



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Child Care Use in Minnesota

*2004 Statewide Household
Child Care Survey*



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Summary

Study purposes and methods

This report on a statewide telephone survey describes child care use in Minnesota among households with children 12 and younger. The survey was conducted from May 2004 through March 2005 to reflect child care use during the summer and the school year.

Interviewers spoke with one adult in each household who was most knowledgeable about child care arrangements. The survey collected information about all the types of child care used at least once in each of the prior two weeks for one randomly selected child per household. The study also includes information on reasons for choosing various arrangements, costs of child care, work related issues and parent satisfaction with current child care arrangements.

The results provide an overview of the availability, quality and affordability of child care for all families in Minnesota.

In this study, child care refers to all arrangements other than parents and the regular school time (K-12). It includes informal home-based care by family, friends and neighbors; licensed home-based care; center-based care (including preschool, nursery school and school-age care programs before and after the school day); organized activities such as clubs or sports, and self care by the child. For complete definitions, see page 13 of the report.

The study included 1,363 randomly selected households (391 surveyed in the summer and 972 during the school year). The base sample is stratified by region (in Greater Minnesota) and by county (in the Twin Cities metropolitan area). The survey has a good response rate of 67.4 percent and an overall sampling error of about plus or minus 2.7 percent.¹

The households in this survey are reasonably representative of all Minnesota households with children ages 12 and younger, based on comparing several sample characteristics with U.S. Census data. For example, about 80 percent of the households surveyed have two parents present, and about 86 percent identify themselves as White, 3 percent as Black or African American, 2 percent as Hispanic or Latino, 2 percent as Asian and 1 percent as American Indian. About 5 percent are of other racial or ethnic identification or

¹ Sub-samples have higher sampling error. For example, the sub-sample of households with low incomes with a child care subsidy has 94 households and a sampling error of plus or minus 10 percent. The sampling error does not diminish any statistical significance but should be taken into account when generalizing results or making population estimates.

of mixed race or ethnicity. Slightly over half of the respondents (56 percent) live in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area, and 44 percent live in Greater Minnesota.

A similar statewide child care survey was conducted in 1999 of 2,450 households with children ages 14 and younger, which offers the opportunity for comparisons.² Because of some methodological differences, however, comparisons should be done with caution. The 1999 survey used an open-ended diary format to collect and categorize detailed information on child care arrangements and schedules for the youngest child in the household (up to age 14). For this survey, respondents chose child care arrangements and schedules from a pre-categorized list for a randomly selected child (up to age 12), which may or may not be the youngest child.

Key findings

Profile of child care use, hours and schedules

About three-fourths of Minnesota families (74 percent) with children under age 13 regularly use some type of child care arrangement.

- On average, households have two child care arrangements.
- Thirty-six percent of households use just one child care arrangement; 39 percent use two and 26 percent use three or more.
- Most families have stable child care arrangements; that is, they have not changed their child care arrangements in the past 12 months for the child covered in the survey. About 19 percent had one arrangement other than their current ones, and just 7 percent have had two or more other arrangements.
- On average, children spend about 24 hours per week in child care.
- Twenty-eight percent of children are in child care full time (35 or more hours per week), similar to findings in the 1999 *Child Care Use in Minnesota* survey (30 percent).
- The average amount of time in child care is about 28 hours in the summer and 22 hours during the school year. Those averages are fairly close to the averages found in the 1999 survey.
- During both the summer and the school year, on average, children are in licensed family child care and center-based care more hours than in any other type of care.

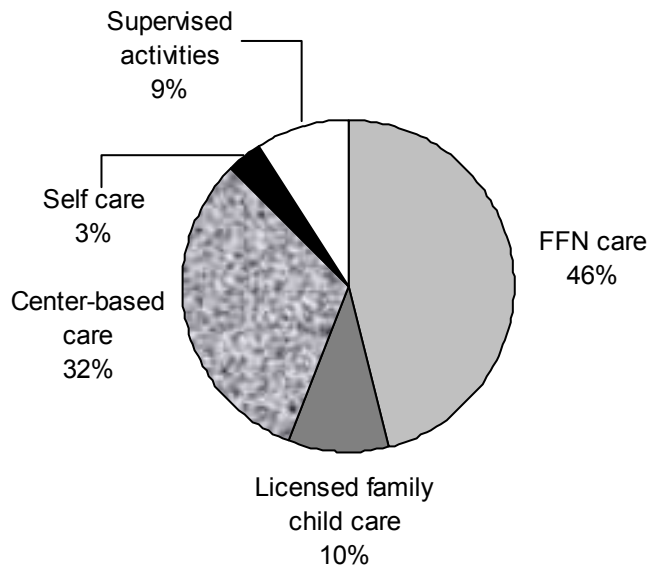
² Chase, R. and Shelton, E. 2001. *Child Care Use in Minnesota, Report of the 1999 Statewide Household Child Care Survey*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research.

- Children ages 5 and younger spend an average of 27 hours per week in child care during the school year, while school-age children spend smaller but still significant amounts of time in child care. (Children ages 6 to 9 spend an average of 18 hours in child care, and those ages 10 to 12 spend an average of 13 hours.)

Relatives are the primary caregivers overall.

- Of households that use child care, 46 percent use family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care in their own homes (28 percent) or in someone else's home (18 percent) as their primary arrangement. See Figure 1.
- The FFN caregivers are mainly grandparents (34 percent) and nonrelatives (24 percent), followed by older siblings (14 percent) and other relatives (17 percent).
- For children under age 6, the FFN care is more commonly provided by grandparents. For children ages 6 to 12, the FFN care more often is provided by older siblings.
- In addition, FFN care is the secondary arrangement in 25 percent of the surveyed households. See Figure 2.
- In this survey, 81 percent say they—at least sometimes—have at least one relative, neighbor or friend available to provide child care on a regular basis. This is a key change since 1999, when only 64 percent of households with one or more child care arrangements reported they had informal help with child care available.

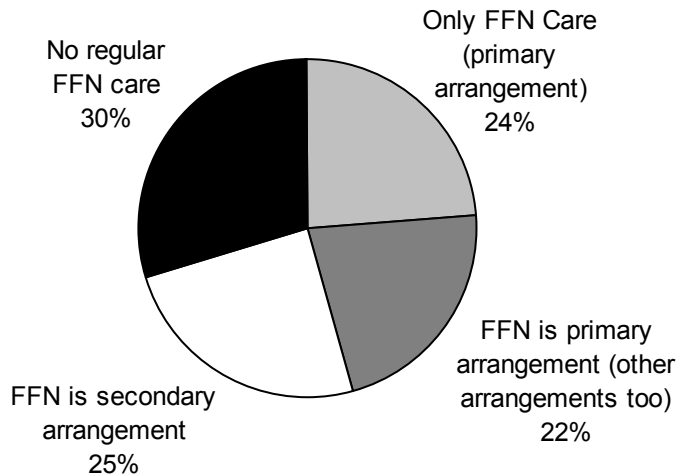
1. Primary child care arrangements for children 12 and younger



Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Defined by the parent as arrangements used at least once per week in each of the last two weeks for one randomly selected child per household. (N=1,363)

2. Use of family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care for children 12 and younger



Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Center-based care is the next most frequent type of primary arrangement.

- One-third of households use center-based care as their primary arrangement, including child care centers, preschools, Head Start and before-school and after-school programs.
- Center-based care is the most common primary arrangement during the school year for children ages 3 to 5 (60 percent, up from 41 percent in 1999), followed by 33 percent for children under 3 and 28 percent for children ages 6 to 9.
- Among households with low incomes (at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a family of their size), those receiving child care assistance are more likely than those without a subsidy to use center-based care as their primary arrangement (57 percent versus 18 percent, compared with 33 percent for households with higher incomes) and less likely to use FFN care as their primary arrangement (28 percent versus 65 percent, compared with 42 percent for households with higher incomes).³

During the school year, the types of child care vary by the children's ages.⁴

- Two-thirds of children are in the care of family, friends or neighbors at least part of the time during the school year (67 percent), followed by center-based care (49 percent), supervised activities (40 percent), self care (13 percent), and licensed family child care (12 percent).
- During the school year, FFN care use is highest for children under 3 (78 percent) and, though still fairly high, least frequent for children ages 3 to 5 (61 percent).
- Center-based care use during the school year is highest for 3- to 5-year-olds (79 percent), followed by children under age 3 (43 percent), children ages 6 to 9 (41 percent) and children ages 10 to 12 (25 percent).
- Supervised activities during the school year are fairly common child care arrangements for children ages 6 to 9 (52 percent) and those 10 to 12 (56 percent), compared with 36 percent of 3- to 5-year-olds.

³ This center-based category includes all types of center-based care, including child care centers, Head Start and before- and after-school programs. When the analysis includes only the child care centers, the percentages drop to 43.6 percent for households with low incomes with child care assistance, 9.4 percent for those without a subsidy and 22.3 percent for households with higher incomes. The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) encourages eligible families to apply to Head Start but does not reimburse any Head Start-only expenses. Families may use child care provided in partnership with Head Start, which may be subsidized through CCAP.

⁴ This section reports all the arrangements used during the school year for the selected child, so the percentages are duplicated.

- Forty-one percent of children ages 10 to 12 are in self care regularly during the school year, compared with 16 percent of children ages 6 to 9. During the summer, 42 percent of children ages 10 to 12 and 4 percent of children ages 6 to 9 are in self care. The percentage in self care for children ages 10 to 12 is higher than the percentage found in the 1999 survey (26 percent school year and 20 percent summer).

Family schedules commonly require child care before and after standard work hours (7 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and on weekends.

- During the school year, Monday through Friday, between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., is at least part of the child care schedule for 93 percent of children and is the only schedule for 32 percent.
- In addition to standard weekday hours during the school year, 48 percent of children are regularly in non-parental care during weekday evenings (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.), and 44 percent are regularly in non-parental care on weekends. Thirteen percent are in non-parental care after 10 p.m. on weekdays, and 14 percent in the early mornings before 7 a.m. Family, friends and neighbors are the usual caregivers during these times.
- Twenty-seven percent of working parents have schedules that vary from week to week, up from 23 percent in 1999.

Cost of child care

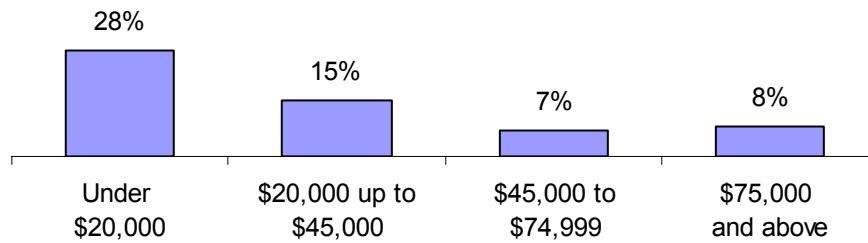
Most families who use child care for children ages 12 or younger have out-of-pocket child care expenses. Households with low incomes have the biggest cost burden relative to their incomes.

- Seventy percent pay something out-of-pocket for child care, up from 59 percent in 1999 among households with children 12 and younger with one or more child care arrangements.⁵
- For those paying for child care, the average out-of-pocket weekly expense for all children is \$111 (\$5,781 per year), just about \$2 more per week on average than reported in 1999. On average, metro-area households pay more than Greater Minnesota households per week for all their child care (\$127 versus \$90).

⁵ This increase in the percentage of households with out-of-pocket child care expenses may be due to an increase in registered FFN, paid FFN, and copays for households using child care subsidies.

- On average, those with child care payments are paying 10 percent of their annual household income for child care, which is considered affordable. However, families in the lowest income group (under \$20,000 per year) pay a much higher percentage. (See Figure 3.)

3. Proportion of annual household income going for child care costs

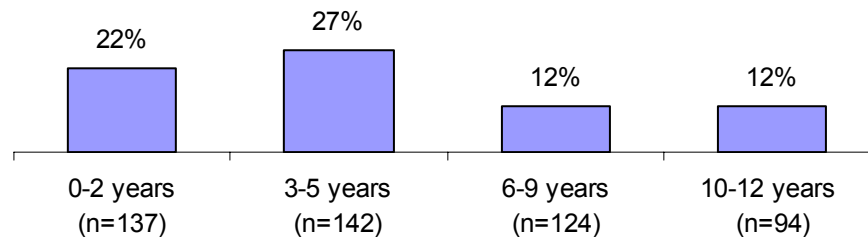


Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Some families receive help paying for child care through government assistance and tax benefits. More families are eligible for this help than are receiving it.

- Nineteen percent of households with low incomes (at or below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines) report currently receiving a subsidy through the state Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). (See Figure 4.) About one-third of low-income households that are currently eligible but not receiving child care assistance say they are not aware of the subsidy.
- Forty-three percent of households with incomes above 200 percent of poverty claim a tax credit for child care, and 36 percent have child care (pre-tax) expense accounts. (Benefit amounts vary by income and family size.)

4. Proportion of households with low incomes receiving state child care assistance, by age of selected child



Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Selecting child care: choices and barriers

Convenience, quality and cost are the top reasons for choosing specific child care arrangements.

- For FFN care, preference for care by a family member and trust are also main reasons. Parents also choose center-based care and supervised activities for the structure and the activities.
- From a list of important considerations in choosing child care, the special training of the caregiver is the top “very important” reason overall (73 percent) and the most important consideration for parents of children 9 and younger.
- Eighty-four percent of parents with low incomes say that a reasonable cost for child care is very important in choosing child care, compared with 61 percent of parents with higher incomes.

A sizeable percentage of parents, including those whose children have special needs, indicate they have limited child care options.

- Eighteen percent of households with children ages 12 and younger have one or more children with a special need that affects their child care options. Special needs include behavioral problems, developmental disabilities, health care needs that require extra attention or learning disabilities that require specialized care. Parents report that children ages 6 to 12 are more likely than younger children to have special needs (22 percent versus 14 percent).
- Twenty-nine percent of all parents say that in choosing child care they “had to take whatever child care arrangement they could get,” up from 21 percent in the 1999 survey.
- Among all parents, parents of color are more likely than White parents to report feeling they had to take whatever arrangement they could get (38 percent versus 28 percent), and so are those whose primary language is not English (43 percent versus 29 percent).
- In addition, parents with children who have special needs are also more likely to feel that way (39 percent versus 27 percent of parents whose children have no special needs).
- Income is also a factor. Parents with low incomes (38 percent) are more likely to feel that way compared with parents with higher incomes (27 percent).

Parental ratings of child care quality

Most parents give high ratings to the quality of their primary child care arrangement.

- Parents of younger children, households with higher incomes and those using their preferred type of care tend to report higher satisfaction with their primary arrangements.
- Compared to parents using center-based care and licensed family homes as their primary arrangements, parents using FFN care as their primary arrangement tend to be more satisfied with the individual attention their child receives and the flexibility of their child care arrangement.
- Parents using center-based and licensed family homes as their primary arrangements, on the other hand, tend to rate these items higher: creative activities and activities that are just right for their child, the knowledge of the caregiver about children and their needs, the caregiver's ability to meet their child's needs ("do not feel they are too demanding"), and not watching too much TV.

Child care among households with low incomes

On balance, households with low incomes have more challenges, less choice, and more problems with child care than do households with higher incomes, but child care assistance nearly levels the playing field.

- Twenty-two percent of households in this study are considered low-income; that is, their annual income is within or below the income range that includes 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a household of their size. For example, for a household of four people, 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline is \$38,700. For perspective, in 2003, the estimated median family income for Minnesota families with children under age 18 was \$62,303 and \$76,733 for all four-person families.
- Households with low incomes are more likely than households with higher incomes to say that in choosing child care they feel they had to take whatever arrangement they could get (38 percent versus 27 percent), to report that child care problems have prevented them from accepting or keeping the kind of job they wanted in the past 12 months (36 percent versus 14 percent) and to have a child with special needs requiring a lot of extra effort (13 percent versus 5 percent).
- Among households with low incomes, those who have child care subsidies are more likely than those without subsidies to be aware of Child Care Resource & Referral Services (CCR&R) (86 percent versus 61 percent), to learn about their current primary arrangement through community or CCR&R services (19 percent versus 9 percent) and, similar to households with higher incomes, to choose child care due to

the quality of the care (15 percent versus 9 percent) rather than due to cost (2 percent versus 14 percent).⁶

- Among households with low incomes, those without a child care subsidy are more likely than those with a subsidy to prefer care by a family member (20 percent versus 12 percent). Households with low incomes with a child care subsidy are similar to households with higher incomes in this regard.
- Among households with low incomes, those with child care subsidies tend to rate their child care arrangements higher than those without child care subsidies, and similarly to households with higher incomes, on these items: creative activities and activities that are just right for their child, the knowledge of the caregiver about children and their needs and not watching too much TV.

Parental employment issues related to child care

Child care problems reduce employee productivity and income.

- Seventy-nine percent of mothers in the surveyed households are working, looking for work, and/or going to school. About half are doing that full time (40 or more hours per week).
- Twenty percent say child care problems have interfered with getting or keeping a job in the past year, similar to the 1999 survey. Child care problems that interfere with employment more commonly affect parents of color (35 percent), parents who have a child with a special need (34 percent), parents with low incomes (36 percent) and parents who have child care subsidies (38 percent) than other parents by about two to one.
- Thirty-seven percent of households say they and/or their spouse or partner have lost time or income in the past six months due to a child care problem other than a sick child.
- When a child is sick or becomes ill during work hours, 83 percent of parents say their usual backup plan is for a parent to stay home or to go home from work, up from 75 percent in the 1999 survey.

⁶ The sub-sample of households with low incomes using a child care subsidy has 94 households and a sampling error of plus or minus 10 percent. The sampling error does not diminish the statistical significance but should be taken into account when generalizing results or making population estimates.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study and discussion with researchers and the study advisory committee, the Department of Human Services recommends the following to ensure that child care is available, of high quality and affordable for all Minnesota families who need it.

1. Develop the supply of high-quality child care options.

The supply of high-quality child care options could be developed by supporting specialized training for child care providers, by encouraging providers and offering them incentives to improve the quality of their care and by empowering parents to make informed decisions about their child care choices. Survey results indicate that parents value highly trained caregivers regardless of their primary child care arrangement or the child's age, but especially for preschool children. In addition, most parents say they would find it helpful if their community had a child care quality rating system that would give them information they could use for selecting the highest quality care.

2. Continue public and private efforts to develop the supply of affordable child care options.

While family, friend and neighbor care is a common child care choice, some parents using that care would prefer center-based programs but cannot afford them. Ways to improve affordability of all child care options include increasing the use of child care tax credits, increasing access to pre-tax child care expense accounts through employers and reducing copayments or out-of-pocket expenses for parents receiving child care assistance.

3. Find ways that formal systems can provide support to family, friend and neighbor caregivers and connect them to appropriate resources.

Grandparents should be eligible for Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE). Schools, school-age care programs, and other youth enrichment programs could provide opportunities for children who are responsible for caring for their younger siblings to learn more about child safety and child care.

See also the recommendations in *Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers: Report of the 2004 Minnesota Statewide Household Child Care Survey*.⁷

⁷ Chase, R., et al. 2005. *Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers, Report of the 2004 Minnesota Statewide Household Child Care Survey*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Human Services.

4. Support programs that provide supervised, developmentally appropriate activities for pre-teens.

The relatively high and growing (compared with 1999) proportion of pre-teens providing self care throughout the year points to the need for more supervised activities and programs for 10- to 12-year-olds during the summer and after school.

Introduction

Survey background and purposes

In 1999, the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning (now Minnesota Department of Education) funded the first statewide household survey of child care usage.⁸ Findings from this telephone survey of 2,450 families documented the types of child care—both formal and informal—used by Minnesota families, cost of child care, parent perceptions of child care quality, access to child care and issues of child care and parent employment. The study results have and continue to inform child care policies and programs at the local and state level. A database of survey results is available from Wilder Research (research@wilder.org).

Since 1999, the social, political and economic context that shapes families' need for and use of child care has changed substantially. Work requirements initially pushed large numbers of parents receiving welfare into the workforce and increased demand for child care and child care assistance. Welfare rolls have since declined dramatically. An economy that was strong at the beginning of this period has since cooled, creating new pressures for families to keep or find jobs and affordable child care. In 2003, Minnesota's child care program was moved from the Department of Education to the Department of Human Services (DHS). At the same time, state funding for child care assistance was reduced as program reforms were enacted by the legislature. New policy and program priorities in the areas of support for informal, legal nonlicensed providers; access to child care for families with low incomes; school readiness for young children and professional development of child care providers are being shaped.

All of these factors created the need for a new household survey in Minnesota to document the changes in child care use over the five-year period, to collect data to address emerging issues and needs and to develop and assess policies and programs related to Minnesota's early childhood and school-age care system, specifically those designed to support the school readiness of young children and to improve the quality and availability of child care for families with low incomes.

Funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the survey was conducted from May 2004 through March 2005. One adult responsible for the household and most knowledgeable about the child care arrangements provided information about all the types of child care used at least once in each of the prior two weeks for one randomly

⁸ Chase, R. and Shelton, E. 2001. *Child Care Use in Minnesota, Report of the 1999 Statewide Household Child Care Survey*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research.

selected child per household. The study also includes information on reasons for choosing various arrangements, barriers to use, costs of child care and the capacity of parents to pay for various types of child care, the quality and stability of child care currently in use from the parents' perspective and parent satisfaction with current child care arrangements.

The results are useful for assessing if the supply of child care is available, of high quality and affordable for all families in Minnesota.

Child care and other definitions in this report

“Child care” is how children spend time when they are not with a parent or at school during the two weeks prior to the survey. It includes all times during the day or night. In the survey, interviewers read respondents a list of different kinds of child care arrangements, programs children attend and people who care for children; and parents stated which ones they used at least once in each of the last two weeks for a randomly selected child. If the child was on vacation or home sick during the past two weeks, responses referred to the two weeks before vacation or illness. The types of care in the survey are:

- Center-based care, which includes Head Start, a child care center, a nursery school or preschool, or a pre-kindergarten, not including child care or babysitting in either the child's home or someone else's home.
- A program that provided before-school or after-school care outside the child's home.
- Child care or babysitting in the respondent's home or the child's other parent's home by someone other than the child's parents. This could include a relative, an older sibling, a neighbor or a nanny, as long as they are ages 13 or older.
- Child care or babysitting in someone else's home during the day, evening or overnight, either a licensed family child care home or not.
- Supervised activities or lessons at a recreation center, library, church, camp, gym or a sports facility. During the summer this included an organized summer program, such as a recreation program, summer day camp or overnight camp.
- Self care or whenever children took care of themselves or stayed alone with a brother or sister age 12 or younger on a regular basis, even for a small amount of time.

In this study, child care excludes care provided by medical or social services, such as personal care attendants, doctors or nurses, group home staff, respite care providers or case managers.

“Family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care” includes informal care in the child’s home or in someone else’s home. If the care is in someone else’s home, the care is defined as FFN care if it is reported as *not* a licensed family child care home. FFN caregivers include grandparents, aunts, siblings, cousins and non-relatives 13 or older.

The **“primary arrangement”** is the type reported by the respondent to be used most often for the randomly selected child at least once a week in each of the last two weeks.

“Regular” means used at least once a week during each of the last two weeks.

“Non-standard schedule” means child care that occurs before 7 a.m., after 6 p.m. or on a weekend.

“Parent” is the survey respondent—the adult in the household most knowledgeable about the children’s care. In some cases the respondent was not the child’s parent but was an aunt or grandparent functioning as the primary caregiver for the child, and was included in this report as a “parent.”

Parents are classified as **“working”** if they reported themselves, during the previous week, as working for pay at a job (including self-employed), holding a job but not at work (such as on vacation, jury duty or sick), looking for work or going to school. Respondents are classified as “not working” if they reported themselves, during the previous week, as being in an unpaid job training program, at home full time or unable to work because of disability. Employment information is also reported for the spouse/partner of the respondent only when the spouse/partner is related to the randomly selected child in the same way as the respondent (e.g., parent, grandparent or uncle).

“Households with low incomes” are those whose annual income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a family of their size. Because the survey asked for income in ranges rather than exact income, this is a high estimate of the number of households with low incomes.

“Out-of-pocket expenses” for child care are payments made by the parent or anyone in the household for the care of one or more children during the previous week. Parents who receive a subsidy through the Child Care Assistance Program and have incomes above 75 percent of poverty guidelines have out-of-pocket expenses or copayments amounting to

part but not all of the cost of the care.⁹ Other kinds of subsidies, such as the Child Care Dependent Tax Credit, reduce income taxes for eligible families who claim child care expenses. Parents using these types of subsidies have out-of-pocket costs equal to the full cost of care.

“**Metro**” refers to the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan region (Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Scott, Carver, Dakota and Washington counties).

“**Greater Minnesota**” comprises the 80 counties in the state economic development regions 1 through 10.

Survey method and samples

Researchers purchased random digit samples of listed and unlisted telephone numbers for each region in the state (based on the state’s Economic Development regions) and within the metro region for each county. Trained interviewers called each telephone number (more than 29,000) to determine eligibility (a household with one or more children ages 12 or younger that used any form of child care at least once a week in each of the prior two weeks). Using computer-assisted scheduling, interviewers called each randomly selected number at least 10 different times at different times of the day and on different days of the week, including Saturday mornings and Sunday evenings. After making contact, interviewers continued calling until exhausting all reasonable leads, ultimately making nearly 136,000 calls. Initial contacts were made in English, Hmong and Spanish, and surveys were conducted in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish.

One adult per household answered general questions about child care use and experiences and provided child care information for one randomly selected child.

The study has a base sample of 1,363 randomly selected households (391 interviewed in summer and 972 during the school year). The base sample is proportional by region (in Greater Minnesota) and county (in the metro area). Figure 5 shows how the 1,363 completed surveys are distributed by region and county in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

⁹ Some families with incomes at or below 75 percent of poverty guidelines, with a child care subsidy, could also have out-of-pocket expenses if the maximum subsidy rate does not cover the full cost of the amount charged by the child care provider.

5. Distribution of completed surveys

Region or county	Number and percent of completed surveys	Percent of sample expected based on Census estimates
1	1%	2%
2	2%	2%
3	6%	6%
4	4%	4%
5	2%	3%
6E	2%	2%
6W	<1%	1%
7E	3%	3%
7W	8%	7%
8	2%	2%
9	6%	4%
10	8%	9%
Anoka	8%	7%
Dakota	9%	8%
Hennepin	19%	21%
Ramsey	10%	10%
Washington	5%	5%
Scott/Carver	6%	4%
Total	1,363	100%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

In addition to the base sample, households were canvassed and screened for eligibility with one additional criterion—an annual household income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Researchers called an additional 16,097 phone numbers to interview an over-sample of 180 households with low incomes.

Instrument development

The survey instrument, initially developed by Wilder Research for the 1999 Household Child Care Use in Minnesota study, was modified with the assistance of an advisory group made up of state, county and local child care professionals, policymakers and social service representatives (see Acknowledgements). The instrument drew relevant questions from the following prior national and local child care surveys:¹⁰

Minnesota Child Care Resource & Referral Outcomes Follow-up Survey
Quality of Care from a Parent's Point of View
National Child Care Survey
Minnesota Family Investment Program, Longitudinal Study
National Household Education Surveys
Census, Survey of Income and Program Participation, Child Care Module
National Survey of American Families

The survey instrument was pre-tested with 25 parents of varying education levels, race/ethnicity, children's ages, and residence (metro or Greater Minnesota) for final revisions.

The instrument was translated into Spanish, Hmong and Somali.

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- ¹⁰ Chase, R. 1999. *Minnesota CCR&R Outcomes Follow-Up Survey*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research.
- Emlen, A., Koren, P., Schultze, K. 2000. *A Packet of Scales for Measuring Quality of Child Care From a Parent's Point of View: With Summary of Method and Findings*. Portland, OR: Portland State University. Available at <http://www.hhs.oregonstate.edu/familypolicy/occrp/publications.html#parentsperspective>
- Hofferth, S. L., Brayfield, A. A., Deich, S. G., Holcomb, P. A. 1991. *National Child Care Survey, 1990*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.
- Minnesota Department of Human Services. 1998. *Minnesota Family Investment Program Longitudinal Study*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Human Services. Contact Karen Green Jung, Project Manager, (651) 296-4408, karen.green.jung@state.mn.us Reports available at http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/economic_support/documents/pub/DHS_id_004113.hcsp#MFIP
- National Center for Education Statistics. 1991, 1995. *National Household Education Surveys*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics. Available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/questionnaires.asp>
- U.S. Census Bureau. 1996. *Child Care Module, Survey of Income and Program Participation*. Available at http://www.sipp.census.gov/sipp/top_mod/1996/quests/wave4/childcar.htm
- Wang, K., Cantor, D., Vaden-Kiernan, N. 2000. *1999 NSAF Questionnaire*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute. Available at <http://www.urban.org/content/Research/NewFederalism/NSAF/Questionnaire/Question.htm>
- Wang, K., Dipko, S., Vaden-Kiernan, N. 1999. *1997 NSAF Questionnaire*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute. Available at <http://www.urban.org/content/Research/NewFederalism/NSAF/Questionnaire/Question.htm>

Strengths and limitations of survey results

Given the growing challenges in conducting telephone surveys, this survey has good response rates of 67.4 percent for the base sample and 68.1 percent for the low-income over-sample. Comparable national child care surveys had response rates well below 60 percent.

The statewide sample of 1,363 has a sampling error of about plus or minus 2.7 percent. Sub-samples have higher sampling errors, for example, plus or minus 4 percent for the Greater Minnesota sub-sample of 601 households; 5 percent for the low-income sub-sample of 500 households; 5 percent for the sub-samples of 335 children ages 0 to 2, 376 children ages 3 to 5 and 389 children ages 6 to 9; 6 percent for the sub-sample of 263 randomly selected children ages 10 to 12 and 10 percent for the sub-sample of 94 households with low incomes with child care subsidies. Sub-samples of 50 or fewer cases have a sampling error of 14 percent or higher and should be interpreted with caution.

Interviewers screened first for households with one or more children ages 12 or younger and then for the use of any type of child care at least once a week in each of the last two weeks.

Interviewers asked to speak to the adult household member most knowledgeable about the selected child. All information is reported by this self-selected household member. Specifically, interviewers told households with children ages 12 and younger, “This survey is about the different kinds of care children have throughout the day and night whenever they are not with a parent, or if they are kindergartners or older, not attending school. This includes babysitting or daycare in your home, someone else’s home, at a child care center, a preschool, or someplace else where they attend programs or participate in activities or lessons. It includes any time day or night the children are being watched by grandparents, other relatives, your friends or neighbors, older brothers and sisters or taking care of themselves.”

The telephone survey method does not include the estimated 3 percent of households without telephones. It also does not include the estimated 6 percent of households that have cell phones only, based on national surveys. These households tend to be households with higher incomes without children.¹¹

Comparing the survey sample with 2000 Census data and considering that the surveyed households are a subset of all households with children ages 12 and under that regularly use child care, the surveyed households and the selected children within them are reasonably representative of the population of Minnesota households with children ages 12 and under (see Figures 7 and 8, pages 23-24).

¹¹ Piekarski, L. June 2005. “Summit Addresses Wireless Challenges to Telephone Sampling,” *The Frame*. Fairfield, CT: Survey Sampling International.

Comparing the over-sample of households with low incomes with the households with low incomes in the population-based sample, the two samples are statistically similar with respect to education, marital status, race/ethnicity, home language, employment status, age of respondent, percentage with a state child care subsidy, parenting education and number of child care arrangements.

In the tables, the number of respondents in the total sample being reported is shown with a capital “N,” and the number in component sub-samples is shown with a lowercase “n.” These numbers represent the size of the group on which the percentages in the table are based. That is, if the table shows the figure of 35 percent and N=200, it means that 35 percent of 200 families, or 70 respondents, are represented by that statistic.

Comparing the results for this survey with the results from the 1999 household child care survey, *Child Care Use in Minnesota*,¹² should be done with caution because of some key methodological differences summarized in Figure 6. The 1999 survey included a somewhat larger sample of 2,450 households with children ages 14 and younger in order to provide results by geographic region and had an overall sampling error of 2 percent. It used an open-ended diary format to collect detailed information on child care arrangements and schedules for the youngest child in the family. All this information was then coded and grouped into categories for reporting. This survey includes only households with children ages 12 and younger that use some form of child care, and respondents chose child care arrangements and schedules from pre-categorized lists for a randomly selected child, which may or may not be the youngest child. In addition, in the 1999 study, the primary child care arrangement was determined based on the time diary; while in this study, the primary arrangement is defined by the parent as the one used most often.

6. Key methodological differences between 1999 and 2004 statewide household child care surveys

1999 survey methods	2004 survey methods
2,450 households with children 14 and younger	1,363 households with children 12 and younger that use child care
Open-ended diary format, with child care types coded into categories	Child care types pre-categorized and read to respondent from a list
Detailed information on youngest child	Detailed information on child selected at random

¹² Chase, R. and Shelton, E. 2001. *Child Care Use in Minnesota, Report of the 1999 Statewide Household Child Care Survey*. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research.

Report structure

Depending on the type of question, the report describes results for all households, by age group based on the age of the randomly selected child within the household, or by type of child care arrangement. In the text, results are rounded and reported as whole numbers.

Researchers tested key variables to see if results differed statistically by these family and child care characteristics: selected child's age (0-5 versus 6-12); household income (at or below 200 percent of poverty versus above that income level), geography (seven-county metro versus Greater Minnesota) and whether or not household receives a government subsidy through the Child Care Assistance Program for the cost of child care (child care subsidy versus no child care subsidy). The analysis also examined if results differed for households with incomes above 200 percent of poverty, households with low incomes with child care subsidies and households with low incomes without child care subsidies.

The statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) are indented in this format at the end of each topical section.

The sub-sample of households with low incomes with child care subsidies has 94 households and a sampling error of plus or minus 10 percent. The sampling error does not diminish the statistical significance but should be taken into account when generalizing results or making population estimates.

In addition, sub-samples of 50 or fewer cases have a sampling error of 14 percent or higher and should be interpreted with caution.

Profile of study households and children

This study includes only households who reported regularly using any child care. Of the households with children ages 12 and younger identified for this survey, 26 percent reported no regular use of any child care (non-parental, non-school care), and were not interviewed further. In the 1999 survey of households with children ages 14 and younger, 18 percent reported no regular child care use.

This section describes the sample of Minnesota households with children 12 and younger that reported using child care, compared with Census data without the qualifier of child care use.

Respondent and household demographics

Interviewers asked to speak to the person age 18 or older who was most knowledgeable about the children's care. As shown in Figure 7, nearly every respondent (98 percent) is the parent of the randomly selected child in the household, or the unmarried partner of the parent. Three-quarters of the respondents (77 percent) are mothers.

In terms of age, the largest proportion are 35 to 44 (43 percent), followed by 25 to 34 (38 percent).

Representative of Minnesota parents, about 86 percent identify themselves as White, 3 percent as Black or African American, 2 percent as Hispanic or Latino, 2 percent as Asian and 1 percent as American Indian. About 5 percent are of other racial or ethnic identification or of mixed race or ethnicity.

In terms of highest level of education completed, under 2 percent of respondents did not complete high school, and 16 percent have a high school education (diploma or GED). Thirty-four percent have some college education, nearly 31 percent a college degree, and nearly 17 percent have post-graduate work or attended professional school. These proportions may slightly overrepresent respondents with higher educational levels.

About 80 percent of the households surveyed have two parents present, including biological parents, adoptive, foster or stepparents and the spouse or partner of such parents. The remaining 20 percent are one-parent households.

Most respondents speak English as their primary language in the home (96 percent); nearly 2 percent speak Spanish, about 1 percent Hmong and about 2 percent other languages including Somali. (The survey was translated and conducted in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish.)

Slightly over half of the respondents (56 percent) live in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area, and 44 percent live in Greater Minnesota.

About 12 percent of the households have been at their current residence for less than one year, nearly 48 percent for one to five years and 40 percent for more than five years.

7. Respondent and household demographics

	Percent of all surveyed households N=1,363	2000 Census Minnesota
Respondent's relationship to selected child		
Mother (including biological, adoptive, foster and stepmother)	77.3%	<i>not</i>
Father (including biological, adoptive, foster and stepfather)	19.9%	<i>available</i>
Grandparent, sibling or other non-parent relative	2.3%	<i>in</i>
Parent's partner	0.4%	<i>Census</i>
Other non-relative	0.1%	
Age of respondent (see note below)		
18-20 years old	0.7%	0.7%
21-24 years old	4.6%	3.2%
25-34 years old	38.4%	25.5%
35-44 years old	43.4%	46.7%
45-54 years old	11.3%	21.7%
55-64 years old	1.0%	2.1%
65 years or over	0.1%	0.2%
Missing/refused	0.4%	-
Primary racial/ethnic identification of respondent		
White or Caucasian	85.5%	89.4%
Black or African American	3.4%	3.5%
Hispanic or Latino	2.4%	2.9%
Asian	2.1%	2.9%
American Indian	1.0%	1.1%
Other (including mixed race)	5.2%	1.8%
Missing/refused	0.4%	-

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Census data regarding age applies to all households with children under age 18, not just those with children under age 13 using child care. Percents may not total 100 due to rounding.

7. Respondent and household demographics (continued)

	Percent of all surveyed households N=1,363	2000 Census Minnesota
Education level of respondent (see note below)		
Eighth grade or less	0.7%	5.0%
Some high school	1.6%	7.0%
High school diploma or GED	16.0%	28.8%
Some college, including two-year degree or technical college	34.0%	31.7%
College graduate (bachelor's)	30.8%	19.1%
Post-graduate work or professional school	16.9%	8.3%
Missing/refused	0.1%	-
Number of parents in the household		
One parent	20.3%	22.6%
Two parents	79.7%	77.4%
Primary language in the home		
English	96.0%	91.5%
Hmong	0.5%	0.9%
Somali	0.1%	N/A
Spanish	1.8%	2.9%
Other (in Census data, includes Hmong)	1.5%	N/A
Geographic area of residence		
Twin Cities metro area (core seven counties)	55.9%	53.7%
Greater Minnesota	44.1%	46.3%
Length of time living at current residence		
Less than one year	12.3%	<i>not</i>
One-five years	47.6%	<i>available</i>
More than five years	40.0%	<i>in</i>
Missing	0.1%	<i>Census</i>

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey and U.S. Census

Note: Census data regarding educational attainment applies to individuals who are 25 years and older. Percents may not total 100 due to rounding.

Children in household

Figure 8 shows that, of the randomly selected children, 25 percent are under age 3, 28 percent ages 3 to 5, 29 percent ages 6 to 9 and 19 percent ages 10 to 12. Overall, randomly selected children are similar in age to all children in the surveyed households and slightly younger than reported in the 2000 Census.

Of the randomly selected children, 80 percent are White; 4 percent are Black, 3 percent Hispanic or Latino, 2 percent Asian, 1 percent American Indian, and 10 percent are multiracial or some other race or ethnicity (see Figure 9). These proportions are similar to those of the adult respondents, with one exception: the proportion of children who are multiracial or some other race or ethnicity (10 percent) is higher than the proportion of adults (5 percent).

Of the households surveyed, 44 percent have one child age 12 or younger; 39 percent have two children 12 or younger; 13 percent have three children 12 or younger, and 3.5 percent have four or more children 12 or younger (see Figure 10). One-parent households are more likely to have one child than two-parent households (59 percent versus 40 percent).

8. Ages of children

Age	Percent of all children in households using child care N=2,416	Percent of randomly selected children in households using child care N=1,363	Percent of all children ages 12 and under in 2000 Census Minnesota N=910,386
Under 3 years old	23.3%	24.6%	21.5%
3-5 years old	27.0%	27.6%	22.1%
6-9 years old	31.3%	28.5%	31.6%
10-12 years old	18.5%	19.3%	24.7%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey and U.S. Census

9. Race/ethnicity of randomly selected children

	Total N=1,363
White or Caucasian	80.0%
Black or African American	4.0%
Hispanic or Latino	2.8%
Asian	2.4%
American Indian	0.7%
Other (including mixed race)	9.8%
Missing/refused	0.3%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

10. Number of children ages 12 or younger in household

Percent of households with...	One parent n=277	Two parents n=1,086	All households N=1,363
One child age 12 or younger	59.2%	40.4%	44.2%
Two children 12 or younger	30.3%	41.3%	39.1%
Three children 12 or younger	8.7%	14.4%	13.2%
Four or more children 12 or younger	1.9%	3.9%	3.5%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: "Parent" is the adult in the household most knowledgeable about the children's care. It includes non-parent respondents who are the primary caregivers for the children in the household.

Children with special needs

About 18 percent of respondents report that the randomly selected child has one or more special needs affecting their child care (such as a physical or developmental disability, health care need, emotional or behavioral problem or learning disability that requires special attention or extra effort). Almost 8 percent report their child has two or more special needs (see Figure 11).

About 1 in 10 children under age 3 have at least one special need, compared with about one in five children 3 to 12.

Children 6 to 12 are more likely than children 5 and younger to have special needs requiring extra help (9 percent versus 5 percent). Among households with low incomes, those proportions double (17 percent versus 10 percent).

For all ages of children, households with low incomes are more likely than households with higher incomes to have a child with special needs requiring extra effort (13 percent versus 5 percent).

11. Percent of randomly selected children who have special needs

	Age of child				Total N=1,363
	0-2 years n=335	3-5 years n=376	6-9 years n=389	10-12 years n=263	
Child has special needs requiring extra effort	5.4%	4.8%	8.7%	9.9%	7.0%
Child had a caregiver quit or let the child go because of [child's] behavioral problems	0.9%	2.9%	4.6%	3.8%	3.1%
Child has a physical or developmental disability that requires special attention	2.4%	5.6%	6.4%	6.1%	5.1%
Child has a health care need that requires extra attention	5.1%	7.4%	9.8%	7.2%	7.5%
Child has an emotional or behavioral problem that requires special attention	1.2%	5.6%	11.3%	8.7%	6.7%
Child has a learning disability that requires specialized approaches	0.9%	4.8%	5.9%	9.9%	5.1%
Child has an individual education plan (IEP) or an individual interagency intervention plan (IIIP)	1.8%	7.7%	10.0%	10.6%	7.5%
Child has at least one of the special needs noted above	10.4%	19.4%	22.9%	20.5%	18.4%
Child has two or more of the special needs noted above	3.3%	6.4%	11.1%	10.6%	7.8%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Having an IEP or IIIP was not considered in determining who has more than one special need as the IEP or IIIP likely is in place to address the other special need(s) rather than being a special need in and of itself.

Household employment status

Work activities during the previous week of parents who regularly use child care

Seventy-four percent of respondents are working for pay at a job (during the week prior to the survey); nearly 10 percent hold a job but were not at work during that week because of vacation, jury duty, sickness or some other temporary reason. About 6 percent are looking for work; 7 percent attend school; 1 percent are in an unpaid job training program, and 2 percent are unable to work due to a disability. About 23 percent are at home full time (see Figure 12).

Parents with children under age 3 are more likely than those with children age 3 or older to be looking for work or going to school (18 percent versus 10 percent to 12 percent).

As shown in Figure 13, 47 percent of mothers are working, looking for work, and/or going to school 40 or more hours per week, 26 percent for 20 to 39 hours per week, and almost 5 percent for one to 19 hours per week. Twenty-one percent are not engaging in any of these activities.

Mothers of children ages 6 to 9 and ages 10 to 12 are more likely to be working, looking for work, and/or going to school 40 or more hours per week than mothers of children under age 6 (52 percent and 49 percent versus 44 percent).

Figure 14 shows that 95 percent of households have least one parent in the workforce, including 44 percent with all parents in the household working full time and 25 percent with one employed full time and one employed part time.

Households with children under age 6 are more likely than those with older children to have one parent employed full time and one not employed (21 percent versus 14 or 15 percent).

The proportion of households with single parents employed full time goes up as the child's age goes up (from 8 percent for under age 3, to 16 percent for ages 10 to 12).

Among households with low incomes, those without a child care subsidy are more likely than those with a child care subsidy to have two parents employed full time (17 percent versus 8 percent), compared with 39 percent for households with higher incomes, and are less likely to have one parent employed full time (18 percent versus 34 percent), compared with 8 percent for households with higher incomes.

12. Work activities of parents during the previous week

	Age of child				Total N=1,362
	0-2 years n=335	3-5 years n=375	6-9 years n=389	10-12 years n=263	
Working for pay at a job (including self-employed)	69.6%	75.7%	77.1%	77.6%	74.9%
Holding a job but not at work (vacation, jury duty, sick)	11.0%	5.9%	10.0%	11.8%	9.5%
Looking for work	9.3%	4.8%	4.4%	3.8%	5.6%
Going to school	8.4%	7.5%	6.2%	6.1%	7.0%
In an unpaid job training program	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	1.5%	1.0%
At home full time	24.5%	25.3%	19.3%	21.3%	22.6%
Unable to work because of disability	2.4%	2.1%	2.1%	2.7%	2.3%
Other	1.5%	2.1%	2.8%	4.6%	2.6%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: "Parent" is the adult in the household most knowledgeable about the children's care. The category includes non-parent respondents who are the primary caregivers. Percents total more than 100 because of multiple responses. N varies due to missing/refused.

13. Work activities of mothers

Percent of households with mothers (see note) who are working	Age of child				Total N=1,343
	0-2 years n=326	3-5 years n=370	6-9 years n=386	10-12 years n=261	
40+ hours per week	44.2%	44.1%	52.1%	48.7%	47.3%
20-39 hours per week	27.0%	27.8%	23.3%	28.4%	26.4%
One-19 hours per week	4.3%	4.9%	6.0%	4.2%	4.9%
Zero hours per week	24.5%	23.2%	18.7%	18.8%	21.4%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: "Mothers" includes single-parent fathers and female, non-parent respondents in households. "Working" includes holding a job but not at work (sick, vacation, etc.), looking for work, or going to school.

14. Parents and employment status

Employment status of respondent and related adults (parents) in household Percent of households with	Total N=1,334
Single parent, employed 40+ hrs/wk	11.2%
Single parent, employed less than 40 hrs/wk	5.2%
Single parent, not employed	4.2%
Two parents, both employed 40+ hrs/wk	32.6%
Two parents, one employed 40+ hrs/wk; one employed less than 40 hrs/wk	25.2%
Two parents, one employed 40+ hrs/wk; one not employed	17.5%
Two parents, one employed less than 40 hrs/wk; one not employed	1.5%
Two parents, both employed less than 40 hrs/wk	1.8%
Two parents, neither employed	0.7%
Percent of households with at least one parent employed	95.1%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: "Parent" is the adult in the household most knowledgeable about the child's care.

Household income

Figure 15 shows the distribution of household income by the number of people in the household. Fifty-nine percent have incomes of \$50,000 or more. Twenty-two percent are considered households with low incomes; that is, their annual income is within or below the income range that includes 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a household of their size. For example, for a household of four people, 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline is \$38,700. (Because the survey asked for income in ranges rather than exact income, this may be a high estimate of the number of households with low incomes.)

Households with one parent and one child (49 percent) and households with six or more people (38 percent to 48 percent) tend to have low incomes more often than other households (14 percent to 22 percent).

15. Household income, 2003

Household income, 2003	Number of people in household						Total N=1,363
	2 n=83	3 n=375	4 n=495	5 n=257	6 n=97	7 or more n=56	
Under \$12,500	20.5%	5.6%	1.8%	2.3%	3.1%	7.1%	4.4%
\$12,500-\$14,999	6.0%	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%	3.1%	3.6%	1.8%
\$15,000-\$17,499	2.4%	1.3%	0.6%	1.6%	1.0%	0.0%	1.1%
\$17,500-\$19,999	3.6%	2.7%	0.8%	0.4%	2.1%	3.6%	1.6%
\$20,000-\$24,999	16.9%	4.3%	2.4%	3.9%	5.2%	5.4%	4.4%
\$25,000-\$29,999	8.4%	5.1%	2.6%	3.1%	3.1%	3.6%	3.8%
\$30,000-\$34,999	7.2%	5.3%	4.0%	3.1%	6.2%	5.4%	4.6%
\$35,000-\$39,999	7.2%	7.7%	4.2%	6.2%	4.1%	7.1%	5.9%
\$40,000-\$44,999	2.4%	4.0%	3.8%	4.3%	4.1%	7.1%	4.0%
\$45,000-\$49,999	3.6%	5.9%	7.3%	5.4%	6.2%	5.4%	6.2%
\$50,000-\$99,999	14.5%	40.5%	44.6%	39.7%	41.2%	28.6%	39.8%
Over \$100,000	0.0%	13.4%	22.6%	24.5%	18.6%	21.4%	18.7%
Don't know/refused	7.2%	3.2%	3.6%	4.3%	2.1%	1.8%	3.7%
Families at or below 100 percent poverty	20.5%	6.7%	3.8%	5.6%	14.5%	19.6%	7.3%
Families at or below 200 percent poverty	49.4%	20.1%	13.7%	21.9%	38.2%	48.2%	22.3%
Families above 200 percent poverty	43.3%	76.8%	82.6%	73.9%	59.8%	50.0%	74.0%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Darker shaded cells show families at or below the poverty line. Lightly shaded cells indicate ranges that include families above the poverty level (100 percent of federal poverty guidelines) but classified as low income (at or below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines). Non-shaded cells show families above 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines. Columns do not total to 100 due to rounding.

Use of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)

About 5 percent of households in this survey report currently receiving benefits under the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), also known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and welfare. Over half of these households (59 percent) have one child age 12 or younger; 23 percent have two, 11 percent three, and 10 percent have four or more children.

Use of Earned Income Tax Credit

In this survey of households with children ages 12 and under who use child care, 21 percent of the households report that someone in their household used this tax credit in the past year.

Availability of support for child caring

As shown in Figure 16, about 62 percent of respondents have a relative, other than those in the household, who would be available “always,” “usually” or “sometimes” to care for their child or children on a regular basis. About 59 percent know of an individual such as a neighbor or friend who might be available “always,” “usually” or “sometimes” to care for their children. Eighty-one percent say they “always,” “usually” or “sometimes” have at least one relative, neighbor or friend available to provide child care on a regular basis. This is a key change since 1999, when 64 percent of households with one or more child care arrangements reported they had informal help with child care available.

Metro area and Greater Minnesota parents are similar with regard to the availability of a relative, friend or neighbor to provide child care on a regular basis. In 1999, that type of help was less available in the Twin Cities metropolitan area than in Greater Minnesota.

16. Availability of support for child care

Percent of respondents who ...	Always	Usually	Some- times	Rarely	Never
have any relatives other than those in the household who would be available to care for their child(ren) on a regular basis (N=1,362)	24.9%	18.1%	19.1%	14.6%	23.3%
know of any individual such as a neighbor or friend who might be available to care for their child(ren) on a regular basis (N=1,361)	9.6%	21.7%	27.4%	20.5%	20.8%
				Yes	No
Percent of respondents who “always,” “usually” or “sometimes” have <i>either</i> a relative <i>and/or</i> a neighbor or friend who would be available to care for their child(ren) on a regular basis (N=1,363)				80.8%	19.2%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Participation in parenting education

About 57 percent of survey respondents say they have participated in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) or another parenting education program.

Participation in parenting education is more likely among parents with some college experience (61 percent versus 42 percent with lower educational levels); White parents (59 percent versus 45 percent for parents of color); mothers not in the workforce (64 percent versus 55 percent), and parents ages 30 or older (61 percent versus 44 percent).

Participation in parenting education is also more likely among parents with children ages 6 to 12 than among those with children ages 5 and younger for all income levels (61 percent versus 54 percent) as well as among households with low incomes (55 percent versus 48 percent).

Profile of all child care use

The use of child care has increased in recent years as more women in general have entered the labor force and as welfare reform has required parents to work in order to receive welfare assistance. Minnesota has the highest labor-force participation rate overall (73.5 percent) and the highest female labor-force participation rate in the country. In Minnesota in 2000, 66 percent of women ages 16 and over were working outside the home, including 72.4 percent of women with children under the age of 6.¹³

Child care for children ages 12 and younger when they are not with a parent or at school takes place in various settings, including licensed child care centers, preschools, and before- and after-school programs; licensed family child care homes; legal unlicensed family child care homes and informal child care in the child's home or someone else's home. According to the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network, in January 2005, the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area had 575 child care centers and 5,332 licensed family child care homes, and Greater Minnesota had 371 child care centers and 7,446 licensed family child care homes. According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the state has about 8,800 legally unlicensed or registered child providers. In addition, an estimated 140,000 to 150,000 households in Minnesota provide informal child care for family, friends or neighbors.¹⁴

In the past few years, state and local policymakers and early childhood advocates have expressed growing interest and concern in Minnesota over the apparent increase in the use of family, friend and neighbor (FFN) child care. This interest in and concern about the growth in the use of FFN care exists in part over the quality and stability of the care provided in unlicensed settings, particularly when public child care assistance dollars are being used to pay for it.¹⁵

In addition, policymakers and the general public are increasingly aware of the importance of early care and development for school readiness. This is especially important for children most at risk of poor developmental outcomes. For these children, the quality of care makes the greatest difference in social, emotional and cognitive development. It is

¹³ Status Report, "Labor Force Participation of Women: Minnesota and United States," Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women, from 2000 Census Bureau.
<http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/lcesw/fs/lfpMN00.pdf>

¹⁴ Chase, R., et al. 2005. *Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers, Results of the 2004 Minnesota Statewide Household Child Care Survey*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Human Services.

¹⁵ Stahl, D., Sazer O'Donnell, N, Sprague, P., and López, M. 2003. *Sparkling Connections: Community-Based Strategies for Helping Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers Meet the Needs of Employees, Their Children, and Employers*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

also helpful to examine patterns of care for older children for whom state-regulated forms of care are unavailable (family child care homes are only licensed for care up to age 10).

This section presents information on the types of care used, including information on the arrangements used most often and information about all types of care for children with more than one arrangement. It also presents information on the number of different arrangements used by families.

Recent national child care studies include the Census Bureau's 1997 Survey of Income and Program Participation,¹⁶ and the National Survey of American Families conducted in 1999 and 2002 by the Urban Institute,¹⁷ which included Minnesota as well as 12 other states representative of the United States as a whole. These studies found a wide variety in the mix of different types of care used, and variations in the mix depending on family characteristics such as race, marital status, family income, employment characteristics and child's age.

These studies also found relative care to be the most common type across the full age spectrum, with center-based care peaking for children in their later preschool years. In addition, self care was fairly common, with almost one-quarter of all 10- to 12-year-olds using self care while their mothers work.¹⁸ The Urban Institute found that Minnesota's use of self care was the highest of all the states in their study.

Further, these studies found it common for children to be in multiple child care arrangements. The Census Bureau reports that 19 percent of all children under age 5 are in multiple arrangements. Out of the 13 states studied in the Urban Institute study of *employed* mothers, Minnesota had the highest number of children under 5 in multiple arrangements, 46 percent.

The Census Bureau and the Urban Institute studies describe school-year arrangements. The Urban Institute provides descriptions of both school-year and summer patterns of child care use, allowing for comparisons based on seasonal differences. Although preschool children are not necessarily affected by school-year variations, it is useful to examine seasonal differences. For instance, relative care among younger children increases during the

¹⁶ Smith, K. 2002. "Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Fall 1997." *Household Economic Studies*, p. 70-86. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

¹⁷ *Assessing the New Federalism* project of the Urban Institute, various occasional papers and policy briefs, 1997-2004.

¹⁸ Capizzano, J, Tout, K., and Adams, G. 2000. "Child Care Patterns of School-Age Children with Employed Mothers." *Assessing the New Federalism* project of the Urban Institute, p. 23.

summer months, and summer school plays an important role in the care arrangement for school-age children from households with low incomes.¹⁹

Number of child care arrangements

As mentioned, this survey includes only households who report regularly using child care. Of the households with children ages 12 and younger identified for this survey, 26 percent report no regular use of any child care (child care is defined as non-parental, non-school care). The age distribution of the children in households that do not use child care is similar to the age distribution of children ages 12 and younger in the 2000 Census (21 percent ages 2 and younger, 20 percent ages 3 to 5, 32.5 percent ages 6 to 9 and 26 percent ages 10 to 12).

About 36 percent of households regularly use just one arrangement; nearly 39 percent use two, 19 percent use three, and nearly 7 percent use four or more. On average, households use two child care arrangements (see Figure 17).

Figures 18 and 19 show that the proportion of households with three or more arrangements is higher during the school year than during the summer for children under age 3 (20 percent versus 11 percent) and children ages 6 to 9 (29 percent versus 16 percent), but the same during summer and the school year for children ages 3 to 5 and ages 10 to 12 (about 30 percent).

White households (66 percent) and households with working (i.e., employed, looking for work or attending school) mothers (66 percent) are more likely than households of color (56 percent) and those with a mother not working (58 percent) to use more than one arrangement.

¹⁹ Capizzano, J., Adelman, S., and Stagner, M. “What Happens When the School Year is Over? The Use and Costs of Child Care for School-Age Children During the Summer Months.” *Assessing the New Federalism* project of the Urban Institute, p. 17.

17. Number of child care arrangements

	Percent of all households N=1,361
Number of regular child care arrangements	
One	35.6%
Two	38.9%
Three	19.0%
Four to six	6.5%
Mean number of arrangements, including all children	2.0

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Regular arrangements are those used at least once per week in each of the last two weeks.

Excludes kindergarten.

18. Number of child care arrangements by age, summer

Number of arrangements	Age of child				Total N=386
	0-2 years n=110	3-5 years n=87	6-9 years n=118	10-12 years n=71	
One	47.3%	27.6%	40.7%	42.3%	39.9%
Two	41.8%	42.5%	43.2%	28.2%	39.9%
Three	9.1%	24.1%	11.0%	28.2%	16.6%
Four or more	1.8%	5.7%	5.1%	1.4%	3.6%
Mean number of arrangements, randomly selected child (N=386)	1.7	2.1	1.8	1.9	1.9

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Excludes child care arrangements that were not used at least once in each of the previous two weeks.

19. Number of child care arrangements by age, school year

Number of arrangements	Age of child				Total N=975
	0-2 years n=225	3-5 years n=288	6-9 years n=270	10-12 years n=192	
One	43.1%	30.6%	31.9%	30.7%	33.8%
Two	36.9%	38.5%	39.6%	39.1%	38.6%
Three	15.6%	22.6%	19.3%	21.9%	19.9%
Four or more	4.4%	8.3%	9.3%	8.3%	7.7%
Mean number of arrangements, randomly selected child (N=975)	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.0

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Excludes child care arrangements that were not used at least once in each of the previous two weeks.

Changes in child care arrangements in the past 12 months (continuity of care)

About three-quarters of the respondents have not had any change in their child care arrangements for the randomly selected child in their household in the past 12 months.²⁰ About 19 percent have had just one arrangement other than their current one or ones, and just 7 percent have had two or more other arrangements. The mean number of other arrangements in the past year is less than one for all children. Including only children whose arrangements changed, the mean number of other arrangements is one or two (see Figure 20).

²⁰ In center-based child care settings, this does not preclude turnover among staff within the arrangement during that time but merely that the overall child care program has remained the same.

20. Number of changes in child care arrangements in the past 12 months (randomly selected child)

Number of changes in arrangements	Age of child				Total years N=1,363
	0-2 years n=335	3-5 years n=376	6-9 years n=389	10-12 years n=263	
No change	78.2%	75.5%	71.0%	70.7%	74.0%
One change	19.1%	16.2%	20.3%	20.2%	18.9%
Two changes	2.1%	6.1%	5.1%	5.7%	4.8%
Three or more changes	0.6%	2.1%	3.6%	3.4%	2.4%
Mean number of changes, all children (N=1363)	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Mean number of changes in arrangements, only children with changes in arrangements (N=355)	1.2	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.5

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Includes arrangements used for at least one week. In center-based child care settings, “no change” does not preclude turnover among staff within the arrangement during that time but merely that the overall child care program has remained the same.

All types of child care use

Summer child care use

Figure 21 shows all the arrangements used during the summer for the selected child, so the percentages are duplicated. Overall, when they are not cared for by their parents, nearly 79 percent of children ages 12 and younger are cared for during the summer by family, friends and neighbors (FFN), mainly grandparents (39 percent) and non-relatives (33 percent), followed by older siblings (15 percent) and other relatives (20 percent). Thirty-one percent are in supervised activities, 28 percent in center-based programs, nearly 9 percent in licensed family homes and almost 10 percent in self care, which includes care by a sibling under age 13.

During the summer, FFN care is higher for children under age 6 than for children ages 6 to 12 (82 percent for under age 3 and 83 percent for ages 3 to 5 versus 73 percent for ages 10 to 12 and 75 percent for ages 6 to 9). For children under age 6, the FFN care is more commonly provided by grandparents. For children ages 6 to 12, the FFN care includes more older siblings.

Center-based care is also higher for children under age 6—37 percent for children under age 3 and 51 percent for children ages 3 to 5—compared with 17 percent for children ages 6 to 9 and 6 percent for children ages 10 to 12.

Supervised activities, including day camps, are fairly common for children ages 6 to 9 (48 percent) and those ages 10 to 12 (44 percent), compared with 26 percent of children ages 3 to 5.

Forty-two percent of children ages 10 to 12 are in self care during the summer, compared with 4 percent of children ages 6 to 9.

21. All types of child care used, summer

Type of care	Age of child				Total N=386
	0-2 years n=110	3-5 years n=87	6-9 years n=118	10-12 years n=71	
FFN care	81.8%	82.8%	75.4%	73.2%	78.5%
Child's grandparent	50.0%	44.8%	29.7%	28.2%	38.6%
Child's sibling	3.6%	8.0%	26.3%	21.1%	14.8%
Another relative (aunt, cousin, etc.)	24.5%	21.8%	16.1%	15.5%	19.7%
Non-relative	29.1%	46.0%	32.2%	26.8%	33.4%
Licensed family child care	10.0%	9.2%	8.5%	7.0%	8.8%
Center-based care	37.3%	50.6%	16.9%	5.6%	28.2%
Child care center, nursery school/preschool	37.3%	49.4%	0.0%	0.0%	21.8%
Group care, child care center	0.0%	0.0%	16.9%	5.6%	6.2%
Head Start	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Kindergarten	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Self care	1.8%	0.0%	4.2%	42.3%	9.6%
Supervised Activities	9.1%	26.4%	48.3%	43.7%	31.3%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Shows all types of care used at least once per week in each of the last two weeks. Children may be listed in multiple categories. Figures in bold are unduplicated totals of any subcategories shown below them.

All types of child care use during the school year

Figure 22 shows all the arrangements used during the school year for the selected child, so the percentages are duplicated. Overall, when they are not cared for by their parents or in school, 67 percent of children ages 12 and younger are cared for by family, friends and neighbors (FFN), mainly grandparents (34 percent) and non-relatives (24 percent), followed by older siblings (14 percent) and other relatives (17 percent). Forty-nine percent are in center-based programs, 40 percent in supervised activities, 12 percent in licensed family homes, and 13 percent in self care, which includes care by a sibling under age 13.

During the school year, FFN care use is highest for children under age 3 (78 percent) and lowest for children ages 3 to 5 (61 percent). For children under age 6, the FFN care is more commonly provided by grandparents. For children ages 6 to 12, the FFN care includes more older siblings.

- Center-based care is highest for children ages 3 to 5 (79 percent), followed by 43 percent for children under age 3, 41 percent for ages 6 to 9 and 25 percent for children ages 10 to 12.
- Supervised activities are fairly common for children ages 6 to 9 (52 percent) and those ages 10 to 12 (56 percent), compared with 36 percent of children ages 3 to 5.
- During the school year, licensed family child care use is highest for children under age 3 (20 percent), followed by children ages 3 to 5 (13 percent) and children ages 6 to 9 (11 percent).
- Forty-one percent of children ages 10 to 12 are in self care during the school year, compared with 16 percent of children ages 6 to 9.

22. All types of child care used, school year

Type of care	Age of child				Total N=977
	0-2 years n=225	3-5 years n=289	6-9 years n=271	10-12 years n=192	
FFN care	77.8%	61.2%	66.8%	65.1%	67.3%
Child's grandparent	50.2%	33.6%	26.2%	25.0%	33.7%
Child's sibling	5.8%	4.5%	17.3%	31.8%	13.7%
Another relative (aunt, cousin, etc.)	20.0%	18.3%	15.9%	10.4%	16.5%
Non-relative	25.3%	23.5%	27.7%	16.1%	23.6%
Licensed family child care	19.6%	13.1%	10.7%	4.7%	12.3%
Center-based care	42.7%	78.9%	41.0%	24.5%	49.3%
Child care center, nursery school/preschool	41.8%	67.5%	0.0%	0.0%	29.6%
Before- or after-school program	0.0%	3.1%	41.0%	24.5%	17.1%
Head Start	2.2%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
Kindergarten	0.0%	14.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%
Self care	1.3%	1.7%	16.2%	41.1%	13.4%
Supervised activities	15.1%	36.0%	52.0%	55.7%	39.5%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Notes: Shows all types of care used at least once per week in each of the last two weeks for one randomly selected child per household. Children may be listed in multiple categories. Figures in bold are unduplicated totals of any subcategories shown below them.

Primary child care arrangements

In this study, the primary child care arrangement is defined as the one the parent says is used most often for the randomly selected child (at least once a week in each of the last two weeks). For 91 percent of the households, the primary arrangement is also the arrangement with the most reported hours of use in the previous week. Because the survey instrument used the primary arrangement defined by the parent as a reference point in numerous follow-up questions, that same arrangement is used in the statistical analyses, rather than redefining primary arrangement based on most hours.

Overall, 46 percent use FFN care in their own home (28 percent) or in someone else's home (18 percent) as their primary arrangement (see Figure 23). The next most often used type of care is center-based (32 percent), followed by licensed family child care (10 percent), supervised activities (9 percent) and self care (3 percent).

Metro area households are more likely to use center-based care (35 percent) than Greater Minnesota households (28 percent).

Among households with low incomes, those with a child care subsidy are more likely than those without a subsidy to use center-based care as their primary arrangement (57 percent versus 18 percent, compared with 33 percent for households with higher incomes).²¹

Households with low incomes without a child care subsidy are more likely than those with a subsidy to use FFN care as their primary arrangement (65 percent versus 28 percent, compared with 42 percent for households with higher incomes).

²¹ This center-based category includes all types of center-based care, including child care centers, Head Start and before- and after-school programs. When the analysis includes only the child care centers, the percentages drop to 43.6 percent for low-income households with child care assistance, 9.4 percent for those without a subsidy and 22.3 percent for households with higher incomes. The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) encourages eligible families to apply to Head Start but does not reimburse any Head Start-only expenses. Families may use child care provided in partnership with Head Start, which may be subsidized through CCAP.

The sub-sample of households with low incomes with a child care subsidy has 94 households and a sampling error of plus or minus 10 percent. The sampling error does not diminish the statistical significance but should be taken into account when generalizing results or making population estimates.

23. Primary child care arrangements for randomly selected child

Type of child care used most often	Percent of all households N=1,363
FFN care - own home	28.4%
FFN care - someone else's home	17.7%
Licensed family child care	9.7%
Center-based care	31.8%
Self care	3.3%
Supervised activities	9.1%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Includes regular arrangements used at least once per week in each of the last two weeks for one randomly selected child per household.

Primary child care arrangements in the summer

As shown in Figure 24, during the summer, 55 percent use FFN care in their own home (36 percent) or in someone else's home (19 percent) as their primary arrangement. The next most popular type of care is center-based, which includes child care centers, nursery schools or preschools, Head Start and before and after-school programs (23 percent), followed by supervised activities (11 percent), licensed family child care (8 percent) and self care (3 percent).

Center-based care is the most frequent primary arrangement in the summer for children ages 3 to 5 (40 percent), followed by 32 percent for children under 3.

Metro area households are more likely than greater Minnesota households to use center-based care in the summer (27 percent versus 18 percent).

Supervised activities are fairly common primary arrangements for children ages 6 to 9 (18 percent) and those ages 10 to 12 (23 percent).

Fourteen percent of respondents use self care in the summer as their 10- to 12-year-olds' primary arrangement.

24. Primary child care arrangement, summer

Type of child care used most often	Age of child				Total N=386
	0-2 years n=110	3-5 years n=87	6-9 years n=118	10-12 years n=71	
FFN care own home	36.4%	23.0%	44.1%	36.6%	35.8%
FFN care someone else's home	20.0%	24.1%	17.8%	15.5%	19.4%
Licensed family child care	10.0%	8.0%	7.6%	7.0%	8.3%
Center-based care	31.8%	40.2%	11.9%	4.2%	22.5%
Self care	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	14.1%	2.8%
Supervised activities	1.8%	4.6%	17.8%	22.5%	11.1%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Includes regular arrangements used at least once per week in each of the last two weeks for one randomly selected child per household.

Primary child care arrangements during the school year

As shown in Figure 25, during the school year, 43 percent use either FFN care at home (26 percent) or at someone else's home (17 percent) as the primary child care arrangement for the randomly selected child, followed by center-based care (36 percent), licensed family child care (10 percent), supervised activities (8 percent) and self care (4 percent).

Children ages 3 to 5 are the least likely to have FFN care at home as their primary child care arrangement during the school year (11 percent), while 10- to 12-year-olds are the most likely (37 percent).

Center-based care is the most frequent primary arrangement during the school year for children ages 3 to 5 (60 percent), followed by 33 percent for children under age 3, and 28 percent for children ages 6 to 9.

Supervised activities are fairly common primary arrangements during the school year for children ages 6 to 9 (15 percent) and those ages 10 to 12 (19 percent).

Licensed family homes are fairly common primary arrangements during the school year for children under age 3 (18 percent).

Fifteen percent use self care during the school year as their 10- to 12-year-olds' primary arrangement.

25. Primary child care arrangement, school year

Type of child care used most often	Age of child				Total N=977
	0-2 years n=225	3-5 years n=289	6-9 years n=271	10-12 years n=192	
FFN care own home	24.9%	11.4%	32.8%	37.0%	25.5%
FFN care someone else's home	23.1%	15.9%	15.1%	14.1%	17.0%
Licensed family child care	17.8%	11.8%	7.0%	3.6%	10.2%
Center-based care	32.9%	60.2%	28.4%	11.5%	35.5%
Self care	0.0%	0.3%	1.8%	14.6%	3.5%
Supervised activities	1.3%	0.3%	14.8%	19.3%	8.3%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Includes regular arrangements used at least once per week in each of the last two weeks for one randomly selected child per household.

Use of Head Start

Twelve percent of households with low incomes with children ages 5 and younger, based on the selected child, report using Head Start.²² Of these households, 35 percent report receiving a child care subsidy for another type of child care arrangement.

Use of family, friend and neighbor care

Altogether, 70 percent of households that use child care use some form of FFN care on a regular basis. Twenty-four percent use FFN care exclusively; 22 percent use FFN as their primary arrangement but also use other types of care; 25 percent use other types of care as their primary arrangements but also use FFN care; and 30 percent of households do not use FFN care on a regular basis.

Characteristics of households more likely to use FFN care *only* include households with children ages 2 and younger (39 percent versus 19 percent); parents with less than college educations (45 percent versus 19 percent); households of color (36 percent versus 22 percent); households with mothers not in the workforce (32 percent versus 22 percent); those with a child who has special needs (38 percent versus 23 percent); parents under age 30 (37 percent versus 21 percent); households with low incomes (32 percent versus 21 percent) and households without child care subsidies (25 percent versus 18 percent).

²² The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) encourages eligible families to apply to Head Start but does not reimburse any Head Start-only expenses. Families may use child care provided in partnership with Head Start, which may be subsidized through CCAP.

Secondary FFN use is more likely among households with working (i.e., employed, looking for work or attending school) mothers (26 percent versus 19 percent) and households with child care subsidies (36 percent versus 24 percent).

Married parents (31 percent versus 22 percent not married) and parents age 30 and older (32 percent versus 21 percent for younger parents) are more likely than other parents to not use FFN care regularly. No regular FFN use is also more likely among households with no children with special needs (30 percent versus 19 percent for households with a child with special needs). In addition, households with higher incomes are more likely than households with low incomes to have no FFN care (32 percent versus 23 percent).

Use of young sibling care or self care

Researchers asked parents if, during the last month, any of their children stayed alone or with a sibling ages 12 or younger on a regular basis, even for a small amount of time.

Parents report that 2 percent of children ages 2 or younger were watched or cared for on a regular basis by siblings ages 12 or younger, and 3 percent of children ages 3 to 5 stayed alone or were watched or cared for on a regular basis by siblings ages 12 or younger, even for a short amount of time. The percentage goes up to 13 percent for children ages 6 to 9, and to 46 percent for children ages 10 to 12.

For those staying alone or being watched by siblings ages 12 or younger, 41 percent of the children have had babysitting or home safety training, such as that offered by the Red Cross or community education.

Child care hours and schedules

This section describes the number of hours that children spend in child care of various types as well as the times of day and week that care is used, including standard weekday times, early mornings, evenings and overnights, and weekends.

It is important to document use of more than just full time child care in formal, regulated settings to ensure that policy is based on an accurate understanding of actual patterns of use for all types of arrangements. In addition, since some policies are based on the assumption that parents can rely on relatives, friends and neighbors to care for their children when needed, this section sheds some light on actual patterns of family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care use.

According to a 2002 Census Bureau study based on national data from 1997, preschoolers of employed mothers spent an average of 37 hours per week in child care and preschoolers of non-employed mothers spent an average of 25 hours per week in child care.²³ Children in formal arrangements (child care centers and licensed family child care homes) tended to spend more hours in care than children in informal arrangements with relatives.

Both the Census Bureau and the Urban Institute studies found that the amount of time spent in self care increases for older children, and that children from families with higher incomes were more likely to be in self care. Children from households with higher incomes (above 100 percent of poverty in the Census study, above 200 percent of poverty in the Urban Institute study) were also more likely to use after-school enrichment activities.

Number of hours in child care

About 12 percent of the randomly selected children are in child care less than five hours per week, 19 percent five to nine hours per week, 21 percent 10 to 19 hours per week, 21 percent 20 to 34 hours per week, 13 percent 35 to 44 hours per week and 15 percent 45 hours per week or more. On average, the randomly selected children are in child care 23 hours and 43 minutes per week (see Figure 26).

²³ Smith, K. 2002. "Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Fall 1997." *Household Economic Studies*, p. 70-86. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

26. Number of hours in child care

Number of hours per week that randomly selected child spent in regular child care, previous week	Percent of all households N=1,363
Four or less	11.8%
Five to less than 10	18.6%
10 to less than 20	20.9%
20 to less than 35	21.1%
35 to less than 45	13.1%
45 hours or more	14.5%
Mean number of hours in child care, selected child, all care	23 hrs., 43 mins.

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Regular arrangements are those used at least once per week in the last two weeks.

Mean hours per week in child care during the summer

This section and the next one about child care during the school year report the mean hours per week in primary arrangements that are used *for at least five hours per week*. This is in order to screen out occasional play dates with grandparents or at friends' houses or other brief activities.

As shown in Figure 27, on average, including all ages of children and all types of care, children spend 28 hours in child care per week during the summer. Children ages 3 to 5 spend the most hours in child care (average of 32 hours per summer week), and children ages 2 and younger the fewest (average of 25 hours per summer week).

Among children ages 9 and younger, those in licensed care in the summer tend to be in care more hours per week on average than those in FFN care (26 to 31 hours versus 12 to 19 hours). Among children ages 10 to 12, those in FFN care and supervised activities in the summer tend to be in care more hours per week on average than those in self care (19 to 20 hours versus 10 hours).

27. Mean hours in child care per week, summer

Type of arrangement	Age of child				Total N=386
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	
FFN care own home	n=58 12:43	n=50 12:55	n=58 14:50	n=32 19:41	N=198 14:11
FFN care someone else's home	n=34 12:16	n=36 17:13	n=33 18:51	n=22 19:33	N=125 16:43
Licensed family child care	n=11 27:05	n=8 *	n=10 31:48	n=5 *	N=34 29:34
Center-based care	n=40 31:08	n=43 27:00	n=19 26:11	n=4 *	N=106 28:35
Self care	n=2 *	n=0 *	n=4 *	n=29 10:20	N=35 9:24
Supervised activities	n=9 *	n=23 5:21	n=54 14:35	n=30 19:04	N=116 12:55
Mean total	25:08	32:04	26:34	30:34	28:08

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Figures show average weekly time in each type of child care. Children can be in multiple types of care. Includes only children who regularly receive a total of five or more hours per week of child care. Times shown as hours:minutes. Asterisk (*) indicates fewer than 10 children in the category. In addition, caution should be used in interpreting the figures because of small sub-sample sizes.

Mean hours per week in child care during the school year

As shown in Figure 28, children of all ages combined average 22 hours per week in child care during the school year, lower than the 28-hour summer average. Children from birth through age 5 spend more time, on average, in child care during the school year (about 27 hours) than children ages 6 to 9 (18 hours) and children ages 10 to 12 (13 hours). Licensed family child care homes have children for more hours per week (average 25.5) than any other form of care.

Among children ages 5 and younger, those in licensed care during the school year tend to be in care more hours per week on average than those in FFN care (20 to 31 hours versus 11 to 17 hours). Children ages 6 to 9 spend 10 to 17 hours per week on average in both FFN care and licensed care. Among children ages 10 to 12, those in FFN care during the school year tend to be in care more hours per week on average than those in self care (nine to 11 hours versus about five hours).

28. Mean hours in child care per week, school year

Type of arrangement	Age of child				Total N=976
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	
FFN care own home	n=111 11:05	n=121 10:22	n=124 11:51	n=76 9:35	N=432 10:50
FFN care someone else's home	n=64 16:55	n=75 14:20	n=77 16:34	n=40 10:48	N=256 15:06
Licensed family child care	n=44 30:33	n=38 28:52	n=28 16:58	n=9 *	N=119 25:35
Center-based care	n=93 24:39	n=212 20:05	n=107 10:04	n=39 7:40	N=451 17:35
Self care	n=2 *	n=2 *	n=34 2:36	n=66 4:32	N=105 3:48
Supervised activities	n=33 2:29	n=103 2:23	n=119 3:40	n=96 4:51	N=351 3:30
Mean total	27:11	27:40	18:11	12:49	22:00

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Figures show average weekly time in each type of child care. Children can be in multiple types of care. Includes only children who regularly receive a total of five or more hours per week of child care. Times shown as hours:minutes. Asterisk (*) indicates fewer than 10 children in the category. In addition, caution should be used in interpreting the figures because of small sub-sample sizes.

Child care schedules

Summer schedules

Figure 29 shows the times of the day and week that children are in care during the summer, including only regular arrangements (used in each of the previous two weeks) and only children who regularly spend at least five hours per week in care.

During the summer, Monday through Friday, between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., is at least part of the child care schedule for 93 percent of children and the only schedule for 42 percent. In addition to the standard weekday, during the summer, 41 percent of children are regularly in the care of non-parents during weekday evenings (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.), and 35 percent are regularly in non-parental care during weekends. Eighteen percent are in non-parental care after 10 p.m. on weekdays, and 17 percent in the early mornings before 7 a.m.

Children ages 2 and younger are less likely than children ages 3 and older to be in summer care early in the morning before 7 a.m. (10 percent versus 17 percent to 23 percent) and at

night after 10 p.m. (11 percent versus 19 percent to 23 percent) and more likely to be in child care on weekends (40 percent versus 32 percent to 33 percent).

29. Children regularly in child care: Percent of randomly selected children in care by type of schedule and age of child, summer

Child care schedule	Age of child				Total N=348
	0-2 years n=94	3-5 years n=85	6-9 years n=104	10-12 years n=65	
Child care <i>only</i> during standard weekday (Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.)	38.3%	43.5%	40.4%	46.2%	41.7%
Percent of all children in child care whose care schedule includes:					
Standard weekday (7 a.m.-6 p.m.)	91.5%	94.1%	91.3%	96.9%	93.1%
Early mornings (before 7 a.m.)	9.6%	16.5%	20.2%	23.1%	17.0%
Evenings (6 p.m.-10 p.m.)	38.3%	41.2%	41.3%	41.5%	40.5%
Nights (after 10 p.m.)	10.6%	18.8%	19.2%	23.1%	17.5%
Weekends	40.4%	32.9%	32.7%	32.3%	34.8%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Includes only children who regularly receive a total of five or more hours per week of child care. One child may be included in multiple categories (except standard weekday schedule only).

Children regularly in child care: Percent in care by type of schedule and age, school year

Figure 30 shows the times of the day and week that children are in care during the school year, including only regular arrangements and only children who regularly spend at least five hours per week in care.

During the school year, Monday through Friday, between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., is at least part of the child care schedule for 93 percent of children and the only schedule for 32 percent. In addition to the standard weekday, during the school year, 48 percent of children are regularly in the care of non-parents during weekday evenings (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.), and 44 percent are regularly in non-parental care during weekends. Thirteen percent are in non-parental care after 10 p.m. on weekdays, and 14 percent in the early mornings before 7 a.m.

During the school year, children 5 and younger are more likely than children ages 6 and older to only have a standard weekday schedule (39 percent to 40 percent versus 20 percent to 24 percent), more likely to have part of their schedule a standard weekday schedule (95 percent to 98 percent versus 85 percent to 88 percent) and less likely to be in child care in the evening (38 percent versus 55 percent to 70 percent).

30. Children regularly in child care: Percent of randomly selected children in care by type of schedule and age, school year

Child care schedule	Age of child				Total N=854
	0-2 years n=195	3-5 years n=277	6-9 years n=231	10-12 years n=151	
Child care <i>only</i> during standard weekday (Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.)	38.5%	40.1%	24.2%	19.9%	31.9%
Percent of all children in child care whose care schedule includes:					
Standard weekday (7 a.m.-6 p.m.)	95.4%	97.8%	88.3%	85.4%	92.5%
Early mornings (before 7 a.m.)	11.3%	10.8%	18.6%	14.6%	13.7%
Evenings (6 p.m.-10 p.m.)	38.5%	37.5%	54.5%	70.2%	48.1%
Nights (after 10 p.m.)	11.3%	9.0%	16.9%	13.9%	12.5%
Weekends	38.5%	40.8%	48.5%	50.3%	44.0%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Includes only children who regularly receive a total of five or more hours per week of child care. One child may be included in multiple categories (except standard weekday schedule only).

Types of child care during non-standard times, summer

During the summer, FFN care is the most common type of child care during non-standard times of the day and week (see Figure 31). Seventy-three percent of children in care in the early mornings (before 7 a.m.) are cared for by FFN providers, as are 92 percent of children late at night (after 10 p.m.). In the evenings (between 6 and 10 p.m.), 92 percent of children are cared for by FFN providers, and 84 percent of children are in this type of care on weekends (Saturday or Sunday).

31. Types of child care during non-standard times, summer

Of children in child care during the time shown, distribution by type(s) of care:	Early morning (< 7 a.m.) N=59	Evening (6-10 p.m.) N=141	Late night (>10 p.m.) N=61	Weekend (Sat or Sun) N=121
FFN care own home	32.2%	61.0%	39.3%	44.6%
FFN care someone else's home	40.7%	31.2%	52.5%	39.7%
Licensed family child care	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Center-based care	15.3%	1.4%	1.6%	4.1%
Self care	3.4%	3.5%	1.6%	2.5%
Supervised activities	15.3%	23.4%	14.8%	24.0%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Shows type(s) of care used regularly during the different schedules shown. Children may be included in multiple schedule categories. Does not include children in overnight camp or in kindergarten or children who are in child care a total of four hours per week or less.

Types of child care during non-standard times, school year

During the school year, FFN care is the most common type of child care during all non-standard times (see Figure 32). FFN providers care for 38 percent of children in the child's own home, and 27 percent in someone else's home during the early morning hours before 7 a.m. During these early morning times, another 30 percent of children are in center-based care (child care centers or before-school programs).

During school-year evenings, after FFN care (72 percent), children are most commonly in activities (37 percent).

Over half (57 percent) of children cared for after 10 p.m. are cared for by FFN providers in the children's own homes, and 46 percent are in the FFN's home.

On weekends during the school year, 77 percent of children are cared for by FFN providers, and 39 percent are in activities.

32. Types of child care during non-standard times, school year

Of children in child care during the time shown, distribution by type(s) of care:	Early morning (< 7 a.m.) N=117	Evening (6-10 p.m.) N=411	Late night (>10 p.m.) N=107	Weekend (Sat or Sun) N=376
FFN care own home	37.6%	51.3%	57.0%	46.0%
FFN care someone else's home	27.4%	21.4%	45.8%	30.9%
Licensed family child care	7.7%	1.9%	1.9%	1.6%
Center-based care	29.9%	5.4%	4.7%	5.9%
Self care	6.0%	8.0%	1.9%	7.2%
Supervised activities	3.4%	37.0%	3.7%	38.6%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Notes: Shows type(s) of care used regularly during the different schedules shown. Children may be included in multiple schedule categories. Does not include children in overnight camp or in kindergarten or children who are in child care a total of four hours per week or less.

Cost of child care

Given the importance of child care to families and children as well as to the state's economy, and given the policy changes and appropriation reductions made to the Child Care Assistance Program by the 2003 Legislature, it is important to understand the amount of money Minnesota families are currently paying for child care, which families might need help paying for it and how they might be helped to afford it. This section provides information on how many families pay for child care; what families pay for all children in their family and for the youngest child; average costs per hour for different kinds of care and sources of help for child care costs.

The Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network reports the average weekly cost of full time care for various types of child care. As of October 2004, for example, the average weekly cost of licensed family child care in rural settings was \$116 for infants, \$108 for toddlers and \$104 for preschoolers. In urban settings, those costs were \$144 for infants, \$133 for toddlers and \$125 for preschoolers. The average weekly costs for child care centers in rural areas was \$154 for infants, \$138 for toddlers and \$126 for preschoolers. In urban areas the average costs in centers goes up to \$248 for infants, \$206 for toddlers and \$182 for preschoolers. Rates for part time and drop-in care may be higher.

At these rates, full time child care costs range from about \$5,000 to \$12,000 per year. For perspective, currently, state college tuition is \$3,437 per year; state university tuition is \$4,474, and undergraduate tuition at the University of Minnesota is \$7,500 per year.

The Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services oversees federal funding to states for child care subsidies, which under federal guidelines are limited to families at or below 85 percent of state median income. According to a 1998 report on state child care subsidy programs,²⁴ the Administration for Children and Families set forth 10 percent of income spent on child care as the benchmark for affordability, citing the opinion of “most experts” that this percent of income is “the limit of affordability.” Parents who spend more than this amount may have more difficulties maintaining safe or stable child care and as a result may have more trouble getting or keeping a job.

The 1997 Urban Institute survey results, published in 2002, found that families earning low incomes in Minnesota spent an average of 15.7 percent of their earnings on child care, while families earning higher incomes spent 6.6 percent of their earnings on child care. The Census Bureau found that 43 percent of employed women in the United States paid for

²⁴ Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General. 1998. *States' Child Care Certificate Systems: An Early Assessment of Vulnerabilities and Barriers*. Washington, D.C.

child care in 1997, with an average weekly cost of \$75 per family per week.²⁵ Families earning below 100 percent of federal poverty guidelines paid a little less than other families (\$52 compared to \$75), but paid a much higher percent of income (20 percent of income, compared to 7 percent). This gap in affordability has persisted in Census Bureau survey results since 1987, and was also independently confirmed in a 1990 national study,²⁶ which found that working poor families (those below the poverty line) averaged 33 percent of their income on child care costs, compared with 6 percent for middle-class families and 13 percent for “working class” (those with incomes above poverty but below \$25,000 in 1990 dollars).

In Minnesota, the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides subsidies to help families with low incomes pay for child care while parents are working, or going to school or in training that will lead to employment. CCAP is also seen as an opportunity to provide children from families with low incomes access to quality learning opportunities leading to school success. CCAP includes:

- Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Assistance is for families with incomes less than or equal to 175 percent of federal poverty guidelines (about \$27,400 for a family of three in 2004), who are not participating in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), but who are working or attending school. Families are no longer eligible when their earnings reach 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines or \$39,175. Families with incomes above 75 percent of the poverty level share some of the child care costs. These copayments increase as family incomes increase. In 2003, the income eligibility for entry tightened from about 300 percent of the poverty level to 175 percent and the copayments for families increased.
- MFIP Child Care Assistance is for parents who are participating in qualifying work activities as part of their MFIP or Diversionary Work Program (DWP) employment services plan. Eligibility for MFIP ends at approximately 115 percent of federal poverty guidelines.²⁷
- Transition Year Child Care Assistance is for parents who have exited MFIP or DWP within the past 12 months and who meet other eligibility criteria.

²⁵ Smith, K. 2002. *Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Fall 1997*. Household Economic Studies, p. 70-86. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

²⁶ Hofferth, S. 1991. *National Child Care Survey, 1990*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

²⁷ DHS MFIP/DWP Manual, Appendix A.

Other kinds of subsidy for child care include:

- The federal Dependent Care Tax Credit, which allows a family to receive a refund on their federal income taxes for 20 to 35 percent of their child care expenses, capped at \$3,000 for one child or \$6,000 for two or more children. The maximum credit is thus \$1,050 for one child, or \$2,100 for two or more. Families who do not owe federal income tax (such as those with incomes below the minimum for tax liability) cannot receive the benefit. As a result, most single parents do not benefit unless their annual income is more than \$13,500, and two-parent families do not benefit unless they earn more than \$19,000. There is no maximum income threshold.
- Employer pre-tax accounts allow employees to pay for child care expenses with pre-tax dollars. Employers generally may deduct their costs as business expenses, and employees may exclude up to \$5,000 of child care expenses from their gross income. Employees using an employer pre-tax account must subtract the amount of benefit received from any federal Dependent Care Tax Credit for which they would otherwise be eligible.
- The Post Secondary Child Care Grant Program provides financial assistance to students who are not on MFIP to attend college and receive help with child care. The maximum award amount is \$2,200 per eligible child per academic year.
- Families qualify for the Minnesota Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit by completing and submitting the federal Dependent Care Tax Credit form. The maximum amount of the credit is \$720 for one child, \$1,440 for two or more. Unlike the federal credit, the benefit is refundable; the family need not owe income taxes to Minnesota to receive the benefit. The credit phases down to zero for families with annual incomes over \$33,930.

Weekly cost of child care

Average total weekly cost of child care per household

Figure 33 shows the average amount paid out-of-pocket by the parent (after subsidy through the Child Care Assistance Program, but before benefits from the Child Care Dependent Tax Credit and employer pre-tax accounts) for child care for all children in the family in the previous week.²⁸ For those families who had child care costs, the average weekly cost is \$111 (or \$5,781 annually), ranging from \$136 for children ages 2 and younger to \$70 for children ages 10 to 12. This figure includes all families using child care, including those whose child care is only part time. It should not be interpreted as representing the cost of full time care.

Child care costs are lower for a family whose selected child is at least 6 and in school. The costs drop for school-age children but do not disappear, suggesting that before- and after-school care costs remain substantial for those relying on paid arrangements.

Although the rates charged by licensed providers of infant care are known to be higher than for other age groups, many families use less costly FFN care, resulting in lower average costs overall.

The average weekly cost of all child care per household is higher in the metro area than in Greater Minnesota (\$127 versus \$90).

²⁸ Specifically, families were asked: “Please think about how much your household paid or will pay for last week, Monday through Sunday, for all of your child care expenses, for all of your children age 12 and younger. Please round to the nearest dollar. We are only interested in how much you paid for last week, whether or not you actually made the payment last week, or pay by the week, month, or some other period of time.”

33. Average total weekly cost of child care per household (parents' out-of-pocket costs for all children)

Number of children	Total N=1,354
One (n=598)	\$58.78
Two (n=531)	\$91.80
Three (n=178)	\$102.75
Four or more (n=47)	\$77.57
Total (mean weekly cost, all families)	\$78.16
Mean cost for only those who paid	N=952
Mean weekly cost	\$111.17
Calculated annual cost	\$5,781

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Includes child care only for children ages 12 and younger. Not intended to represent the cost of full time child care.

Weekly cost of child care by household income

Overall, 30 percent of all families pay nothing out-of-pocket for child care. The percentage paying out-of-pocket increases as household income increases. Families with an annual income of \$75,000 or more also pay more per week, on average, than families in general (\$109, compared with \$78 for all families) (see Figure 34).

Overall, families who pay for child care are paying 10 percent, on average, of their annual household income, which is considered affordable. However, families in the lowest income group (under \$20,000 per year) who pay for child care pay a much higher percentage of their annual income for child care costs (28 percent). Those with incomes of \$20,000 up to \$45,000 are paying 15 percent, compared with 7 to 8 percent for the groups with higher incomes.

In all cases, metro area households, on average, pay more for child care than Greater Minnesota households. The largest difference is for households with two children. Metro area households pay, on average, \$148 per week compared with an average of \$93 per week for Greater Minnesota households.

Based on the amounts parents report paying for the randomly selected child, the average weekly amounts go down as the age of the child goes up, from, on average, \$110 per week for children ages 2 and younger, to \$95 for children ages 3 to 5, to \$68 for children ages 6 to 9, to \$64 for children ages 10 to 12.

34. Weekly cost of child care by household income (parents' out-of-pocket cost for all children)

Weekly household payment for child care, all families	Annual household income				Total N=1,354
	Under \$20,000 n=120	\$20,000-\$44,999 n=307	\$45,000-\$74,999 n=365	\$75,000 or more n=512	
\$0	52.5%	36.8%	26.8%	21.5%	29.7%
\$1-\$50	23.3%	27.0%	31.8%	21.9%	26.0%
\$51-\$100	12.5%	17.3%	18.9%	15.6%	16.6%
\$101-\$200	7.5%	13.7%	18.4%	25.6%	19.1%
\$201-\$300	2.5%	3.3%	2.5%	9.6%	5.2%
More than \$300	1.7%	2.0%	1.6%	5.9%	3.3%
Mean weekly payment, all families	\$45.05	\$58.68	\$64.78	\$108.71	\$78.16
Household payment, only those who paid	n=57	n=194	n=267	n=402	N=952
Mean weekly payment	\$94.84	\$92.87	\$88.55	\$138.46	\$111.17
Calculated annual cost	\$4,932	\$4,829	\$4,605	\$7,200	\$5,781
Mean annual expense as percent of income	28.2%	15.1%	7.8%	6.6%	10.3%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Small "n"s in columns do not add up to total N due to missing income data.

Awareness and use of the state Child Care Assistance Program

Awareness of Child Care Assistance Program

Figure 35 shows that more than half (59 percent) of respondents in the survey are aware of the availability of "state subsidy programs to help pay for child care costs" (i.e., the Child Care Assistance Program [CCAP], described in the introduction to this section). Households with low incomes, for whom this program is intended, are more likely to be aware of it (72 percent versus 55 percent for households with incomes above 200 percent of poverty). That level of awareness for households with low incomes is 18 percentage points higher than in the 1999 survey (57 percent). Awareness is highest among households with low incomes with children ages 2 and younger (78 percent).

Awareness of the availability of child care subsidies tends to be higher among parents in Greater Minnesota than in the metro area (65 percent versus 55 percent), as well as among those whose children have special needs (71 percent versus 57 percent). Younger parents compared with those ages 30 and older (69 percent versus 57 percent) and unmarried parents compared with married ones (75 percent versus 56 percent) are also more likely to be aware of the child care subsidy.

Use of CCAP

Seven percent of all households in the survey, and 19 percent of households with low incomes, report currently receiving a subsidy through CCAP. The rate of use of the state subsidy peaks among families in which the selected child is 3 to 5 years old.

Of the households with low incomes in this survey not now using child care subsidies or CCAP, 35 percent say they are not aware of the subsidy.

Among households with higher incomes (above 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline), 2 percent report receiving a child care subsidy through CCAP.

35. Awareness and use of the state Child Care Assistance Program

	Age of child				Total
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	
Respondents who are aware of the availability of the state Child Care Assistance Program					
Percent of all households	n=334 58.7%	n=375 57.3%	n=389 62.7%	n=263 57.8%	N=1,361 59.3%
Percent of households with low incomes	n=138 77.5%	n=142 72.5%	n=125 67.2%	n=94 69.1%	N=499 71.9%
Households currently receiving state child care assistance					
Percent of all households	n=334 8.1%	n=374 9.4%	n=388 4.4%	n=263 4.2%	N=1,359 6.6%
Percent of households with low incomes	n=137 21.9%	n=142 26.8%	n=124 12.1%	n=94 11.7%	N=497 18.9%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Households with low incomes are those whose income is at or below the range that includes 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a household of their size.

Other help with child care costs

Besides the state Child Care Assistance Program, 39 percent of households claim a federal or state income tax credit for child care (not differentiated because asked as just one question on the survey), and 29 percent use a child care expense account or employer plan that allows them to purchase child care with pre-tax dollars (see Figure 36).

Households with incomes above 200 percent of poverty (43 percent) and households with low incomes with a child care subsidy (42 percent) are more likely than households with low incomes without subsidies (25 percent) to claim the tax credit for child care.

Child care expense accounts are more common among households with higher incomes (36 percent versus 7 percent for households with low incomes), among those with children under age 6 (34 percent versus 24 percent for children ages 6 to 12), and among households with working mothers (i.e., employed, looking for work or attending school) (34 percent versus 11 percent for households without working mothers).

36. Types of help with child care costs

Type of help received	Age of child				Total
	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	
Households of all income levels					
Federal or state income tax credit for child care expenses last year	n=320 36.3%	n=356 44.1%	n=372 44.1%	n=253 28.9%	N=1,301 39.2%
Child care expense account through employer (pre-tax purchase)	n=330 35.2%	n=365 32.1%	n=380 27.4%	n=259 20.1%	N=1,334 29.2%
Child's other parent (in a different household)	n=335 1.5%	n=375 1.9%	n=388 3.1%	n=262 1.1%	N=1,360 2.0%
Employer-paid subsidy	n=335 1.5%	n=375 0.5%	n=388 1.0%	n=262 0.0%	N=1,360 0.8%
Other (school grant, friend/family, support grant for Autism, rec center, insurance)	n=335 1.8%	n=375 0.8%	n=388 0.5%	n=262 1.9%	N=1,360 1.2%
Households with low incomes					
Federal or state income tax credit for child care expenses last year	n=136 24.3%	n=135 31.9%	n=121 34.7%	n=92 20.7%	n=484 28.3%
Child care expense account through employer (pre-tax purchase)	n=137 10.9%	n=138 8.7%	n=120 4.2%	n=93 4.3%	n=488 7.4%
Child's other parent (in a different household)	n=138 3.6%	n=142 4.9%	n=124 5.6%	n=94 1.1%	N=498 4.0%
Employer-paid subsidy	n=138 0.0%	n=142 0.7%	n=124 0.0%	n=94 0.0%	N=498 0.2%
Other (school grant, friend/family, rec center)	n=138 2.9%	n=142 2.1%	n=124 0.8%	n=94 4.3%	N=498 2.4%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Subsidy categories may overlap. Figures for households with low incomes include low-income over-sample.

Selecting child care: Choices and barriers

This section explores the extent to which parents are able to find care that meets their needs for quality, cost and convenience, as well as what parents look for in determining quality. Knowing that the quality of care may affect children's emotional, social and intellectual development, it is important to understand how parents select child care.

Currently, the state funds a statewide network of child care resource and referral agencies that help parents identify and select child care in their communities. These agencies, known as CCR&Rs, work with providers and communities to improve the quality and availability of care for young children.

The findings in this section of the report will help policymakers understand how most parents identify potential child care providers, how they choose among alternatives and why they end arrangements. It also presents information on the extent to which parents have a choice or simply take whatever care they can find.

Awareness of child care resource and referral services

Figure 37 shows that about two-thirds of all households surveyed are aware of the existence of child care resource and referral services. Households using licensed child care are more likely than those using FFN care to be aware of child care resource and referral services (72 percent to 84 percent versus 60 percent to 62 percent).

Some households are more aware of CCR&R services than other households. These include households in greater Minnesota (73 percent versus 63 percent in the metro area); White households (69 percent versus 56 percent of households of color); households whose primary language at home is English (69 percent versus 22 percent for other languages); households with a mother in the workforce (69 percent versus 60 percent) and households with child care subsidies (86 percent versus 66 percent).

Among households with low incomes, those who have child care subsidies are more likely than those without them to be aware of CCR&R services (86 percent versus 61 percent). Households with low incomes without child care subsidies are similar to households with higher incomes in this regard.

37. Awareness of child care resource and referral

	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=1,360
	FFN care own home n=386	FFN care someone else's home n=240	Licensed family child care n=132	Center- based care n=433	Self care n=45	Supervised activities n=124	
Percent of households who are aware of the existence of child care resource and referral service in their area	60.4%	61.7%	84.1%	72.1%	68.9%	63.7%	67.2%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: "Primary arrangement" is the one in which the child spends the most time.

How people learned about their primary arrangement

Households using relative FFN care and self care as their primary arrangements skipped this question. In response to the open-ended question, with responses grouped into categories, about 45 percent of the other families report that they either already knew their main child care provider (7 percent) or were referred to the provider by someone they knew (38 percent). Community services such as child care resource and referral (CCR&R) services helped 13 percent of families find their current primary arrangements, and 13 percent learned about their current primary arrangement through schools (see Figure 38).

A greater proportion of parents learned about licensed family homes through personal contacts (47 percent) and CCR&R (22 percent); while schools were the source of information for a higher proportion of parents using child care centers (18 percent) or activities (24 percent) as their primary arrangement.

Among households with low incomes, those receiving a child care subsidy are more likely than those not receiving a subsidy to learn about their current primary arrangement through community or CCR&R services (19 percent versus 9 percent). Households with low incomes without child care subsidies are similar to households with incomes above 200 percent of poverty in this regard.

38. How people learned about their primary arrangement

Referral source	Child's primary arrangement					Total N=633
	Non-relative care own home n=50	Non-relative care someone else's home n=33	Licensed family child care n=121	Center- based care n=367	Supervised activities n=62	
Referred by personal contacts	44.0%	66.7%	47.1%	34.9%	21.0%	38.2%
Community service, CCR&R	6.0%	3.0%	22.3%	12.8%	8.1%	13.1%
Public or private school	4.0%	3.0%	0.0%	17.7%	24.2%	13.1%
Already knew provider	20.0%	18.2%	6.6%	5.7%	0.0%	7.1%
Newspaper, advertisements, yellow pages, Internet	10.0%	3.0%	7.4%	5.7%	9.7%	6.6%
Drove by/happenstance	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	6.0%	0.0%	4.3%
Church, synagogue, other place of worship	2.0%	3.0%	0.8%	2.2%	14.5%	3.2%
Place of employment	2.0%	0.0%	0.8%	4.6%	-	3.0%
Public bulletin boards, flyers	2.0%	0.0%	0.8%	1.6%	9.7%	2.2%
Reference materials	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	2.2%	1.6%	2.2%
Caseworker or health care provider	6.0%	3.0%	3.3%	1.4%	0.0%	2.1%
Provided care for other child	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.5%	0.0%	1.9%
Non-child care related organization	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	6.5%	0.9%
Did not answer the question	4.0%	-	-	2.2%	4.8%	2.1%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Responses to open-ended question, grouped into categories. Question not asked of families whose primary arrangement was relative care or self care. "Primary arrangement" is the one in which the child spends the most time. Percents may not total to 100 due to rounding. In addition, caution should be used in interpreting the figures because of small sub-sample sizes.

Reasons for choosing primary arrangement

In open-ended responses grouped into categories, as shown in Figure 39, respondents most commonly report choosing their primary arrangement due to the convenient location (24 percent), the quality of care (21 percent) and the cost (20 percent).

For FFN care, the main reasons also include preference of care by a family member and trust. For center-based care and supervised activities, the main reasons also include structure and activities.

Based on the age of the selected child, parents of children ages 5 and younger are more likely than parents of children ages 6 to 12 to choose their primary arrangement due to the quality of the care (15 percent versus 8 percent) and less likely due to the location (12 percent versus 6 percent).

Among households with low incomes, those with a child care subsidy (similar to households with higher incomes) are more likely than those without a subsidy to choose child care due to the quality of the care (15 percent versus 9 percent) and less likely due to cost (2 percent versus 14 percent).

Among households with low incomes, those without a child care subsidy are more likely than those with a subsidy to prefer care by a family member (20 percent versus 12 percent). Households with low incomes with child care subsidies are similar to households with higher incomes in this regard.²⁹

²⁹ The sub-sample of households with low incomes with a child care subsidy has 94 households and a sampling error of plus or minus 10 percent. The sampling error does not diminish the statistical significance but should be taken into account when generalizing results or making population estimates.

39. Reasons for choosing primary arrangement

Reason for choosing primary arrangement	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=1,025
	FFN care home n=266	FFN care someone else's home n=178	Licensed family child care n=131	Center-based care n=370	Supervised activities n=57	Self care n=23	
Convenient location	23.3%	18.0%	24.4%	28.9%	21.1%	17.4%	24.3%
Quality of care	12.4%	19.7%	22.1%	28.4%	15.8%	4.3%	20.7%
Cost	31.6%	26.4%	10.7%	10.8%	14.0%	43.5%	19.8%
Prefer care by family member	38.0%	44.9%	3.1%	1.6%	1.8%	4.3%	18.8%
Convenient and flexible hours	12.4%	11.8%	7.6%	13.5%	10.5%	17.4%	12.1%
Parent knows/trusts them	17.3%	20.8%	9.2%	5.9%	3.5%	21.7%	12.1%
Personality of provider	4.5%	5.1%	21.4%	10.8%	5.3%	0.0%	9.0%
Training/experience of provider	3.0%	5.1%	13.7%	13.8%	10.5%	0.0%	9.0%
Structure and activities	1.1%	0.6%	6.1%	12.4%	28.1%	0.0%	7.2%
References/used before	1.5%	1.7%	18.3%	10.0%	3.5%	0.0%	6.8%
Number of children in the home/center; ratio	1.5%	2.2%	13.7%	9.7%	1.8%	0.0%	6.1%
Other children/socialization	2.3%	5.6%	2.3%	7.8%	17.5%	4.3%	5.8%
Availability (had an opening)	6.4%	6.7%	4.6%	3.8%	5.3%	0.0%	5.1%
Prefer home care	13.5%	1.1%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	8.7%	4.6%
Safety issues	5.3%	3.4%	6.1%	4.6%	1.8%	4.3%	4.6%
Interaction between child and provider	4.1%	5.6%	6.1%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%
Special needs of child	5.3%	1.1%	2.3%	3.0%	1.8%	4.3%	3.1%
Assistance with school work	0.0%	0.6%	0.8%	7.8%	1.8%	0.0%	3.1%
Culture, values, language	0.8%	1.1%	1.5%	3.5%	3.5%	0.0%	2.0%
Appearance of the home/center	1.1%	0.6%	4.6%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Licensed	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Responses to open-ended question, grouped into categories. Includes both first and second reasons when given; total exceeds 100 percent due to multiple responses. Question was not asked of those whose selected child is in kindergarten or whose primary arrangement is less than five hours per week.

Important considerations in choosing child care

As shown in Figures 40 and 41, from a list of important considerations in choosing child care, the top “very important” reason at 73 percent is “a caregiver who has special training in taking care of children,” followed by “a reasonable cost” (67 percent), “a place close to home” (66 percent) and a “small group size” (61 percent). For those using FFN care, “a place where children will be cared for when they are sick” is also very important (64 percent to 65 percent).

The special training of the caregiver is the most important consideration for parents of children ages 9 and younger. This figure shows parents’ ratings of how important a consideration is in choosing child care, which may be different from research findings on how important a consideration is for the well-being and development of children.

Households with low incomes are more likely than households with incomes above 200 percent of poverty to say that “a reasonable cost” is “very important” in choosing child care (84 percent versus 61 percent).

40. Important considerations in choosing child care, by age of child

Considerations in choosing child care arrangements	Age of child				Total N=1,360
	0-2 years n=335	3-5 years n=375	6-9 years n=388	10-12 years n=262	
A caregiver who has special training in caring for children					
Very important	80.6%	75.0%	70.4%	63.5%	72.8%
Somewhat important	17.9%	23.4%	25.5%	31.6%	24.2%
Not important	1.5%	1.6%	4.1%	4.9%	2.9%
A reasonable cost					
Very important	67.2%	67.3%	65.6%	67.2%	66.7%
Somewhat important	28.4%	29.3%	31.9%	29.4%	29.8%
Not important	4.5%	3.5%	2.6%	3.4%	3.5%
A place close to home					
Very important	65.7%	66.7%	69.1%	61.5%	66.1%
Somewhat important	30.7%	30.9%	25.8%	35.5%	30.3%
Not important	3.6%	2.4%	5.2%	3.1%	3.6%
A small number of children in the same class, home or group					
Very important	68.1%	65.0%	54.8%	56.3%	61.1%
Somewhat important	29.3%	32.9%	38.0%	35.4%	33.9%
Not important	2.7%	2.1%	7.2%	8.4%	4.9%
A place where children will be cared for when they are sick					
Very important	53.3%	49.5%	53.1%	61.5%	53.8%
Somewhat important	22.5%	23.7%	23.6%	18.7%	22.4%
Not important	24.3%	26.9%	23.3%	19.8%	23.9%
A caregiver who is a relative or family member					
Very important	33.1%	29.5%	33.8%	34.6%	32.6%
Somewhat important	44.6%	43.1%	36.1%	40.7%	41.0%
Not important	22.3%	27.4%	30.2%	24.7%	26.4%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Ns vary slightly due to missing responses.

41. Important considerations in choosing child care arrangements, by type of primary arrangement

Considerations in choosing child care arrangements	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=1,362
	FFN care own home n=387	FFN care someone else's home n=240	Licensed family child care n=132	Center- based care n=434	Self care n=45	Supervised activities n=124	
A caregiver who has special training in caring for children							
Very important	68.7%	75.0%	78.8%	77.6%	62.2%	62.1%	72.8%
Somewhat important	27.1%	22.5%	19.7%	20.5%	31.1%	33.9%	24.2%
Not important	4.1%	2.5%	1.5%	1.8%	6.7%	4.0%	2.9%
A reasonable cost							
Very important	68.1%	71.4%	66.7%	66.4%	75.6%	51.6%	66.7%
Somewhat important	28.5%	24.9%	31.8%	29.7%	22.2%	44.4%	29.8%
Not important	3.4%	3.7%	1.5%	3.9%	2.2%	4.0%	3.5%
A place close to home							
Very important	69.9%	65.4%	72.0%	65.4%	62.2%	53.2%	66.1%
Somewhat important	27.2%	32.1%	26.5%	30.0%	37.8%	38.7%	30.3%
Not important	2.8%	2.5%	1.5%	4.6%	0.0%	8.1%	3.6%
A small number of children in the same class, home or group							
Very important	64.6%	62.7%	63.6%	60.2%	40.0%	55.6%	61.1%
Somewhat important	28.7%	34.0%	31.1%	37.0%	46.7%	37.9%	33.9%
Not important	6.7%	3.3%	5.3%	2.8%	13.3%	6.5%	4.9%
A place where children will be cared for when they are sick							
Very important	64.2%	65.1%	43.1%	42.6%	53.3%	49.2%	53.8%
Somewhat important	17.1%	19.1%	30.0%	27.7%	20.0%	19.7%	22.4%
Not important	18.7%	15.8%	26.9%	29.8%	26.7%	31.1%	23.9%
A caregiver who is a relative or family member							
Very important	45.2%	43.6%	16.8%	21.1%	17.8%	33.9%	32.6%
Somewhat important	37.5%	40.2%	41.2%	45.0%	46.7%	37.1%	41.0%
Not important	17.3%	16.2%	42.0%	33.9%	35.6%	29.0%	26.4%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: "Primary arrangement" is the one in which the child spends the most time.

Views about potential child care quality rating system

Researchers asked parents how helpful it would be if their community had a child care rating system that would give them information they could use for selecting quality care. As shown in Figure 42, 87 percent say such a system would be “very helpful” (54 percent) or “somewhat helpful” (32 percent).

Parents who are more likely to say a quality rating system would be helpful include those whose primary language at home is not English (100 percent versus 86 percent of those whose primary language is English); parents with low incomes (91 percent versus 85 percent of parents with higher incomes) and those with a randomly selected child age 5 and younger (90 percent versus 83 percent).

42. Helpfulness of child care rating system

How helpful would it be if your community had a child care rating system that would give you information you could use for selecting quality care?	Age of child				Total N=1,356
	0-2 years n=335	3-5 years n=371	6-9 years n=388	10-12 years n=262	
Very helpful	60.0%	55.3%	51.5%	50.0%	54.4%
Somewhat helpful	31.3%	34.2%	33.8%	28.2%	32.2%
Not very helpful	3.3%	4.9%	6.4%	8.8%	5.7%
Not helpful at all	5.4%	5.7%	8.2%	13.0%	7.7%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Options when considering current primary arrangement

Forty-three percent of the respondents report they seriously considered other kinds of arrangements when they chose their current primary arrangement, while 19 percent say they had no other realistic options to consider.

43. Households that had no realistic options other than their current arrangement

Current primary arrangement	No realistic options
FFN care own home (n=387)	20.2%
FFN care someone else's home (n=240)	18.3%
Licensed family child care (n=132)	16.7%
Center-based care (n=432)	19.4%
All types combined (N=1357)	19.0%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Other kinds of arrangements most seriously considered

Figures 44 and 45 show the kinds of arrangements considered by families who report they seriously considered other arrangements when choosing their current primary arrangement, first by the age of the randomly selected child and then by the type of arrangement they ended up choosing. Center-based care is the type most commonly considered by respondents who looked at different options (48 percent), including those using FFN care.

44. Kind of arrangement most seriously considered, by age

Arrangement most seriously considered	Age of child				Total N=582
	0-2 years n=175	3-5 years n=160	6-9 years n=165	10-12 years n=82	
FFN/relative care	25.1%	23.8%	26.1%	30.5%	25.8%
Licensed family child care	27.4%	36.3%	32.7%	20.7%	30.4%
Center-based care	49.1%	48.8%	48.5%	43.9%	48.1%
Self care	0.6%	2.5%	4.2%	4.9%	2.7%
Supervised activities	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.2%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Shows the type of arrangement(s) most seriously considered by the parent when selecting the randomly selected child's current primary arrangement. Responses to open-ended question grouped into categories. Multiple responses allowed.

45. Kind of arrangement most seriously considered, by type of primary arrangement

Arrangement most seriously considered	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=582
	FFN care own home n=151	FFN care someone else's home n=103	Licensed family child care n=75	Center- based care n=211	Self care n=19	Supervised activities n=23	
FFN/relative care	27.2%	17.5%	16.0%	28.4%	57.9%	34.8%	25.8%
Licensed family child care	29.1%	40.8%	20.0%	33.6%	15.8%	8.7%	30.4%
Center-based care	48.3%	53.4%	68.0%	41.7%	42.1%	21.7%	48.1%
Self care	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Supervised activities	2.0%	1.9%	2.7%	1.9%	0.0%	21.7%	2.7%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Shows the type of arrangement most seriously considered by the parent when selecting the randomly selected child's current primary arrangement.

Households taking whatever arrangement they could get

Twenty-nine percent of all parents and 37 percent of parents with low incomes say that, in choosing child care for the selected child, they feel they had to take whatever arrangement they could get “sort of,” “yes,” or “definitely.” Moreover, 51 percent of households with three or more arrangements and 42 percent of those who use self care feel that way (see Figure 46).

Parents choosing child care for children ages 6 to 12 are more likely than those choosing child care for younger children to feel that way among all households (32 percent versus 27 percent) as well as among households with low incomes (40 percent versus 34 percent).

Parents of color are more likely than White parents to report feeling they had to take whatever arrangement they could get (38 percent versus 28 percent), and so are those whose primary language is not English (43 percent versus 29 percent).

Parents with children who have special needs are also more likely to feel that way (39 percent versus 27 percent of parents whose children have no special needs).

Parents with low incomes (38 percent) and parents using CCAP (39 percent) are also more likely to feel that way compared with parents with higher incomes (27 percent) and those not using CCAP (29 percent).

46. Households that report they had to take whatever arrangement they could get

In choosing child care, did you feel like you had to take whatever you could get?	Age of child		Total
	0-5 years	6-12 years	
Percent of all households	n=710 26.6%	n=649 32.2%	N=1,359 29.3%
Percent of households with low incomes	n=160 34.4%	n=153 40.1%	N=313 37.4%
Percent of households with three or more child care arrangements	n=39 46.2%	n=57 54.4%	N=96 51.0%

In choosing child care, did you feel like you had to take whatever you could get?	Child's primary arrangement						Total
	FFN care own home	FFN care someone else's home	Licensed family child care	Center-based care	Self care	Supervised activities	
Percent of all households	n=386 30.6%	n=240 29.2%	n=132 31.8%	n=433 30.7%	n=45 42.2%	n=123 13.0%	N=1,359 29.3%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Table shows percent reporting “definitely,” “yes,” or “sort of” in response to the statement, “In choosing child care for [randomly selected child], I felt I had to take whatever I could get.”

Use of child care that may not be the preferred type of care

This section combines four survey questions (see Figures 47 and 48) to examine whether parents with children regularly in child care for at least five hours a week (excluding self care) are using their favored type of child care or might prefer to change to different arrangements if they had other options. This is not meant to imply dissatisfaction with their current arrangement, but may indicate dissatisfaction with their child care options. Nearly half (47 percent) of those responding answer at least one of these questions in a way that suggests their current care is not their preferred type, ranging from 43 percent for respondents with selected children ages 2 and younger to 52 percent for those with selected children ages 6 to 9.

Households using FFN care as the primary arrangement are more likely than those using licensed family homes or center-based care to not be using their preferred type of care as defined in this analysis.

In addition, households of color (61 percent versus 45 percent) and households with low incomes (59 percent versus 43 percent) are more likely than other households to not be using their preferred type of child care.

47. Use of child care that may not be the preferred type of care

	Age of child				Total N=997
	0-2 years n=263	3-5 years n=308	6-9 years n=277	10-12 years n=149	
A. Had no realistic options other than their current type of care	14.1%	20.1%	20.6%	17.4%	18.3%
B. If they had to do it over, would choose the same arrangement again (percent responding "sometimes," "rarely," or "never")	3.8%	6.8%	3.2%	7.4%	5.1%
C. In choosing child care, felt they had to take whatever they could get (percent responding "definitely," "yes," or "sort of")	30.8%	27.3%	35.4%	32.9%	31.3%
D. Would rather change from current primary arrangement	11.8%	16.2%	14.4%	9.4%	13.5%
E. At least one of the above (unduplicated)	43.3%	46.1%	52.3%	45.6%	47.0%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: In lines A-D the number shown as the basis for percentages is the number of families who self-identified an "arrangement used most often" and who responded to the questions related to that arrangement. All figures include only families regularly using child care for a total of at least five hours per week.

48. Use of child care that may not be the preferred type of care

	Child's primary arrangement					Total N=997
	FFN care own home n=263	FFN care someone else's home n=176	Licensed family child care n=128	Center- based care n=368	Supervised activities n=62	
A. Had no realistic options other than their current type of care	20.2%	18.8%	16.4%	18.8%	9.7%	18.3%
B. If they had to do it over, would choose the same arrangement again (percent responding "sometimes," "rarely," or "never")	6.8%	9.1%	1.6%	4.1%	0.0%	5.1%
C. In choosing child care, felt they had to take whatever they could get (percent responding "definitely," "yes," or "sort of")	34.2%	31.8%	30.5%	32.6%	11.3%	31.3%
D. Would rather change from current primary arrangement	10.6%	21.0%	14.8%	12.8%	6.5%	13.5%
E. At least one of the above (unduplicated)	53.2%	51.1%	43.0%	45.9%	24.2%	47.0%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: In lines A-D the number shown as the basis for percentages is the number of families who self-identified an "arrangement used most often" and who responded to the questions related to that arrangement. All figures include only families regularly using child care for at least five hours per week.

Among those who would rather change primary arrangements (n=142), 90 percent say that something is keeping them from changing child care arrangements. The most common barriers reported, grouped into categories from open-ended responses, are "costs too much" (47 percent) and the person or place is "currently not available" (27 percent), followed by preferred arrangement is "hard to find" (8 percent) or "too far away" (7 percent).

Main reason for ending previous child care arrangement

In an open-ended question, parents were asked for the main reason their last arrangements (before their current ones) ended, and their responses were grouped by category (see Figures 49 and 50). The most common reasons parents report are because it was seasonal (20 percent) or temporary (18 percent), or because the school year ended or started (11 percent). Another common reason is "the provider closed or stopped providing care" (12 percent).

More parents of preschool age children (ages 5 or younger) than of school age children (ages 6 or older) report having ended a previous arrangement because the provider stopped providing care (16 percent to 19 percent versus 5 percent to 10 percent).

FFN care is more likely than other types of care to end because “it was meant to be temporary” (29 percent). About a third (32 percent) of previous arrangements with licensed family child care homes ended because the provider stopped providing care.

49. Main reason for ending previous child care arrangement, by age of child

Main reason for ending previous arrangement	Age of child				Total N=344
	0-2 years n=73	3-5 years n=83	6-9 years n=111	10-12 years n=77	
Arrangement was seasonal	2.7%	14.5%	26.1%	33.8%	20.1%
Arrangement was temporary	31.5%	14.5%	13.5%	18.2%	18.6%
Provider closed/stopped providing care	19.2%	15.7%	9.9%	5.2%	12.2%
School year started/ended	0.0%	6.0%	14.4%	19.5%	10.5%
Parent or child unhappy with program	8.2%	6.0%	6.3%	3.9%	6.1%
Parent changed job/schedule	6.8%	8.4%	4.5%	3.9%	5.8%
Could no longer afford care/program	5.5%	4.8%	5.4%	0.0%	4.1%
Respondent/child moved	4.1%	8.4%	0.9%	1.3%	3.5%
Preferred program became available	4.1%	1.2%	5.4%	2.6%	3.5%
Parent stopped working/finished school	6.8%	2.4%	0.9%	0.0%	2.3%
Child reached age for new program	2.7%	1.2%	2.7%	1.3%	2.0%
Child exceeded age of old program	0.0%	1.2%	1.8%	3.9%	1.7%
Transportation/location	0.0%	2.4%	1.8%	2.6%	1.7%
Parent wanted to stay with children	0.0%	3.6%	0.9%	1.3%	1.5%
Issues with provider's schedule	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
Other	5.5%	3.6%	2.7%	2.6%	3.5%
Respondent did not answer question	2.7%	1.2%	2.7%	-	1.7%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Response to an open-ended question, grouped by category. Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

50. Main reason for ending previous arrangement, by type of arrangement

Main reason for ending previous arrangement	Type of previous arrangement					Total N=352
	FFN care n=170	Licensed family child care n=60	Center-based care n=74	Activities n=18	Other n=30	
Arrangement was seasonal	17.1%	3.3%	12.2%	72.2%	56.7%	19.9%
Arrangement was temporary	29.4%	13.3%	4.1%	0.0%	10.0%	18.2%
Provider closed/stopped providing care	11.2%	31.7%	5.4%	5.6%	0.0%	12.2%
School year started/ended	8.2%	5.0%	20.3%	5.6%	13.3%	10.5%
Parent or child unhappy with program	4.1%	11.7%	9.5%	5.6%	0.0%	6.3%
Parent changed job/schedule	5.9%	1.7%	13.5%	0.0%	3.3%	6.3%
Could no longer afford care/program	2.9%	1.7%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
Respondent/child moved	4.7%	0.0%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
Preferred program became available	2.9%	3.3%	5.4%	0.0%	3.3%	3.7%
Parent stopped working/finished school	2.4%	5.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
Child reached age for new program	2.4%	3.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Child exceeded age of old program	0.0%	3.3%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Transportation/location	1.8%	1.7%	1.4%	5.6%	0.0%	1.7%
Parent wanted to stay with children	2.9%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Issues with provider's schedule	0.6%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	1.1%
Other	1.8%	10.0%	5.4%	5.6%	0.0%	3.4%
Respondent did not answer question	1.2%	-	1.4%	-	10.0%	1.7%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Response to an open-ended question, grouped by category. Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. No respondent identified self care as the type of their most recent previous arrangement. Caution should be used in interpreting the figures because of small sub-sample sizes.

Opinions about self care

Fewer than 5 percent of parents think children ages 9 or younger can safely be left to care for themselves. Thirteen percent think 10-year-olds can; 11 percent think 11-year-olds can, and 38 percent think 12-year-olds can (see Figure 51).

By the time children are considered old enough to care for themselves on a regular basis, parents consider it safe to leave them alone for an average of three hours at a time. As shown in Figure 52, the length of time grows longer as the child grows older, rising from just about two hours at ages 8 to 10, to three and one-half hours at age 13, to 5 hours at age 16.

51. Opinions on safe age for self care

Age at which it is safe in their neighborhood for children to be left to care for themselves on a regular basis:	Total N=1,355
3 years old or older	0.1%
5 years old or older	0.1%
7 years old or older	0.1%
8 years old or older	1.8%
9 years old or older	2.6%
10 years old or older	12.5%
11 years old or older	10.6%
12 years old or older	37.8%
13 years old or older	17.9%
14 years old or older	9.4%
15 years old or older	3.7%
16 years old or older	1.8%
17 years old or older	0.1%
18 years old or older	1.5%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

52. Mean length of time children could be left to care for themselves

Age of child	Total N=1,329
7 years old or younger (n=4)	*
8 years old (n=24)	1:51
9 years old (n=34)	2:04
10 years old (n=166)	2:07
11 years old (n=142)	2:34
12 years old (n=501)	3:02
13 years old (n=241)	3:38
14 years old (n=126)	3:31
15 years old (n=50)	3:45
16 years old (n=24)	5:10
17 years old (n=1)	*
Mean, all ages combined	3:02

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Time shown as hours:minutes. Asterisk (*) indicates fewer than 10 children in the category. Mean calculation excludes outlying response of 18 years old (16 responses).

Transportation problems

As shown in Figure 53, 2 percent of respondents report that transportation to and from child care is a problem. Seven percent report that it is sometimes a problem, and 90 percent report that it is not a problem.

53. Percent of households reporting that transportation to and from child care is a problem

Is transportation to and from child care a big problem for your household?	Age of child				Total N=1,362
	0-2 years n=334	3-5 years n=376	6-9 years n=389	10-12 years n=263	
Yes	1.5%	1.9%	2.3%	4.2%	2.3%
Sometimes	5.4%	5.9%	7.7%	11.0%	7.3%
No	93.1%	92.3%	90.0%	84.8%	90.4%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Question asked of all respondents, concerning transportation to and from child care for all their children ages 12 and younger.

Parental ratings of child care quality

Quality child care can be found in home-based and center-based settings. Factors commonly associated with quality care include small group size, low child-adult ratios, continuity and stability of the staffing, provider responsiveness to individual child and family concerns and values and providers with formal training or education in child development.

This section presents parents' reports of the quality of the selected child's current primary arrangement and their satisfaction with that arrangement. In surveys of parent satisfaction, parents tend to report high levels of satisfaction with their child care when they are asked general questions. This has been found even when trained observers visiting the same providers have determined that quality was marginal. However, when parents are asked more probing questions (e.g., "What one thing would you change about this arrangement?"), they generally reveal more dissatisfaction. Presenting both kinds of responses, while they may appear contradictory, helps to document a more balanced account of parents' perceptions about the quality of their child care. This is important, since current policy relies heavily on parents to make well-informed choices on the quality of the care they select.

Parents' quality and satisfaction ratings for primary arrangement

Parents tend to express strong satisfaction with the quality of their primary child care arrangements. Characteristics on which arrangements are rated highest include "my child feels safe and secure" (99 percent said "always" or "usually"), "my child likes the caregiver" (97 percent) and "the caregiver is warm and affectionate toward my child" (95 percent). Ninety-five percent say if they had it to do all over they would "always" or "usually" choose the same care again (see Figure 54).

Parents rate items concerning activities ("lots of creative activities" and "activities just right for their child") lower (78 percent and 83 percent, respectively).

Households with younger children, households with higher incomes, and those using the preferred type of care tend to report higher parental ratings of arrangements.

Compared to parents using center-based care and licensed family homes, parents using FFN care tend to be more satisfied with the individual attention and the flexibility of their primary arrangement.

Parents using center-based and licensed family homes, on the other hand, tend to be more satisfied with these items: creative activities and activities that are just right for their child, the knowledge of the caregiver about children and their needs, the caregiver's ability to meet their child's needs (not feel they are too demanding) and not watching too much TV.

Among households with low incomes, those with child care subsidies tend to rate their child care arrangements higher than those without child care subsidies, and similar to households with higher incomes, on these items: creative activities and activities that are just right for their child, the knowledge of the caregiver about children and their needs and not watching too much TV.

54. Parents' quality and satisfaction ratings for primary arrangement

Indicators of child care quality and satisfaction (N=1,017)	Yes	No	Don't Know			
Do you feel free to drop in at this child care arrangement without an appointment?	94.5%	5.2%	0.3%			
	Always	Usually	Some-times	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
My child feels safe and secure	89.6%	9.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
The caregiver or provider is warm and affectionate toward my child	78.2%	16.8%	4.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%
The caregiver and I share information about my child	75.6%	15.7%	5.7%	1.7%	1.2%	0.1%
There are lots of creative activities	52.1%	26.3%	18.5%	2.4%	0.7%	0.1%
My child gets a lot of individual attention	43.6%	32.6%	20.4%	2.3%	0.5%	0.7%
The caregiver provides activities that are just right for my child	48.4%	34.7%	13.6%	1.6%	1.3%	0.5%
My caregiver knows a lot about children and their needs	68.0%	23.8%	6.6%	0.8%	0.6%	0.2%
My child likes the caregiver	79.5%	17.5%	2.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
My caregiver feels that my child's needs are too demanding	0.8%	1.3%	11.5%	18.6%	67.5%	0.4%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Respondents' reports about self-identified primary arrangement for their randomly selected child.

Questions were not asked of respondents who say that the arrangement they use most often is self care. Ns vary slightly due to respondents who refused to answer.

54. Parents' quality and satisfaction ratings for primary arrangement (continued)

Indicators of child care quality and satisfaction (N=1,017)	Always	Usually	Some-times	Rarely	Never	Don't Know
I rely on my caregiver to be flexible about my hours	33.2%	18.5%	20.9%	9.7%	17.4%	0.3%
The caregiver needs more help with the children	0.5%	1.5%	10.8%	21.6%	65.5%	0.1%
The children watch too much TV	2.4%	3.6%	20.0%	17.5%	56.3%	0.2%
If I had it to do over, I would choose this care again	82.0%	12.7%	3.5%	0.9%	0.7%	0.2%
There has been too much turnover in my child's caregivers at this arrangement	0.4%	0.8%	6.4%	12.2%	79.1%	1.1%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Respondents' reports about self-identified primary arrangement for their randomly selected child.

Questions were not asked of respondents who say that the arrangement they use most often is self care. Ns vary slightly due to respondents who refused to answer.

The one thing parents would change about their primary arrangement

In response to an open-ended question (responses grouped by category), 31 percent of respondents say there is nothing they would change about the selected child's primary child care arrangement. Fourteen percent want more structure and activities, 9 percent more availability of hours or days and 8 percent lower cost. The percentage wanting a lower cost is highest for center-based care (14 percent) and supervised activities (13 percent) (see Figure 55).

55. One thing parent would change about primary arrangement

One thing parent would change about primary arrangement:	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=990
	FFN care own home n=255	FFN care someone else's home n=172	Licensed family child care n=125	Center-based care n=354	Self care n=23	Supervised activities n=61	
Nothing	40.0%	39.5%	25.6%	20.1%	21.7%	41.0%	30.6%
Structure and activities	17.3%	12.2%	17.6%	11.3%	17.4%	11.5%	13.9%
More structure	1.2%	1.7%	1.6%	0.3%	4.3%	1.6%	1.1%
Television problems (amount/type)	3.9%	2.9%	3.2%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
More (variety of) activities	2.7%	1.2%	2.4%	1.1%	0.0%	3.3%	1.8%
(More) creative activities	2.4%	0.6%	1.6%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
(More) outside activities	0.8%	0.6%	2.4%	0.8%	0.0%	1.6%	1.0%
(More) educational activities	1.6%	2.9%	3.2%	2.3%	4.3%	1.6%	2.3%
(More) age appropriate activities	0.4%	1.2%	0.8%	1.1%	8.7%	0.0%	1.0%
Capacity and availability (days/hours)	6.7%	8.7%	8.0%	10.5%	4.3%	16.4%	9.1%
Flexibility/scheduling hours	2.7%	2.3%	1.6%	2.0%	0.0%	4.9%	2.3%
Extended hours	0.8%	2.3%	5.6%	7.1%	0.0%	6.6%	4.2%
Lower cost	1.6%	4.1%	8.8%	14.4%	4.3%	13.1%	8.3%
Prefer (in-)home care	9.0%	5.2%	6.4%	3.7%	34.8%	0.0%	6.2%
Parent wants to be home	7.8%	3.5%	4.8%	3.4%	34.8%	0.0%	5.3%
The caregiver(s)/staff	5.1%	4.7%	5.6%	8.2%	N/A	3.3%	6.0%
Less staff turnover	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	N/A	0.0%	1.0%
Location and transportation	2.4%	11.6%	5.6%	5.4%	8.7%	3.3%	5.7%
Closer location	2.0%	11.0%	5.6%	4.8%	4.3%	0.0%	4.9%
Size of program	2.7%	1.7%	4.0%	8.8%	4.3%	3.3%	4.9%
Higher staff/child ratio	0.4%	0.0%	0.8%	2.5%	N/A	1.6%	1.2%
Smaller program	0.0%	1.2%	1.6%	4.2%	N/A	0.0%	1.9%
More one-on-one with child	1.2%	0.6%	1.6%	1.7%	N/A	0.0%	1.2%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Responses to open-ended question, grouped by category. Asked only of respondents who self-identified a primary arrangement for their randomly selected child. Rows in bold represent totals of broad themes. To provide greater detail, responses within these themes that were mentioned by at least 1 percent of respondents are listed underneath.

55. One thing parent would change about primary arrangement (continued)

One thing parent would change about primary care arrangement:	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=990
	FFN care own home n=255	FFN care someone else's home n=172	Licensed family child care n=125	Center- based care n=354	Self care n=23	Supervised activities n=61	
Physical facilities – features and quality	1.6%	1.2%	10.4%	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%
Larger facility/house	0.8%	0.0%	3.2%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
The other children	5.9%	4.7%	4.0%	3.7%	4.3%	3.3%	4.4%
More children of same age	1.6%	2.9%	1.6%	1.1%	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%
More socialization with other children	2.7%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Food	2.0%	1.7%	0.8%	3.7%	0.0%	1.6%	2.3%
Provide healthier meals/snacks	1.6%	1.7%	0.8%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Discipline	3.1%	2.3%	1.6%	0.6%	0.0%	1.6%	1.7%
Problems with amount or kind of discipline	1.6%	1.2%	1.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Training or capabilities of caregiver(s)	2.0%	1.2%	0.8%	2.0%	N/A	0.0%	1.5%
Other	0.8%	1.2%	0.8%	0.6%	0.0%	1.6%	0.8%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Responses to open-ended question, grouped by category. Asked only of respondents who self-identified a primary arrangement for their randomly selected child. Rows in bold represent totals of broad themes. To provide greater detail, responses within these themes that were mentioned by at least 1 percent of respondents are listed underneath.

Parental employment issues related to child care

The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that in Minnesota 69 percent of children under the age of 6 lived in households in which the single parent or both parents participated in the labor market (59 percent in two-parent households and 17 percent in single-parent households).³⁰ The Census Bureau also reports that a majority of new mothers were in the workforce nationwide: 54.6 percent of married or single women with babies less than a year old were employed in 2002.³¹

Economic and social expectations increasingly assume that most adults, including parents of young children, will be in the paid workforce, raising the importance of understanding how children are cared for during the time their parents are unable to be present. Minnesota's "work-first" model of welfare reform discourages the use of public funds to help parents stay home, and provides funds to support child care so parents can work. More generally, many recent reports have documented that Minnesota continues to lead the nation in the percentage of women in the workforce.

Not all child care is work related: evidence from national studies suggests that some non-working parents choose various types of care to give children social opportunities or enrichment and development experiences. However, a large proportion of child care is necessary to support parents' employment.

This section presents findings from the household survey concerning the work activities of Minnesota parents that might shape their child care needs; the ways in which child care issues affect parents' work; parents' ability to handle child care problems that arise during work hours; and parents' usual backup arrangements for handling child care problems such as a sick child or a school closure.

This information will help policymakers assess the impact of combining parenting activities with employment. It will also be useful to child care resource and referral agencies helping parents plan for contingencies, and it will help employers support their employees' attendance and productivity.

³⁰ Casale, O. and Fisher, A. December 2002/January 2003. *Labor Force Participation Rates: How is Minnesota Different?* Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, p. 4.

³¹ Downs, B. 2003. *Fertility of American Women: June 2002, Population Characteristics*. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Report P20-548.

Work related child care problems

Twenty-seven percent of working parents report that their work schedule varies from week to week.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents report that they or their spouse or partner had one or more of the work related issues listed in Figure 56 within the past six months because of a problem with child care (not including occasions when the child was sick). For example, 19 percent worked fewer hours; 17 percent were late for work or left early and 16 percent missed an entire day of work. Of respondents who have lost time from work, 13 percent say such problems have happened “often” in the last six months; 25 percent say they had happened “sometimes,” and 62 percent say “rarely.”

Twelve percent of respondents report that child care problems have prevented them from accepting or keeping the kind of job they wanted in the past 12 months. Another 8 percent say child care problems have “sometimes” been such a problem.

Respondents more likely to report this type of child care problem at least sometimes include those who: are not married (34 percent versus 17 percent); are parents of color (35 percent versus 17 percent); have a child with a special need (34 percent versus 17 percent); have low incomes (36 percent versus 14 percent), and have a child care subsidy (38 percent versus 18 percent).

The percentage reporting that child care problems have prevented them from accepting or keeping the kind of job they wanted in the past 12 months goes down as household income goes up (from 33 percent for households with incomes under \$20,000, to 17 percent for incomes of \$20,000 to \$44,999, to 10 percent for incomes of \$45,000 to \$74,999, to 5 percent for incomes of \$75,000 or more).

Sixty-nine percent of parents say that in their work place it is “rarely” or “never” difficult to deal with child care problems that arise during working hours. Eleven percent say it is “always” or “usually” difficult.

56. Work related child care problems, by primary child care arrangement

In the past six months, how often did the following occur for the respondent, spouse or partner due to a problem with child care (does not include child being sick)?	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=1,337
	FFN care own home n=387	FFN care someone else's home n=241	Licensed family child care n=132	Center-based care n=408	Self care n=45	Supervised activities n=124	
Worked fewer hours	20.7%	25.3%	14.4%	16.9	22.2%	15.3%	19.3%
Late for work or left early	18.6%	23.0%	14.4%	15.0%	13.3%	14.5%	17.3%
Changed shifts or schedule	16.8%	25.0%	14.4%	13.8%	22.2%	13.7%	17.0%
Could not work overtime	19.6%	18.3%	16.7%	15.4%	20.0%	9.7%	16.9%
Missed an entire day of work	13.4%	20.3%	25.8%	14.0%	20.0%	7.3%	15.7%
Quality of work suffered worrying about your child	8.3%	7.1%	4.5%	6.4%	13.3%	8.1%	7.3%
Quit job or was fired	3.4%	3.3%	0.0%	3.4%	4.4%	2.4%	3.0%
Did not get a raise or promotion	3.1%	1.7%	0.8%	3.4%	2.2%	1.6%	2.5%
Any of the above	34.9%	44.4%	43.2%	34.1%	37.8%	27.4%	36.6%
Of households who lost time from work, how often in the past six months?	n=135	n=107	n=57	n=139	n=17	n=34	N=489
Rarely	53.3%	57.9%	70.2%	66.2%	58.8%	73.5%	61.6%
Sometimes	28.1%	29.0%	24.6%	20.1%	35.3%	20.6%	25.4%
Often	18.5%	13.1%	5.3%	13.7%	5.9%	5.9%	13.1%
In the past 12 months, have any problems with child care prevented you from accepting or keeping the kind of job you want?	n=385	n=241	n=131	n=434	n=45	n=124	N=1,360
Yes	14.5%	18.3%	8.4%	9.7%	8.9%	4.0%	11.9%
Sometimes	6.2%	9.1%	6.9%	9.7%	6.7%	4.0%	7.7%
No	79.2%	72.6%	84.7%	80.6%	84.4%	91.9%	80.4%
(For those who are working) How difficult is it for you to deal with child care problems that arise during working hours?	n=285	n=174	n=124	n=352	n=42	n=87	N=1,064
Always difficult	5.3%	5.2%	6.5%	5.4%	4.8%	1.1%	5.1%
Usually difficult	8.1%	7.5%	4.8%	4.0%	7.1%	8.0%	6.2%
Sometimes difficult	17.5%	19.5%	16.9%	23.0%	19.0%	16.1%	19.5%
Rarely difficult	31.6%	35.1%	38.7%	34.4%	47.6%	26.4%	34.1%
Never difficult	37.5%	32.8%	33.1%	33.2%	21.4%	48.3%	35.1%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: "Primary arrangement" is the one in which the randomly selected child spends the most time. Columns may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. Second question about losing time from work was only asked if respondent said "yes" to any one of the questions above.

57. Work related child care problems, by age of child

In the past six months, how often did the following occur for the respondent, spouse or partner due to a problem with child care (does not include child being sick)?	Age of child				Total N=1,337
	0-2 years n=335	3-5 years n=350	6-9 years n=389	10-12 years n=263	
Worked fewer hours	20.9%	18.3%	20.6%	16.7%	19.3%
Late for work or left early	19.7%	16.6%	19.1%	12.5%	17.3%
Changed shifts or schedule	18.5%	15.8%	19.1%	13.7%	17.0%
Could not work overtime	16.4%	14.6%	19.5%	16.7%	16.9%
Missed an entire day of work	22.4%	17.7%	13.1%	8.4%	15.7%
Quality of work suffered worrying about your child	6.6%	6.3%	8.7%	7.2%	7.3%
Quit job or was fired	4.2%	4.0%	1.3%	2.7%	3.0%
Did not get a raise or promotion	2.4%	3.1%	2.3%	2.3%	2.5%
Of households who lost time from work, how often did this occur in the past six months?	n=140	n=131	n=136	n=82	n=489
Rarely	64.3%	61.1%	57.4%	64.6%	61.6%
Sometimes	22.1%	27.5%	24.3%	29.3%	25.4%
Often	13.6%	11.5%	18.4%	6.1%	13.1%
In the past 12 months, have any problems with child care prevented you from accepting or keeping the kind of job you want?	n=334	n=374	n=389	n=263	N=1,360
Yes	15.3%	12.6%	8.7%	11.4%	11.9%
Sometimes	6.9%	9.6%	8.7%	4.6%	7.7%
No	77.8%	77.8%	82.5%	84.0%	80.4%
(For those who are working) How difficult is it for you to deal with child care problems that arise during working hours?	n=247	n=286	n=314	n=217	N=1,064
Always difficult	5.7%	5.6%	5.4%	3.2%	5.1%
Usually difficult	7.7%	4.9%	6.4%	6.0%	6.2%
Sometimes difficult	21.1%	18.5%	18.8%	20.3%	19.5%
Rarely difficult	32.8%	32.2%	33.8%	38.7%	34.1%
Never difficult	32.8%	38.8%	35.7%	31.8%	35.1%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Second question about losing time from work was only asked if respondent said "yes" to any one of the questions above.

Kinds of problems that cause loss of time from work

Parents were asked to say what kind of problem they had with their child care that resulted in lost time from work most recently, and their responses to this open-ended question were grouped by category. The most common kind of problem is a scheduled closing of the school or center on which they rely (17 percent), followed by scheduling issues (15 percent) and the illness of the child care provider (14 percent). As shown in Figure 58, the kinds of problems vary by type of arrangement.

58. Kinds of problems that cause loss of time from work

Problems that cause loss of time from work	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=430
	FFN care own home n=123	FFN care someone else's home n=94	Licensed family child care n=52	Center- based care n=119	Self care n=14	Supervised activities n=28	
School or center closed (scheduled closing)	8.9%	9.6%	23.1%	28.6%	21.4%	17.9%	17.2%
Schedule issues	14.6%	16.0%	15.4%	15.1%	7.1%	17.9%	15.1%
Provider was ill	13.8%	20.2%	9.6%	11.8%	7.1%	14.3%	14.0%
Provider unavailable (unspecified)	11.4%	11.7%	7.7%	4.2%	7.1%	7.1%	8.6%
Provider had personal problems	10.6%	5.3%	13.5%	7.6%	0.0%	7.1%	8.4%
Provider had other business/ appointments	13.0%	8.5%	3.8%	6.7%	7.1%	3.6%	8.4%
Provider's family was ill	4.1%	2.1%	15.4%	8.4%	0.0%	7.1%	6.3%
Transportation issues	5.7%	5.3%	1.9%	3.4%	7.1%	7.1%	4.7%
School or center closed (unscheduled closing)	2.4%	5.3%	3.8%	4.2%	14.3%	3.6%	4.2%
Child's behavioral issues	3.3%	4.3%	1.9%	5.9%	0.0%	3.6%	4.0%
Payment issues	3.3%	2.1%	0.0%	0.8%	7.1%	0.0%	1.9%
Child's health	1.6%	0.0%	1.9%	1.7%	7.1%	0.0%	1.4%
Provider abuse/neglect	1.6%	3.2%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Can't leave child home alone for that long	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.7%
Respondent did not answer question	4.1%	6.4%	-	1.7%	7.1%	10.7%	4.0%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Response to open-ended question, grouped by category. Percents may not total to 100 due to rounding. Because many children have multiple arrangements, the primary arrangement is not necessarily the arrangement that caused the loss of time from work. Caution should be used in interpreting the figures because of small sub-sample sizes.

Backup child care arrangements

Backup arrangements for children who are sick

In response to an open-ended question, with responses grouped by category, 83 percent of parents say that when their child is sick, they or a spouse or partner usually stay home or go home from work to care for the child (see Figure 59). Relatives fill in for 7 percent overall and slightly higher (9 percent to 11 percent) for those who use FFN or self care.

59. Backup arrangements for children who are sick

Backup arrangements for children who are sick	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=1,334
	FFN care own home n=386	FFN care someone else's home n=241	Licensed family child care n=131	Center- based care n=407	Self care n=45	Supervised activities n=124	
Parent (or spouse/partner) stays home or goes home	75.1%	83.0%	87.8%	87.5%	75.6%	90.3%	83.0%
Child goes to regular arrangement (other than school)	9.3%	6.6%	0.8%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%
Relative cares for child	8.8%	6.6%	6.1%	7.1%	11.1%	4.8%	7.3%
Neighbor or friend cares for child	0.8%	0.4%	0.8%	0.5%	0.0%	0.8%	0.6%
Child cares for self	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	8.9%	2.4%	0.9%
Other and non-answer	4.1%	2.1%	2.3%	1.9%	2.2%	1.6%	2.6%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Response to open-ended question, grouped by category. Percents may not total 100 due to rounding. "Primary arrangement" is the one in which the child spends the most time.

Backup arrangements for school-age children when there is no school on a regular weekday

Parents of school-age children were asked what usually happens when there is no school on a regular weekday. Forty-three percent report that they or a spouse or partner either stay home or go home to care for the child. Twenty-one percent report that their child goes to their regular child care (non-school) arrangement. Thirteen percent say a relative cares for the child, and 6 percent say an older child stays home to watch the child (see Figure 60).

60. Backup arrangements for school-age children when there is no school on a regular weekday

Backup arrangements when there is no school on a regular weekday	Child's primary arrangement						Total N=461
	FFN care own home n=160	FFN care someone else's home n=66	Licensed family child care n=27	Center-based care n=98	Self care n=33	Supervised activities n=77	
Parent (or spouse/partner) stays home or goes home	43.1%	47.0%	11.1%	35.7%	42.4%	62.3%	43.4%
Child goes to regular arrangement (other than school)	18.1%	22.7%	70.4%	30.6%	0.0%	6.5%	21.3%
Relative cares for child	16.3%	12.1%	3.7%	15.3%	15.2%	6.5%	13.0%
Older child stays home to watch child	10.6%	4.5%	0.0%	1.0%	9.1%	5.2%	6.1%
Neighbor or friend cares for child	1.9%	6.1%	3.7%	3.1%	3.0%	5.2%	3.5%
Special (school-sponsored) arrangements	1.3%	0.0%	3.7%	5.1%	0.0%	3.9%	2.4%
Child cares for self	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	12.1%	0.0%	2.0%
Take child to work	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	2.0%	6.1%	1.3%	1.5%
Hire sitter	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%
Other	1.3%	3.0%	0.0%	2.0%	3.0%	1.3%	1.7%
Respondent did not answer	4.4%	1.5%	7.4%	-	9.1%	6.5%	3.9%

Source: 2004 Minnesota statewide household child care survey

Note: Response to open-ended question, grouped by category. Percents may not total 100 due to rounding. "Primary arrangement" is the one in which the child spends the most time. Caution should be used in interpreting the figures because of small sub-sample sizes.

Conclusion

The results of this statewide survey of randomly selected households that use child care for children ages 12 and younger provide an accurate overview of child care use, choices and affordability for all families in Minnesota. Following discussion of the results with researchers and the study advisory committee, the Department of Human Services makes the following recommendations:

1. Develop the supply of high-quality child care options.

The supply of high-quality child care options could be developed by supporting specialized training for child care providers, by encouraging providers and offering them incentives to improve the quality of their care and by empowering parents to make informed decisions about their child care choices. Survey results indicate that parents value highly trained caregivers regardless of their primary child care arrangement or the child's age, but especially for preschool age children. In addition, most parents say they would find it helpful if their community had a child care quality rating system that would give them information they could use for selecting the highest quality care.

2. Continue public and private efforts to develop the supply of affordable child care options.

While family, friend and neighbor care is a common child care choice, some parents using that care would prefer center-based programs but cannot afford them. Ways to improve affordability of all child care options include increasing the use of child care tax credits, increasing access to pre-tax child care expense accounts through employers and reducing copayments or out-of-pocket expenses for parents receiving child care assistance.

3. Find ways that formal systems can provide support to family, friend and neighbor caregivers and connect them to appropriate resources.

Grandparents should be eligible for Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE). Schools, school-age care programs and other youth enrichment programs could provide opportunities for children who are responsible for caring for their siblings to learn more about child safety and care of younger children.

See also the recommendations in *Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers: 2004 Minnesota Statewide Household Child Care Survey*.³²

4. Support programs that provide supervised, developmentally appropriate activities for pre-teens.

The relatively high and growing (compared with 1999) proportion of pre-teens providing self care throughout the year points to the need for more supervised activities and programs for 10- to 12-year-olds during the summer and after school.

³² Chase, R., et al. 2005. *Family, Friend and Neighbor Caregivers, Results of the 2004 Minnesota Statewide Household Child Care Survey*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Human Services.



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