



# Stability and continuity of child care

*Fundamental facts from the Minnesota child care survey*

***Most children have two, three, or more different child care arrangements in a typical week.***

**About three-quarters of children regularly in child care have two or more different arrangements during a typical week.**

- 46% of children have three or more arrangements weekly.
- Almost one-quarter of children – and close to one-third of school-age children – have four or more regular arrangements per week.

**Most children have not changed arrangements in the past year.**

- 71% of children have not changed child care in the past 12 months.
- Only 10% have had two or more different arrangements in the past year.

**Parents give three main reasons for ending their previous arrangement(s).**

- Care was designated as a temporary arrangement (35%). (This was most commonly care provided by a relative or friend.)
- The school year started or ended (12%). (This was most commonly care provided by a child care center.)
- The provider stopped providing care (10%). (This was most commonly care provided by a family child care home.)

**Unstable child care arrangements lead to missed days at work for almost one out of four families.**

- 23% of parents say they or a spouse missed all or part of a day at work in the previous six months because of a child care problem other than illness of a child.
- The most common kinds of problems were:
  - Provider was ill (22%).
  - Scheduled closing of school or center (16%).
  - Personal problems of the provider (13%).
  - Poor communication with the provider or unreliable provider (12%).

These results come from a survey of 2,450 parents throughout Minnesota, sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning and conducted by Wilder Research Center. “Child care” in this survey includes anything other than the direct care of a parent or the regular K-12 school day. The survey covers the arrangements for the youngest child in each family (infants through age 14). The survey was conducted from June 1999 through March 2000, so it includes both summer and school-year patterns of care. Any difference between groups that is mentioned here has been tested and found to be statistically significant, unless specifically noted otherwise. The overall margin of error is about plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Other fact sheets in this series, as well as the full research report *Child care use in Minnesota*, are available for free download at [www.wilder.org/research](http://www.wilder.org/research). Printed copies of the research report can be purchased from Minnesota's Bookstore, 800-657-3757, [www.commedia.state.mn.us/bookstore](http://www.commedia.state.mn.us/bookstore).

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