

# **Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa**

**November 2021**

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**Prepared for:**

Washington Economic Development Group  
Washington, Iowa

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2021, First Children’s Finance was commissioned by Washington Economic Development Group (WEDG) to conduct this *Child Care Market Analysis*. This analysis provides relevant child care data, child care market analysis, and First Children’s Finance’s key findings of the child care market of Washington County, Iowa.

The data in this report has been collected from three original surveys developed by First Children’s Finance and from data provided by the US Census Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Human Services, and Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. This analysis is First Children’s Finance’s professional interpretation of the data available as of the date of this report. The information and analysis presented in this document are intended to provide a basis for sound business and community planning decisions, but no warranty is stated or implied as to completeness or accuracy.

First Children’s Finance is a national nonprofit organization with a mission to grow the supply and business sustainability of excellent child care. Access to quality early care and education is essential for all communities. Furthermore, early care and education is the foundation of individual success making it an engine of regional economic growth. For more information, contact Heidi Schlueter, Regional Director [InfoIA@FirstChildrensFinance.org](mailto:InfoIA@FirstChildrensFinance.org).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington County is located in Southeast Iowa. Incorporated communities within the county are Ainsworth, Brighton, Coppock, Crawfordsville, Kalona, Riverside, Washington, Wellman, and West Chester. The largest community and county seat is Washington. The US Census Bureau estimates both the overall population and the number of children in Washington County has been increasing. As of 2019, the total population of the county is 22,100 and the total children ages 0 to 11 is 3,485. Taking into consideration the data collected through this study, First Children's Finance estimates 2,547 of those children have all parents working, and 1,511 of those are from families that are likely to use Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) regulated child care, either licensed child care centers or registered child development homes.

In Washington County, the average family size is 2.91 people and the median income for families with children under the age of 18 is \$69,462 per year. According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of Quarter 2 of 2021, there was an average of 8,106 people employed by companies in Washington County, and the average wage among those workers was \$756 per week. The industry that employed the most people was health care & social services.

For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they make. According to longitudinal research, the child care environment parents choose will have lasting effects on their child. When there are not enough child care spaces in a community, finding *any* care is a challenge; and options for *quality* care that meet the needs and preferences of families can be even more challenging.

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet family's varying needs and preferences. The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available. Through a child care needs survey developed by First Children's Finance and conducted in the fall of 2021, it was determined that most Washington County parents that are likely to use "outside" care want their child in a setting that is regulated by the Iowa Department of Human Services. Parent's top preference is a licensed child care center.

Iowa Department of Human Services data shows that as of November 2021 there were 754 spaces in DHS Licensed Child Care Centers and Registered Child Development Homes in Washington County. Of those spaces, 667 are available on a year-round basis, the remaining 87 are school year only part-time preschool spaces. With only 667 year-round spaces but an estimated 1,511 children likely needing outside care, it is reasonable to conclude there is a shortage of regulated child care spaces within Washington County.



A key part of this analysis was a survey to gain input from parents on their child care needs and preferences, compared to the current supply. Of the parents that participated, 202 reported they currently have children age 12 or younger. Using the most popular responses, a survey respondent would be described as female (84%), married (86%), and living in the community of Washington (46%). They work 41 or more hours per week (55%) and are employed in health care & social assistance (26%). They currently use child care in Washington (50%), Monday through Friday, year-round. They use child care 40-49 hours per week for younger children, and less than 10 hours per week for before and after school care. They are satisfied with their current child care provider (67%).

Participants in the child care needs survey confirmed there is a shortage of child care spaces. When asked if they had difficulty finding child care, 81% of those with children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) and 68% of those with children ages 5 to 12 (school age children) indicated they had. Most obstacles named were related to lack of openings or not enough spaces.

### **Key Findings of This Analysis**

Complete details of these key findings are contained in this report. These key findings are based on research and conditions of the current child care market in Washington County, Iowa. If the county or the child care environment changes significantly, current findings may be affected.

#### **Parents are in the Labor Force and Need Child Care**

According to the US Census Bureau as of 2019, 66% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 78% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in Washington County have all parents in the labor force. The number of households with all parents in the labor force varies by individual community, and by ages of children in the home. Those with children ages 0 to 5 and all parents in the labor force, varies from a low of 36.4% in Ainsworth, to a high of 100% in Coppock. While families with children ages 6 to 17 ranges from a low of 72.1% in Wellman to a high of 100% in Coppock.

#### **Parents Prefer Regulated Child Care Settings**

The most preferred child care setting according to parents that participated in the child care needs survey was a DHS licensed center for all ages. The second most preferred setting among parents with children ages 0 to 4 is a regulated home. Among parents with children ages 5 to 12, the second most preferred setting was with a relative such as a grandparent or sibling.

### **Less Than Half of Parents Are Using their Preferred Child Care Setting**

Only 36% of current parents, indicated their children are currently in their preferred type of child care. Of those that indicated their children are not in their preferred setting, the most common reason given was that they cannot afford their preferred setting, followed by their preferred provider not accepting enrollments.

### **Parents Have Difficulty Finding Child Care**

The child care needs survey indicated that 81% of parents with children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) and 68% of parents with children ages 5 to 12 found it somewhat difficult or very difficult to find child care. Obstacles named were almost exclusively related to lack of openings or not enough spaces.

### **Shortage of Child Care Spaces**

There are an estimated 3,485 children ages 0 to 11 living in Washington County as of 2019. Based on the number of children that have all parents working and parents' preferences, First Children's Finance estimates that approximately 1,511 children likely need care within a DHS regulated setting (licensed center or registered child development home). With only 754 DHS regulated spaces (as of November 2021) and only 667 of those available full-time and year-round, the deficit could be as high as 844 spaces.

### **Median Family Income is Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold**

The median annual income for families in Washington County with children under the age of 18 is \$69,462 county-wide. To be eligible for tuition assistance under the Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) program according to the 2021 eligibility criteria, a family of 3 must have an annual household income below \$31,494.

### **Parents Indicate Child Care is Affecting Their Employment**

Over the last 12 months, parents in Washington County have experienced child care challenges that have in turn affected their employment. The most commonly named effects were had to leave work early, missed work because the provider was closed, and had to supervise their child while working from home.

In addition, 24 parents indicated child care challenges are keeping them or their spouse or partner from working, while 49 parents indicated child care challenges are limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment, such as forcing them to work fewer hours.

### **Employers Indicate Child Care is Affecting Productivity and Attendance**

Employers in Washington County are seeing the affect child care challenges has on their labor force. Through the child care needs survey, 49% of employers indicated their business has experienced challenges related to productivity due to parents' child care challenges, while 55% indicated they had experienced challenges related to employee absenteeism because of employee's child care challenges.

### **Child Care Providers Indicate Staffing is a Challenge**

Child care providers in Washington County indicated that staff turnover and difficulty hiring new staff are both challenges they are facing, especially child care centers. Collectively the child care centers participating in the survey report having a total of 20 employees depart over the last 12 months, and 14 positions currently vacant. When it comes to hiring, 80% of centers and 33% of homes indicated hiring in the last 12 months has been very difficult. As a result, 2 centers and 1 home also reported that they had to close a classroom or limit enrollment due to not enough staff.

Separate from general turnover, child care providers indicated COVID has affected their staffing over the past 12 months. Not only has COVID caused some staff to have to quarantine or not come to work, it has also made it harder to find people that want to work in the child care environment.

### **Putting this Study into Use**

The data in this report shows that the families within Washington County have different demographics, and each community has a different supply and demand for child care. This data can be used both by existing child care programs to make operational decisions, as well as to inform the community as child care solutions are explored and developed. This data can be useful for making decisions on what ages to care for and hours of operation, as well as understanding what factors are important to parents when selecting child care, and what child care settings are most preferred by parents.

## MARKET DESCRIPTION

### Market Area

Washington County is located in Southeast Iowa. Incorporated communities within the county are Ainsworth, Brighton, Coppock, Crawfordsville, Kalona, Riverside, Washington, Wellman, and West Chester. The largest community and county seat is Washington. For this report, data referenced as a particular city includes only the city limits. The surrounding unincorporated areas are included in “balance of county”.

### Population and Demographics

#### Total Population

According to the US Census Bureau, as of 2019 the total population of Washington County was 22,100, which is a net change of +1,430 since 2000. Census data shows 3 incorporated communities have a lower population than in 2000, while the remaining communities plus the unincorporated rural areas have a larger population. The unincorporated county experienced the largest net change, with an increase of 745 residents.

Table 1: Population Change by Community

	2000	2010	2020	Net Change
Ainsworth	541	532	511	-30
Brighton	677	543	723	+46
Coppock	---	49	26	---
Crawfordsville	301	248	353	+52
Kalona	2,267	2,449	2,520	+253
Riverside	953	891	1,115	+162
Washington	6,988	7,261	7,313	+325
Wellman	1,404	1,484	1,321	-83
West Chester	148	103	82	-66
Balance of County	7,391	8,144	8,136	+745
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,670</b>	<b>21,704</b>	<b>22,100</b>	<b>+1,430</b>

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2000, 2010, 2019)

#### Fertility

As of 2019 there were 4,437 women ages 16 to 50 living in Washington County. The US Census Bureau estimates that 400 of them gave birth in the prior 12-month period. Overall, about 6% were both in the labor force and gave birth. When broken down by community, both the percent of women giving birth and those that gave birth and are in the labor force varies. The unincorporated area (Balance of County) experienced the greatest number of women giving birth with 142, followed by the community of Washington with 123.

Table 2: Fertility by Community

	<b>Women 16-50</b>	<b>Gave Birth</b>	<b>% Gave Birth</b>	<b>Gave Birth and In Labor Force</b>	<b>% Gave Birth and in Labor Force</b>
Ainsworth	113	17	15%	4	4%
Brighton	124	5	4%	0	0%
Coppock	9	0	0%	0	0%
Crawfordsville	89	12	13%	8	9%
Kalona	470	68	14%	42	9%
Riverside	275	9	3%	6	2%
Washington	1,547	123	8%	86	6%
Wellman	268	22	8%	13	5%
West Chester	8	2	25%	2	25%
Balance of County	1,534	142	9%	91	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,437</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>6%</b>

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2019)

### Children Ages 0 to 11

In 2019 Washington County had 40 more children ages 0 to 11 living in the county than there were in 2010. In 2010 there were 3,445 and in 2019 there were 3,485, a net change of +40. All communities have more children than they did in 2010, with the exception of Wellman and the unincorporated areas (Balance of County), which both have fewer. The following table shows the population ages 0 to 11 for the county and all communities.

Table 3: Population Ages 0 to 11

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Net Change</b>
<b>Washington County</b>			
Age 0 to 4	1,388	1,491	+103
Age 5 to 11	2,057	1,994	-63
Total Ages 0 to 11	3,445	3,485	+40
<b>Ainsworth</b>			
Age 0 to 4	33	44	+11
Age 5 to 11	74	69	-5
Total Ages 0 to 11	107	113	+6
<b>Brighton</b>			
Age 0 to 4	51	57	+6
Age 5 to 11	25	100	+75
Total Ages 0 to 11	76	157	+81
<b>Coppock</b>			
Age 0 to 4	0	4	+4
Age 5 to 11	0	5	+5
Total Ages 0 to 11	0	9	+9
<i>Table continues on next page</i>			

<b>Crawfordsville</b>			
Age 0 to 4	11	29	+18
Age 5 to 11	33	55	+22
Total Ages 0 to 11	44	84	+40
<b>Kalona</b>			
Age 0 to 4	106	202	+96
Age 5 to 11	240	209	-31
Total Ages 0 to 11	346	411	+65
<b>Riverside</b>			
Age 0 to 4	36	67	+31
Age 5 to 11	71	87	+16
Total Ages 0 to 11	107	154	+47
<b>Washington</b>			
Age 0 to 4	433	399	-34
Age 5 to 11	633	684	+51
Total Ages 0 to 11	1,066	1,083	+17
<b>Wellman</b>			
Age 0 to 4	124	90	-34
Age 5 to 11	122	108	-14
Total Ages 0 to 11	246	198	-48
<b>West Chester</b>			
Age 0 to 4	3	4	+1
Age 5 to 11	0	7	+7
Total Ages 0 to 11	3	11	+8
<b>Balance of County</b>			
Age 0 to 4	591	595	+4
Age 5 to 11	859	670	-189
Total Ages 0 to 11	1,450	1,265	-185

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2000, 2010, 2019)

## Race

While the population of Washington County doesn't show much racial diversity, the county experienced changes from 2010 to 2020. In 2010 the population was 98.5% White, and as of 2020 the population was 95.3% White. The greatest changes from 2010 to 2020 were the increases in residents that identify as Some Other Race and Two or More Races.

Table 4: Race

	2010		2020	
Total Population	21,704	100%	22,565	100%
One Race	21,386	98.5%	21,507	95.3%
White	20,796	95.8%	20,374	90.2%
Black or African American	146	0.7%	188	0.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	56	0.2%	70	0.3%
Asian	72	0.3%	116	0.5%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	13	0.1%	3	0.0%
Some Other Race	303	1.4%	756	3.4%
Two or More Races	318	1.5%	1,039	4.7%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2010, 2020)

Another change experienced in Washington County, was the number of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino, regardless of race. In 2010, approximately 4.63% of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino, in 2019 that had increased by 6.16%.

Table 5: Hispanic or Latino Origin by Specific Origin

	2010		2019	
Total Population	21,626	100%	22,100	100%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,003	4.63%	1,363	6.16%
Mexican	768	3.55%	1,133	5.12%
Puerto Rican	18	0.08%	15	0.07%
Cuban	27	0.12%	1	0.01%
Guatemalan	68	0.31%	108	0.49%
Honduran	7	0.03%	21	0.09%
Salvadoran	0	0.00%	13	0.06%
Other Central American	0	0.00%	7	0.03%
Other Hispanic or Latino	115	0.54%	65	0.29%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2010, 2019)

From 2010 to 2019, the percentage of residents in Washington County that spoke a language other than English at home decreased. While a greater percentage of residents are speaking English at home, the percent of residents that speak a language other than English and speak

English at home “very well” has decreased, and those that speak English at home “less than very well” increased. As of 2019, the language other than English that is most spoken is Spanish.

*Table 6: Primary Language Spoken at Home*

	2010		2019	
Population Age 5 and older	20,238	100%	20,609	100%
Speaks Only English	18,275	90.3%	18,803	91.2%
Speaks Language Other than English	1,963	9.7%	1,806	8.8%
Spanish	980	4.9%	920	4.5%
Other Indo-European Language	912	4.5%	742	3.6%
Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	62	0.3%	144	0.7%
Other Languages	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Speaks Language Other than English	1,963		1,806	
Speaks English Very Well	1,313	66.9%	1,006	55.7%
Speaks English Less than Very Well	650	33.1%	800	44.3%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2010, 2019)

### **Educational Attainment**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau residents have higher educational attainment than they did in 2010. From 2010 to 2019 the percent of residents in Washington County age 18–24 that had some college or an associate degree jumped from 3% to 35%. There was some change among residents 25 or older. Two groups that did increase were those with an associates degree (from 10% to 11%) and those with graduate or professional degree (from 5% to 7%).

*Table 7: Educational Attainment*

	2010		2019	
Total Population 18–24	1,417	100%	1,772	100%
Less than High School	364	25%	264	15%
High School Graduate, or equivalent	520	37%	721	41%
Some College or Associate’s Degree	491	3%	622	35%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	42	3%	165	9%
Total Population age 25+	14,744	100%	14,862	100%
Less than High School	1,474	10%	1,275	9%
High School Graduate, or equivalent	5,603	38%	5,834	39%
Some College, No Degree	3,244	22%	2,881	19%
Associate’s Degree	1,474	10%	1,629	11%
Bachelor’s Degree	2,212	15%	2,273	15%
Graduate or Professional Degree	737	5%	970	7%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2010, 2019)



## **Working Families**

From 2010 to 2019, Washington County experienced an increase in the total number of households, family households, and family households with children under 18 present. The following tables show household types and characteristics for the as well as the individual communities.

As of 2019, there were 8,832 households in Washington County, of which 6,168 were family households. The average size of all households was 2.46 persons, while the average family household was slightly larger with 2.91 persons. Over half of all households were family households (70%), yet just one-third of households (30%) have children under the age of 18 present.

The number of families with children and all parents working varies by community. According to the US Census bureau, for all of Washington County, 66% of families with children ages 0-5 had all parents working, while 78% of families with children ages 6-17 had all parents working. All parents working means if there are two parents living in the home they both work, or if the child lives with a single parent that parent is working.

The median income<sup>1</sup> for all households in the county as of 2019 was \$62,556, while the median income of families was \$75,545, and \$69,462 for families with children under the age of 18. These are all increases over 2010 median incomes. An increase in median income can be the result of multiple factors including more people in each household working, those that are working are working more hours, and workers receiving wage increases.

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<sup>1</sup> Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

*Table 8: Household Types and Characteristics*

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>
Total Households	8,767	8,832
Average household size	2.44	2.46
Median household income	\$50,710	\$62,556
Family Households	5,973	6,168
Average family size	2.95	2.91
Median family income	\$60,466	\$75,545
Family Households w/children under 18	2,740	2,644
<i>Married couples</i>	2,033	1,876
<i>Male householder (no wife)</i>	181	177
<i>Female householder (no husband)</i>	526	591
Median income for families w/children under 18	\$58,451	\$69,462
<i>Median family income married couples</i>	---	\$90,636
<i>Median family income male (no wife)</i>	---	\$44,886
<i>Median family income female (no husband)</i>	---	\$23,975
Households w/children ages 0 to 5, and all parents working	80%	66%
Households w/children ages 6 to 17, and all parents working	79%	78%

*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2010, 2019)*

The community of Washington had the most family households with children under 18 with 867, followed by Kalona with 307. Family household sizes ranged from a low of 2.09 in Coppock to a high of 3.19 in Ainsworth. Median income for families with children under 18 was available for all communities and varied between those cities. This difference could influence parent’s views of what is “affordable” for child care. Median income for families with children was the lowest in Coppock at \$29,583, and highest in Kalona at \$84,219.

The following table shows the same household types and characteristics for each incorporated community. Not all data was available for all cities.

Table 9: Household Types and Characteristics by Community

	<b>Ainsworth</b>	<b>Brighton</b>	<b>Coppock</b>	<b>Crawfordsville</b>	<b>Kalona</b>
Total Households	201	279	13	127	1,054
Average household size	2.87	2.59	2.0	2.78	2.32
Median household income	\$54,875	\$48,906	\$29,375	\$56,406	\$58,446
Family Households	150	178	11	97	686
Average family size	3.19	3.12	2.09	3.13	2.85
Median family income	\$63,000	\$57,500	---	\$57,344	\$73,250
Family HH w/children under 18	106	81	10	51	307
<i>Married couples</i>	83	58	2	45	218
<i>Male householder</i>	12	5	2	0	3
<i>Female householder</i>	11	18	6	6	86
Median income families w/children	\$61,667	\$62,083	\$29,583	\$58,958	\$84,219
<i>Median family married couples</i>	---	\$91,429	---	\$59,375	\$95,500
<i>Median family male</i>	---	---	---	---	---
<i>Median family female</i>	---	\$32,083	---	---	\$13,281
Households w/children age 0 to 5, all parents working	36%	69%	100%	66%	83%
Households w/children age 6 to 17, all parents working	89%	85%	100%	75%	78%
	<b>Riverside</b>	<b>Washington</b>	<b>Wellman</b>	<b>West Chester</b>	
Total Households	503	3,023	541	39	
Average household size	2.22	2.34	2.35	2.10	
Median household income	\$62,772	\$52,697	\$56,528	\$47,750	
Family Households	289	1,985	345	25	
Average family size	2.90	2.77	2.92	2.68	
Median family income	\$77,981	\$60,702	\$69,583	\$48,250	
Family HH w/children under 18	128	867	142	7	
<i>Married couples</i>	113	446	110	3	
<i>Male householder</i>	0	103	6	2	
<i>Female householder</i>	15	318	26	2	
Median income families w/children	\$80,625	\$66,019	\$75,625	\$49,375	
<i>Median family married couples</i>	\$89,375	\$80,417	\$81,000	---	
<i>Median family male</i>	---	\$44,205	---	---	
<i>Median family female</i>	\$47,813	\$24,091	---	---	
Households w/children age 0 to 5, all parents working	64%	64%	79%	100%	
Households w/children age 6 to 17, all parents working	81%	77%	72%	89%	

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2019)

## **Economy in the Area**

### **Labor Force and Unemployment**

A competitive job market can make it hard for child care programs to attract and retain quality staff. According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of September 2021 the total labor force (residents age 16 or older that could work) living in Washington County was 11,200. Of those, 10,900 were employed, while 300 (2.5%) were unemployed. In comparison, in September 2019 the total labor force was 12,100, with 11,900 employed, and 200 (2.0%) unemployed. That means there are 1,200 fewer potential workers in the county than there were just 2 years ago.

### **Place of Work and Time Leaving Home**

According to the US Census Bureau the number of adults living in Washington County that are in the labor force increased from 2010 to 2019. As of 2019, there were a total of 11,011 workers age 16 and over living in the county. Of those, 60.4% worked in Washington County, 39.1% worked outside the county, and another 0.5% worked outside the state. The most popular hour to leave home to go to work was 7:00 am to 7:59 am with 31.8%, followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am with 23.6%.

A comparison of 2010 and 2019 data shows that both where residents work and what time they leave home to go to work has changed. As of 2019, more residents out-commute to other counties or even out of state for work. Fewer residents leave home between 12:00 am and 4:59 am than did in 2010, which could be an indication that fewer residents are working third-shift or overnight.

*Table 10: Place of Work and Time Leaving Home to Go to Work*

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>
Total workers 16 years and over	10,987	11,011
Workers who worked from home	930 (8.4%)	704 (6.3%)
<i>Time leaving home to go to work</i>		
12:00 am to 4:59 am	6.1%	4.1%
5:00 am to 5:29 am	4.2%	4.5%
5:30 am to 5:59 am	6.1%	7.0%
6:00 am to 6:29 am	9.9%	11.2%
6:30 am to 6:59 am	13.5%	12.4%
7:00 am to 7:29 am	14.5%	14.7%
7:30 am to 7:59 am	14.9%	17.1%
8:00 am. to 8:29 am	7.1%	9.2%
8:30 am to 8:59 am	5.0%	2.8%
9:00 am to 11:59 pm	18.6%	16.9%
Mean travel time (minutes)	20.8	21.7
<i>Place of Work</i>		
Within county of residence	61.2%	60.4%
Outside county of residence	38.4%	39.1%
Outside Iowa	0.4%	0.5%

*Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2010, 2019)*

### **Washington County Employees and Wages**

According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of Quarter 2 of 2021, there was an average 8,160 people employed by companies located in Washington County, which is a decrease from 8,437 during the same period in 2016. The average weekly wage of those working at these companies was \$756 per week, up from \$625 during the same period in 2016.

Of all the industries based in Washington County, the industry that employed the most people was health care & social assistance (1,205), followed by retail trade (1,149), and accommodations & food service (1,036). Average wages ranged from a low of \$294 per week for arts, entertainment & recreation, to a high of \$1,023 per week for wholesale trade.

The following table shows a comparison of Quarter 2 2016 and Quarter 2 2021.

Table 11: Washington County Employees and Wages

	Q2 2016			Q2 2021		
	Total Locations	Average Employees	Average Wk. Wage	Total Locations	Average Employees	Average Wk. Wage
Accommodations & Food Service	44	1,195	\$488	42	1,036	\$607
Administrative & Waste Management	27	129	\$430	22	66	\$685
Agriculture, Fishing & Hunting	38	279	\$679	38	321	\$941
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	9	60	\$245	9	55	\$294
Construction	123	920	\$822	117	903	\$959
Educational Services	24	888	\$651	23	904	\$698
Finance & Insurance	51	232	\$786	47	209	\$993
Health Care & Social Assistance	72	1,315	\$591	94	1,205	\$724
Information	12	97	\$598	9	60	\$847
Management of Companies	6	17	\$1,179	3	---	---
Manufacturing	46	899	\$688	44	767	\$879
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	3	---	---	3	---	---
Other Services (except Public Admin)	56	239	\$444	54	248	\$536
Professional, Scientific, Technical	50	156	\$637	50	162	\$837
Public Administration	28	647	\$813	27	369	\$843
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	15	24	\$553	15	23	\$521
Retail Trade	88	1,055	\$435	94	1,149	\$550
Transportation & Warehousing	45	207	\$683	54	202	\$847
Utilities	2	---	---	3	---	---
Wholesale Trade	51	378	\$891	61	427	\$1,023
<b>Total</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>8,437</b>	<b>\$625</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>8,106</b>	<b>\$756</b>

Note: Data from Iowa Workforce Development (2016, 2021)

### **Child Care and Preschool Labor Force and Wages**

Most child care and preschool workers fall under one of three categories as defined by the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system: Childcare Workers<sup>2</sup>, Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare<sup>3</sup>, or Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> SOC Definition: Attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and childcare institutions. Perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play. Illustrative examples: Au Pair, Daycare Provider, Nanny.

<sup>3</sup> SOC Definition: Plan, direct, or coordinate academic or nonacademic activities of preschools or childcare centers and programs, including before- and after-school care. Illustrative examples: Childcare Center Administrator, Head Start Director, Preschool Director.

<sup>4</sup> SOC Definition: Instruct preschool-aged students, following curricula or lesson plans, in activities designed to promote social, physical, and intellectual growth. Illustrative examples: Home-based Preschool Teacher, Nursery School Teacher, Preschool Head Start Teacher.

According to Iowa Wage Report Data from Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) for Iowa City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)<sup>5</sup> as of November 2021, the entry wage<sup>6</sup> for Childcare Workers in the region was \$8.66, while the mean<sup>7</sup> wage was \$10.70 and experienced wage<sup>8</sup> was \$11.73. There were 990 childcare workers in the region, and 6,980 across the state.

For Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare, the entry wage was \$14.26, the mean wage \$18.01, and experienced wage \$19.88. There were 70 of these workers in the area, and 830 across the state.

For Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education, the entry wage in the area was \$9.84, the mean wage \$12.91, and experienced wage \$14.44. The report did not disclose how many workers are classified in this occupation within the area, but there are 3,890 across the state.

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<sup>5</sup> Consists of Johnson and Washington Counties.

<sup>6</sup> Entry Wage is the average of the lowest third of reported wages for the occupation.

<sup>7</sup> Mean Wages is the average wage and is computed by dividing the estimated total wage for an occupation by its weighted employment.

<sup>8</sup> Experienced Wage is the average of the upper two-thirds of reported wages for the occupation.

## EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

### Early Care and Education Environments in Iowa

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet each family's varying needs and preferences. These include:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- School-Based Programs
  - School-Age Care
  - Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program
- Registered Child Development Homes
- Legal Unregulated Home Care
  - Nanny or Au Pare
  - Family, Friend or Neighbor care

The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available.

### Iowa Department of Human Services<sup>9</sup>

In Iowa, the Department of Human Services (DHS) oversees programs that fall into three categories—Licensed Centers, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes. The level of regulation and requirements placed on the provider varies based on the type.

#### *Licensed Centers*

Licensed Centers include child care centers (including child care programs operated by school districts), preschool programs, and Head Start. A center can care for larger groups of children, which are typically separated by age groups according to specific staff-to-child ratios. All centers are required to have an Iowa DHS inspection prior to opening and an annual inspection after that. A licensed center may apply for a Child Care Assistance<sup>10</sup> Provider Agreement and may participate in the voluntary Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS)<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Information in this section adapted from "Child Care Overview". Iowa Department of Human Services. <https://dhs.iowa.gov/childcare/overview>

<sup>10</sup> Child Care Assistance (CCA) is a tuition assistance program available to children of income-eligible parents. The tuition reimbursement is paid directly to the child care program based on the child's attendance.

<sup>11</sup> Quality Rating System (QRS) is voluntary rating system for Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, Head Start programs, and child care programs that are operated by school districts. Participating providers achieve a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, by meeting key indicators of quality in the areas of professional development, health and safety, environment, family and community partnership, and leadership and administration.



### *Registered Child Development Homes (a.k.a. Registered Homes)*

Anyone caring for more than 5 children at a time is required to register with the Iowa Department of Human Services. Registered Child Development Homes can provide care for up to 8, 12 or 16 children at a time depending on the registration level. Registration levels A, B, or C are based on the providers experience and if there are any assistants or co-providers present. These programs are required to have an Iowa DHS inspection prior to opening and an unannounced annual inspection after that. A Registered Child Development Home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with DHS and may participate in the voluntary Child Net<sup>12</sup> program and the Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS).

### *Child Care Homes*

Child Care homes can care for 5 or fewer children at any given time. These programs are not required to register but have the option to do so. A Child Care Home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with DHS. Child Care Homes serving children eligible for child care assistance must complete an unannounced inspection once per year to assure compliance with health, safety, and fire standards. These providers are not eligible to participate in Child Net or Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS).

The table on the next page shows a comparison of the requirements for child care providers in Iowa.

## **Iowa Department of Education**

Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program administered by the Iowa Department of Education provides an opportunity for all young children in the State of Iowa to enter school ready to learn by expanding voluntary access to quality preschool curricula for all four-year-old children. School districts that have been approved to participate receive funding to offer at least 10 hours of preschool per week during the school year. Districts may provide the preschool directly or contract with a community partner to provide preschool on their behalf.

Until January 2016 some schools that offered child care, preschool (other than the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program), or before and after school care, were exempt from being licensed with Iowa DHS, because they were overseen by the Iowa Department of Education. Now many of those programs need to be licensed as a child care center under DHS. Statewide Voluntary

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<sup>12</sup> ChildNet certification is a requirement for Child Care Home providers wishing to achieve a Level 2 and higher in the Iowa Quality Rating System. To earn ChildNet certification, the provider must complete the ChildNet training series with Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and demonstrate 100% compliance with the Iowa Department of Human Services' Registration checklist through a certification visit with their local CCR&R Child Care Consultant.

Preschool is still exempt in most cases, unless it is extended for additional hours with parents paying tuition for the extra hours.

### Legal Unregulated Care

In Iowa, parents may choose “family, friend, or neighbor care” or other unrelated caregiver such as a nanny or au pare. These types of care are not regulated and typically not tracked, unless the provider has an agreement with DHS to accept child care assistance, at which time they are considered a Child Care Home as described earlier. Because these providers are “off the radar” and data is not available, the data in this section does not include unregulated providers.

Table 12: DHS Requirements for Child Care Providers in Iowa

	Non-Registered Home w/out DHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/DHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Licensed Center
State Regulated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum Capacity <sup>13</sup>	5	5	8	12	8	16	Varies by license
Inspection prior to Registration/Licensing			•	•	•	•	•
Annual Facility & Records Inspection		•	•	•	•	•	•
Minimum age of caregiver		18 years	18 years	20 years	21 years	21 years	Lead teacher 18 years
Iowa child abuse registry check <sup>14</sup>		•	•	•	•	•	•
Iowa criminal records check <sup>7</sup>		•	•	•	•	•	•
National (FBI) Fingerprint-based records check		•	•	•	•	•	•
Experience required				2 years or 1 year w/child related degree	5 years or 4 years w/child related degree	5 years or 4 years w/child related degree	Combination of experience and education
Minimum education required				High school or GED	High school or GED	High school or GED	Director/ On-Site Supervisor High school or GED

<sup>13</sup> A home provider’s own children are included in their legal capacity. Their school-age children are not unless they are being home-schooled.

<sup>14</sup> Iowa child abuse registry and Iowa criminal records checks are required for all household members age 14 and older.

	Non-Registered Home w/out DHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/DHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Licensed Center
Minimum pre-service & orientation trainings		•	•	•	•	•	•
Professional Development (every 2 years)		6 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	
CPR and First Aid Certification		•	•	•	•	•	•
Mandatory Reporter Training		•	•	•	•	•	•
Emergency Preparedness Response Training		•	•	•	•	•	•
Non-smoking environment		•	•	•	•	•	•
Fire-extinguishers and smoke detectors		•	•	•	•	•	•
2 direct exits				•	•	•	•
Space requirements				•	•	•	•
Quiet area for sick children				•	•	•	•
Reference letters			3 letters of reference				

Adapted from: Iowa Department of Human Services (2011)

<https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/ChildCareRequirements.aspx>.

### Early Care and Education Supply

The total number of DHS regulated child care providers and child care spaces across Iowa has changed over the last few years. According to Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral data, from 2016 to 2021 the total number of child care providers in Iowa declined by 28%, yet the total number of child care spaces increased by 4%. During that same time, across Southeast Iowa the number of providers declined by 28%, while the number of child care spaces increased by 8%.

Industry changes that occurred during this time that may have influenced the numbers are:

- As of January 2016, child care, preschool (other than the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program), and before and after school programs operated by a school district are no longer exempt from DHS licensing. In some communities, this resulted in a shift, with some

spaces previously counted under Department of Education being counted under Department of Human Services.

- Starting in September 2016, all child care center staff, Registered Child Development Home operators, and Child Care Home operators that accept Child Care Assistance were required to take the 12-hour “Essential Child Care Preservice” training.
- As of July 2017, Child Care Home operators that accept Child Care Assistance were required to complete preservice training, have their home inspected at least once a year, and meet other regulations that had not previously been required.
- Since 2012, participation of school districts in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program has increased significantly. Overall participation of school districts increased from 90% of districts participating in 2011–2012 to 98% in 2019 (321 of 327 districts). Overall enrollment increased from 19,900 in 2011–2012 to 25,330 in 2019–2020. As more districts participate, this has increased the number of child care spaces under both DHS and Department of Education.

According to Child Care Resource & Referral data, from 2016 to 2021 Washington County experienced a net gain of 87 regulated child care spaces. Registered Child Development Homes and Child Care Homes collectively lost 102 spaces, while Licensed Centers & Preschools gained 189 new spaces, which off-sets the losses. The following table shows the number of child care programs and spaces in Washington County over the last 5 years.

*Table 13: Programs and Spaces Listed with Child Care Resource & Referral*

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Net Change
<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>-11</b>
DHS Centers & Preschools	13	13	14	15	15	13	0
Dept. of Ed. Programs	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
Registered Child Dvpmnt. Homes	13	11	12	9	8	8	-5
Child Care Homes	6	4	1	1	1	0	-6
<b>Total Spaces</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>+87</b>
DHS Centers & Preschools	584	585	625	799	791	773	+189
Dept. of Ed. Programs	58	58	58	58	58	58	0
Registered Child Dvpmnt. Homes	172	140	148	120	96	100	-72
Child Care Homes	30	20	5	5	5	0	-30

*Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.*

Iowa DHS data shows that as of November 2021, there were 20 DHS regulated programs with 754 spaces in Washington County. These programs include child care and Head Start. They breakdown as follows:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools- There are 13 DHS Licensed Child Care Centers, which account for 670 (88%) of the spaces.
- Registered Child Development Homes- There are 7 DHS Registered Child Development Homes which account for the remaining 84 (11%) of spaces.
- Child Care Homes- There are no Child Care Homes.

The following tables show the child care programs within Washington County as of November 2021 that are tracked by Iowa DHS. It is possible there are additional home providers or Department of Education preschool programs in the area that are not listed because they are not regulated by DHS and data is not available.

*Table 14: DHS Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools, November 2021*

<b>Program Name &amp; Location</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>DHS Capacity</b>	<b>Child Care Assistance</b>	<b>QRS Level</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Year-Round</b>
First Baptist Preschool, Washington	8:00 am-11:00 am Mon-Thurs	35	Yes	3	3-4 yrs.	No
HACAP Head Start-Orchard Hill, Washington	7:30 am- 5:30 pm Mon -Fri	36	No	4	3-5 yrs.	No
Kids Corral Before & After, Washington	6:30 am- 6:00 pm Mon -Fri	30	Yes	---	5-12 yrs.	Yes
Kids Corral Inc, Washington	6:30 am- 6:00 pm Mon -Fri	60	Yes	---	0-4 yrs.	Yes
Kids Country Club, Kalona	5:30 am- 6:00 pm Mon -Fri	83	Yes	3	0-12 yrs.	Yes
Little Ducklings Daycare Center, Ainsworth	6:00 am- 6:00 pm Mon- Fri	49	Yes	---	0-12 yrs.	Yes
St James Three Year Old Preschool, Washington	8:00 am- 11:00 am Mon, Tues, Th, Fri	16	No	---	3 yrs.	No
Sunrise Child Care Before and After School Program, Wellman	8:00 am- 5:00 pm Mon -Fri	30	Yes	---	PS- 12	Yes
Sunrise Child Care Inc, Wellman	5:30 am- 6:00 pm Mon -Fri	80	Yes	2	0- PS	Yes
Up With Kids - United Presbyterian Home, Washington	6:00 am- 5:00 pm Mon -Fri	56	Yes	1	0- PS	Yes
Washington Community Y Cornelia S Day Child Care, Washington	5:30 am- 6:00 pm Mon -Fri	75	Yes	3	0-5 yrs.	Yes
Washington Community Y Kid Konnection, Washington	5:30 am- 6:00 pm Mon -Fri	55	Yes	---	5-12 yrs.	Yes
Washington Y Kids, Washington	5:30 am- 6:00 pm Mon -Fri	65	Yes	---	5-12 yrs.	Yes

*Note: Data from Iowa Department of Human Services (2021)*

Table 15: DHS Registered Child Development Homes, November 2021

Provider Name & Location	Hours	Registration Level	DHS Capacity	Child Care Assistance	QRS Level
Angela Truitt, Kalona	6:00 am- 5:30 pm Mon -Fri	Home B	12	Yes	---
Candice Betsworth, Washington	7:00 am- 5:30 pm Mon-Fri	Home B	12	Yes	---
Jessica Vilovchik , Kalona	6:00 am- 6:00 pm Mon-Fri	Home C	16	Yes	---
Mackenzie Shalla, Kalona	6:30 am- 5:30 pm Mon- Sat	Home A	8	Yes	---
Munchkins Den, Riverside	6:50 am- 5:30 pm Mon- Fri	Home C1	8	Yes	1
Roots & Wings Montessori Kids, Kalona	7:30 am- 5:30 pm Mon- Fri	Home C	16	Yes	---
Terri Kraus, Riverside	6:30 am- 5:00 pm Mon- Fri	Home B	12	Yes	2

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Human Services (2021)

### Price Point

In addition to individual providers changing their rates, changes in average tuition rates can be the result of providers going out of business, new providers coming into the market, providers no longer reporting their tuition rates to DHS if they stop accepting child care assistance, or homes that let their registration expire and no longer report their tuition to DHS (centers cannot let their license expire or they will be shut down). When comparing rates, it is important to note that some providers charge tuition that is all-inclusive, while others may charge separate fees for specific items or require parents to furnish supplies, snacks, or other items, and some programs operate full-time while some are only part-time.

According to Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, as of July 2021, the average weekly rates for care in a DHS Licensed Child Care Center in Washington County, ranged from a low of \$140.00 per week for a school-age child to \$168.33 per week for infants and toddlers. Before and After School care averaged \$75.40 a week. These average rates are lower than they were in 2020 for most age groups, with the exception of four- & five-year-old and school age care, which are higher.

*Table 16: Average Weekly Tuition Rates of DHS Licensed Centers*

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Infant	\$175.00	\$158.05	\$162.50	\$172.50	\$175.00	\$168.33
Toddler	\$175.00	\$158.05	\$162.50	\$172.50	\$175.00	\$168.33
Two-Year-Old	\$166.65	\$141.69	\$145.00	\$152.50	\$159.75	\$154.67
Three-Year-Old	\$162.50	\$139.74	\$142.50	\$147.50	\$157.25	\$151.33
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$160.00	\$139.45	\$142.50	\$145.00	\$141.33	\$149.67
School-Age (full time)	\$141.65	\$137.49	\$141.25	\$145.00	\$136.00	\$140.00
Before & After School	N/A	\$79.05	\$82.50	\$72.50	\$73.70	\$75.40

*Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.*

As of July 2021, average weekly rates for care in a DHS Registered Child Development Home in Washington County, ranged from a low of \$130.50 per week for a school-age child to \$151.00 per week for infants and toddlers. Before and After School care averaged \$73.33 a week. The 2021 average rates for all age groups are higher than they were in 2020.

*Table 17: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Homes*

	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Infant	\$135.00	\$130.00	\$139.00	\$143.00	\$140.00	\$151.00
Toddler	\$133.75	\$130.00	\$137.50	\$143.00	\$140.00	\$151.00
Two-Year-Old	\$130.00	\$128.55	\$135.83	\$143.00	\$140.00	\$145.00
Three-Year-Old	\$130.00	\$128.55	\$135.83	\$143.00	\$140.00	\$145.00
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$130.00	\$128.55	\$135.83	\$143.00	\$140.00	\$145.00
School-Age (full time)	\$123.10	\$122.85	\$131.00	\$142.00	\$125.00	\$130.50
Before & After School	\$64.17	\$79.05	\$60.00	\$52.50	N/A	\$73.33

*Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.*

With a portion of residents out-commuting to other counties and school districts boundaries that cross county lines, the average rates in neighboring counties can be informative. The average weekly tuition rates for care in both DHS Licensed Child Care Centers and Registered Child Development Homes for Washington County and surrounding counties are in the following tables.

Average weekly tuition at DHS Licensed Centers varies greatly from county-to-county. As of 2021, Johnson County had the highest overall average tuition for ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten), while Iowa County had the highest overall average for Before & After School care. In contrast, Jefferson County had the lowest overall average tuition rates for all ages.

Table 18: Average Weekly Tuition at Licensed Centers in Surrounding Counties

	Henry	Iowa	Jefferson	Johnson	Keokuk	Louisa	State of Iowa
Infant	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$145.00	\$254.18	N/A	\$150.00	\$218.42
Toddler	\$165.00	\$175.00	\$145.00	\$250.09	N/A	\$150.00	\$217.23
Two-Year-Old	\$155.00	\$162.50	\$135.00	\$230.24	N/A	\$140.00	\$198.15
Three-Year-Old	\$145.00	\$160.00	\$135.00	\$209.23	N/A	\$135.00	\$186.21
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$135.00	\$160.00	\$135.00	\$201.00	N/A	\$135.00	\$179.34
Full time School-Age	\$110.00	\$150.00	\$135.00	\$176.47	N/A	\$125.00	\$155.47
Before & After School	N/A	\$80.00	N/A	\$78.20	N/A	\$65.00	\$83.84
Total Centers	7	5	7	85	1	5	1,496
Spaces w/in Centers	429	331	406	8,070	15	273	130,341

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (2021)

Average weekly tuition at DHS Registered Child Development Homes also varies from county to county. As of 2021, Johnson County had the highest average rates for registered home care for all ages, while Jefferson County had the lowest average rates for registered home care for all ages.

Table 19: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Homes in Surrounding Counties

	Henry	Iowa	Jefferson	Johnson	Keokuk	Louisa	State of Iowa
Infant	\$145.00	\$138.12	\$122.95	\$163.13	\$125.00	\$129.80	\$144.74
Toddler	\$145.00	\$138.12	\$122.95	\$162.39	\$125.00	\$129.80	\$143.37
Two-Year-Old	\$145.00	\$141.11	\$122.00	\$160.19	\$125.00	\$121.80	\$141.09
Three-Year-Old	\$138.75	\$141.11	\$122.00	\$159.60	\$125.00	\$121.80	\$139.50
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$138.75	\$141.11	\$122.00	\$160.17	\$125.00	\$121.80	\$137.50
Full time School-Age	\$137.50	\$130.83	\$118.65	\$146.96	\$125.00	\$108.00	\$127.16
Before & After School	\$62.14	\$60.71	\$25.00	\$64.22	\$60.00	\$54.10	\$65.40
Total Reg. Homes	11	14	10	98	3	3	2,442
Spaces w/in Reg. Homes	128	156	108	1,016	36	32	26,796

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (2021)

### Child Care Assistance

Child Care Assistance (CCA) is available to the children of income-eligible parents to help pay for care at Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) approved child care programs while a parent or caretaker works or attends school. Child care programs are reimbursed directly from Iowa DHS when they provide care to a family that qualifies. In Iowa, a family's household income cannot exceed 145% of the annual federal poverty threshold to qualify for assistance. According to the federally determined 2021 poverty threshold, that would mean a family of three must have



an annual household income below \$31,842 and a family of four must have an annual household income below \$38,425 to qualify.

Reimbursements to the provider are based on the number of units a child attends each week but cannot exceed the number of units approved by DHS. A unit is a half-day (up to 5 hours). In most cases, a child that attends full time, five days a week would be approved for 10 units (2 half-day units, for 5 days) or less, depending on several factors, including the parent or caretaker work or school schedule. A child care provider is reimbursed at a rate equal to the amount they would charge a private pay family (or equivalent), with a maximum reimbursement rate based on whether or not the provider participates in the Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS).

The following table shows the maximum amount child care providers can be reimbursed through the CCA program as of July 2021.

*Table 20: Half-Day Maximum CCA Reimbursement Rates*

<b>Age Group<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>No QRS</b>		<b>QRS Level 1 or Level 2</b>		<b>QRS Level 3 or Level 4</b>		<b>QRS Level 5</b>	
	<b>Basic Care</b>	<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>Basic Care</b>	<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>Basic Care</b>	<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>Basic Care</b>	<b>Special Needs</b>
Infant/Toddler	\$19.30	\$51.94	\$20.50	\$51.94	\$21.50	\$51.94	\$23.21	\$51.94
Preschool	\$17.00	\$30.43	\$18.00	\$30.43	\$18.98	\$30.43	\$20.00	\$30.43
School Age	\$13.50	\$30.34	\$14.75	\$30.34	\$15.00	\$30.34	\$16.00	\$30.34

*Note: Data from Iowa Department of Human Services (2021)*

<sup>15</sup> As of July 1, 2020, the age group Infant/Toddler for CCA includes ages 0 to 2, and Preschool includes children from the age of 3 until they begin Kindergarten.

## CHILD CARE NEEDS SURVEYS

In September 2021, three electronic surveys developed by First Children’s Finance were distributed for the purpose of determining how child care affects employers and parents, as well as to gain insight from child care providers about the current challenges and opportunities they are experiencing. To assure there were no biases and to maintain confidentiality, surveys were distributed electronically and then collected and analyzed by First Children’s Finance. Comments made by survey participants are shared verbatim as long as an individual respondent, local employer, or child care program cannot be identified, in which case they may have been partially reported or edited to remove the identifying information.

### Employer Survey

A total of 26 employer surveys, representing 22 different companies were received. Employers represent a total of 15 different industries, and collectively employ over 2,650 individuals. Participants reported the composition of their workforce as:

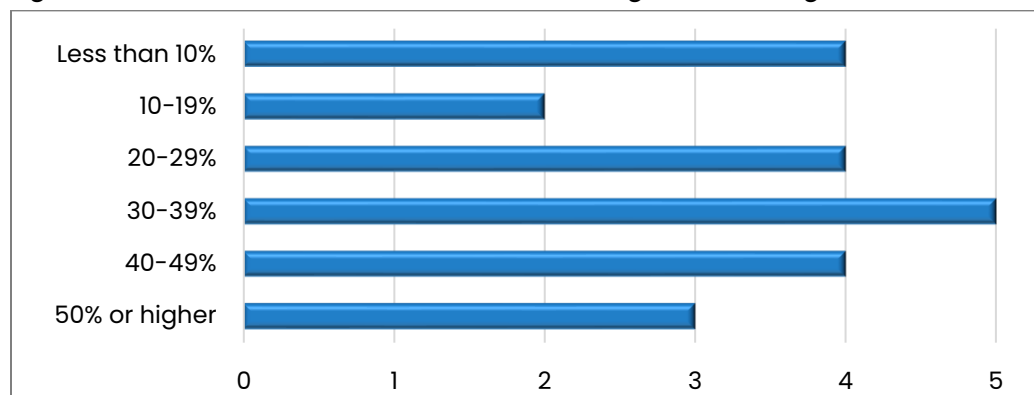
Table 21: Composition of Respondents’ Workforce

	Number of Employers
Male 0% to 25% -- Female 75% to 100%	7
Male 25% to 50% -- Female 50% to 75%	5
Male 50% to 75% -- Female 25% to 50%	5
Male 75% to 100% -- Female 0% to 25%	5

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children’s Finance, © 2021

Four (4) employers estimated that less than 10% of their employees have children age 12 or younger, while 2 indicated 10–19%, 4 indicated 20–29%, 5 indicated 30–39%, 4 indicated 40–49%, and 3 indicated 50% or higher.

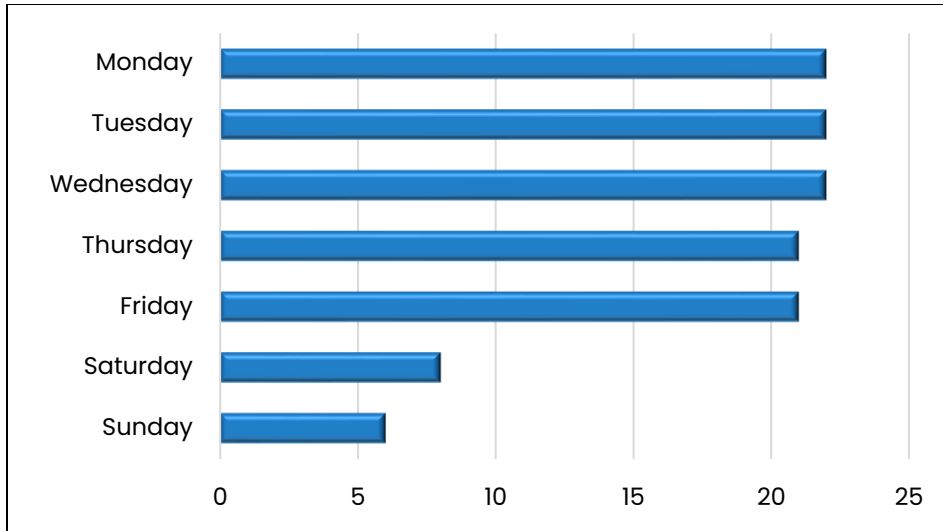
Figure 1: Estimated Labor Force with Children Age 12 or Younger



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children’s Finance, © 2021

When asked which days of the week their labor force typically works, all 22 employers indicated they operate Monday through Wednesday, 21 also operate on Thursday and Friday, while 8 operate on Saturday, and 6 on Sunday. Four (4) operate 24-hours a day, 7 days per week, while the other 18 operate varying hours between 5:00 am and 8:00 pm

Figure 2: Days Labor Force Typically Works



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Thirteen (13) of the employers indicated that there are sometimes changes or fluctuations in their hours or days of operations. Comments received about schedule fluctuations were:

- *Before and after work on occasion.*
- *Hours of operation vary by worksite. One worksite operates 20 hours per day with two shifts, Monday through Friday. Other worksites operate 365 days a year but work schedules are mostly in the morning from 5am-3pm.*
- *Most [of our] offices are open 8:00a to 4:30p. We do have departments that are open 24/7.*
- *Overtime is available.*
- *Holiday hours are limited, and we try to work 1 Friday a month.*
- *End time is not always the same. Sometimes 2:30 pm.*
- *Large events, holidays, etc.*
- *We extend our hours during the winter months to include more evening hours and weekend hours.*
- *Seasonal overtime and Saturday hours.*
- *Overtime, Emergency on- call situations.*
- *Early start by 2 hours for overtime.*
- *Seasonal work, may work Saturday if needed to complete job or didn't work during week due to weather.*

Out of the 22 different employers represented, 45% indicated they had challenges related to productivity due to employee's child care challenges, 41% said they do not have challenges, and another 14% were unsure. Respondents that answered yes or unsure were asked to explain. A summary of comments from those answering yes:

- *Communicating with child care during day. Late start to work. Early leave. Shut down production.*
- *If spouse works and child is sick, daycare is closed, sitter on vacation, etc. they often will rotate absences.*
- *Finding Childcare or the illness of a provider.*
- *In the past staff has had to leave before work was done to pick up child before day care closed.*
- *Available daycare for unusual hours is hard to find.*
- *Call offs, etc.*
- *There have been times that parents cannot get their kids into a child care center due to waiting lists, which in turn delays their return to work or the hours that they are available to work until a spot opens up.*
- *[One of our employees] has two small children and uses family for care. [They are] looking for daycare, but it's hard to find.*
- *We had challenges during COVID with childcare centers closing down, and required quarantines due to exposures at school or daycare.*
- *Lack of support when child has to be home and parent has to work.*
- *Employees arriving late and needing to leave early due to child care hours.*

Summary of comments from those answering unsure:

- *With COVID we faced some child care challenges.*
- *We have heard of some having issues to make before or after school meetings due to child care.*

When asked about absenteeism due to employee's child care challenges, 55% of employers indicated they had experienced challenges, while 31% did not, and another 14% were unsure. Respondents that answered yes or unsure were asked to explain. Summary of comments from those answering yes:

- *Day care not consistent or professional, leaves employee leaving early or starting late.*
- *We have had some challenges due to COVID.*
- *The challenge is reduced productivity when crew isn't able to work. Less productivity = less profitability.*
- *I'm not sure of the frequency, but yes we do have attendance issues due to childcare.*
- *Seems to be less and less daycare options in the area so therefore it causes issues.*

- *Single-parent families and the daycare had to close.*
- *Multiple call ins "no one to watch my child".*
- *If school is cancelled, people miss work.*
- *There have been child care centers that have closed in our community recently and this has cause issues with attendance. We have changed schedules to work with parents when we can.*
- *Child care shutting down for periods of time due to Covid concerns leaves no option for the working parent.*
- *This was only an issue for us due to COVID.*
- *Employees not able to come to work due to child care being closed for sick kids or kids possibly exposed to Covid at day care.*

Summary of comments from those answering unsure:

- *It's not a common challenge but we have a few employees that state lack of child care as a reason for being absent.*

In a separate question, 27% of employers indicated they had experienced difficulty hiring employees due to child care options or challenges, 59% indicated they had not experienced difficulty, and another 14% were unsure. Respondents that answered yes or unsure were asked to explain.

Summary of comments from those answering yes:

- *Yes, from finding a provider or the cost.*
- *Applicants can't work weekends, no child care or need to be off to pick children up from school.*
- *[The] available hours to work are night shifts, really hard for people to manage.*
- *Because there are no child care openings in the community we have had some hires that have not been able to take the position or have had to find temporary care with a relative to be able to work.*
- *Cost and availability of child care limit the availability of candidates with child care needs.*
- *There are very few child care facilities in the area for our employees.*
- *Employees travel to job sites and may not be able to take the job as they are unable to drop kids off early enough to get to work or need to leave early to pick up kids.*

A total of 6 employers indicated their company had employees that left over the last 12 months because of child care. Five (5) indicated they lost 1 employee, and 1 indicated they had lost 10 employees.

As a follow up, employers were then asked if any employees departed as a direct result of changes to child care due to COVID. Two (2) indicated yes, while 4 indicated no, and 5 were unsure. Respondents that answered yes were asked to explain. Comments received were:

- *No school or child care options.*
- *Child care closing due to COVID resulted in employee [having] no child care.*

Employers were asked if their company experienced changes over the last 12 months due to COVID. A list with multiple options was provided and employers instructed to select all that apply. Those responses are reflected in the following table.

*Table 22: Company Changes in Last 12 Months Due to COVID*

	<b>Number of Employers</b>
All or some employees temporarily worked from home.	19
All or some positions permanently changed to work from home.	2
At least one employee permanently departed as a result of their child care arrangement being affected by COVID.	2
At least one employee permanently departed as a result of their child's school (K-12) utilizing online instruction.	2

*Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021*

When asked if their company is currently experiencing changes to staffing or scheduling due to COVID, 9 indicated yes, and 13 indicated no. Those indicating yes were asked to explain. A sampling of comments were:

- *1/2 work from home, 1/2 in the office.*
- *No one to hire. No one wants to work.*
- *Not as much now, but definitely in the first 6-12 months of COVID.*
- *We can be short some days due to staff or their children having COVID and it is hard to get subs.*
- *No applications coming in.*
- *Not many applicants and quite a few didn't come back from the shut down for COVID.*
- *Employees needing to stay home when they or their child contracts COVID.*

Six (6) employers indicated their company has implemented or changed employee policies to adapt to employees' child care needs in regards to COVID. Comments provided were:

- *We have tried to make adaptations as much as possible, but they have to be very temporary being in [our] field.*

- We offered 80 hours of additional paid time off for staff that were affected by Covid or had to take care of a family member due to Covid.
- We did make changes during the height of COVID. Things have since gone back to normal.

Employers were given a list of common affects their employees (not job applicants) may experience due to child care challenges, and were asked to select all that they are aware have affected their employees in the last 12-months. The most common challenge was having to leave work early, followed by missing a day of work because the providers was closed, and arriving late to work.

One employer selected other. The accompanying comment was: *[Employee] eventually left to move closer to her mom, so her mom could help care for her baby.*

Table 23: Affects of Child Care Challenges on Employees

	Percent of Employers
Had to leave work early	77%
Missed a day of work because their provider was closed, on vacation, or not available	68%
Arrived late to work	50%
Unable to work overtime	45%
Had to bring their child to work with them	32%
Unable to accept a different work schedule or shift	27%
Have had to reduce the number of hours worked	27%
Missed a day of work because their provider did not have room or space for a child	22%
Had to leave their child home alone to go to work	18%
Received disciplinary action (not including firing)	18%
Lower productivity	18%
Had to change jobs to one that works with their child care arrangement	14%
Did not accept a desired job offer	9%
Quit a job	9%
Got fired	9%
Unable to travel for work	5%
Other	5%
Our employees experienced no issues related to work and child care	18%

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Employers were asked if their company currently offered any child care related benefits to their employees (they were asked to select all that applied). The most common child care related

benefit offered is flexible schedules, followed by dependent care flex spending accounts, and work-from-home options when an employee's regular child care arrangement is not available.

*Table 24: Child Care Related Benefits Currently Offered*

	<b>Number of Employers</b>
Flexible schedule if regular care is not available	10
Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts	8
Work-from-home option if regular care is not available	6
Child care information included in orientation	2
Financial assistance to help employees pay for child care	2
Child care information included in employee handbook	1
None of the above	5

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Employers were also asked if there were reasons why their company does not offer any or some of these benefits listed above. Comments received were:

- *No one works here with children currently.*
- *New employees will lead to more work which will produce more margin so I can offer more benefits.*
- *In some of our worksites it is difficult to postpone certain activities because of the nature of working with live animals.*
- *I feel like [our company] does a great job offering flexibility to employees in all departments.*
- *Budgetary constraints. Unsure of what "child care information" is available to provide to employees.*
- *Manufacturing line cannot run with remote employees.*
- *Finances.*
- *Some positions can be more flexible than others.*
- *Not necessary as employees have had no issues related to Corona.*
- *There hasn't been a demand from our employees for child care services.*
- *Most employees are considered part time.*
- *Work at home is not an option in our industry.*
- *Have not seen a need to offer the choices above.*
- *No need.*
- *Public taxpayer dollars.*
- *Manufacturing schedule does not allow for flexibility in hours and work cannot be done from home.*
- *Work schedules need to be consistent at job sites for productivity.*



Employers were asked to share any other ways their business assists employees with child care. Comments received were:

- *Flexibility of production schedule to allow for employees to take care of children.*
- *We try to be as flexible as possible, but we also have to meet the needs of our [customers].*
- *We allow our employees to leave work if they need to tend to their children for any reason.*

Employers were asked “If a new community-based child care solution was explored, which of the following would your business consider?” and asked to select all that apply. Seven (7) employers indicated their business might be willing to make a donation or financial contribution for the construction of a new child care center, or for the general operations of a child care center.

*Table 25: Solutions Employers are Willing to Consider*

	<b>Number of Employers</b>
Donation or financial contribution for the construction of a new child care center	7
Donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for your employees	5
Donation or financial contribution for general operating of a child care center	3
Donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for all children	1
Other (see comments below)	5

*Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children’s Finance, © 2021*

Comments shared by those selecting “other” were:

- *As the HR director I’m unable to accurately answer this question at this time. I’ve reached out to administration.*
- *I don’t know what upper management would consider.*
- *Would need more information before donating to these options.*
- *Would depend on [management’s] decision.*

Employers were asked what they think the biggest challenge facing Washington County parents today in regard to child care. A sampling of comments were:

- *Affordability of childcare compared to median income of parent.*
- *Availability of spots, facility hours not aligning with work schedules and commuting times, and the cost of child care for lower wage workers.*
- *In-home daycares are pretty full.*
- *Cost - hours of operation/flexibility - availability.*
- *Not enough child care providers.*
- *Lack of facilities.*

- *Finding options.*
- *Weekend availability.*
- *Consistent care.*
- *Affordable and quality care that's accessible.*
- *Availability and cost.*
- *Sufficient child care options that are flexible and affordable.*
- *Unsure as my family no longer has these needs and my employees all have child care and not expressed any issues.*
- *The cost of child care to the income received by the employee is problematic.*
- *Lack of options and hours of child care providers.*

Employers were asked to provide additional thoughts about their own employees' needs related to child care. A sampling of comments were:

- *Our employees struggle with facilities not being open early enough.*
- *This is a high priority for [our] employees and their families.*
- *The best child care option seems to be family, and if family is not available there are limited options that serve our employees' needs.*

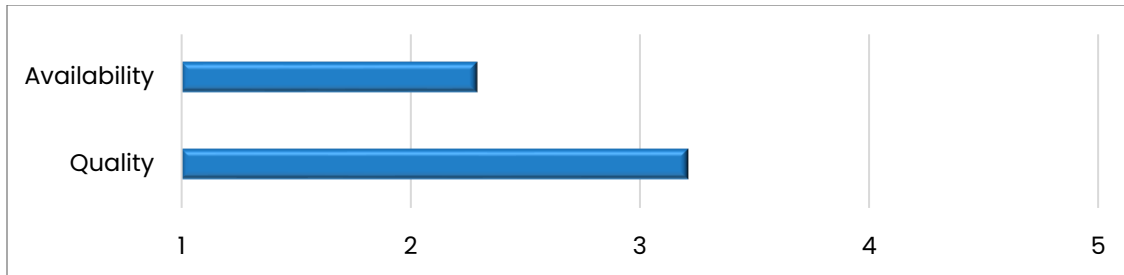
Employers were asked what opportunities they see that should be explored to help address the child care supply. A sampling of comments were:

- *Lower overall tax burden and regulation. Allow parents to choose childcare without government interference.*
- *There are several empty buildings as well as people who would be willing to provide day care from home.*
- *Washington is blessed to have a history of private large donors, tap on those resources. We have had other child centered bonds pass. Such as the new middle/high school, new dawn at sunset, the pool, the library and the YMCA. The Washington County Riverboat Foundation has contributed over 46 million since 2006 to Washington County and surrounding communities.*
- *Any and all grants related to expanding current child care centers. Also exploring any current and future building vacancies for new child care centers.*
- *Use of empty buildings, churches, etc.*
- *Child care center open longer hours to accommodate work schedules and weekends.*

As a whole, employers think the *availability* of child care in Washington County is less than adequate. Respondents were asked to rate the availability of child care in Washington County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 adequate, and 5 highly available (the higher the score, the more available). The weighted average was 2.29.

Employers were then asked to rank the *quality* of child care in Washington County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 adequate, and 5 highly quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). As a whole, employers think the quality is adequate. The weighted average was 3.21.

Figure 3: Employer Rankings of Child Care in Washington County



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

The final question asked employers to provide any additional thoughts about the supply of child care in Washington County. A sampling of comments were:

- *It would be helpful to have our employees complete this type of survey. I'm sure there are difficulties that they face that we, as the employer, are not aware of.*
- *I'm exciting this is being looked at.*

### Child Care Provider Survey

A total of 20 child care providers surveys, representing 18 different programs were received. The majority of programs are located in Washington, however Ainsworth, Kalona, Riverside, Wellman, and unincorporated Washington County were also represented.

Table 26: Location of Child Care Program

	Number of Programs
Ainsworth	3
Kalona	4
Riverside	2
Washington	7
Wellman	1
Unincorporated Washington County	1

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Eleven (11) home-based providers are represented, while 7 child care centers and preschools are represented. Of the 11 home providers, 5 were registered with DHS and 6 were not. Among the providers that were not registered, 1 was previously registered with DHS but is no longer. When asked if they are interested in becoming registered, all non-registered providers indicated "no". Those that answered no were asked to explain, only one comment was received: *"I prefer to be a*

*drop in or emergency day care provider. I will take one or two children at a time for a short period of time as needed, in place of their usual day care provider”.*

Seven (7) of the home providers and 5 centers answered questions about the length of time they have been providing care, and how much longer they plan to provide care (home providers only). Of the home providers that answered these questions, 6 indicated they have been providing care for 10 or more years and 1 indicated it has been less than 1 year. Among those providing care 10 or more years, 5 are registered and 1 is not. The home providers were also asked how much longer they intend to provide child care. Seven (7) are planning on 5 or more years, while 1 is planning 4 or more years. Among those planning on 5 or more years, 5 are registered providers and 2 are not. Among the 5 centers, 4 have been open for over 20 years, and 1 has been open just under 10 years.

Providers reported they are currently caring for 357 children, with some enrolled full-time and others part-time. The 7 centers reported that according to Iowa DHS licensing capacities, their collective legal capacity is 305 children. Although the licensed capacity is assigned to a center based on usable square footage, there are often reasons for the provider setting a lower preferred capacity. Reasons for a lower preferred capacity may include the ability to staff all classrooms, or large spaces like multi-purpose rooms counted in the total license that do not work well for a classroom. Most reported their preferred capacity is the same as their licensed capacity.

The 5 registered homes reported that according to Iowa DHS registration capacities, their collective legal capacity is 56 children, and their current collective enrollment is 61. All registered homes reported their preferred capacity to be the same as the legal capacity set by Iowa DHS for their particular registration level.

Two (2) nonregistered providers provided data related to capacity and enrollment. Collectively the legal capacity of these nonregistered homes is 10 (5 each). One indicated their maximum capacity according to Iowa DHS as what is actually allowed, while the other reported they believed their maximum capacity according to Iowa DHS is double than what is allowed. Currently, these two providers reported they have 18 children enrolled.

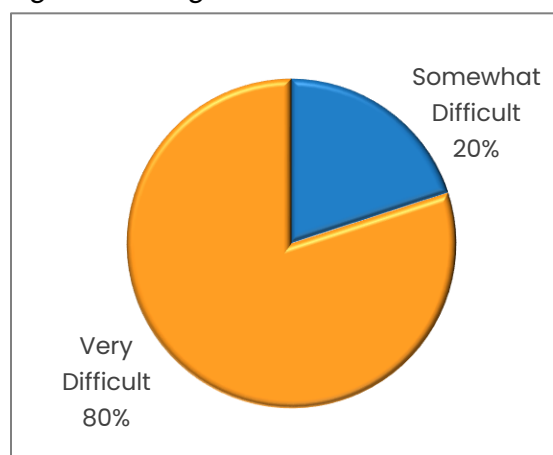
Table 27. Participating Programs by Type<sup>16</sup>

	Total Providers	Legal Capacity	Reported Max. Cap	Preferred Capacity	Full-Time Enrollment <sup>17</sup>	Part-Time Enrollment
Licensed Center/Preschool	7	305	305	300	206	72
Category C2 Home	---	---	---	---	---	---
Category C1 Home	---	---	---	---	---	---
Category B Home	4	48	48	50	36	15
Category A Home	1	8	8	8	10	0
Unregistered Provider	2	10	15	13	13	5

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Collectively, centers reported they have 62 employees, 27 part-time (35 hours per week or less) and 35 full-time (36 hours per week or more). Turnover during the previous 12 months affected 3 centers. One had 2 employee leave (voluntarily or involuntarily), another had 5, and a third had 16. This adds up to 20 center employees turning over in one year. As a group, the centers report they currently have a total of 14 vacant staff positions. Five (5) different centers reported vacancies, with all having between 1 and 3 full-time positions, and 3 centers have an additional 1 or 2 part-time positions. When asked how hiring staff had been over the last 12 months, 5 of the centers indicated it has been somewhat difficult or very difficult.

Figure 4: Hiring Child Care Center Staff in Last 12 Months



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Two (2) of the centers that reported very difficult, also reported they that in the last 12 months they had to close a classroom or limit enrollment due to not enough staff. In addition, 5 centers said they had to turn away families or put them on a wait list because of a lack of openings in

<sup>16</sup> Reported Maximum Capacity, Preferred Capacity, and Total Enrollment totals reflect only those providers that provide information. All 7 centers and all registered homes answered, and 2 of 6 unregistered providers answered.

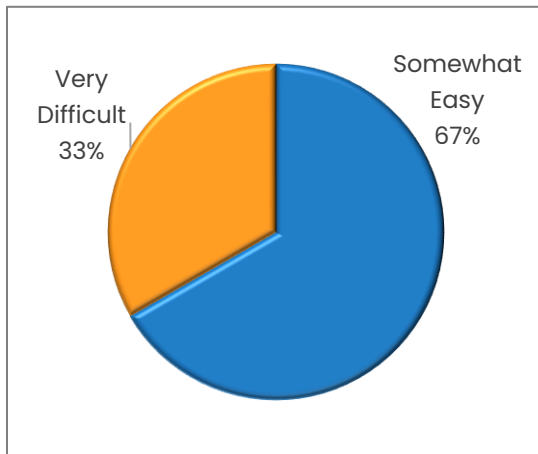
<sup>17</sup> It is possible for a child care program to have more children enrolled than what their capacity allows due to varying attendance schedules of the children.

their program. Participants that answered yes, were asked to provide details. A summary of comments received were:

- *We have a limited number of openings and the spots were filled by February for the current school year.*
- *There are people calling everyday that I either do not have spots for or have to go on a waiting list due to having too many kids and not enough staff/space.*
- *Our program turned away 9 preschoolers due to full enrollment.*
- *Need staff hired to fill spots*
- *At this time, our next scheduled openings are June 2022 in all classrooms except the 4 year old room.*

Four (4) home providers reported they have a total of 5 staff or assistants. Those staff or assistants are both part-time (2 total) and full-time (3 total). Turnover during the previous 12 months affected 1 home, with 2 staff or assistants departing (voluntarily or involuntarily). Currently only one home reports having 1 part-time opening. When it comes to hiring, 1 home provider reported it had been very difficult, while 2 home providers reported it had been somewhat easy to hire staff in the last 12 months.

Figure 5: Hiring Registered Home Staff in Last 12 Months



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

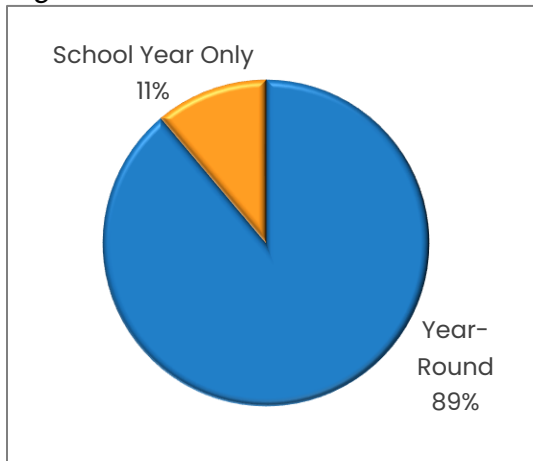
The home provider that reported it very difficult, along with 1 home provider that reported it somewhat easy to hire staff, also reported they had to limit enrollment due to not enough staff during the last 12 months. In addition, 5 home providers said they had to turn away families or put them on a wait list because of a lack of openings in their program. Participants that answered yes, were asked to provide details. A summary of comments received were:

- *I get calls every week for childcare. I would love to open a home based center and be able to help more families in need but still keep the home vibe in a center.*

- I don't recall exact details. Had quite a few last fall that I had to turn away.
- I have a waiting list 14 deep. I've turned several away and had to let 2 kiddos go because of numbers. I am currently full through 2022.

Sixteen (16) providers operate year-round, while 2 provide care during the school-year. The 2 programs that operate during the school-year only consist of 1 part-time preschool center with 35 spaces, and 1 nonregistered home provider.

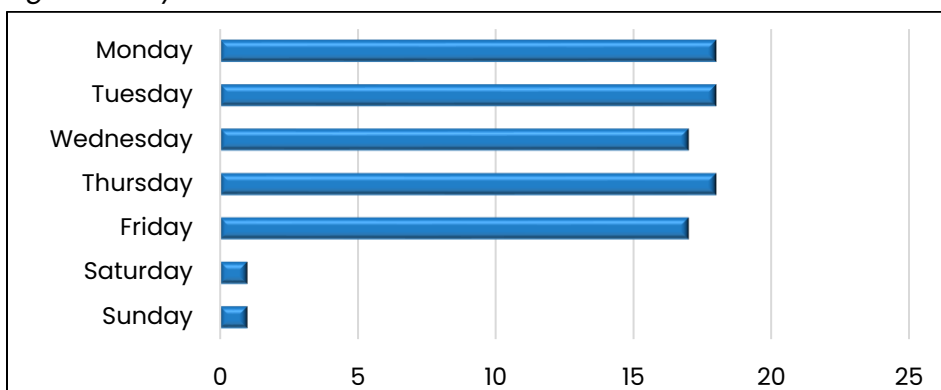
Figure 6: When Care is Provided



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

All 18 child care providers indicate they provide child care on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, while 17 also provide care on Wednesday, and Friday. One (1) of the survey participants provides care on Saturday or Sunday.

Figure 7: Days Care is Provided



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

All 18 programs open between 5:00 am and 8:59 am. When it comes to closing, one part-time preschool program closes at 11:00 am, with all other programs closing between 4:00 pm and 7:59 pm.

Providers were given a list of factors that parents may consider when looking for child care and asked to indicate which one factor is most important to parents. This question was answered by 13 providers. Collectively the number one factor is available space or timing of enrollment (8 providers), followed by tuition rates or price (2 providers). The remaining factors were each selected by 1 provider: dependable provider or staff, part-time options, and positive interactions between staff and children.

*Table 28: Location of Child Care Program*

	<b>Number of Programs</b>
Available space/timing of enrollment	8
Tuition rates or price	2
Dependable provider/staff	1
Part-time options	1
Positive interactions between staff and children	1

*Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021*

Many providers will provide financial assistance or participate in programs that provide the center funding to off-set costs. Providers were asked which programs they participate in and if they offer any other forms of assistance such as scholarships. Eight (8) providers indicated they are enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), 8 are approved to accept Iowa DHS child care assistance, and 4 participate in some other sort of financial assistant program or offer financial assistance to parents. Other forms of assistance named were: Des Moines, Henry, Louisa, Washington Early Childhood Iowa (DHLW ECI) and scholarships.

Child care providers were asked a few questions about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their program over the past 12 months, as well as changes they have made as a result. Providers were first asked how has COVID affected your staffing? Responses received were:

- *Staff worked long days with few days off.*
- *It has made it harder to find people that have wanted to work and will show up.*
- *Covid had not affected our staffing at all.*
- *We are fortunate that we are doing well with staffing. I have been advertising for additional staff due to adding additional kids but haven't gotten many applicants.*



- *We had multiple staff quarantine or feel that they need to take time off for safety and the safety of their families.*

Next, providers were asked how COVID has affected their enrollments over the last 12 months.

Responses received were:

- *Not at all.*
- *We have never closed, but in the beginning of the pandemic our numbers went down by 15 then back up to normal.*
- *Covid has not really had much of an affect.*
- *We had approximately 4 children miss preschool due to family illness.*
- *Enrollment has not been an issue. We are able to quickly fill spots.*
- *None besides having to close.*
- *I had half the children I would normally because parents were off work during March to August 2020.*
- *This is why I have started this type of day care and I have had one 3 year old while their day care provider had to close because of COVID.*
- *Not affected.*

When asked how COVID affected their overall operations or business practices over the last 12 months, providers responded with:

- *Not much. We have had to limit our normal field trip experiences.*
- *We have had to close down a few times due to exposure. However, the families have been very understanding.*
- *Covid has not affected our operations, other than limiting some of our community activities. For example, we weren't allowed to take field trips [as some places have] restricted access [for visitors].*
- *Lots of extra work and tension.*
- *Aside from the worry of what may happen in the near future, we are blessed that we have been able to continue to run the business as normal as possible.*
- *Costs have risen and restrictions made day to day operations very difficult.*
- *I had Covid in March and had to close. I didn't get paid during that time so it was hard financially.*
- *No besides having to wear masks.*
- *Just more cleaning and time it takes for cleaning, and the cost of the cleaning equipment.*
- *I was afraid to take on more kids due to the fear of getting Covid.*
- *Just began when school started and have tried to spread the word through Facebook, schools and personal talking.*

- *More cleaning.*
- *More money spent on supplies for cleaning.*

COVID is currently affecting local child care businesses. When asked how, providers responded with the following:

- *Not enough staff, but very long waiting list.*
- *We are extremely short staffed and have had to close/ limit enrollment due to exposure or our staff getting sick.*
- *We have a better financial status due to the CARES act funds provided by DHS.*
- *Tension. Have had several staff positive in the last month and that is stressful.*
- *We are concerned about losing staff due to the mandate of the vaccine. We are also following the quarantine guidelines so we are having to be short on staff and have to have kids out of our facility. This is difficult for the parents and for staffing.*
- *I'm currently not affected by Covid.*
- *We just had to close down for 2 weeks because 4 out of five in our household tested positive for Covid. We still have one family absent due to Covid. One family just got out of quarantine from 4 weeks of absence because they slowly all got Covid. Money is short these past 4 weeks and so is income from the food program because children were not in care full time.*
- *I have had a couple positive cases lately and might have to close for a couple weeks.*
- *I hope to be able to help more people but as of yet not needed.*

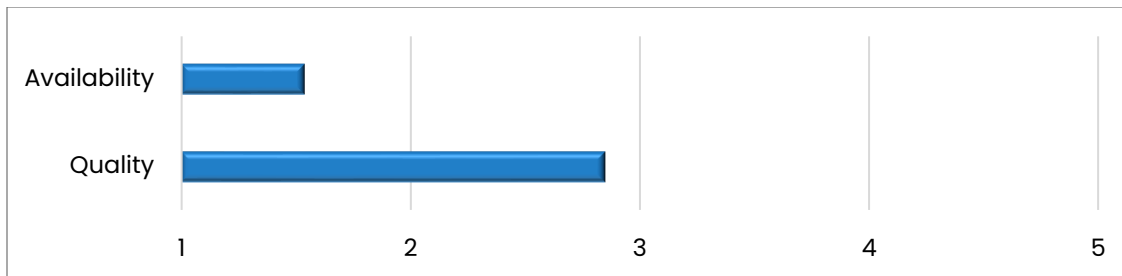
The final question related to COVID was, as a result of COVID have you made permanent changes to any of your policies or procedures, or ways you provide child care? Providers submitted the following comments:

- *We have added much deeper cleaning procedures. We no longer allow parents past a certain point in our center to help reduce foot traffic.*
- *Constantly sending kids home to be checked for Covid if minor symptoms. One 2 year old has been testing 9 times. Bleaching toys more often. Spend a lot more time outside to avoid close contact.*
- *We have implemented a stricter health policy that parents have to adhere to.*
- *I make sure kids are picked up immediately if a child gets sick.*
- *Just illness policies.*
- *Changed my illness policies.*
- *More attention to cleaning and disinfecting.*
- *Illness policy, cleaning procedures, etc.*

As a whole, child care providers think the *availability* of child care in Washington County is less than adequate. Providers were asked to rate the availability of child care in Washington County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 adequate, and 5 highly available (the higher the score, the more available). The weighted average was 1.54.

Providers were then asked to rank the *quality* of child care in Washington County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 adequate, and 5 highly quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). The weighted average was 2.85, just under adequate.

Figure 8: Child Care Provider Rankings of Child Care in Washington County



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

At the conclusion of the survey, providers were asked 5 open-ended questions about being a child care provider in Washington County, what they saw for the future of child care, and any other comments they have about child care. Summaries of these answers are listed below.

What are the biggest challenges for become a child care provider?

*Responses from child care centers and preschools:*

- *Soooo MUCH DHS requirements and paperwork for licensed centers. I always tell home day care providers it's not worth the hassle.*
- *Funding to start up, building space with proper DHS requirements, staffing.*
- *Staffing pay.*
- *Providing staff. It is a high burnout job and children's behavior has changed drastically over the last few years. I also think that we need to make it easier to have subs. Not so much training required for them.*
- *The biggest challenge is the lack of resources that we have to provide staff with adequate pay. They deserve so much more than daycares are able to provide. My staff showed up to work all throughout the Covid shutdown and provided outstanding care to the children so their parents could continue to work. So many parents complain about the price of daycare but are also the first to complain if something doesn't go their way. We have a hard time getting in well-qualified staff if parents are not willing to pay for it.*
- *Substandard wages*

*Responses from home providers:*

- *Being treated as a daycare provider versus a babysitter.*
- *Not having enough spots to accommodate more families. I get calls daily to see if there are any openings in my child care.*
- *Paperwork and maintenance with house and with training.*
- *I think the amount of time and money spent can take the toll and unless there is a passion for kids this can be a hinderance.*
- *You have a lot of paper work and people complain that your prices are too high, and not enough space in my house.*
- *Salary, insurance, and state rules and regulations.*

How do you think the community could better support child care providers?

*Responses from child care centers and preschools:*

- *Have a list of relief care providers for families or providers who need emergency care? Kind of like a substitute teacher list, only for day care. Do NOT make masks or vaccinations a requirement for day care providers!*
- *There is not enough support given to child care as compared to teachers. there is also not enough funding*
- *Higher Pay grants more trainings.*
- *I think the parents could be more appreciative to the staff.*
- *Appreciations events, fundraisers for childcare, partner with businesses to offer grants, listen to our concerns.*
- *Partnerships with business to donate supplies, or to provide a stipend to their staff to help pay their child care costs.*

*Responses from home providers:*

- *Respecting that we are not just babysitters. We are an essential business.*
- *Grants and funding help to start a center.*
- *Offer more programs to help providers with entertainment or educational fields. low-income ideas for all.*
- *Make it where the people want to work and feel comfortable.*
- *Not sure.*

What challenges do you see in the future for child care in Washington County?

*Responses from child care centers and preschools:*

- *There should be a way to provide grants for providers who are not licensed through DHS. They could have more income and don't have to spend so much time and effort on DHS regulations. There can be quality programs that are not licensed!*

- *More in homes, which is not bad, but they may not be licensed and have more children than they are able to handle. Finding staff to work in places with very low wages.*
- *Not enough spots vs. children.*
- *Keeping childcare open.*
- *I think that wages are going to have to increase to have good quality staff.*
- *Lack of staffing to run a childcare program. Lack of building space to open new centers.*
- *Lack of staff, lack of availability.*

*Responses from home providers:*

- *Not enough child care options. I talked to many providers and its hard to hire because staff don't make enough money to support themselves and families*
- *We are losing people who are willing to give dependable quality child care. Not enough places open and more children who need quality care.*
- *People need to want child care.*
- *Availability.*

What opportunities do you see in the future for child care in Washington County?

*Responses from child care centers and preschools:*

- *There are places that could be developed into perfect day care spaces, like the adult day care building that is for sale. It is cost-prohibitive for a new person who wants to start using that space.*
- *Growth in number of centers.*
- *I think that grants are great to help but there needs to be more funding for staffing wages to offset parent expense.*
- *I am excited to see that the issues that daycares face are finally in the process of being addressed. I think the community is finally realizing that daycares are essential and without daycare, parents are not able to go to work. I look forward to working with the community to help better our daycare system in Washington County.*

*Responses from home providers:*

- *More support programs for registered providers helps to get more quality daycare programs.*
- *We need more adequate child cares in our County. We need providers to be the best that they can be and not just do it to do it.*
- *Hopefully new centers/ expansions*

- *I would like to see another day care center since the few we have do have waiting lists for 2 years or more.*
- *People who are interested in having child care in town not just in people's homes.*
- *With the demand there is opportunity to fill more in home daycares or a center.*

Additional comments you have about child care in Washington County

*Responses from child care centers and preschools:*

- Covid regulations need to be taken away from every center. Children are not at risk and should not be masked. Teachers absolutely should have the option to choose what is best for them.
- So thankful for all of those that support programs and funding.

*Responses from home providers:*

- *We need more registered providers. I see so many that are not or don't want to be because all the work involved to becoming registered.*
- *I am not sure I should have attempted this survey as it may throw off your data but I felt it as another way to get the word out that in an emergency and if it is possible I am willing to fill in for those who can't afford to pay 2 care givers. I am not charging a fee unless they can afford to give it and only what they feel is proper. I also would consider overnight if the need is there for emergency care.*
- *Make child care more available to people who want to work with kids.*

## **Parent Survey**

A total of 237 individuals accessed the parent child care needs survey. Of those, 202 currently have children ages 12 or younger and are referred to as "current parents". Of those 202 current parents, 57 indicated they plan to have or adopt more children in the next 5 years. An additional 9 respondents indicated they do not currently have children ages 12 or younger but plan to have or adopt children in the next 5 years, these are referred to as "future parents". Current parents completed questions that provide information about both their current and future child care needs, while future parents completed only questions about their future child care needs. Responses from all questions answered by the current and future parents are included in the aggregate data, even if an individual did not complete all survey questions.

Using the most popular responses, a survey respondent with children age 12 or younger would be described as female (84%), married (86%), and living in the community of Washington or the 52353 zip code (46%). They work 41 or more hours per week (55%), first shift or days Monday through Friday (89%), and are employed in health care & social assistance (26%). They currently use child care in Washington (50%), Monday through Friday, year-round. They use child care 40

to 49 hours per week for younger children, and less than 10 hours per week for before and after school care. They are satisfied with their current child care provider (67%).

Among parents that currently have children, the majority are from Washington (91). The next largest group is from Riverside (34). The majority of future parents live in Washington (3), followed by Riverside (2).

Table 29: Respondents Place of Residence

	<b>Current Parents</b>	<b>Future Parents</b>
<b>In Washington County</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>7</b>
Ainsworth area (52201 zip code)	4	0
Brighton area (52540 zip code)	18	0
Crawfordsville area (52621 zip code)	4	1
Kalona area (52247 zip code)	15	0
Riverside area (52327 zip code)	34	2
Washington area (52353 zip code)	91	3
Wellman area (52356 zip code)	11	1
West Chester area (52359 zip code)	1	0
Other zip code in Washington County	4	0
<b>Outside Washington County</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>
Henry County	1	0
Iowa County	3	0
Johnson County	2	0
Keokuk County	1	0
Linn County	1	1
Muscatine County	2	0
Not disclosed	5	1

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

A total of 27 current parents indicated that the availability of child care in Washington County has impacted their decision of where to live. Those that answered yes were asked to explain, a summary of comments received were:

- *Our housing location choice was not optional due to low housing availability, but the lack of childcare in Washington in 2020-21 meant one or both parents in our house had to cut back on work hours by up to 20%.*
- *Must live close to family in order to get child care that won't bankrupt a young family.*
- *One reason that we bought our house was because it was directly across the street from our daycare provider.*

- *Currently deciding on where to live after Dec 1...due to this issue.*
- *I am needing child care in Kalona and there is not a large range to choose from. We are always being put on a wait list.*
- *Having to travel outside of town just for child care puts a big impact on my family and I. Mainly financially. More child care centers are definitely needed in Washington County.*
- *We are in need of part time child care for children under the age of two. I work full time while my wife dropped down to 3 days a week to spend time with our daughter. We did this because it has been proven to help with the developmental growth of children. With that being said, we have not been able to find child care that does not charge full time for children under the age of two. It's sad to say but even with both of us having respectable jobs we cannot afford to pay for full time.*
- *We had already moved to Washington before we had children and realized the lack of part time child care opportunities.*
- *When looking to purchase a house, we made sure it was near a daycare that can take our kids if needed since both parents would be working.*
- *Needed to be close to homecare daycare.*
- *I am currently working nights and weekends due to the lack of daycare. I would move if I could find the right price and area*
- *We are looking at possibly moving to find a more accommodating child care system.*
- *I need to have reliable, safe, affordable care for my child and niece and nephews.*
- *We moved to Kalona from Iowa City in 2017, at that time there was a before and after school program at Mid-Prairie East. This was reassuring to us at that time, now there is only a program in Wellman-- this is very frustrating as we both work in IC. We have discussed the possibility of moving again closer to IC in part because of the lack of quality child care options for all age levels.*
- *Knowing that childcare options were limited and/or extremely cost prohibitive, we chose to live in Washington where both sets of our parents live. They have helped us care for our child, who was unable to attend daycare until the week of his first birthday due to capacity restrictions.*
- *We live on family farm. I stay home with kids due to expense and lack of good childcare*
- *I moved into a family home and are connected here through farming. We will not move.*

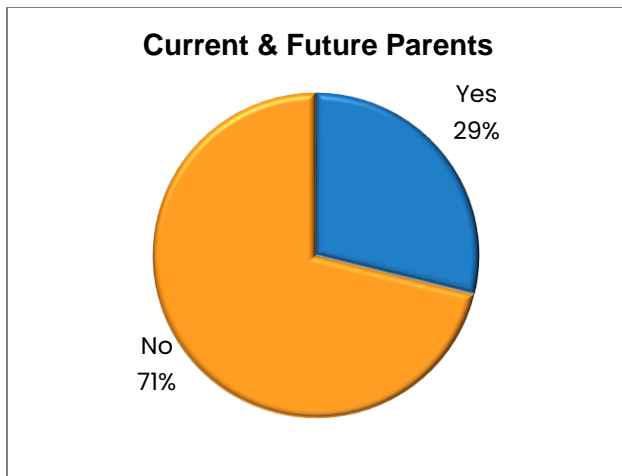
A total of 45 respondents—43 current parents and 2 future parents, indicated that the availability of child care in Washington County has impacted their decision to have or adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family. Comments received about child care impacting the decision to have or adopt children were:

- *It is not financially feasible to raise larger families in Washington County without considerable financial security.*



- *\*Hard to want more kids when the ones we have we cannot find child care for.*
- *While it has not impacted our decision, I know that others have struggled to find daycare providers with space or availabilities when they needed them.*
- *The availability and price of childcare makes us have to consider having children more spread out in age to be able to afford childcare.*
- *I am currently pregnant, and very much concerned about my future and finding proper childcare for my child. As well as finding summer childcare for my oldest.*

Figure 9: Impact of Current Child Care Supply on Having or Adopting Children



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

The majority of parents are married or living with a partner, making them a “family” household, according to US Census Bureau definition.

Table 30: Marital Status

	<b>Current Parents</b>	<b>Future Parents</b>
Married or living with a partner	165	6
Not married or living with a partner	27	2

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Current parents were asked to indicate how many children were living in their household by age groups. The “Households” column of the following table shows how many parents indicated they have at least one child in each age group, while the “Children” column reflects how many total children are represented in the survey. Because several households have children each of the age groups, the households column may be duplicative. A total of 353 children are represented in the survey.

**Table 31: Total Children Represented**

	<b>Households</b>	<b>Children</b>
0 to 5 (not started Kindergarten)	125	180
5 to 12	111	173
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>353</b>

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children’s Finance, © 2020

Most parents and their spouse or partner work 41 or more hours per week, followed by 31 to 40 hours per week. The following table shows average hours worked per week of the survey respondents and their spouses or partners.

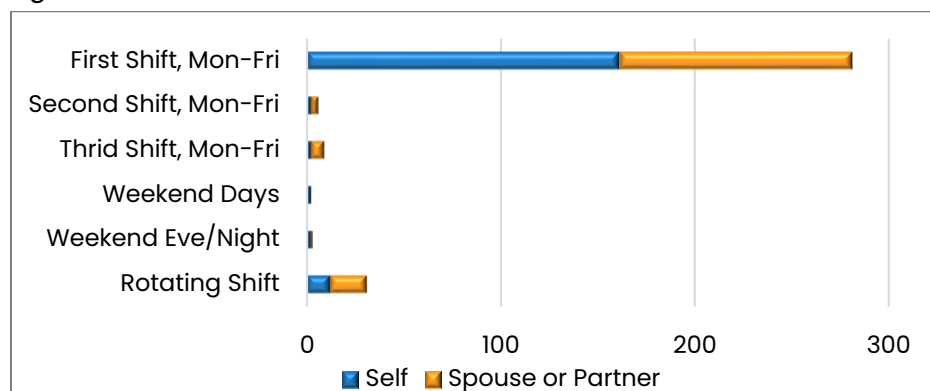
**Table 32: Average Hours Worked Per Week**

	<b>Current Parents</b>		<b>Future Parents</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Self</b>	<b>Spouse or Partner</b>	<b>Self</b>	<b>Spouse or Partner</b>	
0 to 15 hours	3	3	0	0	<b>6</b>
16 to 20 hours	9	1	0	0	<b>10</b>
31 to 40 hours	68	34	3	3	<b>108</b>
41 or more	108	124	6	3	<b>241</b>
Don't work	8	3	0	0	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>376</b>

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children’s Finance, © 2021

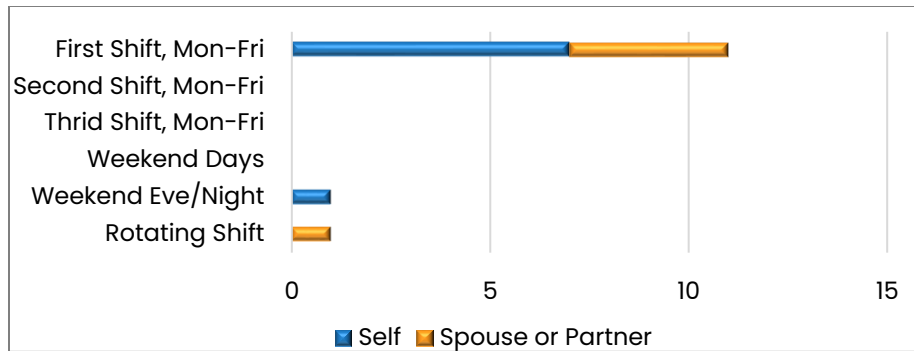
The majority of parents indicated they and their spouse or partner work first-shift, Monday through Friday. The next common work schedule is rotating shift. A few other parents indicated that they or their spouse or partner work second-shift, third-shift, or weekend evenings or nights. No parents indicated they work primarily weekend days. See the following figures.

**Figure 10: Current Parent Work Schedules**



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children’s Finance, © 2021

Figure 11: Future Parent Work Schedules



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Health care & social assistance was the largest overall industry of employment among both current and future parents and their spouses or partners, with 60 indicating that was the nature of their position, followed by other services (56), educational services (44), and then agriculture, fishing, hunting (31). See the table on the next page.

Table 33: Industry of Employment of Current Parents

	Current Parents		Future Parents		Total
	Self	Spouse or Partner	Self	Spouse or Partner	
Accommodations & Food Service	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Administrative & Waste Management	1	2	0	0	<b>3</b>
Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting	5	24	1	1	<b>31</b>
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	1	2	0	<b>3</b>
Construction	4	17	0	1	<b>22</b>
Educational Services	31	11	1	1	<b>44</b>
Finance & Insurance	16	11	0	0	<b>27</b>
Health Care & Social Assistance	48	10	2	0	<b>60</b>
Information	4	1	0	0	<b>5</b>
Management of Companies	4	5	0	0	<b>9</b>
Manufacturing	12	10	0	0	<b>22</b>
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Professional, Scientific & Technical	12	12	1	0	<b>25</b>
Public Administration	7	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	2	1	0	0	<b>3</b>
Retail Trade	6	4	0	0	<b>10</b>
Transportation & Warehousing	2	10	0	0	<b>12</b>
Utilities	1	2	0	1	<b>4</b>
Wholesale Trade	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Other Services	24	30	1	1	<b>56</b>

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

The most common child care benefits offered by employers of current parents was dependent care flex spending accounts. Among future parents, the majority indicated they were unsure if their or their spouse’s or parent’s employers offered any of the listed benefits. Among the future parents that were sure what their employer offered, the most common answer was work from home options if your regular child care arrangement is not available. See table on the next page.

*Table 34: Child Care Related Benefits offered by Employer*

	<b>Current Parents</b>	<b>Future Parents</b>
Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts	39%	0%
Financial assistance to help employees pay for child care	2%	0%
Flexible schedule if regular care is not available	18%	14%
Work from home options if regular care is not available	15%	29%
Child care information included in employee orientation	1%	0%
Child care information included in employee handbook	2%	14%
Unsure if employer offers any of these	16%	43%
Employer does not offer any of these	34%	29%
Other	5%	0%

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children’s Finance, © 2021

Comments received by those that selected “other” included:

- *Semi flexible schedule (to accommodate picking up by 5).*
- *His schedule can accommodate flexible hours and work from home, but not consistently.*
- *I am very blessed with flexibility and the option to work from home.*
- *Employer offers child care information but is not relevant since I commute. Live in Washington County but work in Johnson County.*
- *I work part time in order to be home for the kids.*

Current parents were asked if they or their spouse or partner had declined employment or withdrawn from the workforce during the last 2 years due to child care. Forty-one (41) indicated “yes”. Those that indicated yes were asked to explain. Comments received were:

- I would have returned to a weekday 9-5 position in the workforce if I could afford childcare.
- Since I can't, I work self-employed for less money than I could be making.
- I also have taught at [a college], however, due to the limited availability of before/after childcare (on the wait list), I could not teach this semester.
- Less hours due to child care.
- It has not happened yet- but it has created A LOT of stress over the last year in particular and I am looking to move that direction of changing employment due to child care.

- Reduced hours by ~20%, both spouses are now 75-80% of FT
- I left my former job to stay home after having my 2nd child.
- Daycare is expensive for 3 children even with 2 parents working.
- Had to take days off to fill in the gaps in child care.
- I have turned down a couple jobs as my daycare is open 7-5 and the hours they were hiring for were 8-6 so therefore my kids would have been without daycare for an hour.
- Son's mother sees him very little and I am the sole caregiver. Have had to miss days when he is sick, etc. I do not make enough to pay for child care so I take him to my parents. They are getting older and dad's health is not good so don't know how much longer they can help take care of him. Daycares do not open early enough or stay open late enough for my work schedule. During the busy season I need to leave him off around 5:00 some mornings and some evenings am not able to pick up until 6:00 or after.
- Having a hard time looking for a different job due to lack of child care and not being able to find new openings for our children to attend.
- I currently work 24 hours a week. I have the opportunity to go up to 32 hours a week but cannot find part time child care that isn't at a home center.
- I completely changed jobs because we didn't have childcare.
- Childcare in Washington seem to always be filled or has a waiting list. I always have to work around my family's schedule to be able to work since all daycares in town don't have openings.
- Too expensive to have two kids in daycare at the same time. I wouldn't have been bringing any money home, just giving it to childcare. I stayed home and watched kids part time until my oldest started Kindergarten.
- I had to leave my career due to daycare closure and no suitable options available.
- Spouse originally worked first shift M-F but our daycare closed down and all the surrounding daycares were full so he quit his job to work 3rd shift and care for her during the day.
- However, we have had to utilize vacation time and adjust work schedules after our daycare closed.
- Not withdrawn, but decreased my business work load substantially.
- In 2020 when things were shut down due to the pandemic, the company I was working for at the time allowed me the ability to work from home from March-July 2020. However, I still had to watch our infant daughter while doing my job, that became very stressful and difficult, often with me watching her fulltime during the day and then working late into the night after my husband got home from work. Luckily on some days we had a family member watch her so I could work during the day. Our daughter's daycare was closed all of April, May, and part of June.

- I have looked at other employment, for better pay, but cannot find a job to fit my current schedule. My current schedule follows the school hours. Which lowers my need for childcare.
- No, but have adjusted work schedules to accommodate child care. Meaning working evenings/weekends and within the day while children were home.
- Child care options were limited and expensive, so I withdrew from employment to stay home with children.
- I took a fairly substantial pay cut 5 years ago to cut the need for daycare as it was too expensive to pay for before and after school care.
- Unable to work due to lack of child care, as well as, cost of childcare
- At times we have been unable to find reliable child care that we trust. While there may be openings at certain providers, we have either had negative experiences or known others that did. Trusted providers are very difficult to obtain open spots with. Summer programs are even more difficult.
- My wife stopped working because she had to miss many days as the school would send our school ago son home for a sniffle. Our daycare would operate in the same manner with the younger two. We had to pay the same for childcare whether the boys were there or not. After a while, it just made more sense for her to quit her job, as the cost was outweighing the benefit.
- Covid reduced the number of hours I could work when child care was closed.

Current parents were then asked if child care challenges are currently keeping them or their spouse or partner from working. Twenty-four (24) indicated “yes”. Comments received from those indicating yes, were:

- *I stay home so my partner can work.*
- *Less hours due to child care hours.*
- *The limited number of providers and centers that have openings*
- *A family member watches our toddler but will not be able to afford after December when the new baby comes.*
- *Not affordable and the wait list is long.*
- *Not enough child care centers in town and the one I was using got shut down.*
- *From working more hours.*
- *Cost and availability.*
- *My works hours have cut extremely due to no childcare. I am so thankful to have my family near otherwise I wouldn't be working at all due to no childcare. I wish there was more availability for child care.*
- *Daycare closing due to COVID and no other options since all the daycares are full.*

- *Not anymore, but it was a struggle to find. I talked with probably 15 in-home daycares that had no openings in Riverside. I am currently waiting for my start date for a position and am having to pay daycare to hold a spot for my child even though I'm not making any money at the moment for fear of losing her spot and not being able to find another.*
- *From working a well-paying job with normal hours. I took an eight dollar pay cut due to closure of care provider.*
- *We continue to use vacation time and adjust schedules, and sometimes take kids to work with me.*
- *To an extent - I am only able to work the few hours he's at daycare or at night. I put in on average 50 hours per week and a majority are done either with him in my office with me or at night after he goes to bed.*
- *They will though as we continue to have more children. As the cost of child care is too high that I would be working only to pay for them to go to daycare.*
- *Could be a chance if they're unable to fill the open director position at our current daycare facility.*
- *We're lucky to have a secured spot in a daycare facility but have heard that the current situation doesn't have any openings for a new child until June 2022.*
- *After school early outs. Or no school days. There is no room in any program.*
- *Lack of childcare is the reason I cannot work full time.*
- *We cannot secure, affordable, flexible childcare in this community, in relation to the income that my wife could earn working. \$300 a week for my two sons who are not in school is not sustainable.*

Separately, current parents were asked if child care challenges are limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment. A total of 49 indicated "yes" it has limited them, their spouse or partner, or even both. Comments from those indicating yes, were:

- *Could be making more in a different work setting than I currently am in.*
- *I also have taught [at a college], however, due to the limited availability of before/after childcare (on the wait list), I could not teach this semester. My partner also cannot pick up overtime hours because we do not have childcare due to this.*
- *I am not able to work my full shift on 3 days per week due to my child care closing prior to my shift ending.*
- *The shortage of preschool openings in the community last year meant keeping two children home at least 3 days during the workweek.*
- *Have to adjust parents work schedules to accommodate schools, and the numerous early outs.*
- *Not open past 5:30.*

- *Our daycare closes at 5pm M-Th and 4:30 F. I often have to pick up my child and then return to work to finish off my day.*
- *Pick up hours are challenging.*
- *It's hard to work more hours when I have no available child care outside of school hours.*
- *We're not able to find different employment due to lack of child care available in our area. We're both wanting to seek other opportunities but are unable to at this time.*
- *On multiple occasions, my spouse and I have had to stay home from work to care for our children due to lack of child care, our provider having sick children or being closed.*
- *I'm limited on how much OT that I can work.*
- *It is extremely difficult to find a qualified and trustworthy care provider whom is willing to provide childcare past 5:00pm. If there are days where I need to work more than my scheduled 8 hours, I have to depend on family and friends to provide childcare after 5pm as well as weekends, etc. Neither my spouse nor myself work a traditional M-F 8a-5pm job. We often have to work weekends and overtime during the week, some days it would be nice to live in a larger city vs. rural community that has childcare centers available with extended hours including weekend drop in options. Thankfully both of our employers are relatively flexible and we are able to put in extra hours if needed on our own availability when we are able to have childcare outside our normal work hours.*
- *Need to carefully choose shifts so one of us can be home.*
- *A little bit taking time off here and there.*
- *Can only accept hours of employment from 7:45am-5pm due to daycare hours being 7:15-5:30.*
- *Finding a long-term full-time spot has been next to impossible. Keeping them home with me impacts my capabilities to complete all my work in a timely and efficient manner.*
- *Because we have no child care my spouse works nights to watch her while I work days.*
- *Luckily, my schedule is allowed to be flexible, but it means that I sometimes have to work extra at night or over the weekend to get my work done.*
- *We've had to adjust our work hours significantly due to lack of a before and after school program in Kalona. This paired with having an infant at a daycare center in IC due to little quality care options in Kalona makes scheduling very challenging.*
- *It is not limiting our employment, but adjustment of new schedules have been stressful.*
- *Hours of daycares are a struggle - finding one that is open early enough and late enough to accommodate for work schedules is tough.*
- *If I were to no longer work [for my employer], the amount of money I would pay for childcare for a 40 hour week for both kids, I would be bringing in the amount of money I am now.*
- *Without childcare, my wife cannot restart the career that she had. She is attempting to enter [a different] sector because of flexibility, but even this is proving challenging.*



- *It keeps me from working a full 40 hours a week.*

Child care challenges have affected current parents' jobs or their spouse or partner's job in the last 12 months. A list of possible affects were presented and respondents were asked to select all that apply. The most common effects were having to leave work early which was experienced by 52% of parents, followed by missing a day because the provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (50%), and having to supervise child while working from home (34%). Only 21% of respondents indicated they experienced no issues related to work as a result of child care.

*Table 35: Effects of Child Care Challenges on Job*

	<b>Percent of Parents</b>
Had to leave work early	52%
Missed a day of work because provider was closed, on vacation, or not available	50%
Had to supervise child while working from home	34%
Arrived late to work	33%
Unable to work overtime	23%
Had to take child to work with me/them	20%
Had to reduce the number of hours worked	20%
Lower productivity	18%
Unable to accept a different work schedule or shift	16%
Missed a day of work because the provider did not have room or space for child	10%
Did not accept a desired job offer	9%
Unable to travel for work	9%
Had to leave child home alone to go to work	7%
Quit a job	5%
Had to change jobs to one that works with child care	5%
Received disciplinary action (not including firing)	4%
Other (see comments below)	3%
Took a job that does not fit my/their skills	1%
Got fired	0%
Experienced no problems	21%

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Comments received about child care challenges affecting respondent jobs were:

- *Child got sick due to other children being sent to daycare while infectious with illness/fever. Had to miss work due to having to take said Child to doctor for illness and keep them home for x amount of days until they were cleared to return to daycare.*
- *Childcare closes before I get off work.*

- *So far my daughter is only 8 months old so we are pretty new into the child care world and already have had some complications.*
- *Quit job & started own business.*

Thirty-two percent (32%) of current parents indicated that there are changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow them to perform better at work. Frequently named changes were related to having openings and the hours of care. Comments received about how changes to child care would improve their work performance were:

- *Daycare center in Riverside as primary or backup childcare would be very valuable.*
- *More availability of before/after school care.*
- *Allowing for a later pick up time.*
- *More community preschool spots available.*
- *Less expensive options without sacrificing quality of care.*
- *I used my lunch break to transport child after Pre-K to daycare, so sometimes end up not being able to eat lunch, so having transportation would be nice.*
- *Hours of operation.*
- *Open longer hours.*
- *Pick up hours extended.*
- *More child care options in Washington.*
- *Lower cost.*
- *Child care closer to home.*
- *Having a more reliable option.*
- *We need part time for children under two.*
- *Open later.*
- *Not having current provider closed as frequently, and being closer to or in Washington.*
- *If centers had openings for nonscheduled drop offs if I needed to be called into work.*
- *Price and availability doesn't allow me to work.*
- *Not having to worry about closures would allow for more consistent work schedules and productivity.*
- *A daycare that's affordable & accepting new kids and has flexible hours so that I can work full-time.*
- *Extend closing/pick-up time to 5:30pm/6:00pm. Even just an additional half hour of work every day would be hugely beneficial to my current workload.*
- *Increase hours of operation of daycare.*
- *Less closures at the provider.*
- *Not worrying daily if I had daycare.*
- *If there was a daycare center in Riverside I wouldn't have to work nights and weekends only.*

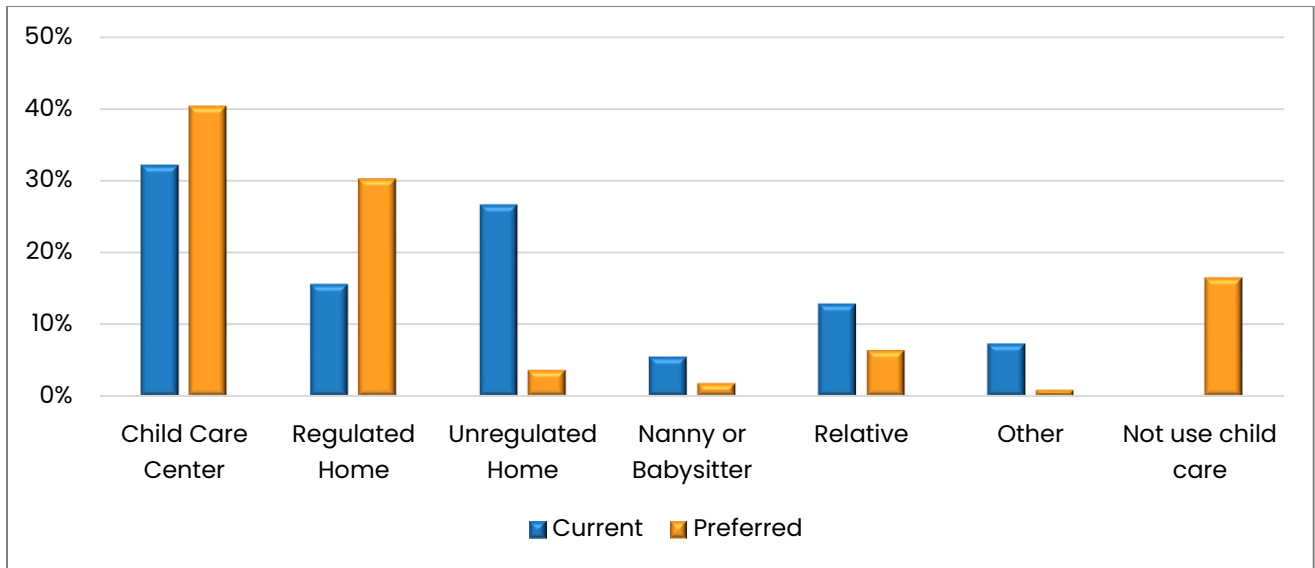
- *Having a safe COVID protected care provider, would allow me to return to a day shift job within my area of work.*
- *Understanding of a mom that works in health care.*
- *I would love to be able to find someone I can trust to care for my children while I am away at work.*
- *One of my kids is at work with me all day on Friday. Difficult to be productive.*
- *More hours, in Kalona most before school care is not available before 7:30 a.m.*
- *There could be more centers with higher capacity so I can have my child in care full time.*
- *The entire summer our children have been out every 2-3 weeks due to some sort of sickness they contracted at their current daycare. They were not sick all winter when the daycare facility was cleaning every night but now they are sick all of the time. They are also charging more for rides to and from school. There is a new face in the facility almost weekly and it is making it difficult to drop the children off as they don't recognize people often.*
- *After school care. Early outs.*
- *More flexible hours by the care provider, and reasonably priced child care. Charge by day instead of by week.*

Among current parents that have children ages 0 to 5 (not yet in Kindergarten), the most common setting being used is a licensed child care center (32%). The second most common is an unregulated home (27%), followed by a regulated home (16%). More parents would prefer either a licensed center, regulated home, or to not need to use care, than what are currently using those settings. If all choices were available, 40% would prefer a licensed center, followed by a regulated home with 30%, and 17% would prefer that they or their spouse or partner could be a stay-at-home parent or that they could adjust work schedules to not need child care.

Among respondents that have children ages 5 to 12 (school age), the most common setting is a child care center (29%), followed by a relative (27%), and unregulated homes (19%). If all choices were available, 35% would prefer a licensed center, followed by relative (19%) or to not use care (19%).

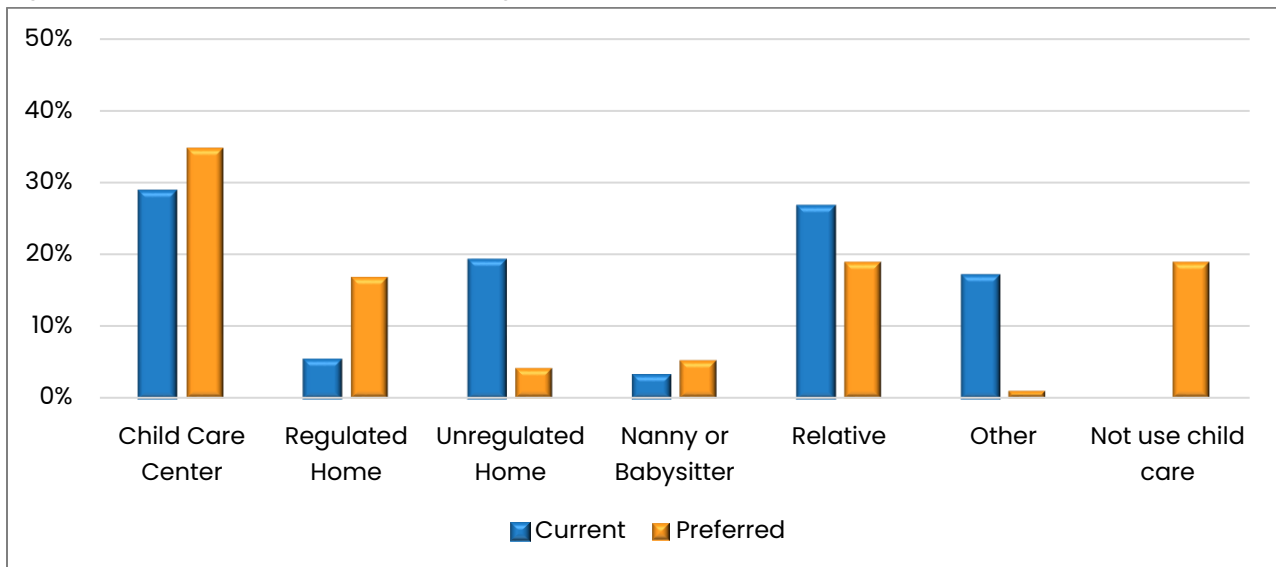
See figures on the following page.

Figure 12: Primary Care for Children Ages 0 to 5



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Figure 13: Primary Care for Children Ages 5 to 12



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2020

Future parents were also asked what their preferred child care setting would be if they were selecting care today. Responses were almost evenly split between child care center (2), regulated home (2), unregulated home (1), and spouse/partner or I be a stay-at-home parent (1).

Only 39% of current parents indicated their children are currently in their preferred type of child care. Respondents were given a list of common reasons and asked to select the primary reason their children are not currently in their preferred type of care. The most common reason given was the respondent prefers they or their spouse or partner could stay at home. Among those that do want to use child care, the most common reasons were not able to afford, followed by not accepting enrollments.

*Table 36: Reason Children are Not in Preferred Type of Care*

	<b>Total</b>
Prefer I or my spouse or partner could stay home, but need to work	14%
Not able to afford	13%
Not accepting enrollments	11%
Not conveniently located	6%
Prefer I or my spouse or partner could adjust schedule so care not needed	5%
Other (comments below)	4%
Location too far away	3%
My children are not the right age for preferred arrangement	3%
Not open for extended or nontraditional hours	2%
Children are in my preferred type of care	39%

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

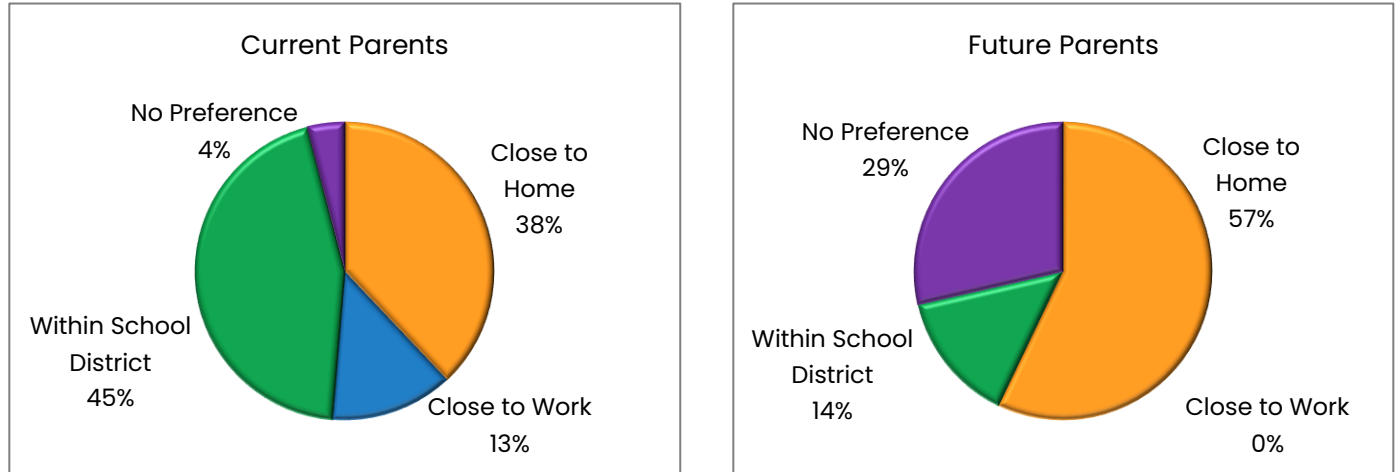
Summary of comments from those that answered other:

- I'm a single parent therefore have no choice but to work.
- There aren't any reliable and the expensive.
- Hours and availability.
- No family members have the ability to help.
- One is but in a different city, it would wonderful to have a quality center in Kalona for all ages with hours that are helpful across hours (6:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.). For my older child, my preferred form of child care would be a before and after school program in Kalona-- onsite. Right now to participate in the Mid-Prairie before and after school program, I would need to drive my child daily to Wellman from Kalona and than drive to work in Iowa City.
- I work half days, and that is not an option at most childcare centers. I would have to pay for the whole day even though I can pick them up by noon.

Respondents were asked about their preferences of proximity of child care if they were selecting care today. Among current parents, the most popular answer was within the school district child attends or will attend (45%), followed by close to home (38%), close to work (13%), and only 4% said they had no preference. Among future parents, 57% prefer close to home, while 14% prefer

within the school district where their child will attend, and 29% have not preference. No future parents prefer child care that is close to work.

Figure 14: Preferred Proximity of Child Care



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Current parents were asked which community their current child care provider is located in, and which community they would prefer to take their children to for child care. The most popular location for current care is Washington, followed by Riverside, and then "other". Those that selected other were asked to specify the town, all other locations were communities outside of Washington County. Current parents' preferred locations within Washington County are similar to what they are currently using with Washington being the most popular choice, followed by Riverside. Future parents were also asked when they have children, which community they would prefer to take their child to for care. The largest group indicated they prefer care in Washington, followed by care outside of Washington County.

Table 37: Location of Child Care

	Current Parents		Future Parents
	Current	Preferred	Preferred
Ainsworth	2	2	0
Brighton	1	1	0
Crawfordsville	0	3	0
Kalona	11	10	1
Riverside	22	32	1
Washington	77	87	3
Wellman	4	9	0
West Chester	1	1	0
Other (not in Washington County)	20	5	2

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Respondents were asked several questions about the average number of hours of child care used per week, preferred child care schedule, and current and preferred drop-off and pick-up times. Parents with children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) are using child care what could be considered full-time, with most using 30 hours a week or more. Parents with school age children are using 19 hours or less per week during the school year, and then 40 hours or more per week during the summer months.

*Table 38: Hours per Week Child Care Used*

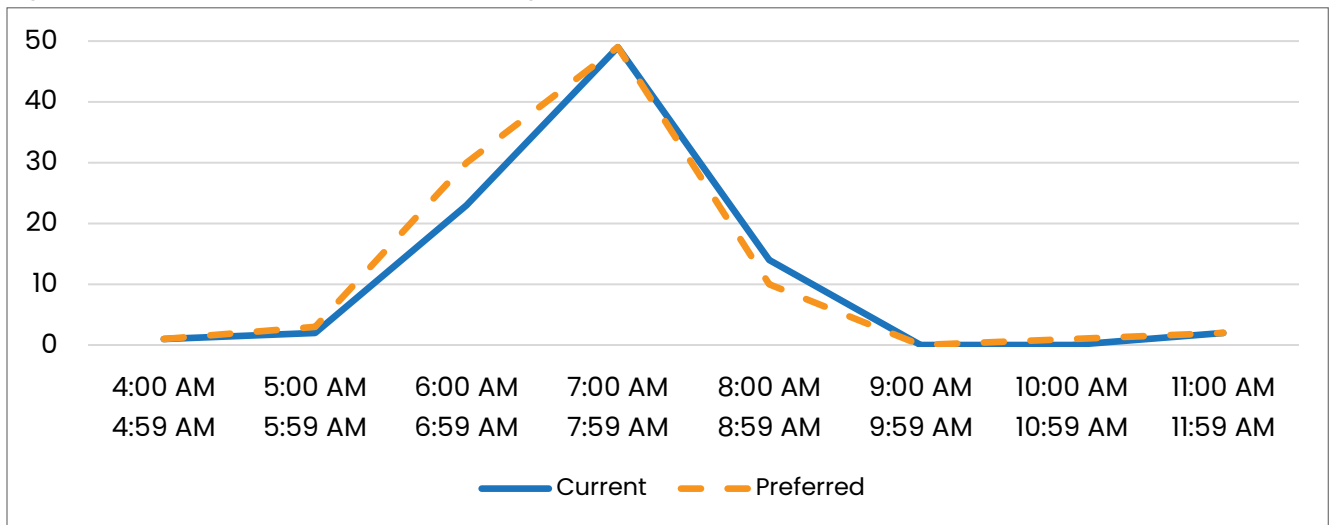
	<b>Less than 10 Hours</b>	<b>10 to 19 Hours</b>	<b>20 to 29 hours</b>	<b>30 to 39 hours</b>	<b>40 to 49 hours</b>	<b>50 or more</b>
Age 0 to 5 (not Kindergarten)	2	8	11	18	51	9
Age 5 to 12 during school year	33	26	7	1	4	1
Age 5 to 12 during summer	8	4	9	9	31	5

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Currently, the most popular hour to drop-off children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) is from 7:00 to 7:59 am, followed by 6:00 to 6:59 am. Preferred drop-off times are the same, with the most preferred still being 7:00 am to 7:59 am, followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am. There is not a significant difference in current versus preferred drop-off times, but there are a few parents that would prefer to drop off during the 6:00 to 6:59 am hours than what are currently.

The following figure shows a comparison of drop-off times currently versus preferred. Anytime the preferred time (represented by the dotted line) is higher than the current time (solid line), it indicates more respondents prefer that time than are currently dropping-off during that time.

*Figure 15: Drop-off Times for Children Ages 0 to 5*

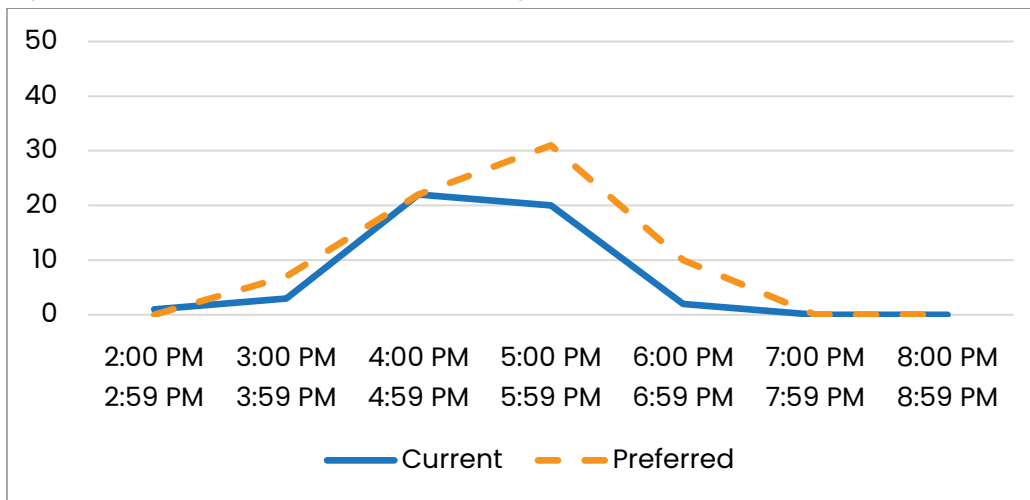


Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Currently, the most popular hour to pick-up children ages 0 to 5 is from 4:00 to 4:59 pm, followed by 5:00 to 5:59 pm. Current parents did indicate they would prefer to pick up their children ages 0 to 5 later than what they currently are. The most preferred hour to pick-up is from 5:00 to 5:59 pm, followed by 4:00 to 4:59 pm.

The following figure shows a comparison of pick-up times currently versus preferred. Anytime the preferred time (represented by the dotted line) is higher than the current time (solid line), it indicates more respondents prefer that time than are currently picking-up during that time.

Figure 16: Pick-Up Times for Children Ages 0 to 5



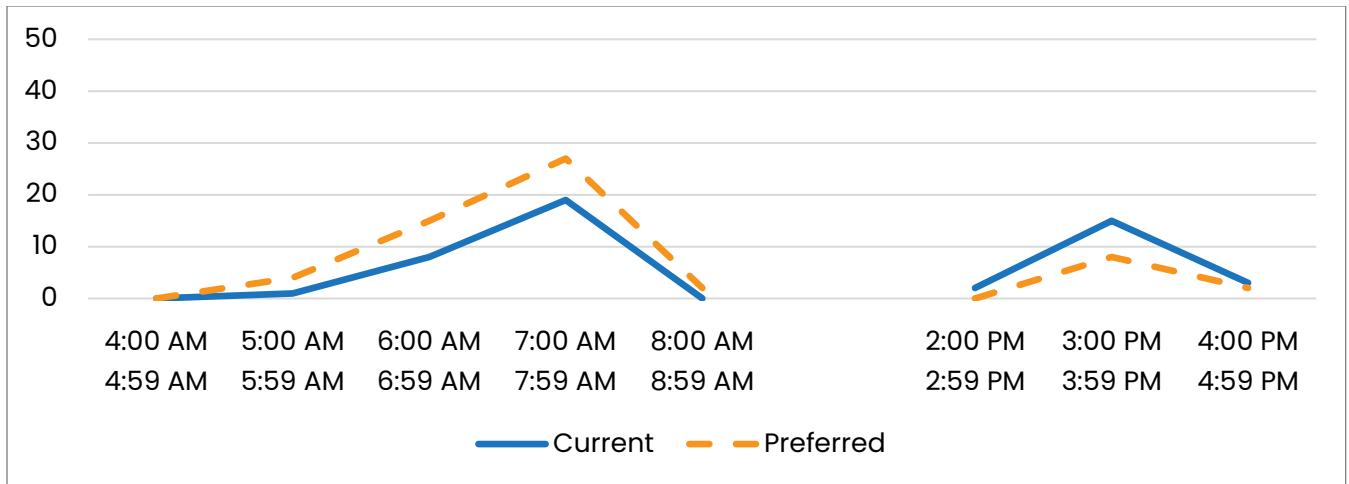
Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Currently, the most popular hour to drop-off children ages 5 to 12 during the school year is from 7:00 to 7:59 am, reflecting before school care. With just 4 fewer responses, the hour of 3:00 to 3:59 pm is the second most popular hour, reflecting after school care. More parents would prefer to drop-off children earlier in the morning than what currently do, and fewer parents would prefer to drop-off in the afternoon than what currently do.

The following figure shows a comparison of drop-off times currently versus preferred. Anytime the preferred time (represented by the dotted line) is higher than the current time (solid line), it indicates more respondents prefer that time than are currently dropping-off during that time.



Figure 17: Drop-off Times Children Ages 5 to 12 During School Year

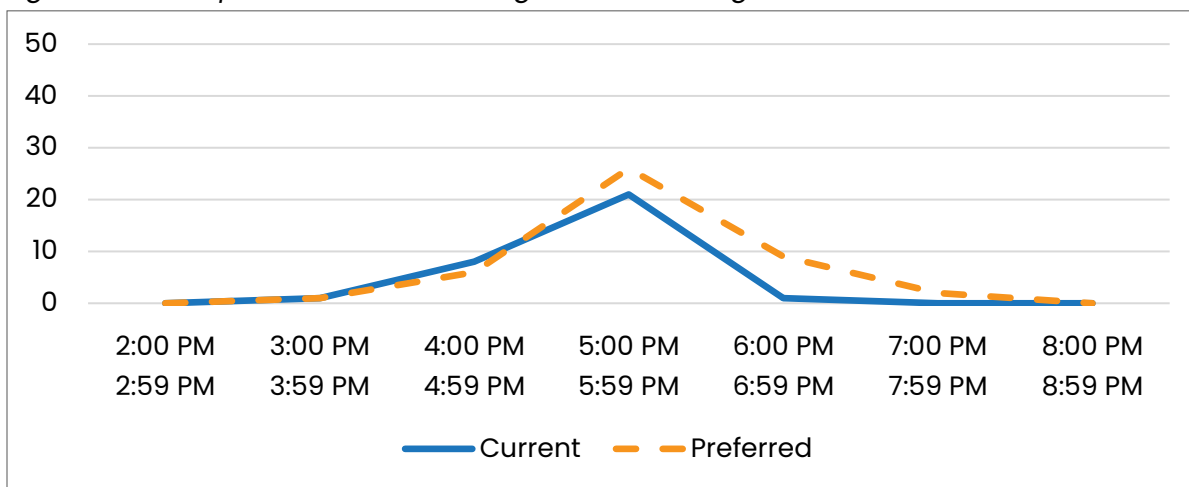


Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Currently, the most popular hour to pick-up children ages 5 to 12 during the school year is from 5:00 to 5:59 pm, followed by 4:00 to 4:59 pm. The most preferred pick-up time is the same as the current time (5:00 to 5:59 pm), but more respondents prefer this hour than the number currently picking-up during this time. The second most preferred pick-up time is 6:00 to 6:59 pm, showing more parents would like to pick-up later than what they currently are.

The following figure shows a comparison of pick-up times currently versus preferred. Anytime the preferred time (represented by the dotted line) is higher than the current time (solid line), it indicates more respondents prefer that time than are currently picking-up during that time.

Figure 18: Pick-Up Times for Children Ages 5 to 12 During School Year

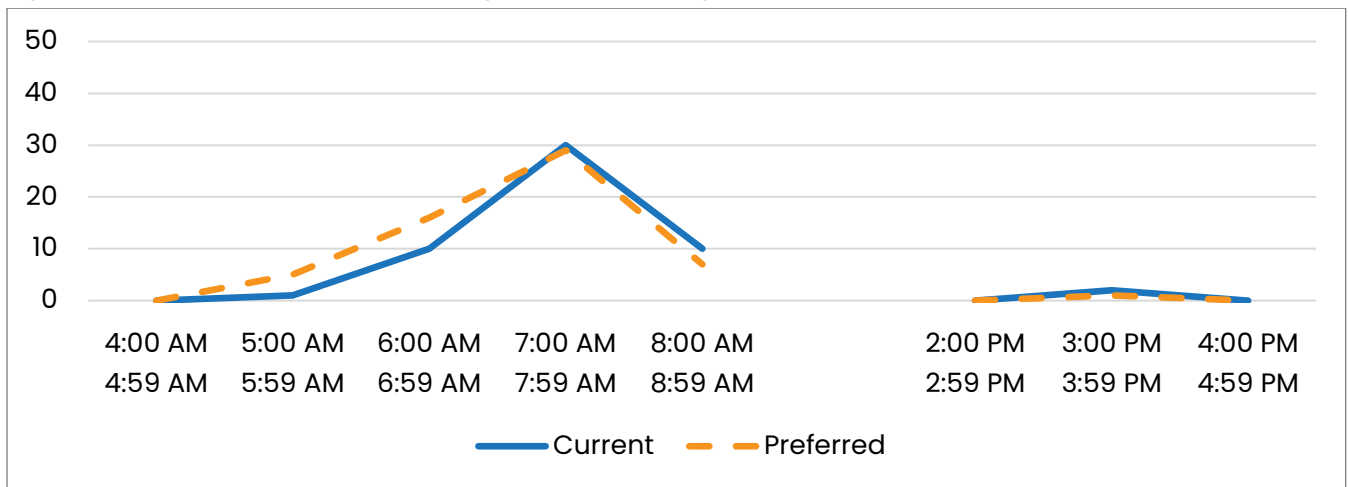


Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Currently, the most popular hour to drop-off children ages 5 to 12 during the summer is from 7:00 to 7:59 am, followed by 6:00 to 6:59 am. Preferred drop-off times are the same, with the most preferred still being 7:00 am to 7:59 am, followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am. There is not a significant difference in current versus preferred drop-off times, but there are more parents that would prefer to drop off during the 6:00 to 6:59 am hours than what are currently.

The following figure shows a comparison of drop-off times currently versus preferred. Anytime the preferred time (represented by the dotted line) is higher than the current time (solid line), it indicates more respondents prefer that time than are currently dropping-off during that time.

Figure 19: Drop-off Times Children Ages 5 to 12 During Summer

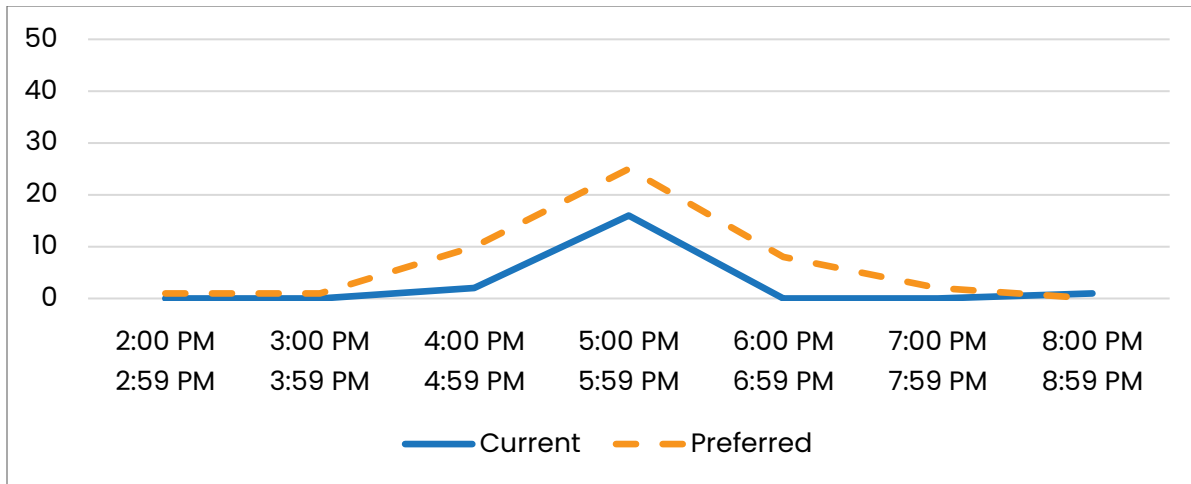


Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Currently, the most popular hour to pick-up children ages 5 to 12 during the summer is from 5:00 to 5:59 pm, followed by 4:00 to 4:59 pm. The most preferred pick-up time is the same as the current time (5:00 to 5:59 pm), but more respondents prefer this hour than the number currently picking-up during this time. The second most preferred pick-up time is 4:00 to 4:59 pm.

The following figure shows a comparison of pick-up times currently versus preferred. Anytime the preferred time (represented by the dotted line) is higher than the current time (solid line), it indicates more respondents prefer that time than are currently picking-up during that time.

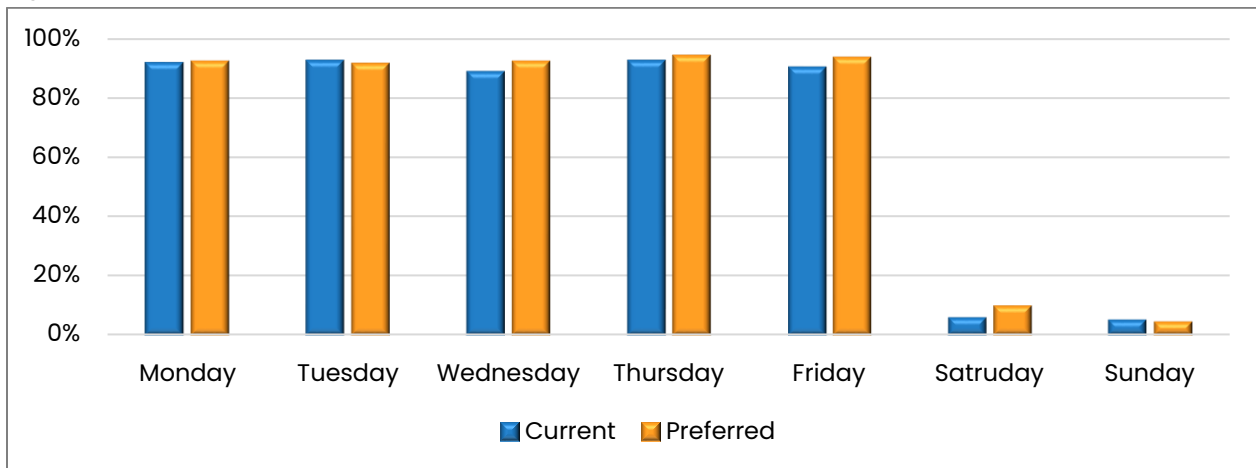
Figure 20: Pick-Up Times for Children Ages 5 to 12 During Summer



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Most current parents indicated they currently use care Monday through Friday (ranging from 92% to 88% per day), while only 5% of respondents say they use care on Saturday and 5% on Sunday. When it comes to preferred days for care, Monday through Friday is still the most preferred, ranging from 91% to 94% per day. Meanwhile, 9% of respondents prefer Saturday care, which is more than are currently using Saturday care, and 4% prefer Sunday care, which is fewer than are currently using Sunday care.

Figure 21: Days Child Care Used vs. Preferred by Current Parents

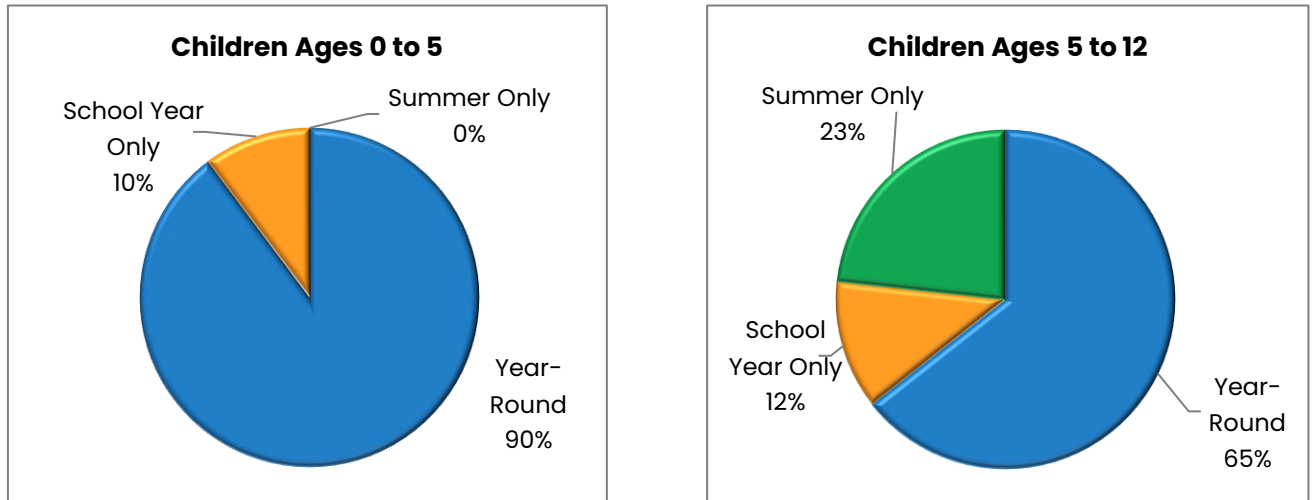


Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

All future parents indicated they prefer to use care Monday through Friday, with 100% selecting all 5 days. One future parent indicated they would also prefer to use care on both Saturday and Sunday.

Ninety percent (90%) of current parents with children ages 0 to 5, indicate they are currently using child care year-round, with the remaining 10% using care during the school year only. Parents with children ages 5 to 12 indicate that 65% are using child care year-round, while 12% use care during the school year only, and 23% during the summer only.

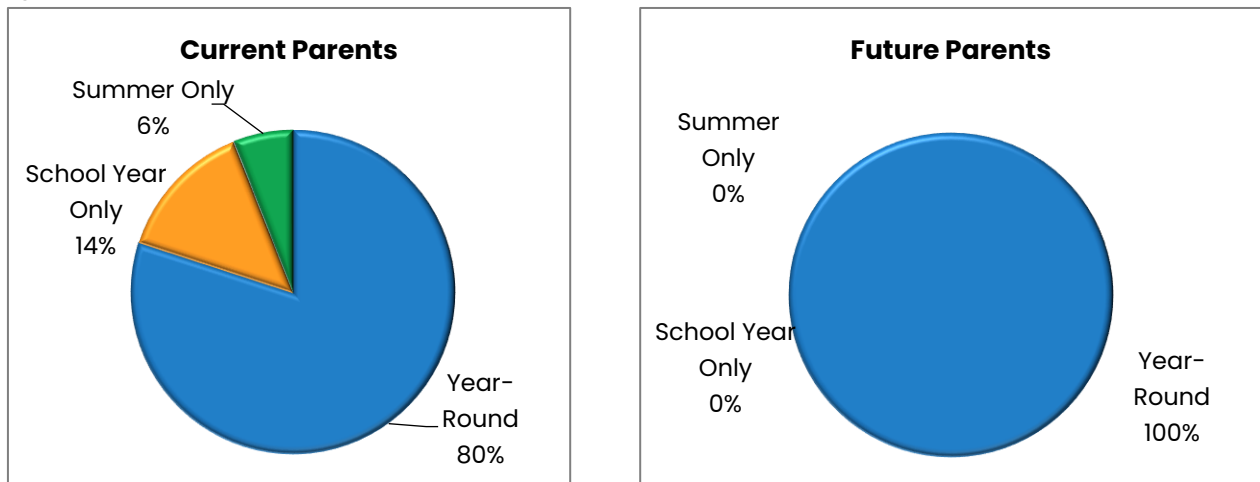
Figure 22: Time of Year Families Currently Use Child Care



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

When asked what their preferences would be if they were selecting child care today, the majority of both current and future parents prefer year-round care. Eighty percent (80%) of current parents indicate they would prefer to use child care year-round, 14% during the school year only, and 6% during the school year only. Among future parents, 100% would prefer year-round, none indicated they would want school year only or summer only.

Figure 23: Time of Year Families Prefer to Use Child Care



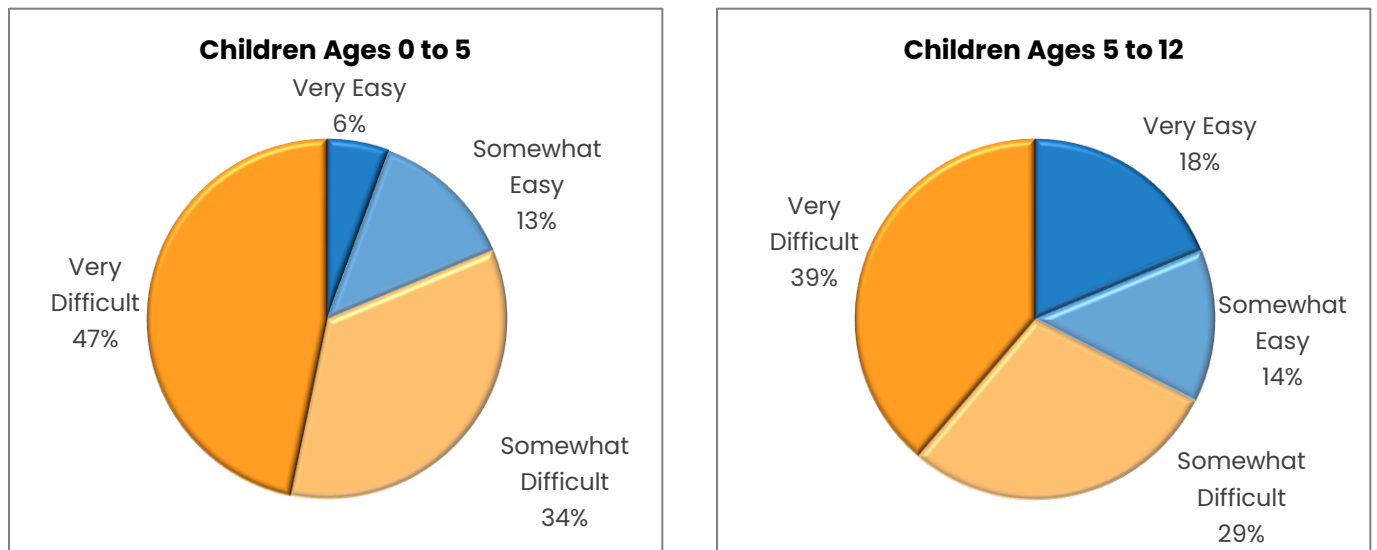
Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

When asked, if selecting care today, would your needs significantly fluctuate, 22% of current parents said yes. No future parents said yes. Comments received from those indicating yes were:

- *Summer care needed, but not school year.*
- *My child does not need child care in the summer. However for my child's age group full time is the only option.*
- *Currently a college student and working parent schedule varies.*
- *Shift, depending if I have to go to work early or stay late.*
- *Depends on hours of job.*
- *Husband works rotating schedule, but can change on short notice.*
- *I do not have a set schedule and work 2-3 12 hour shifts per week. I only send my kids to daycare on days I work but had a hard time finding a daycare to offer part time without set days of the week.*
- *Weekdays could alter depending on if I needed to stay later at work and there was an option to extend pick-up time by 30-60 minutes past my "usual". Option of drop-in care on Saturdays if needed would be a nice available option, even if I had to pay an additional fee.*
- *My child is in 4-year old preschool so daytime childcare isn't as necessary as the before and after school days and on no-school days.*
- *Due to the nature of both of our jobs, we sometimes need to stay late. While we typically pick-up between 4-4:30 pm, the ability to pick up between 5-5:30 pm would be helpful.*
- *Dance class days, older children's extracurricular activities.*
- *Variable job demands.*
- *Besides summer care, the addition of weekend care during certain seasons for our family business would be beneficial.*
- *Summer (5 days/week) vs school year (early outs only).*
- *Sometimes I have to work late, sometimes my day off changes because of staffing needs.*

Current parents were asked how easy or difficultly it has been to find child care, both for their children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) and their children age 5 to 12 (school age). A total of 81% of those with children ages 0 to 5, and 68% of those with children ages 5 to 12 experienced some level of difficulty finding child care. The most common obstacles named were related to lack of openings or available spots.

Figure 24: Ability to Find Child Care



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

A summary of comments from those that experienced obstacles were:

- Limited options, only a handful of daycare providers, most full.
- Can't afford.
- Not enough availability in Washington. Wait list is extensive for the [center we want].
- Openings closer to Wellman. Part time openings for preschool age. Willing to take under 12 month old.
- We had to check with several places before finding an opening. Also considering trying to find an affordable daycare was an issue as well.
- Either too costly for quality care, or unqualified.
- Few places available, all full.
- Spots, hours of operation not open early enough and not open late.
- Waitlisted until my child was 8 months old. My child had to come to work with me while we waited on a spot.
- Finding reliable childcare that is open reasonable hours with availability.
- I have called all the daycares in Washington and they are all closed. Or I find one but I would paying \$600 a month for my 5 year old to be watched for an hour and a half a day. On a single income.
- Wait lists everywhere that had quality
- Everyone was full and had to be put on a waitlist.
- Finding a child care provider in Washington that accepts CCA for young single moms that are on a fixed income.
- All the daycare centers were full when ours got shut down.

- *Part time daycare for children under two.*
- *Cost and drop off and pick up times.*
- *In home is unreliable and care center is expensive with multiple kids.*
- *Daycare cost are so expensive for my income. We have not been able to find another daycare we could afford to send the kids to.*
- *There is currently no openings for babies anywhere in town. Pricing, daycare is very expensive and due to the nature of both of our jobs our current checks are going all to child care for the most part. Not only is it incredibly hard to find openings, there's nowhere with openings that takes child care assistance.*
- *The centers in town don't take part time until 2 years of age. The centers that do have a huge wait list.*
- *When we wanted to find a safe location to send my infant in fall of 2020 there were no openings. My mother retired to help take care of my children.*
- *Finding availability, part time options*
- *When precious sitters have closed it has been nearly impossible to find another sitter to take our kids. Very few options.*
- *Childcare not accepting new kids, too expensive that It's cheaper for me to stay home instead of work.*
- *Drop off time too early for providers or pick up time too late for providers.*
- *Daycare that are opened earlier than 6:30am and later than 5pm.*
- *Convenience and location are factored into choosing childcare as well as safety, cleanliness, license, trust, etc. In my town there are registered providers, some of which have less than ideal reputations. I am not originally from this town and it was difficult finding someone I could trust that fit the hours that I needed, let alone who had an opening. I was lucky to reserve a spot with whom my child goes to now and I do feel that my child is safe and well cared for. The other issue that I struggle with is the lack of structured activities that most in home daycares have compared to childcare centers. It would be beneficial to have a childcare center that had structured activities daily for the children and/or also had a 3 year old and a pre-k program. My sister has this option available. It would be nice to see a larger employer in the Washington County area open an onsite daycare center that would also allow non-employee childcare options for community members.*
- *When we were looking in the past, daycares were full or location was not convenient.*
- *Finding child care closer to where I live. Having a spot available for an infant when maternity leave ended.*
- *No one in our desired area that fits in our budget and pick up time*
- *No openings. Needed after school care for my oldest for the school year.*
- *Low availability when first looking for daycares*

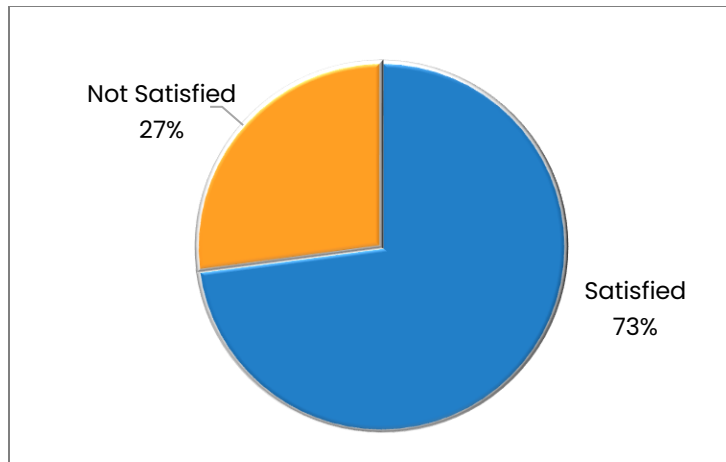
- *Looking for care for an infant in March 2021, ALL of the spots were full around here. Had to go to Iowa City for an opening!*
- *School aged centers for before & after school programs.*
- *Hours needed were too short not many in home daycare providers in this area.*
- *Availability and qualified/quality providers.*
- *Limited openings in Riverside.*
- *No one in the Riverside school district has openings. I only found one and I started looking 6 months in advance.*
- *Finding a full time spot. Something closer to home would be great too.*
- *No daycares in Riverside that have openings and in home daycares not reliable.*
- *No available spots or no Covid protections in place.*
- *Open and closing times.*
- *Not enough options in town & operating hours aren't broad enough.*
- *Cost for good reliable.*
- *There are no openings in our area for one day per week and also transferring my oldest to and from school on Fridays.*
- *Getting both kids into same place.*
- *Until I took my current job, I had difficulty finding a location that would accept children as early as I needed in the morning.*
- *The fact that I don't need full-time care has been the biggest obstacle (during the school year). I just need after school and all day Friday, which most in-home providers would prefer a full-time kid to fill the slot. No spaces available at the centers.*
- *Waiting list for centers.*
- *Childcare for our children was/is only easy because we have been in the program for about 10 years now. If we didn't have this program– I can't even imagine how hard childcare would have been to figure out in the past year.*
- *Quality options-- Mostly in-home care options that can't tell me what they do with the children. It was very challenging finding any options for an infant and the few were not great. Trying to find some place for multiple children was even more challenging. The one center locally that may be able to take both kids and have before and after school options, is a hard no for our family. We have extended family members who attended there and have firsthand accounts that are very concerning. The other obstacles is the limited hours, especially in the morning. Many options did not open before 7:30 or 8 am, when we both work in Iowa City, we need earlier care options.*
- *I called no less than 7 centers/in home providers when I was 4 WEEKS PREGNANT and was declined to all but one - the one that would accept me put me on a year long wait list!!*
- *Child care services are not advertised as much. Difficult to find facilities.*



- *Nobody offers part time (half day) options. I would have had to pay for the whole day even if they were only there half the day.*
- *Most of the options in Kalona area were full or unable to take both of my children.*
- *We have tried to look at going elsewhere as we are not happy with our current daycare and there are literally no openings in the Washington area.*
- *When we started having children we could not find a single childcare center or in home provider with space in Washington.*
- *Finding good, affordable child care in Washington.*
- *When our first center closed it was hard to find a new center with an opening, many already had waitlists that were months out from an opening.*
- *Not that many options in the area and all were full or mostly full.*
- *Part time openings*
- *Unable to find affordable childcare in the summer.*
- *Not enough providers or cost too high*
- *No availability within quality in-home child care provider's home, they are at or exceed max capacity. Wait lists are long. No child care centers available in Riverside. Limited drop off and pick up times that don't work with work schedule. Providers also had little availability for drop-in.*
- *Needed to find new daycare after the old one closed.*
- *Originally had to find/use alternative care because our "spot" at daycare wasn't ready when we needed it after the baby was born and ready to go to daycare*
- *No available space in centers.*
- *No part time daycare available without paying a full-time rate.*
- *Not many childcare options available. The few we have are not taking new clients/children.*
- *The waitlist for an infant is sometimes a year out. I was not able to get either of my children in right way.*
- *Low availability/openings. Cost is great. Not flexible.*
- *Not knowing the ropes. like that you need to put a deposit down to hold spots, having to wait 6 plus months to get into a child care center*
- *Too expensive for child care that I wanted. Charge by week instead of by day, have to watch kids year-round.*
- *Limited open spots.*

Despite difficulty finding care, once families find care, they are satisfied with their child care provider. Overall, 67% said they are satisfied with their current provider, while 33% said they are not. Respondents that indicated they are not satisfied were asked to share why, those reasons are shared on the next page.

Figure 25: Satisfaction with Current Provider



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Those that are not satisfied with their current provider were asked to explain. Reasons given were:

- *In home childcare closed too frequently.*
- *Would like to work but can't because I can't afford childcare.*
- *For the most part I am satisfied with care our son receives. However a later pick up would be much better to accommodate my work schedule. And the illness/vacations my provider takes makes it very challenging for us to find other care forcing us to take off work.*
- *Now that all my children are in school, it is satisfactory. But before K and during the summers it was not fully satisfactory.*
- *The invoice for 1 week of childcare should not rival the mortgage payment.*
- *Would like the child to go full time but cost too much.*
- *Cost and amount of travel.*
- *Not completely reliable.*
- *Provider is great but child needs to be around other kids and have a bit more academic structure.*
- *Yes and no. Yes because its reliable but no because it makes me have to choose what bills I can and cannot pay.*
- *Would like somewhere that is closer, accepts child care assistance and different hours of availability so we can find different employment*
- *Need part time care in town so I don't have to drive my child to Mount Pleasant before work to my in laws.*
- *The daycare does not keep staff due to pay issues and finding those who don't stick around is hard on young children. Also, many issues with payment and not getting finances cashed in a timely matter causes issues with personal finances.*
- *Can't find daycare for hours I would need to get back to work.*

- *I am happy with my current provider but there are no options for local families and not nearly enough capacity.*
- *I wish I had another option and only use family for daycare as needed.*
- *Too expensive and lack of availability.*
- *I like the location and provider but am not satisfied with the number of closed days and the lack of backups on those closures.*
- *Only option available. Not a great provider*
- *We are happy where we are at, however if we had an option closer to Riverside area we would like that more.*
- *Currently my child attends 2 different childcare centers. One before school and another afterschool. On top of paying the mini bus transportation*
- *I enjoy the provider, but she charges about \$30 more/week than most other in homes in Riverside, as well as \$10 more/drop-in days.*
- *I'm exhausted from working all night and then taking care of our daughter while my wife works during the day. I run on 3-4 hours of sleep.*
- *My spouse has to work a job they don't like, and run on very little sleep in order to care for our child. My child is not properly stimulated for her growing mind due to spouse being too tired.*
- *Bringing kids to work or working less hours is inefficient for getting work done.*
- *We love our center in Iowa City for our youngest. But our current set-up for before and after school care for our kindergartener is not ideal, we make it work as best we can but it's frustrating.*
- *Yes but no - frustrated that we really only had one option and it really doesn't help where we need it most.*
- *I am happy with the price and service but would prefer not to have to drive out of town.*
- *I talk with the girls that work at our daycare and the wages they are paid are not a reasonable livable wage for the current economy. Which I'm sure is what results in the high turnover we see. I'm not sure all of them are even qualified. And our director just recently resigned as well so I don't know what that means for the future of our daycare.*
- *We are pleased with [our] daycare facility and how our daughter can go back and forth from the center to her pre-school classroom during the day without the concern of transportation.*
- *Our children are both now in school full-time, so we adjust our work schedule to their school schedule and don't use child care at this time. Prior to them being in school full-time my answers to this survey would be very different. Our community is growing with families with young children. Lack of child care availability is a serious issue.*

- *Unregulated in-home provider doesn't provide many opportunities for outdoor play, meals in summer aren't very nutritious, no specific activities aimed at social/academic enrichment.*
- *I feel childcare could be more diligent and organized with the care of my child and the others. Many times it seems she is in more of a hurry to get rid of the children when it's time to go and hardly communicates with parents.*
- *Cost is the biggest worry.*
- *Think it could be better managed. Seeing decrease in staffing and child growth.*

Respondents were given a list of factors and asked to select all that are important to them when choosing child care. The top choices among current parents were dependability (71%), location (67%), positive interactions between staff and children (64%) and available space/timing of enrollment (61%). After identifying all factors that are important, current parents were asked to select the single factor that is most important to them. Those factors were, positive interactions between staff and children (28%), followed by dependability (23%).

The top factors overall among future parents were available space/timing of enrollment (86%), dependability (86%) and positive interactions between staff and children (86%). After identifying all factors that are important, future parents were given the same list and asked to select the single factor that is most important to them. The top factors were, available space/timing of enrollment and tuition rates or price, with 28% each. See the following table for details.

Table 39: Important Factors When Selecting Child Care

	Current Parents		Future Parents	
	All Factors that are Important	Single Most Important	All Factors that are Important	Single Most Important
Available space/timing of enrollment	75%	5%	86%	29%
Care includes preschool	25%	0.5%	29%	0%
Dependability	80%	17%	86%	0%
Drop-in or occasional care	35%	3%	29%	0%
Educational curriculum used	41%	5%	57%	0%
Evening or 2 <sup>nd</sup> shift care (after 6:30 pm)	12%	1%	14%	0%
Health and safety policies	67%	6%	27%	14%
Iowa Quality Rating System (QRS) rating	24%	2%	29%	0%
Location	73%	5%	71%	14%
Overnight or 3 <sup>rd</sup> shift care	3%	0.5%	0%	0%
Part-time options	43%	9%	57%	0%
Positive interactions between staff and children	75%	31%	86%	14%
Secured entrance	41%	0%	43%	0%
Special needs care	4%	0%	42%	0%
Transportation to and from school or preschool	56%	8%	29%	0%
Tuition assistance or scholarships	18%	0.5%	29%	0%
Tuition rates or price	51%	6%	71%	29%
Upkeep or appearance of the facility and playground	64%	0.5%	57%	0%
Weekend care	10%	0%	14%	0%

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Current parents were asked a few questions about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected child care for them over the past 12 months. Just over half of parents indicated their child care arrangement was affected in some manner because of COVID. Parents were given a list of a few possible affects and were asked to select all that apply.

Table 40: Affects of COVID on Child Care Arrangement in Last 12 Months

	Total
Child care provider temporarily closed	40%
Child care provider permanently closed	8%
Child care provider limited capacity and my children could not attend	18%
Child care was not affected by COVID	47%

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Parents were next asked if their child care needs had changed over the last 12 months as a direct result of COVID. Half of parents indicated that their child care needs were not affected by COVID, however many parents did indicate they were affected.

*Table 41: Changes in Child Care Needs Due to COVID*

	<b>Total</b>
Temporarily did not need care while working from home	14%
No longer need care because COVID changed job to work from home	3%
Needed more care because of changes to job or work schedule	18%
Needed less child care because of changes to job or work schedule	7%
Needed more care because child's school utilized online instruction	10%
Needed less child care because child's school utilized online instruction	0%
Other (see comments below)	11%
Child care needs were not affected by COVID	50%

Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Comments received from parents that indicated other:

- *I had to use all my vacation and rely on family members when Covid hit. Due to my job, I cannot work from home and was required to work- and even asked to work overtime.*
- *There were times when we had to miss work simply because there was a COVID exposure/other illness even if my child wasn't sick. So we technically needed more childcare on a drop in basis in those situations.*
- *Needed more childcare because preschool options were full and we were on a long waiting list.*
- *Had to find new childcare after first shut down, because previous provider had to quit providing childcare and find different job in order to make ends meet*
- *My daycare was affected by Covid and she shut down for a while.*
- *Needed another option for child care as both parents had to work, and daycare closed for several week 2 times due to Covid. Mom had to make other arrangement and about lost job.*
- *Hours and availability not matching our work schedule.*
- *Need consistent child care.*
- *Besides the permanent closure, we used all available vacation time to cover all temporary closures.*
- *Required to work from home during child's quarantine from school.*
- *Due to both of us working from our home, we were lucky enough to be able to wait the YEAR to get into a care center. Had we not been working from home, I likely would have had to ask my husband to stay home full time.*

- *Our daycare center that my child started with from birth closed and sort of had some troubles finding new due to the number of limitations that they have for the number of children that a center can have at a time.*
- *We also experienced our daycare center closing and having 3 weeks notice to find a new center.*
- *I worked from home as child care provider could not take my children.*

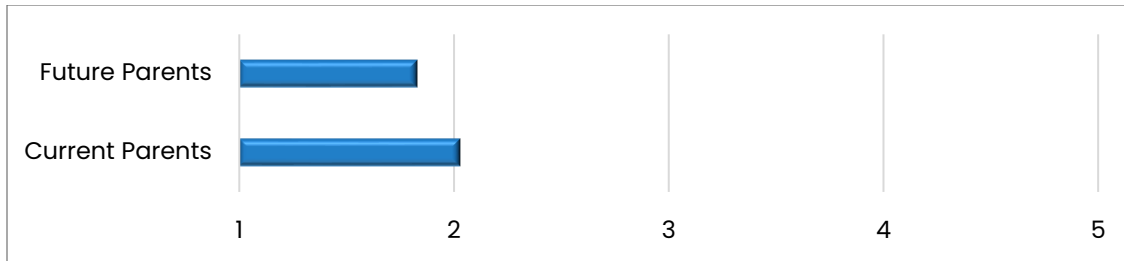
The final question about COVID that parents were asked was, are your child care arrangements or child care needs still be impacted by COVID. Eighteen percent (18%) indicated yes, and were asked to explain. Comments received were:

- Within the last month, there was an exposure and we had to keep our child home until he tested negative (I do not care to test my toddler if I don't need to).
- Limited spots and hours they are open.
- Needing more, to work at the hospital d/t short staffing.
- She is still on quarantine and not sure when she will be back to work.
- Not at this time, provider was tested for Covid and waiting for result currently.
- Due to staff shortage, daycare was shut down when a few teachers tested positive versus in the beginning they only shut down rooms.
- I am continuing to homeschool my children to keep them safe.
- Now that children are in school, I feel nervous having my older parents watch my kids because I'm afraid my kids will bring home sickness from school to my parents. When they are sick, I can't afford to expose my parents so I can't send them for care.
- COVID-19 Outbreaks cause class room closures.
- One school age child now comes home after school instead of going to daycare since I am working remotely for now.
- If someone tests positive closed.
- Center could shut down due to Covid at any time and I'm not sure what I would do.
- Centers short staffed or affected by Covid causing temporary closure.
- There is no summer camp in Riverside now for school aged kids.
- My permanent provider decided to close and get a town job. A temporary provider had to close because of Covid
- We lost our daycare provider and have yet to find an option that we feel safe with due to Covid.
- My children are currently attending a childcare center and because of Covid they are having staffing issues.
- Can't find any.

- Our center is open if we wanted to go there for afterschool care but voted not to this year and are utilizing grandma and I am getting off work early two days a week to pick them up.
- My wife stopped working because of what I previously explained. Now she stays home with them.
- If one kid is sick they do not allow the other kids to come to daycare.

As a whole parents think the *availability* of child care in Washington County is less than adequate. Respondents were asked to rate the availability of child care in Washington County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 adequate, and 5 highly available (the higher the score, the more available). The weighted average from current parents was 2.03, and the weighted average from future parents was 1.83.

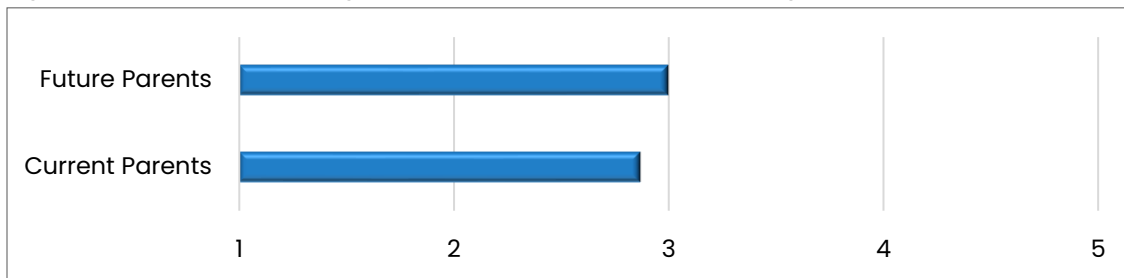
Figure 26: Parents' Ranking of Child Care Availability in Washington County



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

Parents were then asked to rank the *quality* of child care in Washington County on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 adequate, and 5 highly quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). Future parents think the quality is adequate, while current parents believe it is just under adequate. The weighted average from current parents was 3.0, and the weighted average from future parents was 2.87.

Figure 27: Parents' Ranking of Child Care Quality in Washington County



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021



At the conclusion of the survey, parents were asked 3 open-ended questions about child care in Washington County and any other comments they have about child care in the county. Summaries of these answers are listed below.

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents in Washington County today in regard to child care?

Summary of comments from current parents:

- *Finding dependable daycare, with available openings.*
- *Affordability, availability and in this last year- illness and closures and not having drop in care available.*
- *Availability of total spots/openings means a number of families cannot find adequate amounts of childcare hours.*
- *There isn't enough to choose from, enroll in.*
- *Amount of providers is the district hours and openings.*
- *Not many options. Many are very full with long waitlists.*
- *Finding child care in general.*
- *Waitlists that are over a year. You shouldn't have to secure childcare before evening getting pregnant.*
- *Not enough "GOOD" child centers available and what is available is with either full or cost an arm and leg... child care shouldn't cost more than your living expenses*
- *No care available on weekends.*
- *Finding dependable, quality care.*
- *Too many kids not enough child care options.*
- *Not enough child care. Or rates are too high.*
- *Not enough child care centers for the amount of children that need care*
- *Part time daycare for children under 2.*
- *Being able to work full time, and the hours of being able to work.*
- *Very few part time options. Not requiring vaccines for employees.*
- *Lack of stability for children in the room and finding good help who get paid decent.*
- *There is a significant lack of capacity. Also, there are not enough options. We were forced to send our kids to the only available sitter, regardless of preference. We love our sitter and have had a very positive experience but I know others who have not. Also, most pick up times in the evening are earlier than we would prefer. We have had to alter our work schedules to accommodate our childcare schedule.*
- *The cost of childcare & the availability part and full time.*
- *Trustworthy providers that provide structured activities, meals and a positive caring/nurturing environment (that also have availability). Not relying on TV and other technology to be the primary form of entertainment, etc.*

- *Not enough options, difficult to become aware of the options.*
- *Location.*
- *Hours of operation. Most daycares in Riverside close as 5, people work until 5 and most out of town. Also not many options in Riverside, only a few in home daycares and most don't have openings.*
- *Not enough options. Everywhere is full.*
- *Cost is the biggest factor for us. We are having to wait until our daughter is in preschool for another child because we cannot afford the daycare tuition for two children with all of our other life expenses.*
- *A lot of childcare centers only accept small children. Not school aged, limited space is also an issue. I've been on a waiting list for childcare at [a center] for 2 years... and was told they have no available spots.*
- *Not enough child care providers.*
- *Lack of dependable daycares.*
- *Availability and quality people.*
- *There are no daycare centers and the in home daycare providers are limited in the number of children they accept and are unreliable.*
- *There are no Covid safe options available or no available spots at safe options.*
- *Ability to accept all kids who need care. Normally there are waiting lists to get into program.*
- *Reliable and cost.*
- *Cost for multiple kids.*
- *Safety.*
- *Affordable care limited family size due to availability in community.*
- *The lack of options is definitely a challenge. There are only a couple of options that I know of in the county. This makes finding a suitable option difficult and if you don't find a good fit you're "stuck".*
- *Decent child care centers that are accepting new people, hours/rates of child care (it's not cheap and if you can't find a job in town, you have to make the hours work)*
- *Limited options for centers. In home daycares are few and far between. Limited options for last minute coverage when an in-home provider calls off - employers are not that happy when you don't have a childcare backup. I also think many people commute to work and no longer work in the town they live. Commuting adds to the hours a child is in need of childcare services and the hours needed are not always ideal.*
- *Childcare for infants and toddlers.*
- *Lack of quality options with flexible times.*
- *Not enough options, and hours of operation are limited.*

- *Pricing, it is far too expensive as it is and then they charge you when the kids aren't there due to that being their "livelihood" without realizing they're draining our livelihood.*
- *Having facilities that are not only providing high quality care, but are built to LAST. So many facilities recently have shut down due to lack of payment from parents, crazy regulations with capacity, and lack of employee help. It's impossible to find a spot and has caused us to rethink our family planning.*
- *Finding child care providers and reviews.*
- *Knowing who provides childcare. Neither school district could provide me with a list of who does childcare in the county.*
- *Finding a reliable and dependable place to take your children to everyday. Where employees are treated well and compensated fairly so that in return benefits your children and community.*
- *The lack of centers, there is always waiting lists there are always reasons that they aren't able to take more children, and now that Covid has come around I think staffing has started to become an issue.*
- *Affordable care or centers that accept child care assistance. Dependable care is also a struggle in Washington.*
- *Availability for all ages as families move into town and as new parents have babies.*
- *Quality child care that's both affordable and accessible.*
- *Parents are being forced to send children to in-home providers that are not registered, or being regulated, due to other facilities being full.*
- *Not enough services & they are expensive.*
- *Limited centers available, lack of drop in/occasional care, cost.*
- *Finding a safe and reliable place to send children. There just aren't spots available. The worry is what if for some reason our childcare center stops providing care? What would we do?!?*
- *There isn't enough dependable, caring, safe places to take children for care. There are far too many "in-home centers" flying under the radar that parents think will be good but end up devastating.*
- *Finding dependable, trustworthy providers with openings. Staff turnover is huge as well; finding good staff is an issue as well-the pay is very low and good staff often leave for other job fields. We left a child care center previously because of the staff behavior and interaction with kids. I chose to reduce work hours because I did not want my children to have negative experiences at day care and thankfully we were able to afford to do so.*
- *Being able to afford it mainly, I'd love to send my kids to a child care facility but I can't afford it with two kids in day care.*

- *If not from the area, finding someone you trust if in home care & if a child care center then the cost per kid*

Summary of comments from future parents:

- *Very few childcare options to begin with and then they all have small capacities. Also extremely expensive-most of the cost more than my mortgage.*
- *Infant childcare options that aren't regulated at home providers.*
- *Not enough child care options, staff are paid too little child car receives no recognition but give more than school staff. Meaning longer hours, no extended periods off, less pay, less staff, less help, less in general.*
- *Cost and space at centers.*

Do you see any opportunities for the future of child care in Washington County?

Summary of comments from current parents:

- *Yes, daycare center would do well.*
- *More childcare options with lower rates.*
- *An extended before/after school availability would be ideal. In particular, utilizing the schools cafeteria/gym at both elementary schools to allow for children to come early and stay late. This will also reduce risk from transportation to and from locations. New London, Iowa has a similar program that works well. In addition, a daycare facility for younger children would be great as well. Mt. Pleasant, Iowa has utilized funding and raised funds to convert an old Family Video into a childcare facility. That would be an ideal option for the Washington area as well, if they have the opportunity to do so.*
- *In home or another center would be nice.*
- *I think there is a need in our community and I think there are spaces that could support childcare that already exist.*
- *Yes, the formation of more high quality/high standard child care institutions with preschool option and that pays employees enough with benefits to keep good caregivers at the job. Children's quality care is worth paying tuition for!*
- *Partner with old folks homes?*
- *I hope more quality daycares can open to better serve the children of our community.*
- *Yes lower the cost shouldn't cost more to take your child to daycare then it does to pay or the or rent.*
- *Not unless more people step up.*
- *I would like to say yes but prices today are outrageous making parents unable to afford the cost of child care. Which leaves them struggling to find a provider close by that accepts assistance.*

- *Opening a new daycare center.*
- *The hospital could have a daycare for employees. This would allow free slots at other daycares.*
- *Yes, make daycare jobs worth their time and money! It takes a lot to work in a daycare, they deal with a lot and I don't think they get enough pay or credit for their constant hard work!*
- *Riverside is pursuing a new community center, this would be an excellent opportunity to add a child care center. This could also be coordinated with the school.*
- *Yes, I know there was news at one point of a childcare center opening in Ainsworth, which I think would be a great location and opportunity not only for those in Washington County but also Henry and Louisa County commuters that travel to the Iowa City/corridor area for work. I think there are opportunities as well for larger employers in the area to consider opening onsite childcare centers for their employees and/or local community. I know staffing would be the hardest issue right now as it is an issue for all industries across the board. But, I think it is an option worth researching.*
- *Child care center in Riverside would be phenomenal!*
- *Build a center with qualified teachers and staff.*
- *Build a child care center near Riverside.*
- *More in home daycares or a center would be*
- *Open a childcare facility in all towns.*
- *I believe that a daycare center should be opened in the future Riverside Community Center.*
- *A center in Riverside with wrap around for Pre-K would be amazing and there is plenty of land near the school. A summer program for school kids would be great too.*
- *Absolutely! There are many opportunities for the growth of child care centers in Washington County.*
- *There are spaces available that could be utilized, however given the job market issues right now, I know there will be difficulty finding workers for the job, especially if they are a low rate with no benefits.*
- *Maybe if we received grant money or money from casino grants. Starting up a new center is costly but so needed.*
- *Address the Before and After school program in the school district to start with. It's incredibly frustrating to see the program only at one school location and that location is not where the youngest children are located. I don't understand this decision except for the convenience of who they partner with is based in Wellman. It serves Wellman specifically, not Washington County or the MP school district. There*

*is also a lot of room for quality in-home providers or a center that offers a wider flexibility for working families.*

- *Yes creating a facility to have more availability.*
- *There needs to be more awareness. I also feel an integrated childcare/preschool for the Mid-Prairie district would be beneficial. My children did not attend MP Preschool because I couldn't afford the childcare associated with it. I would have had to pay a full day of daycare for them to be at the childcare provider 1 hour.*
- *I would love to look into the possibility of purchasing the old Lending Hands building and making it into a REAL non for profit daycare. Where the owner of the building uses the rent money to pay the mortgage/prop. taxes/insurance and then once mortgage is paid off uses it to put money back into the daycare, playground, etc. Or if the city or county or school district would be willing to team up to create something more sustainable than what we currently have.*
- *Yes - make it affordable for parents, especially single parents.*
- *Due to the high demand with more families having both parents working I think there is definitely room for growth in the county.*
- *Yes. The struggle is finding people willing to work and spaces that are not too expensive.*
- *Additional facilities are needed. Encouragement/incentive of in-home providers to be registered with the state. DHS actually providing oversight of daycares (drop in, resource support, etc.).*
- *The Riverside city council is considering a community center, having a child care center added to that structure would be beneficial. More opportunities for in-home child care are needed too.*
- *It would be great for someone to turn the lending hands building into a daycare. The problem is the money and experience (and the want) to do so. Most daycare providers that are educated and have the proper credentials to run a center don't want the headache of managing people. It would be great to have a dual director roll if someone started one. One to manage people and finances and the other to manage the children coordinating/issues and the curriculum.*
- *One could only hope more would open up and be able to stay open.*
- *After school.*
- *Yes, I think that there is a great need for child care but it has to be an entity that is dependable and trust worthy.*
- *I hope. there are spaces available but need the management and employees.*
- *Plenty, large facilities with discounted rates. \$1,000 a month for child care is insane.*
- *Need more center options!!!*
- *HIGH need--just need quality care at affordable rate in more quantities.*

Summary of comments from current parents:

- *Many businesses have the space to rent out a portion of their building to child care providers. Workers could all bring their children to that site which in turn would lead to more openings at other centers. Many other local businesses would have the ability to do this as well.*
- *There are plenty of spaces to grow child care, but no funding or employees.*
- *Yes, we can always use more child care.*

The final question asked parents to share any additional comments they have about child care in Washington County. A summary of responses were:

- *I would prefer not to use unregulated in-home caregivers due to the lack of accountability regarding abuse, cleanliness of space, lack of structure/use of screen time, etc.*
- *The facility we are using seemed like the only decent place in town. I wish there were more options for other families, but I feel blessed to have our child care center available to us.*
- *Child care shouldn't cost for them \$100 a week for a child who is potty trained and able to eat on their own.*
- *We are in need of part time child care for children under the age of two. I work full time while my wife dropped down to 3 days a week to spend time with our daughter. We did this because it has been proven to help with the developmental growth of children. With that being said, we have not been able to find child care that does not charge full time for children under the age of two. It's sad to say but even with both of us having respectable jobs we cannot afford to pay for full time.*
- *Would benefit from more options.*
- *There's a number of in home providers in Riverside and we have used about 5 over the years, several closed and several we did not care for. I've heard that when an in home provider closes it's a mad scramble to find care, also when we were expecting a new baby and I've heard of others expecting and having so much trouble finding a place they are comfortable with who has openings.*
- *Quality of care depends on place of childcare. Ones that are not registered and regulated go unchecked and you get bad childcare. Then you have ones that are unreliable and a backup is more costly than going to a place that is more expensive because you have to pay both primary and backup childcare that's in home.*
- *Thank you for taking the time to look at child care in Washington County. This challenge will continue to impact the community unless addressed. Less people from the surrounding communities will consider moving here to raise families if this continues to be a challenge.*

- *I truly hope this problem finds a solution.*
- *The statewide/nationwide issue of lack of childcare is affecting our community in Washington County. There are not enough providers/centers for the care needed.*
- *One inefficiency that isn't discussed in the survey- parents keeping school-age kids enrolled during the school year, or other times that care isn't actually needed, in order to maintain a "slot" at daycare for summer, breaks, snow days, etc. I send my kids to daycare at least once a week, even on weeks that care isn't needed, just to hold their slot at daycare so that I have a place for them to go when there's no school. Those days of care could probably be used by another family, but I'm afraid I won't be able to find good summer care if I pull them out during the school year.*
- *Thank you for conducting this survey; it is long overdue, and I hope that some change stems from this.*
- *I can't tell you the quality of child care in Washington because I can't afford most of the places.*
- *Wish there were more options like Sunrise in Wellman, IA in the rest of Washington County.*

Additional comments shared by future parents about child care in Washington County were:

- *Would love to see more options that offer infant care in the greater Washington area.*



## CHILD CARE GAP ANALYSIS

Calculating the true gap in a child care market needs to take into consideration multiple factors. Not only are the current number of child care spaces and children considered, but also how many families prefer to use child care, in combination with how many want or need care full-time versus part-time. Based on full or part-time factors, one child care space might actually be adequate supply for two or three children. When preferences are considered, not all families who work need child care, and not all child care slots meet the needs of every child.

The following summary of the supply and demand provides an estimation of the gap between the number of children likely to use child care and the number of spaces available in programs currently listed by Iowa DHS<sup>18</sup>. As solutions to address this gap are considered, it must be kept in mind that not all families will utilize child care, and those that do will have a variety of needs with some children attending full-time while others attend only part-time and therefore may share a space. If there was exactly one space for each child, some spaces would not be utilized, or would be utilized in a manner that would not allow the child care provider to maintain a sustainable business model.

In Washington County there is a need for more regulated child care spaces. The majority of parents indicated a desire for child care year-round, Monday through Friday. The majority prefers to be able to drop their child off 7:00 to 7:59 am and to pick them up 5:00 to 5:50 pm. When selecting care, the most important factors to current parents are positive interactions between staff and children. Parents prefer care located within the school district their child attends or will attend, and the most preferred arrangement is a licensed child care center. Seventy percent (70%) with children ages 0 to 5 prefer some type of regulated child care, while 52% of those with children ages 5 to 12 prefer some type of regulated child care.

As of November 2021, there are 20 regulated child care programs offering a total of 754 spaces in Washington County. Of the 754 spaces, only 667 provide full-time, year-round child care. There are 13 DHS licensed centers and preschools (670 licensed spaces), offering care varying hours, between 5:30 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Among those programs, there are two part-time preschool programs that only operate 8:00 am–11:00 am, during the school year, on varying days. There are also 7 Registered Child Development Homes (84 registered spaces), offering care 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. No regulated child care is available after 6:00 pm or on weekends.

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<sup>18</sup> Includes all Iowa DHS Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes listed with Iowa DHS as of November 2021.

In Washington County, there are 3,485 children ages 0 to 11. Of those, First Children’s Finance (FCF) estimates 2,547 have all parents working. If it is assumed these families are represented by the child care needs survey responses, and 70% ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) and 52% ages 5 to 12, are from families that prefer to use regulated child care while they are at work, then approximately 1,511 are likely to need child care in a DHS regulated setting. According to Iowa DHS, there are currently 754 child care spaces in Washington County, of which, 667 are available year-round. That means there are enough DHS regulated spaces to serve approximately 44% of the 1,511 children likely needing child care, leaving a gap as high as 844 spaces.

The following table shows the number of children likely to use DHS regulated care versus the number of spaces available. There are gaps among all age groups.

Table 42: Estimated Child Care Gap in Washington County

	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Prefer Regulated Care</b>	<b>DHS Listed Spaces<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>Child Care Gap</b>	<b>Year-Round Spaces</b>	<b>Child Care Gap</b>
Age 0 to 2	718	504	231	-273	231	<b>-273</b>
Age 3 to 4	293	206	222	+16	135	<b>-71</b>
Age 5 to 11	1,536	801	301	-500	301	-500
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,547</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>-757</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>-844</b>

Source: *Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa*. Copyright © 2021, First Children’s Finance.

Breaking down the same information by community can help give a more detailed picture. Some communities may have a greater shortage than others, and some communities with a shortage of their own will also serve families from neighboring communities. See the following pages for a breakdown by community.

<sup>19</sup> Only full-time, year-round child care spaces were included. Part-time or school year only preschool spaces were not included.

## Ainsworth

Ainsworth has approximately 71 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 40 of those are likely to use regulated child care. There is one brand new center in Ainsworth, which is licensed for 49 children.

Table 43: Ainsworth Child Care Supply and Demand

<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>	
Age 0 to 4	15	11	
Age 5 to 11	56	29	
<b>Total children</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>DHS Regulated Programs</b>	<b>Ages Served</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Year-Round Capacity</b>
Little Ducklings Daycare Center	0-12	49	49
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

## Brighton

Brighton has approximately 123 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 71 of those are likely to use regulated child care. Currently there are no options for DHS regulated child care within the community.

Table 44: Brighton Child Care Supply and Demand

<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>	
Age 0 to 4	39	27	
Age 5 to 11	84	44	
<b>Total children</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>71</b>	
<b>DHS Regulated Providers</b>	<b>Ages Served</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Year-Round Capacity</b>
None	N/A	0	0
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

## Coppock

Coppock has approximately 9 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 9 of those are likely to use regulated child care. Currently there are no options for DHS regulated child care within the community.

Table 45: Coppock Child Care Supply and Demand

<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>	
Age 0 to 4	4	4	
Age 5 to 11	5	5	
<b>Total Children</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	

<b>DHS Regulated Providers</b>	<b>Ages Served</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Year-Round Capacity</b>
None	N/A	0	0
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

## Crawfordsville

Crawfordsville has approximately 59 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 34 of those are likely to use regulated child care. Currently there are no options for DHS regulated child care within the community.

Table 46: Crawfordsville Child Care Supply and Demand

<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>	
Age 0 to 4	19	13	
Age 5 to 11	40	21	
<b>Total Children</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>34</b>	

<b>DHS Regulated Providers</b>	<b>Ages Served</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Year-Round Capacity</b>
None	N/A	0	0
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

## Kalona

Kalona has approximately 332 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 203 of those are likely to use regulated child care. Kalona currently has 112 regulated child care spaces. There is 1 licensed center with a licensed capacity of 60, and 4 Registered Child Development Homes with a collective capacity of 52.

Table 47: Kalona Child Care Supply and Demand

<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>	
Age 0 to 4	168	118	
Age 5 to 11	164	85	
<b>Total children</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>203</b>	

<b>DHS Regulated Providers</b>	<b>Ages Served</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Year-Round Capacity</b>
Kids Country Club	0-12	83	83
Angela Truitt, Reg. Home B	0-12	12	12
Jessica Vilovchik, Reg. Home C	0-12	16	16
Mackenzie Shalla, Reg. Home A	0-12	8	8
Roots & Wings Montessori Kids, Reg. Home C	0-12	16	16
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>135</b>	<b>135</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

## Riverside

Riverside has approximately 111 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 65 of those are likely to use regulated child care. There are currently 2 DHS regulated child care settings with a total of 20 spaces available year-round.

Table 48: Riverside Child Care Supply and Demand

Children with All Parents Working	Children w/All	Likely to Use	
	Parents Working	Regulated Child Care	
Age 0 to 4	43	30	
Age 5 to 11	68	35	
<b>Total children</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>65</b>	

DHS Regulated Providers	Ages	Total Capacity	Year-Round
	Served		Capacity
Munchkins Den, Reg. Home C1	0-12	8	8
Terri Kraus, Reg. Home B	0-12	12	12
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

## Washington

Washington has approximately 775 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 449 of those are likely to use regulated child care. There are currently 10 DHS regulated child care settings with a total of 353 spaces available year-round, and an additional 20 preschool and Head Start spaces available during the school year only.

Table 49: Washington Child Care Supply and Demand

Children with All Parents Working	Children w/All	Likely to Use	
	Parents Working	Regulated Child Care	
Age 0 to 4	255	179	
Age 5 to 1	520	270	
<b>Total children</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>449</b>	

DHS Regulated Providers	Ages	Total Capacity	Year-Round
	Served		Capacity
First Baptist Preschool	3-4 yrs.	35	0
HACAP Head Start-Orchard Hill	3-5 yrs.	36	0
Kids Corral Before & After School	5-12 yrs.	30	30
Kids Corral, Inc.	0-4 yrs.	60	60
St. James Three Year Old Preschool	3 yrs.	16	0
Up With Kids- United Presbyterian Home	0-Preschool	56	56
Washington Y Cornelia S Day Child Care	0-5 yrs.	75	75
Washington Y Kid Konnection	5-12 yrs.	55	55
Washington Y Kids	5-12 yrs.	65	65
Candice Betsworth, Reg. Home B	0-12	12	12
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>440</b>	<b>353</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

Washington has a shortage of child care for the families that live in the community and that gap may be worsened by families that live in other communities seeking care in Washington. According to preferences among parents completing the child care needs survey, the majority of parents prefer care in Washington, regardless of where they live.

### Wellman

Wellman has approximately 151 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 92 of those are likely to use regulated child care. There are currently 2 DHS regulated child care settings with a total of 110 spaces available year-round.

Table 50: Wellman Child Care Supply and Demand

<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>	
Age 0 to 4	71	50	
Age 5 to 11	80	42	
<b>Total children</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>92</b>	
<b>DHS Regulated Providers</b>	<b>Ages Served</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Year-Round Capacity</b>
Sunrise Child Care Before & After School	5-12	30	30
Sunrise Child Care, Inc.	0-12	80	80
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>

Source: *Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.*

### West Chester

West Chester has approximately 151 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 92 of those are likely to use regulated child care. Currently there are no options for DHS regulated child care within the community.

Table 51: West Chester Child Care Supply and Demand

	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>	
<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>			
Age 0 to 4	4	3	
Age 5 to 11	6	3	
<b>Total children</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	
	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>Year-Round Capacity</b>
<b>DHS Regulated Providers</b>	<b>Served</b>		
None	N/A	0	0
<b>Total child care spaces</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

### Balance of County

In the unincorporated areas of Washington County, there are approximately 906 children that have all parents working. Based on parent preferences shared through the child care needs survey, FCF estimates 542 of those are likely to use regulated child care. These children utilize the child care settings listed with the individual communities above.

Table 52: Balance of County Child Care Demand

	<b>Children w/All Parents Working</b>	<b>Likely to Use Regulated Child Care</b>
<b>Children with All Parents Working</b>		
Age 0 to 4	393	275
Age 10 to 12	513	267
<b>Total children</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>542</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.



## KEY FINDINGS

These key findings are based on research and conditions of the current child care market in Washington County, Iowa as of November 2021. If the community or the child care environment changes significantly, current findings may be affected.

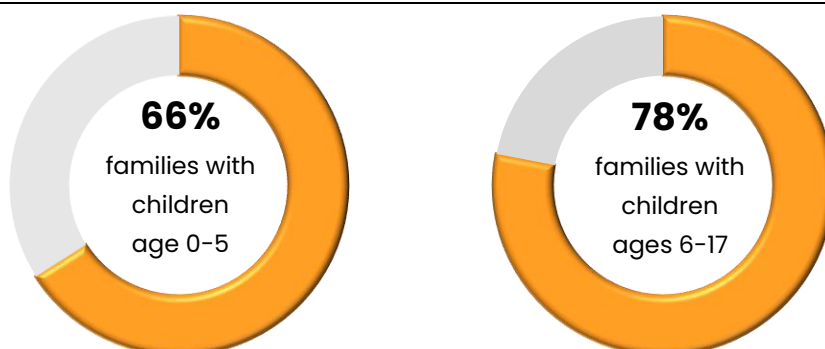
### Parents are in the Labor Force and Need Child Care

According to the US Census Bureau as of 2019, 66% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 78% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in Washington County have all parents in the labor force. All parents in the labor force means if a family is headed by a couple, both parents are working and if it is a headed by a single parent that parent is working. The state-wide averages are 76% and 81%, respectively.

The number of households with all parents in the labor force varies by individual community, and by ages of children in the home. Those with children ages 0 to 5 and all parents in the labor force, varies from a low of 36% in Ainsworth, to a high of 100% in Coppock, while those with children ages 6 to 17 ranges from a low of 72% in Wellman to a high of 100% in Coppock.

When households with children ages 6 to 17 have a higher percentage of all parents working than households with children ages 0 to 5 in the same market, it may indicate that a parent stays home while the children are very young and (re)enters the labor force after the children are in school. Kalona, Wellman, and West Chester are the only communities where the percentage of all parents working is higher when the children are very young and lower when children are of the age they would be in school.

Figure 28: Washington County Families with All Parents in the Labor Force



Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

Table 53: Percentage of Households with All Parents Working, 2019

	<b>With Children Age 0 to 5</b>	<b>With Children Age 6 to 17</b>
Ainsworth	36%	89%
Brighton	70%	85%
Coppock	100%	100%
Kalona	83%	78%
Riverside	64%	81%
Washington	64%	77%
Wellman	79%	72%
West Chester	100%	89%
Washington County	62%	76%
State of Iowa	76%	81%

Source: *Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa*. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

### Parents Prefer DHS Regulated Child Care Settings

The most preferred arrangement chosen by parents on the child care needs survey was a DHS licensed center, for all ages. For children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) the second most preferred arrangement is a regulated home. For children ages 5 to 12 the second most preferred arrangement is to not use child care or for a relative such as a grandparent or sibling to watch the child.

If all choices were available, 40% of parents with children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten), and 35% of parents with children ages 5 to 12 would prefer a licensed center. The next most preferred setting for children ages 0 to 5 is a regulated home with 30%. Among parents that have children ages 5 to 12 the next most preferred setting is a relative such as sibling or grandparent (19%) or to not use care (19%).

Table 54: Preferred Child Care Settings

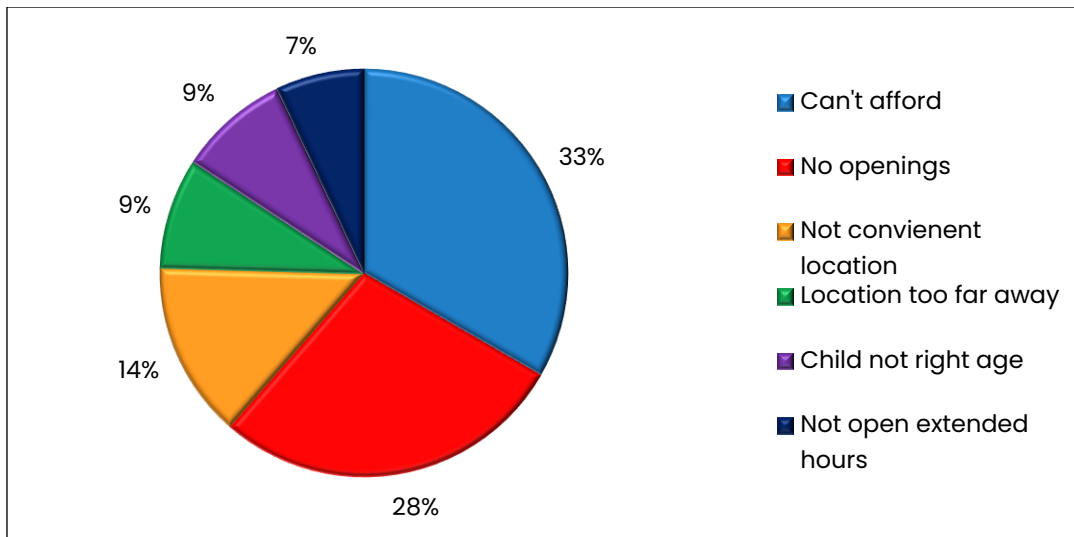
	<b>Age 0 to 5</b>	<b>Ages 5 to 12</b>
Child Care Center	40%	35%
Regulated Home	30%	17%
Unregulated Home	4%	4%
Nanny or Babysitter	2%	5%
Relative, Sibling, etc.	6%	19%
Other	0%	0%
Prefer to Not Use	17%	19%

Source: *Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa*. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

### Less Than Half of Parents Are Using their Preferred Child Care Setting

Only 36% of current parents indicated their children are currently in their preferred type of child care, and another 20% indicated they would prefer to not use care for various reasons. Of the those that indicated their children are not in their preferred setting and they are interested in “outside care”, the most common reason given was that they can’t afford their preferred setting, followed by the preferred provider not having openings or space. Other reasons included location, children not the right age, and the hours.

Figure 29: Reasons Why Children are Not Enrolled in Preferred Child Care Setting



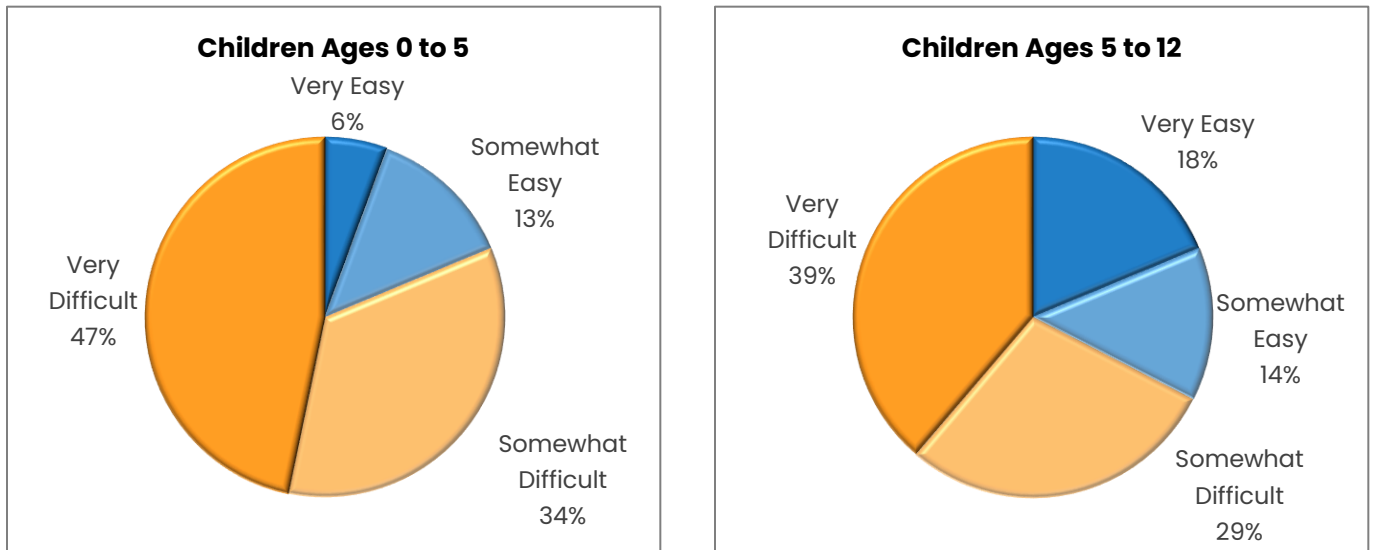
Source: *Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa*. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

### Parents Have Difficulty Finding Child Care

The child care needs survey indicated that 81% of parents with children ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) and 68% of parents with children ages 5 to 12 found it somewhat difficult or very difficult to find child care. Obstacles named were almost exclusively related to lack of openings or not enough spaces.

If an adequate supply of child care is not available, parents may look for care outside the county, consider moving, or limit the number of children they have. Forty-five (45) parents indicated the current child care supply in Washington County has impacted their decision to have or adopt children or has caused them to limit the size of their family.

Figure 30: Ability to Find Child Care



Source: Washington County Child Care Needs Survey by First Children's Finance, © 2021

### Shortage of Child Care Spaces

There are an estimated 3,485 children ages 0 to 11 living in Washington County as of 2019. Based on the percentage of families that have all parents working, the number of children that have all parents working, and parents' preferences, First Children's Finance estimates that approximately 1,511 children likely need care within a DHS regulated setting. With only 754 DHS regulated spaces (as of November 2021) and only 667 of those available full-time and year-round, the deficit could be as high as 844 spaces.

Table 55: Child Care and Preschool Spaces in Washington County

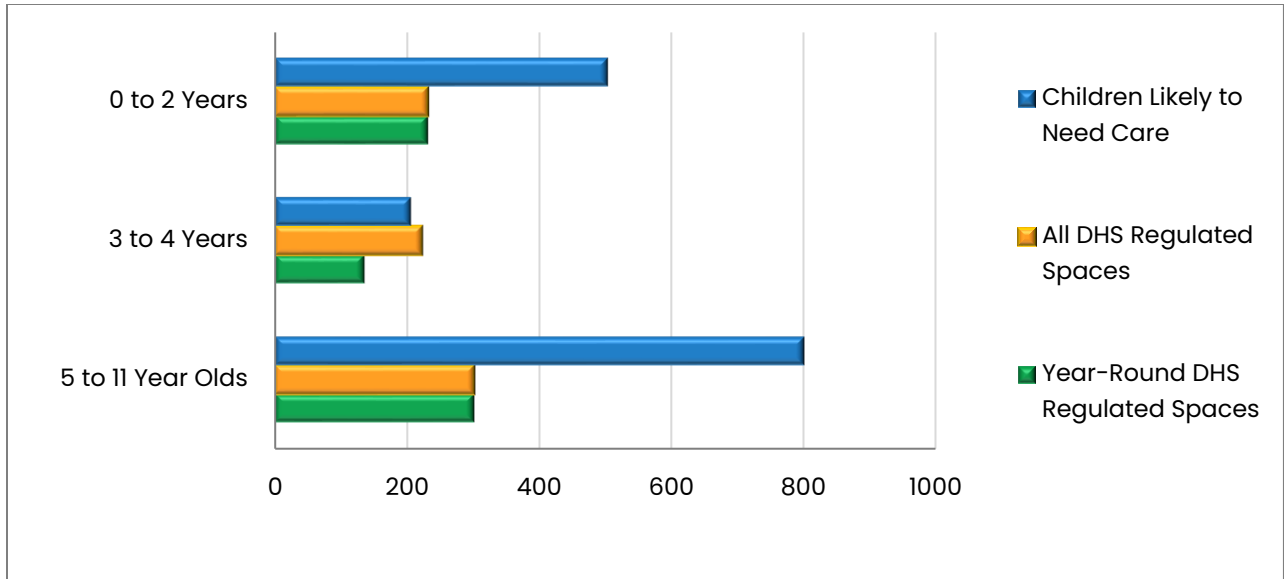
	Children Needing Care	DHS Listed Spaces <sup>20</sup>	Child Care Gap	Year-Round Spaces	Child Care Gap
Age 0 to 2	504	231	-273	231	<b>-273</b>
Age 3 to 4	206	222	+16	135	<b>-71</b>
Age 5 to 11	801	301	-500	301	-500
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>-757</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>-844</b>

Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

The following figure shows a comparison of the children likely to use regulated child care, the total DHS regulated spaces, and the year-round DHS regulated spaces, by age groups.

<sup>20</sup> Only full-time, year-round child care spaces were included. Part-time or school year only preschool spaces were not included.

Figure 31: Children Need Care vs. DHS Regulated Spaces<sup>21</sup>



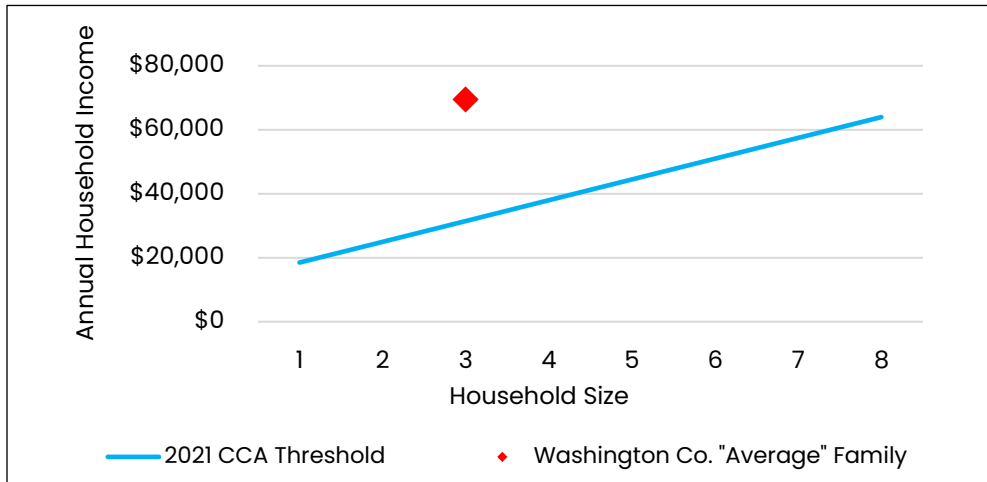
Source: *Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa*. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

### Median Family Income is Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold

The median annual income for families in Washington County with children under the age of 18 is \$69,462 county-wide. To be eligible for tuition assistance under the Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) program according to the 2021 eligibility guidelines, a family of 3 must have an annual household income below \$31,494 and a family of 4 must have an annual household income below \$37,990 to initially qualify. While many households with children in Washington County exceed these thresholds, it is possible they still struggle to pay child care expenses out of pocket. The following figure plots the median income of households with children under 18 for Washington County using the average family size of 2.91. The line shows the CCA eligibility based on based 145% of the poverty threshold based on the household size. The affordability gap between the median family income in Washington County (\$69,462) and the CCA eligibility guideline for a family of 3 (\$31,494) is easily visible by comparing the red diamond and the blue line directly below the diamond.

<sup>21</sup> Spaces do not include school district programs such as Statewide Voluntary Preschool if they are not licensed by Iowa Department of Human Services, or after school activities that are exempt from DHS Child Care Licensing.

Figure 32: Child Care Assistance Thresholds vs. Median Income of Family with Children



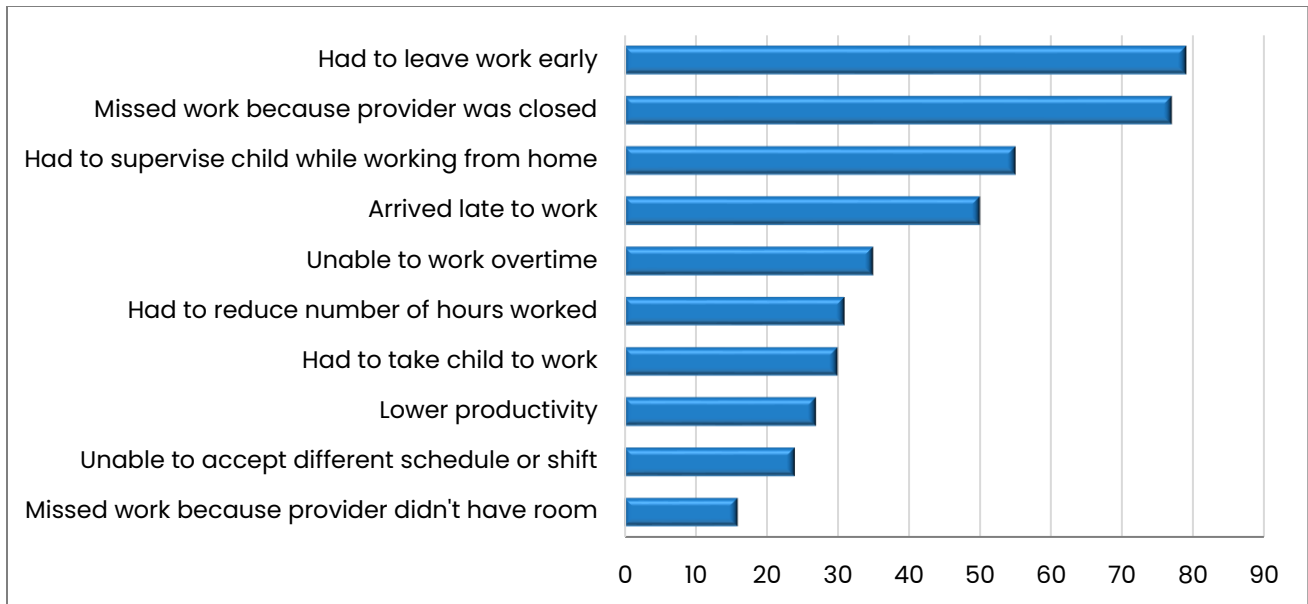
Source: Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

### Parents Indicate Child Care is Affecting their Employment

Over the last 12 months, parents in Washington County have experienced child care challenges that have in turn affected their employment. The most commonly named effects were having to leave work early, missing work because the provider was closed, and arriving late to work, and having to supervise their child while working from home. The figure on the next page shows the 10 most common effects of child care challenges on parent's employment.

In addition to those challenges, 24 parents indicated child care challenges are keeping them or their spouse or partner from working. Separately, 49 parents indicated child care challenges are limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment, such as forcing them to work fewer hours or only being able to accept positions that have hours when they can secure child care.

Figure 33: Most Common Effects of Child Care Challenges in the Last 12 Months



Source: *Child Care Market Analysis of Washington County, Iowa*. Copyright © 2021, First Children's Finance.

### Employers Indicate Child Care is Affecting Productivity and Attendance

Employers in Washington County are seeing the affect child care challenges has on their labor force. Through the child care needs survey, 45% of employers indicated their business has experienced challenges related to productivity due to parents' child care challenges, while 55% indicated they had experienced challenges related to employee absenteeism because of employee's child care challenges.

Employer comments indicate productivity is affected when parents have to leave work early to pick-up children from child care. When it comes to attendance, employees often have to miss because their provider is closed for a day, or more recently due to programs shutting down during COVID.

### Child Care Providers Indicate Staffing is a Challenge

Child care providers in Washington County indicated that staff turnover and hiring are both challenges they are facing, especially child care centers. Among the child care centers participating in the survey they lost a total of 20 employees over the last 12 months, and currently have 14 vacant positions. When it comes to hiring, 80% of centers and 33% of homes indicated hiring in the last 12 months has been very difficult. As a result, 2 centers and 1 home also reported that they had to close a classroom or limit enrollment due to not enough staff.

Separate from general turnover, child care providers indicated COVID has affected staffing over the past 12 months. Not only has COVID caused some staff to have to quarantine or not come to work, it has also made it harder to find people that want to work in the child care environment.

## **PUTTING THIS STUDY INTO USE**

First Children's Finance's (FCF) research has provided information that can be valuable to the communities within Washington County, as well the existing child care providers. Based on FCF's analysis, it can be concluded that the number of children living in Washington County has been increasing and more quality child care spaces are needed. The data in this report shows that the families within Washington County have different demographics, and each community has a different supply and demand for child care. That data, along with the employer, child care provider, and parent survey results can guide future decisions concerning child care in Washington County. Those decisions include what ages to provide care for, hours of operation, what factors are important to parents when selecting child care, and what child care settings are most preferred by parents.