



Webster, South Dakota: Childcare Survey Report – Primary Caregiver

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Introduction

The childcare crisis in South Dakota has reached critical levels, with many families struggling to find affordable, high-quality care for their children. This report aims to understand the current landscape of childcare in the state, focusing on availability, cost, quality, and impact on families and the economy. According to South Dakota Kids Count, approximately 74% of children under the age of six live in households where all available parents are working, creating a significant demand for reliable childcare services. However, many rural areas in South Dakota face severe childcare shortages, exacerbating the issue for many families. This survey report draws on data from hundreds of primary caregivers across the state to provide insights into how these issues affect South Dakota's families, their economic stability, and the broader community. By exploring these dimensions, the report seeks to identify opportunities to better the current childcare crisis facing South Dakotans.

Survey Respondents

This report examines a portion of a larger group who selected the zip code "57274" indicating they live in Webster, South Dakota. Forty-four (44) individuals in the larger group indicated they were from Webster.

- The Survey was viewed (link opened) 2,138 times.
- 515 responses were recorded.
- 223 completed enough of the survey to have a meaningful response.

While there was a minimum amount of participation, not all questions were required. Open ended questions and demographic questions, specifically, were optional. See questions needing completion indicated in the survey instrument in the appendix of this report. Each question discussed has an associated N=#, this indicates how many people's answers the table represents.

Again, this document is only reporting findings from the 44 individuals who identified themselves as living in Webster (all respondents entered the zip code 57274). Respondents did not answer every question, some questions have as few as 16 responses.

Key Findings

This survey, based on responses from 44 primary caregivers for children, reveals several critical insights into childcare needs and challenges. A significant portion of respondents (64%) have one or two children aged 0-6 years, with homes having only one child showing a higher likelihood of not needing childcare within the next three years.

Responses showed parents and family members are playing a crucial role in filling childcare gaps. The need for full-day childcare is prevalent Monday through Friday, with around 60% of respondents requiring it, indicating a consistent demand throughout the workweek.

Childcare accessibility is another significant concern.

The survey shows the average respondent drives an additional 10.6 miles each day for childcare, and many families struggle with availability. The cost of childcare is a major burden, with 50% of families paying between \$100 and \$149 per week per child, closely matching what they identify to be their maximum budget.

The survey highlights dissatisfaction with the quantity of childcare options, with nearly 90% of respondents disagreeing that there are plenty of choices available.

Results

The following information is from a survey (included in appendix at end). Which included a maximum of 23 questions. None of the questions were force-answers, each participant could skip questions they did not wish to answer.

How many children (0-6 years old) in your home currently need childcare? Do you anticipate needing childcare or needing additional childcare in the next 3 years? N=44

Table 1: Number of children in homes and anticipated future need for childcare.

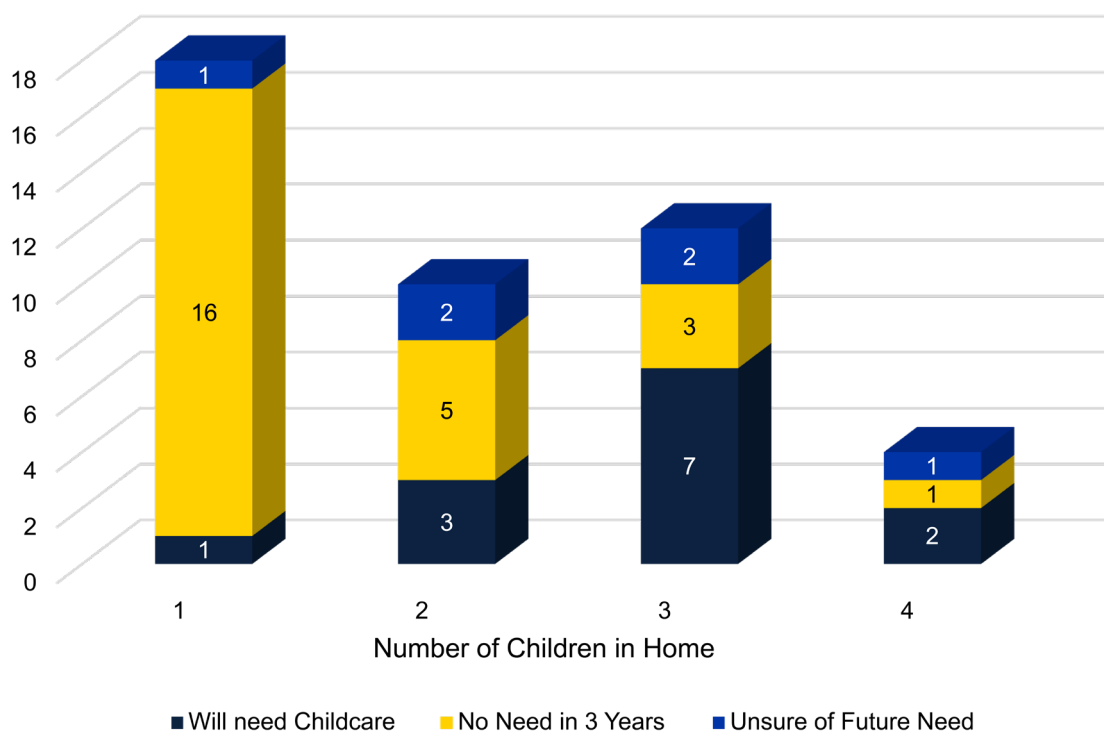


Table 1 pairs two questions, identifying how many children are in each respondent's home and if they will need childcare in three years.

Most respondents with one child in the home indicated they likely wouldn't need childcare in three years, while those with multiple children were far more likely to anticipate childcare needs continuing beyond the next three years. Also, considering the large proportion of respondents with only one child in the home planning to not need childcare in three years (88.9%), this may suggest a reduced need for childcare in the future. It could suggest more families are heading toward needing less childcare, rather than planning to have more children and needing additional or continued childcare.

If you are not using a childcare center, can you please share about the other arrangement(s) you have?

N=16

Table 2: Qualitative responses for alternatives to childcare centers

Number of Responses	Other Arrangement
6	Daycare/Childcare Center
5	Family Members
3	Change work schedule to accommodate (changed hours or quit job)
10	Change work schedule to accommodate (changed hours or quit job)
2	Nanny/After School Programs

This open-ended question was voluntary and received 16 responses. Four response themes were observed. Verbatim responses will not be shared in these sections, for example, “Family” “My Parents” and “Older siblings” would all be counted in the theme of “Family Members.” Those who responded were able to list multiple arrangements they use to fill childcare gaps, this resulted in 26 responses from 16 individuals.

Please check all the times your family may need childcare throughout the week: N=19

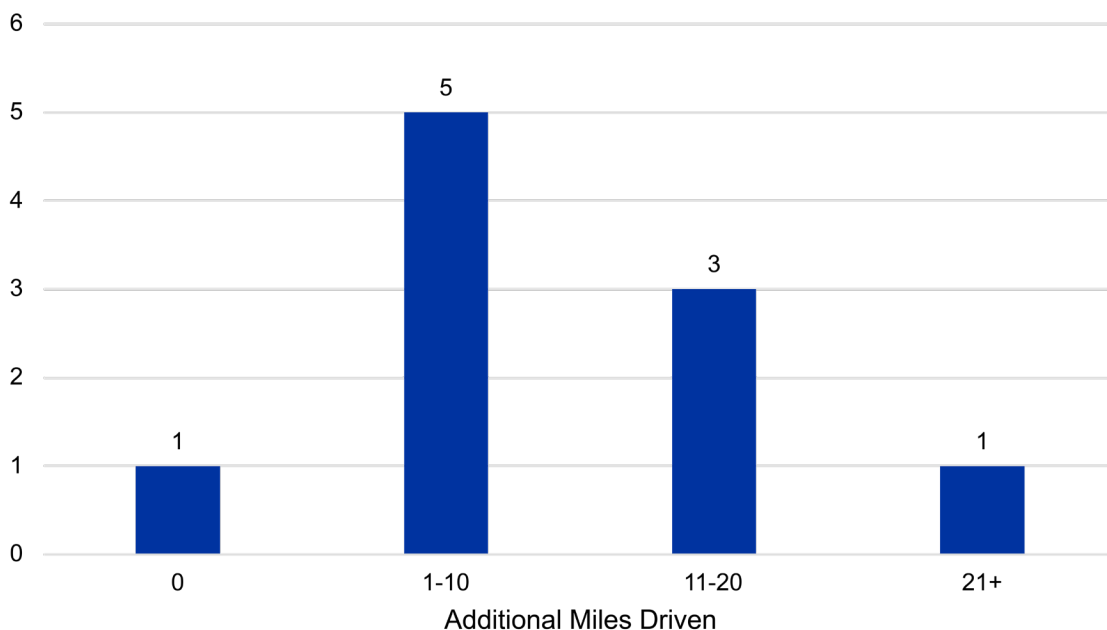
Table 3: Childcare needs by day of the week, N (%). Most needed days are bold and highlighted light blue in table.

Day of week	6:00-9:00 a.m.	3:00-9:00 p.m.	Half Day	All Day	Other
Sunday	1 (5.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Monday	5 (26.3%)	5 (26.3%)	3 (15.8%)	12 (63.2%)	2 (10.5%)
Tuesday	5 (26.3%)	5 (26.3%)	3 (15.8%)	12 (63.2%)	2 (10.5%)
Wednesday	5 (26.3%)	5 (26.3%)	3 (15.8%)	12 (63.2%)	2 (10.5%)
Thursday	5 (26.3%)	5 (26.3%)	3 (15.8%)	11 (57.9%)	3 (15.8%)
Friday	5 (26.3%)	5 (26.3%)	4 (21.1%)	11 (57.9%)	2 (10.5%)
Saturday	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Participants were asked to share what days of the week and which parts of the day they need childcare. Individuals were able to select multiple options for each day.

How many additional miles do you drive for childcare? N=10

Table 4: Additional miles driven each day for childcare.



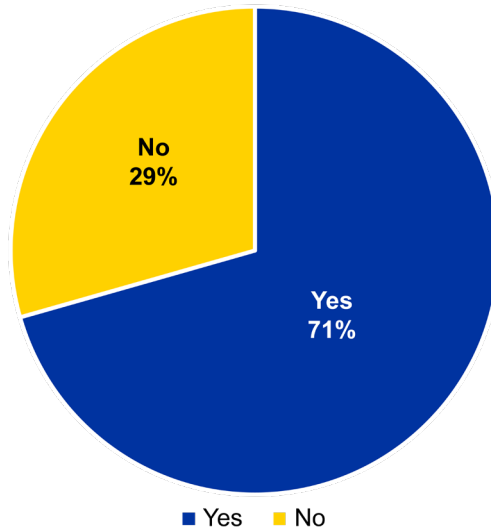
Participants were asked to share how far they travelled to attain childcare. The most common answer, making up 50% of answers, were between 1 and 10 additional miles each day they needed childcare.

It is important to note, the survey question before this question received 19 responses and the one after this received 17 responses, this question received 10. It is possible individuals who do not drive additional miles skipped the question when they should have answered “0”.

As they responded, 10 individuals collectively drive 106, or an average of 10.6 miles per day. If those who didn’t respond did not drive additional miles this would bring the average number of miles driven per person down to 6.2 miles per person, per day.

Do your childcare needs change in the summer months? N=17

Table 5: Changing childcare needs in summer months.



This question was asked because before and after school care can make a significant impact on childcare. Only those who indicated their needs did change (Table 5) were asked to share what their summer childcare needs were (Table 6).

Please check all the times your family may need childcare throughout the week in the summer. (N=11)

Table 6: Summer childcare needs by day of the week, N (%). Most needed days are bold and highlighted light blue in table.

Day of week	6:00-9:00 a.m.	3:00-9:00 p.m.	Half Day	All Day	Other
Sunday	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)
Monday	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	4 (36%)	5 (45%)	3 (27%)
Tuesday	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	3 (27%)	7 (64%)	3 (27%)
Wednesday	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	3 (27%)	6 (55%)	3 (27%)
Thursday	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	3 (27%)	5 (45%)	3 (27%)
Friday	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	4 (36%)	4 (36%)	3 (27%)
Saturday	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

In comparison to the schedule of childcare needs during the year (Table 3), those who indicated a change in needs during the summer months had a less clear need pattern. About 50% needed a full day of care and the need for half-day care rose from about 16% during a regular week to about 30% during the summer.

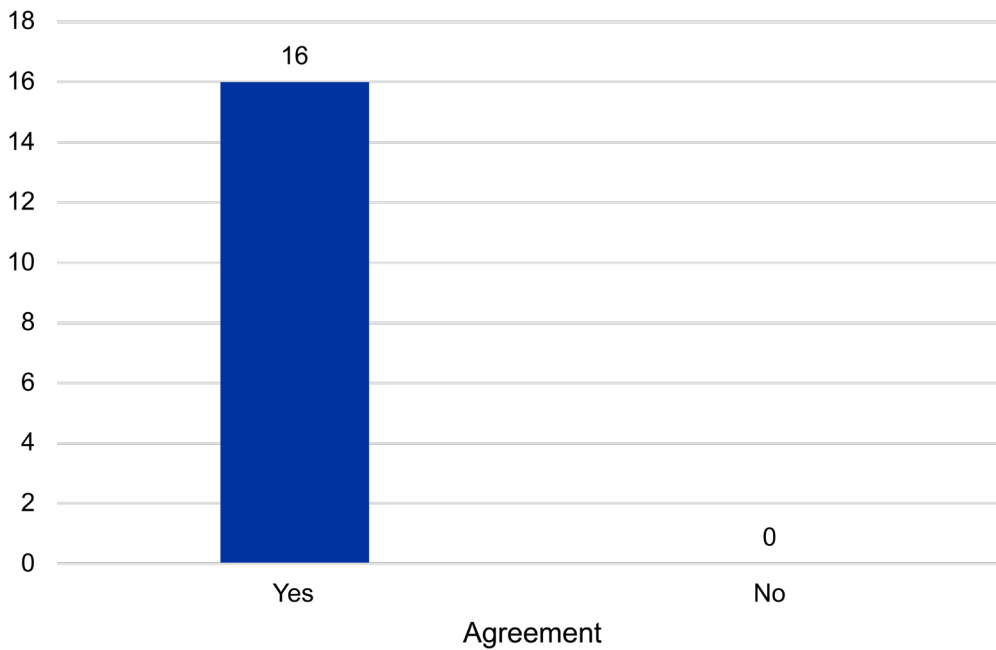
What childcare options does your family use during the summer? N=11

This open-ended question was voluntary and received 11 responses. Verbatim responses will not be shared in this section, for example, “Family” “My Parents” and “Older siblings” would all be counted in the theme of “A parent or family member cares for the children.” Those who responded were able to list multiple arrangements they use to fill childcare gaps, this resulted in 13 responses from 11 individuals.

Number of Responses	Other Arrangement
4	Daycare
6	A parent or family member cares for the children
3	Had no arrangement

Do you believe there is a need for a childcare center or more childcare options in your community? N=16

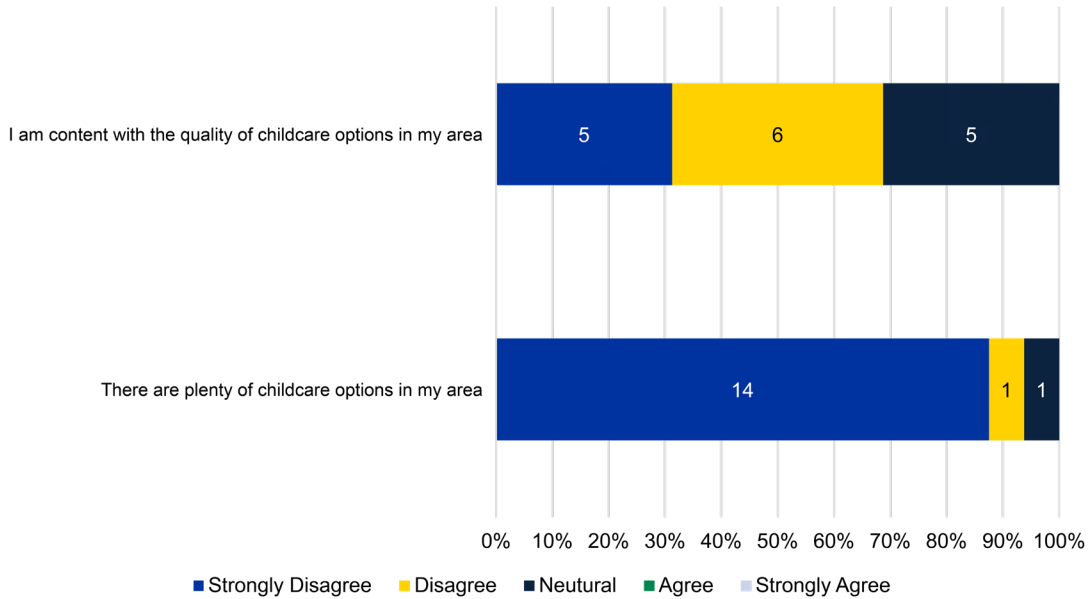
Table 7: Belief in need for more childcare in community



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- There are plenty of childcare options in my area (N=16)
- I am content with the quality of childcare options in my area (N=16)

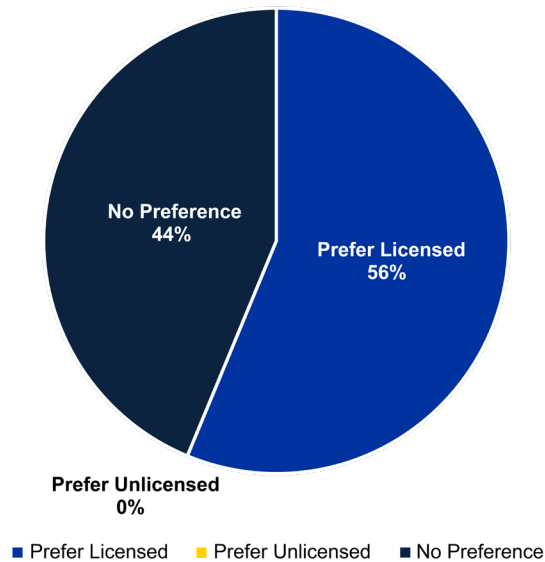
Table 8: Contentedness with quality and quantity of childcare options.



When asked about opinions of quality and quantity of childcare options respondents were more content with the quality of childcare options (Table 8), with just over 31% having neutral feelings toward the quality of childcare in their area. Strong disagreement was more widely expressed toward the quantity of available childcare, with nearly 88% indicating strong disagreement with the statement.

How do you feel about childcare center’s licensing status? (N=16)

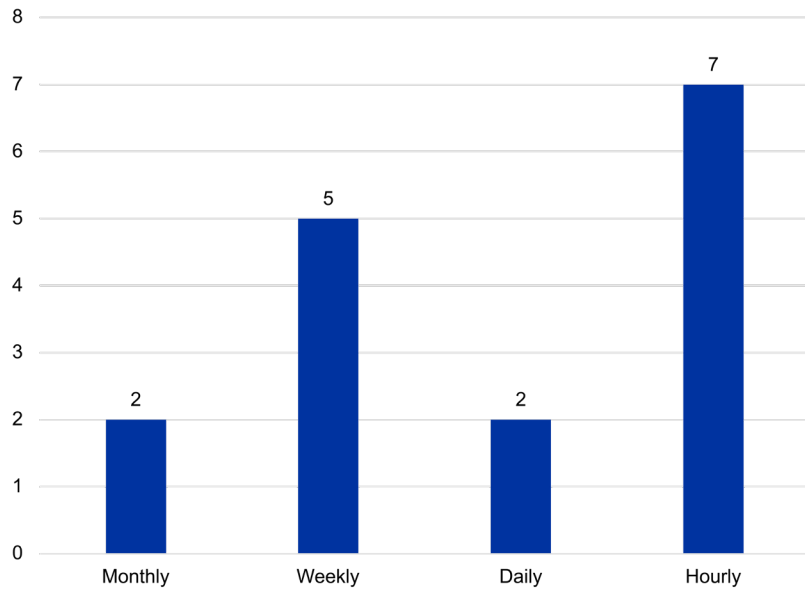
Table 9: Preference toward licensing status of childcare center



When asked how respondents felt about licensing status, about half (56.2%) shared they did not have a preference (Table 9). While the rest preferred a licensed facility 43.7% and no respondents from Webster preferred a center to be unlicensed.

How would you prefer to be charged for childcare services? (N=16)

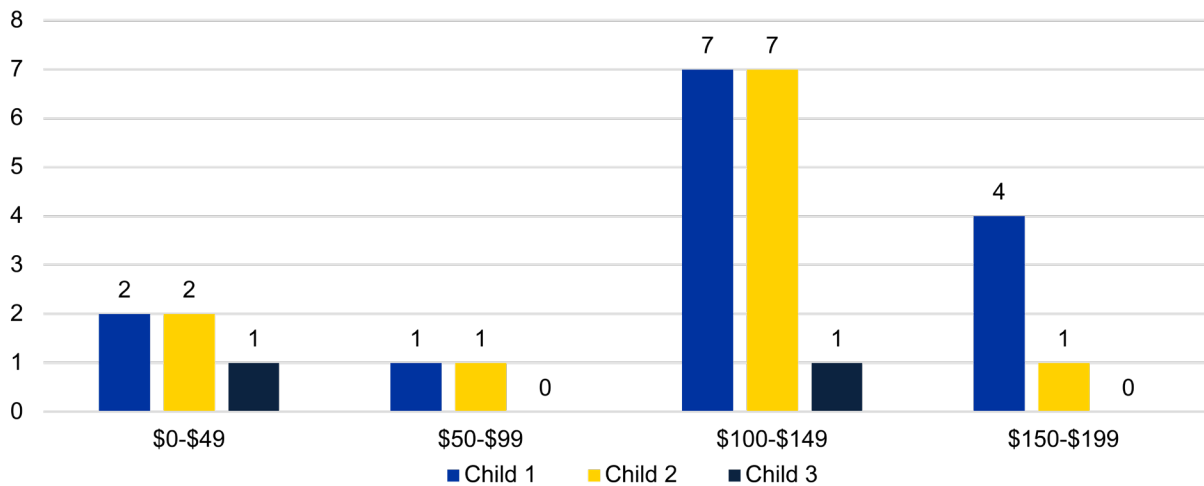
Table 10: Preference of payment style/frequency



The most preferred payment schedule was hourly with 43.7% and the least popular was monthly and daily (12.5% each) (Table 10). Webster was quite different than the rest of the state, in which approximately 50% of respondents preferred a weekly payment.

How much are you paying for childcare services, per child, per week? N=14

Table 11: Cost per week, per child, by child



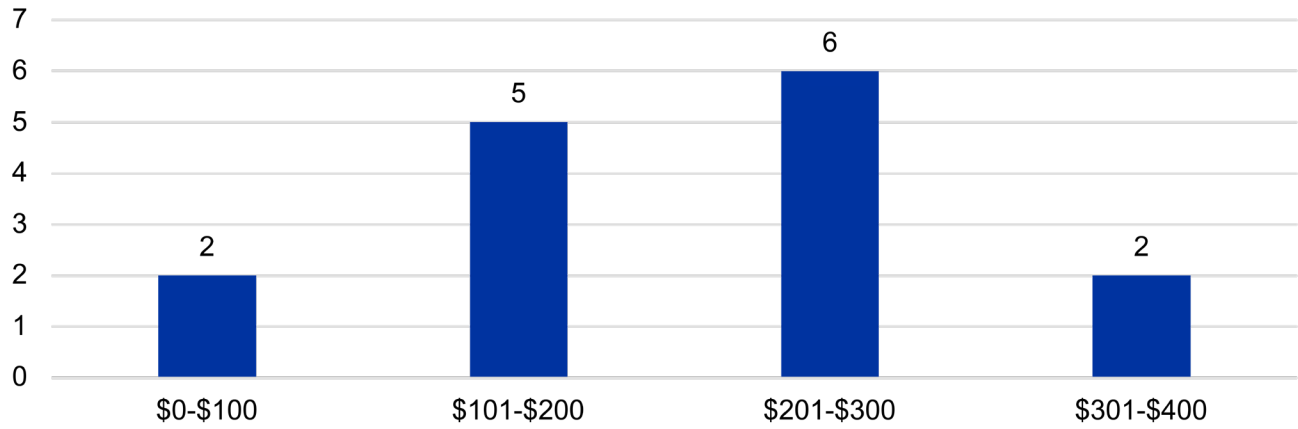
This question allowed for up to 5 children, no one entered a cost for a fourth or fifth child, so the report reflects only up to three children.

Of the 14 respondents who answered this question they entered data for 27 children. The most common amounts paid for both child one and child two were between \$100 and \$149 (50% each).

Using the responses to this question, it was possible to calculate how much each family is paying for childcare for all children per week (Table 12).

This was not asked as a standalone question but rather, was determined by adding up each respondent’s reported cost per child, per week, for all their children.

Table 12: Total cost per week for childcare



What is your maximum budget per week for childcare? (Consider costs such as additional childcare fees or having additional children in childcare) (N=14)

Table 13: Weekly Childcare Budget

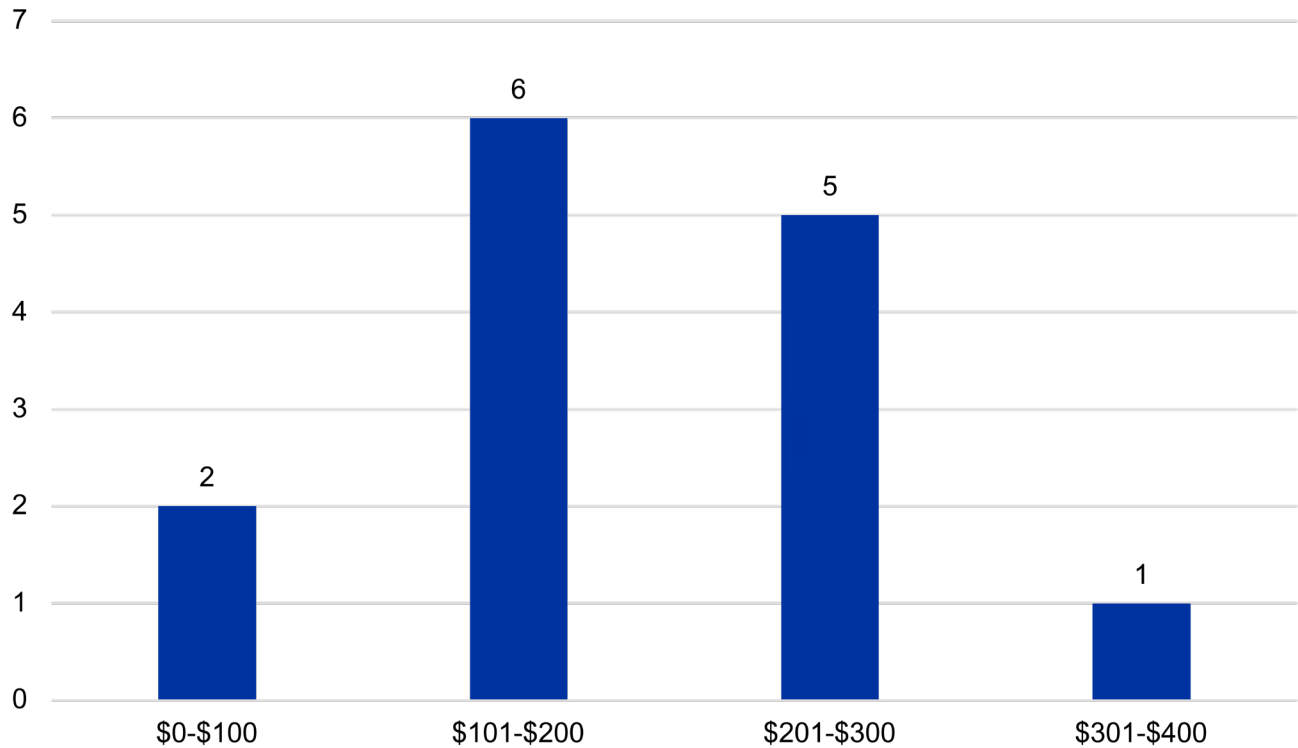
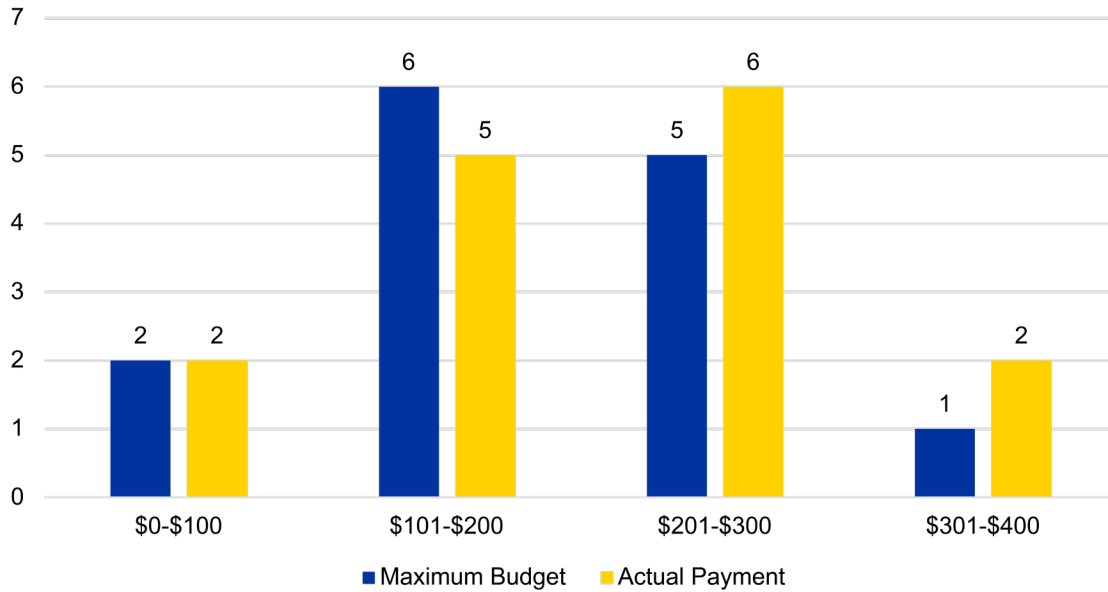


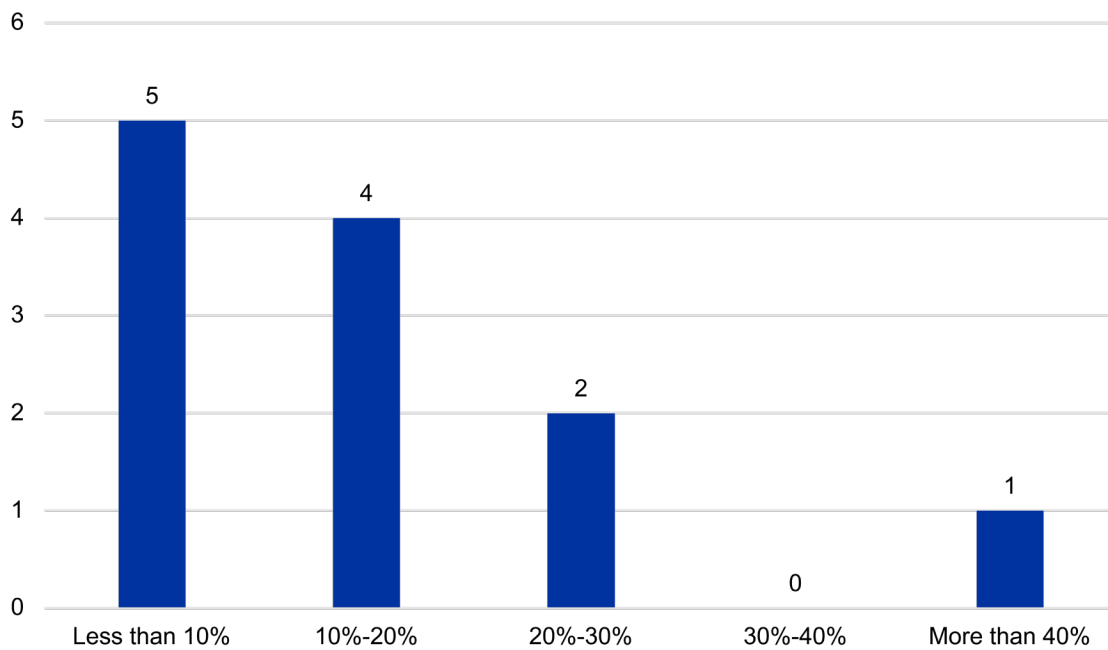
Table 14: Actual vs. estimated maximum childcare budget.



When compared side by side, the actual payment is very close to the upper limit budget most respondents are currently identifying.

Furthermore, if middle ground is assumed for income ranges (i.e., \$0-\$24,999 = \$12,500) found on Table 19 and multiply the childcare costs people are currently paying per week by 52, a ratio of approximate amount of income being spent on childcare can be seen. N=12 (participants needed to share how much they paid for childcare as well as their income level to be included in this statistic).

Table 15: Percent of income spent on childcare.

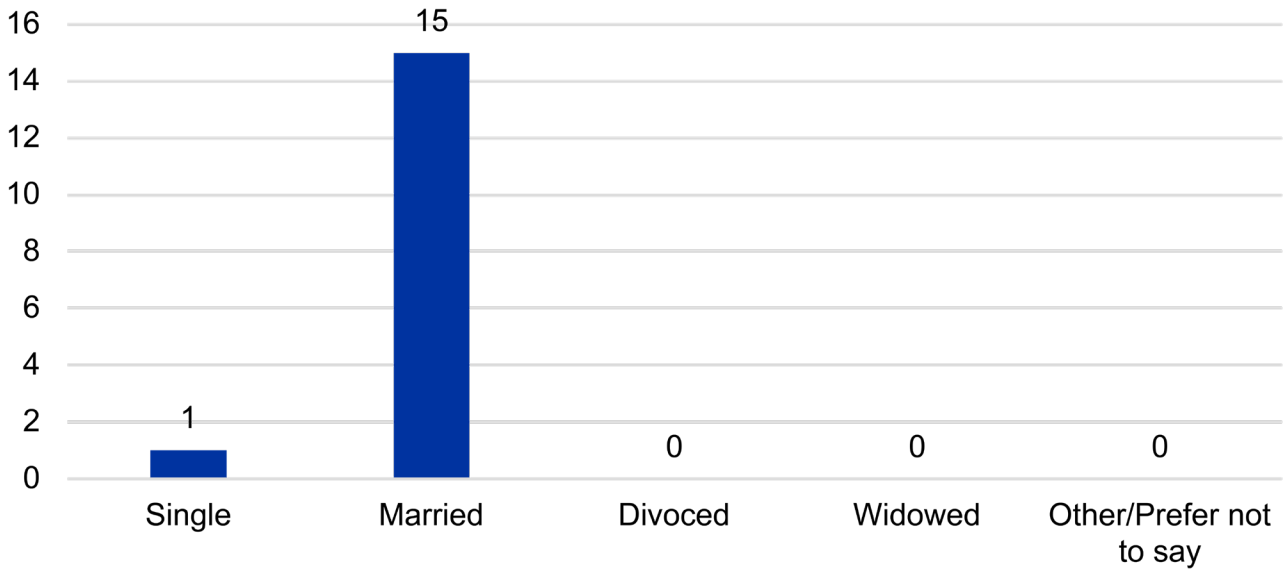


Demographics

Marital Status

When asked about marital status 16 responses were counted, the most common answer being “Married”. N=16

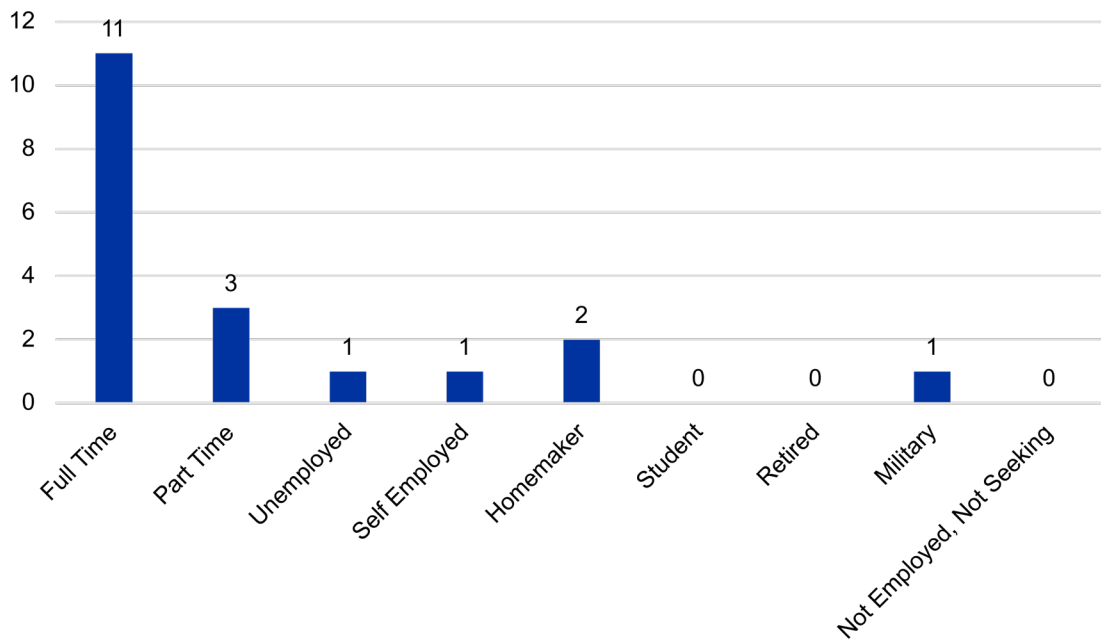
Table 16: Marital status



Employment

When asked about employment status the most common answer being “Full-time.” Participants could select more than one answer, which is why more than 16 employment options were selected. N=16

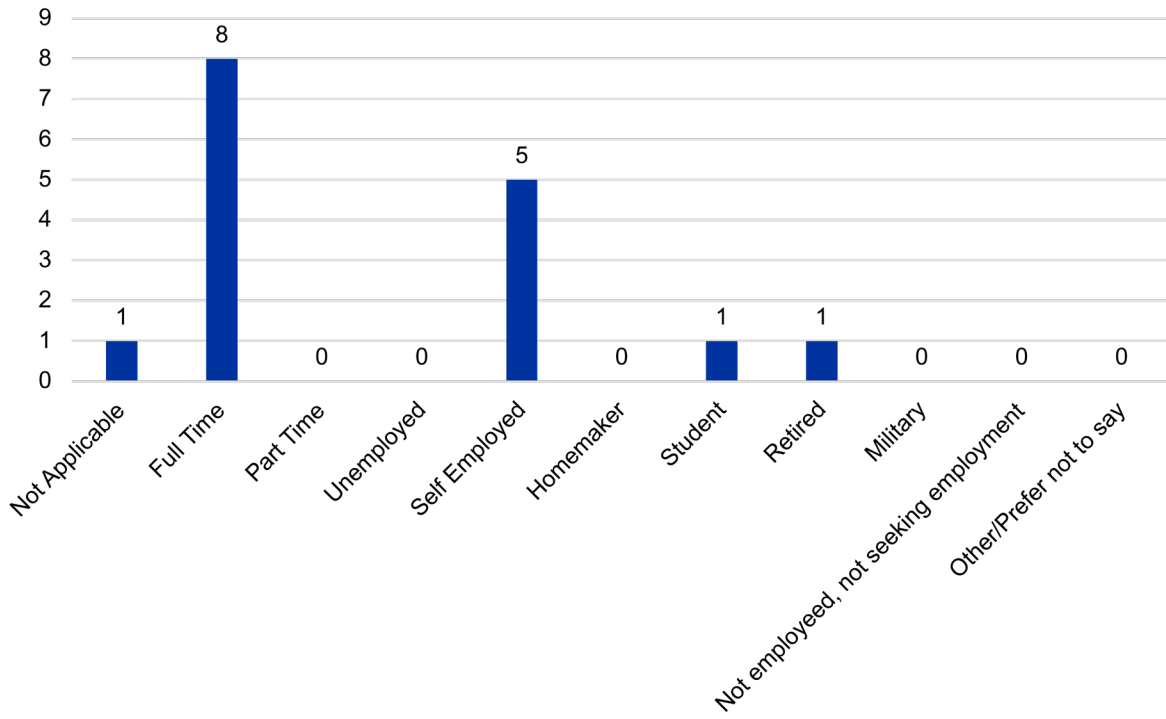
Table 17: Employment



Spouse/Partner Employment

When asked about the employment status of a Spouse/Partner 16 responses were counted, the most common answer being “Full-time”. N=16

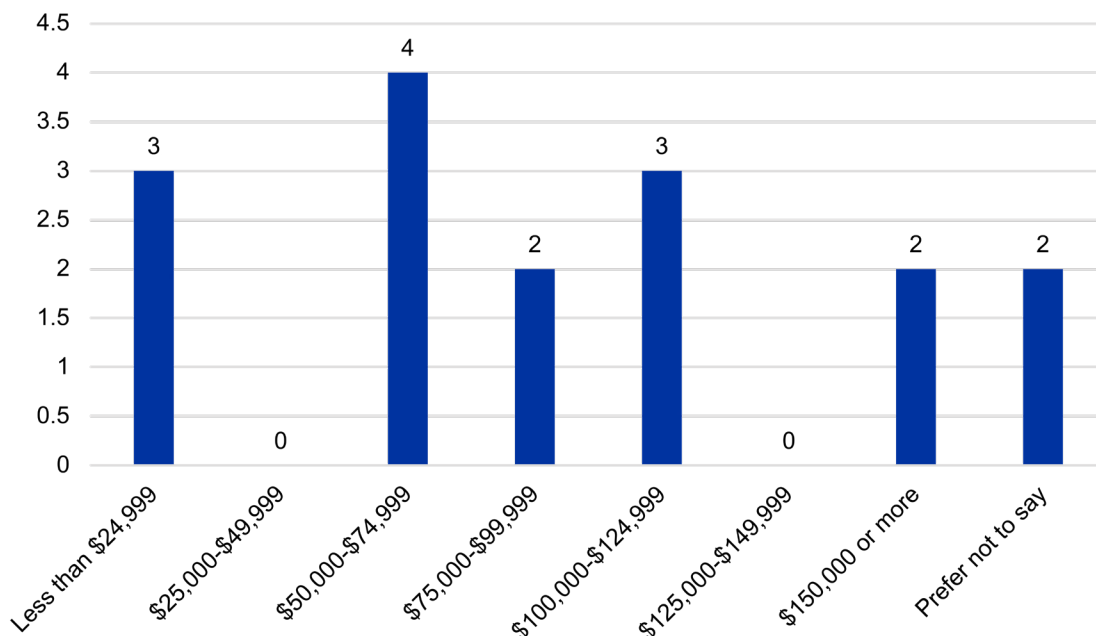
Table 18: Spouse/Partner employment status



Income

When asked about household income level 16 responses were counted, the most common answer being \$50,000-\$74,999. N=16

Table 19: Household income



Thank you for participating in this survey, please share here any additional comments you may have about childcare. These comments have been heavily generalized due to the low number of responses. N=4

- The cost of childcare is a major factor preventing me from being a more productive member of society.
- Childcare is a huge need in this area, everyone should be more concerned about it.
- We need more childcare.
- Childcare is a major concern; we should explore options within school districts.

Appendix A – Survey Instrument

The information below represents the survey participants took to collect the data in this report. Respondents took the survey online, so this is not identical to what they saw. Participants were not forced to answer any questions, however, if they skipped certain questions their response was not counted in the reports.



This voluntary survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Answers will be held strictly confidential and used only for this study. The results will only be reported in aggregate form and cannot be identified individually. One business owner or household member aged 18 years or older should complete the survey.

What is your zip code? _____

Are you a childcare provider?

- Yes*
- No

****If “yes” was selected the participant was asked a different set of questions and then offered the rest of these questions if they had children of childcare age and wanted to take the survey***

How many children (0-6 years old) in your home currently need childcare?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

Do you anticipate needing childcare or needing additional childcare in the next 3 years?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you are not using a childcare center, can you please share about the other arrangement(s) you have?

Please check all the times your family may need childcare throughout the week.

Day of the week	6:00 - 9:00 a.m.	3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Half Day	All Day	Other time frame
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many additional miles do you drive for childcare? Daily Miles _____

Do your childcare needs change in the summer months?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

What childcare options does your family use during the summer? _____

Please check all the times your family may need childcare throughout the week in the summer.

Day of the week	6:00 - 9:00 a.m.	3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Half Day	All Day	Other time frame
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you believe there is a need for a childcare center or more child care options in your community?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
There is plenty of childcare available in my area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am content with the quality of childcare in my area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How do you feel about childcare centers licensing status?

- I prefer an unlicensed center
- I have no preference if a center is licensed
- I prefer a licensed center

How would you prefer to be charged for childcare services?

- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily
- Hourly
- Other

How much are you paying for childcare? (Enter as many children as you pay for)

Child	Cost per week for child care
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

What is your maximum budget per week for childcare? (Consider costs such as additional childcare fees or having additional children in childcare)

If you would be interested in participating in a round table discussion in your community please share your email address below:

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Other or Prefer not to answer

What is your employment status?

- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Unemployed
- Self-employed
- Home-maker
- Student
- Retired
- Military
- Not employed, not seeking employment
- Other or Prefer not to answer

What is your spouse/partner's employment status?

- N/A
- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Unemployed
- Self-employed
- Home-maker
- Student
- Retired
- Military
- Not employed, not seeking employment
- Other or Prefer not to answer

What is your annual household income?

- \$0-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$124,999
- \$125,000-\$149,000
- \$150,000 or more
- Prefer not to answer

Thank you for participating in this survey, please share here any additional comments you may have about childcare.



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