



# 2023 Ravenswood Early Childhood Needs

Survey and Focus Group Findings



**Innovate Public Schools + Ravenswood  
City School District**

December 2023



# Introduction

In Fall 2023, Innovate Public Schools and Ravenswood City School District conducted 220 surveys and 4 focus groups with families with young children (ages 0-6) to better understand the community's needs and desires around early childhood.

The purpose of the survey and focus groups was to:

- 1) explore families' current choices and experiences with childcare for their young children (ages 0-4), and;
- 2) understand what childcare options families would like to see in the community.

# Methodology

220

## Surveys

Innovate conducted 220 surveys in English and Spanish with families of young children ages 0-6.



4

## Focus Groups

Innovate and Ravenswood City School District led 4 focus groups in English and Spanish with 31 parents of 35 young children ages 0-6.



# Methodology

**Surveys.** Innovate Public Schools worked closely with Ravenswood City School District to design and conduct a survey of families with young children (ages 0-6) in Ravenswood communities. To participate in the survey, participants must have at least one child age 0-6 years old and live in East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, or Redwood City. Participants were recruited through email, text, social media, and in-person outreach. In-person outreach locations for the survey included grocery and department store parking lots, health clinics, parks, churches, and food distribution sites. Surveys were conducted in English and Spanish. The Innovate team walked through the survey with any participants in-person reading the questions aloud or shared a flyer with a link to the survey for participants to fill out on their own time. All surveys were anonymous. A total of 220 responded to the survey.

**Focus groups.** Innovate worked closely with the district to design and conduct four focus groups of families with young children. Innovate coordinated with the district, a nonprofit, and a church to recruit participants. Focus groups were conducted in English and Spanish. A total of 31 parents of 35 young children (ages 0-6) participated in the focus groups.



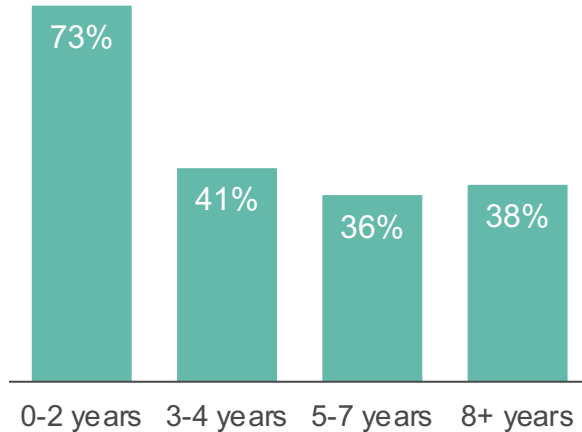
# Survey Results.

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# Demographics of respondents

## Age of children

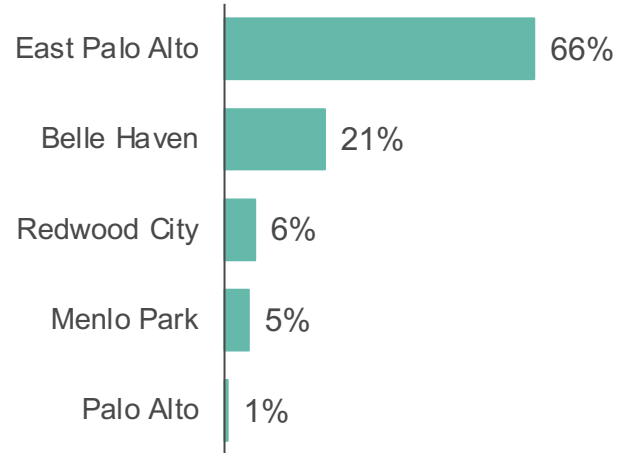
Participants were asked to select all that apply



Respondents on average had 2 children

2

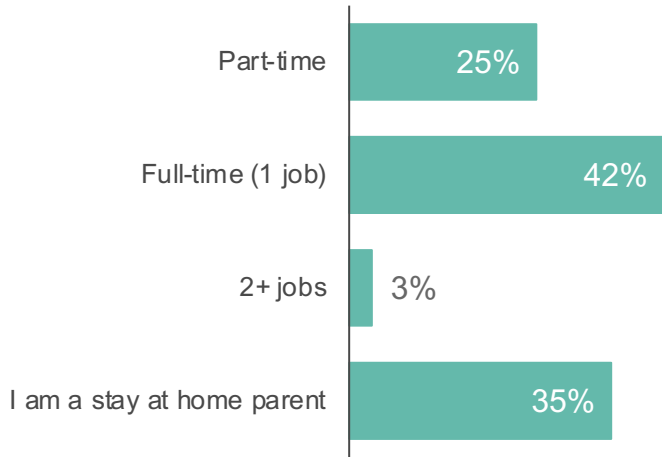
## Neighborhood



# Demographics of respondents

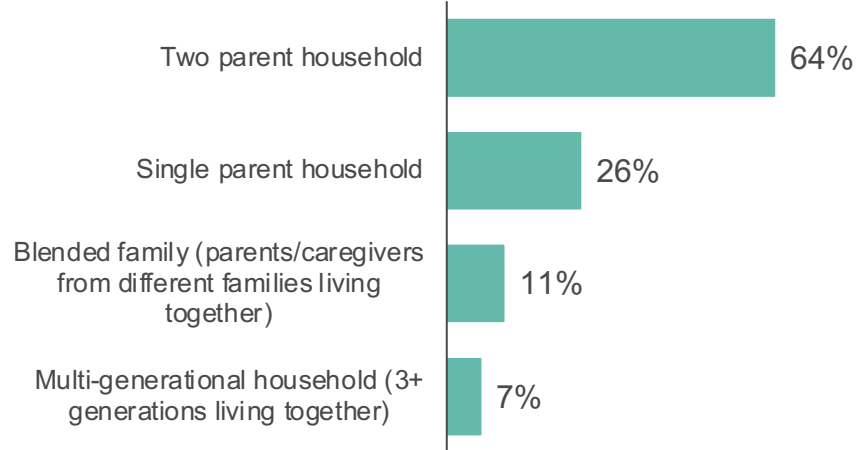
## Do you do paid work?

Participants were asked to select all that apply



## Household structure

Participants were asked to select all that apply



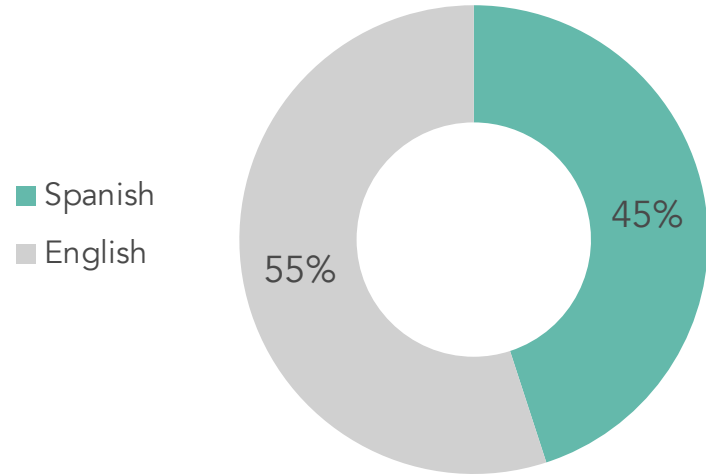
# Demographics of respondents

## Race/ethnicity

Participants were asked to select all that apply

81%	Latino/Latina/Latinx
8%	White
5%	Black/African American
5%	Multi-racial or multi-ethnic
3%	Asian/Asian American
3%	Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
1%	Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native
1%	Other

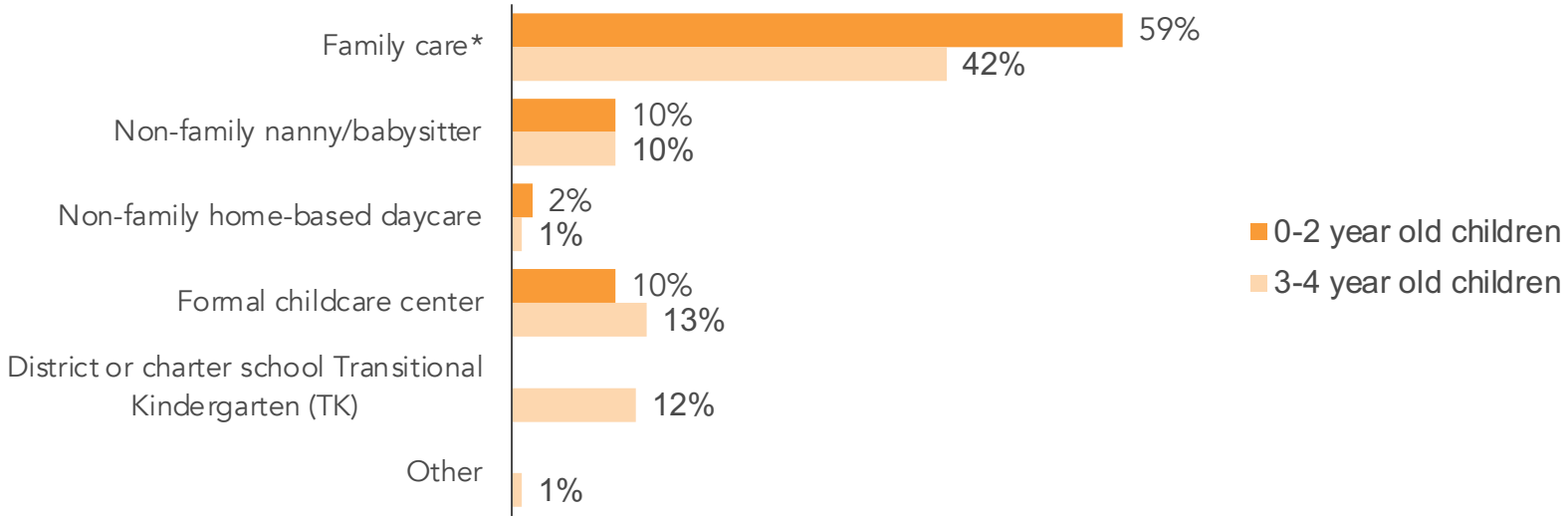
## Language of survey



# Most respondents rely on family to take care of their 0-4 year old children.

How would you describe who is taking care of your 0-2 year old and 3-4 year old children during the day?

Participants were asked to select all that apply

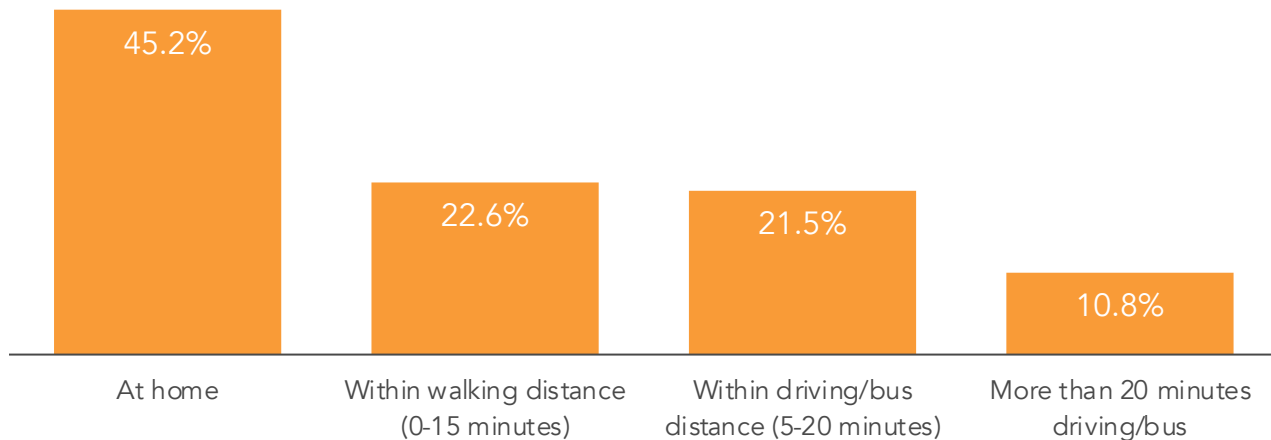


How would you describe who is taking care of your 0-2 year old children during the day? (N=211); How would you describe who is taking care of your 3-4 year old children during the day? (N=186)

\*Family care includes the respondents themselves as caregivers.

# Most respondents report that their childcare is at home or within walking distance.

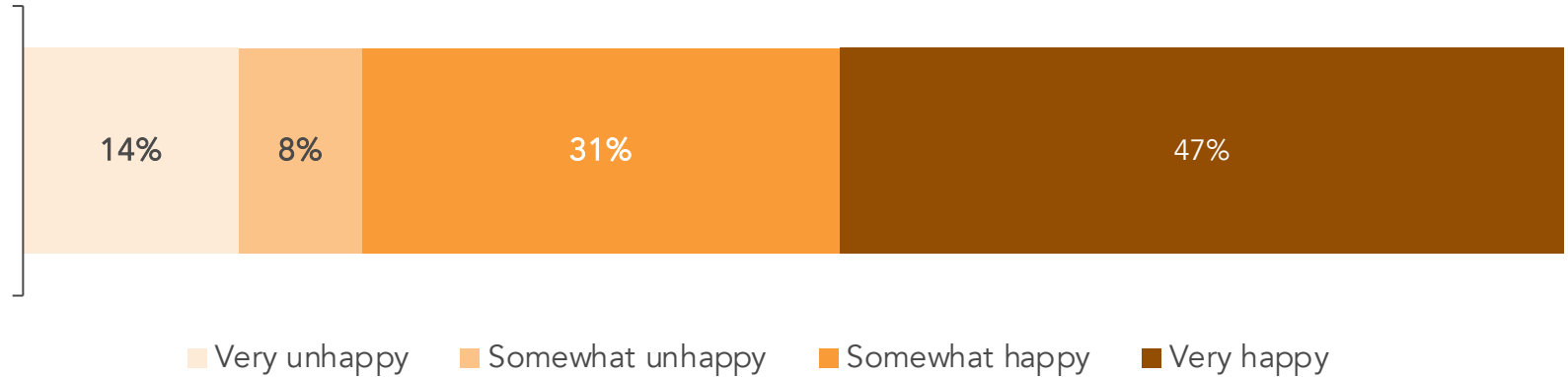
Approximately how far is your current childcare from your home?





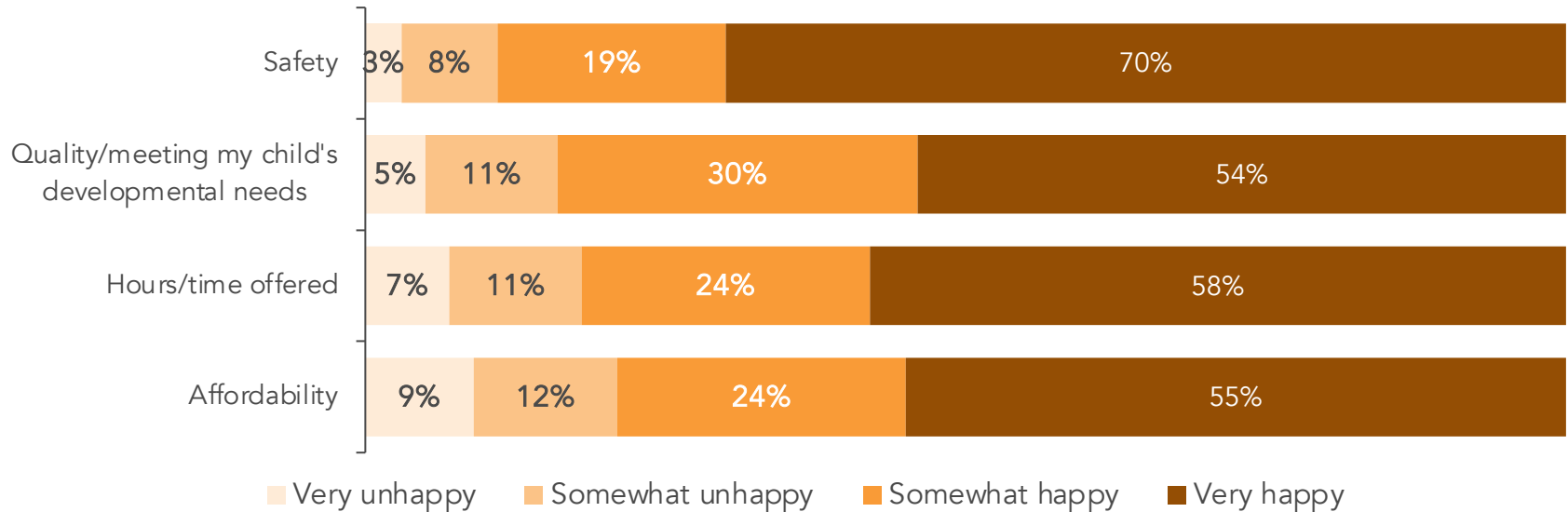
# 78% of respondents are somewhat or very happy with their current childcare.

How do you feel about your current childcare?



# Most respondents report the most satisfaction with the safety and quality of their current childcare.

How happy do you feel about your current childcare for each of the following criteria?

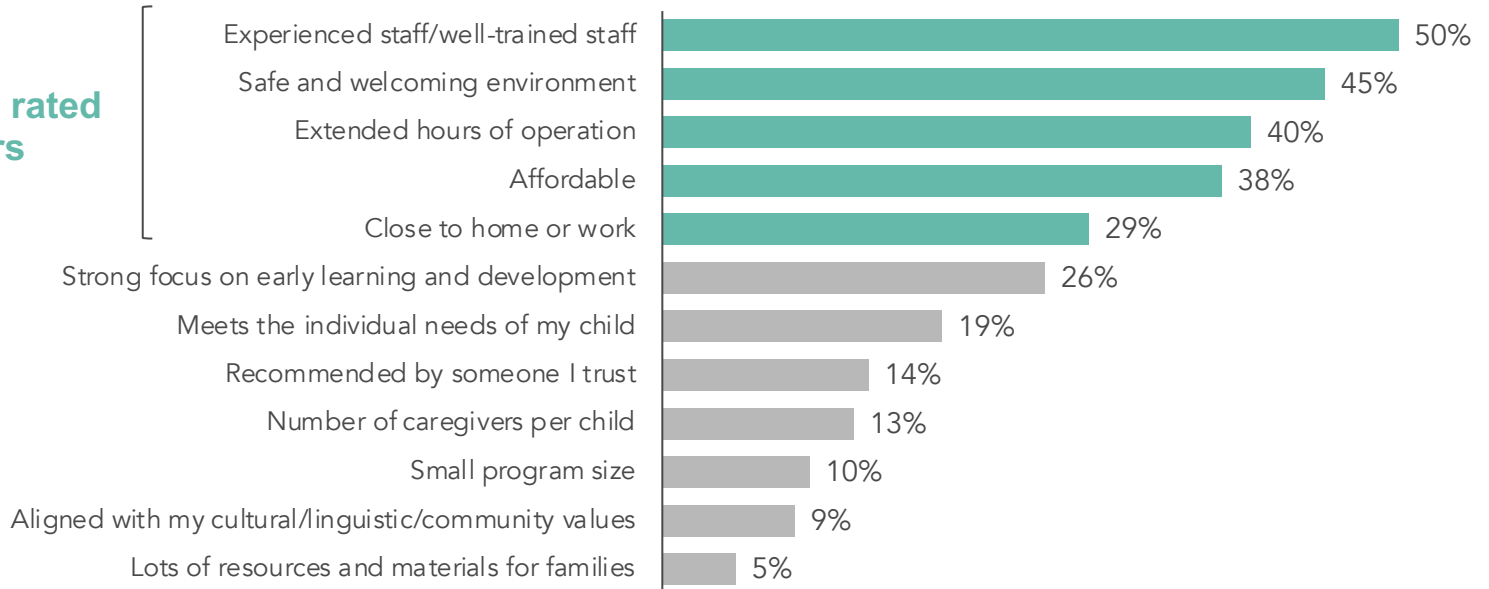


For the next set of questions, answer how happy you feel about your current childcare using this scale (1- very unhappy, 2- somewhat unhappy, 3- somewhat happy, or 4- very happy) for each of the following criteria. (Safety, N=183) (Quality/meeting my child's developmental needs, N=183) (Hours/time offered, N=184) (Affordability, N=182)

# Respondents' top 5 factors for choosing childcare were: experienced staff, safe and welcoming environment, extended hours, affordability, and location

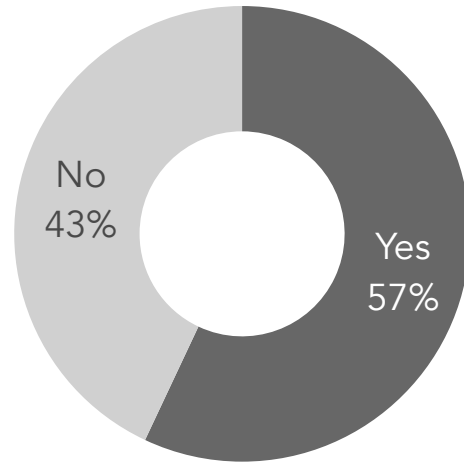
When choosing a childcare setting, which factors are most important to you? Participants were asked to choose their top 3

## Top 5 rated factors



# 43% of respondents do not have adequate childcare for their children ages 0-2.

Do you currently have adequate childcare for your child(ren) ages 0-2 years old?

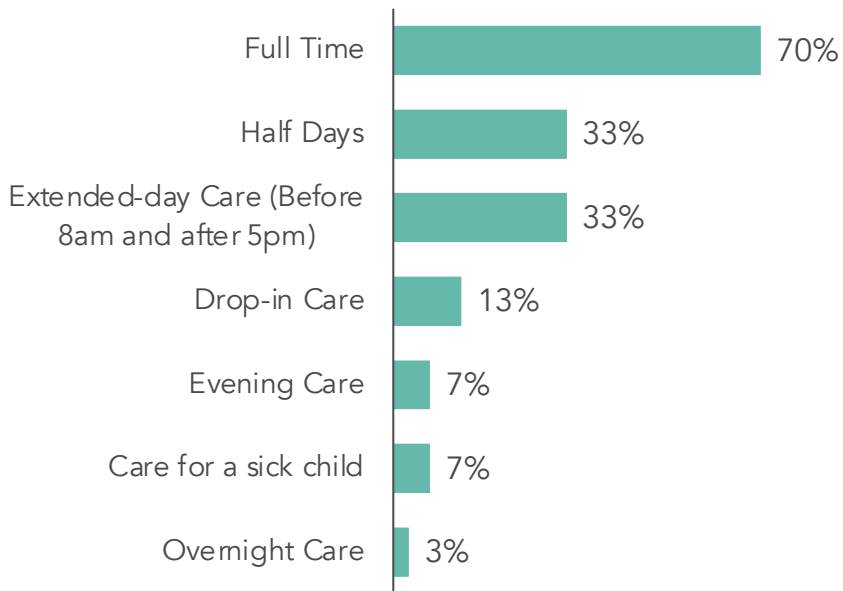


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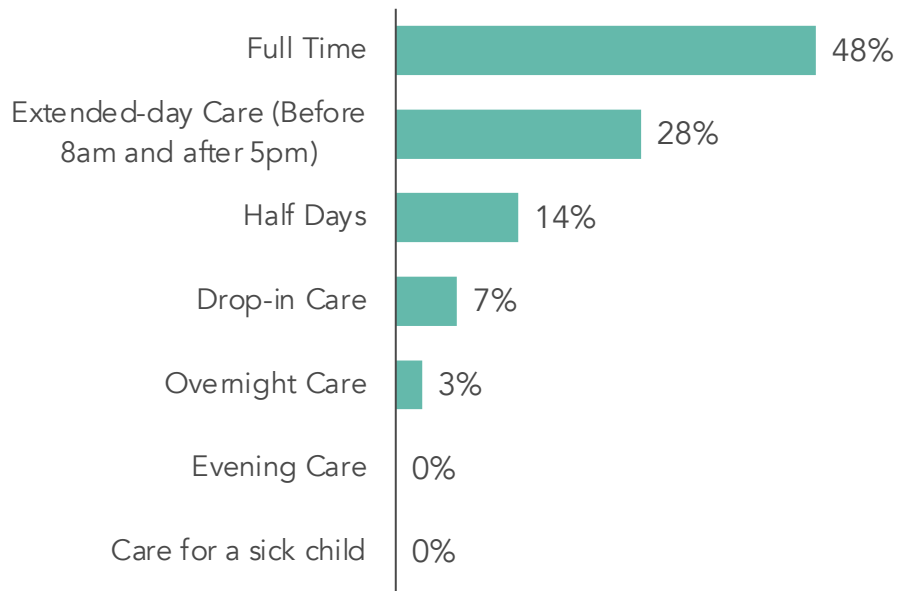
Do you currently have adequate childcare for your child(ren) ages 0-2 years old? (N=141)

# 70% of English speakers and half of Spanish speakers said they need full-time care for their 0-2 year olds.

English participants' type of childcare needed for children ages 0-2  
(English participants were asked to select all that apply)



Spanish participants' type of childcare needed for children ages 0-2  
(Spanish participants were asked to select one)\*

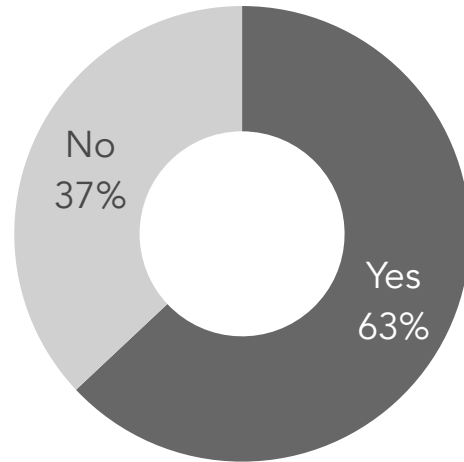


If you don't currently have adequate childcare for your child(ren) ages 0-2 years old, what type of childcare do you need? (English N=30; Spanish N=29)

\*Respondents who participated in the English survey were asked to select all that apply. Respondents who participated in the Spanish survey were asked to select one. This is due to a flaw in the programming of the survey so is a limitation in comparing the responses.

# 37% of respondents do not have adequate childcare for their children ages 3-4.

Do you currently have adequate childcare for your child(ren) ages 3-4 years old?



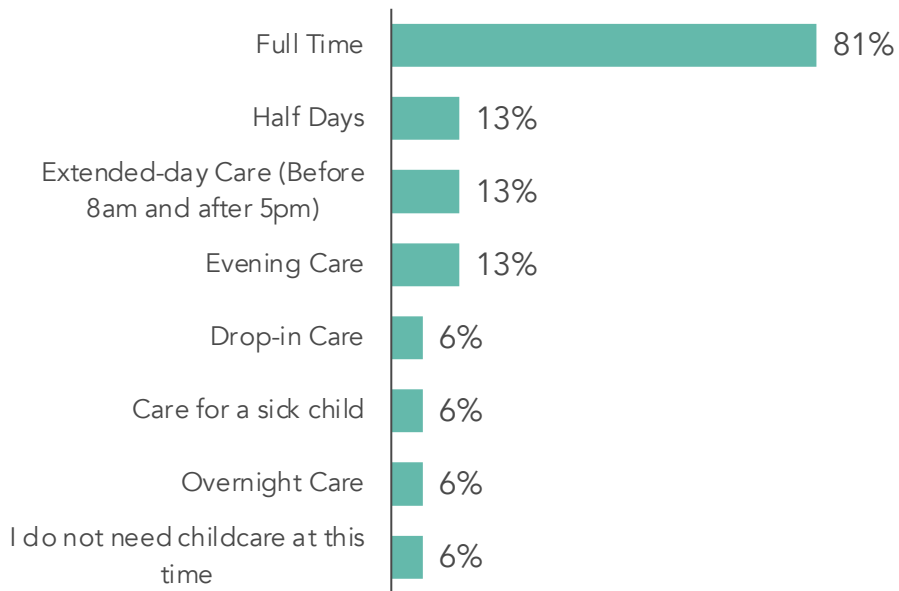
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Do you currently have adequate childcare for your child(ren) ages 3-4 years old? (N=102)

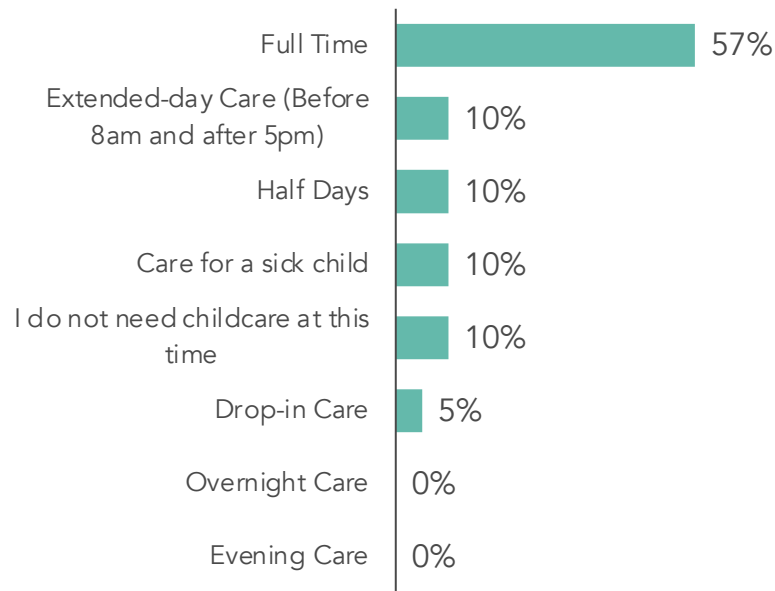


# 81% of English speakers and 57% of Spanish speakers said they need full-time care for their 3-4 year olds.

English participants' type of childcare needed for children ages 0-2  
(English participants were asked to select all that apply)



Spanish participants' type of childcare needed for children ages 0-2  
(Spanish participants were asked to select one)\*

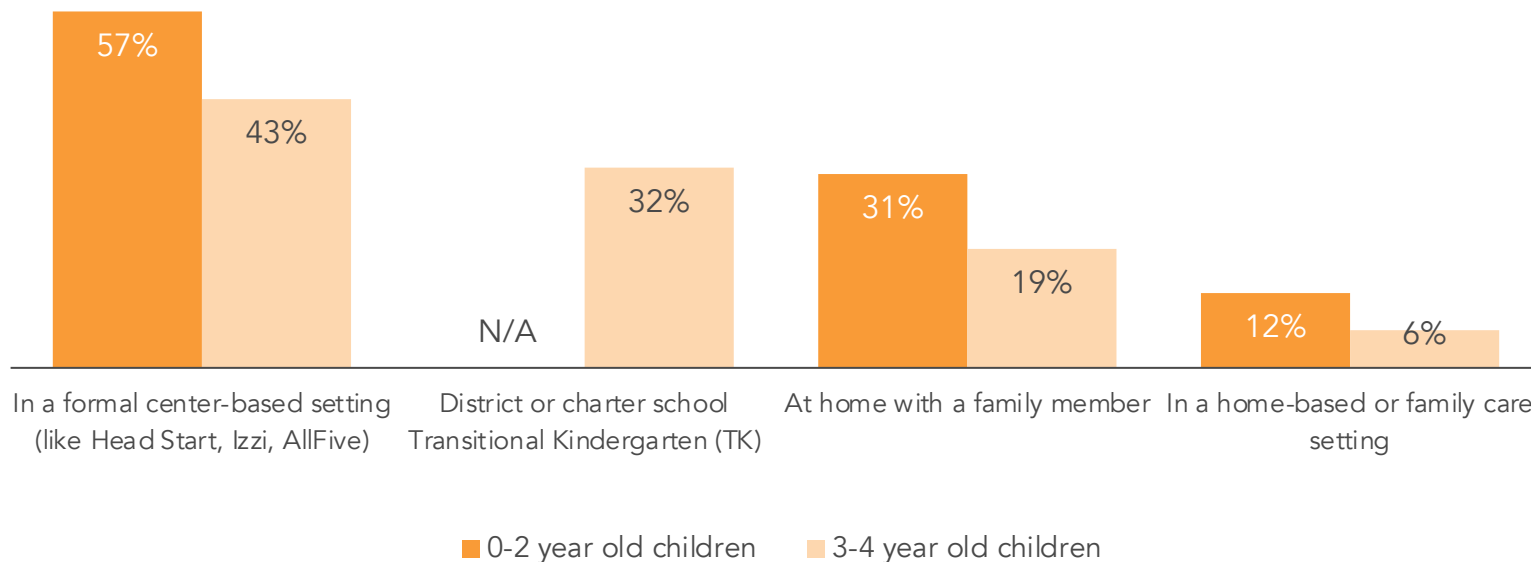


If you don't currently have adequate childcare for your child(ren) ages 3-4 years old, what type of childcare do you need? (English N=30; Spanish N=29)

\*Respondents who participated in the English survey were asked to select all that apply. Respondents who participated in the Spanish survey were asked to select one. This is due to a flaw in the programming of the survey so is a limitation in comparing the responses.

# 57% and 75% of respondents say a formal center-based care setting would be their preferred childcare setting for their 0-2 year old and 3-4 year old children\*, respectively.

Ideally, what would be your preferred childcare setting for your children ages 0-2 and 3-4?



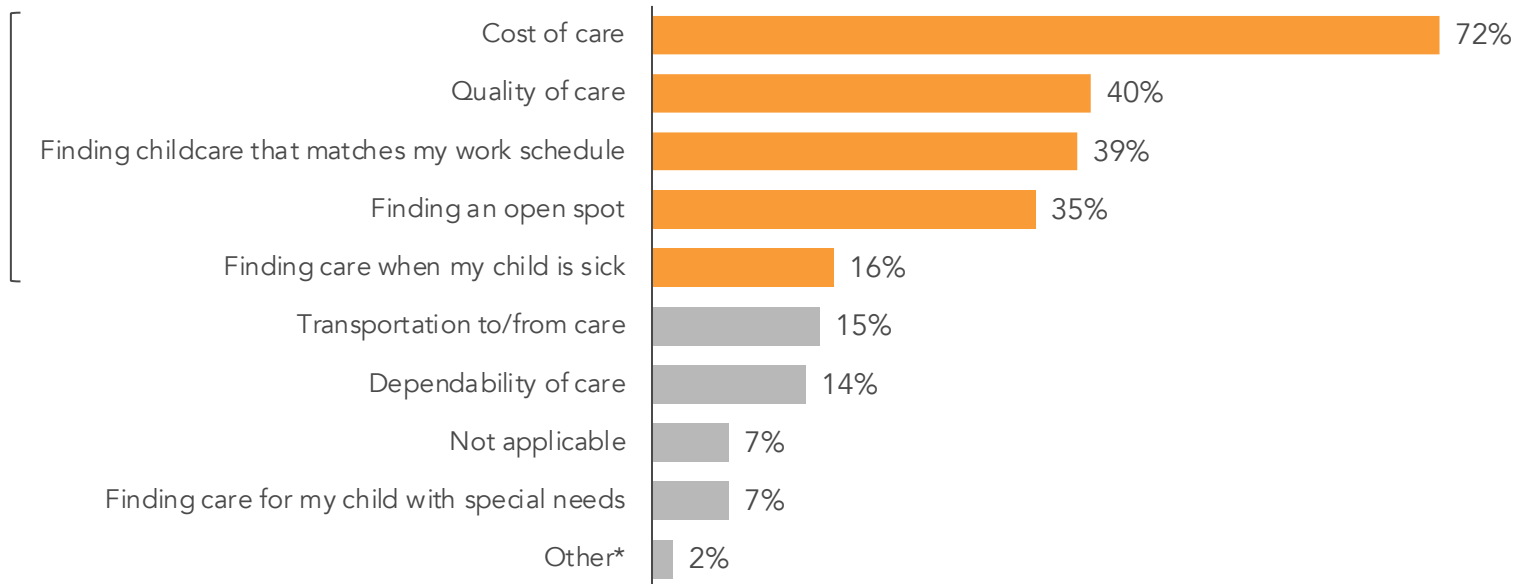
Ideally, what would be your preferred childcare setting for your child(ren) ages 0-2 years old? (N=142); Ideally, what would be your preferred childcare setting for your child(ren) ages 0-2 years old? (N=119)  
\*43% of respondents say they would prefer a formal center-based setting and 32% say they would prefer a district/charter school Transitional Kindergarten setting which combined totals 75%.

# Respondents' top 5 challenges for getting the care they need are: cost, quality, finding care that matches their work schedule, finding an open spot, and finding care when child is sick.

## What factors make it hard to get the care you need for your child?

Participants were asked to select all that apply

### Top 5 rated challenges



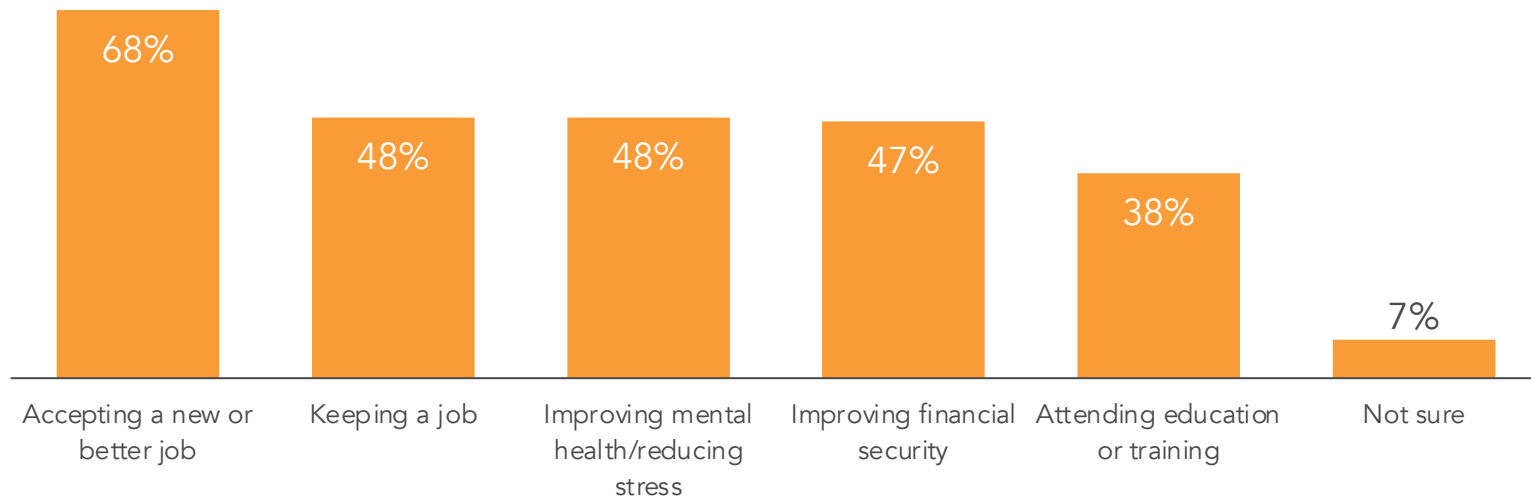
What factors make it hard to get the care you need for your child? (N=158)

\*Other included: Finding a Spanish-speaking program, safety, and lack of vaccines.

# 68% of respondents say that having access to more quality childcare options would help them accept a new or better job.

In your opinion, would having access to more quality childcare options help you or other household members with any of the following?

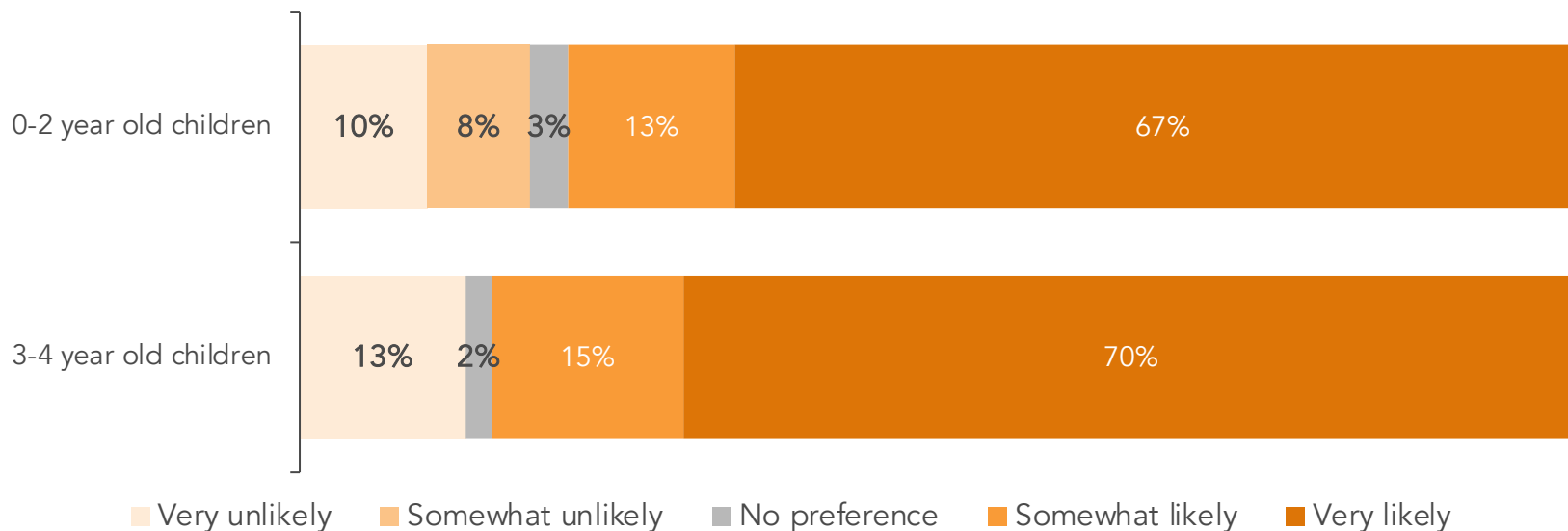
Participants were asked to select all that apply



In your opinion, would having access to more quality childcare options help you or other household members with any of the following? (N=157)

# 80% of respondents with 0-2 year olds and 85% of respondents with 3-4 year olds would be somewhat or very likely to enroll their children in a new affordable, high-quality childcare center.

How likely would you be to enroll your children in a new affordable, high-quality childcare program in a center-based setting in Ravenswood that would serve 200 young children?



# Early childhood care needs

We asked respondents, "Is there anything else you want to share with us regarding your early childhood care needs?"

"It would be very helpful if the childcare center could open from 6 in the morning, providing a better work schedule for me."

"I am very excited for the district to come up with an early childhood program for the community because it's really hard to find a trusted place that's affordable for us."

- **Desire for full-time care & extended hours:** Respondents expressed a strong desire for full-time childcare and highlighted the importance of extended hours to accommodate working parents.
- **Educational quality & safety standards:** Parents highlighted the importance of qualified and educated staff, safe and clean environments, and developmentally appropriate materials for their children.
- **Affordability & future planning:** Respondents expressed a need for affordable childcare options, restructuring pricing, and hope for the development of community-based early childhood programs. Future planning for additional children was also mentioned.
- **Language & cultural considerations:** A few parents emphasized the need for affordable programs that offer language immersion or bilingual education to expose their children to languages beyond what they can provide at home.



# Focus Group Results.

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# Overview of focus groups

Date	Location	# of parents	# of children and ages
10/6/23	Belle Haven	9	9 children ages 3-5 years
10/17/23	Los Robles	5	6 children ages 0-6 years
10/30/23	Little Blue House	6	7 children ages 0-6 years
11/7/23	New Creation Home Ministries	11	13 children ages 0-6 years
<b>Total</b>		<b>31 parents</b>	<b>35 children</b>

# Focus group key findings

1. Parents who are stay-at-home caregivers are satisfied but did so out of necessity. Others cited affordability, location, and extended hours as key to their satisfaction to their current childcare.
2. Most parents have not enrolled their children in a center-based program because there were no open spaces or they couldn't afford it. Some said they haven't enrolled because they don't feel confident in the quality of care.
3. If available, nearly all parents said they would enroll their children in a high-quality childcare facility.
4. Challenges to accessing childcare include: lack of open spaces, affordability, income too high to qualify for subsidized care, and lack of extended hours care.
5. Parents' ideal childcare for their 0-4 year old children include: Spanish/bilingual programs, movement and sports, healthy food, providers sharing developmental milestones and information with parents, flexible hours and part-time care options, strong and regular communication, and caring providers that build strong bonds.

# 1. Parents who are stay-at-home caregivers are satisfied but did so out of necessity. Others cited affordability, location, and extended hours as key to their satisfaction to their current childcare.

- Parents who are stay-at-home caregivers are satisfied and happy to spend this time with their children. But, several mentioned that it inhibits their ability to have a job and earn income. Several shared they cannot afford childcare so have decided to not work and take care of their children.
- Others shared that they chose their childcare arrangement based on affordability, hours, and convenience of location. One mother shared that finding childcare that was equipped to serve her children with learning differences was key for her.
- Parents also mentioned being satisfied with their child being seen and known by the childcare provider and learning social emotional skills.

Parents who are stay-at-home caregivers are satisfied but did so out of necessity. Others cited affordability, location, and extended hours as key to their satisfaction to their current childcare. (continued)

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“It happened because obviously you need a second job since my husband is the only one who works, which sometimes feels stressful that there is no money or that it is not enough or whatever, but also at the same time, if we send him to a daycare...they are going to charge you, which is you understand what I mean. I mean, there's no [money] for that either.” — *Mother of young children*

“It was cheaper to not work than to pay for care” — *Mother of young children*

“We decided to go to All Five for convenience. The hours (7:30am-5:30pm) were important, I work at 7am, so his mom drops them off. Then I pick them up at the end of the day, while she's at school” — *Father of young children*

”



## 2. Most parents have not enrolled their children in a center-based program because there were no open spaces or they couldn't afford it. Some said they haven't enrolled because they don't feel confident in the quality of care.

- Parents shared that all center-based and family-based options in their community were completely full. For example, Izzi and Primary School were only available by lottery.
- Several parents said they have not enrolled their children in a center-based program because they cannot afford it. They talked about the lack of affordable options which is why they decided to stay at home to care for their children. They emphasized not qualifying for subsidized care even though they feel they don't make a lot of money.
- Several mentioned not sending their children to daycare programs because they don't feel comfortable/confident with the quality of care. All of them emphasized the importance of their children speaking and learning in Spanish and the lack of bilingual or Spanish-speaking childcare options to meet that need.



Most parents have not enrolled their children in a center-based program because there were no open spaces or they couldn't afford it. Some said they haven't enrolled because they don't feel confident in the quality of care. (continued)

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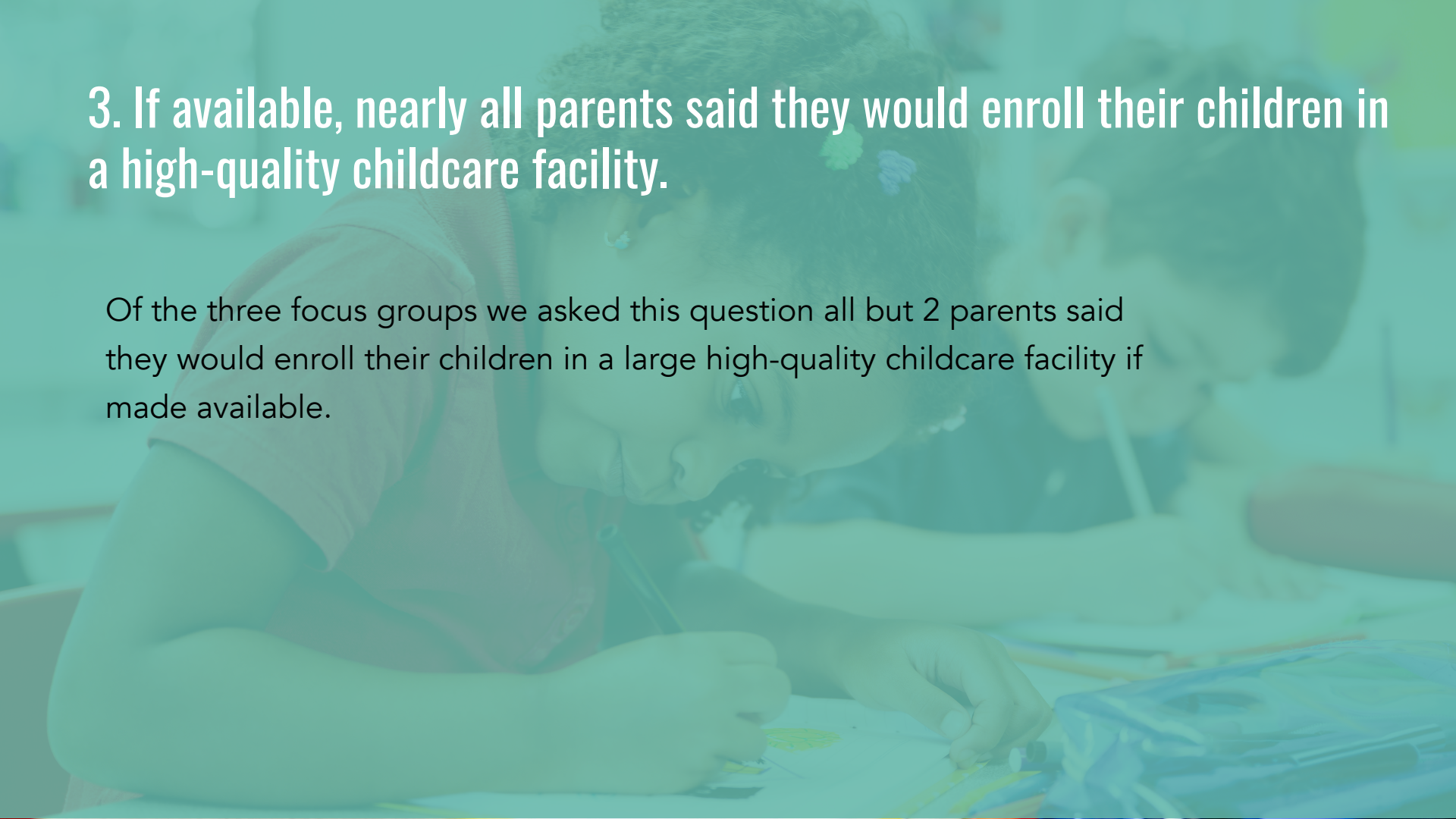
“I struggled to find childcare for my son. My babysitter cannot drive so I struggled looking for schools nearby or they cost too much. We couldn't find daycare that would meet his behavioral needs. I struggled so much with him. I was working two jobs and I didn't have anyone to help me. So I just took him on full-time. My husband works nights and I work during the day so we just switch. We were so happy when he started Kindergarten because at least now he is in school and we can work with a counselor on his behavior. I struggled so much when he was younger. Everything was full and there was nothing nearby.” — *Mother of young children*

“We were waitlisted everywhere.” — *Mother of young children*

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### 3. If available, nearly all parents said they would enroll their children in a high-quality childcare facility.

Of the three focus groups we asked this question all but 2 parents said they would enroll their children in a large high-quality childcare facility if made available.





## 4. Challenges to accessing childcare

- Lack of open spaces (e.g., on a waitlist, applied to multiple preschools but all were full)
- Affordability (e.g., families can't afford daycare programs)
- Income too high to qualify for subsidized care
- Difficulties transitioning children post-COVID
- Lack of access to extended hours care (e.g., before 8:00am and/or after 5:00pm)
- Lack of confidence in quality of care
- Lack of options for younger children (under 2 years old)
- Several talked about having to drive far to find quality and open childcare because there are no options in their community.

## Challenges to accessing childcare (continued)

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“I looked at preschools, but I was above the income levels. I didn’t make enough to send him to a private preschool.” — *Mother of young children*

“We checked All Five, but it was expensive. Our income isn’t high enough to afford it, but it’s too high to get subsidized.” — *Mother of young children*

“Waitlists were a problem.” — *Mother of young children*

“We moved here from Peru. My son and I don’t speak any English. It was hard to start school all in English.” — *Mother of young children*

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## 5. Ideal childcare setting for 0-4 year old children

- Spanish/bilingual childcare programs
- Movement and sports for kids
- Healthy food options
- Providers share developmental milestones and information with parents on how to support their children at home
- Flexible hours and part-time care options (e.g., flexibility with early and late drop off and pick up options due to non-traditional work hours)
- Strong and regular communication with parents (e.g., providers that share photos and updates during the day)
- Caring providers that build strong bonds and relationships with children
- Opportunities and spaces for parents to meet and get together to talk and support one another
- Small classroom size so that children receive individualized attention and care (10 kids or less)

## Ideal childcare setting for 0-4 year old children (continued)

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“We only speak to him in Spanish, they were going to speak English there. Then he spoke, it's like we said, no, he's small, but if we send him to him, maybe they won't understand him. This was also a class where it was only English. At the same time we said, Oh, well, they're not going to understand him...We wanted him to look for something that was obviously where they would speak only Spanish.” — *Mother of young children*

“I think that they must have tutors available because sometimes the children are not on grade and do not have tutors there and they tell you to go to the library to meet with a tutor. They should have tutors there at school.” — *Mother of young children*

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## Ideal childcare setting for 0-4 year old children (continued)

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“What would be ideal for a childcare center would be that they teach us about what they are teaching [the children] as well and something about their age and what they must learn every year. Like my child, he started preschool at 2 years and 10 months and during the pandemic it was difficult for us to help him. I would like the teachers to talk to us about his development and how we can support him at home. For example, a list of things for each age and what are the things they must accomplish and how to do this.” — *Mother of young children*

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# 2023 Ravenswood Early Childhood Needs Study

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