

Employer and Employee Surveys: Summary of Findings

Between April 18, 2017, and July 15, 2017, Westat, on behalf of Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) administered two surveys – one to employers in Montgomery County and one to employees – on the types of supports that working parents of young children need and want.

The first survey asked employers about their perceptions of how certain challenges affect their employees' productivity, how various supports would improve the productivity or retention of working parents and if their company offered those supports, and the types of supports they would like to be able to offer and the challenges to providing those supports. Seventeen employers responded to the survey; three of the responses were partial responses.

The second survey asked employees about current child care arrangements and monthly costs, concerns related to child care, perceptions about how various supports would improve their productivity or ability to work and whether their companies offered those supports, satisfaction with supports currently provided by their employer, and their desired additional supports. A total of 140 individuals responded to the survey; 32 of the responses were partially complete.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

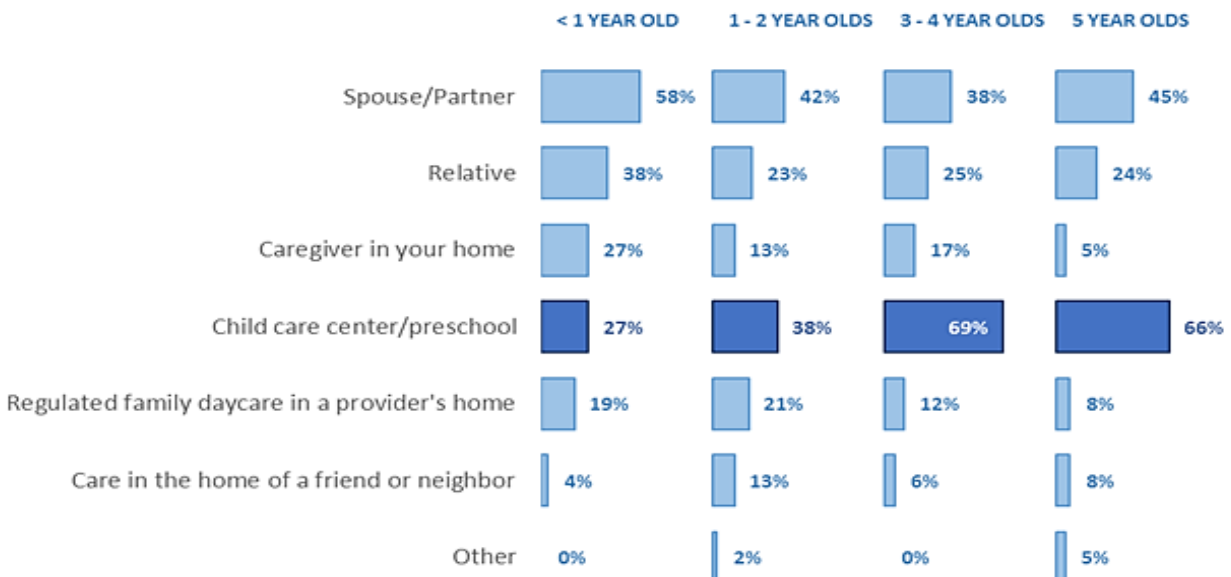
Forty-seven percent of the employer survey responses were nonprofit organizations, while 41 percent were for-profit businesses. Nearly half (47 percent) of employers were large organizations, with over 500 full-time employees. Just over a third (36 percent) had between 51 and 500 full-time employees, while 18 percent were small organization, with 50 or fewer.

The vast majority of the employee survey respondents (80 percent) were from nonprofit organizations, and 12 percent were from for-profit businesses. Nearly all of the respondents to the employee survey (86 percent) indicated they were full-time employees. Employees also reported having between one and three children younger than six years old, with an average of 1.3 children in that age range.

Current Child Care Arrangements

Employees were asked to indicate what types of child care arrangements they utilized for their children. Infants (less than one year old) were most commonly cared for by either their spouse/partner, or another a relative (86 percent), while parents of children one year or older most commonly indicated that their children were cared for by their spouse or partner. Beginning at age three, more than 60 percent of parents reported that their children were in child care centers or preschool.

More than 60 percent of parents with children ages three and older report using child care centers or preschools for their primary child care arrangement.



Ninety-three respondents to the employee survey also provided data on how they found their current child care arrangements for children not cared for by their spouse or partner.

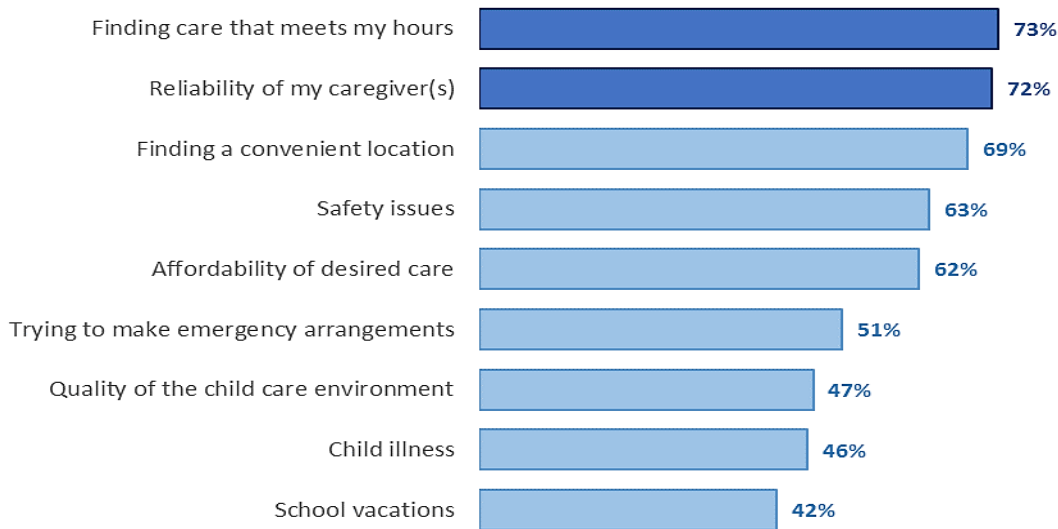
Nearly half (48 percent) indicated that they found their current child care arrangements via referrals from a trusted friend or relative (see Figure 5). More than a third (38 percent), meanwhile, found their existing arrangements using Internet searches, and more than a quarter (28 percent) were informed by word of mouth. Ten percent of respondents indicated using *LOCATE: Child Care*, a service provided by the Maryland Family Network.

In addition to providing information on their child care arrangements, employees were also asked about the amount spent on child care per month. The data collected indicate that child care costs, as expected, decrease as children age; post infancy, the average monthly cost for child care for children a year old was \$1,181 compared to \$847 for children who were five years old.

Challenges Related to Child Care

Employees were also asked about how much various challenges about their current child care situation concern them. The challenges of most concern were “finding child care that meets my hour” (73 percent), and “reliability of caregiver” (72 percent).

The two main concerns for employees were finding care that matched their work hours and finding reliable care.



Respondents also provided data on the number of days taken off work in the last six months due to problems with child care. Nearly everyone (92 percent) indicated they had taken at least one full day off work, and more than three-quarters (77 percent) took between one and 10 days off. Less than 10 percent indicated they had not taken any time off work due to child care in the past six months. On average, employees took 6.6 days off work in the past six months for reasons related to their child.

Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) indicated they had taken at least one full day off work due to child illness, while about two-thirds responded that they had taken at least one full day off work due to child care not being available (68 percent) or for doctor or dentist visits for their children (66 percent) (see Figure 9).

Employers understand that difficulty in finding child care can impact the productivity of their staff – 60 percent acknowledged that the lack of child care impacted staff productivity either “moderately” or “a lot” while 73 percent indicated child illness impacted staff productivity.

In contrast with the findings from the employee survey, however, 67 percent of employers believed that unaffordable child care at least moderately impacted staff productivity, compared to 11 percent of employees who indicated they missed work due to affordability of child care.

Child Care Supports

Employees also provided insight into which types of supports would improve their productivity or ability to work. More than half of the respondents indicated that the following would improve their productivity or ability to work “moderately” or “a lot”:¹

- Flexible work hours (83 percent)
- Employer-subsidized offsite child care (82 percent)
- Work-at-home options (81 percent)
- Paid maternity leave (81 percent)
- Onsite child care (75 percent)
- Emergency child care (71 percent)
- Paid paternity leave (70 percent)
- Disability leave (60 percent)

Employers agreed. More than half of the responding employers believed that the following supports would improve productivity or retention of working parents “moderately” or “a lot”:²

- Flexible work hours (93 percent)
- Work-at-home options (86 percent)
- Paid maternity leave (85 percent)
- Disability leave (79 percent)
- Onsite child care (71 percent)
- Paid paternity leave (69 percent)
- Emergency child care (64 percent)
- Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (64 percent)
- Offsite child care (64 percent)

While employers and employees generally agreed, there were a few areas where disagreements exist. With a 22 percent difference, 82 percent of employees stated that employer-subsidized offsite child care would at least moderately improve their productivity, whereas only 64 percent of employers agreed. More than half of the employee survey respondents to this question also indicated that their company or organization provided the following supports:³

- Disability leave (77 percent),
- DCFsAs (72 percent), and
- Flexible work hours (65 percent).

Similarly, more than half of the employers reported offering the following supports:⁴

- Disability leave (100 percent),
- Flexible work hours (92 percent),
- DCFsAs (83 percent), and
- Work-at-home options (54 percent).

A lower percentage of employees (44 percent) reported that their organization offered work-at-home options than the percentage of employers that reported doing so; the difference was approximately 10 percentage points. However, a similar percentage of employees (48 percent) and employers (46 percent) indicated that their company or organization offered paid maternity leave.

Meanwhile, about a third or more of employees were not aware of whether their company offered the following supports:

- Job sharing (40 percent),
- Paid paternity leave (31 percent), and
- Information on local child care options (29 percent).

Less than 40 percent of employers reported providing those supports:

- Job sharing (15 percent),
- Paid paternity leave (38 percent), and
- Information on local child care options (23 percent).

¹ The number of responses to each of these items varied. The minimum number of responses was 103.

² The number of responses to each of these items varied. The minimum number of responses was 13.

³ The number of responses to each of these items varied. The minimum number of responses was 95.

⁴ The number of responses to each of these items varied. The minimum number of responses was 12.

Satisfaction with Family Support benefits Offered by Employers

A total of 102 employees provided data on their satisfaction with the family support benefits offered their employers. Satisfaction was about evenly split across whether employees felt dissatisfied, neutral, or satisfied about those supports; 31 percent were dissatisfied, 35 percent were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 34 percent were satisfied. When disaggregated by company size, the distribution of satisfaction does differ.

Employees in medium sized organizations reported greater levels of satisfaction with the supports offered by their employer.

