

# Livingston County Child Care Census 2000-2001

Special Summary Report to The Livingston County Workforce  
Development Council

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## *State of Child Care In Livingston County*



*"You are the caretaker of the earth's most wonderful resource: the children. Your tender care allows them to trust that you will make the world a better place."*

*— Jean Steiner and  
Mary Steiner Whelan*

*For the Love of Children, 1995*

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*Building a quality child care system for the children and families of Livingston County*

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Livingston County, Michigan  
Child Care Census 2000-2001  
Special Summary Report  
To The Livingston County Workforce  
Development Council  
November 15, 2001

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**Produced by  
The Livingston County  
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*A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend to those things, which you think, are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations...the fate of humanity is in his hands.*

Abraham Lincoln

**INTRODUCTION:** Public attention to critical shortages of affordable, quality child care has increased in recent years, reflecting the reality that child care has become an urgent need for the majority of families—regardless of income or marital status. Changes in the family and the economy have rapidly increased the demand for child care, as growing numbers of women with young children have entered the labor force. The census has shown that 65% of all new entrants to the work force are women, of whom 80% are of child-bearing age. Eighty five to ninety percent will be parents during their career. Nationally, nearly 78 percent of all women with children younger than six work either full- or part-time outside the home. In the 1940’s, fewer than one in five women (less than twenty percent) did so. Most mothers who work do so out of economic necessity; two-thirds are single, widowed, divorced or married to men earning less than average.

These trends have many repercussions, but none more important than those affecting the care and rearing of the nation’s children. Whether participating in the work force out of economic necessity, or to maintain a foothold in the work force, women face the similar challenge of finding quality child care that they can afford.

“Michigan works when child care works” is a theme that the Michigan 4C Association has used for several years. The child care industry is in crisis. With the explosion of women in the labor force, the supply of child care centers has not kept up with the demand. There is a shortage of child care slots for every age group, with a particularly acute need for infant care. No matter what measures are used – access, affordability or quality, the system is failing working parents in every income bracket. The need for affordable, high-quality child care has become critical. Today, this sadly goes unmet. Surveys tell us that each week nearly 5 million children are left unsupervised after school.

Child care experts recognize three major issues faced by parents needing child care: availability, affordability, and quality. While these issues can be identified and discussed separately, in Livingston County they are without question linked.

**METHODOLOGY:** On September 30, 2000, owners and administrators of all Livingston County regulated child care businesses with active licenses were mailed a Livingston County Child Care Census. These businesses were either child care centers or family and group day care homes. They were all part of a computer database maintained by the Livingston County (4C) Council, on a program called Carefinder®. According to the database, there were 254 licensed or registered child care businesses in Livingston County. Twenty-three of these businesses were listed as inactive, leaving a total of 231 active child care businesses in the county. Of those 231, there were 18 multiple site, same type businesses (i.e. public school-age and Head Start programs) that were able to be combined into one survey per location. The total number of surveys mailed was 213 and 175 completed surveys were returned. Additionally, 36

businesses responded that they had closed and 2 providers in the county chose not to respond at all. Overall, the response rate was 99%.

**TYPES OF CHILD CARE:** Child care providers work in the following four basic categories of care-giving situations:

- **In-Home Care:** A professional provider is employed by the parents to give care in a child's home. This type of care is almost always unregulated.
- **Family Child Care:** Usually six children or fewer are cared for in a caregiver's home. Although most states require licensing or registration, depending on the number of children served, between 70% and 90% of Family Child Care Homes are unlicensed, relying on an informal arrangement between parents and providers.
- **Group Homes:** A form of Family Child Care, where six to 12 children are permitted in a caregivers home, with the requirement of a second adult.
- **Child Care Centers:** Located in non-residential buildings, child care centers include infant and pre-school children; they are usually full day, with part-time child care also offered. Many child care centers have after school programs for some elementary school aged children. Child Care Centers can be non-profit if sponsored by a community group, welfare agency, schools or a church; or for profit, proprietary centers, many of which have expanded into national chains.

Research shows that the types of child care used by families with a working mother depend on the age of the child, the mother's work schedule and marital status and family income. Families with young children are most likely to rely on a child care center, preschool or group care facility (24.4%). Closely followed by parental care (24.2%), family day care homes (22.3%), and care by other relatives (21.7%). Mothers working part-time and single mothers are much more likely to rely on relatives, or in the case of two-parent families to juggle schedules to permit care by the other parent.

**AVAILABILITY:** Currently, there are 31,722 children under 14 years of age residing in Livingston County. The Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services, Bureau of Regulatory Services, Child Day Care Licensing Division, reports that Child Care providers in Livingston County were licensed for a maximum of 6,172 child care slots. As part of the survey, child care providers were asked what the maximum capacity they were choosing to use was, and the total reported 4,453, leaving 1,719 fewer slots being offered to the county than the licensing maximum allowed spaces. If only 50% of the children 0 – 14 years of age in Livingston County needed child care, there would be a deficit of 13,365 regulated child care slots.

Between September 30, 2000 and January 30, 2001, thirty-six child care businesses (15%), in Livingston County closed. Thirty-four of the businesses that closed were family day care homes and the remaining two were group day care homes. These closures resulted in an additional loss of 228 open slots for the county's children.

It is important to note the reasons that providers gave for closing down, because they are indicative of current national trends. During exit interviews conducted by the Livingston 4C Council, family and group day care owners gave the following reasons for closing their businesses:

- Found a better job.
- Need less stress, more money.
- Taking a job in another field.
- Child is in school now and needs a real job.
- Quitting; parents are too difficult.
- Had a baby.
- Wasn't making enough money – went back to old job.
- Quit to work at a day care center.
- Taking a full time job/can't make a living.
- Quit because no money and no benefits.
- Too stressful.
- Taking a *good* job.
- Moved out of county.
- Too hard on family and not enough pay and benefits.

Future child care shortages are projected. With the current state of the economy, the number of two-earner families is expected to grow, making the number of working mothers to continue to increase. This all occurring at the same time the number of potential child care providers is dropping off. Finally, the very low salaries received by child care workers and the absence of basic work-related benefits may make it difficult to attract quality providers.

**AFFORABILITY:** It is clear that many parents have difficulty locating high quality care and that many of their struggles stem from the fact that increasing numbers of families do not earn enough to pay for quality child care at the market price. The options of low and moderate income families are limited: they can choose lower quality care which is often unlicensed, they can rely on friends and relatives, they can leave their children alone, or they can care for their children themselves by not seeking work or leaving the labor force. Each of these choices may have negative repercussions for the economy, for families, or for the children themselves. However the cost of child care is a concern for parents from all economic levels. Because families are confronting the ever-rising cost of health care, education and child care, few are able to make ends meet on one income. In these families, second incomes are now essential, not supplemental. In many places across the country, parents are paying twice as much for child care as they would spend on public college tuition (Children's Defense Fund, 1998). A 1998 Census Bureau analysis showed that no matter what their income level, child care is the third greatest expense for families with children under 5, after housing and food.

Child care fees vary by the age of the child, program characteristics, and the length of time a child spends in care. In general, infant and toddler care is more expensive than preschool care. This reflecting in large part to the lower provider- to- child ratios required with infants and toddlers. Part-time (daily rates) care is generally more expensive than full-time care and center-based care is more expensive that family day care arrangements. In Michigan, the average cost of care for just one child in full-time care exceeds \$5,000 per year. A single parent working full-time at minimum

wage would need to commit almost 50 percent of their gross income to care for just one child. Many have been forced out of the labor market.

In Livingston County, most providers charge a weekly rate with full-time care ranging from a low of \$100 to a high of \$205. The following chart depicts the average rates that Livingston County providers are charging for child care.

**AVERAGE RATES FOR CHILD CARE IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>HOURLY</b>	<b>DAILY</b>	<b>WEEKLY</b>
<b>Birth to 2 ½</b>	\$3.25	\$30	\$136
<b>2 ½ to 3</b>	\$3.25	\$30	\$127
<b>3 to 4</b>	\$3.25	\$27	\$125
<b>4 to 5</b>	\$3.25	\$27	\$125

Approximately half of the child care businesses and family/group day care home providers in Livingston County charge registration fees and deposits. The average amount of a registration fee is \$25 and the average amount of a deposit ranges from one to two weeks tuition.

**QUALITY:** All parents want the best for their children and this would certainly include seeking the best quality child care. While parents may differ in their ideas of quality child care, research indicates that the following are critical:

- Low child to adult ratios, small group sizes
- Well trained care givers
- Sufficient staff
- Staff continuity and stability, to foster trusting, warm relationships
- Parental involvement

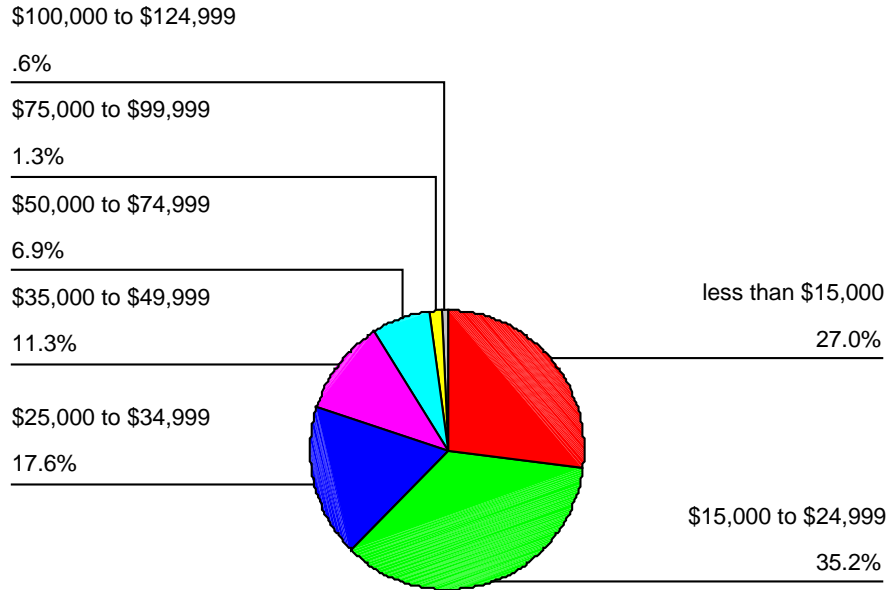
The ability to attract talented, qualified providers to the field of child care and to assure sufficient continuity and stability is compromised by the low salaries and status of the child care profession. Child care workers are among the lowest 10 percent of wages earners in the country, earning less than janitors/cleaners, barbers, cosmetologists, gardeners, and groundskeepers. Despite increased levels of staff education and training, the wages of licensed providers has not improved.

Respondents of the Livingston County Child Care Census were asked to report their total annual income from their child care business. The median annual income for Livingston County child care owner/administers is between \$15,000 and \$25,000. Twenty-seven percent reported earning less than \$15,000 annually.

The wages and benefits of child care staff members was also extremely low in comparison to other fields. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics data from 1999 listed the mean hourly wage for a child care worker as \$7.42 an hour. According to 1999 statistics from the Michigan Department of Career Development, the mean hourly rate for a Livingston County child care worker was \$7.31 an hour.

The mean hourly rate from the respondents of the Livingston County Child Care Census was exactly the same - \$7.31 an hour. According to the survey, the lowest paid caregiver in Livingston County earns \$5.25 an hour and the highest earns \$10.00 an hour. Responses show that lead teachers and assistant directors average \$10.50 per hour and the mean hourly wage for a child care director in Livingston County is \$12.50.

## Gross Annual Income of Respondents

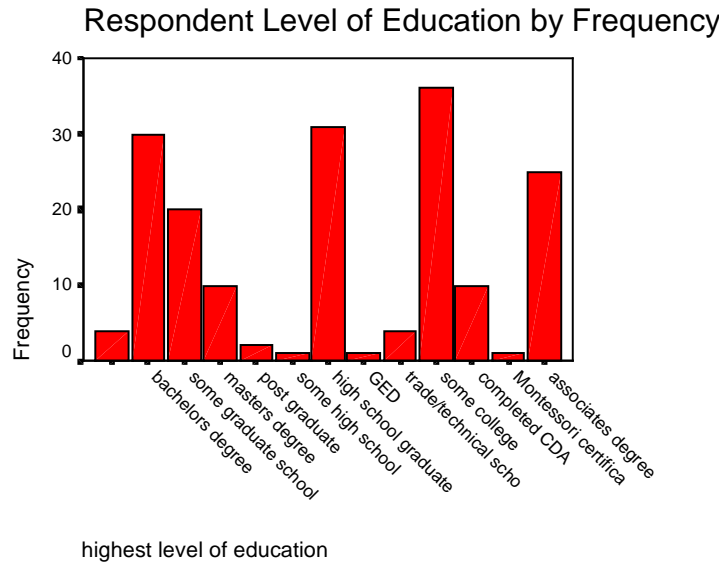


Seventy-five percent of all teaching staff employed in the centers studied in 1996, and 40% of the directors were no longer on the job when centers were revisited in 2000. Thus the pool of child care providers and programs must be constantly renewed. Researchers have consistently found that the cornerstone of any quality child care program that promotes healthy development of children, is the presence of sensitive, consistent, well-trained and well-compensated caregivers.

**Level of Education:** The level of higher education achieved by a child care provider is strongly linked to the quality of child care that individual offers. Nationally, more than half of center-based teaching staff and regulated family child care providers have some college background. Among center-based teachers approximately one third have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips 1990; Cost, Quality, & Child Outcomes Study Team 1995). However, because of low pay and the lack of professional recognition for working with young children, many leave the classroom or family/group child care home – even if they would like to continue.

Over 75% of Livingston County respondents have participated in formal education beyond the high school level. Twenty percent said they completed some college, 20% have a CDA or an

associate’s degree, 17% hold a bachelor’s degree and 18% of the provider population has had some level of postgraduate degree or study.



**Staff Qualifications:** Respondents were asked what type of experience and education they required their employees to have. Responses to this question (70) are shown below.

**What type of experience or education do you require your caregivers to have?**

	Frequency of Response
Previous experience with children	28
Formal education in childcare	18
High school education	8
Degree and experience	7
Just enjoy working with kids	7
CPR/First Aid	2

Staff training and ongoing professional education is linked to higher quality of child care and more positive child outcomes. Training also increases provider knowledge in important areas such as health and safety and developmentally appropriate practices contributing to higher quality child care.

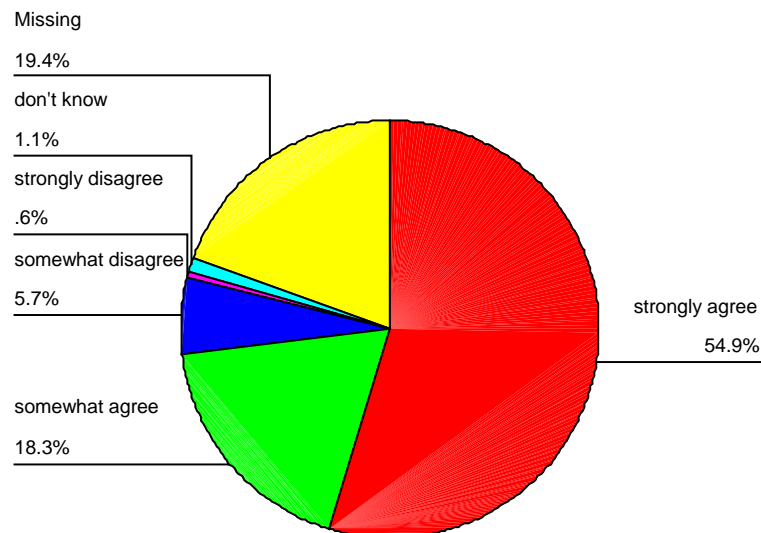
Training and education also builds professionalism among child care providers, which is associated with greater confidence and satisfaction with daily work, reduced provider burnout and

increased provider longevity. In addition, when providers are engaged in a network of professional peers, they are able to offer each other mutual support, problem solving and mentoring. These experiences also further enhance provider skills and thus contribute to increased care quality.

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about professional development for themselves and their staff. Administrators/owners were asked whether they felt it was important to attend trainings and conferences for professional development. Over 70% of those responding (141) agreed or somewhat agreed that professional development opportunities were important.

### Do you feel that Continuing Education is Important?

Participating in Continuing Education is Important



Respondents were also asked if they provided opportunities for their staff to participate in any type of ongoing training and professional development. Eighty percent of the respondents (74) said their staff did participate in ongoing training opportunities.

Respondents were then asked where they looked for professional development opportunities for themselves and for their staffs. The overwhelming majority of child care professionals in Livingston County (78%) look to The 4C Council for the no-cost training opportunities it offers through the Michigan Child Care Futures Project. Almost half of respondents reported attending the annual Community Healthy Sharing for Healthy Caring Conference.

### Professional Development Opportunities by Frequency and Percentage

Type of Training	Frequency of Response out of 175	Percentage of Response %
Livingston 4C Trainings	136	78
Community College	20	12
Community Education	29	17
College/University	26	15
Head Start Trainings	2	1
High School Voc. Education	13	8
Conferences	80	46

**Geographic Location:** Respondents were asked to identify the school district their facility was located in. The City of Howell has the highest concentration of child care facilities in the county (33%), followed by Brighton (22%) and Pinckney (16%).

**Hours of Operation:** Child care businesses need to be open longer hours to accommodate the needs of working parents. In Livingston County because the majority of working adults commute to work outside the county, there is a need for the hours that a child care business is open to reflect travel time. The average child care business operates twelve hours a day, with times ranging from early morning to dinner time, to provide for families with conventional working hours. However as Livingston County grows, there are more and more families needing child care for non-traditional working hours, such as second and third shifts and weekends. Child care options for these families are severely limited.

The Livingston County Survey asked each child care business to list its hours of operation. The results are as follows:

- Only 15 providers in the entire county reported opening earlier than 6:00 a.m.
- Seventy percent of day care providers open their businesses between 6:00 and 7:00 a.m.
- The average closing times were 5:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Two businesses in the county provide 24 hour care.
- Nine businesses report offering weekend child care.

Ten businesses say that they provide evening care. Types of Services and Scheduling: The Livingston County survey also asked respondents to indicate types of services and scheduling their facilities provided for children and families. The following shows the response:

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<b><u>Type of Service</u></b>	<b><u># Providing Out of 175</u></b>
Before and After School	86
Care for Special Needs Children	82
Transportation	35
Pre-Kindergarten	28
Temporary/Emergency Care	28
School Year Program Only	27
Drop-In Care	26
Summer Camp	23
Evening Care	10
Weekend Care	9
All Day Kindergarten	8
Elementary School On-Site	8
Sick Care	5
24Hour Care	2
Bilingual Program	3

**School Age Care:** Children age 6 and up who are in school have many different needs and abilities, then they did when they were preschoolers. They still need a place to play, but they also need a caring adult to talk to and a place to do homework.

Survey respondents were asked if they had any type of school-age curriculum for older children. The question had a response rate of 56%, with only 24% saying they had planned activities for school-age children. The majority of respondents said they did at least have a quiet place for older children to do their homework.

**Provider/Parent Communication:** Child care programs that are supportive of children and families are based on good communications between the caregivers and the parents. When they can share facts and feelings about the child’s likes, dislikes, moods and fears, then open, positive communication develops and an effective working relationship usually follows. Parents must keep the provider informed about The caregiver needs to inform the parent about child care policies and procedures, a summary of a child’s day, as well as information on the child’s growth and any concerns that there may be. Ultimately, strong ties between family and child care center will support the child in the best way possible.

One way a child care center can support working parents is to provide an open door policy for parents to visit their child at any time. The vast majority of providers in the county (144) responded yes to the question: *“Are parents/guardians welcome to visit their child at anytime*

*while in your care?”* Sixty-five percent of respondents (111) encourage some type of parent involvement ranging from simple daily communication to helping out in the classroom.

The following shows the most preferred methods of provider communication with parents.

<b>Method</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Daily verbal communication	95%
Bulletin Boards	45%
Memos	43%
Newsletter	40%
Monthly schedule	35%
Daily Activity Logs	31%
Menus	29%
Conferences	22%
Parent Group Meetings	13%
Web Sites	4%
<b>Internet</b>	<b>3%</b>

**Child Development and Care Services (FIA):** Being able to afford quality child care is a particularly challenging barrier for low to moderate income families seeking to re-enter the workplace or sustain on-going employment. The Michigan Family Independence Agency (FIA) has a program that assists these families with their child care costs, so that parents can work, attend school or job training programs. The income level of the applicant determines eligibility and rate of reimbursement in the Child Development and Care Services Program (CDC). Livingston County has an average of 180 families receiving day care assistance through FIA, at any one time.

When a child care provider agrees to work with a family on CDC, the amount of payment to the provider depends on the type of care setting, age of the child, the county where the care is provided, the number of hours of care, the rate a provider charges and family income. FIA will pay actual cost up to their limits and families are responsible to pay any amount not paid by FIA.

Rising costs associated with running a child care business have increased rapidly and the providers have had to pass these costs on to their customers. The FIA rate of reimbursement has not been able to keep pace with these rising costs, and the result has been hefty co-pays for families who are trying to make a new start.

The Livingston County Child Care Survey asked respondents to answer questions about their relationship with FIA. Child care business owners/administrators were asked if they accepted child care payments from FIA and 48% (133) answered yes. Only 26% of respondents said they believed the FIA rate of reimbursement was adequate to cover their costs.

**Accreditation and Grants:** The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of NAEYC, administers a national, voluntary, professionally sponsored accreditation system for all types of preschools, kindergartens, child care centers and school-age child care programs.

Currently, there are 7,700 programs serving more than a half million children that have achieved NAEYC accreditation. NAEYC-accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high quality program for young children and their families. Accreditation can be a very powerful program improvement tool as it provides a process by which professionals and families can evaluate programs in relation to professional standards and subsequently identify areas needing improvement.

Livingston County has three child care centers that are accredited with The National Association For The Education Of Young Children (NAEYC). Currently, there are no family or group day care homes accredited with The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) or the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) in the county.

Only 23% of providers saw accreditation as an attribute that parents value when looking for child care. The survey asked respondents whether or not they had plans to seek accreditation for their child care business. Thirty-three percent of respondents answered positively that they would be seeking accreditation in the future and another 48% said they were interested in further information on the accreditation process.

Six percent of child care businesses in Livingston County receive some type of grant funding. Four locations (public school programs and Head Start) reported receiving federal and state dollars to help operate their programs, two respondents said they receive some monies from religious sources and one respondent was a recipient of a Michigan 4C EQUIP grant. Almost half (61) of those responding said they would like to learn more about grant opportunities for the future.

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### **Early Childhood Care and Development Curriculum and Learning Activities**

Early childhood development and care refers not only to what is happening within the child, but also to the quality of care that child requires in order to blossom and thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a safe, healthy and typical way, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction and stimulation, affection, security, and learning through exploration and discovery.

The earliest years are crucial in a child's life. This means early childhood professionals need to provide the best environment possible for children. Educators need to be sure children get the interaction and stimulus they need in order to develop. Early childhood professionals need to read and be knowledgeable on the most current research about early brain development and how to implement programming to support these findings. When opportunities for meaningful play, work, experimentation and exploration surround children, they flourish.

Numerous early childhood curriculums and activities support young children appropriately and strengthen the child care environments in which they attend. A well-balanced early childhood environment strikes a balance between spontaneity, flexibility and pre-planned activities. Many early childhood professionals use their own informal curriculums and there are many formalized early childhood curriculums available for educators to purchase and use, as well.

Most respondents to the survey (77%), reported that they do not use any type of formalized early childhood curriculum. Many said that they did not use anything specific, but that everything they did was developmentally appropriate for a “traditional” American preschool. Four centers reported following a Montessori curriculum, three said their curriculum was based on Christianity, one center uses parts of Glasser’s Choice Therapy and one center uses The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood.

Seventy-eight respondents said they actively promote age-appropriate self-help skills through encouraging independence, modeling acceptable behaviors, practicing tasks of daily living and the use of books and games to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Respondents were asked about their usage of other types of daily activities. Ninety-six percent of respondents offer music opportunities, 98% offer some type of outdoor physical exercise and 60% use computers with the children.

**Program Uniqueness:** In an open-ended question, respondents were asked what made their program different from others. The top five responses were:

- Loving, home/family-like setting (29)
- Myself (15)
- Christian influence (12)
- Adapting the program to meet the needs of all kids (7)
- Operating program like a preschool (6)

Other responses to this question were varied and can be paraphrased as follows:

Country-like setting	Our reputation and services we offer
Communication	Convenience and cost
Clean house, no pets	Farm animals, computers, environment & staff
Music, Spanish, Science, language arts	I specialize in part-time care
I teach the basics	Flexibility; structure; latchkey
Small group, same-aged children	Great staff; little turnover
Accredited program	Emotional & spiritual intimacy; security and love
Long-term staff, parent and family involvement	Central location for 3 elem. schools
Very conscientious; low ratios; quality oriented	Directors on-site
Unusual hours and me	I have bachelor’s degree; children are my passions
Loving, care-giving home; flexible hours	We join with other daycares for projects
Developmental; less academic; play-based	Rotations through rooms, rather than 1 room
High school students trained to work with children	Small center; French class
I provide specialized care and speech therapy	Comprehensive services; eligibility requirements
I take children over 5	

**Children with Challenging Behaviors:** Sometimes children behave in ways that are hard to understand – even when parents and child care providers work closely together. Another series of questions in the survey asked respondents about how best to work with children with challenging behaviors and their parents.

The first question in this section was: *Have the behaviors of children gotten better or worse over the last five years?* Only 25 % of respondents said that children’s behaviors have improved over the last five years, while 75% believe that behaviors have gotten worse.

The following are comments that respondents elaborated with:

- There is so much more violence and aggression.
- Children are more stressed and have more temper tantrums.
- They cannot sit still and are lacking in manners.
- Kids are much more disrespectful to staff.
- Parents today do not say “no” and children run the households.
- I see more speech delays and children are coming in sick.
- A large percentage of boys are high energy.

The next question respondents were asked was if they had ever had to expel a child from their care due to the child’s behavior or difficulty with a parent. Over half (55%) of respondents answered yes – that they had expelled a child in the past. The reasons for these expulsions were due to child’s behavior (56), as well as 23 respondents who said they had expelled a child due to parental behaviors such as non-compliance with policies, poor attitudes and issues relating to payment.

In 1998, in response to a growing concern that too many children were being expelled from child care, a collaboration of early childhood professionals in Livingston County developed a consultation service for providers and parents called *Success for Kids in Child Care* in order to help children with challenging behaviors succeed in child care settings. The goal is to work in partnership with the parents and providers to determine a child’s needs, support positive behaviors and increase retention in child care and preschool settings.

When asked the question “*Are you aware of Success for Kids in Child Care?*” only 40% of respondents answered yes, and 55% answered that they were not aware of the service at all.

The follow-up question was, “*What services do you feel should be offered to children with challenging behaviors?*” The following summarizes and paraphrases their answers and shows the frequency of each response.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Parenting classes	29%
Counseling	24%
Staff training	8%
Whatever is needed	5%

Loving, caring, common sense	3%
Don't know what is available	3%
County evaluation in preschool and home setting	3%
Counseling, parent ed., teacher shadowing	3%
A stay at home parent	3%
4C advice	3%
1 to 1 instruction	3%
Smaller groups; smaller sites	3%
Referral programs	1%
On-site services	1%
Play groups	1%
State care facility w/ 1 on 1 attention	1%
Special day care for ONLY these children	1%

**Cultural Diversity and Awareness:** As our nation becomes more linguistically and culturally diverse and as the needs for cultural understanding and bilingual education increases, all early childhood professionals will have the responsibility to understand how best to meet the needs of all children and provide effective early childhood education for all.

These are new challenges facing many early childhood educators who have had little exposure to diversity and may not be comfortable or adequately trained to work with children whose home language is not English. Even so, the educator has a responsibility to respect the child and family through encouraging dialogue, play and projects that promote social interaction. Hands-on experiences are the best ways to facilitate acceptance and understanding among preschoolers.

According to the 2000 United States Census – Population Totals by Race, only 3% of the population of Livingston County is non-white. In an open-ended survey question, Livingston County child care providers were asked how they recognize and promote cultural diversity with young children in their care. Paraphrased answers (72) are as follows:

- I teach them that they are all the same (14)
- I use books, toys and videos; multi-cultural equipment (30)
- I do nothing; I don't have it (8)
- I plan multi-cultural events (6)
- I ask for parents help - sharing individual backgrounds (3)
- We watch Sesame Street (1)
- We teach that Jesus loves all children & teach Xmas (1)
- We talk about different nations, people, and holidays thru themes (3)
- I am open to having minorities (2)
- I take them out everywhere (2)
- I teach them they are not all the same, which is ok (1)
- I have a planned diversity curriculum (1)

It is anticipated that the number of culturally diverse families in the county will grow as families of varying backgrounds continue to move into the community. This will increase the

need for child care providers and teachers to provide students with skills that will reduce conflicts, increase tolerance, and help erase racism and prejudice.

**Community Resources and Support for Families:** Child care is a major component in the large array of family supports needed within any community and the child care system is an excellent vehicle to promote or provide preventative and ongoing additional services to children and families.

The survey asked respondents to identify if they knew of families in their care that were receiving any type of local community support services. A list of different services was provided and respondents were asked to check boxes labeled “Yes,” “No,” “Free of Charge,” and “Services Offered On-Site At Your Facility.” The majority of respondents left this section of the survey blank, however the following chart shows the frequency of “yes” and “free of charge” answers to the different resources that were listed. Only the centers that were associated with the public schools or Head Start had any types of support services for children on-site.

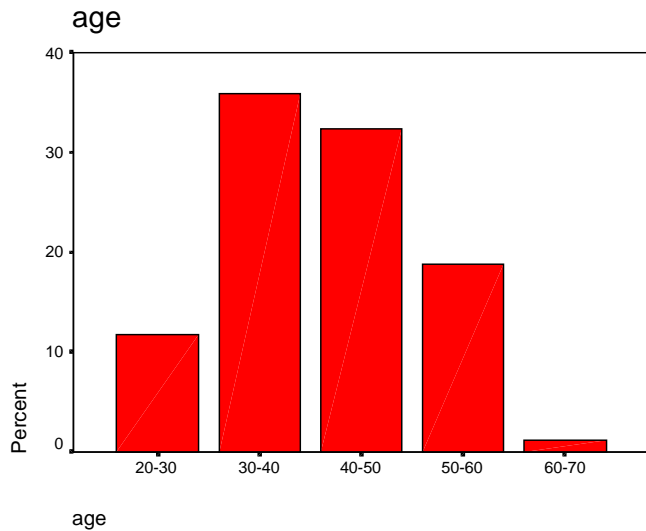
<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Free of Charge</b>
Child Care Subsidy	22	5
Special Needs Assessments	20	3
Mental Health Services	15	11
Speech/Language	43	7
Hearing Screenings	30	8
Vision Screenings	29	1
Nutrition Services	10	1
Food Bank	4	1
WIC	24	2
Occupational Therapy	12	6
Physical Therapy	12	6

**Food and nutrition programs:** Child care providers have opportunities to participate in federally funded nutrition programs that provide monetary reimbursement for serving nutritious food to the children in their care. They also receive newsletters, cookbooks, sample menus, educational workshops and technical assistance.

Respondents were asked whether or not they were members of a food program. Only about a third of the providers in the county who responded report participating in one of the food programs, despite the many benefits of belonging to one.

**Title of Person Completing Survey:** Survey respondents were asked to identify themselves by title, thus defining the type of business being represented. Out of 175 responses, 90 were owners of family day care homes, 33 were group day care home owners, 32 were center directors, 18 were center owners and 2 responded “other.”

**Age:** Survey respondents were then asked their age in order to help predict the longevity of the current child care workforce in Livingston County. The average age of a child care owner/administrator in the county is 45 years old, and the majority of those responding (85%) are between the ages of 30 and 60.

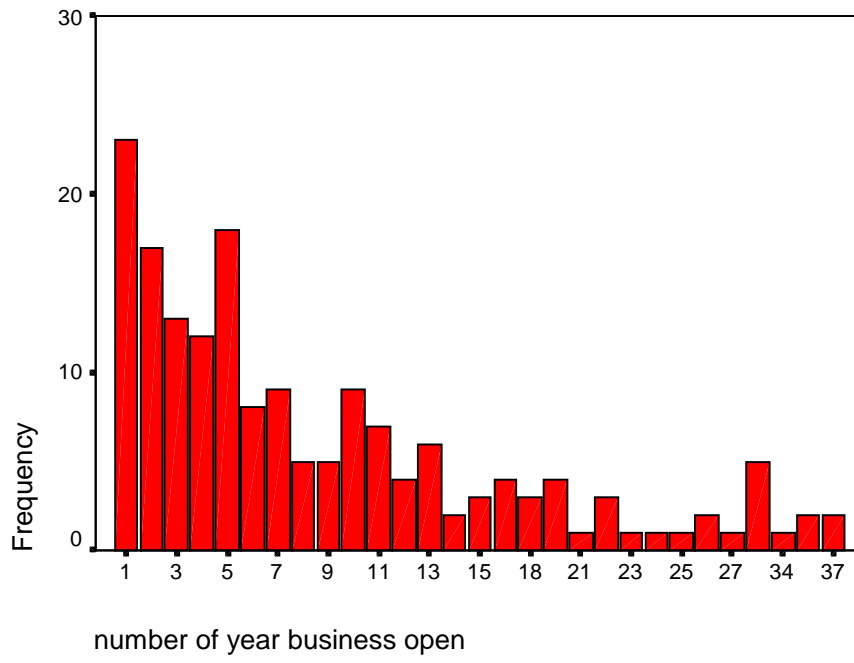


**Number of Years in Business**

The following chart shows most child care businesses in Livingston County are relatively new. Although the average length of time a child care business has been open is 9 years, 68% of

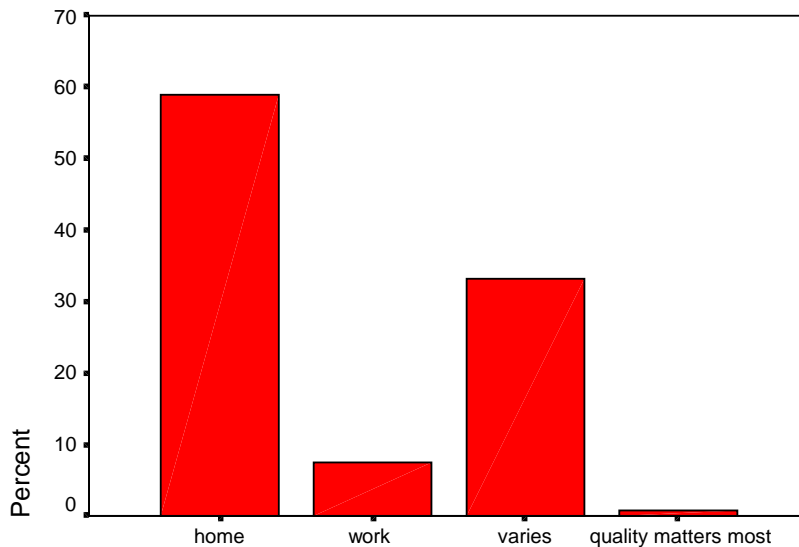
Livingston County child care businesses have been operating for 10 years or less.

### How long has your business been open?



**Work/Life Issues and Employer Services:** One of the decisions that must be made during a child care search is whether a parent wants their child close to home or close to them at work. Some parents have very specific qualifications based on timing, transportation needs and the age of the child. Other families are in circumstances that allow for greater flexibility. The following chart gives a breakdown of how respondents view the needs of the families in their care.

Do parents prefer child care close to home or work



do parents prefer child care close to home or work

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**Employer Services:** The business community has long been reluctant to get involved in child care. Some employers believe it is the role of the family, not the business community to make child care arrangements, some believe women do not belong in the workplace and many employers have not seen any bottom-line reasons to assist employees with their child care needs. A 1997 survey of employees by the Families and Work Institute showed that women with children under 13 often have higher rates of absenteeism, often because of child care arrangements that break down. Also the study showed that women who have more stable child care arrangements are more satisfied with their work lives, are less stressed and report coping better. Employer-sponsored child care programs that reduce child care costs reduce labor market barriers for women who want or need to enter the labor market.

**Employer sponsored child care services:** Respondents were asked if they worked with any employers to help them sponsor child care services. Seventy-five percent of respondents answered this question and from that number only 5% answered yes to the question.

Respondents were then asked to name the employers they worked with. The short list includes Ford Motor Company/Americare, Home Depot, Brighton Area Schools, and Hartland Schools

transportation. The types of services being provided to these employers include dependability, priority enrollment, accommodating early work hours and discounted tuition.

**Conclusion:** The need for quality child care continues to grow in Livingston County, as economic and labor market changes move an increasing number of women into the labor force. Over half of all children under the age of six have a potential need for regular child care—either because their single parent is in the paid labor force or because both parents work outside the home.

While access to affordable, quality child care can be difficult for all families, single parent and low income families are facing the largest burden. Certain types of care, especially infant and toddler programs or services for children whose parents do not work traditional schedules, are in dangerously short supply. The major issue facing Livingston County is that for hundreds of single parent, low- and moderate-income families, quality child care is simply unaffordable when and if available.

The issue of child care is strongly linked to the county's economic well-being. Child care helps families remain self-sufficient and increases productivity. With the knowledge that quality child care and early childhood education can improve outcomes for children and benefit families, it is crucial that these programs be a key component of Livingston County's economic development policy. Livingston County's economic future, its potential tax base, and its ability to deliver services to an increasing population will depend on the preparedness of our future leaders. Given the relationship between childcare and early childhood education and later school and social success, investments in this area should be considered critical.

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