of the following have you sought/would you seek support for? <Only list those that were selected in the previous question>

- Understanding municipal policies that impact my business
- Business ownership/management support (mentoring, small business resources, planning, etc.)
- Cash-flow challenges related to caring for children who receive state or federal dollars
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Identifying additional funding sources
- Fund development
- Licensing support
- Identifying and/or implementing curriculum
- Helping families apply for child care subsidy support
- Bookkeeping
- Early childhood development resources
- Staff training
- Family recruitment and retention
- Food service
- Beginning or advancing Great Start to Quality rating
- Contract management
- Parent communication
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- Not applicable/No challenges faced

16. What has prevented you from taking full advantage of these supports? Select all that apply.

- Unaware of the availability of these services
- The business supports I have found are not specific to child care
- Costs associated with accessing these types of services
- Do not have time to access these services

17. What additional supports would be beneficial to child care providers as businesses? [text box]

Moving Forward

18. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements: [Not applicable, Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree]

- I am concerned about how I am going to stay afloat as a business.
- I am concerned about how I am going to afford higher wages for myself and/or employees.
- I am concerned about how I am going to afford benefits for myself and/or my employees.
- I am concerned about my business/organization's ability to afford improvements to comply with child care licensing requirements.
- I would consider closing my child care program if I am unable to find additional supports.

19. If given the appropriate resources (e.g., funding, capacity-building support), would you be willing to consider expanding your licensed capacity?

- Yes, expanding at a new location
- Yes, expanding at a current location
- Yes to both of these
- No to both of these

20. If yes, what would you need to expand? Select all that apply.

- Funding to purchase property and/or build a new building
- Grant or loan to cover remodeling costs of an existing building I own or lease
- Additional staff
- One or more partners to help with costs and logistics
- Business-planning help
- Other, please explain: _____
- None of these; I can expand on my own.

<Skip to demographics>

Staff Section

5. What education or certification do you have to work as a child care worker? Select all that apply.

- Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential
- Associate's degree in early childhood education, child development, or a related field
- Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or a related field
- Master's degree in early childhood education, child development, or a related field
- Other, please explain: _____
- None of these

6. How many hours are you supposed to work at your child care organization in a typical week? Please round your response to the nearest whole hour.

- Under 20 hours
- 20 to 29 hours
- 30 to 40 hours
- Over 40 hours

7. How frequently do you work more hours than you are supposed to?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

7. What is your monthly income from your child care position before taxes?
- Less than $1,500
- $1,500–$1,999
- $2,000–$2,499
- $2,500–$2,999
- $3,000–$3,499
- $3,499–$3,999
- More than $4,000

8. How many miles do you live from work? <numeric entry>

9. What best describes your financial situation?

- My family often struggles to make ends meet.
- My family sometimes struggles to make ends meet.
- My family does not struggle to make ends meet.

10. What do you consider when searching for or applying for a new position in child care? Rank the following options, 1 being most important, 7 being least important.
- Wages
- Benefits (e.g., health, dental, vision, retirement)
- Staff child care discount
- Health and safety of provider location
- Location of child care provider in relation to your home
- Support for continuing education opportunities
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- I don't know/Not applicable

11. What factors are you **currently facing** that might lead you to consider leaving your current position in child care? Check all that apply.

- Insufficient wages

- No benefits or unsatisfactory benefits
- Burn out or exhaustion
- Lack of child care for own children
- Unclear career mobility options
- Lack of support from administrative team
- Difficult commute
- Uncertainty about how to gain credentials and/or degrees
- Other (please specify) [text box]
- I am not facing any factors that might lead me to consider leaving.

12. Are you considering leaving the field of child care altogether in the next 12 months? (Yes/No)

Demographics

1. Where is your child care organization located?

- Livingston County
- Washtenaw County
- Somewhere else, please describe

    {If Livingston, drop down of Livingston municipalities
    If Washtenaw, drop down of Washtenaw municipalities
        If Somewhere else, open response option}

2. Where do you live?

- Livingston County
- Washtenaw County
- Somewhere else

- {If Livingston, drop down of Livingston municipalities
    - If Washtenaw, drop down of Washtenaw municipalities
    - If Somewhere else, open response option}
-

3. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender male
- Transgender female
- Gender variant/nonconforming
- Prefer to self-describe: [text box]

- Prefer not to answer

4. What is your racial or ethnic identity? Check all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Arab or Middle Eastern/North African
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latinx, or of Spanish origin
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Some other race: [text box]
- Prefer not to answer

Conclusion Page

Thank you for sharing your feedback and time today. Please click here to indicate your interest in participating in future conversations on this topic and to enter a raffle to win a $25 Visa gift card to thank you for completing this survey.

If you would like to learn more about the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, please visit annarborusa.org/childcare or email plindeman@publicsectorconsultants.com

Separate Survey

Enter me in the drawing for a $25 Visa gift card. <Checkbox>

I am willing to be contacted about future opportunities to give input. <Checkbox>

Please enter your email address. The coalition may contact you in the coming weeks if you win the raffle or are selected to participate in future discussions on this topic. This is not connected to your answers on the survey, so entering your email address does not compromise your survey response anonymity.

<short answer to enter email>

If you would like to learn more about the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition, please visit annarborusa.org/childcare or email plindeman@publicsectorconsultants.com

Appendix F. Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Provider Survey Summary

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition

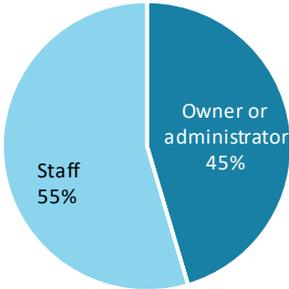## Provider Survey Summary

October 2023

Introduction

The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition distributed a survey to child care owners and administrators in the region to collect data to inform decisions as they create an action plan to improve child care in the region. Responses were received from 273 child care providers representing child care organizations located in 31 different zip codes across the two counties.

Of the 273 respondents, 45 percent were child care owners or administrators and 55 percent were staff (Exhibit 1).

EXHIBIT 1. Respondents' Role at the Child Care Organization

Staff 55%

Owner or administrator 45%

N = 273

More than three-quarters of respondents worked at child care centers, with 13 percent representing school-based pre-K programs, and 12 percent representing out-of-school programs. Only 8 percent each worked in a family child care home or a group child care home (Exhibit 2). Most (86 percent) provided care for preschool-aged children, 71 percent provided care for toddlers, and 57 percent cared for infants. Fewer (40 percent) provided care to school-aged children (Exhibit 3).

EXHIBIT 2. Type of Child Care Center or Program

Child care center	76%
School-based pre-K	13%
Out-of-school program	12%
Family child care home	8%
Group child care home	8%
License exempt provider	1%
Nonlicensed, home based	1%
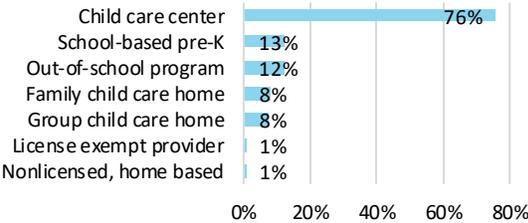
N = 271
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

EXHIBIT 3. Ages of Children Receiving Care

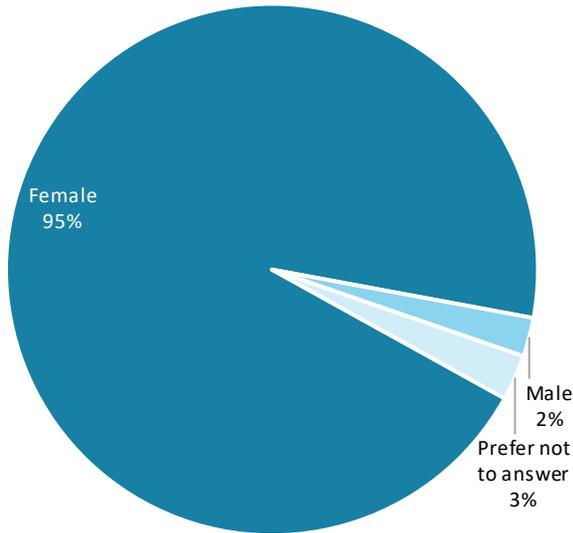|	
Infants	57%
Toddlers	71%
Preschool	86%
School age	40%
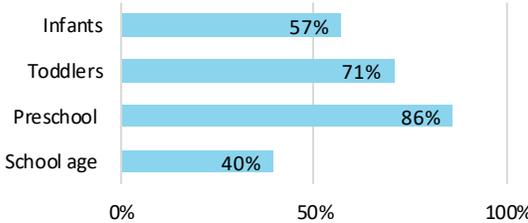
N = 273
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.
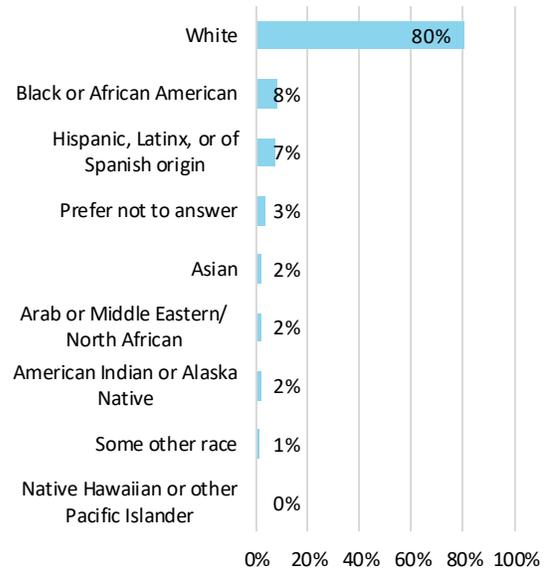
Survey Respondent Demographics

Nearly all respondents (95 percent) were female and most (80 percent) were white (Exhibits 4 and 5).

EXHIBIT 4. Percentage of Respondents by Gender

Female 95%

Male 2%

Prefer not to answer 3%

N = 253

EXHIBIT 5. Percentage of Respondents by Race or Ethnicity

Race or Ethnicity	Percentage
White	80%
Black or African American	8%
Hispanic, Latinx, or of Spanish origin	7%
Prefer not to answer	3%
Asian	2%
Arab or Middle Eastern/North African	2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%
Some other race	1%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%

N = 252
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Owner and Administrator Feedback

The survey had a section with questions for child care business owners and administrators and a section with questions for staff. The following summarizes feedback from 124 owners and administrators.

Child Care Program Information

The length of time respondents' child care organizations had been in operation ranged from a few months to 89 years. On average, the organizations represented have been operating for 23 years. Most of these organizations (90 percent) offer full-time care, 84 percent offer part-time care, and a little over half (56 percent) offer school-age summer care (Exhibit 6). Only a few respondents represented programs that offered evening care (7 percent), overnight care (5 percent), or weekend care (4 percent).

EXHIBIT 6. Scheduling Options Offered to Families

Full time (five or more days a week) — 90%
Part time (less than five days a week) — 84%
School-age summer care — 56%
School-age before- and/or after-school care — 49%
School-age breaks and school closures — 45%
Drop-in/flexible scheduling — 31%
Evenings — 7%
Overnights — 5%
Weekends — 4%
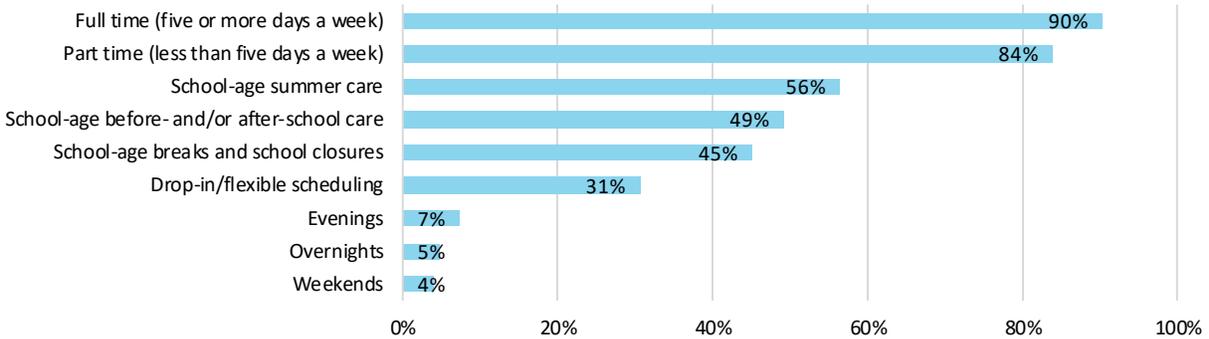
N = 124
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Number of Children

Respondents said their programs were licensed to provide care to an average of 85 children, with a median of 44 children. Respondents' current maximum capacity for children ranged from zero to 775, with an average of 67 and a median of 35 (Exhibit 7). This means roughly 22 percent of licensed slots are not currently available. More than three-quarters of respondents (77 percent) said their program currently has a waitlist for services, ranging from one to 661 children on a waitlist, with an average of 48 children and a median of 15.

EXHIBIT 7. Number of Licensed Slots and Current Capacity to Provide Care

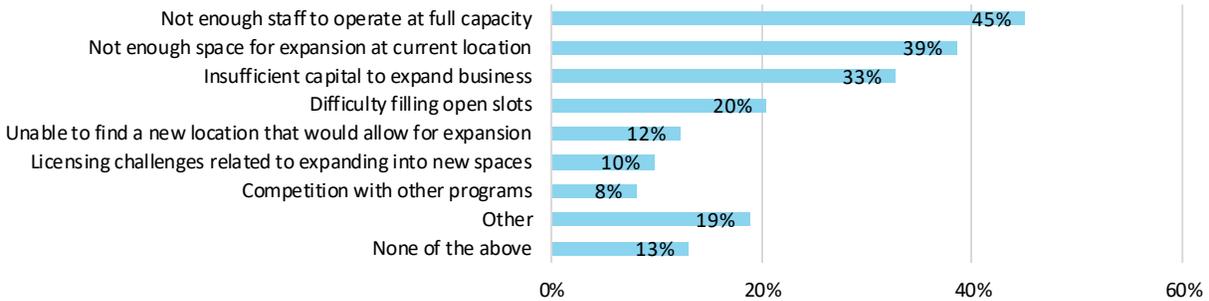|	Number of respondents	Range	Average	Median
Number of licensed slots	117	0–800	85	44
Number of slots at current capacity	119	0–775	67	35
Number of children on a waitlist	94	1–661	48	15

Challenges

Owners and administrators provided information on challenges in the areas of enrollment, capacity, staffing, and finances. Nearly half reported not having enough staff to operate at full capacity and nearly 40 percent did not have enough space to expand at their current location. One-third of owners and administrators said they didn't have capital to expand the business and 20 percent had difficulty filling open slots (Exhibit 8).

EXHIBIT 8. Challenges with Enrollment and Capacity

Not enough staff to operate at full capacity — 45%
Not enough space for expansion at current location — 39%
Insufficient capital to expand business — 33%
Difficulty filling open slots — 20%
Unable to find a new location that would allow for expansion — 12%
Licensing challenges related to expanding into new spaces — 10%
Competition with other programs — 8%
Other — 19%
None of the above — 13%

N = 122
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Staff Shortages, Recruitment, and Retention

Half of owners and administrators said that the center or program where they work was experiencing staffing shortages, and reported various impacts due to those shortages. Of those, three-quarters reported taking on additional tasks. The majority could not operate at full capacity (54 percent), and reported having less time to support their staff and families (51 percent) (Exhibit 9). Other impacts of limited staffing were owners and administrators spending more time in the classroom providing care (47 percent), working longer hours (47 percent), and being less able to take time off (42 percent). Only 2 percent of respondents said they did not experience any impact from the staff shortage.

EXHIBIT 9. Impact of Staffing Shortages

I have taken on additional tasks, on top of my usual duties — 75%
I am unable to provide care at my program's full capacity — 54%
I have less time to support staff and families — 51%
I spend more time in the classroom providing care — 47%
I work longer hours — 47%
I am less able to take time off — 42%
I have less time to prepare for the day — 39%
I cannot complete my usual duties — 36%
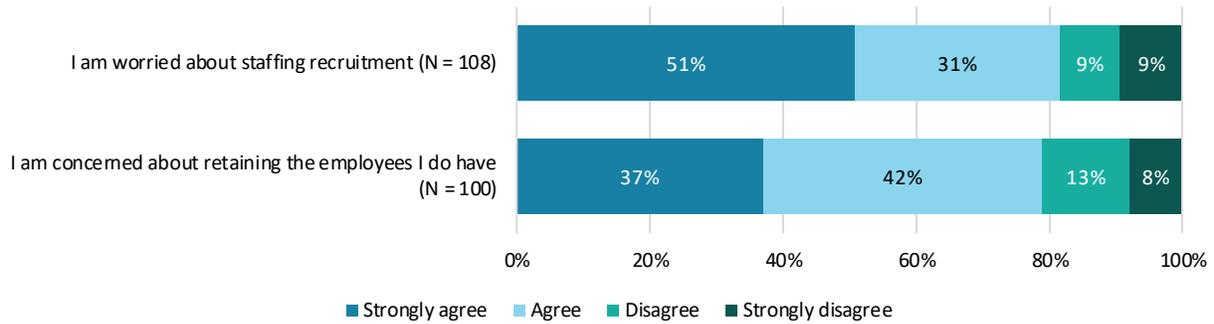I have less time for self-care — 34%
Other — 5%
None of the above — 2%

N = 59
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Additionally, 82 percent of owners and administrators strongly agreed or agreed that they were worried about staff recruitment, and 79 percent strongly agreed or agreed that they were concerned about retaining the employees they do have (Exhibit 10).
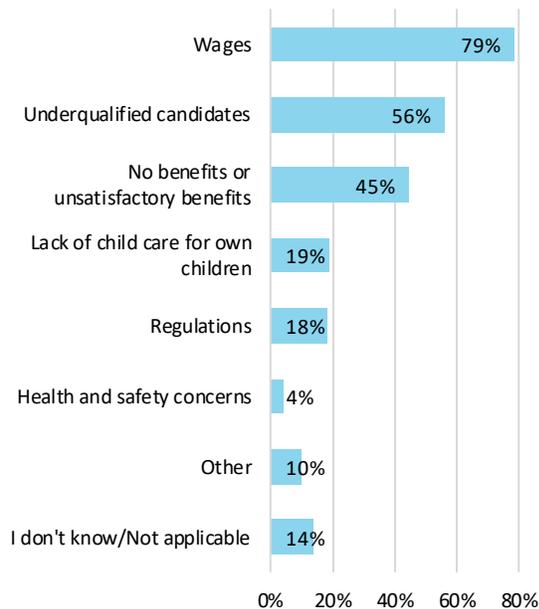
EXHIBIT 10. Level of Concern about Staff Recruitment and Retention

I am worried about staffing recruitment (N = 108): Strongly agree 51%, Agree 31%, Disagree 9%, Strongly disagree 9%

I am concerned about retaining the employees I do have (N = 100): Strongly agree 37%, Agree 42%, Disagree 13%, Strongly disagree 8%

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

N = varied by response

Nearly 80 percent said wages were a main challenge in recruiting qualified staff, and 45 percent said no benefits or unsatisfactory benefits made recruitment challenging. Similarly, 77 percent of owners and administrators said wages were a main challenge in staff retention, and 48 percent said no benefits or unsatisfactory benefits were a retention challenge. Furthermore, 56 percent said a primary challenge to recruitment was underqualified candidates and 53 percent identified staff burnout as a retention challenge (Exhibits 11 and 12).

EXHIBIT 11. Challenges in Staff Recruitment

- Wages: 79%
- Underqualified candidates: 56%
- No benefits or unsatisfactory benefits: 45%
- Lack of child care for own children: 19%
- Regulations: 18%
- Health and safety concerns: 4%
- Other: 10%
- I don't know/Not applicable: 14%

N = 121
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

EXHIBIT 12. Challenges in Staff Retention

- Wages: 77%
- Burn out or exhaustion: 53%
- No benefits or unsatisfactory benefits: 48%
- Uncertainty about how to gain credentials/degrees: 17%
- Lack of child care for own children: 13%
- Regulations: 12%
- Health and safety concerns: 3%
- Other: 7%
- I don't know/Not applicable: 14%
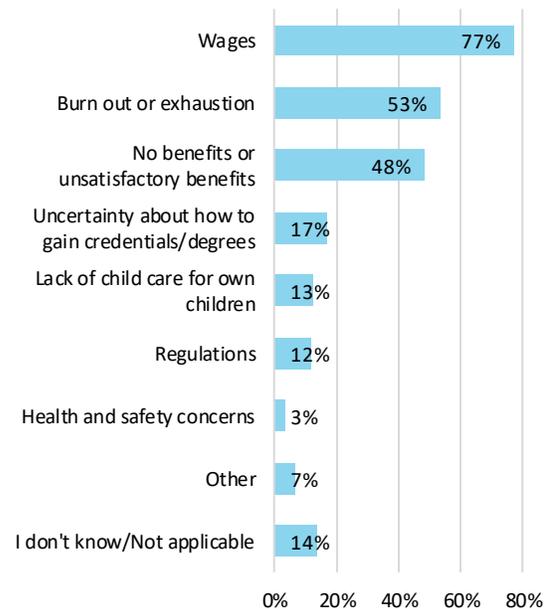
N = 118
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Funding

Nearly all owners and administrators expressed some level of concern about funding for their child care organization. Most strongly agreed or agreed that they were concerned about affording higher wages (92 percent) and benefits (87 percent) for themselves and their employees (Exhibit 13). Around two-thirds also strongly agreed or agreed that they were concerned about their ability to afford improvements to comply with licensing requirements (67 percent) and how they were going to stay afloat as a business (64 percent). More than one-third of owners and administrators said they strongly agreed or agreed that they would consider closing their program if they could not find additional supports.

EXHIBIT 13. Level of Concern about Financial Issues
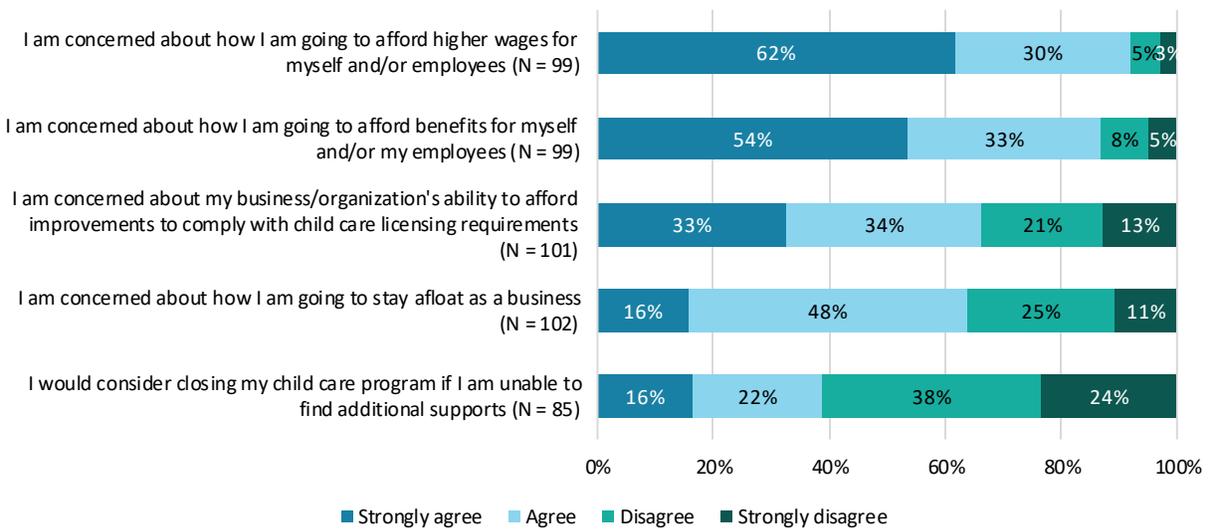
N = varied by response
Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Needed Support

In addition to challenges with capacity and enrollment, staffing, and finances, respondents provided information about challenges they faced as a child care business owner or administrator and the supports they needed.

Nearly two-thirds of owners and administrators said staff recruitment and retention was a challenge they experienced, and more than half said they experienced challenges identifying additional funding sources. One-third said they faced staff training challenges and more than one-quarter said fund development was a challenge (Exhibit 14).

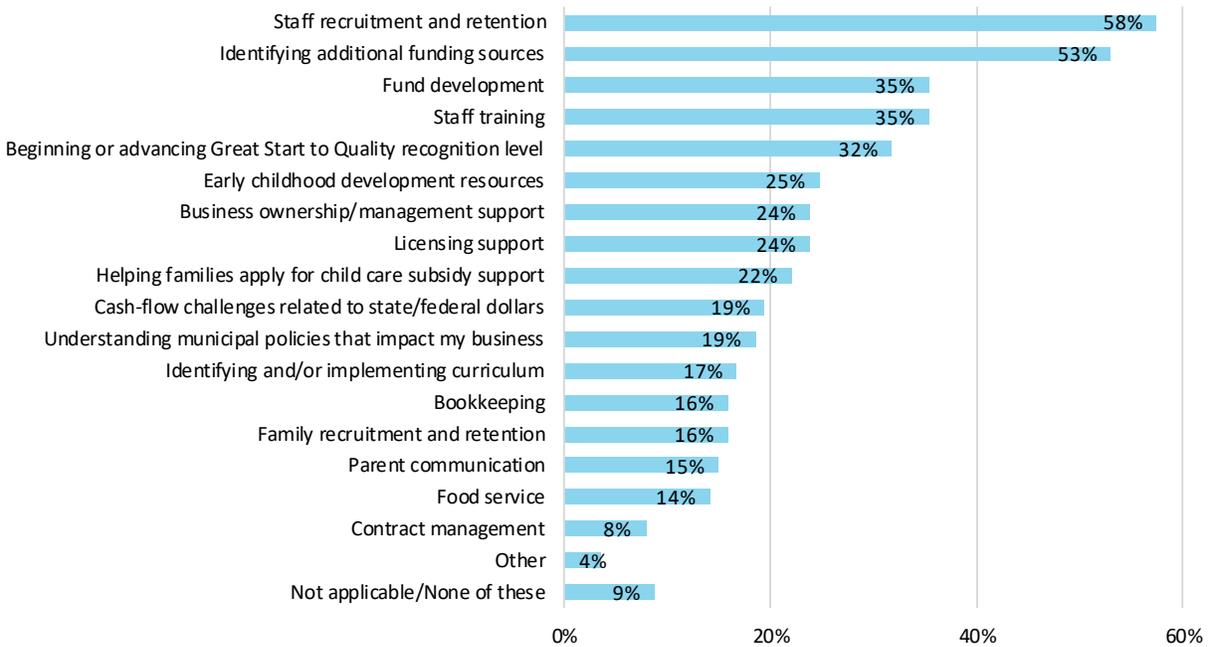EXHIBIT 14. Challenges Faced as a Business Owner or Administrator

Challenge	Percentage
Staff recruitment and retention	63%
Identifying additional funding sources	51%
Staff training	33%
Fund development	27%
Beginning or advancing Great Start to Quality recognition level	24%
Cash-flow challenges related to receiving state/federal dollars	22%
Business ownership/management support	21%
Helping families apply for child care subsidy support	17%
Licensing support	15%
Bookkeeping	14%
Understanding municipal policies that impact my business	14%
Early childhood development resources	12%
Family recruitment and retention	11%
Food service	11%
Parent communication	8%
Identifying and/or implementing curriculum	7%
Contract management	3%
Other	9%
Not applicable/No challenges faced	9%

N = 117
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

The same four challenges were also the top areas for which child care business owners and administrators said they have or would seek support. Nearly 60 percent said they have or would seek support for staff recruitment and retention, more than half have or would seek support identifying additional funding sources, and 35 percent have or would seek support with fund development and staff training (Exhibit 15).

EXHIBIT 15. Needed Supports as a Business Owner or Administrator[1]

EXHIBIT 15. Needed Supports as a Business Owner or Administrator[1]

Support	Percentage
Staff recruitment and retention	58%
Identifying additional funding sources	53%
Fund development	35%
Staff training	35%
Beginning or advancing Great Start to Quality recognition level	32%
Early childhood development resources	25%
Business ownership/management support	24%
Licensing support	24%
Helping families apply for child care subsidy support	22%
Cash-flow challenges related to state/federal dollars	19%
Understanding municipal policies that impact my business	19%
Identifying and/or implementing curriculum	17%
Bookkeeping	16%
Family recruitment and retention	16%
Parent communication	15%
Food service	14%
Contract management	8%
Other	4%
Not applicable/None of these	9%

N = 113
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected

Respondents identified the major reasons for not taking full advantage of supports as not knowing the services were available (60 percent) and not having time to access services (59 percent). One-third of respondents said the costs associated with these services has prevented them from taking full advantage, and one-quarter said that the supports they have found were not specific to child care businesses (Exhibit 16).

EXHIBIT 16. Reasons for Not Accessing Needed Supports as a Business Owner or Administrator

Reason	Percentage
Unaware of the availability of these services	60%
Do not have time to access these services	59%
Costs associated with accessing these types of services	33%
Business supports I have found are not specific to child care	25%
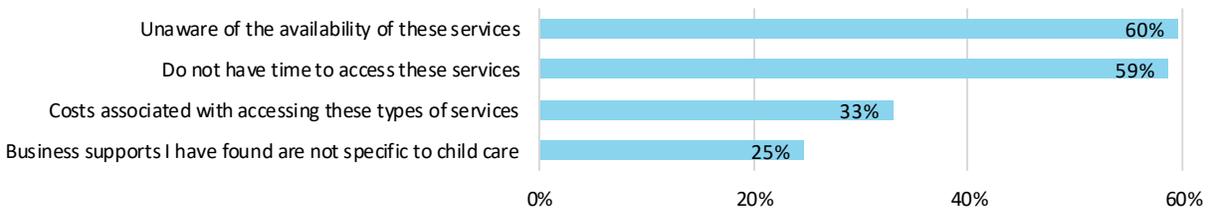
N = 109

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[1] Some respondents provided more detailed feedback on the business supports that would be beneficial to child care providers. Many themes in this feedback related to supports listed in this question, such as funding and support for staff wages and benefits, assistance with staff training, child care business technical assistance, and help recruiting families.

Expanding Capacity to Serve

Nearly 80 percent of owners and administrators said they would be willing to consider expanding their licensed capacity if given appropriate resources. As illustrated in Exhibit 17, 36 percent said they would consider expanding at their current location, 11 percent at a new location, and 31 percent said they would consider either of these options.

EXHIBIT 17. Percentage Willing to Consider Expansion
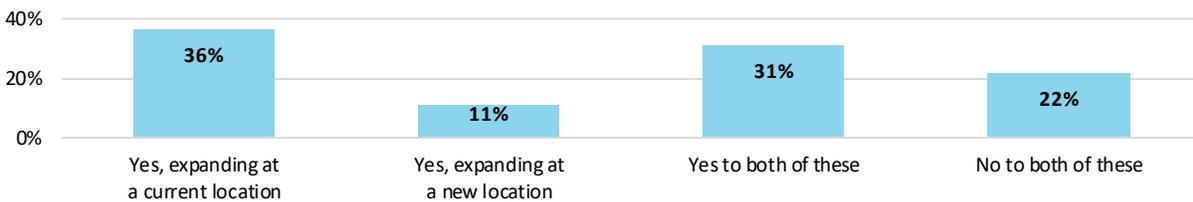
N = 110

To expand their licensed capacity, nearly 80 percent of respondents said they would need additional staff and three-quarters said expansion would require a grant or loan to cover remodeling costs of an existing building (Exhibit 18). More than half (56 percent) said they would need funding to purchase property and/or build a new building.

EXHIBIT 18. Needed for Expansion
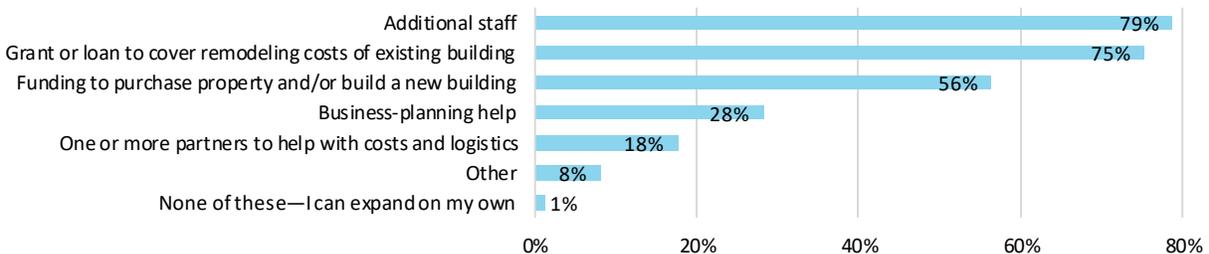
N = 85
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Child Care Staff Feedback

The following summarizes feedback from 149 child care staff members.

About Staff Respondents

Nearly one-third (30 percent) of child care staff had a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or a related field; more than one-quarter (26 percent) had a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential; and just under one-quarter (22 percent) had an associate's degree in an early childhood-related field (Exhibit 19).

EXHIBIT 19 Staff Respondents' Education in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Related Field
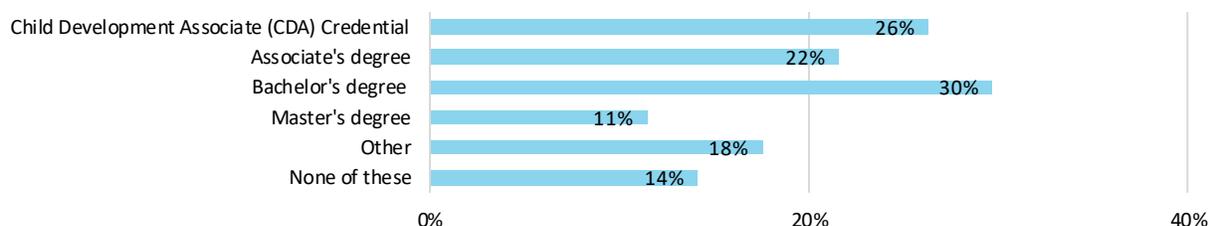
N = 148
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

More than half (56 percent) of respondents have a monthly income of less than $2,500 from their child care position before taxes, with 14 percent earning less than $1,500 per month (Exhibit 20). Additionally, 70 percent reported that their family at least sometimes struggles to make ends meet (Exhibit 21).

EXHIBIT 20. Staff Respondents' Pre-tax Monthly Income from Child Care Position
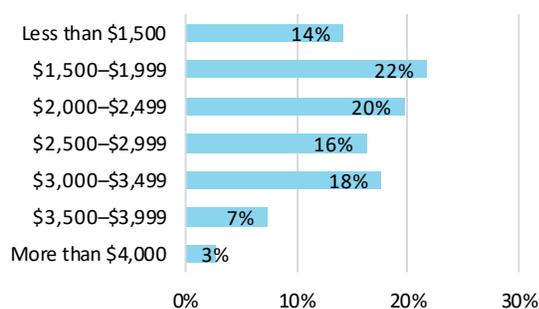
N = 147

EXHIBIT 21. Staff Respondents' Financial Situation
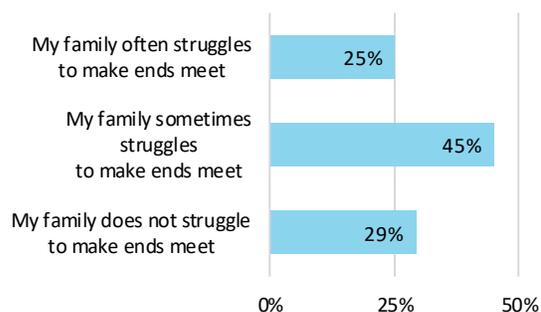
N = 146
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.
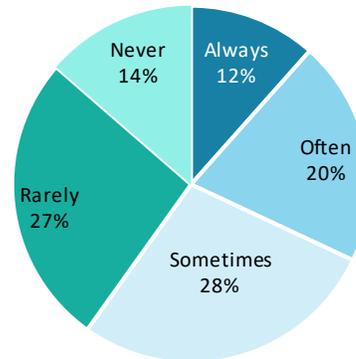
Current Staff Circumstances

Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of staff respondents said they are scheduled to work between 30 and 40 hours in a typical week. However, over half (60 percent) said they at least sometimes work more hours than scheduled (Exhibits 22 and 23).

EXHIBIT 22. Staff Respondents' Scheduled Work Week Hours

Over 40 hours 11%
Under 20 hours 6%
20 to 29 hours 9%
30 to 40 hours 74%
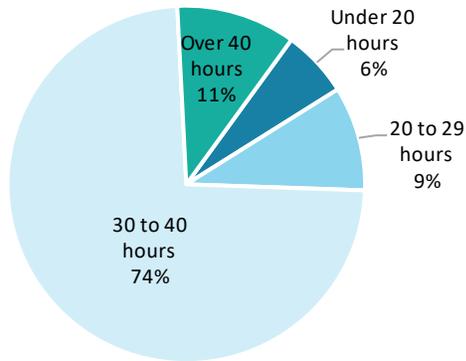
N = 148

EXHIBIT 23. Percentage Working More Hours than Scheduled

Never 14%
Always 12%
Often 20%
Sometimes 28%
Rarely 27%

N = 147
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

The number of miles respondents live from work ranged from one to 50 miles, with an average of 14 miles and a median of 11 miles. Exhibit 24 shows that 40 percent of respondents live fewer than ten miles from work, 30 percent live 10 to 19 miles from work, and 29 percent live 20 miles or more from their work location.

EXHIBIT 24. Distance Traveled from Home to Work in Miles

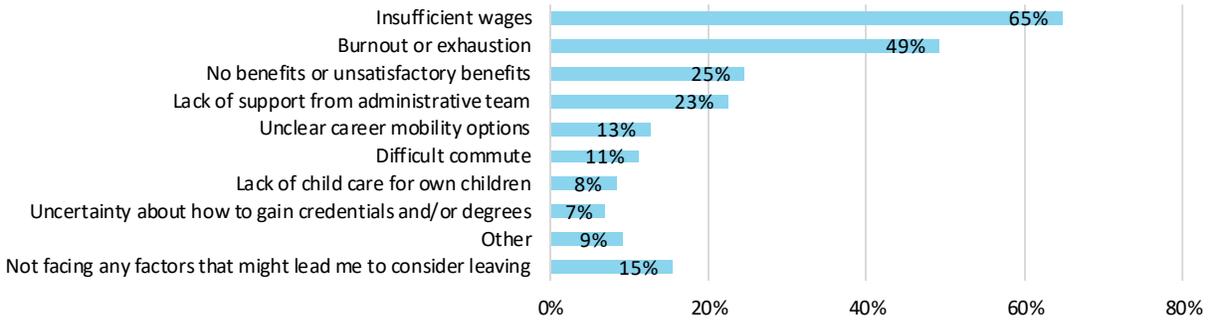| Fewer than 5 miles	5–9 miles	10–14 miles	15–19 miles	20–24 miles	25–29 miles	30 miles or more
21%	19%	18%	12%	10%	8%	11%
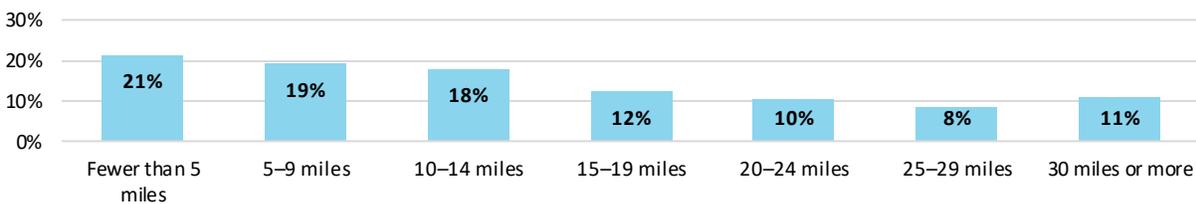
N = 146
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Child Care Position Challenges

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of staff respondents said that insufficient wages were a factor that might lead them to consider leaving their current position in child care, and nearly half (49 percent) indicated that burnout or exhaustion may lead them to consider leaving (Exhibit 25).

Insufficient wages	65%
Burnout or exhaustion	49%
No benefits or unsatisfactory benefits	25%
Lack of support from administrative team	23%
Unclear career mobility options	13%
Difficult commute	11%
Lack of child care for own children	8%
Uncertainty about how to gain credentials and/or degrees	7%
Other	9%
Not facing any factors that might lead me to consider leaving	15%

N = 142
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

While 85 percent of child care staff said there was at least one factor that might lead them to consider leaving (Exhibit 25), 28 percent said they were currently considering leaving the field of child care altogether in the next 12 months (Exhibit 26). Considering the current impact of staffing shortages on child care owners and administrators (Exhibit 9), a quarter of respondents considering leaving the field in the next year is cause for concern.

EXHIBIT 26. Percentage of Staff Considering Leaving the Field in the Next 12 Months

Yes 28%

No 72%
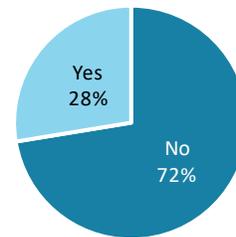
N = 145

Important Factors when Searching for a New Child Care Position

Respondents ranked a series of seven factors they consider when searching for a new position in child care by level of importance, with 1 being most important and 7 being least important. By average ranking, wages were the most important factor, followed by benefits and location of child care provider in relation to their home (Exhibit 27).

| Factor	Average Ranking
Wages	1.5
Benefits	3.0
Location of child care provider in relation to your home	3.7
Health and safety of provider location	4.0
Support for continuing education opportunities	4.2
Staff child care discount	5.4

N = 131

Note: Scale was 1 to 7, with 1 as "most important" and 7 as "least important." Only six factors are included on the chart, because individuals could offer and rank "other" factors; however, because those varied, an average for "other" as a factor is not included.

Exhibit 28 illustrates the percentage of respondents who gave each factor a rating in the top three of all seven factors. Nearly all (94 percent) of respondents rated wages as one of the top-three factors, with 70 percent rating it as the most important factor. Nearly two-thirds rated benefits as a top-three factor, with 42 percent giving it a second-place ranking. Of all respondents, 8 percent listed something other than provided factors as most important to them. These most commonly included educational philosophy of the child care provider and whether or not the provider was faith based.

EXHIBIT 28. Factors by Percentage Rated One, Two, or Three
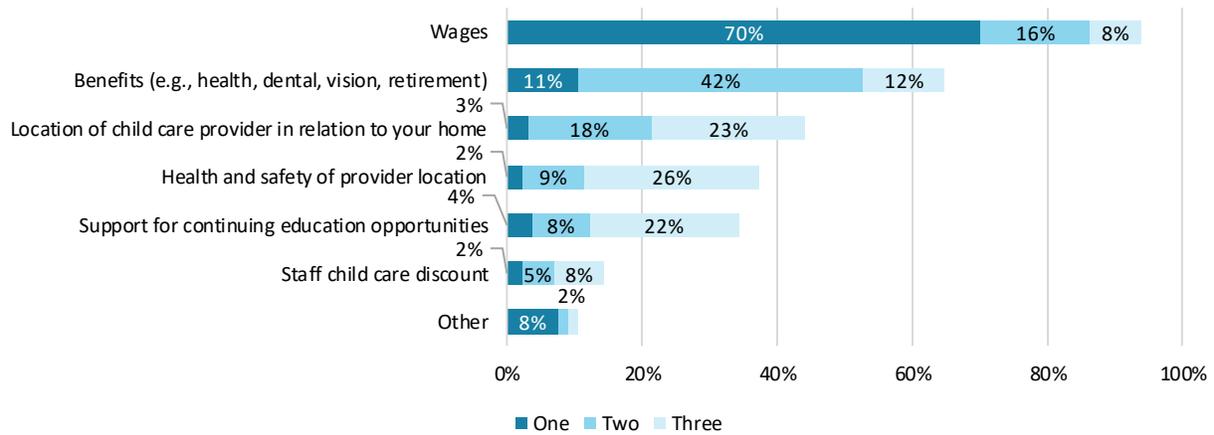
N = 131

Conclusion

The provider survey data highlights several key trends within Washtenaw and Livingston Counties' child care provider network among both owners, administrators, and staff. Previous reports showed that families do not have access to the child care they need, particularly in lower-income populations and families of color. This report shows that the inability to serve families is due in part to staffing shortages and other challenges preventing providers from operating at their fully licensed capacity and from expanding the number of children they can serve. There are many resources providers would consider to address these concerns, such as support recruiting and retaining a qualified well-trained staff and acquiring additional funding from other sources, but lack of awareness of these services and time constraints prevent them from taking advantage of them. If connected with some of these resources, the majority of providers would expand their businesses, which could help address the gap between the number of licensed slots, available slots, and families seeking care for their children.

This survey confirmed that wages are a key factor impacting the staffing shortage. While many workers have college degrees, the majority of survey respondents indicated that they made less than $30,000 a year, which is not a livable wage for many in Livingston and Washtenaw County. Insufficient wages is not only likely keeping many future child care workers from entering the field, it was also the prime reason current workers were considering leaving the field, followed by burnout and exhaustion, both of which may have at least part of their source in staffing shortages, which result in staff being asked to take on additional work. Over a quarter of respondents indicated that they would consider leaving the field in the next year, which would only exacerbate the staffing shortage and the impact it has on workers, owners, and the number of available child care slots.

Insight gleaned from the provider survey will be used alongside data collected from family and local business surveys, as well as secondary desktop research. The research and feedback will inform a strategic planning process that identifies actionable steps to increase the supply of child care providers in the region.

Appendix G. Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Employer Survey

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Regional Child Care Planning Coalition

Employer/Business Survey

Introduction

The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Regional Child Care Planning Coalition is a group of community leaders in the region who want to increase the availability of high-quality child care. The coalition is using survey research to inform data-driven decisions as they create an action plan to improve child care in the region and wants to hear from businesses and employers as they navigate employees' child care needs.

Completing this survey will take about ten minutes. Anything you share in the survey will remain confidential and will be combined with answers from other individuals taking the survey. Combining the data makes it so that respondents cannot be identified based on digital location information.

Company/Organization Information

1. Which of the following descriptions best fits your role within the company?

- Management
- Nonmanagement

2. [IF Q1 = Management] Which of the following describes your role in business management? Select all that apply.

- President, chief executive officer, or business owner
- Chief operating officer
- Human resources executive or individual with equivalent responsibilities
- Benefits manager or individual with equivalent responsibilities
- Other [text box]

3. Please select the county where your company/organization is located. If your business has multiple locations, please provide the locality of the central/main office. [drop down list of all MI counties]

4. Which of the following best describes the location of your company/organization?

- Urban or suburban area
- Rural area
- Locations in both urban/suburban and rural areas

5. Which of the following best describes the business or industry of your organization? [select one multiple choice with responses in a list]

   a. Agriculture
   b. Construction
   c. Education
   d. Finance
   e. Government
   f. Healthcare
   g. Hospitality
   h. Insurance
   i. Information
   j. Leisure
   k. Manufacturing
   l. Professional and business services
   m. Real estate
   n. Retail
   o. Transportation
   p. Warehousing
   q. Other (please describe)

6. What days of the week does your business operate? Select all that apply.

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

7. What are your hours of operation?

Operations begin:	▼ 12:00 AM… 12 PM
Operations end:	▼ 12:00 AM … 12 PM

8. Do you offer emergency or on-call services outside of these hours?

   a. Yes

   b. No

9. Including yourself, how many full-time employees work at your company?

- Fewer than 5
- 5–9
- 10–19
- 20–49
- 50–99
- 100–249
- 250–500
- More than 500
- No full-time employees work at my company

10. Including yourself, how many part-time employees work at your company?

- Fewer than 5
- 5–9
- 10–19
- 20–49
- 50–99
- 100–249
- 250–500
- More than 500
- No part-time employees work at my company

11. About what percentage of employees at your company have children younger than 13?

-
- No employees have children younger than 13
- 25 percent or fewer
- 26 to 75 percent
- 76 percent or more
- I don't know

12. What is the average employee drive radius from home?

- Less than 5 miles
- 5–10 miles
- 11–15 miles
- More than 15 miles
- I don't know

13. Which of the following describe the business owner or most senior executive at your company? Select all that apply.

- Woman
- Person of color
- Veteran
- LGBTQIA+ individual
- Person with a disability
- None of the above

14. About what percentage of your employees are salaried (exempt) and what percentage are paid hourly wages (nonexempt) employees? Percentages should total 100.

- Salaried employees _____
- Hourly employees _____

Employee Child Care Needs

15. Which of the following is true of your employees? Select all that apply.

- Work during nontraditional hours (e.g., evening, overnight, weekends)
- Have schedules that are not always consistent (e.g., working different days of the week, times of day, different shift lengths)
- Schedules can change with little advance notice (e.g., last-minute scheduling, overtime, reduction in hours, on-call work)
- Need specialized care to support their children who have disabilities
- None of the above

16. How much does the lack of child care availability limit your ability to either recruit new or retain employees?

- Not at all
- Somewhat
- A lot
- I don't know

17. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree)

Child care issues experienced by my employees are negatively impacting my business (e.g., low productivity, absenteeism, turnover).

18. How often have your employees experienced any of the following as a result of having a child care issue? (Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Frequently, I don't know)

- Missed work, arrived late, left early
- Been distracted, stressed, or worried at work
- Reduced regular work hours or changed from full- to part-time
- Turned down job offer, promotion, reassignment, or further education/training
- Had to leave job

19. What are the biggest challenges employees in your organization face related to child care? [text box]

Workplace Policies

20. We are interested in understanding the workplace policies and practices that businesses implement that support their employees' child care needs. Please indicate whether you have implemented, would consider implementing, or would not consider implementing each of the following policies or practices:

(Would **not** consider implementing, Would consider implementing, Implementing or have implemented this policy, Not applicable)

- Provide emergency or backup care assistance (e.g., for sick child or school closure)
- Provide direct financial assistance for child care expenses (e.g., vouchers to offset costs)
- Provide other financial supports (e.g., offering reduced rates at certain child care programs, flexible spending accounts)
- Provide flexible work scheduling and/or remote work options
- Provide information about child care availability in the area
- Provide information about financial assistance for child care expenses
- Provide onsite child care

21. We are interested in understanding what prevents a business from implementing workplace policies and practices that support their employees' child care needs. Please indicate the extent to which the options below represent barriers to implementing policies or practices supporting employees' child care.

(Not a barrier, Moderate barrier, Major barrier)

- Cost of providing child care benefits
- Lack of information about employee needs
- Concerns about unfair benefits distribution (i.e., child care benefits only support some employees)
- Inability to offer flexibility in work location/schedule
- Concerns about liability for employer-sponsored child care
- Lack of knowledge/technical assistance around how to support child care needs
- Regulatory burden of operating on-/near-site child care

22. Please indicate how important you feel it is for Michigan to make investments and implement child care policies to address the following:

(Not important, Somewhat important, Very important)

- Making child care more affordable for families
- Increasing the supply of child care
- Improving the quality of child care
- Supporting the child care industry and workforce
- Funding programs that support child care, business, and family collaboration, like the Tri-Share Program
- Funding child care as a public good, like K–12

Is there anything else you would like to share about employee child care needs or your perspective as an employer? [text box]

Thank You and Confirmation Page

Thank you for sharing your feedback and time today. All answers will remain confidential.

If you have any questions about the Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Regional Child Care Planning Coalition, please email plindeman@publicsectorconsultants.com

Appendix H. Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition Employer Survey Summary

Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition
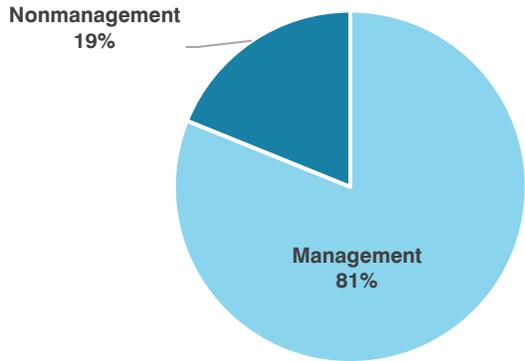
Employer/Business Survey Summary

October 2023

Introduction

The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition distributed a survey to employers and businesses in the region to collect data to inform decisions as they create an action plan to improve child care in the region. The survey was completed by 53 employers.
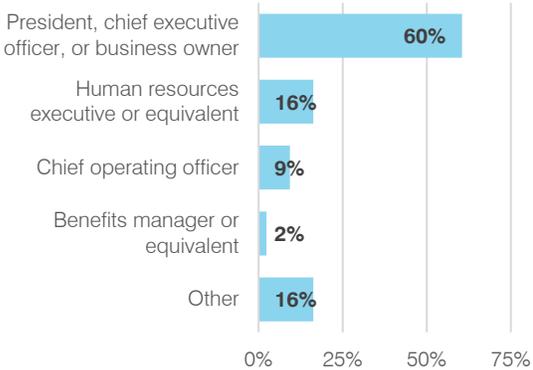
Survey Respondents

More than 80 percent of survey respondents serve in a management role at their company (Exhibit 1). Of those in management positions, 60 percent were the president, chief executive officer, or business owner, 16 percent were human resource executives, and 9 percent were chief operating officers (Exhibit 2).

EXHIBIT 1. Percentage of Respondents Who Were Management or Nonmanagement

Nonmanagement 19%
Management 81%

N = 53

EXHIBIT 2. Respondent Role Within Management

President, chief executive officer, or business owner — 60%
Human resources executive or equivalent — 16%
Chief operating officer — 9%
Benefits manager or equivalent — 2%
Other — 16%

N = 43
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Business Information

More than 80 percent of respondents worked at businesses located in Washtenaw County, and nearly 70 percent worked for businesses in urban or suburban areas (Exhibit 3 and Exhibit 4).

EXHIBIT 3. Company or Business Location, by County

Livingston
19%

Washtenaw
81%
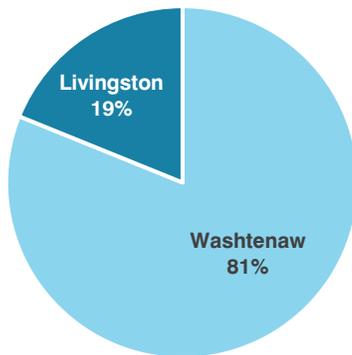
N = 53

EXHIBIT 4. Company or Business Location, by Type

Rural area
13%

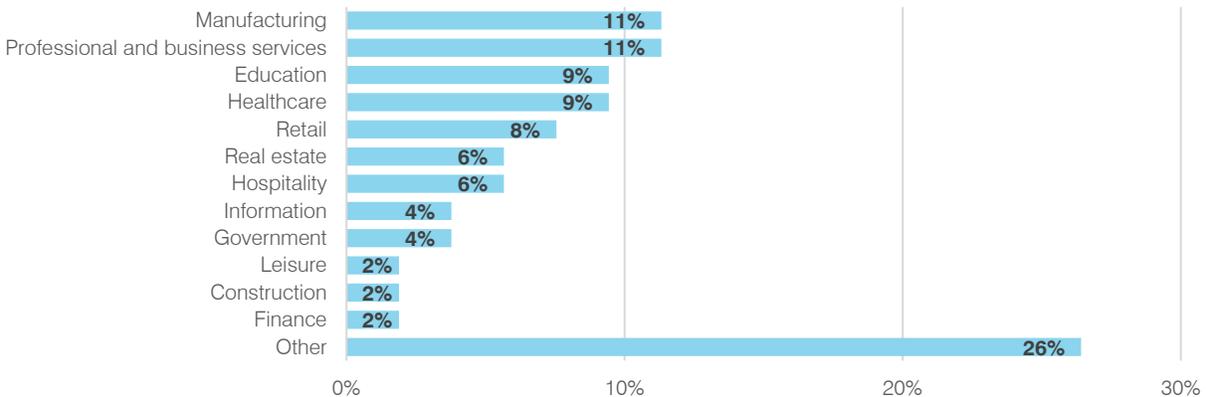Locations in
both areas
17%

Urban or
suburban area
69%
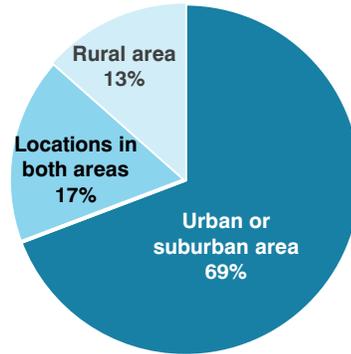
N = 52
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Just over 10 percent described their business as manufacturing or professional and business services, and just under 10 percent worked in education or healthcare (Exhibit 5).

EXHIBIT 5. Business Type

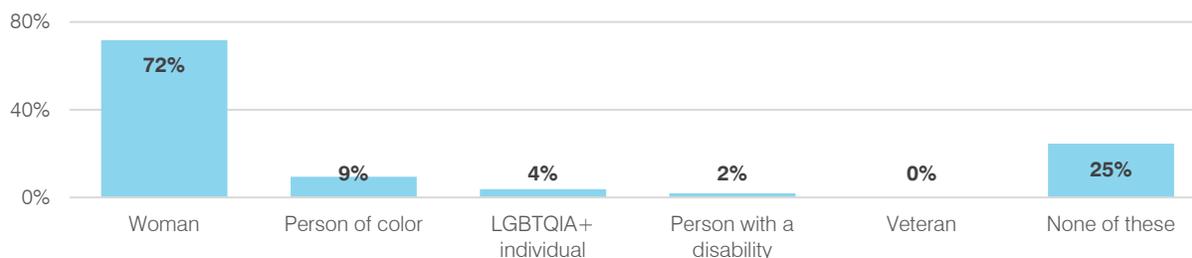| Business Type	Percent
Manufacturing	11%
Professional and business services	11%
Education	9%
Healthcare	9%
Retail	8%
Real estate	6%
Hospitality	6%
Information	4%
Government	4%
Leisure	2%
Construction	2%
Finance	2%
Other	26%

N = 53
Note: "Other" responses included charitable services, community and subsidy services, consulting, disability inclusion services, fitness services, law, and nonprofit organizations.

Mor than 70 percent of respondents said that the business owner or most senior executive at their company was a woman, and just under 10 percent identified owners and executives as a person of color (Exhibit 6).

**EXHIBIT 6.** Categories of Business Owners or Most Senior Executives

N = 53
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

Days and Hours of Operations

Respondents' businesses were open between five and seven days per week, with 60 percent open five days a week, Monday–Friday and 25 percent open seven days a week (Exhibit 7). More than two-thirds (69 percent) operated between six and 12 hours a day (starting 4:00–11:00 AM and ending 4:00–11:00 PM) with 31 percent operating more than 13 hours a day (Exhibit 8). Just over one-third of respondents' businesses offer emergency or on-call services outside of their normal business hours (Exhibit 9).
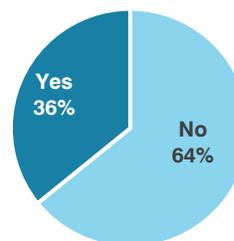
EXHIBIT 7. Days of Operation
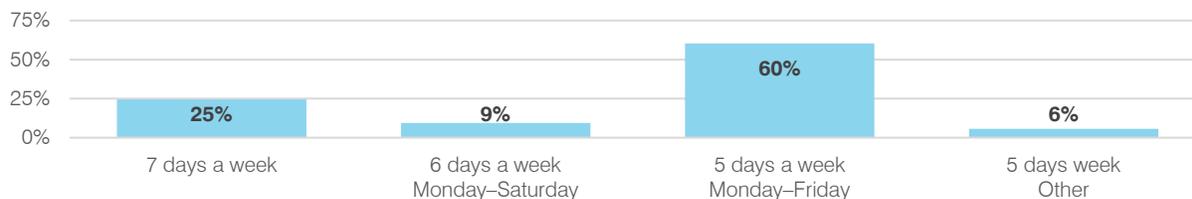
N = 53

EXHIBIT 8. Hours of Operation

N = 52

EXHIBIT 9. Percentage of Businesses Offering Emergency or On-call Services


N = 53

Employee Information

Part-time employees are more likely to have inconsistent work schedules, which can make maintaining child care more challenging. Nearly all respondents (87 percent) said they had at least one part-time employee. More than half (54 percent) have between one and four part-time employees (Exhibit 10).
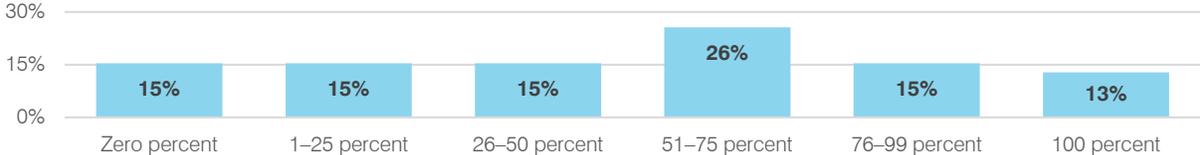
EXHIBIT 10. Number of Part-time Employees

None	1–4	5–9	10–19	20–49	50–99	100–249
13%	54%	12%	10%	4%	2%	6%
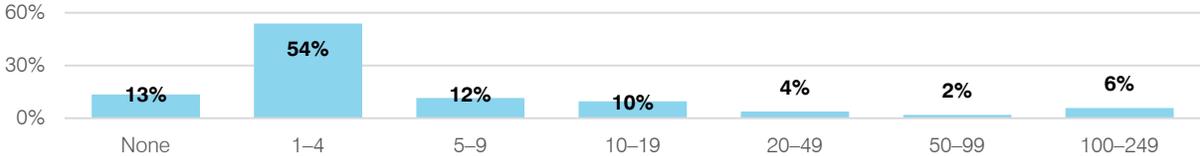
N = 52
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

As illustrated in Exhibit 11, over half of respondents (54 percent) pay more than half of the employees at their company an hourly wage as opposed to being paid on a salaried basis.

EXHIBIT 11. Percentage of Employees Who Are Paid Hourly

Zero percent	1–25 percent	26–50 percent	51–75 percent	76–99 percent	100 percent
15%	15%	15%	26%	15%	13%

N = 39
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

One-quarter of respondents said that their employees drive more than 15 miles on average to get to work (Exhibit 12).

EXHIBIT 12. Average Employee Drive Radius from Home

Less than 5 miles	5–10 miles	11–15 miles	More than 15 miles	I don't know
21%	27%	23%	25%	4%
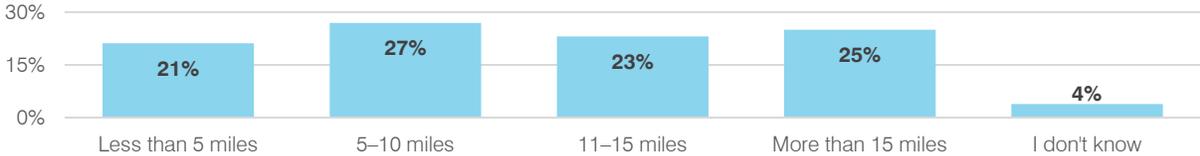
N = 52

Employee Child Care Needs

Nearly 20 percent of respondents said none of their employees have children under the age of 13, while 45 percent said that between one and 25 percent of their employees have children under the age of 13, and one-quarter said between 26 and 75 percent of their employees have children younger than 13 (Exhibit 13).

EXHIBIT 13. Percentage of Employees with Children Under 13 Years Old

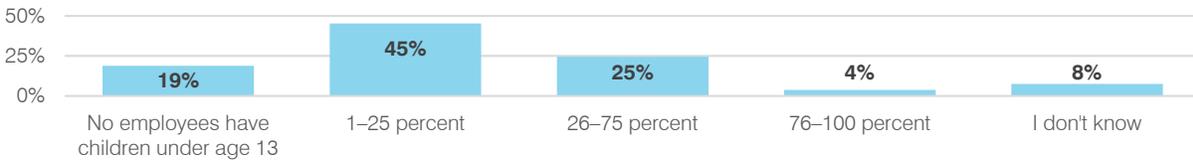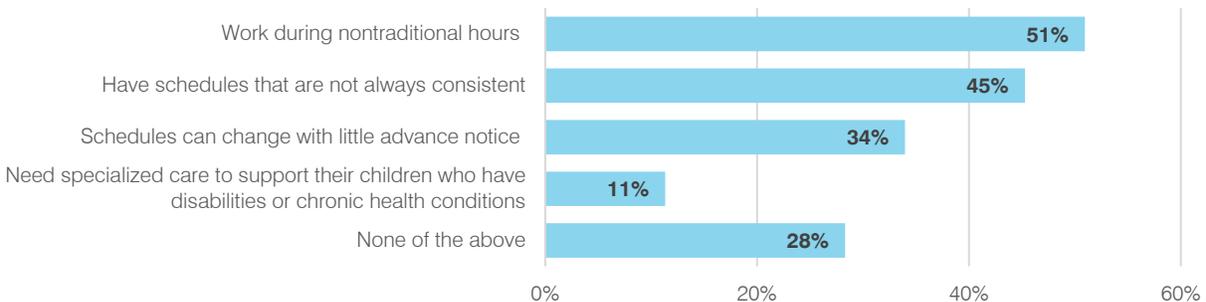| No employees have children under age 13	1–25 percent	26–75 percent	76–100 percent	I don't know
19%	45%	25%	4%	8%

N = 53
Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Certain aspects of employment, such as working nontraditional hours and having an inconsistent work schedule, may affect a family's access to child care. More than half of respondents said that their employees work during nontraditional hours and 45 percent said their employees have schedules that are not always consistent (Exhibit 14). Additionally, more than one-third said that their employee's schedules can change with little advance notice.

EXHIBIT 14. Aspects of Employment Potentially Effecting Child Care Access

Work during nontraditional hours	51%
Have schedules that are not always consistent	45%
Schedules can change with little advance notice	34%
Need specialized care to support their children who have disabilities or chronic health conditions	11%
None of the above	28%

N = 53
Note: Percentages total more than 100 because more than one response could be selected.

One third of respondents said that a lack of child care availability limits their ability to either recruit new candidates or retain employees a lot and 40 percent said it somewhat limits their ability to recruit or retain employees (Exhibit 15). In addition to many employers saying lack of child care limited their ability to recruit and retain employees at least somewhat, nearly 60 percent either strongly agreed or agreed that child care issues experienced by employees are negatively impacting their business with issues such as low productivity, absenteeism, and turnover (Exhibit 16).

EXHIBIT 15. Extent to Which Lack of Child Care Limits Employee Recruitment and Retention

I don't know 15%

A lot 33%

Not at all 12%

Somewhat 40%
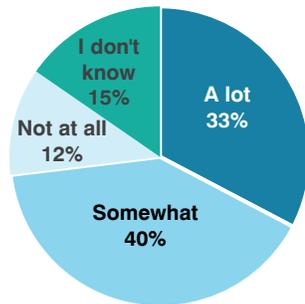
N = 52

EXHIBIT 16. Level of Agreement that Employees' Child Care Issues Negatively Impact Business


Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
12%	47%	33%	6%	2%
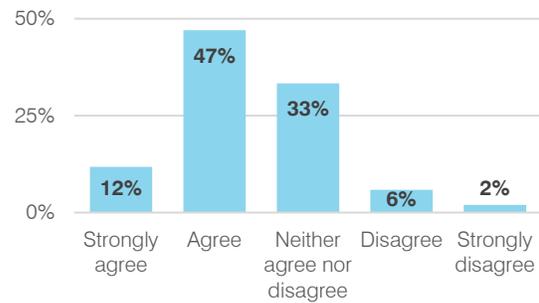
N = 51

Nearly three-quarters of employers said that their employees either frequently or occasionally were distracted, stressed, or worried at work as a result of having a child care issue, and 72 percent said employees frequently or occasionally missed work, arrived late, or left early due to problems with child care (Exhibit 17). Nearly half said their employees had frequently or occasionally reduced regular work hours or changed from full- to part-time, and 45 percent said employees frequently or occasionally turned down a job offer, promotion, reassignment, or further education or training as the result of a child care issue.

EXHIBIT 17. Aspects of Employment Potentially Affected by Child Care Needs

	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	I don't know
Been distracted, stressed, or worried at work	37%	37%	10%	6%	10%
Missed work, arrived late, or left early	37%	35%	18%	4%	6%
Reduced regular work hours or changed from full- to part-time	14%	34%	22%	22%	8%
Turned down job offer, promotion, reassignment, or further education/training	6%	39%	18%	31%	6%
Had to leave job	6%	28%	26%	34%	6%
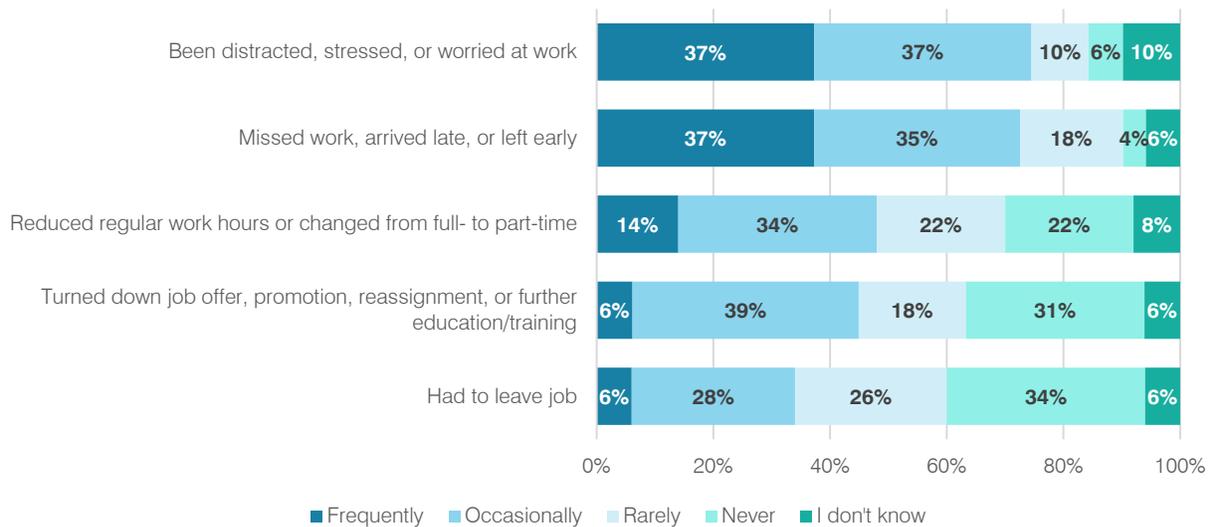
N varied between 49 and 51 by response.

Respondents said that some of their employees' biggest challenges related to child care included high costs, limited availability, and difficulty finding care during times that children were not in school,

including before and after school care, summer care, sick child care, and care during evening, nights, and weekends.

Overall affordability of childcare. The cost of childcare far exceeds the amount most are able to earn to keep up with general expenses and childcare needs. Programs that exist are often times reimbursement programs and individuals do not have the money up front to pay or the luxury of waiting for the reimbursement to come if they pay out of pocket.

—

Cost and availability are the top issues. State assistance thresholds are far to low for income before financial assistance is available.

—

There is only one child care provider in the area that accepts state assistance and that provider has a very long waiting list.

—

Six families work at our company, two of which have children. One family experienced so many child care issues that the employee had to leave full time work and step out of day to day operations after seven years of working for us to be the primary childcare provider. The other family had to pay for a full-time nanny to survive the summer, which was an exorbitant cost.

—

Recruiting employees with children. Retail wages are not enough to allow parents to afford child care, and retail hours make it difficult for them to find child care for evenings and weekends.

—

Recruiting potential employees. Shoppers who love our store inquire about open positions available at our location. They decline once the hours are explained to them due to lack of child care availability.

—

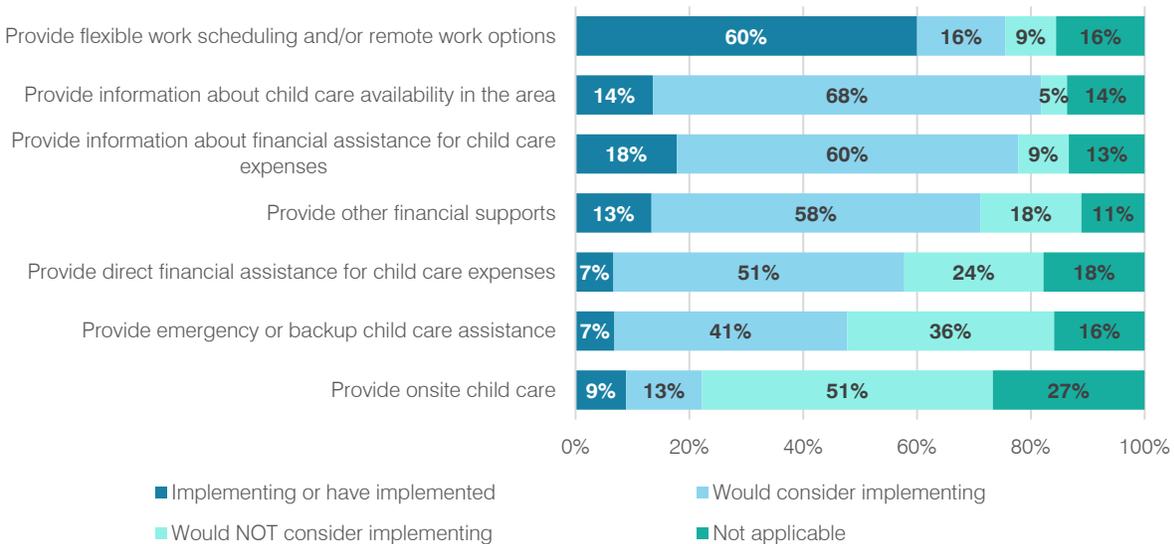School start and end times do not line up with traditional business hours.

—

Illness or long illness (covid) can prevent people from attending work or having to leave work to provide care.

—

Well, we ARE a child care center. We had to give free child care to attract employees. Then we participated in the tri-share program and offered 2/3 childcare (the state pays 1/3 if they qualify) we pay the other 2/3. We are losing a lot of money to do this, but we couldn't get qualified employees if we didn't let them have their children here as a benefit. No other center does this. However, we don't always have space, and then we may lose the employee because they cannot afford the care elsewhere. Also, we have to give GENEROUS paid time off because parents have to be off so much due to children being ill so often.

Many respondents are either already implementing workplace policies to help address some of these child care challenges or are willing to consider doing so. For example, 60 percent of respondents already provide flexible work scheduling and/or remote work options, and 16 percent more said they would consider doing so (Exhibit 18). While fewer respondents are already providing information about child care availability and information about financial assistance for childcare (14 percent and 18 percent respectively) 60 percent or more said they would consider doing so. The smallest percentage of respondents is or would be willing to consider providing onsite child care, with more than half saying they would not consider doing so and more than one quarter saying that option is not applicable to their business.
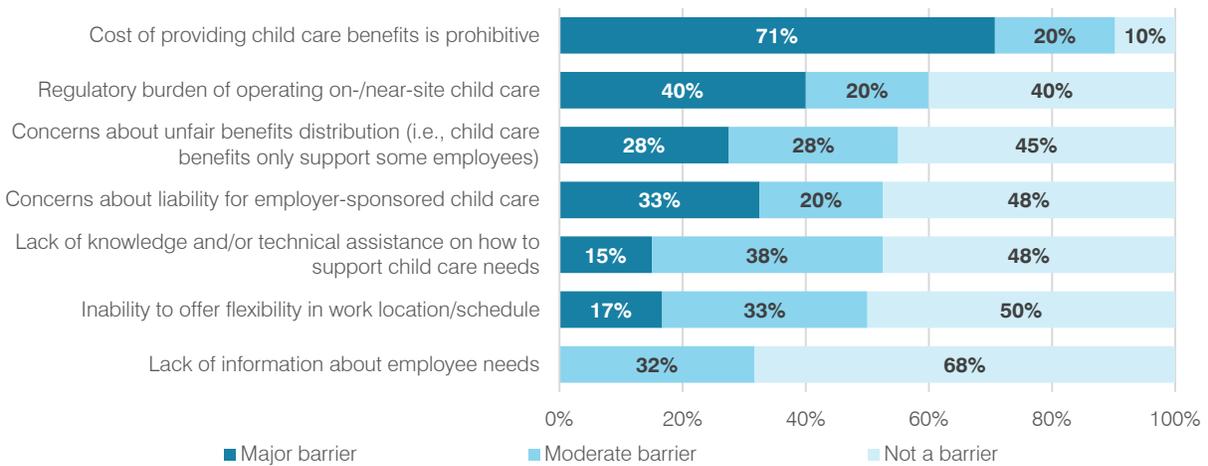
EXHIBIT 18. Willingness to Consider Workplace Child Care Policies

Policy	Implementing or have implemented	Would consider implementing	Would NOT consider implementing	Not applicable
Provide flexible work scheduling and/or remote work options	60%	16%	9%	16%
Provide information about child care availability in the area	14%	68%	5%	14%
Provide information about financial assistance for child care expenses	18%	60%	9%	13%
Provide other financial supports	13%	58%	18%	11%
Provide direct financial assistance for child care expenses	7%	51%	24%	18%
Provide emergency or backup child care assistance	7%	41%	36%	16%
Provide onsite child care	9%	13%	51%	27%

N varied between 44 and 45 by response.
Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

There are some things that may get in the way of employers implementing policies or practices supporting employees' child care needs. For example, nearly all respondents said that the cost of providing child care benefits is either a major or moderate barrier to doing so (Exhibit 19). Additionally, 60 percent of respondents said that the regulatory burden of operating an on- or near-site child care center was either a major or moderate barrier to doing so.
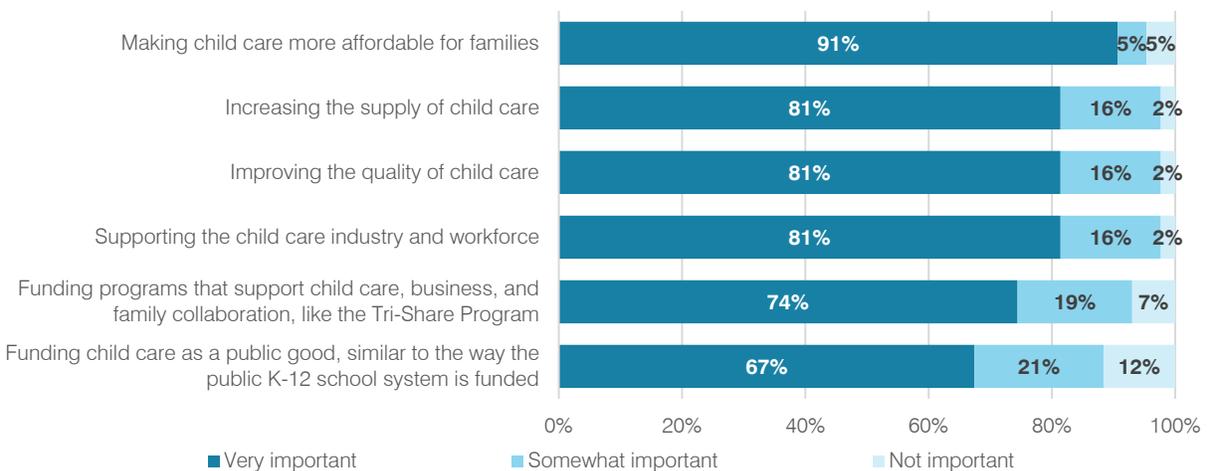
	Major barrier	Moderate barrier	Not a barrier
Cost of providing child care benefits is prohibitive	71%	20%	10%
Regulatory burden of operating on-/near-site child care	40%	20%	40%
Concerns about unfair benefits distribution (i.e., child care benefits only support some employees)	28%	28%	45%
Concerns about liability for employer-sponsored child care	33%	20%	48%
Lack of knowledge and/or technical assistance on how to support child care needs	15%	38%	48%
Inability to offer flexibility in work location/schedule	17%	33%	50%
Lack of information about employee needs	32%		68%

N varied between 40 and 42 by response.
Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Nearly all respondents (91 percent) said it was very important for Michigan to make investments and implement child care policies to make child care more affordable for families, and more than 80 percent said it was very important to make investments and implement policies that increase the supply of child care, improve the quality of child care, and support the child care industry and workforce (Exhibit 20).

EXHIBIT 20. Level of Importance for Michigan Investment and Policy Making

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
Making child care more affordable for families	91%	5%	5%
Increasing the supply of child care	81%	16%	2%
Improving the quality of child care	81%	16%	2%
Supporting the child care industry and workforce	81%	16%	2%
Funding programs that support child care, business, and family collaboration, like the Tri-Share Program	74%	19%	7%
Funding child care as a public good, similar to the way the public K-12 school system is funded	67%	21%	12%

N = 43

In closing, employers offered some final thoughts about employee child care needs that included:

Adequate early learning opportunities for young children is a critical need for both employers and employees. Investing in early childhood makes good business sense and it is the right thing to do. It is a systems level issue and needs to be addressed at that level.

—

We do our best to accommodate scheduling needs as we are all parents and understand. However, in general women deeply fear repercussions from needing time off to care for their kids and will hesitate for ask what they actually need. It's a major stressor and it's sad to see and also to feel from time to time as a parent myself. Being a woman in the workforce and a parent often puts you between a rock and a hard place.

—

Child Care businesses need more financial supports, to maintain quality and consistent care. I want to keep childcare affordable, however I am battling many factors. The best way to support child care centers, so they can support families and other businesses, is through funding. To keep my doors open I need to provide my staff with an appropriate salary that represents their skills, and provide them with enough staff so they can maintain their jobs tasks without feeling burnt out, which leads to quitting. More financial supports are needed for child care, or child care will have to require more tuition from parents in order to stay open. Also access to licensing, and funds in order to open new facilities or expand facilities. I have the opportunity to expand, but am waiting on both licensing and funds in order to do so. I could open up 8 additional rooms that would serve 32 children and families in my area.

—

For parents with minor and adult children with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities finding child care is impossible. Most parents are unable to work. The percentages of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder are increasing while the staffing available to support these families is at a nonexistent or crisis level.

—

I would like a state matching program for employers to team up with daycare providers to offer subsidies towards accredited daycare centers as an employee benefit.

—

The only way for my employee to get financially assisted child care is to drive 20 minutes out of the way, each way, twice a day. Not really a viable option.

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