

SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL, INC.
REGION 8 CHILD CARE AWARE
1106 3RD AVENUE, WORTHINGTON MN 56187
507-376-4195

WORTHINGTON CHILD CARE SURVEY

PARENT EMPLOYEE RESPONSES

SURVEY DATES:
MARCH 26 – APRIL 9, 2018

BACKGROUND

Quality child care = a ready workforce. Parents with young children work to support their families. These working parents need safe, affordable, reliable child care to be productive employees. As more and more families are dual income households, the impact of child care directly impacts their ability to meet household expenses. Working parents should not have to choose between child care and maintaining a job. Investments in child care benefit communities.

In addition to community benefits, children benefit from quality child care. A child who receives high quality early childhood education enters kindergarten ready to learn and is more likely to graduate high school and college. That translates into a high school graduate earning \$1.3 million more than a high school dropout. These high earners save over \$19 million over the next generation. High quality early childhood provides a great rate of return. www.childaction.org

When children have access to quality child care their parents are present and productive at work. Business and employers can grow their businesses and Nobles County can retain and attract businesses. Helping parents find child care, resolving child care issues, and assisting new child care options to get started helps build communities.

“Nationwide, 45% of working parents miss at least 1 day of work every 6 months due to child care breakdowns.”
www.childaction.org

The availability of quality child care minimizes employee’s loss of time and productivity resulting from unmet child care needs. The availability of child care can help working parents remain engaged in their jobs. It leads to better mental health and less stressful spillover from home to their job. When working parents are not worried about child care arrangements, there is an increased opportunity for their economic security. This is not just a “working mom” issue. Women and men are equally sharing household responsibilities – managing families and careers.

“There is a national conversation about women in the workplace, the new role of dads, and equitable expectations for both. Women today outnumber men both on college campuses and in earning advanced degrees. They do not expect to put their career on hold while they have a family. 92% plan to be as committed post-baby as they were before; 64% are excited about being a role model for their child; 77% are excited to provide for their family; 53% look forward to developing their career.” (Bright Horizons Modern Family Index 2016)

The start of the recession in December 2007 impacted the child care field in Southwestern Minnesota, including Nobles County. As families moved out of the area for employment reasons, enrollment in child care programs was impacted. Some child care providers relocated as spouses found employment in other area. The implementation of all-day, every day Kindergarten in 2011 also impacted child care enrollment for 9 of the 12 months of the year. The addition all-day, every day preschool adds another layer of complexity to the child care dilemma. The removal of children ages 3 to 5 from the child care system does not create additional child care spaces for younger children. Licensing requirements outline maximum number of children based on the age of the child. A child care program cannot enroll 5 infants to replace 5 preschool or school-age children who leave child care to enroll in preschool programs and Kindergarten.

A Historical Look at the Number of Early Childhood Programs – Nobles County:

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Family Child Care	69	62	62	65	63	58	56	52	47	45	42	41	41	40	42	40
Child Care Center	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Preschool Programs	9	8	8	7	8	8	9	9	7	7	7	6	14	14	16	16
Totals:	80	72	72	74	73	68	67	63	56	54	51	52	51	56	60	58

The influence of child care is far-reaching, impacting the demographics of the workforce in Nobles County and the financial health of working parents. Child care intensifies human resource issues for employers.

“Finding daycare alone is very hard, and because of the lack of in-home day-care there is not a standard of high quality. There is such demand that daycare providers to little in actually benefit or education of the children the care for. Also, because of the demand there are basically no options for families when day care is closed. For those of us who moved here with no family around to help, we are left missing work constantly (my day care has been closed 21 days since Christmas). It is easy to say that this issues, has led me to start my search for employments elsewhere. Although we have only been here a short time, it's in the best interest of my family that we move somewhere that childcare and education are important” - Survey Respondent

This report compiles the results of a survey conducted from the period of March 26, 2018 – April 9, 2018 to gather input from working parents on their child care experience in Worthington (and surrounding communities). A total of 398 individuals responded to the survey.

The survey questions were asked to gather information in the following areas:

- Availability of Child Care from the Working Parent’s Perspective
- Identifiable Areas of Child Care Need
- Child Care Issues / Challenges
- Input / Opportunities for Solutions

Efforts were made to determine the extent child care impacted parents with young children and their employment. For open-ended questions, the responses were categorized in subgroups to more clearly articulate specific needs. Comments are listed as submitted by the respondent with identifying information removed to maintain confidentiality.

Gathering information from working parents who rely on the child care system regarding their ease or difficulty accessing child care; satisfaction with current child care arrangements; and types of accommodations they need to make to maintain employment can lead to solutions that benefit all segments of communities.

Parents were appreciative of the opportunity to give input:

“I’ve been wanting to express my disappointment in lack of options around here for child care – thank you for providing the survey! – Survey Respondent

“Thanks for noticing the need!” – Survey Respondent

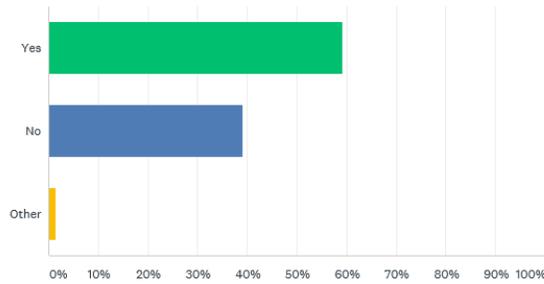
“I am glad Worthington is looking into the ongoing child care issue” – Survey Respondent

“Make Worthington affordable, livable and exciting place to live to attract others to come to our community” – Survey Respondent

**QUESTION 1: ARE YOU CURRENTLY USING CHILD CARE?
(DOES SOMEONE WATCH YOUR CHILDREN SO YOU CAN WORK OR GO TO SCHOOL? IT CAN BE LICENSED, UNLICENSED, FAMILY, FRIEND, OR NEIGHBOR.)**

1. Are you currently using child care? (Does someone watch your children so you can work or go to school? It can be licensed, unlicensed, family, friend, or neighbor.)

Answered: 398 Skipped: 0

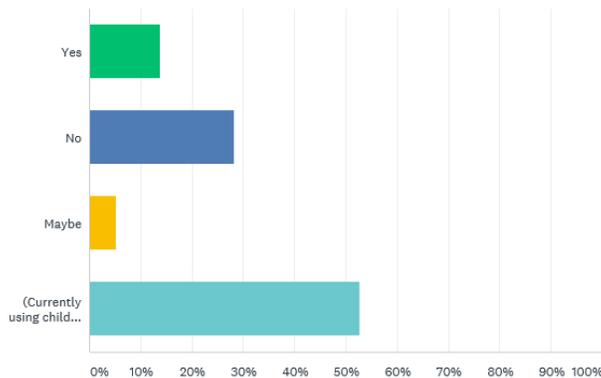


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	59.30% 236
No	39.20% 156
Other	1.51% 6
TOTAL	398

QUESTION 2: IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY USING CHILD CARE, WILL YOU NEED IT IN THE FUTURE?

2. If you are not currently using child care, will you need it in the future?

Answered: 382 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	13.87% 53
No	28.27% 108
Maybe	5.24% 20
(Currently using child care)	52.62% 201
TOTAL	382

QUESTION 3: HOW MANY CHILDREN WILL NEED CHILD CARE IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS?

236 parents currently using child care and 38 parents needing child care in the next 6 months indicated child care is needed for the following ages of children: (Note: Not all children are cared for in Worthington)

TYPE OF CARE	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENTAGE
Infant (6 weeks-12 months)	97	20.73%
Toddler (12-24 months)	79	16.88%
Preschool (24 months–5 years)	164	35.04%
School Age (5-11 years)	128	27.35%
Total Children	468	100%

Table 1: Ages of Children Needing Child Care

QUESTION 4: DO YOU COMMUTE TO WORK?

4B: WHICH COMMUNITY DO YOU USE FOR CHILD CARE? (DO YOU USE THE COMMUNITY WHERE YOU LIVE OR WHERE YOU WORK?)

187 parent employees using child care commute to Worthington for employment. 77 (41%) of these parents identified using child care in Worthington. 110 of these parents identified using child care in other communities:

COMMUNITY	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
Adrian	12	6.42%
Avoca	1	0.53%
Between Home & Work	2	1.07%
Bingham Lake	1	0.53%
Brewster	5	2.67%
Drive Out of My Way	1	0.53%
Ellsworth	1	0.53%
Fulda	7	3.74%
Heron Lake	1	0.53%
IA Ocheydan, Sibley, Spirit Lake	3	1.07%
Lakefield	2	1.07%
Luverne	1	0.53%
Nobles	3	1.6%
Okabena	1	0.53%
Reading	3	1.6%
Round Lake	1	0.53%
Rushmore	4	2.14%
SD Brandon	1	0.53%
Slayton	2	1.07%
Still Looking	3	1.6%
Wilmont	3	1.67%
Worthington	77	41.18%
“Where I Live” – No Location Given	34	18.18%
Commuting – No Child Care Location Given	17	9.09%
Total	187	100.02%

Table 2: Communities Employees Use for Child Care

“I want to move to Worthington, just not sure I could find childcare.” - Survey Respondent

QUESTION 5: DO YOU NEED EVENING CHILD CARE YOU ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR?

Of the 236 parent employees currently using child care and 36 employees needing child care in the future, 51 identified the following evening care needs:

	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE (OF 272 TOTAL PARENTS)
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	34	12.5%
9:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	9	3.3%
Overnight	8	2.94%
Total	51	18.74% (of 272 Total Parents)

Table 3: Parent Employees Willingness to Pay for Evening Child Care in Worthington

“I am lucky to have an infant spot at an in home place. However, they now close at 5 pm and are often closed on school days. I literally am paying someone to pick up my kids by 5 to keep them till 5:30 or 6 a few nights a week when I or my husband get off work. The travel and inconvenience of this costs about \$20/ day for that one hour. What's worse than that is finding someone available for that hour. I can't leave the in home because no infant options are available. I can't blame the in home for wanting to close at 5 because it's her business. It creates a lot of stress and I constantly am trying to think of a better solution. This is the reality in Worthington. Nights and early morning care are even worse. This doesn't just affect shift workers, it also affects nurses, people who travel for work often, and many others with professional careers.” – Survey Respondent

QUESTION 6: HOW DIFFICULT HAS IT BEEN TO FIND CHILD CARE MEETING YOUR NEEDS?

244 parent employees currently using child care responded as follows:

	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
Very Difficult	98	40.2%
Difficult	93	38.1%
No Problems	42	17.2%
Still Looking for Child Care	5	2.1%
Did Not Comment/Respond	6	2.5%
Totals:	244	100%

Table 4: Difficulty Finding Child Care

“Throughout the course of 4 children Now ages 4-11, we had 6 different in home daycare she due to ages ratio, closing, conflicts etc.”– Survey Respondent

“Lack of availability. I have been very happy with the care my children receive at their daycare. However, if there were ever an issue where I would want to switch day cares, it would not be possible. There simply are not enough day cares open to allow parents to have any sort of real choice--if we are lucky enough to find daycare, we stick with it even if there are some things we don't like about it. There's no where else to go.”-Survey Respondent

162 parent employees needing child care in the future responded as follows:

	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	PERCENTAGE
Very Difficult	27	17%
Difficult	31	19%
No Problems	15	9%
Still Looking for Child Care	8	5%
Did Not Comment/Respond	81	50%
Totals:	162	100%

Table 5: Difficulty of Parent Employees Needing Child Care in the Future

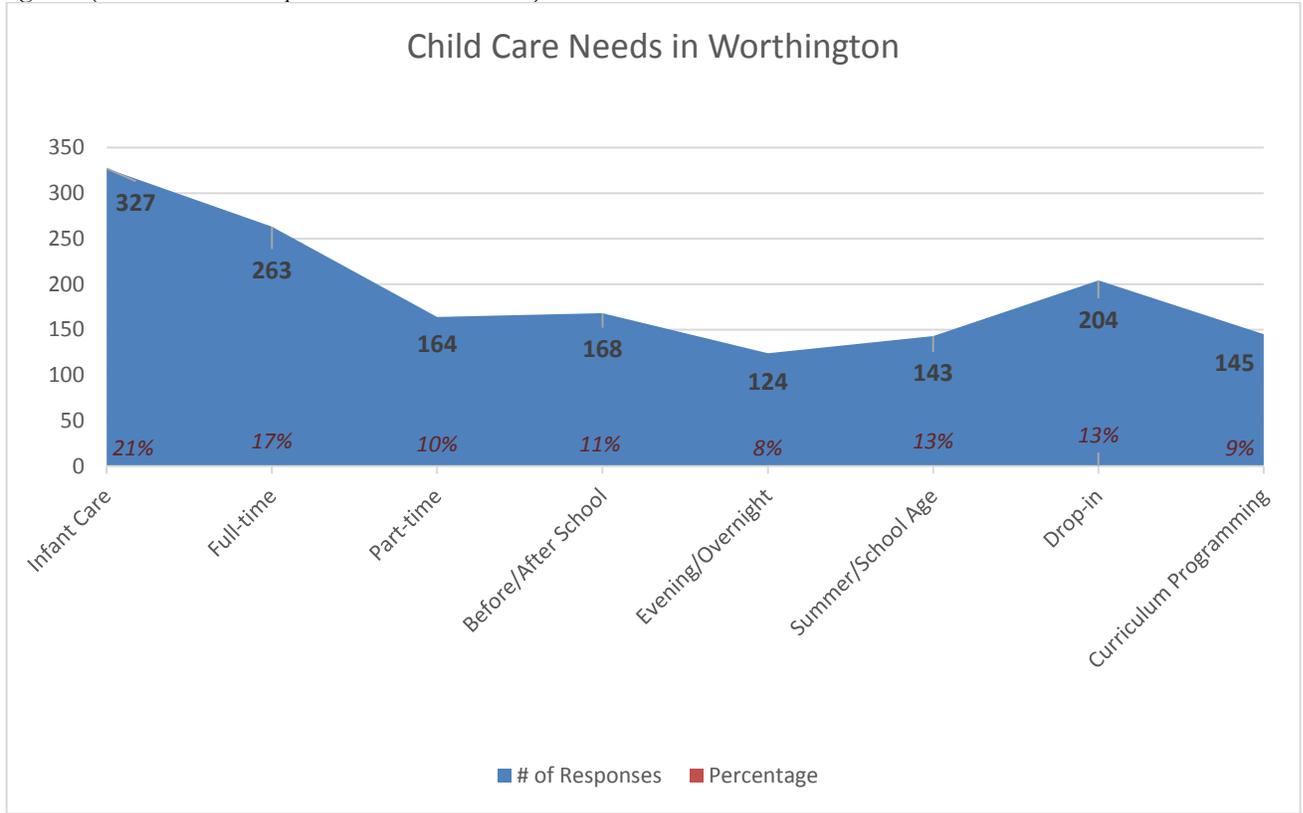
Open-ended responses “Why has it been difficult to find child care that meets your needs?”

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<i>“My job sometimes requires me to travel for meetings and at time have to leave at 4am. No one is open that early. My husband also travels to work and his car does not fit all the little ones.”</i>
<i>“There are not many licensed providers available, esp who can take an infant or child under 2 years of age. Most are full for that age group and have no openings or are taking any new families”</i>
<i>“We had a difficult time finding providers that stayed open. Two providers closed before we found one that our child went to for several years. We preferred in home daycare. It has also been very complicated to find something for my daughter during the summer months - she is too old for the YMCA day camp programs but bored at home alone.”</i>
<i>“Made calls to almost all available in home options in the community before finding an opening. I was lucky to find an opening with someone I trusted and also very lucky she could take my second child once she was born.”</i>
<i>“I was on a waiting list for worthington daycare for 18 months. In that time I had to drive 30 min out of my way to take him to a daycare that had an opening at the time”</i>
<i>“Not a lot of options so have to accept the way they run their daycare. For example, if school gets out at noon the little ones don't get a nap because the older ones are there and loud.”</i>
<i>“When my child was in infant in 2008 it was extremely hard to find an in-home daycare. We were able to use the same provider until my child turned 3 years old and they closed/moved. By then my child was old enough to go to another program. He was able to go there until this year he is old enough to not need daycare.”</i>
<i>“No daycare is open early morning or late nights”</i>
<i>“They are all full, only able to take so many infants and are at capacity.”</i>
<i>“Not many infant caretakers”</i>
<i>“Had horrible problems when they were infants”</i>
<i>“We were on a waiting list for 6 months”</i>
<i>“Due to not finding an in-home daycare, our parents watch our daughter.”</i>
<i>“I could not find infant care in the Nobles County area- my in laws decided to retire early and move here to care for the kids.”</i>
<i>“There are not many options for older kiddos- I do not want them at an in-home daycare where they are only playing with toddlers.”</i>
<i>There is hardly ever openings! I have been lucky to finally find a good one for my first child, and then had to plan concieving our 2nd and 3rd child around availability of daycare.</i>
<i>“All the daycares are full and its HARD to find infant openings. Being put on a waiting list for a year or so out does not help currently”</i>
<i>“you almost needed to know someone who knew someone to get into home daycare.”</i>
<i>“Not many options without separating my kids”</i>
<i>“Not enough providers to meet the needs of our community.”</i>
<i>“When my daughter was born there were no open spots for an infant and then when I found one the lady was closed all the time”</i>
<i>“Nothing is available especially for infants. You almost need to start looking even before you ever get pregnant.”</i>

QUESTION 7: IN YOUR OPINION, ARE MORE CHILD CARE OPTIONS NEEDED IN WORTHINGTON?

370 total respondents indicated more child care options are needed in Worthington. A total of 1,538 responses were given (more than one option could be chosen):



“Couldn’t find a reliable opening for an infant so ended up not working for 6 months” – Survey Respondent

“I will be staying home next year partially because I wanted to be able to stay home with my kids when they were little and partially because we were not sure when we would be able to have another child and get them an infant spot in daycare. With the cost of multiple kids in child care, it was going to be quite costly as well.” – Survey Respondent

“Yes, yes, yes! Many families choose not to come to Worthington because they are unable to find childcare. It also holds some mothers back from working due to the shortage”. – Survey Respondent

“As a working mom with a college degree, I can see a lot of my fellow working moms choosing to stay at home or take part-time work because child care needs are so great. My career path does not allow me to jump in and out of the work force so my family has dealt with some challenges of childcare that others may not put up with.” – Survey Respondent

“I’ve talked with other couples they are NOT moving to worthington because they know how hard childcare is. That’s a problem!” – Survey Respondent

QUESTION 8: FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT AREAS OF CHILD CARE ARE NEEDED IN WORTHINGTON?

266 of survey respondents currently use child care or will need child care in the future. Child care options identified by these 266 respondents are as follows (Note -- more than one option could be chosen):

TYPE OF CARE NEEDED	NUMBER OF OPTIONS CHOSEN	PERCENTAGE
Infant Care	248	22%
Full-time Care	197	17%
Drop-in Care	156	14%
Part-time Care	120	11%
Educational Focused Care (Curriculum Driven Programs)	111	10%
Before and After School Care for School-age Children	118	10%
Summer Care for School-age Children	101	9%
Evening or Overnight Care	83	7%
Total	1134	100%

Table 6: Child Care Needs in Worthington

"I'm currently not using my nursing license because we don't have childcare so I'm staying home." – Survey Respondent

QUESTION 9: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR(S) AFFECTING YOUR CHOICE OF CHILD CARE FOR YOUR CHILD?

QUESTION 10: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM YOU ENCOUNTER WITH CHILD CARE?

These were open-ended questions.

The responses were categorized into 5 areas:

- Availability of Child Care: Lack of Options and Lack of Openings
- Child Care Quality: Trust, Activities Offered, Reliability and Competence, Attentiveness
- Hours Child Care is Available: School Issues, Drop-In, Part-Time, General Availability, Dependability, Start/Stop Time, Flexibility
- Cost of Child Care: Affordability, Cost, Payment Issues
- Child Care Regulations

*** Comments are listed as submitted by the respondent with identifying information removed to maintain confidentiality.*

a) Availability of Child Care:

Lack of Options	Lack of Openings
Availability. Literally there isn't options to choose from. (Mentioned 2 times)	I have no back-up if my daycare closes due to illness, vacation, etc.
Have no choice currently!	Everyone is full... (Mentioned 2 times)
Lack of choices (Mentioned 2 times)	Finding room anywhere bc they are all full.
Lack of options. If one doesn't work out, there is no where else to go. (Mentioned 3 times)	No openings/ lack of openings. (Mentioned 8 times)
long waiting lists (Mentioned 3 times)	Providers that are highly recommended are full.
The lack of child care providers. (Mentioned 2 times)	Not enough spots, some co-workers have quit work due to lack of care..
no options for daycares (Mentioned 4 times)	no body putting me on a list
No options/everyone is full (Mentioned 2 times)	I'm on 3 waiting lists
Not enough child care (Mentioned 3 times)	Difficult to find any openings

Shortage	Not being able to find an open spot
There isnt enough daycares	No one has openings and if they do, it is full time only.
there just isn't any child care available.	Not getting into childcare because nothing is available
There's not much out there	NOTHING available.
Infant Daycare almost caused me to have to quit my job. Luckily I have in-laws who were willing to uproot their lives to help us out.	
There aren't enough daycares in general, let alone drop in daycares.	
I was on a waiting list from 4 months pregnant until my baby was almost 6 months old before we got a full time spot.	
It is hard to find a quality daycare when you don't have ANY options.	
It simply doesn't exist, especially for a part-time infant. We have hired an individual, which works most of the time, but working around their schedule can be difficult.	
extremely limited options for infant-we were on a waiting list for daycare in town for over a year before an opening. We were driving to/from [REDACTED] before that & unhappy with that daycare, but no other options.	
Day cares are full. It's difficult to be selective in the quality of care because of the lack of providers. When I first looked for day care 4 years ago, I was only able to find one place that had space for an infant. And that was only because I was looking almost a whole year in advance. Every other place I called had no openings for close to two years. With my second child, I was grandfathered in at my current daycare and was able to bypass the long waiting list for the infant room.	
It was near impossible to find child care of my infant son. My mother agreed to watch him four days a week and he goes to day care one day a week.	
Started and stopped one "licensed" provider who was awful with my infant. Now mother in law is babysitting however she has 2 other jobs so i am only able to work part time.	
We were not able to get in right away when my child would need care as in infant. There was a spot open when my child was 7 months old so work schedules were adjusted/grandparents assisted with caring for our daughter until there was an opening.	
I planned my pregnancies around my daycare openings.....seriously! That's how hard it is in Worthington to be in a good daycare!	
My provider carried a variance for my child for almost 10 months. I was able to pay monthly to reserve a spot starting when I was only 8 weeks pregnant in order to ensure that my spot would not be taken . Planning on a 2nd baby is stressful though because I know infant spots are hard to come by.	
I could not find a licensed daycare for my youngest until she was 2 years old.	
When I was looking for my daughter, there were about 12 of us that all had babies at the same time and all of the providers were only able to take so many under 2, so it took lot so of extensive searching and I ended up going through 3 differently people all before she turned 1	
I started looking for infant care when I got pregnant- and still didnt find anyone by the time I had my son.	
my second child was given priority and we notified them 11 months in advance of coming.	
I didn't have a choice of who was going to provide daycare, it was literally the only option for us. It has been working out thankfully but there is no options in Worthington.	
We could not get into an in-home daycare, so our parents watch our daughter. My parents live 1.5 hours away, so they stay at our house half of the week!	
I have an infant, preschooler, and a kindergartener. I have one infant spot in an in home. I had no other options to choose from.	
Unfortunately, the most important factor became simply whether there was availability. I did not have the luxury of being choosy when I was looking for daycare.	
Finding childcare. We have a 9 month old and we have only found a daycare 26 miles away. Have been on multiple lists since before her birth.	
It holds some mothers back from working due to the shortage	

"Finding daycare alone is very hard, and because of the lack of in-home day-care there is not a standard of high quality. There is such demand that daycare providers to little in actually benefit or education of the children the care for. Also, because of the demand there are basically no options for families when day care is closed. For those of us who moved here with no family around to help, we are left missing work constantly (my day care has been closed 21 days since Christmas). It is easy to say that this issues, has led me to start my search for employments elsewhere. Although we have only been here a short time, it's in the best interest of my family that we move somewhere that childcare and education are important." – Survey Respondent

b) Child Care Quality

There were 4 comments made indicating “quality” as a problem parents are experiencing with child care. The remaining factors were separated into four sub-categories: Trust; Activities Offered/Needed; Competence of the Child Care Provider/Program; and Attentiveness of the Child Care Provider/Program

*** Comments are listed as submitted by the respondent with identifying information removed to maintain confidentiality.*

Trust is a major factor for parents leaving their children with a child care provider/program:

<i>feel comfortable leaving my baby there.</i>
<i>Feeling comfortable with who is watching my children. Making sure I trust them and they are caring for my children as I would.</i>
<i>finding someone i trust (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Finding someone that's trustworthy, the hours they're open, cost, dealing with the other co parent</i>
<i>Finding someone you trust and has openings is VERY difficult, my husband and I work seperate shifts because of this.</i>
<i>For infants and smaller children an in-home setting is ideal. Finding someone that you trust and will give your child the same care as you would is so important for parents.</i>
<i>Hard to find someone you trust and room</i>
<i>Knowing who I am leaving my kids with (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Not being able to trust everyone.</i>
<i>Not knowing If you can fully trust someone (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>not someone I am comfortable with</i>
<i>people we don't know, no trust</i>
<i>Some providers are NOT trust worthy with your baby.</i>
<i>Someone I can trust. (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>Someone who is trustworthy who is great with kids.</i>
<i>That the provider is trust worthy, works with the child on areas of development, interaction with children (Mentioned 3 times.)</i>
<i>Trust (Mentioned 7 times)</i>
<i>I will not leave my children with just anybody, even if my only option is to miss work.</i>
<i>Trust in the provider / trust in the workers / reputation (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Trust. A structured day, children need a constant routine. Someone I can see loving my child as much as me! I think of it as a “daycare mom” that person is pretty much raising my child 45 hours a week (if I work a 40 hour week) I need someone that is compatible with my children and treat them as their own.</i>
<i>Trust. Sometimes you walk in and walk right out because it doesn't feel right. Gotta trust the person watching your child.</i>
<i>Trusted Provider (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>Trusting someone to watch your children (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Trusting that my children are being properly taken care of while I'm working.</i>
<i>Trusting the provider... interaction with other kids... structure of the provider</i>
<i>Trusting the systems of care available now</i>
<i>trustworthy (Mentioned 8 times)</i>
<i>We mostly wanted somebody that is trustworthy and willing to play with and teach our children.</i>
<i>You have no options. Either you send your child to someone you don't know because that is the only opening or you quit your job.</i>

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Parents want activities and educational programming for their child at child care:

<i>Activities / actively working with the kids</i>
<i>activities offered, training and experience of provider (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Activities, experiences, learning</i>
<i>Being well cared for with their needs being met in a safe, educating environment.</i>
<i>child being happy, programming</i>
<i>Consistency, and learning programs.</i>
<i>Consistency. Centers.</i>
<i>Curriculum based child care programs (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>Does the provider have a curriculum to work with kids. How much is the t.v. on. Is the provider nurturing but firm (are the trustworthy) doing educational activities (reading stories, coloring/ cutting activities, learning how to write name, alphabet activities, taking children outside education, loving, interaction (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>educational (preschool with wraparound child care) component</i>
<i>Educational Programming (Mentioned 5 times)</i>
<i>Educational, stimulating, age-appropriate activities. (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Educational/ hands on activities Play time (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>From what I hear, child care that is less of a babysitting "play games all day" and more of a prep for preschool/ kindergarten is needed.</i>

<i>Her learning, liking where she is at</i>
<i>I want my child to be in a loving, nurturing, stable environment with structure!</i>
<i>I want somewhere that my children are happy, healthy, safe, and are gaining some sort of beneficial education. Turning the TV on all day is not daycare, it's a detriment to our children and the future of this community.</i>
<i>I would utilize community programs like the YMCA but I still feel like there are safety concerns (accidental drowning, screening for employees, Y visitors), Library would be good but visitors could interact or even possibly kidnap kids. There needs to be security cameras at YMCA and Library.</i>
<i>if there is a structured day and curriculum in place.</i>
<i>If they help getting child ready to attend school</i>
<i>It would be fantastic to provide transportation to story hour, swimming lessons, or preschool.</i>
<i>It would be nice if more daycares were educational focused so that we can prepare them for when they go into Kindergarten. It's a win win for all.</i>
<i>lack of educational/ outdoor activities</i>
<i>Learning involved.</i>
<i>Learning opportunities, demeanor of provider, activities available for the children, outside play</i>
<i>learning, art and play activities</i>
<i>learning/ activity based, outdoor time, food/ nutrition</i>
<i>Not many indoor play areas for toddlers</i>
<i>Quality educational care</i>
<i>Quality of care, absence of television - We don't want to be paying for our child to be babysat by a tv. Integrated education elements as part of everyday activities.</i>
<i>Structure-days. Quality care (nurturing, caring)</i>
<i>The center should have some planned activities for the children.</i>
<i>The type of care such as what they do while there (crafts, creative play, minimal tv time), naps, food, discipline and interactions with the provider are very important to me</i>
<i>The type of programming that is available and the type of care that they will receive.</i>
<i>There are not a lot of options and many have a high number of small children and variances have been issued from the state. It is hard to send my child to a place when all the smaller children take all the attention,so the older children are left with unstructured time.</i>
<i>There are not many options for older kiddos- I do not want them at an in-home daycare where they are only playing with toddlers.</i>
<i>There needs to be something available for older kids that may need extra supervision</i>
<i>Very attentive care providers. Focus on play and education, not having a tv/ electronics on more than 30min/ day.</i>

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Parents rely on their child care provider/program to be competent and reliable:

<i>a great facility with good staff for the most part.Its nice that they don't close like in-home daycare's do frequently.</i>
<i>a responsible person who is able to build and gain trust.</i>
<i>child care provider/ program reputation (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>Choosing someone I feel will responsibly take care of my child while I am at work</i>
<i>Communication</i>
<i>Competent and professional provider (Mentioned 6 times)</i>
<i>coparenting issues</i>
<i>diversity and wellness</i>
<i>Excellent reputation and good families in the daycare and neighborhood.</i>
<i>For our first daycare (██████) the main problem was that she closed often and we were left with no child care. There were no other available options for over a year in Worthington.</i>
<i>Good references, welcoming environment.</i>
<i>How well the provider listens to the parent, Does my child fit in. Are there other children their age to play with.</i>
<i>I also need comfort in knowing child is in good, quality and capable hands. (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>I want someone who is educated in caring for children.</i>
<i>I've ran into issues with providers not speaking English making it difficult to discuss my childs needs.</i>
<i>Lack of professionalism Young inexperienced individuals opening daycares</i>
<i>Longevity & their references. I want to know the person will be open in several years so I'm not constantly looking for a new childcare provider. Also, I want to know that the person providing care is reliable & not putting kids in danger.</i>
<i>More high quality providers/ caretakers who are passionate about what they do and are receiving adequate wages for the work that they do.</i>
<i>Needs to be reputable and kids need to learn and not just play.</i>
<i>no competition and people fighting for any spot they can get, daycares are left to do as they please with parents forced to take what they can get.</i>
<i>No one is committed.</i>
<i>Not a lot of options so have to accept the way they run their daycare. For example, if school gets out at noon the little ones don't get a nap because the older ones are there and loud.</i>

<i>Of course it is the quality of care, but I feel as though that has gone to the wayside... It is now just finding care at all!</i>
<i>qualified people watching my kids, I feel comfortable leaving my children with (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Quality day care providers. (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>quality of the care they would receive, your impression of the provider</i>
<i>Quality Star Rated programs</i>
<i>reliable, educational, experienced (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Some providers are letting quality of care slide as they know they are in high demand and parents don't really have a choice.</i>
<i>Someone is taking care of my child, my pride and joy. I'm going to be quick to judge.</i>
<i>Staff turn over and lack of early childhood teachers to work positions (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>That we are comfortable leaving them.. they spend a lot of time in the hands of the caregiver</i>
<i>the daycare provider takes on too many children leaving the provider heavily outnumbered & not in control. Creates worry that infants & smallest children may not be getting the attention they need.</i>
<i>the lack of professionalism (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>There is NO choice - all day cares are full, the only option is to take WHOMEVER has an opening - IF they have an opening. If an opening occurs its with a less adequate provider</i>
<i>Unfortunately, the only factor we could take into consideration was availability. We would prefer to be able to select a daycare based on our comfort level with the provider first.</i>
<i>We have a day care provider but when she's gone it's impossible to find someone else.</i>
<i>Well rounded and able to work with older kids work spelling, reading, counting</i>
<i>When my daughter was born there were no open spots for an infant and then when I found one the lady was closed all the time</i>
<i>Who is available to take my children- it's not possible to be overly picky with who you choose due to the lack of daycare.</i>

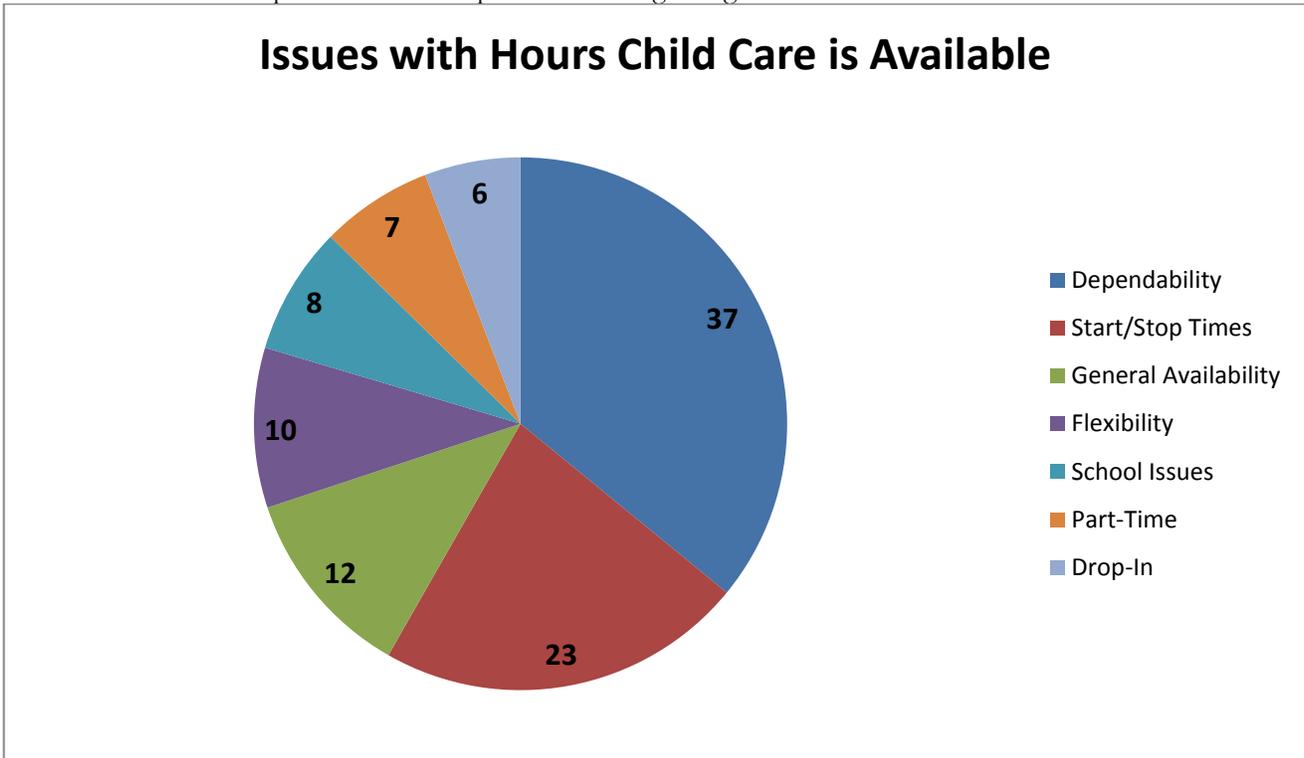
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The attention given to their child and the overall attentiveness of the child care provider / program is an area of concern for parents using child care:

<i>attention. (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Attentiveness, nutrition, paying attention and working with my child (Mentioned 3times)</i>
<i>Authenticity in care for my children.</i>
<i>Background, interactive, loving care (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Being cared for as loved....caused everything else important will follow suit!</i>
<i>Care and support from provider, reputation (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>caring environment, caring individual (Mentioned 6 times)</i>
<i>Caring person and a schedule that includes school type lessons during the day</i>
<i>Do they care about my children. Are my kids happy (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>ethnic based daycares</i>
<i>familiarity, kindness</i>
<i>fun and educational. A place where my kids like to go and they have adults that care about them.</i>
<i>Having a quality provider who watches over the kiddos - meaning they need to be compassionate and caring, and truly LOVE their job and the kids, not somebody who does it just so they can stay home in their pajamas all day and not even interact with the kids.</i>
<i>How interactive caretaker interactive is</i>
<i>How they are treated and the attention they get</i>
<i>I need to feel comfortable with the person I leave my child with. Having a loving, caring, in-home daycare is very important to me.</i>
<i>If the caregiver is kind, not just in it for the money, patient, and Also, knowing my daughter will get the attention she needs and not being parked in front of a TV or something equivalent</i>
<i>It's frustrating to take what you can get versus making a decision based on the best factors.</i>
<i>Knowing my child is going to be getting the needs he/she needs while I cannot provide. Knowing my child is being loved, taken care of, and played with.</i>
<i>Lack of attentiveness to the kids/ lack of engagement</i>
<i>Laziness (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>Learning, easy to talk, interacts with the kids, outside play</i>
<i>Quality / Level of care provided (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>love/ care, loving environment (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>Needing someone who is going to care for my child well</i>
<i>one on one attention and time.</i>
<i>Providers not being engaged or making relationships with the child.</i>
<i>That my children are getting good quality care and they feel like they are at home in the daycare. I love my in home daycare that I have now but it was hard to find when I first needed it years ago.</i>
UNDERSTAFFED DAYCARES

c) Hours Child Care is Available: School Issues, Drop-In, Part-Time, General Availability, Dependability, Start/Stop Time, and Flexibility

103 parents included specific issues regarding the hours child care is available.



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Hours and Dependability:

<i>Constantly being closed due to holidays, vacation days, activities, etc. (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Dependability (Mentioned 5 times)</i>
<i>you never know when they will call in or quite</i>
<i>For our first daycare the main problem was that she closed often and we were left with no child care.</i>
<i>Having to constantly leave work early due to daycare closure. If child has no fever but is crabby, we were forced to come pickup child because she was "sick".</i>
<i>I don't have vacation or PTO, so that puts me in a tough bind when my daycare calls in sick. She has the right to sick days, but that leave me with little to no options for my job.</i>
<i>if they need time off, finding someone to fill in during that time is even more difficult</i>
<i>lack of committed/ reliable childcare providers (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>my daycare closes random days or has early pickup times, but I have no other options.</i>
<i>Making sure the provider takes child care seriously - doesn't take time off just because and/ or have constant "pick up early" days.</i>
<i>My daycare takes off a lot of time (at least a week or more a month) and I have no one else available to watch my kid</i>
<i>No back up when provider takes time off</i>
<i>No where to take the child if the daycare provider is sick or has to be gone. (Mentioned 8 times)</i>
<i>Not enough reliable good day care providers in the area</i>
<i>Random days off without more of a notice.</i>
<i>Reliability (Mentioned 14 times)</i>
<i>reliability and flexibility</i>
<i>Reliable daycare (Mentioned 4 times)</i>
<i>Sick days and vacation days</i>
<i>Taking time off or needing to close early.</i>
<i>The provider dictates my days off. If she is sick or needs a day off, I have no choice but to take the day off because i have no other providers</i>
<i>When my provider takes a vacation day or a sick day, I have a hard time finding a backup. It's even harder to find a backup during summer.</i>
<i>When she's sick or vacation or other kids are sick, a substitute daycare is near impossible.</i>
<i>When they have days off or emergency's and you need to find someone else to watch your child(ren)</i>

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Hours and Child Care Start / Stop Times:

<i>closing time (6pm)</i>
<i>Daycare ends to soon. Sometimes need daycare to go into 7 or later at night.</i>
<i>Daycare to be open until 530 would be helpful</i>
<i>Early morning care for people who start work at 4 am</i>
<i>Finding someone available to watch the children overnight part-time</i>
<i>Hours. I need someone in the evening and there's no nightcare</i>
<i>I have a routine schedule, so I don't have to worry about evening/ overnight or drop in.</i>
<i>My work hours are often longer than the babysitters.</i>
<i>no early morning (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>No one wants to take kids super early or super late.</i>
<i>limited hours</i>
<i>Opened early enough for my job</i>
<i>Overnights</i>
<i>The hours open</i>
<i>The hours. We have to commute so getting the kids to daycare and then to work or picking up has to coordinate. Our provider often wants to be done before we can get off work and pick up our children.</i>
<i>There are no options for evening or overnight care. Most families have to rely on other family members, friends or work opposite shifts as their significant other in order to have someone to care for their children. Most in-home and daycare centers close by 6 p.m.</i>
<i>They don't work with my hours</i>
<i>Times / timing (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>We would need child care, depending on the day, from 6 am - 7 pm. Most daycares don't open until 7 and close by 5:30.</i>

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Hours and General Availability:

<i>certain times</i>
<i>Conflicting schedule</i>
<i>convenience</i>
<i>Hours (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>hours available</i>
<i>hours of operation (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>Hours that they are open. Because of my schedule I can't be picky as to who is providing child care for my children.</i>
<i>I don't really encounter any issues with my in-home provider, but know others struggle with hours and vacancies that some providers are able (or not able) to offer.</i>
<i>times available</i>

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Hours and Flexibility:

<i>Flexibility (Mentioned 5 times)</i>
<i>flexibility of hours</i>
<i>Flexible (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>hours, flexibility (Mentioned 2 times)</i>

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Hours and School Issues:

<i>All day everyday Preschool linked to our Elementary School</i>
<i>all is needed but if Wgtn goes to year round schooling we will need all times covered to accommodate working parents.</i>
<i>I enjoy being a teacher because I will not have to worry about child care during summer months.</i>
<i>lack of child care summer care</i>
<i>Many of the drop in sites are only available if school is in session, when school is cancelled the spots are all taken so if you need an alternative site for the day they are no longer available.</i>
<i>More convenient preschool options for working parents</i>
<i>Summers</i>
<i>Transportation to/ from preschool is also needed.</i>
<i>Year round school would make the child care situation WORSE, as I will utilize summer break as a time to take care of my children without having to worry about finding daycare services. We need to continue with regular school months. Year round school will not be beneficial.</i>
<i>If this district is considering year round, there will need to be childcare for older school age kids. check out Colorado.</i>

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Hours and Part-Time Child Care Needs:

<i>being able to work part time.</i>
<i>Flexibility for part time working moms.</i>
<i>lack of part time care</i>
<i>Not many options for part time working parents.</i>
<i>Not many places take part time kids and if they do it's very expensive</i>
<i>Part time care was near impossible so now my daughter goes full time even though it's not needed</i>
<i>part time openings</i>
<i>Someone willing to work with my schedule for part time</i>

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Hours and Drop-In Care Needs:

<i>availability of drop in care for short notice needs at work</i>
<i>having drop in care would be nice</i>
<i>More flexible options would be nice. More drop-in, rather than contracted, pay for when your child is there, not when they are not.</i>
<i>No drop in availability.</i>
<i>options for drop off places other than the YMCA while you are there.</i>
<i>Would be nice to have drop in options somewhere</i>

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d) Child Care Costs:

20.5%
Affordability – 18

64.8%
Cost - 57

14.8%
Payment Issues - 13

<i>Affordability (Mentioned 3 times)</i>	<i>Cost (Mentioned 28 times)</i>	<i>A provider that accepts child care assistance.</i>
<i>Affordable (Mentioned 3 times)</i>	<i>cost at the moment</i>	<i>being charged when you are not there, high cost</i>
<i>affordable. I am a single parent with little to no child support coming in.</i>	<i>Cost has to be within our means also.</i>	<i>Finding Drop-in care or summer time care at a reasonable price</i>
<i>be affordable for a single parent income.</i>	<i>Cost is a big issue too.</i>	<i>flexibility, not having to pay when your children aren't there</i>
<i>Everyone thinking everything should be free or paid for by others. If you can't afford a big family, plan accordingly</i>	<i>cost per hour or for 2 or more children.</i>	<i>Having to pay for childcare over school breaks and summer vacation even though I do not need it.</i>
<i>For one child I pay \$125 a week for my child if I had another it would cost \$250 a week. I get paid bi-weekly and that would be most of my paycheck. I would need 3 year old preschool or do daycare myself.</i>	<i>costs too much on teachers salary</i>	<i>Our schedule is very flexible and I don't like paying for days when my child isn't at daycare (although I don't argue with the reasoning behind needing to do so)</i>
<i>having affordable pre-k not 175/ month additionally</i>	<i>ease and cost</i>	<i>I like my Daycare but it cost around 14000 a year for 2 kids under the age of 5 to attend full-time.</i>
<i>Hourly rates</i>	<i>Finances (Mentioned 2 times)</i>	<i>It's important to for me to just be able to pay when we need the service. Being a school district employee I have a lot of time off during the school year and also have the summer months off. It would be essential to only pay for the time we use the service and not have to pay when my son is not there.</i>
<i>I want HIGH quality drop in care for a reasonable price.</i>	<i>Finances and options</i>	<i>Having to pay for hours my kid is not there.</i>
<i>Not all care options need to cater to low income. There is a huge gap for middle income filies needing realiable care. It doesn't always need to be subsidized.</i>	<i>Price (Mentioned 16 times)</i>	<i>Some people work part time and need to pay full time child care prices.</i>
<i>The cost for me is not an issue at this time but if my husband died I couldn't afford daycare in the summer on my own. I would make too much to qualify for assistance through the county and I would have to go so a non-secure home daycare if there were any openings.</i>	<i>The cost is outrageous and they are often short staffed.</i>	<i>Some of the daycare contracts have unrealistic expectations. It is not fair that you are expected to pay for daycare when the provider is gone for more than 2 weeks during the year and you are expected to take your children someplace else on those 3+ weeks, thus doubling up on the cost.</i>

<i>The fee is high. That is why people take children to unlicensed providers because the fee is high. when you have multiple its too much</i>	<i>the cost of home care vs. daycare centers was an issue.</i>	<i>The rate of pay for some here in Worthington is way too much.</i>
<i>10 years ago when I lived in St Cloud, full time daycare was \$300/week (M-F, 8-5). I don't know anyone in Worthington who charges anywhere close to that. While we have things to complain about (more towards lack of vacancies), cost is definitely not one of them.</i>	<i>The cost was better for us, and it was more trusting because it was family.</i>	<i>What I can afford verses what it would cost to provide my child with one-on-one care from a quality provider.</i>
<i>is reasonably priced</i>	<i>reasonable cost</i>	<i>Very expensive. Pay even when child isn't there.</i>
<i>some are very expensive.</i>	<i>Cost is so high (Mentioned 2 times)</i>	<i>Flexible and not expecting to be paid full time if we aren't there full time or being paid for summer when I am off work.</i>

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e) Parent comments regarding child care regulations:

<i>Adult to infant ratio.</i>
<i>child friendly atmosphere</i>
<i>cleanliness of some</i>
<i>I had a daycare provider not following the rules and could have potentially put my child in danger.</i>
<i>Infant and toddler numbers and not being able to take on additional infants or toddlers</i>
<i>licensed daycare</i>
<i>Limitations on location and licensing requirements for only so many per age.</i>
<i>Limits on the number of children a provider can have</i>
<i>not enough staff</i>
<i>providers become frustrated with the demands they must meet to stay open</i>
<i>So many people that are NOT licensed watching lots of families. I believe there are rules against that in MN that if they are not relatives and you are NOT licensed then you are to only watch one family. The license is there to protect your child and to make sure the person watching them is suitable to be taking care of children!</i>
<i>the lack of regulation, and the lack of support.</i>
<i>The state makes it really tough for day care providers. There are too many regulations.</i>
<i>There is not qualified staff and a space issue with knowing that my child will have adequate space to play and qualified staff to take care of him.</i>
<i>They can only take a certain amount of infants. Some of the people that area allowed to be providers is scary! It is easy to get a license, take classes, get your house to code, but really some people are not cut out for the job.</i>
<i>Unqualified staff</i>
<i>way too many kids per adult</i>
<i>We had two very good in-home daycare people quit because the demands to get licensed by the state of MN were too demanding. One quit because she wasn't able to afford private health insurance.</i>

QUESTION 11: WHAT PROGRAMS/SERVICES ARE NEEDED IN WORTHINGTON TO ENSURE YOUNG CHILDREN ARE WELL CARED FOR?

This was an open-ended question. The responses were categorized into 6 areas:

- a) Types of Programs
- b) Quality
- c) Employers
- d) Hours
- e) Cost
- f) Regulations

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a) Types of Child Care Providers / Programs needed:

<i>A center that is connected to the potential WELL that is being discussed. Dependable childcare is the number one challenge I deal with in raising my family. I love my career but it is becoming very difficult to piece schedules together when you have limited or one option.</i>
<i>a childcare facility that can take multiple infants</i>

<i>All day preschool and more infant spots</i>
<i>Another child care facility that takes infants. More in-home daycares.</i>
<i>Another daycare center is needed. The school district should look into a before and after school program.</i>
<i>Bus service for in home daycare children to get to preschool. More daycare providers in the area for ALL ages, especially infants.</i>
<i>care for children under school age</i>
<i>Child care of all kinds and preschool for children</i>
<i>Childcare center. A childcare center with multiple positions for children and multiple caretakers could increase safety and trustworthiness as well as create the most positions possible.</i>
<i>Create easy web portal to find daycare operations with openings (easier than Worthington Area swap on Facebook)</i>
<i>Daycare center in the area that is trustworthy</i>
<i>Daycare. Young children involvement with halftime entertainment at sporting events.</i>
<i>Faith based daycare!</i>
<i>From what I've heard from other parents, all levels of care are needed. Infants, toddlers, school-age children; full time and part time.</i>
<i>In home daycares and maybe another daycare center. People only use it because there is not where else.</i>
<i>Infant - toddler care is my concern at this time</i>
<i>Infant care is impossible to find.</i>
<i>Infant care!!!! (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>It holds some mothers back from working due to the shortage.</i>
<i>Just more services in general</i>
<i>more center based (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>More day care - more options (Mentioned 7 times)</i>
<i>More day cares to share the wealth of support for our kids.</i>
<i>More Daycare options for infants and children under 2!</i>
<i>More daycare options other than inhome</i>
<i>More Daycares (Mentioned 3times)</i>
MORE DAYCARES OR STAFF AVAILABLE
<i>More daycares, maybe a daycare center.</i>
<i>More activities/ centers for children to go.</i>
<i>more facilities and people willing to do the work</i>
<i>More in-home daycare. (Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>More options both centers and in home options (Mentioned 5 times)</i>
<i>More providers. Less exclusive ways to get your kids into daycare.</i>
<i>more resources</i>
<i>Possibly another daycare facility, but I have never heard good things about large centers whe children go</i>
<i>There just needs to be more options. A daycare center would be awesome and I'm sure it would be full in not time.</i>
<i>Transportation to the current preschool's in town is a burden for those working full time.</i>
<i>Two more multi aged centers.</i>
<i>We simply need more childcare options. Childcare is not one-size-fits-all, and everyone has different needs, but I know many parents are taking whatever they can get, even those that can afford any option they can find.</i>

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b) Child Care needs with regard to program quality:

<i>3 year old preschool or to know she learning as she should as an almost 2 year old.</i>
<i>a boys and girls club would be awesome.</i>
<i>a professional! daycare facility</i>
<i>a well structured daycare facility with qualified workers more preschool programing</i>
<i>Activities (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Allow the center to join forces with the library, YMCA, etc for programming. Pay the help in the center well enough that the turnover isn't high.</i>
<i>Better child care for all ages.</i>
<i>Better Daycare Facilities/ Educational based centers for young children</i>
<i>Child care services that are credible where the adult truly cares for children and provides great care</i>
<i>Consistent and open communication from caregivers about child's day.</i>
<i>consistent, quality, reliable child care with better preschool or integrated preschool services</i>
<i>Curriculum-based certified places that have infant openings. (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Dependable and caring adults</i>
<i>education centered childcare good care for infants (Mentioned 2 tmes)</i>
<i>educational based summer programs like the YMCA's day camp</i>
<i>Educational programming along with activities are important. (Mentioned 3 times)</i>

<i>educational programming, more in home and centers to offer options to families.</i>
<i>Educational programs (preschool and early childhood family education). Nutritional/food assistance. More providers that can offer such services.</i>
<i>experienced/trained staff. Good pay for those employees to get them to stay and have less turnover.</i>
<i>food program, trained staff, education (pre-preschool/pre-k)</i>
<i>Indoor park</i>
<i>I believe it would be very beneficial to have a hands on educational environment that would utilize the outdoors as well as indoors for children to develop and learn.</i>
<i>Investing in anything related to children (schools, playgrounds, pools, libraries, child care, etc...) is a huge benefit to any parent and community. I would love if there was a montessori school again.</i>
<i>Like a Head Start but for younger children and babies. Kids learn so much from the day they are born, why have them just sit in a swing or lay in a crib all day.</i>
<i>Montessori style programs</i>
<i>more daycare options that focus on development</i>
<i>More daycares, educational daycares</i>
<i>More Learning programs. Daily sheets of their day.</i>
<i>More supervised group activities for kids 8-12</i>
<i>more things for families to do besides the lake or the YMCA.</i>
<i>multi cultural day care</i>
<i>Outdoor space for them to safely play</i>
<i>Parent Aware Program. Our original day care was a 4 Star Daycare and helped prepare the children for preschool. It uses circle time songs and educational techniques to make the learning fun for young children!</i>
<i>Parent Aware Star rated programs</i>
<i>pay day care workers higher wages. (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>Preschool programming by certified educators linked to our elementary school</i>
<i>qualified people</i>
<i>Quality and quantity of providers or centers. The centers I do not trust due to prior comments and concerns of other parents.</i>
<i>Quality care - both in home providers and workers at centers.(Mentioned 3 times)</i>
<i>quality child care</i>
<i>resources for educational learning</i>
<i>Safe transportation to get from place to place for after school activities. Educational programs for toddlers..</i>
<i>They need safe places do get child care as well as activities for them to do.</i>
<i>Transportation Curriculum</i>
<i>We just need more trust worthy daycare available!</i>
<i>We need more for young children to do, period. In and out of daycare. Worthington does not offer much outside the YMCA and local parks for youth entertainment. But aside from the entertainment- well educated providers would be nice.</i>
<i>Would there be a way to better prepare so many of our impoverished students and new comers on pre school skills. It seems they start behind and never catch up.</i>

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c) Employee Needs / Suggestions

<i>Community support and recourses to promote more daycare providers</i>
<i>connect a pre-school/ daycare center to the school to offer to district employees only. It would free up space in other daycares. They could work with the school to have curriculum and programs correctly aligned with what i needed for school.</i>
<i>grants for current and new daycare's would be helpful (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>I don't think this should be City subsidized, it puts the city at too large of a risk in today's sue happy society.</i>
<i>ISD 518 should have its own daycare (have teachers get priority) make some money with it. The school district could also hire 18 year old seniors to work at the facility if they would have open blocks and/ or potential to work in the childcare/ teaching industry. We should have someone in charge of a school aged after school program that is non-academic as well (example Willmar schools has "cardinal place" Marshall has "Tiger Kids." We should also have our own preschool program, why we do not is beyond me.</i>
<i>Mostly overnight daycare is highly needed as most of the parents works at JBS second shift</i>
<i>Other ideas I've thought of are attaching it to an assisted living center where residents could be background checked and come for an hour or two. Utilize a population that is lonely to hold babies or read to children and turn both into a positive.</i>
<i>Something attached to school prekindergarten or preschool</i>
<i>swimming pool, aquarium park, availability of play grounds in the neighborhood with apartments and housings. For example "Rising Sun Estates Townhomes" has no playground and in the summer, kids are roaming around units.</i>
<i>We need an all day, everyday preschool program. I currently send my child to Brewster for his preschool needs. I am an ISD518 employee and the other preschool options in town are not options for me because I cannot provide transportation from preschool to daycare during the day.</i>
<i>Would like to see employers start to offer child care on site</i>

<i>Would be nice if employers could set up a contract with daycare providers to lower the cost of daycare.</i>
<i>It would be great if some employers would offer it at their place of employment. IE. JBS, Bedford, Sanford.</i>
<i>It would be great if the school district had it's own daycare facility for employees. I have seen many staff members quit their job after having a baby because they could not find a daycare. I would like to have more children in the near future and I may have to quit my job in order to stay home with them.</i>
<i>Bringing in more childcare options to Worthington is imperative. This need can also be expensive. Unfortunately our community, and those in need of childcare are primarily low to medium income families. There are minimal employment options in Worthington that have wages that would allow for a family to choose a more expensive childcare option and still make ends meet. Although the development and ongoing progress of our community may be moving closer towards being appealing for families to move to, the fundamentals are still absent: employment options for the college educated, a safe affordable place for your children to be at while you work and a school facility that meets the needs of the children.</i>
<i>It would be beneficial if employers provided daycare within the company. Drawing more employees without having to worry if they have daycare.</i>
<i>Since a few entities make up the largest employment opportunities in Worthington could they have da-care options in house for their employees.</i>
<i>Isd518 providing a childcare option would be beneficial to staff and would bring more young faculty to the district.</i>
<i>At our city council meetings they discuss spending millions in tax payer funds to create more entertainment in town. That is not why people are leaving our town, and new people aren't coming in. People want good quality daycare and education for their children. The programs that could be created with as little as 100,000-150,000 could open as many as 20 new in home day cares. Another 100,000 could buy enough curriculum and teachers to properly educate day-care providers to give us the quality that our children deserve. The city needs to meet the basic needs of the people, or the city will trend downward.</i>

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d) Hours of child care services needed:

<i>A safe place for school aged kids to go after school.</i>
<i>A school aged childcare program that would allow a few hours of care before and after school.</i>
<i>After school care</i>
<i>After school programs</i>
<i>All day pre school like Brewster.</i>
<i>before and after school programs & infant in home care</i>
<i>Care for school aged kids when there is a 2 hour late start and/ or no school. More part-time care options would be nice.</i>
<i>Daycare and afterschool programs</i>
<i>Educational offerings for summer.</i>
<i>GOOD after school programs and summer programs for school age kids.</i>
<i>Licensed providers with hours that are conducive to the working class schedules. Many daycares want children picked up immediately after a shift has ended which does not allow for the times when you are unable to leave your jobsite immediately. I understand the providers want regular hours but some compromise would be appreciated without being penalized by having to pay for additional time when you are only 5 minutes behind.</i>
<i>More daycare centers with a better range of hours.</i>
<i>more preschool programs with an all day option, afterschool programs</i>
<i>More summer activities/ free lunch programs in summer</i>
<i>Or Find a space to offer all day pre-school with bussing like Brewster.</i>
<i>Part-time/ drop in care</i>
<i>Pre school options and part time childcare option for those that only work 2-3 days per week</i>
<i>Pre-k for all students in District 518 (no outside enrollment),</i>
<i>Prek programs.</i>
<i>Preschool bussing because we are unable to attend because both parents work</i>
<i>Providers that are willing to have a flexible schedule in case parents run late or have to work late to complete tasks.</i>
<i>Summer daycare for older children, drop in daycare, evening daycare.</i>
<i>Summer programs for children over 10 seem to be the struggle in our family at the moment. Sports can cover some of their free time, but many families can't afford the camps or time off work.</i>
<i>Summer programs for kids. Transportation to and from extra curricular activities</i>
<i>Transportation to Preschool to/ from daycare</i>
<i>We are fortunate to have flexibility with our schedules and have family that can also help out, but I do hear many people struggling to find a place for their children that has flexible hours, or a place that can be used occasionally if needed.</i>
<i>We need summer day programs for 4-7tyh graders.</i>

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e) Cost and affordability needs of parents:

<i>Additional committed, affordable daycare (Mentioned 2 times)</i>
<i>financial assistance for those children are not able to go to day-care, or after school programs.</i>
<i>I would be willing to pay more if I knew my child was getting something out of it.</i>

<i>More low cost options.</i>
<i>More options to help drive price down.</i>
<i>More programs/ services for middle class families who don't qualify for any low-income programs. Possibly bus service from preschools for working parents who can't make that work to get their kids to daycare after school. It seems every service is only available for low income students when many other families need help too.</i>
<i>Please don't assume that people can't pay for care. Every center tries to cut costs to save and is left with mediocrity at best.</i>
<i>something to curb the high costs of some providers</i>
<i>There are no programs or facilities designed for enrichment of children that charge a fair price to offer dependable and consistent care everyday.</i>
<i>Ways for low income families to save money on childcare, but still make it equal to all parents who bring kids to daycare. Or other incentives for sitters to lower rates for all.</i>

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f) Parent comments regarding regulations:

<i>In home provides safer care but significantly less dependability. (We were in a center before and it was ok but there were too many red flags that caused a gut feeling that caused us to leave).</i>
<i>A licensed facility (infant-5) would be ideal with a preschool program.</i>
<i>better training for daycare providers</i>
<i>Cameras to make sure that either the provider or the child are telling the right thing.</i>
<i>Centers, stricter rules and regulations</i>
<i>Child care centers with educated providers</i>
<i>Childcare Trained employees</i>
<i>Consistent training for caregivers so they are educated on new ways of caring for children. Background checks ALWAYS. Building inspections to ensure the structure they are staying in is safe.</i>
<i>cut the red tape of paperwork so more qualified people are willing to take on this job</i>
<i>educational opportunities for providers to become more qualified.</i>
<i>Enough people to help with little ones so they aren't in a crib or pack n play most of the day.</i>
<i>Grants and more training for current and future daycare providers. Make it easier for people that want to have a daycare or do daycare have one.</i>
<i>I understand there has to be rules and regulations but there are too many. Each kid is different, for example; a child with acid reflux cant sleep lying flat and they have to be in a swing or car seat to be propped up. Some kids cant have milk, some families choose not to give their children whole milk, some kids can handle table food earlier. Why should the state or county tell a family what they need to feed their kids?</i>
<i>I would like to see home day cares providing written daily reports.</i>
<i>I would love an option of being able to see my children throughout the day via cameras.</i>
<i>I would say safety information translated into all the languages so they know about drowning, blind cords, choking, seat belts, car seats, heat stroke, good touch/ bad touch, rights for women and children,</i>
<i>Less restrictions on in-home daycares in regards to meals.</i>
<i>Licensed daycares with more infant spots.</i>
<i>Licensed professionals</i>
<i>Loosening state rules to encourage more providers</i>
<i>Maybe less inservice requirements and spend resources doing random check ups on the providers</i>
<i>Mental health check, not just a background check. Make sure they can take care of their own kids first. Some of these providers haven't done well in that aspect, let a lone take care of someone else's kids.</i>
<i>Mentors for people wanting to start a new daycare,</i>
<i>More checks for in home.</i>
<i>More clean well inspected and well employed facilities or in home daycares</i>
<i>More in daycare evaluations.</i>
<i>more inspections</i>
<i>More opportunities for day cares, Tax rebates and financial assistance for those attempting to open in home day cares. Education for day care providers on how to provide educational activities for day care children, and a regulatory board mandating standards, enforcing appropriate time off and paid time off for day care providers, allow parents a place to report abuses that can actually result in positive change in the health care industry.</i>
<i>More places with less kids</i>
<i>More qualified care providers,</i>
<i>Periodic unannounced wellness checks at each licensed facility (maybe already happens)</i>
<i>Quality licensed care</i>
<i>reliable childcare providers/ licensed daycare.</i>
<i>required trainings</i>
<i>support for those starting child care businesses and ongoing support to provide ideas and tips and tricks</i>
<i>The amount of paperwork and stupid rules/ guidelines the state and county impose on childcare providers is absolutely ridiculous. Common sense has completely gone out the window. Highly qualified people don't want to do in-home daycare because of the amount of regulations they need to</i>

follow (really... they need a tote outside their door with 5 gal of water and snacks, diapers, first aid kit, etc. ready in case of an emergency)-I don't have that for my own family, and I certainly don't want my daycare provider to be concerned about grabbing a damn tote... grab my kids, and get them to safety- even if that means foregoing a properly secured carseat in the heat of an emergency. Let's get back to commonsense.

Safe day care;

smaller ratio

State services doing random drop ins at least 2 times a month. When licensed, maybe a video camera that's being watched by the state during hours of operation

support for providers, many feel overwhelmed

Training for caregivers. Lower child to caregiver ratio.

well monitored child care facilities

What can they do? With all of the regulations they are required, people don't want to deal with the hassle to open up any new daycares.

QUESTION 12: ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

This was an open-ended question.

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"The adult to child ratio. I don't think the bigger license providers offer trainings to their staff. Taking care of a child isn't only about watching them."

"NONE available - and if you find one the price is outrageous. The providers can charge whatever they want. One provider had a waiting list of 2 years out!! how is that possible"

"If there are issues, it is hard to complain about anything because daycare options are so limited you don't want to take the risk of getting them upset (and getting kicked out). Cost is a big issue too."

"There is no that has an opening for drop ins for twins 14 months olds and an almost 3 year old. On regular days I still need to have my kids picked up at 5 pm. When I work until 5pm 20 miles away. Thankfully I have a very understanding employer!"

"Lack of providers. New families come in and take up spots and current daycare families then worry about when they can have another baby. Families are desperate. I know moms that have had to quit their job because they could not find daycare. My family needs both incomes. I do not want to have to split up my kids someday either because there isn't room for them to be at the same daycare."

"It is very frustrating to watch working parents struggle to not only have good attendance at their job because of child care issues, but also to watch them have stress issues with worrying about their children being well cared for, and to be able to have good care be affordable. At the same time them being able to be focused on their job and reliable themselves."

"There is a high demand for child care, but also affordable daycare. I'm 29, good job as well as my boyfriend but we also have a mortgage, car payments and all the other normal things people pay for."

"PLEASE help get something for toddlers/preschoolers/elementary kids to do, like an indoor play area, indoor bike/trike track, or something for bad weather days for them to run around. The YMCA is expensive and the kid gym is small with nothing for kids to climb/jump/ slide on. There is no place for kids to play when it is January in MN!"

"It is stressful finding childcare for expecting parents - we hit so many dead ends before finally finding a provider only to find out they were the only provider that required monthly payment to hold a spot. When you have 7 months left of your pregnancy + maternity leave it is hard to phathom making payments that don't go towards your childcare when you do start using the provider. There should be some oversight of these providers to make sure that no one is getting scammed & a list where providers let the city know if they have openings so parents aren't calling every single provider on the list. If we did that, then many other parents did as well."

"When my children were infants, I had a horrible time finding daycare. And when I did find daycare, they didn't do summer daycare. It was awful & part of the reason my husband & I choose not to have more kids..we knew we didn't have daycare options..."

"Hoping to have kids soon. Not sure if I can stay in Worthington, because of the lack of child care"

"Additional daycare is needed to minimize the cost of current available options and to provide the luxury of choice. Daycare cost is ultimately a huge deciding factor in whether my husband and I remain members of this community. The current cost of daycare and the lack of options is currently deterring us from making this a permanent residency. My husband and I are both young professionals in the community. We have implemented

ourselves on various committees and groups throughout Worthington. Unfortunately, even with full time positions, the lack of viable childcare and cost weighs heavily on us. If you aren't on a waiting list prior to conception or if you don't know someone, who knows someone, childcare is a difficult undertaking."

"I truly feel as though the YMCA could be offering so much more than it does. After school programming...including child care, homework help, snack, activity, and craft...something like that. The activities offered for children is so poorly run. They are unorganized and sometimes don't even happen due to poor attendance. The swimming pool is extremely frustrating. The outdoor pool is so small. There are so many rules and they change every time we use the facility."

"Lack of adequate child care is causing absenteeism at the workplace. It is also causing many qualified professionals to leave the workforce. Families are forced to split up their children into different daycares which is not a healthy situation for the children."

"Being a full time working mom is hard, but adding daycare issues on top of it makes it extremely stressful. If my family didn't need the health insurance I don't know that the stress would be worth it."

"Child care is a huge problem in every city especially trying to find infant care. Parents shouldn't have to make a choice between child care for their child and working to support their families. Having curriculum based programs would be great. Might give our kids that extra boost to help jump start their learning and prepare them for when they go into kindergarten. Early intervention is the best intervention. As I fill out this survey, I hope some action will be taken in a positive way and that I didn't just waste my time filling this out with no action being taken to solve the our child care issues. Thanks."

"Worthington needs to help and move forward in progress to our community looks like the county seat. Daycare, Movie Theatre, Bowling, Shopping and Dining. It has its strong points but we need a reason why young families stay! The ones staying are because of roots and family. We need to attract NEW and reasons why to return for young families. Thanks for the survey."

"The other thing that is difficult is the school age children that only come to daycare for about an hour and a half after school. They still have to be counted as a full time child in terms of the providers overall numbers. If providers could take more children that would make a huge difference in the shortage problem. Hopefully the County will continue to provide variances as needed without an issue. We love our daycare provider and want her to continue to be able to run her daycare for years to come! She is excellent."

"My wife almost quit work to watch our kids after our daycare suddenly quit and my youngest was just starting daycare. An opening for an infant was very difficult to find."

"Lack of childcare has affected my family because my husband and I have to juggle our work times to make sure my child is taken care of, it has also affected our decision of the timing of when we will have another child"

"I did not get to check out day cares in the area and make comparisons and decide if it was a great fit for my family. I just had to go with the one that had a spot for my child."

"The lack of it, the lack of professionalism, the lack of regulation, and the lack of support."

"Not many options for licensed daycare that have openings for families with multiple children so that Parents don't have to take kids to separate places. A lot of parents (myself included) Would love to have more children however if They can't find child care then families that would like to grow are unable to grow unless A parent were to quit a job to stay home which is not something that many can afford to do. Most families need both paychecks to provide for their families needs and to pay insurance. I feel If your not employed or out looking for a job then you should not have your child in a licensed daycare. Free up spots for working families. I know that sounds harsh however if you take your child to daycare so that you can go home and play video games on a daily basis and live off government funds then you should not be taking a licensed spot from someone who wants to go to work and provide for their family. (Not talking about a working persons one day off a week)"

"Many new and veteran teachers in the Worthington School District have had to give up their jobs or move because they cannot find cost effective daycare."

"A lot of people work separate shifts than their spouse just so their kids don't need to go to daycare."

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Availability of child care was the most common issue raised. Families are piecing together child care arrangements, relying on family members (grandparents who are quitting their jobs to provide child care for their grandchildren), settling for child care they are unhappy with, and using unlicensed options. Parents are asking for more options in all types of care. There is a need for each type of care: family child care, child care center, infant care, part-time, full-time, family friend & neighbor, legally unlicensed, and community programs. As one respondent said, “there is no one-size fits all”. A variety of programs are needed. Without additional resources put toward building full-day, full-time, full-year child care capacity, Worthington will continue to struggle with declining child care numbers. It will be difficult to attract new people to the child care field if they cannot make a living.
- Quality of the child care available is also an issue. Parents mentioned repeatedly they are taking the only child care they can find, regardless of the quality of that care or if it is the best environment for their child. This is impacting parents’ ability to be productive employees or maintain employment. It is also impacting children’s development. Children need quality, consistent care to develop the skills they need for success in life. The time a child spends in child care plays a critical role in their development. Child care providers and staff impact the growth, development, and health habits of the children they are caring for.
- Parents are having difficulty finding child care and are not aware of the resources available to them. Parentaware.org is a child care search website created and funded by the Department of Human Services. The website lists all licensed and license-exempt child care programs, whether they are Parent Aware Quality Rated or not. Parents can search by type of care needed, location, and openings. The system is free for parents to use. All programs listed are licensed (or license-exempt), which means they have met minimum health and safety standards to obtain a child care license, and are checked on once a year.
- Parents who are concerned about health and safety can look up licensing violations for any licensed child care program on the DHS website. Parents can also use the site to find the licensing contact person to make a complaint or report a licensing violation.
- The cost of care was an issue raised frequently. Child care rates can be directly related to the number of children being cared for. As child care providers / programs continue to lose children to other programs, the cost to parents for younger children to be in child care will continue to increase. Child care providers enter the field because they love children, but they also deserve to earn an income. Unless someone steps up to help bridge the gap, the cost of child care will continue to rest solely on two sources: the parents and the child care providers.
- Parents may not be aware of the programs that are in place to assist income eligible families pay for child care.
 - Child Care Assistance is available to income eligible families and can be used at a variety programs: family child care, child care centers, license-exempt child care centers, preschool programs, and legally non-licensed care.
 - Early Learning Scholarships are available to income eligible families who have their children enrolled in Parent Aware Quality Rated Programs. Families can access: \$3,000 per child per year if they choose a program in a current rating cohort; \$4,000 per child per year if they choose a program with a 1 or 2-Star rating; \$5,000 per child per year if they choose a program with a 3-Star rating; and \$7,500 per child per year if they choose a program with a 4-Star rating. These scholarships can make the difference in a family with multiple children under the age of 5 being able to remain in the workforce. As more child care programs attain their Parent Aware Quality Rating, the options available to families will continue to expand.

- Capacity in a licensed child care center is directly related to the availability of teacher qualified staff. To keep rates affordable for families, child care center staff do not earn the salary they deserve as they nurture our youngest citizens growth and development. Parents do not want to pay more for child care. Child care programs need resources to close the gap between what parents are willing to pay and the wages child care staff need to make.
- Many parents commented on the need to find back-up care when their child care provider takes a day off. Family child care is a small business, and each business has the right to establish their policies: rates, days off, curriculum and programming, etc. Because most family child care providers only have one caregiver present, it does present a challenge for parents when the caregiver needs a day off. Parents need to be proactive and have a back-up plan in place. However, when families are counting on very limited child care options, the dependability of the child care provider is important. This is an area that can be addressed with the local family child care providers.
- Licensing rules dictate when a child cannot be in child care due to illness. If the parent cannot miss work due to a sick child, it is their responsibility to have an alternate arrangement. Having sick children in child care spreads the illness to other children as well as the child care provider. It is not beneficial to anyone in care for a sick child to be enrolled and risk the spread of illness. Young children are more susceptible to colds and illness – working parents need to be prepared for the instances where their child will not be able to attend licensed child care.
- There are a lot of people who begin doing family child care because they cannot find child care themselves, or it is not financially viable for them to pay for child care and continue working. Sometimes, these people operate their family child care business until their children enter school. This adds to the turnover in our child care industry. Sometimes, operating a family child care business turns out to be different than they expected – so people quit in a short period. “Being a parent” does not automatically qualify some to operate a family child care business and support the growth and development of children from multiple families. Family child care is a complex blend of nurturing children’s development, dealing with parents, and operating a small business. Not everyone is cut out for this job.
- The majority of parent’s comments about child care regulation were in favor of regulation. They wanted safe, healthy places for their child(ren). Many parents also wanted an increase in the quality of the care their child(ren) receives. Supporting the current child care providers and programs to participate in Minnesota’s Parent Aware Quality Rating System will increase the quality of child care available. It is a voluntary program that encourages child care providers and programs to implement best practices.
- Finally, a word about the turnover in the child care system. Being licensed to provide child care is not a commitment for life. Family child care providers can determine how long they want to stay in business. They are able to enter and exit the field as with any other profession or job. Quite often it is finances that dictates the need to leave the profession. The chart on page 2 shows when Nobles County began the decline in the number of child care providers available. It began in 2007 (with the recession) and took another large downward turn in 2011 (the loss of 5 year olds to all-day, every-day Kindergarten). In 2014, DHS implemented additional training requirements. Family child care providers need 16 hours of training a year, previously it had been 6 hours a year. For an individual who may be working alone with up to 12 children -- in their private home -- for 10 to 12 hours a day – 1.3 hours of training a month is not excessive. The development of children is at stake. (There was no increase in the number of training hours required for child care center staff, a full-time child care center staff needs 20-40 hours a year. Focusing on supporting our children’s caregivers and staff to meaningfully meet their requirements will benefit the field as well as the thousands of children being cared for in child care in Nobles County.

Respectfully,
Karen DeBoer, Director
Region 8 Child Care Aware