

Region 8 Child Care Providers Survey Report

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Prepared for
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Key Takeaways

- Survey respondents are representative of all child care providers in the region in all ways: location, size, type, and service offerings.
 - It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the issues identified are common to all providers in the region.
- Lack of caregiving staff is the primary reason that 22% of providers cannot operate at capacity.
- Family-paid tuition and DHS/state subsidy are the primary sources of provider operating revenue.
- Providers rely heavily on MiRegistry for training needs, because of licensing requiring its use for tracking compliance with continuing education requirements.
- Aside from licensing, the MDE and GSRP are the most-used sources of information—although less than half of respondents cited them.
 - Local and regional resources (e.g., ISDs/RESAs, school districts, ECSNs) are not considered to be major sources of information and support.
 - Fewer than one-quarter of respondents considered ECIC a source of information and support.
- More than one-third of respondents cited the need for support with care-related business functions, such as licensing and quality initiatives.
 - More than one-quarter of respondents need help with general business functions, such as recruiting, HR management, bookkeeping, and marketing.
 - Nearly one-half of respondents need help with facilities management.
- More than three-quarters of respondents will continue to participate in the project if it can be done remotely and asynchronously (e.g., email follow-up).
- Respondents aren't generally engaged in the “business life” of their communities.
 - Little awareness of or activity with local chambers, EDOs, and other agencies outside of child care-specific organizations.
 - Providers don't serve on boards or councils of other local organizations, nor do leaders of other organizations serve on child care provider boards (where they exist).
- Child care providers want to be part of any solution to the child care crisis, and they share their ideas and challenges.

Methodology and Response

In April 2023, we surveyed child care providers in the MEDC’s Region 8 (Berrien, Branch, Cass, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren counties). The purpose was twofold: to involve them in the ECIC’s Child care Regional Planning Grant Initiative, and to gather information about their ability to meet demand for child care services in the region.

Paper surveys were mailed to the 711 child care providers in the region who were operational as of 4/11/23 (according to LARA/Great Start to Quality lists retrieved on that day). The survey (attached) invited providers to complete it either on paper or online. Recipients were incentivized to complete the survey with the chance to win one of three \$50 Amazon gift cards. The mailing went out on 4/25/23 and providers were given until 5/9/23 to complete it.

Nine surveys were returned as undeliverable. Out of the 702 surveys that presumably reached their destinations, we received 114 responses. This sample size is statistically significant for our purposes and represents a response rate of 16%.

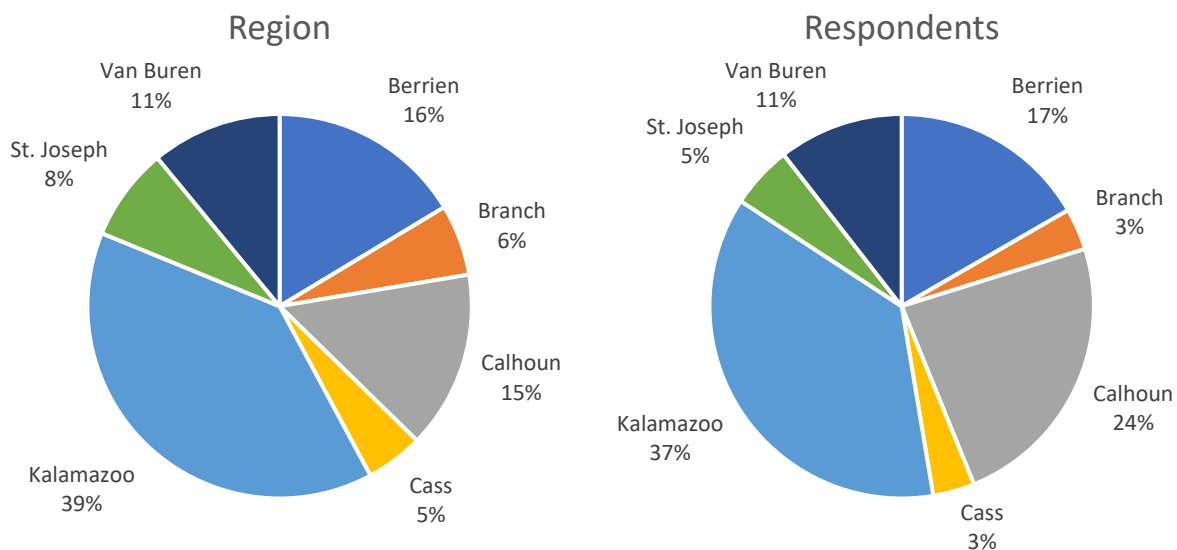
DEMOGRAPHICS

In every way—county of operation, provider type, licensed capacity, ages served, and number of years in business—the survey respondents prove to be representative of all providers in the region.

County of Operation

The distribution of responses by county almost perfectly matched the distribution of all providers in the region (Fig. 1), confirming that the location of respondents is representative of the location of all providers in the region. The only county with a notable difference was Calhoun County, whose response rate was 50% higher than its actual distribution of providers; this can plausibly be explained by the advance notice these providers received about the Regional Planning Initiative during the Innovation Grant process a few months prior.

Figure 1: County of Operation



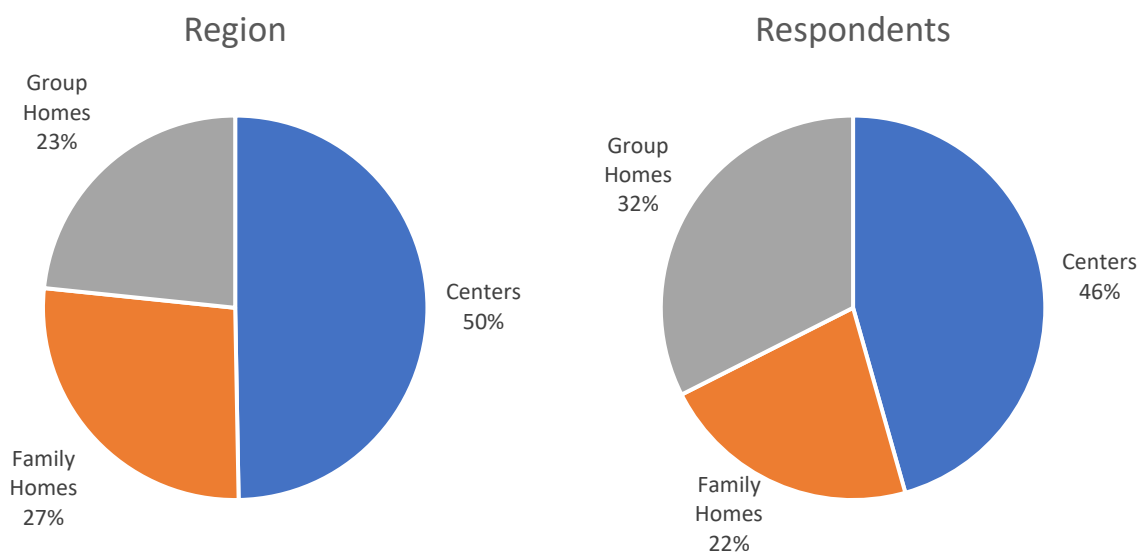
Participation by county can also be referenced in terms of the total number of providers by county. The table below represents this perspective.

County	Total Providers	Respondents	Co. Resp. Rate
Berrien	115	19	17%
Branch	42	4	10%
Calhoun	105	27	26%
Cass	34	4	12%
Kalamazoo	274	42	15%
St. Joseph	55	6	11%
Van Buren	77	12	16%

Provider Type, Licensed Capacity, and Subsidy Participation

Licensed capacity is primarily a function of provider type: by definition, family homes are limited to six children and group homes are limited to twelve children (Rule 400.1908), while center capacity is primarily determined by the square footage of the facility (Rule 400.8167). Figure 2 indicates that the survey sample is representative of the region in terms of provider type.

Figure 2: Provider Type



To determine whether the capacity of respondents in licensed centers was representative of all centers in the region, we examined the median capacity and found they were sufficiently alike:

- Median capacity of all licensed *centers* in Region 8: **60**
- Median capacity of all licensed *centers* in the respondent group: **58.5**

Participation in Michigan’s child care subsidy program is shown in the table below.

County	Total Providers	Subsidy Participation	Respondents	Subsidy Participation
Berrien	115	40%	19	47%
Branch	42	48%	4	50%
Calhoun	105	50%	27	48%
Cass	34	59%	4	75%
Kalamazoo	274	47%	42	55%
St. Joseph	55	58%	6	100%
Van Buren	77	55%	12	75%

Age Groups Served

In terms of the earliest age of entry, the ages served by survey respondents generally correspond to the ages served by all providers in the region (Fig. 3). Figure 4 shows the range of school-age children providers served in both the region and the sample, but these data cannot be easily compared without considering attributes such as whether school-aged children are served seasonally (e.g., summer camp), before/after school, or in some other capacity. These attributes were not available for analysis.

Figure 3: Earliest Entry Age

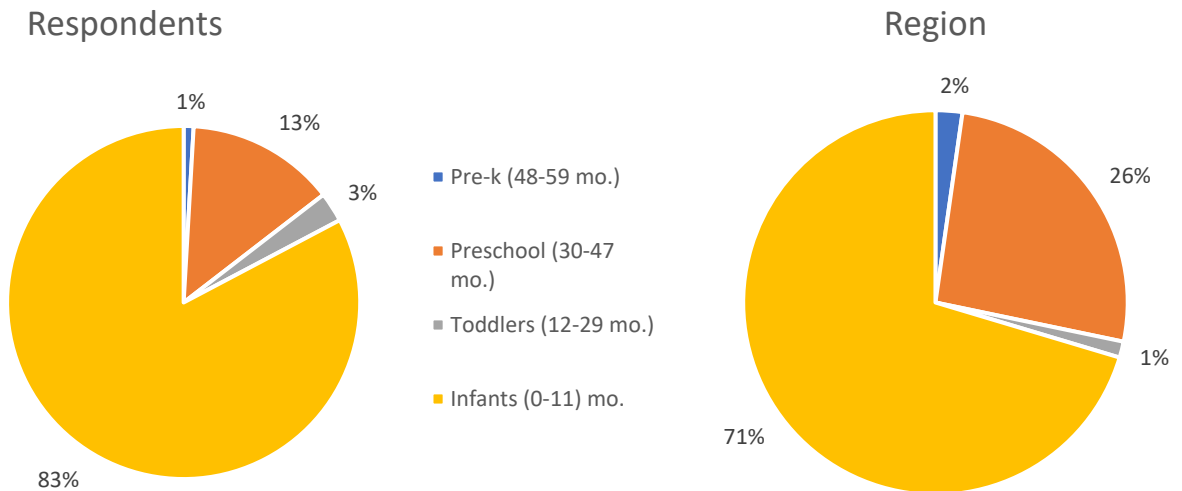
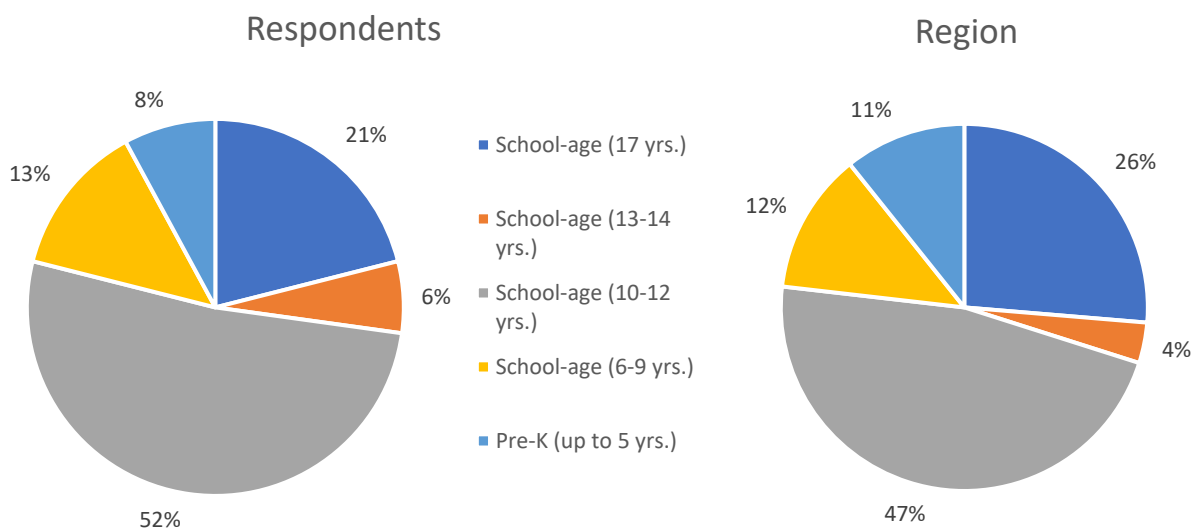


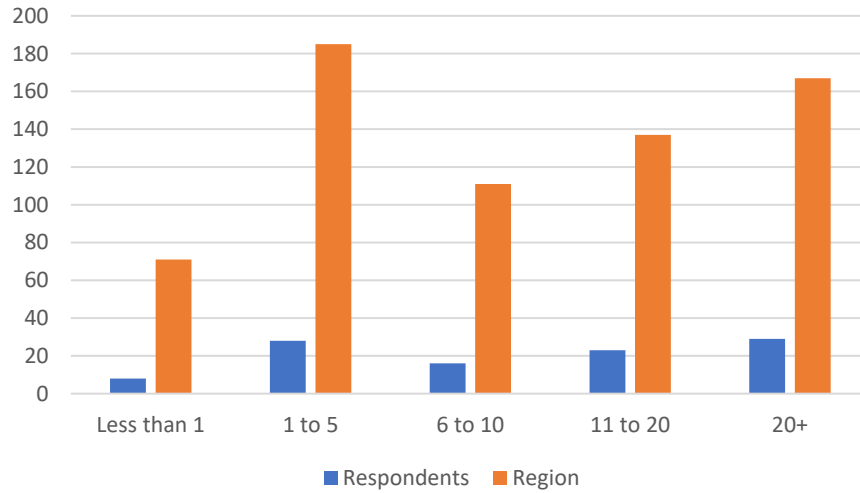
Figure 4: Oldest Ages Served



Number of Years in Business

The median “age” of the respondent sample is 10.9 years in business; the median age region-wide for providers is 9.6 years in business (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Years in Business



Areas of Inquiry

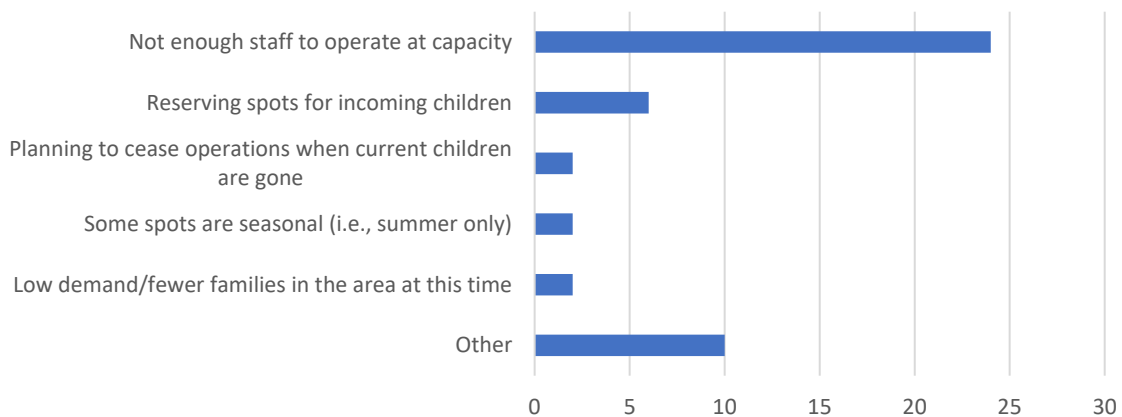
Capacity Operations

Eighty respondents (70%) reported they are currently enrolled at or very near their licensed capacity. Of those:

- Fifty (63%) are family home or group home providers.
- Thirty (37%) are centers.

Thirty-four respondents (30%) reported they are currently operating below their licensed capacity. Figure 6 shows the reasons they cited.

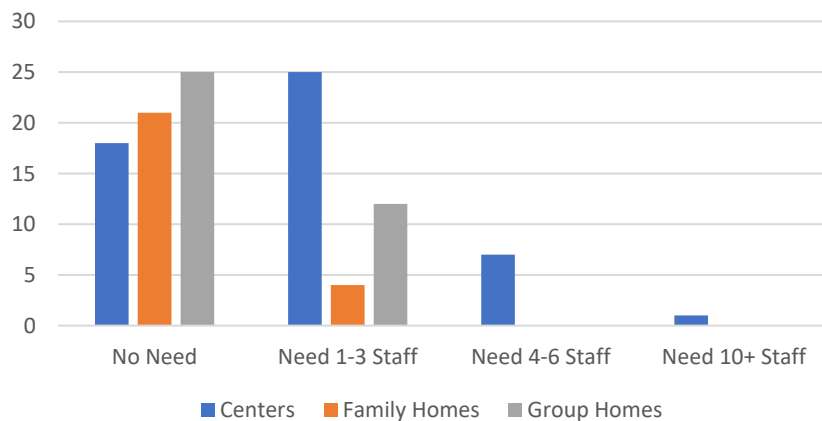
Figure 6: Reasons for Operating Below Licensed Capacity



Labor Force

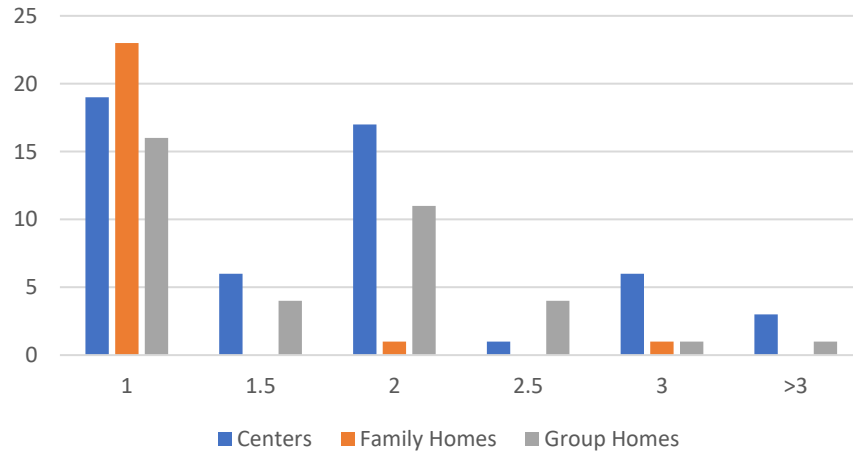
Sixty-four respondents (56%) reported no need for additional caregiving staff. Of the 44% citing staffing needs, the majority estimated needing between one and three staffers (Fig. 7).

Figure 7: Need for Caregiving Staff



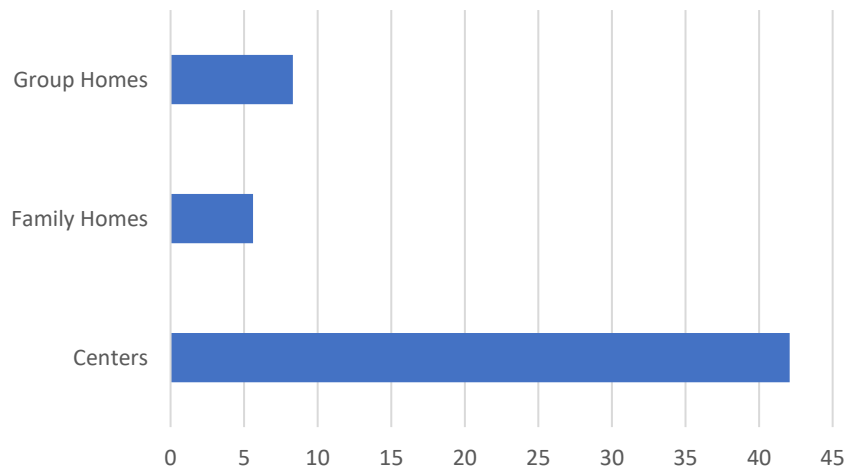
Respondents were also asked how many administrative staff were employed to support operations, in order to determine a level of capacity to handle activities beyond caregiving. Figure 8 shows that administrative capacity is low.

Figure 8: Number of Administrative Staff



More to the point, the larger the provider’s enrollment capacity, the thinner each administrator is spread (Fig. 9).

Figure 9: Number of Children for Each Administrator

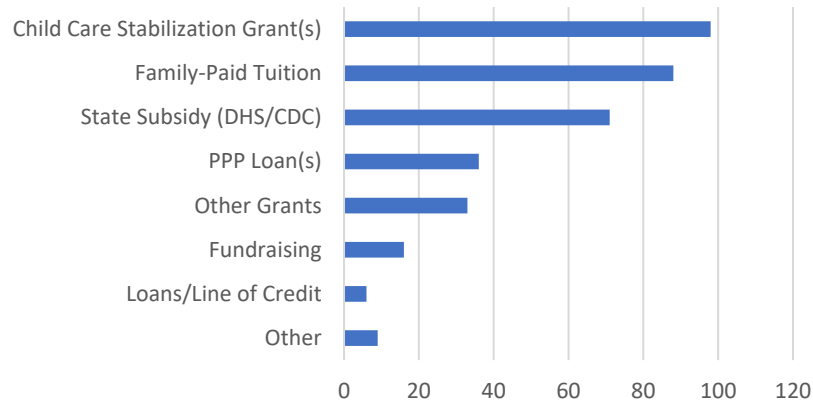


Funding Sources

Figure 10 shows the sources of operating funds that respondents are currently using or have used in the past. Nearly all respondents reported having received Child Care Stabilization Grant funds,

and most (77%) rely on family-paid tuition. Sixty-two percent also receive state subsidies for low-income families.

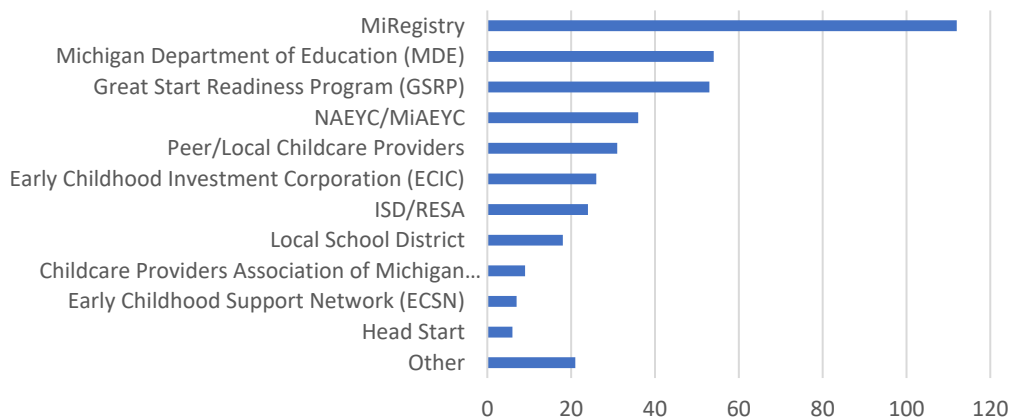
Figure 10: Sources of Operating Funds



Information Sources

Respondents were asked to identify which resources they use (in addition to licensing) for information, training, or support. Figure 11 shows that MiRegistry, MDE, and GSRP are leading sources of information, which may be helpful in determining communication channels for conveying news and getting provider attention.

Figure 11: Sources of Information, Training, and Support

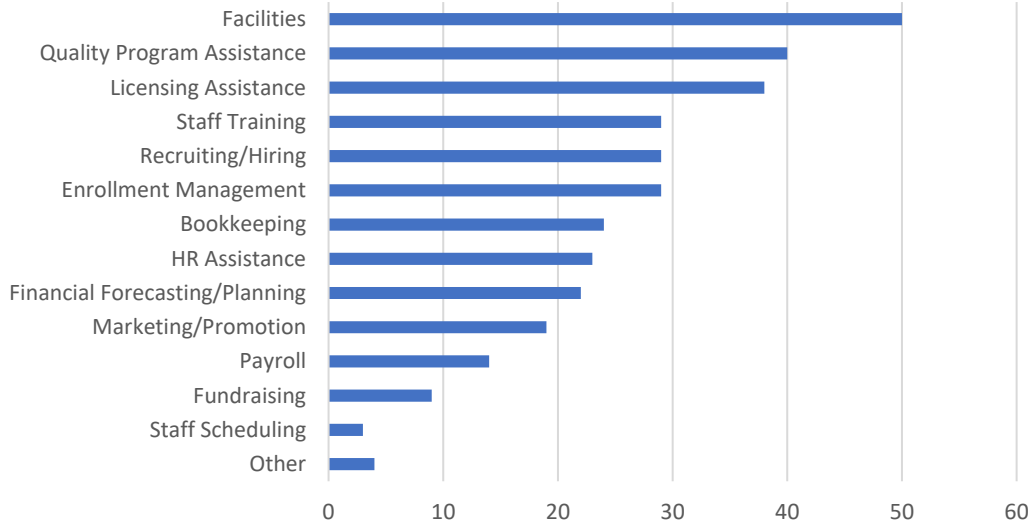


Business Supports

Respondents were asked to indicate the general business functions they would most like to be supported on, whether by training or outsourcing, if time and money were not obstacles. Figure 11

shows that facilities issues (maintenance, improvement, oversight, etc.) was the primary area in need of support, followed closely by quality initiative assistance and licensing assistance.

Figure 11: Business Functions Needing Support

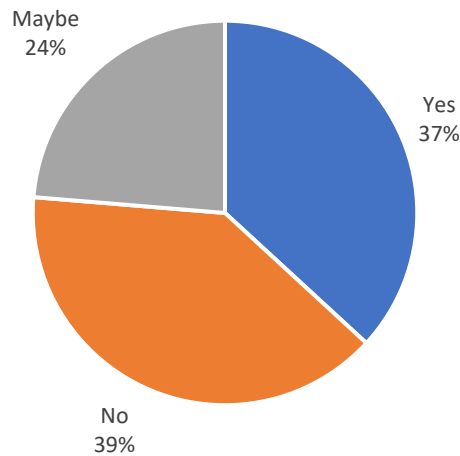


Project Participation and Follow-up

PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE RESEARCH

Sixty-nine respondents (61%) said they are willing to continue participating in this project in some capacity.

Willing to Participate in Follow-up Research

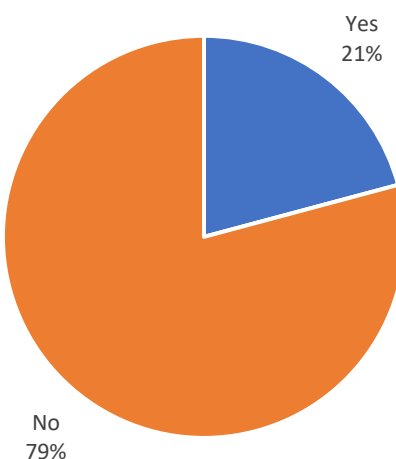


ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY BUSINESS CULTURE

A second follow-up survey focused on whether and to what extent child care providers engage—or are aware of—other organizations in their communities that exist to provide support to or networking with other organizations for the purpose of mutual benefit. Figure 12 exemplifies an important disconnect—and opportunity—in this matter.

Figure 12: Awareness of Local Support Organizations

Are you aware of local agencies/organizations, NOT including those already in the child care field, who can or do support your child care business in non-financial ways (e.g., posting for jobs or enrollment, business networking, etc.)?



This is important data, suggesting that child care businesses might not be connected to—or approached by—local chambers of commerce, EDOs, or other intermediaries who provide business supports and opportunities.

A common way for business networks to form and grow is when owners and operators serve on the boards, councils, and committees of other businesses. In this round of surveys, child care providers were asked to describe whether and to what extent they participate in this way for local organizations, aside from those organizations already in the ECE field. Providers were also asked whether other non-ECE businesses were formally engaged in the governance or operations of their child care operation. Figure 13 shows that only 27% of respondents reported serving on a board, council, or committee of a local business or association.

Figure 13: Provider Involvement with Other Businesses

Do you serve on any local boards, councils, or committees?

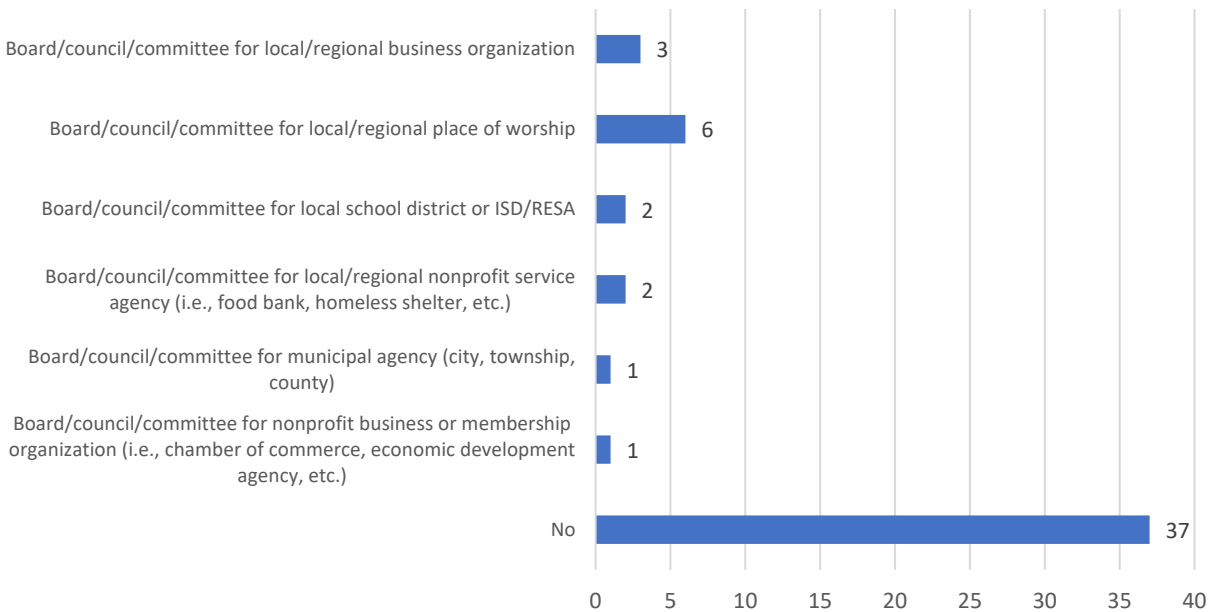
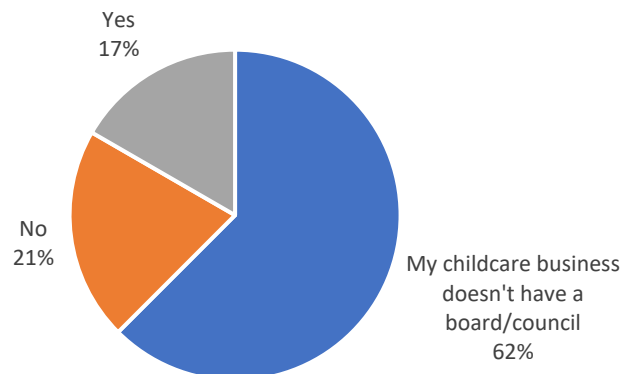


Figure 14 shows that 63% of respondents reported having no board or council of their own on which community leaders could serve; another 21% reported having a board or council that did not include community leaders.

Figure 14: Other Business Involvement with ECE Providers

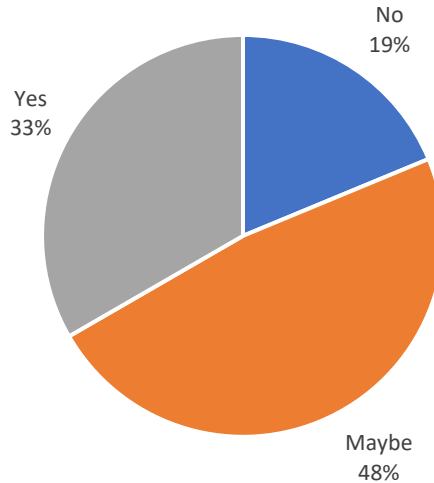
Not including parents of currently-enrolled children, are there community leaders on the board/council of your own child care business?



These data suggest that there is limited knowledge about or interaction between child care and other businesses. Figure 15 indicates that 81% of respondents think more interaction with local organizations would be beneficial.

Figure 15: Local Relationships Would Benefit Child Care Providers

Do you think your child care business would benefit from a closer or more clearly defined relationship with local agencies, organizations, and businesses?



HOW DO WE IMPROVE THE SYSTEM?

A third follow-up survey focused on the child care provider perspective about how to improve the current child care landscape. Figure 16 identifies the biggest challenges faced by providers at present.

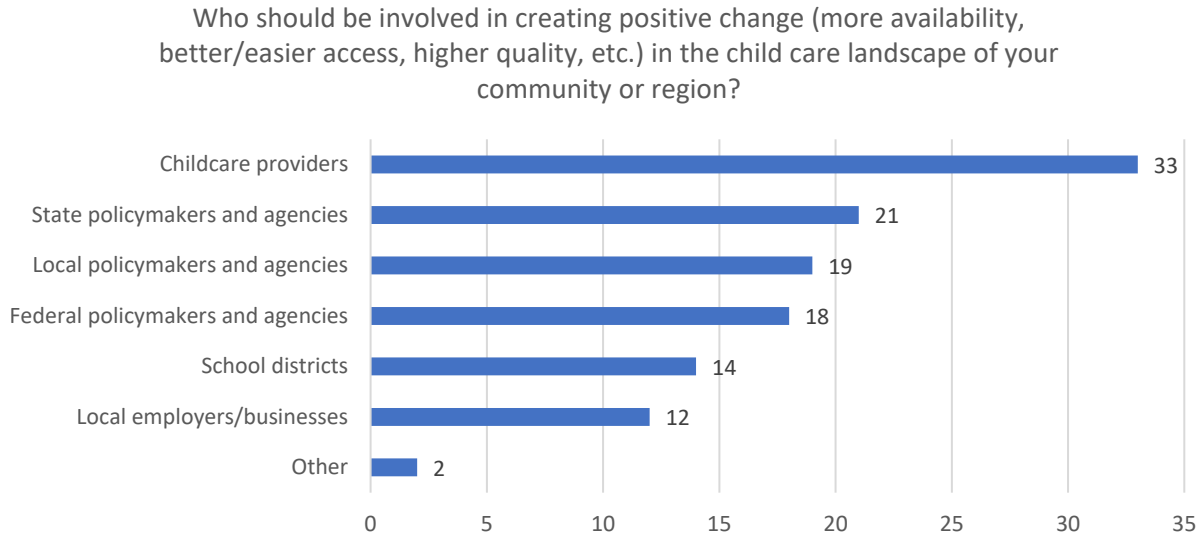
Figure 16: Biggest Challenges Right Now

What are the biggest challenges you face as a child care provider in Michigan right now?



Given the limited involvement between child care providers and local organizations, it is not surprising that they don't perceive local organizations as having the necessary impact to improve the child care landscape in any meaningful way (Fig. 17).

Figure 17: Agents of Change



Appendix A: Survey Instruments

Region 8 Child Care Provider Survey

This initiative values child care providers and recognizes that you are the key to solving the child care crisis. We are reaching out to all child care providers in the MEDC's Region 8 counties (Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, & Van Buren) so we can involve you in this important process.

By completing this 3-4 minute survey, you will be giving us critical information about the current child care landscape.

Please enter your email address so we may confirm receipt of your survey. All contact information remains confidential.

* Indicates required question

1. Email *

2. Is your child care facility currently enrolled at or near its maximum licensed capacity? (After responding, click the "Next" button at the bottom of this section.) *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, we are enrolled at or near our licensed capacity *Skip to question 3*
- No, we are not enrolled at or near our licensed capacity *Skip to question 4*

Waitlist Information

3. Since your facility is enrolled at or near your licensed capacity, do you currently have a wait list? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, we have a wait list
 No, we do not have a wait list

Skip to question 5

Enrollment Limitations

4. Please indicate the reason(s) why your facility is not enrolled at or near your licensed capacity. (Check all that apply.) *

Check all that apply.

- Not enough staff to operate at capacity
 Reserving spots for incoming children
 Planning to cease operations when current children are gone
 Some spots are seasonal (i.e., summer only)
 Low demand/fewer families in the area at this time
 Other: _____

Skip to question 5

Workforce Information

5. Approximately how many **classroom staff** do you need to hire in order to operate **at capacity**? *

Mark only one oval.

- None (I'm fully staffed or I'm the only staff needed)
- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10+
- Unsure

6. **Including you**, how many **administrative staff** work to support your site's childcare operations? (Do not include classroom staff who perform certain administrative tasks.) *

Check all that apply.

- 1 (Just me)
- 1.5
- 2
- 2.5
- 3
- More than 3

Funding, information resources, and operations needs

7. Which of the following sources of funding are currently used or have been used in the past three years for operating your child care business? (Check all that apply.) *

Check all that apply.

- Family-paid tuition
- State subsidy (DHS/CDC)
- PPP loan(s)
- Child Care Stabilization Grant(s)
- Other grants
- Fundraising
- Business/personal loan or line of credit from a financial institution
- Other: _____

8. ***In addition to licensing***, which of the following resources do you use for information, training, or support? (Check all that apply.) *

Check all that apply.

- Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC)
- Michigan Department of Education (MDE)
- Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)
- Head Start
- MiRegistry
- NAEYC/MIAEYC
- Local school district
- ISD/RESA
- Early Childhood Support Network (ECSN)
- Childcare Providers Association of Michigan (CPAOM)
- Peer/local childcare providers
- Other: _____

9. If time and cost were not factors, which of the following child care business functions are the TOP THREE you would outsource and/or welcome training and support for? *

Check all that apply.

- Bookkeeping
- Enrollment management (i.e., tuition billing, child files, family communication, etc.)
- Facilities (i.e., maintenance, improvement, oversight, etc.)
- Financial forecasting and planning
- Fundraising
- HR assistance (i.e., policy handbook, staff retention strategies, etc.)
- Licensing assistance (i.e., records compliance, license renewal, etc.)
- Marketing and promotion
- Payroll
- Quality program assistance (i.e., Star rating, CLASS, accreditation, etc.)
- Recruiting/hiring
- Staff scheduling
- Staff training
- Other: _____

Participation

10. Are you willing and able to participate on a provider advisory group for this project? Participation consists of responding to emails—no meetings required. *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Contact Information

In order to qualify for the drawing to win one of three \$50 Amazon gift cards, we need your contact information.

11. First and last name *

12. Organization name *

13. Mailing address *

14. City, State, ZIP *

15. Phone number *

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Region 8 Child Care Provider Follow-up Survey-1

This

initiative values child care providers

and recognizes that you are the key to solving the child care crisis. We are reaching out to the child care providers in the MEDC's Region 8 counties (Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, & Van Buren) who indicated willingness to continue participating in the planning process.

Please enter your email address so we may confirm receipt of your survey. All contact information remains confidential.

** Indicates required question*

1. Email *

2. Please indicate the **primary** way you are interested in or able to be continuing participation in this project. *

Mark only one oval.

Follow-up surveys by email (like this one)

Zoom meetings

In-person meetings

Other: _____

3. Please indicate the **secondary** way you are interested in or able to be continuing *
participation.

Mark only one oval.

- Follow-up surveys by email (like this one)
- Zoom meetings
- In-person meetings
- Other: _____

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Region 8 Childcare Provider Follow-up #2

This survey is intended to provide us with information about how childcare businesses interact with other businesses and organizations.

* Indicates required question

1. Email *

2. Are you aware of local agencies/organizations, **NOT including those already in the childcare field**, who can or do support your childcare business in non-financial ways (e.g., posting for jobs or enrollment, business networking, etc.)? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes *Skip to question 3*

No *Skip to question 4*

Local Agencies/Organizations

3. Please list the names and/or types of local agencies or organizations that are available to support childcare businesses in non-financial ways. *

Community Business Participation

4. **Not including childcare organizations** (such as a Great Start Collaborative), do you currently serve in a leadership capacity or on any boards of directors or advisory councils of local/regional companies and municipalities? Please check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- Board of directions (or advisory council or committee) for local/regional business organization
- Board/council/committee for local/regional place of worship
- Board/council/committee for local school district or ISD/RESA
- Board/council/committee for local/regional nonprofit service agency (i.e., food bank, homeless shelter, etc.)
- Board/council/committee for municipal agency (city, township, county)
- Board/council/committee for nonprofit business or membership organization (i.e., chamber of commerce, economic development agency, etc.)
- Other: _____

5. **Not including parents of currently-enrolled children**, are there community leaders on the board/council of your own childcare business? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- My childcare business doesn't have a board/council

6. Do you think your childcare business would benefit from a closer or more clearly defined relationship with local agencies, organizations, and businesses? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

7. Briefly describe why you answered that way. *

Comments and Questions

8. Use this space for any feedback, questions, or concerns about anything covered in this survey.

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Region 8 Childcare Provider Follow-up #3

* Indicates required question

1. Email *

2. What are the biggest challenges you face as a childcare provider in Michigan right now? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- Finding and/or keeping good staff
- Bringing in enough money to keep the business going
- Getting time for my own training or professional development
- Being able to take time off for myself and/or provide time off for my staff
- Keeping up with licensing requirements
- Keeping up with quality rating requirements
- Learning from and/or sharing ideas with other providers
- Having more families needing care than I am able to provide
- Other: _____

3. Use this space to elaborate on any of your responses to the previous question about the challenges you face as a childcare provider.

4. Who should be involved in creating positive change (more availability, better/easier * access, higher quality, etc.) in the childcare landscape of your community or region? Check all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- State policymakers and agencies
- Local policymakers and agencies
- Childcare providers
- School districts
- Local employers/businesses
- Federal policymakers and agencies
- Other: _____

5. Use this space to elaborate on any of your responses to the previous question regarding who should be involved in creating positive change.

6. What ideas do you have for enhancing childcare access and quality in your community, county, or region?

7. Would you be willing to share your thoughts in a brief video conversation to be shared with stakeholders involved in this project? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Maybe

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Appendix B: Comments

RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL AGENCIES

- A closer relationship with local businesses opens up the door for resources not typically offered to child care. It obviously gives us more access to funding, but also provides a means for finding volunteers and advocates
- Agencies could possibly assist in helping with trainings and helping with children needs
- As a "newer" child care center (opened 8/2019) serving over 100 students (ages 6 weeks to 6 years), we have spent the first four years establishing the groundwork for our school, navigating a pandemic, and staffing highly-qualified employees - all of which hasn't been easy! As such, the community relationship piece has been somewhat neglected. We joined the Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce recently with the hope of connecting more with the community. Additionally, with the Ford (Motor Company) Blue Oval Battery Park soon becoming a large part of the Marshall Community, I would like to find a way to help and connect - especially with the limited options for child care in the area.
- As we are re-opening our child care facility, I believe community connections can help us get our name out there to show parents what we offer.
- Because I am always full just by word of mouth
- Depends on the business and community
- I already partner with organizations.
- I am curious to see what this could be.
- I am open to try new things
- I am unsure of what this means and what they would offer our program. We are part of a school district, so we have a board overseeing our program
- I believe if we all knew, it would be a great asset to us and help us work together as a team
- I don't understand what they could do to benefit my Child Care Home. But I am interested in finding out.
- I feel like daycares have always been stereotyped as "baby sitters" so the fact that we're really pushing it as early learning is new to people. I think the more our community talks about us, perhaps the more people will recognize the importance of it.
- I have continual business already.
- I just feel the more you have in your circle the better we can all benefit each other
- I think anytime a community partners, you increase your capacity for sustainability and overall impact on the community itself.
- I think it is extremely important to build relationships within the community. It can be beneficial for everyone when we all work together.
- I would definitely benefit from having a relationship with local agencies, organizations & businesses.
- I would need more information regarding the type of agencies, organizations, etc.
- I would need to find out more about it.
- If they want to be supportive I believe they would.
- I'm a group home daycare and I have been at capacity for over a year.
- I'm a very small business so I'm not sure if it would benefit me or not.

- I'm really not sure it would or would not. Leaning more towards no but not sure as to what capacity they could benefit my business...???
- In home child care providers can feel very isolated. We work long hours for little pay & it leaves us with little time or money to commit to relationships within our community.
- It can always help to partner with businesses in my community. It could help get the word out about my center and it could also help get the word out about other businesses in the area.
- It just take one agency to support and it can grow from there. Supporting and spending the word about your child care in a positive way will help other child care grow.
- Just having a known presence in the community
- Many staff and leaders don't have any awareness of local resources that can be very beneficial in advancing careers and advocacy with higher pay in this field. Collaboration is a huge benefit not competition.
- More community exposure
- more community involvement means more hands to help and spread the word of the importance of high quality child care
- More support from other agencies and businesses would most likely improve and/or expand my daycare business
- My business.
- Not sure what benefits
- Not sure what that relationship would look like
- Parenting is a big job some dont have the rime
- Posting for job openings could be helpful
- Some collaborative services that take away some of the paperwork burden leaves more time for us to concentrate on our services to children & families we serve. It would have to be economically feasible however or its not do-able financially.
- Some local agencies near me are just not helpful nor do they care.
- To help parents in all areas.
- Unsure
- We actually already have a close relationship with many businesses in our area. I feel like it could be more well defined though.
- We are a before and after school child care
- We are functioning without any connections with other businesses and we are doing great. So I am not sure that anything will change.
- We dont have a lot of community connections becuase we've "never needed them", but I think they could be very helpful. Community is always nice.
- We have reached out and connected. We know what's happening with local business and rotary activities
- We need teachers, qualified Early Childhood Professionals. It is hard work, we are essential, and need to be recognized as so!
- We've never had any partnerships.
- I always have a waiting list. It would be nice to have information on other daycare in the area so I could send my waiting families to someone I knew and trusted
- Is there any grants out that will help keep the small centers going.

- Need more support to keep child care center and home centers from closing. Parents need quality child care.
- What kind of businesses could help our child care industry? We don't really need advertising. We might need better food (organic) for our children but that is about it.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- By far the biggest problem is not being able to pay my staff what they deserve.
- Continued grant funding needs to happen in order to sustain ongoing child care needs for staff and families
- DHS/CDC child care subsidy accounts for 85-90% of our income. State of Michigan is ratcheting DOWN our support, every 6 months, while the cost to do business keeps going up. The next drop is in September, its \$2.00 hour drop per hour, per child. I can't afford to take in any less, SO that will create LARGE copay for DHS families (\$2 per hr drop X 40 hrs for full time care = \$80 per week copay x 4 wks in month = \$320 per month copay for DHS family, per child. Thats size of car payment - for DHS/ALICE family - thats not happening. So, daycare providers serving in low income areas & DHS families are going to close OR parent is going to quit their job to take care of kids, adding to work force shortage because they can't afford child care OR find child care - because, no daycares will accept DHS. I have already instituted policy - Out of pocket families go to top of list for child care slots. DHS families aren't going to be able to afford daycare in 3 months anyway. I need to stabilize my income stream or close (add to lack of child care slots).
- Early Childhood Professionals are essential and should be treated as so. Individuals do not want to work in child care centers due to the low wages. Stop building centers, we have room! We do not have individuals that can afford to work in child care. It IS hard work and very important. Early Childhood Profession needs to be recognized and valued!
- Feel like just hanging by a thread.
- finding staff has been a huge issue the last couple years.
- Good staff is number one. Paying them enough to keep any good ones-but not charging outrageous prices for care to make that happen is just as hard. Lots of people can't pay \$200-250/week for child care. I take a pay cut to pay my staff better. I turn down 1-3 calls a week for child care. My second is the extra hours needed for professional dev. We put in 12 hour days just for care, there is always 30 minutes of set up/chores before the day and at least an hour of clean up at the end. Where is time to hire, apply for grants, searching for contractors for the grants, filing the grant paperwork after receiving funds, keeping up on emails, stress of being perfect and above and beyond a "star rating program," shopping, keeping up on broken toys and house, keep up on staff prof dev. and the \$ for those, make personal Dr appointments (forget self care appts,) food program and other paperwork (parent statements) etc. Hiring so often is killing the bank account too. Paying for all the required things and classes and their time. It really is all overwhelming and I love children but home child care in your home is extremely tough. People talk of 10 hour days at their jobs and that is beyond a dream in our world. I'd be happy with 5, 10 hour days... I really want this to be an eye opener & not taken as complaints, this IS my reality, every day. It really is not a job for the faint, we are shaping the future, literally, and it a cannot be taken lightly. I feel validated for the first time in 23 years since covid. We have been listened to more than ever and we sure needed it. Great start to quality has been huge to us and i'm forever grateful. The grants and help received are necessary and needed. Survery's like this are also imperative so we can move forward in helping make child care homes successful in MI!!

- "I am blessed to have my sister working with me, but I know that finding staff is a huge problem for in home child cares. We can't afford to give them benefits, days off, etc. We can't just call off if we are having a bad day. doctors and dentist appointments are impossible, it has truly been horrible for my own health. Licensing requirements require that a sub provider has all of the requirements, even when the staff member does, which makes it impossible to get a sub.
- People talk about the high prices of child care, but believe me, I am not getting rich. there are so many expenses, taxes, and payroll expenses, that I barely stay ahead.
- There are very few licensed providers in my area/school district. I get calls on a weekly basis, especially for infants."
- I am licensed for 6 and so zmany people need child care that I may up my license when I get the chance
- I am operating at 60% capacity because I can't find staff. I need to be at 75%-80% to break even.
- I couldn't click the first one about taking time off.
- I didn't included "finding and/or keeping good staff" simply because we actually have some good staff, but we were able to provide quite a few bonuses recently. Without that, I'm not sure we would have retained the staff we did. Hence my biggest challenges are bringing in enough income to keep the business going AND paying our staff a live-able wage.
- I just completed the first step (very late due to a communication issue) of the quality rating process. It was long and tedious. I have lots more work to go. I have a state grant pending and working on another local grant. It's summer and I'm exhausted.
- I received at least one phone call every week from a parent seeking day care and unfortunately I have to say no to them as I am at full capacity. I have enough staff that I could take at least 3 more children. I have two assistants plus myself so we could take 18 children. I have right now 14. Also there are more and more regulations from licensing to keep up with.
- I would like to staff to be able to take time off without me being the only one to cover.
- It is hard to find certified experienced staff for key positions such as lead teachers.
- It would be helpful if all staff could get their CDA's but most employees can not afford to pay for it and the center cant afford to pay for everyone.
- keeping up with rating requirements is really hard for me, I just don't have the time
- Not enough reliable staff and information for licensing is not available in the allotted time to make adjustments
- Parents that I know is needing provider.
- Quality rating requirements do not take into account the fact that centers are struggling to keep staff and cannot put additional time into all the extra requirements. There needs to be an exception to some items deemed "extra" and not a daily necessity to care for children. Things like an all natural playground are nice and give the highest rating, but finding staff to take the kids outside is much more important than the materials they are playing with. If the playground is safe and has variety, it should score just as high as a natural playground in a facility barely making it.
- Staff turnover has been high over the last two years. Not sure if it is poor candidates, stress of the job, lack of training, or what. I work hard to onboard staff and support them but you cannot make people want to stay.
- The few financial fixes Governor Whitmer initiated have been temporary and are running out. Wages paid to child care workers are back to barely anything. It's a demanding job, both

physically and emotionally, with pay and benefits that don't make it worth it. The families of the children we care for don't understand the pressures child care providers face every day, no health insurance, low pay, little time off, stress, but child care providers are still required to provide loving, stable, quality care.

- The funding is the biggest problem I am having and finding quality staff. To keep my doors open for families that are in need.
- The increase in costs of everything are making it nearly impossible to stay afloat. Without the grants, I know I wouldn't have made it.
- We are struggling with charging enough for daycare with this economy and being able to pay our taxes at the end of the year. It's getting harder and harder to keep my daycare running.
- Weekly we are getting so many calls for children that need care in our community. A lot of the ages are of mothers that are pregnant or due soon that are looking for infant care. Second, being competitive in wages has strained our cash flow. When people can work at McDonald's for \$15 an hour, but we can't offer that as a wage because it's hard for families to be able to afford child care if we raise the rates to cover livable wages. Third, taking time off to keep ourselves going to avoid burnout is just as tough. We have families that complain if we take sick days but are unable to provide backup caregivers because of the rules that a provider must follow.
- Without staff I am unable to bring in additional families.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

- As long as child care centers continue to struggle yet find a way to remain open top leaders will continue to bury their heads in the sand not fully understanding the struggle
- Ask the people actually dealing with child care's. The providers and the employers are often in the thick of it and can offer good ideas and solutions.
- "Because we have to be licensed by the state, they need to be involved. they need to help providers get better, not just come to their home to inspect and do write ups.
- ultimately child care is a parents responsibility. I understand that parents need to work. But they also should expect quality child care from whomever is caring for their child.
- child care providers want to be good at what they do. But they are exhausted and feel overwhelmed."
- everyone
- Federal and State have no clue or have forgotten what it is like to actually be on the ground providing care/service every minute of the day.
- I previously worked in the public schools for over 20 years and made a shift into private early childhood education five years ago - primarily because I felt divided in my beliefs and what I was asked to do in my classroom. I worry that the autonomy I have as a director of an early childhood school may be compromised if outside agencies gain too much control.
- I think EVERYONE needs to be involved in this process. Literally, everyone benefits from families being able to care for their children and those children receiving a quality early learning experience. There is social change that could be impacted by eliminating some of these stresses and barriers for families.
- If we can't get adequate recognition for child care staff/teachers we won't have enough employees. If we can't get more funding for child care to help my families out they aren't able to get adequate child care.
- It take a village to be involve in creating change.

- It takes a village to raise children, it's going to take a village to make early child care what it needs to be for all children and families.
- It would be helpful to have access to free trainings that are required
- no one knows what it is like to be in our shoes except other daycare providers
- State policies should figure out how to make it easier on day care providers by allowing more children for the ratio per children to adults to alleviate the burden from families to find day care. They are struggling to find in home day care as we are enabled to open our door to more children due to the ratio. If a in home day care has enough staff we should be able to take more in. Right now it's 7 kids per adults so 14 maximum per 2 adults in a group home but if we can find a third person we should be able to add more. I run a bilingual day care and I have 15 kids in my waiting list. We are in a huge demand and I keep having families inquiring every week.
- The child care system cannot survive the way it is going. Child care providers are tired of being treated poorly. The government must help make changes or a quality system cannot survive.
- The people involved in the day to day duties with any age children should be the ones you are asking about change. They are the ones living and dealing with the issues.
- The State & Federal Government are going to have to INVEST in child care or families with children birth - 5 yrs are going to drop out of the work force & ADD to growing number of those receiving DHS social services support.
- The state helps. I would like to see more local businesses and service clubs help.
- To keep quality caregivers we need to be competitive with pay. To do this we need to get money from other sources beyond parent pay.
- unless a policymaker has a background in child care, they don't know what they are talking about
- We need our policymakers understand that we need continuous assistance, not a onetime help.

IDEAS FOR ENHANCING ACCESS AND QUALITY IN THE REGION

- A city owned building with child care employees. Incentives for companies to invest in their employees child care needs.
- Advertising to let the community aware of quality child care in the community.
- All families should be able to access quality child care. Staff need to be able to take off time in order to save their mental health, but also to keep up with required training. We need some sort of Substitute Teacher Support that allows for child care providers to have a list of subs to contact. This needs to be a free or very inexpensive program. We need easy access to those who have been finger-printed so we can ensure that the proper steps for child safety for staffing is followed. Some kind of program that subs have to be pre-id'ed as qualifying subs.
- Child care is being paid for by families. Families can only provide so much compensation. Funding needs to come from the government or another source.
- Child care teachers need to be respected and recognized in my county by the state, by other school districts, by businesses.
- "-collect data to determine how many families are in need and use the data to plan
- -partner with colleges or hospitals- they often have space and will support "overhead" and fixed costs
- -state financial support to help pay employees a fair wage
- -additional support to families with young children - especially for those who do not qualify for DHS

- -determine “successful” (beyond the star rating - as much of that is just “hoops” to jump through) schools and use them as a model to develop good teaching and caregiving practices
- - state assistance with payment for professional development and college courses for child care staff"
- Comparing locals and advertising
- Convincing Rotary, Lions and exchange clubs to pick preschools and daycares for district grants instead of parks. Convincing local business owners to be more involved in fundraisers.
- DHS/CDC child care subsidy reimbursement rates need to stabilize & adjust with inflation, our cost to do business. If we can't meet McDonald's wages, we aren't going to be able to attract & KEEP highly qualified staff that needed for high QUALITY care or any time of care.
- Easier programs for DHS payments so providers are more willing to accept it. Higher pay for providers through DHS. More free training and seminars for providers. Networks of providers in each area to help find everyone the care they are searching for.
- give us more resources and less requirements
- Government gives incentives if employers, businesses, schools, community colleges provide space for child care centers for free rent space etc.
- Grants for current providers to keep us going. During the pandemic that money was so useful. It would also be great to see child care treated like public schools and federally funded for all families birth to 4.
- Grants help immensely with quality (and being heard too helps) I think we are very accessible in my opinion. No ideas off my head right now...
- Higher Pay for employees, do what is best for the child’s development not how much it will cost. Social and emotional learning.
- I am not sure what the answer is however something needs to be done. I have been doing this profession for over 28 years and it has changed, just as everything has, however, early childhood professionals will not work if they are not even making a living wage.
- I have wonderful parents that are very thankful. However, society doesn't value child care. Any news story you hear is negative (too costly, something bad happened, etc) For the most part, it is an thankless, exhausting job (I work 12+ hours daily) . Some positive media attention, kind & helpful licensing consultants, more communication from licensing, great start. Another problem is insurance for inhome child cares.
- I'm not sure at this time
- It is very hard to offer high quality care with the lack of work ethic I am seeing
- mandatory, in-person trainings that require child care to close for the training. Gives providers a break to avoid burn out and a social outlet, as well as valuable training.
- more funding for opening more programs, help from local businesses to open up employer-sponsored child care options for their employees <- help connecting with businesses who may be interested in this opportunity
- More grants to help both providers and families
- "More marketing
- More opportunities for free programs for my daycare kids
- More opportunities for grants to support staff
- More pay and willing workers
- none at this time

- None right now
- Really, monies have to be invested. When private providers can pay a livable wage to their staff then these businesses and settings with thrive!!
- State paid training time for new hires so that if they leave after a week or two, that money has not been taken from the center and the center can have money to put towards program quality.
- Support
- Support from the State
- Support groups
- There has to be more funding in order to hire quality staff that have an investment in this career. The average employee is here because they are single parents looking for jobs that support working hours around child care needs.
- To align child care providers with their community. Time is the difficult factor because most child care providers work at least 10 hour days & need time with their own families too. So having time to interact with their community is difficult.
- To have monthly resource meetings
- We need more child care. Starts with building space to do it in. And money
- We should have universal pre school for 4 years old. We should be able to help families so they can go back work.
- When we had access to grant support, everything was great!
- working together