

Child Care Market Analysis

Adair-Casey Area

September 2025



First Children's Finance

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Prepared for:

Little Smiles & Company, Inc.

Prepared by:

First Children's Finance-Iowa Regional Office
1601 22nd Street, Suite 305
West Des Moines, IA 50266

Iowa Regional Director: Heidi Schlueter
Project Lead: Angie Rae Duncan, Business Development Manager

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INTRODUCTION

In 2025, First Children's Finance was commissioned by Little Smiles & Company, Inc. to conduct this *Child Care Market Analysis*. This analysis provides relevant child care data, child care market analysis, and First Children's Finance's key findings regarding child care in the Adair area.

The data in this report has been collected from three original surveys developed by First Children's Finance along with data published by the US Census Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, and Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. This analysis is First Children's Finance's professional interpretation of the data available as of the date of this report. The information and analysis presented in this document are intended to provide a basis for sound business and community planning decisions, but no warranty is stated or implied as to completeness or accuracy.

PUTTING THIS STUDY INTO USE

This report can be used by employers and other community members that may be considering recruiting or adding new child care businesses, to better understand what parents most prefer for settings and offerings. It can also be used by both existing and future child care programs to understand the families wanting child care and to make operational decisions, such as what ages to care for, hours of operation, and understanding what factors are important to parents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Child Care Market Analysis* is focused on the communities of Adair (50002–zip code) and Casey (50048–zip code), referred to as the market area. The US Census Bureau estimates that over the last 5 years, the total population of the market area has increased, while the number of children ages 0 to 11 has decreased. The population of the market area as of 2023 is 2,276 and the total number of children ages 0 to 11 is 305.

In the Adair area (50002 zip code) the average family size is 3.01 and in the Casey area (50048 zip code) it is 3.03. In both communities, the majority of families with children are headed by a married couple. The median annual income for families headed by married couple that also have children under the age of 18 is \$97,685 in Adair and \$113,250 in Casey. Most families in the two communities have all parents in the workforce. Overall, 78% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 77% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in the Adair–Casey area have all parents in the labor force.

A key part of this analysis was a survey to gain input from parents on their child care needs and preferences, compared to the current supply. Using the most popular responses, a parent would be described as married (84%) and living in the 50002–zip code (61%). They work first shift Monday through Friday in Adair (36%), and the nature of their job is agriculture, fishing, hunting (23%). Their spouse also works first shift Monday through Friday in Adair (46%), and the nature of their job is also agriculture, fishing, hunting (46%). They currently use child care in Adair (89%), Monday through Friday. They use child care 40 to 49 hours per week or more for younger children, less than 10 hours per week for before and after school care, and 30 to 39 hours per week for school age children during the summer. They are satisfied with their current child care provider (93%).

For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they make. According to longitudinal research, the child care environment parents choose will have lasting effects on their child. When there are not enough child care spaces in a community, finding *any* care is a challenge; and options for *quality* care that meet the needs and preferences of families can be even more challenging.

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet families varying needs and preferences. The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available. Through a child care needs survey developed by First Children's Finance and conducted in 2025, it was determined that most of the parents that are likely to use "outside" child care, want their child in either an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulated setting or a license

exempt center. The most preferred child care setting among parents is a center, followed by a regulated home. First Children's Finance's estimates there are 164 spaces within 2 HHS regulated child care programs and 1 HHS license exempt center in the Adair-Casey area.

Parents that participated in the child care needs survey indicated finding child care is difficult, especially for younger children. When asked if they had looked for care in the last 12 months and how easy or difficult it had been, 73% of parents with children ages 0 to 2 and 67% of parents with children ages 3 to 4 indicated that they had some level of difficulty finding child care. For school age children, 43% of parents with children ages 5 to 6 and 13% of parents with children 7 to 12 indicated they had some level of difficulty finding child care. The most named obstacle was that child care programs are full or there were not any openings.

After analyzing local demographics, child care supply, and the survey results, First Children's Finance conducted a *Child Care Gap Analysis*. The gap analysis determined that there are 343 children ages 0 to 11 living in the Adair-Casey area. Of those, 226 are from families that prefer to use either an HHS regulated child care provider or a license exempt center. As of August 2025, there are 164 spaces available in those settings, leaving a gap of 62 spaces.

Key Findings of This Analysis

Complete details of these key findings can be found in the last section of this report. These key findings are based on research and conditions of the current child care market. If the community or the child care environment changes significantly, current findings may be affected.

Finding 1: Most families in the Adair-Casey area have all parents participating in the labor force. According to the US Census Bureau as of 2023, 78% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 77% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in the Adair-Casey area have all parents in the labor force.

Finding 2: Parents report that child care challenges are adversely impacting their job. The top adverse effects reported by working parents during the last 12 months were that they had to leave work early (59%) and missed a day of work because the provider was closed or on vacation (52%).

Finding 3: Employers indicate child care challenges are affecting their employees. Through the child care needs survey, employers indicated the top adverse effects experienced were, employees had to leave work early (65% of employers) and employees missed a day of work because their child care provider was closed or on vacation (57% of employers).

Finding 4: Child care providers are full and turning away families. During the last 12 months, 50% of the child care providers turned away families or put them on a waitlist because their program was full.

Finding 5: There is a shortage of child care spaces in the Adair-Casey area. There are an estimated 226 children from families who prefer a regulated child care setting. According to Iowa HHS along with self-reported data from local child care programs, there are 164 spaces available, leaving a gap of 62 spaces.

Finding 6: Most parents prefer to use a child care center.

Through the child care needs surveys, 71% of parents indicated that if they were selecting care today, a child care center is their preferred setting.

Finding 7: Most parents prefer to use child care year-round.

Through the child care needs surveys, most parents indicated if they were selecting care today, they prefer year-round care.

Finding 8: Parents with children age 4 to 6 are very likely to enroll at Little Smiles if more space was available. When it comes to enrolling children ages 4 to 6 (preschool through first grade) at Little Smiles if more spaces were available, 50% of parents indicated they are very likely to enroll, while an additional 14% of parents indicated they are somewhat likely.

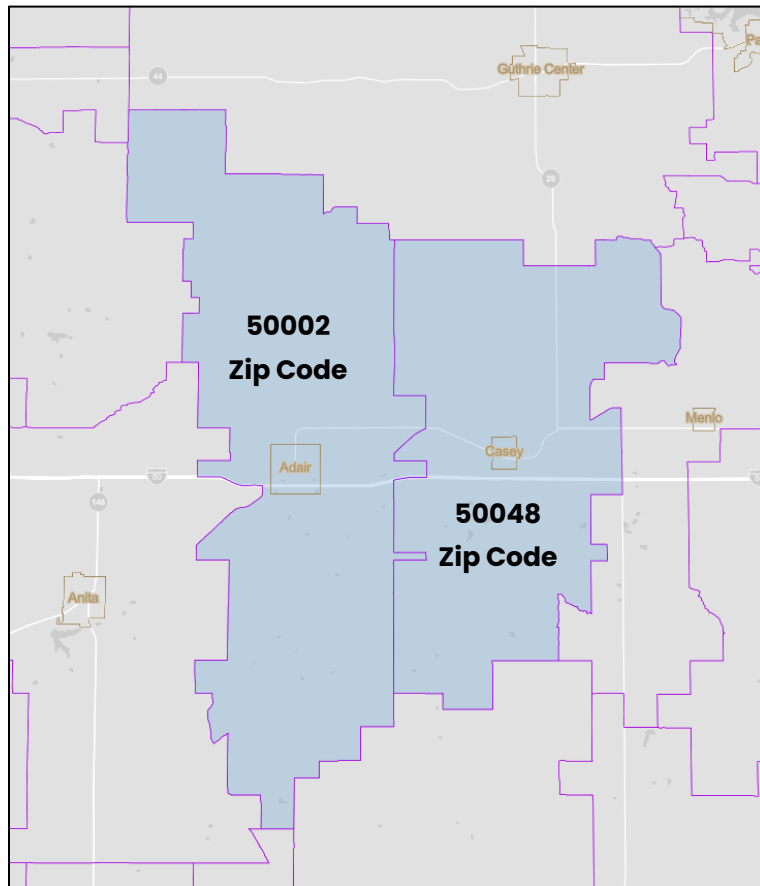
Finding 9: Parents are very likely to enroll their child in three-year-old preschool at Little Smiles if it was offered. If Little Smiles were to offer three-year-old preschool, 58% of parents indicated they are very likely to enroll their child now or when they are old enough.

MARKET DESCRIPTION

Study Area

The area for this study includes the 50002-zip code, which includes the city of Adair and the surrounding unincorporated areas, and the 50048-zip code which includes the city of Casey and the surrounding unincorporated areas.

Figure 1: Map of the Study Area



Note: Map from US Census Bureau (2020)

Population and Demographics

According to the US Census Bureau, as of 2023 the total population of the market area is 2,276, which is a net change of +38 since 2018. As of 2023, the total population of the Adair area (50126-zip code) is 1,522, and the total population of the Casey area (50048-zip code) is 754. See table on the next page.

Table 1: Total Population by Community

Town	2018	2023	Net Change
Adair (50002 zip code)	1,460	1,522	+62
Casey (50048 zip code)	778	754	-24
Total	2,238	2,276	+38

Note: Data from US Census Bureau

Children Ages 0 to 11

As of 2023 there are 305 children ages 0 to 11 in the market area, which is a net change of -38 since 2018 when the total number of children was 1,111. As of 2023, the total number of children ages 0 to 11 in the Adair area (50002-zip code) is 205, and the total number of children in the Casey area (50048-zip code) is 100.

Table 2: Population Ages 0 to 11 by Community

Town	2018	2023	Net Change
Adair (50002 zip code)	243	205	-38
Casey (50048 zip code)	100	100	---
Total	343	305	-38

Note: Data from US Census Bureau

Fertility

Fertility reflects how many women give birth each year and it may be helpful to give an estimate of how many babies are born each year. It must however be recognized that a single birth may result in more than one child, and there are circumstances where the newborn child may not live within the community after the birth. As of 2023 there are 326 women ages 16 to 50 living in the Adair area. The US Census Bureau estimates that 6% (20 women) gave birth in the prior 12-month period, while 3% (11 women) both gave birth and are in the labor force. In the Casey area, as of 2023 there are 149 women ages 16 to 50. The US Census Bureau estimates that 3% (5 women) gave birth in the prior 12-month period, and 5% (24 women) both gave birth and are in the labor force.

Table 3: Fertility by Community

	Adair (50002 Zip Code)		Casey (50048 Zip Code)	
Women 16 to 50 Years	326	100%	149	100%
Women In the Labor Force	264	81%	118	80%
Women with Births in the Last 12 Months	20	6%	5	3%
Gave Birth and in Labor Force	11	3%	5	3%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2023)

Race

In the Adair area 97% of the population is one race, while 3% are two or more races. The race that most residents identify as is White, which accounts for 97% of the population, followed by some other race with 0%. Within the Casey area 94% of the population is one race, while 6% is two or more races. The race that most residents identify as is White, which accounts for 88% of the population, followed by Some Other Race with 5%.

Table 4: Race

	Adair (50002 Zip Code)		Casey (50048 Zip Code)	
Total Population	1,522	100%	754	100%
One Race	1,481	97%	707	94%
White	1,477	97%	660	88%
Black or African American	0	0%	0	0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%	0	0%
Asian	0	0%	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	12	1%
Some Other Race	4	0%	35	5%
Two or More Races	41	3%	47	6%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2023)

Creating an inclusive child care program by recognizing and incorporating diverse cultures can help build strong relationships with families and children. As of 2023, 2% of the residents in the Adair area are Hispanic or Latino, with the largest group being Mexican (2%). In the Casey area, 8% of the residents are Hispanic or Latino, with the largest groups being Mexican (3%) and Guatemalan (3%).

Table 5: Hispanic or Latino Origin by Specific Origin

	Adair (50002 Zip Code)		Casey (50048 Zip Code)	
Total Population	1,522	100%	754	100%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	35	2%	59	8%
Mexican	27	2%	21	3%
Puerto Rican	---	0%	1	0%
Guatemalan	---	0%	24	3%
Honduran	8	0%	---	0%
Argentinian	---	0%	3	0%
All Other Hispanic or Latino	---	0%	10	1%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2023)

It can be helpful to look at what languages are spoken within a community to determine if there may be barriers for parents that want to use child care but do not speak English. In the Adair area 2% of residents speak a language other than English. After English, the most common language is Spanish which is spoken by 2% of the population. Among those that speak a language other than English at home, 100% also speak English very well. In the Casey area 6% of residents speak a language other than English. After English, the most common language is Spanish which is spoken by 5% of the population. Among those that speak a language other than English at home, 90% also speak English very well.

Table 6: Language Spoken at Home

	Adair (50002 Zip Code)		Casey (50048 Zip Code)	
Population Age 5 and older	1,395	100%	686	100%
Speaks Only English	1,374	98%	644	94%
Speaks Language Other than English	21	2%	42	6%
<i>Spanish</i>	21	2%	34	5%
<i>Asian and Pacific Island languages</i>	0	0%	8	1%
Speaks Language Other than English	21	100%	42	100%
Speaks English Very Well	21	100%	38	90%
Speaks English Less than Very Well	0	0%	4	10%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2023)

Educational Attainment

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the Adair area, among the population ages 18 to 24, 46 adults (54%) are high school graduates (or equivalent), while 37 (44%) have some college or an associate's degree. When it comes to the population ages 25 and older, 471 (45%) are high school graduates (or equivalent), while 328 (32%) have some college or an associate's degree, and 215 (21%) have a bachelor's degree or higher.

In the Casey area among the population ages 18 to 24, 67 adults (82%) are high school graduates (or equivalent), while 7 (8%) have some college or an associate's degree. When it comes to the population ages 25 and older, 241 (48%) are high school graduates (or equivalent), while 135 (27%) have some college or an associate's degree, and 98 (20%) have a bachelor's degree or higher. *See table on the next page.*

Table 7: Educational Attainment

	Adair (50002 Zip Code)		Casey (50048 Zip Code)	
Total Population 18–24	85	100%	82	100%
Less than High School	2	2%	8	10%
High School Graduate, or equivalent	46	54%	67	82%
Some College or Associate’s Degree	37	44%	7	8%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	0	0%	0	0%
Total Population age 25+	1,040	100%	499	100%
Less than High School	26	2%	25	5%
High School Graduate, or equivalent	471	45%	241	48%
Some College or Associate’s Degree	328	32%	135	27%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	215	21%	98	20%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2023)

Working Families

As of 2023 there are 615 total households in the 50002–zip code, of which 422 (69%) are family households and 196 (32%) are families with children under the age of 18. The average family size is 3.01. The median income¹ is \$82,250, while the median income of families with children under the age of 18 is \$96,071. In the 50002–zip code 66.2% of families with children ages 0–5 and 80.5% of families with children ages 6–17 have all parents in the labor force. All parents in the labor force means if there are two parents in the home, they both work; or if there is a single parent, that parent is working.

In the 50048–zip code there are 305 total households, of which 204 (67%) are family households and 84 (28%) are families with children under the age of 18. The average family size is 3.03. The median income² is \$55,536 while the median income of families with children under the age of 18 the median is not available. In the 50048–zip code 100% of families with children ages 0–5 and 66.3% of families with children ages 6–17 have all parents in the labor force. All parents in the labor force means if there are two parents in the home, they both work; or if there is a single parent, that parent is working. See table on the next page.

¹ Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

² Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

Table 8: Household Types and Characteristics

	Adair (50002 Zip Code)	Casey (50048 Zip Code)
Total Households	615	305
Average household size	2.47	2.47
Median Income	\$82,250	\$55,536
Family Households	422	204
Average family size	3.01	3.03
Median Income	\$108,382	\$70,000
Family Households w/children under 18	196	84
<i>Married couples</i>	176	45
<i>Male householder (no spouse present)</i>	4	25
<i>Female householder (no spouse present)</i>	16	14
Family w/children- Median Income	\$96,071	---
<i>Married couples- Median Income</i>	\$97,685	\$113,250
Male householder- Median Income	---	---
<i>Female Householder- Median Income</i>	\$40,714	---
Households w/children ages 0 to 5	133	75
Households w/children ages 0 to 5, and all parents in the labor force	88	75
Households w/children ages 0 to 5, and all parents in the labor force	66%	100%
Households w/children ages 6 to 17	262	92
Households w/children ages 6 to 17, and all parents in the labor force	211	61
Households w/children ages 6 to 17, and all parents in the labor force	81%	66%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2023)

Economy in the Area

Labor Force and Unemployment

A competitive job market can make it hard for child care programs to attract and retain quality staff. According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of July 2025 the total labor force (residents age 16 or older that are choosing to participate in the workforce) living in Adair County is 4,550. Of those, 4,420 are employed, while 130 (2.8%) are unemployed. In comparison, in July 2020 the total labor force was 3,940 with 3,770 employed, and 180 (4.5%) unemployed. This data indicates that, as of July 2025 there are 610 more residents in Adair County participating in the labor force than there were 5 years prior.

Place of Work and Time Leaving Home

According to the US Census Bureau as of 2023, there are a total of 848 workers age 16 and over living in the 50002-zip code, of those 66.4% work in county where they live in, 31.6% work outside

the county but within Iowa, and 2.0% work out of state. The most popular hour for residents of the 50002-zip code to leave home to go to work is 7:00 am to 7:59 am (32.7%) and the mean travel time to work is 17.5 minutes.

Within the 50048-zip code, there are a total of 631 workers age 16 and over, of those 28.8% work in the county where they live in, 69.0% work outside the county but within Iowa, and 2.2% work out of state. The most popular hour for residents of the 50048-zip code to leave home to go to work is 6:00 am to 6:59 am (35.5%) and the mean travel time to work is 29.6 minutes.

Table 9: Place of Work and Time Leaving Home to Go to Work

	Adair (50002 Zip Code)	Casey (50048 Zip Code)
Total workers 16 years and over	848	361
Workers who worked from home	9.7%	8.0%
<i>Time leaving home to go to work</i>		
12:00 am to 4:59 am	4.7%	7.5%
5:00 am to 5:29 am	4.4%	5.4%
5:30 am to 5:59 am	3.9%	4.5%
6:00 am to 6:29 am	5.4%	6.3%
6:30 am to 6:59 am	8.5%	29.2%
7:00 am to 7:29 am	21.7%	9.3%
7:30 am to 7:59 am	11.0%	8.7%
8:00 am. to 8:29 am	23.6%	5.1%
8:30 am to 8:59 am	1.0%	1.5%
9:00 am to 11:59 pm	15.8%	22.3%
Mean travel time (minutes)	17.5 mins.	29.6 mins.
<i>Place of Work</i>		
Within county of residence	66.4%	28.8%
Outside county of residence	31.6%	69.0%
Outside Iowa	2.0%	2.2%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2023)

Employees and Wages

According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of Quarter 1 of 2025 there is an average of 2,521 people employed by companies located in Adair. The average weekly wage at these companies is \$997. Of all the industries in Adair County the industry that employs the most people on average is retail trade (420 employees), followed by health care & social assistance (395 employees). Average wages range from a low of \$122 per week for arts, entertainment & recreation, to a high of \$1,948 per week for information. *See table on the next page.*

Table 10: Employees and Wages for Adair County

	Total	2025-Q1 Average	Avg. Wk.
	Locations	Employees	Wage
Accommodations & Food Service	24	213	\$255
Administrative & Waste Management	15	31	\$635
Agriculture, Fishing & Hunting	22	217	\$931
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7	23	\$122
Construction	41	338	\$1,713
Educational Services	5	203	\$796
Finance & Insurance	28	95	\$1,422
Health Care & Social Assistance	29	395	\$1,018
Information	9	32	\$1,948
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4	---	---
Manufacturing	6	---	---
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	3	---	---
Other Services (except Public Admin)	26	88	\$970
Professional, Scientific, Technical	26	50	\$1,159
Public Administration	14	123	\$962
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	4	---	---
Retail Trade	28	420	\$656
Transportation & Warehousing	15	84	\$1,122
Utilities	4	35	\$1,846
Wholesale Trade	23	174	\$1,141
Total	333	2,521	\$997

Note: Data from Iowa Workforce Development (2025)

Child Care and Preschool Workforce and Wages

Most child care and preschool workers fall under one of three categories as defined by the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system: Childcare Workers³, Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare⁴, or Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education⁵.

³ SOC Definition: Attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and childcare institutions. Perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play. Illustrative examples: Au Pair, Daycare Provider, Nanny.

⁴ SOC Definition: Plan, direct, or coordinate academic or nonacademic activities of preschools or childcare centers and programs, including before- and after-school care. Illustrative examples: Childcare Center Administrator, Head Start Director, Preschool Director.

⁵ SOC Definition: Instruct preschool-aged students, following curricula or lesson plans, in activities designed to promote social, physical, and intellectual growth. Illustrative examples: Home-based Preschool Teacher, Nursery School Teacher, Preschool Head Start Teacher.

According to Iowa Wage Report Data from Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) for Southwest Balance of State⁶ as of May 2023, the hourly mean⁷ wage for Childcare Workers is \$11.65 and the annual median⁸ wage is \$23,240. There are 300 of these workers in the region.

For Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare in the workforce region, the mean hourly wage is \$21.12 and median annual wage \$42,840. There are 70 of these workers in the region.

For Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education, the mean hourly wage is \$15.85, and the median annual wage is \$28,090. There are 280 of these workers in the region.

Table 11: Southwest Balance of State Childcare and Preschool Workforce and Wages

	Total Jobs in Region	Hourly Mean	Annual Median
Childcare Workers	300	\$11.65	\$23,240
Education & Childcare Admin, Preschool & Daycare	70	\$21.12	\$42,840
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	280	\$15.85	\$28,090

Note: Data from Iowa Workforce Development (2023)

⁶ Southwest Iowa Balance of State (BOS)- Aggregate data for the counties of Adair, Adams, Audubon, Carroll, Cass, Clarke, Crawford, Decatur, Fremont, Greene, Lucas, Monona, Montgomery, Page, Ringgold, Shelby, Taylor, Union, and Wayne.

⁷ Mean Wages is the average wage and is computed by dividing the estimated total wage for an occupation by its weighted employment.

⁸ Median Wage or 50th Percentile Wage is the point at which 50% of the employment was below this wage and 50% was above.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Early Care and Education Environments in Iowa

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet each family's varying needs and preferences. These include:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- School-Based Programs
 - School-Age Care
 - Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program
- Registered Child Development Homes
- Child Care Homes
- Legal Unregulated Home Care
 - Nanny or Au Pare
 - Family, Friend, or Neighbor care

The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available.

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services⁹

In Iowa, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), formerly Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS), oversees programs that fall into three categories—Licensed Centers, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes. The level of regulation and requirements placed on the provider varies based on the type. *See table starting on page 20 for a side-by-side comparison.*

Licensed Centers

Licensed Centers include child care centers (including child care programs operated by school districts), preschool programs, and Head Start. A center can care for larger groups of children, which are typically separated by age groups according to specific staff-to-child ratios. All centers are required to have an Iowa HHS inspection prior to opening and an annual inspection

⁹ Information in this section adapted from "Child Care Overview". Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. <https://hhs.iowa.gov/childcare/overview>.

after that. A licensed center may apply for a Child Care Assistance¹⁰ Provider Agreement and may participate in the voluntary Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating system¹¹.

Registered Child Development Homes (a.k.a. Registered Homes)

Anyone caring for more than 6 children at a time is required to register with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Registered child development homes can provide care for up to 8, 12 or 16 children at a time depending on the registration level. Registration levels A, B, or C are based on the providers' experience and if there are any assistants or co-providers present. These programs are required to have an Iowa HHS inspection prior to opening and an unannounced annual inspection after that. A registered child development home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with HHS and may participate in the voluntary ChildNet¹² program and IQ4K.

Child Care Homes

Child Care homes can care for 6 or fewer children at any given time. These programs are not required to register but have the option to do so. A Child Care Home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with HHS. Child Care Homes serving children eligible for child care assistance must complete an unannounced inspection once per year to assure compliance with health, safety, and fire standards. These providers are not eligible to participate in ChildNet or IQ4K.

¹⁰ Child Care Assistance (CCA) is a tuition assistance program available to children of income-eligible parents. The tuition reimbursement is paid directly to the child care program based on the child's attendance.

¹¹ Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) is voluntary rating system for Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, Head Start programs, and child care programs that are operated by school districts. Participating providers achieve a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, by meeting key indicators of quality in the areas of nutrition & physical activity, professional development, leadership & administration, family & community partnerships, environment, teaching staff qualifications, and teaching & learning for centers, and the areas of nutrition & physical activity, professional development, family & community partnerships, environment, provider qualifications, and teaching & learning for homes.

¹² ChildNet certification is a requirement for Child Care Home providers wishing to achieve a Level 2 and higher in the Iowa Quality Rating System. To earn ChildNet certification, the provider must complete the ChildNet training series with Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and demonstrate 100% compliance with the Iowa Department of Human Services' Registration checklist through a certification visit with their local CCR&R Child Care Consultant.

Table 12: HHS Requirements for Child Care Providers in Iowa

	Non-Registered Home w/out HHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/HHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (2 providers)	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Licensed Center
State Regulated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum Capacity ¹³	6	6	8	12	16	8	Varies by license
Inspection prior to Registration/Licensing			•	•	•	•	•
Annual Facility & Records Inspection		•	•	•	•	•	•
Minimum age of caregiver		18 years	18 years	20 years	21 years	21 years	Director 21 Years
Iowa child abuse registry check ¹⁴		•	•	•	•	•	•
Iowa criminal records check ⁷		•	•	•	•	•	•
National (FBI) Fingerprint-based records check		•	•	•	•	•	•
Experience required				2 years or 1 year w/child related degree	5 years or 4 years w/child related degree	5 years or 4 years w/child related degree	Combination of experience and education
Minimum education required				High school or GED	High school or GED	High school or GED	Director/ On-Site Supervisor High school or GED
Minimum pre-service & orientation trainings		•	•	•	•	•	•
Professional Development (every 2 years)		6 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	
CPR and First Aid Certification		•	•	•	•	•	•
Mandatory Reporter Training		•	•	•	•	•	•

Table continues on next page.

¹³ A home provider's own children are included in their legal capacity. Their school-age children are not unless they are being home-schooled.

¹⁴ Iowa child abuse registry and Iowa criminal records checks are required for all household members age 14 and older.

Table continued from previous page.

	Non-Registered Home w/out HHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/HHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Licensed Center
Non-smoking environment		•	•	•	•	•	•
Fire-extinguishers and smoke detectors		•	•	•	•	•	•
2 direct exits				•	•	•	•
Space requirements				•	•	•	•
Quiet area for sick children				•	•	•	•
Reference letters			3 letters of reference				

Adapted from: Iowa Department of Human Services (2025)

<https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/ChildCareRequirements.aspx>.

Additional HHS Requirements for Child Care Providers in Iowa

- Non-Registered Homes may have up to 6 children, as long as at least one child is school-aged.
- Child Development Home A: Limit of 6 preschool children with a maximum of 4 aged 24 months or younger. Of these, no more than 3 can be 12 months of age or younger. They can also care for 2 school-aged children for a total maximum of 8 children in care at any one time.
- Child Development Home B: Limit of 8 preschool children with a maximum of 4 children aged 24 months or younger. Of these, no more than 3 can be 12 months of age or younger. They can also care for 4 school-aged children for a total maximum of 12 children in care at any one time. When there are more than 8 children present for more than 2 hours, an assistant 14 years or older needs to be present.
- Child Development Home C (2 providers): Limit of 14 preschool children with a maximum of 6 aged 24 months or younger. 2 additional school-age children can also be in care for a total maximum of 16 children in care at any one time. Whenever there are more than 8 children present, the business co-provider needs to be present.
- Child Development Home C (1 provider): Limit of 8 children with a maximum of 4 aged 24 months or younger.
- Center and preschool staff to child ratios: babies up to 23 months 1:4; 2-year-olds 1:6; 3-year-olds 1:8; 4-year-olds 1:12; 5-year-olds and older 1:15.

Iowa Department of Education

Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program administered by the Iowa Department of Education provides an opportunity for all young children in the State of Iowa to enter school ready to learn by expanding voluntary access to quality preschool curricula for all four-year-old children. Participating school districts receive funding to offer at least 10 hours of preschool per week during the school year. Districts may provide preschool directly or contract with a community partner to provide preschool on their behalf.

Until January 2016 some schools that offered child care, preschool (other than the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program), or before and after school care, were exempt from being licensed with Iowa HHS, because the Iowa Department of Education oversaw them. Now many of those programs need to be licensed as a child care center under HHS. An instructional program for children who are attending prekindergarten, as defined by the State Board of Education under Iowa Code section 256.11, or a higher grade level and are at least four years of age, or are at least three years of age and eligible for special education under chapter 256B, administered by a public or nonpublic school system accredited by the Department of Education or the State Board of Regents, or a nonpublic school system that is not accredited by the Department of Education or the State Board of Regents, is exempt from child care licensing under HHS.

Iowa Legal Unregulated Care

In Iowa, parents may choose “family, friend, or neighbor care” or another unrelated caregiver such as a nanny or au pair. These types of care are not regulated and typically not tracked, unless the provider has an agreement with HHS to accept child care assistance, at which time they are considered a Child Care Home as described earlier. Because these providers are “off the radar” and data is not available, the data in this section does not include unregulated providers. These homes are reflected in the column titled “Non-Registered Home without HHS agreement” in the table below.

Iowa Early Care and Education Supply

The total number of HHS regulated child care providers and child care spaces across Iowa has changed over the last few years. According to Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) data, from 2019 to 2024 the total number of child care spaces in Iowa has increased by 4% while the number of children ages 0 to 5 decreased by 5%. During that same time, within CCR&R Region 4 Central Iowa,¹⁵ the number of child care spaces has increased by 6% while the number of children ages 0 to 5 decreased by 4%.

¹⁵ Includes the counties of Adair, Appanoose, Boone, Clarke, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Hardin, Jasper, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Marshall, Monroe, Polk, Poweshiek, Story, Wapello, Warren, and Wayne.

Adair County Early Care and Education Supply

According to Child Care Resource & Referral data, for the five-year period from 2019 to 2024 Adair County experienced a net gain of 32 regulated child care spaces. There was a collective increase of 42 spaces in licensed child care centers and registered child development homes; however, that gain was offset by a loss of 10 spaces in child care homes.

Table 13: Programs and Spaces in Adair County

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Net Change
Total Programs	15	16	17	16	16	14	-1
HHS Centers & Preschools	5	5	5	5	5	5	---
Dept. of Ed. Programs	2	2	2	2	2	2	---
Reg. Child Development Homes	6	7	9	9	8	7	+1
Child Care Homes	2	2	1	0	1	0	-2
Total Spaces	312	350	361	360	362	344	+32
HHS Centers & Preschools	182	212	212	212	212	212	+30
Dept. of Ed. Programs	40	40	40	40	40	40	---
Reg. Child Development Homes	80	88	104	108	104	92	+12
Child Care Homes	10	10	5	0	6	0	-10

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.

As of August 2025, there are 41 HHS regulated programs with 1,375 spaces within 20 miles of the town of Adair. They breakdown as follows:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools- There are 17 licensed child care centers and preschools, which account for 1,083 (78%) spaces.
- Registered Child Development Homes- There are 24 registered child development homes, which account for 292 (22%) spaces.
- Child Care Homes- There are no child care homes.

Table 14: HHS Licensed Centers and Preschools within 20 Miles of Adair

Program Name & Location	Hours	HHS Capacity	Child Care Assistance	Age Groups	Year-Round
Ann W Wickman Child Development Center, Atlantic	5:30 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	80	Yes	Infant to Preschool	Yes
Atlantic Head Start Preschool Atlantic	8:30 am-3:00 pm Mon-Fri	45	No	Preschool	No
B-F Pre-Kindergarten Bridgewater	8:00 am-11:30 am Mon, Wed, Fri	30	No	Preschool	No
CAM Cubs Childcare (South) Massena	7:00 am-5:00 pm Mon-Fri	66	Yes	Infant to School Age	Yes
CAM Cubs North Anita	7:00 am-5:00 pm Mon-Fri	65	Yes	Infant to School Age	Yes

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Exploration & Learning Station Stuart	6:30 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	82	Yes	Infant to Preschool	Yes
Immanuel Little Lambs Preschool, Greenfield	12:30pm-4:00 pm, Mon 8:00 am-4:00 pm, T/Th	30	No	Preschool	No
Jack and Jill Preschool Atlantic	8:10 am-3:30 pm Mon-Fri	40	Yes	Preschool	No
Kids Campus Stuart	6:30 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	30	Yes	School Age	Yes
Little Charger Early Learning Center, Guthrie Center	6:30 am-5:30 pm Mon-Fri	82	Yes	Infant to School Age	Yes
Little Panther Daycare & Preschool, Panora	6:00 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	106	Yes	Infant to School Age	Yes
Little Smiles and Company, Inc. Adair	6:00 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	35	Yes	Infant to School Age	Yes
Panorama Daycare Center Panora	5:30 am-6:30 pm Mon-Fri	95	Yes	Infant to School Age	Yes
Sunshine Day Care Center Greenfield	6:00 am-5:30 pm Mon-Fri	67	Yes	Infant to School Age	Yes
TLC - Summer Y'ers Atlantic	6:00 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	150	Yes	School Age	Yes
Wickman Annex Atlantic	5:30 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	30	Yes	Preschool	Yes

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (August 2025).

Table 15: HHS Registered Child Development Homes within 20 Miles of Adair

Program Name & Location	Hours	HHS Capacity	Child Care Assistance
Nicole Lindberg, Reg. Child Development Home A Fontanelle	6:00 am-6:00 pm Mon-Fri	8	Yes
Olive Street Child Care LLC, Reg. Child Development Home A, Atlantic	6:30 am-5:00 pm Mon-Fri	8	Yes
Bailey Lester, Reg. Child Development Home B Menlo	7:00 am-5:00 pm Mon-Fri	12	Yes
Brenda Funke, Reg. Child Development Home B Fontanelle	5:30 am-5:30 pm Mon-Fri	12	Yes
Britnee Noland, Reg. Child Development Home B Adair	6:30 am-5:30 pm Mon-Fri	12	No
Christina Johnson, Reg. Child Development Home B, Anita	5:30 am-7:00 pm Mon-Fri	12	Yes
Jacqueline Combs, Reg. Child Development Home B, Menlo	5:30 am-5:00 pm Mon-Fri	12	Yes
Jean Benn, Reg. Child Development Home B Atlantic	7:00 am-5:00 pm Mon-Sat	12	Yes

Table continued on next page

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Little Raskals Daycare, Reg. Child Development Home B, Atlantic	6:15 am–5:15 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Makayla Altschaffl, Reg. Child Development Home B, Atlantic	6:45 am–5:15 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Mikayla Kern, Reg. Child Development Home B Atlantic	5:00 am–5:00 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Ruth Meyer, Reg. Child Development Home B Atlantic	5:30 am–6:00 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Shelene Thrane, Reg. Child Development Home B Stuart	6:00 am–5:00 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Sherri Clark, Reg. Child Development Home B Atlantic	7:00 am–5:00 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Stacie Zenor, Reg. Child Development Home B Greenfield	7:00 am–4:30pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Tammy Wahlert, Reg. Child Development Home B Anita	6:00 am–6:00 pm, Mon–Fri 7:00 am–4:00 pm, Sat	12	No
Tiana Houser, Reg. Child Development Home B Atlantic	7:15 am–5:15 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Whitney Vanderpool, Reg. Child Development Home B, Atlantic	5:30 am–3:30 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes
Lori Armstrong, Reg. Child Development Home C Greenfield	6:30 am–5:30 pm Mon–Fri	16	Yes
Misty Deemer, Reg. Child Development Home C Greenfield	6:00 am–5:30 pm Mon–Fri	16	Yes
Teresa Harris, Reg. Child Development Home C Exira	6:30 am–5:30 pm Mon–Fri	16	Yes

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (August 2025).

License-Exempt Programs

According to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Child Care Centers and Preschools Licensing Standards and Procedures, for the purposes of licensing, child care does not include care, supervision, and guidance of a child by any of the following:

- “An after school program continuously offered throughout the school year calendar to children who are least five years old, are enrolled in school, and attend the program intermittently. The program must be provided through a nominal membership fee or at no cost.”
- “A special activity program which meets less than four hours per day for the sole purpose of the special activity. Special activity programs include but are not limited to music or dance classes, organized athletic or sports programs, recreational classes, scouting programs, and hobby or craft clubs or classes.”

Boys and Girls Clubs of America was cited as an example for both of those descriptions.

Because it is not licensed, comparable information about Boys and Girls Club of Central Southwest Iowa is not provided through Iowa HHS. Information obtained through the club's website is shown in the table below.

Table 16: HHS Exempt Programs

Program Name & Location	Hours	Preferred Capacity	Child Care Assistance	Age Groups	Year-Round
Boys and Girls Club of Central Southwest Iowa, Adair	No-Preschool Care 7:30 am-6:00 pm, Wed After School Care 3:30 pm-6:00 pm, M-F Summer Care 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, M-F	Information is not available.	N/A	Preschool (age 4) to School Age	Yes

Adair-Casey Community School District

The Adair-Casey Community School District serves residents of Adair and Casey. The district has an Adair address, and the district's elementary and high school buildings are located on While Pole Road between the communities of Adair and Casey.

The district has a whole grade sharing agreement with the Guthrie Center Community School District for grades 7 through 12. Students in grades 7 and 8 are served by Adair-Casey and students in grades 9 through 12 are served by Guthrie Center. Each district serves their own students grades PK through sixth grade. Enrollment for the Adair-Casey CSD for 2024-2025 school year is 260 students (PK-8th grade) with 19 of those in preschool and 141 in kindergarten through sixth grade. Preschool is 8:20 am to 3:25 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday while Kindergarten through sixth grade is 8:05 am to 3:15 pm, Monday through Friday.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) is available through the Adair-Casey Community School District. SWVPP is offered Monday and Thursday, 8:20 am to 3:25 pm. Students enrolled in SWVPP have the option to also attend on Tuesday and Friday. According to the Iowa Department of Education, enrollments for the 2024-2025 school year are 8.5 full time equivalents. Based on the funding formula used by the state, each enrolled student is counted as 0.5 FTE, therefore there are approximately 17 children enrolled in SWVPP. It does need to be noted that these enrollments may be duplicative with some of the preschool enrollments listed above, as some districts offer additional hours of preschool that are not funded through the SWVPP program. These enrollments include both students that attend SWVPP at their local school building as well as those that attend through a community partner program that has been contracted by the school district and meets all Department of Education requirements.

Local Price Point

Besides individual providers changing their rates, changes in the average tuition rates can be the result of providers going out of business, new providers coming into the market, or providers no longer reporting their tuition rates if they stop accepting child care assistance. When comparing tuition rates, it is important to note that some providers charge tuition that is all-inclusive, while others may charge separate fees, or charge for specific items or require parents to furnish supplies, snacks, or other items, and some programs operate full-time while some are only part-time.

The average weekly tuition rates for care within a licensed center within Adair County have increased over the last 5 years. As of 2024, the average weekly rates ranged from a low of \$130.00 per week for four- and five-year-old care, to a high of \$160.00 per week for infants and toddlers. School age care averages \$62.50 per week. *See table on the next page.*

Table 17: Average Weekly Tuition Rates of Licensed Centers in Adair County

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Infant	\$135.00	\$140.00	\$129.60	\$136.25	\$147.92	\$160.00
Toddler	\$135.00	\$140.00	\$129.60	\$132.92	\$147.92	\$160.00
Two-Year-Old	\$135.00	\$130.00	\$123.75	\$132.92	\$141.25	\$153.33
Three-Year-Old	\$125.00	\$120.00	\$123.75	\$132.92	\$121.25	\$150.00
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$125.00	\$120.00	\$123.75	\$132.92	\$121.25	\$130.00
School-Age (full-time)	\$115.00	\$120.00	\$123.75	\$129.38	\$91.88	\$140.00
Before & After School	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$55.00	\$65.00	\$71.67	\$62.50

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.

The average weekly tuition rates for care within a registered child development home within Adair County have increased over the last five years. As of 2024, the average weekly rates ranged from a low of \$142.86 per week for full-time care for school age children, to a high of \$151.86 per week for infants and toddlers. School age care averages \$81.00 per week.

Table 18: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Homes in Adair County

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Infant	\$121.67	\$125.00	\$134.29	\$136.79	\$144.00	\$151.86
Toddler	\$115.00	\$125.00	\$131.43	\$133.93	\$144.00	\$151.86
Two-Year-Old	\$106.67	\$116.67	\$131.43	\$134.06	\$144.00	\$146.86
Three-Year-Old	\$106.67	\$116.67	\$131.43	\$134.06	\$142.00	\$144.86
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$93.33	\$116.67	\$120.71	\$123.44	\$142.00	\$144.86
School-Age (full-time)	\$106.67	\$125.00	\$120.00	\$117.92	\$130.00	\$142.86
Before & After School	\$43.33	\$50.00	\$52.50	\$51.43	\$69.00	\$81.00

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.

With a portion of residents out-commuting to other counties and school districts boundaries that cross county lines, the average rates in neighboring counties can be informative.

When it comes to average weekly tuition at licensed centers in the area, as of August 2025, Adair County is lower than all but one other county, Adams County. The highest average rates overall are in Guthrie County, except for full-time school age care (such as summer break), which is highest in Madison County. *See table on the next page.*

When it comes to average weekly tuition at a registered child development home in the area, as of August 2025, Adair County is lower than all but one other county, Adams County. The highest average rates overall are in Madison County, except for before and after school care, which is the highest in Cass County. *See table on the next page.*

Table 19: Average Weekly Tuition at Licensed Centers in Surrounding Counties

	Adair	Adams	Audubon	Cass	Guthrie	Madison	Union
Infant	\$160.00	\$135.00	\$186.00	\$209.00	\$248.75	\$232.50	\$165.00
Toddler	\$160.00	\$135.00	\$186.00	\$209.00	\$243.13	\$232.50	\$165.00
Two-Year-Old	\$153.33	\$135.00	\$178.00	\$199.00	\$226.25	\$222.50	\$154.67
Three-Year-Old	\$150.00	\$135.00	\$178.00	\$199.00	\$193.40	\$190.00	\$138.50
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$130.00	\$135.00	\$178.00	\$167.00	\$173.40	\$190.00	\$133.33
School-Age (full-time)	\$140.00	\$135.00	N/A	\$168.75	\$139.00	\$206.67	\$145.00
Before & After School	\$62.50	\$60.00	N/A	\$75.25	\$83.22	\$125.00	\$72.78
Total Centers	5	2	2	8	5	5	6
Spaces w/in Centers	212	74	81	566	395	428	410

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (August 2025).

Table 20: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Homes in Surrounding Counties

	Adair	Adams	Audubon	Cass	Guthrie	Madison	Union
Infant	\$149.75	\$140.00	\$150.00	\$158.25	\$162.50	\$183.39	\$153.00
Toddler	\$149.75	\$140.00	\$143.75	\$160.23	\$162.50	\$183.39	\$152.33
Two-Year-Old	\$145.38	\$140.00	\$135.00	\$160.23	\$162.50	\$187.50	\$152.33
Three-Year-Old	\$143.63	\$140.00	\$162.25	\$158.86	\$162.50	\$187.50	\$152.33
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$143.63	\$140.00	\$162.25	\$158.86	\$162.50	\$187.50	\$152.33
School-Age (full-time)	\$135.57	\$140.00	\$133.75	\$158.86	\$162.50	\$176.25	\$152.14
Before & After School	\$78.33	\$50.00	N/A	\$164.83	\$78.89	\$105.83	\$67.76
Total Homes	8	2	4	11	2	10	15
Spaces w/in Homes	100	24	52	128	24	116	180

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (August 2025).

Child Care Assistance in Iowa

Child Care Assistance (CCA) is available to the children of income-eligible parents to help pay for care at Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) approved child care programs while a parent or caretaker works or attends school. Child care programs are reimbursed directly from HHS when they provide care to a family that qualifies. The income eligibility limit for those initially applying for CCA is 160% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or 200% if they have a child with special needs.

According to the federally determined poverty threshold that went into effect January 2025, for a household of 3, to initially qualify for CCA 160% FPL is \$42,640 while the point which a family already approved for CCA would exceed income eligibility, 225% FPL, is \$59,562. According to the same threshold, for a household of 4, to initially qualify for CCA 160% FPL is \$51,440 while the point which a family already approved for CCA would exceed income eligibility, 225% FPL is \$72,337.

Reimbursements are based on the number of units a child attends each week but cannot exceed the number approved by HHS. A unit is a half-day (up to 5 hours). In most cases, a child that attends full-time, five days a week would be approved for up to 10 units (2 half-day units, for 5 days), depending on several factors, including the parent or caretaker work or school schedule. A child care provider is reimbursed at a rate equal to the amount they would charge a private pay family (or equivalent), with a maximum reimbursement based on their participation in the Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating improvement system. *See table on the next page.*

Table 21: Half-Day Maximum CCA Reimbursement Rates

Age Group	No IQ4K		IQ4K Level 1 or Level 2		IQ4K Level 3 or Level 4		IQ4K Level 5	
	Basic Care	Special Needs	Basic Care	Special Needs	Basic Care	Special Needs	Basic Care	Special Needs
Licensed Centers								
Infant/Toddler	\$25.66	\$51.94	\$25.66	\$51.94	\$25.66	\$51.94	\$27.00	\$51.94
Preschool	\$19.50	\$30.43	\$20.25	\$30.43	\$21.50	\$30.43	\$22.97	\$30.43
School Age	\$16.50	\$30.34	\$17.10	\$30.34	\$17.50	\$30.34	\$18.50	\$30.34
Child Development Home A or B								
Infant/Toddler	\$16.63	\$24.95	\$16.63	\$24.95	\$16.63	\$24.95	\$17.50	\$24.95
Preschool	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$15.50	\$22.50	\$16.00	\$22.50	\$17.00	\$22.50
School Age	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$15.25	\$22.50	\$15.50	\$22.50	\$15.75	\$22.50
Child Development Home C								
Infant/Toddler	\$18.00	\$27.00	\$18.00	\$27.00	\$18.00	\$27.00	\$18.50	\$27.75
Preschool	\$16.28	\$24.42	\$17.00	\$25.50	\$17.50	\$26.25	\$18.50	\$27.75
School Age	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$15.75	\$23.63	\$16.44	\$24.66	\$17.50	\$26.25
Child Care Homes (not registered)								
Infant/Toddler	\$16.63	\$24.95	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Preschool	\$15.00	\$22.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School Age	\$15.00	\$22.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (2024).

CHILD CARE NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS

In 2025, three electronic surveys developed by First Children's Finance were distributed for the purpose of determining how child care affects employers and parents, and to gain insight from child care providers about the current challenges and opportunities they are experiencing. To ensure there are no biases and to maintain confidentiality, survey links were distributed and then responses were collected and analyzed by First Children's Finance as an independent third party. Comments made by survey participants are shared verbatim, if an individual respondent, local employer, or child care program cannot be identified, in which case the comment may have been partially reported or edited to remove the identifying information.

Employer Survey Results

A total of 10 companies are represented in the employer survey results. Participating employers are in Adair, Casey, and Menlo and represent the following industries: accommodations and food service, construction, educational services, finance and insurance, manufacturing, retail trade, and wholesale trade. Collectively participating companies employ 234 employees, with the majority considered full-time, first shift (days). Currently there are 9 full-time vacancies, which are all full-time, first shift (days) positions.

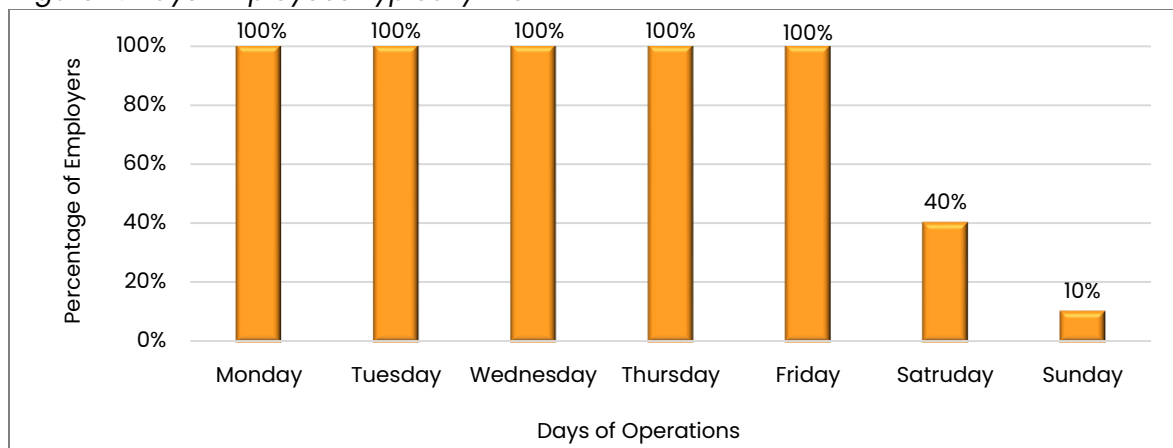
Table 22: Employees and Vacancies by Shift

Shift	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Full-Time Vacancies	Part-Time Vacancies
First Shift (days)	215	9	9	0
Second Shift (evenings)	10	0	0	0
Third Shift (overnight)	0	0	0	0
Rotating Shift (changing days/times)	0	0	0	0
Total	225	9	9	0

In a separate question, employers were asked how many new positions they plan to add in the next 3 years. Seventy percent (70%) of employers indicated they are planning to add at least 1 new position. Collectively they plan to add 15 positions, with most planning to add only 1 or 2 positions.

When asked which days of the week their employees typically work, most operate Monday through Friday. Out of the 10 companies represented all 10 operate Monday through Friday. Four (4) also operate on Saturday, and 1 operates on Sunday. *See figure on the next page.*

Figure 2: Days Employees Typically Work



When it comes to hours and days of operation, 6 companies operate first-shift Monday through Friday (5 days/week), 3 operate first-shift Monday through Saturday (6 days/week), and 1 operates first-shift plus evenings Monday through Sunday (7 days/week).

Employers were asked if all or some employees work set shifts, and what are the hours for each shift. The following comment was received:

- *Production works one shift Mon-Thur. (7am-5pm) Friday (as overtime requires)*

Fifty percent (50%) of employers indicated there are sometimes changes or fluctuations in their hours or days of operations, such as shut-down, seasonal changes, planned overtime of a group of workers, etc. Comments received about schedule fluctuations were:

- *Christmas break, spring break, summer break.*
- *Seasonal changes.*
- *Seasonal hours.*
- *We are open for extra hours during planting and harvest seasons.*
- *Seasonal lay off.*

Twenty percent (20%) of employers indicated their company had employees that departed during the last 12 months as a direct result of child care challenges. Collectively they lost 3 employees. As a follow up, employers were then asked a series of questions about productivity, absenteeism, and other challenges as they relate to child care.

When it comes to employee productivity, 30% of employers indicated they have experienced challenges related to productivity due to employee's child care challenges during the last 12 months, while 20% are unsure, and 50% said they did not. Comments received were:

- *When staff members cannot find daycare or a substitute daycare provider, they spend time solving their child care issues.*

- *Take days off unplanned.*
- *We did; we don't currently but potentially will in the next few months.*
- *Doctor visits and children being sick.*

When asked about absenteeism due to employee's child care challenges, 50% of employers indicated they have experienced challenges, while 10% are unsure, and 40% have not.

Comments received were:

- *We have run into issues where an employee has had to work from home due to the daycare being closed due to understaffing.*
- *When staff members cannot find daycare or a substitute daycare provider, they don't come to work.*
- *Take days off unplanned.*
- *We did; we don't currently but potentially will in the next few months.*
- *If a child becomes ill or has to stay home from school, our employees will miss a day of work to stay home and take care of child.*
- *Missing days due to children sickness.*

In a separate question, 10% of employers indicated their business had difficulty hiring due to child care options or challenges in the area, 10% are unsure, and 80% have not had any difficulty hiring. Comments received were:

- *It's always a challenge finding daycare, or backup daycare providers.*

Employers were given a list of common effects their employees (not job applicants) may experience due to child care challenges and asked to select all that they are aware of as having affected their employees in the last 12 months. The most common challenges were employees missed a day of work because their provider was closed or on vacation (70% of employers), employees arrived late to work (60% of employers), and employees had to leave work early (60% of employers). *See table on the next page.*

Table 23: Effects of Child Care Challenges on Employees

	Percent of Employers
Missed a day of work because their provider was closed or on vacation	70%
Missed a day of work because their provider did not have room or space for a child	10%
Did not accept a desired job offer	0%
Arrived late to work	60%
Had to leave work early	60%
Unable to work overtime	30%
Unable to travel for work	10%
Lower productivity	0%
Unable to accept a different work schedule or shift	10%
Have had to reduce the number of hours worked	40%
Received disciplinary action (not including firing)	0%
Quit a job	20%
Got fired	10%
Had to change jobs to one that works with their child care arrangement	20%
Took a job that does not fit their skills	0%
Had to leave their child home alone to go to work	0%
Had to bring their child to work with them	40%
Other (see comments below)	10%
Our employees experienced no issues related to work and child care	20%

Comments from those selecting “Other”:

- *Employee had to work from home due to no child care.*

Employers were asked if their company currently offered any child care related benefits to their employees (they were asked to select all that applied). The benefits listed typically have some cost to the employer. The majority do not offer any of the benefits on the list. Twenty percent (20%) indicated they do offer employees dependent care flex spending.

Table 24: Child Care Related Benefits Currently Offered

	Percent of Employers
Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts	20%
Financial assistance to help employees pay for child care	0%
None of the above	80%

Employers were then asked what prevents their company from offering any or some benefits listed above. Comments received were:

- *Haven't needed to yet.*
- *Not needed.*

- *Initial cost and monitoring.*

Employers were then given a second list of child care related benefits and asked which they offer to their employees (they were asked to select all that applied). The benefits on this list typically do not result in the employer incurring additional costs. The majority do not offer any of the benefits on the list. Among those that do offer the benefits listed, 20% indicated they offer employees a flexible schedule if their regular child care is not available, while 10% offer a work-from-home option if regular care is not available.

Table 25: Child Care Related Benefits Currently Offered

	Percent of Employers
Child care information included in employee orientation	0%
Child care information included in employee handbook	0%
Flexible schedule if regular care is not available	20%
Work-from-home option if regular care is not available	10%
None of the above	70%

Employers were then asked what prevents their company from offering any or some benefits listed above. Comments received were:

- *Working from home doesn't work for our production floor workers.*
- *We have a schedule for school.*
- *Haven't needed to yet.*
- *Not needed.*
- *Our hours are based on the time of suppliers and the weather conditions.*

Employers were asked to share any other ways their business assists employees with child care. Comments received were:

- *Communicate available child care centers in the Adair-Casey and Guthrie Center communities.*

Employers were asked how their business would be willing to assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or supporting child care businesses. A list of options was provided, and respondents asked to select all that apply. Ten percent (10%) indicated they consider a donation or financial contribution to build, remodel, or expand a child care center, 90% are unsure what solution they would consider, and 10% would not offer any of the benefits listed. *See table on the next page.*

Table 26: Solutions Employers Are Willing to Consider to Address Child Care

	Percent of Employers
Provide space for on-site child care center (owned & operated by another entity)	0%
Own and operate a child care center (either on-site or off-site)	0%
Provide a significant donation or financial contribution for a child care center as a match for a grant application	0%
Donation or financial contribution to build, remodel, or expand a child care center	10%
Donate land or provide a financial contribution to purchase land to build a larger child care center	0%
Directly employ the Center Director (paying wages and benefits) in order to help reduce operating costs of a center	0%
Annual donation or financial contribution that is equal to the full wages of a child care center director	0%
Annual donation or financial contribution for a portion (but not all) of the wages of a child care center director	0%
Other	10%
Unsure	90%
None of the above	10%

Comments received from those answering “Other” were:

- *The Adair Casey CSD currently owns the child care center in Adair.*

Employers were given another list with additional ways a business may assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or supporting child care businesses. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. Ten percent 10% indicated they would appoint an employee to serve on the Board of Directors of a child care program, 10% would provide in-kind services to reduce expenses of a child care program, and 10% would provide a donation or financial contribution for operating a child care program. Overall, 90% are unsure what other ways they would be willing to assisting with child care in the community. *See table on the next page.*

Table 27: Additional Solutions Employers Are Willing to Consider to Address Child Care

	Percent of Employers
Appoint an employee to serve on the Board of Directors of a child care program	10%
Provide child care providers access to purchase supplies through our company to take advantage of bulk pricing or discounts	0%
Provide in-kind services to reduce expenses of a child care program (ex. bookkeeping, payroll, maintenance, cleaning, etc.)	10%
Donation or financial contribution for operating a child care program	10%
Donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for your employees	0%
Donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for all children	0%
Pay a child care provider the tuition of a vacant slot in order to reserve or hold that slot for one of your employees (with the employees taking over payment upon enrolling)	0%
Other	0%
Unsure	90%
None of the above	0%

Employers were asked “what do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents in regard to child care, and what will resolve that challenge”? Comments received were:

- *Having proper staffing to keep facility open.*
- *Finding a high quality and reliable child care service. This can be resolved by building a larger building in Adair.*
- *Hours of availability Low staff Size of day care facility.*
- *Not enough available daycare in the area that works with early/late schedules.*
- *More available openings & cost.*
- *Availability of centers or in home daycares.*
- *Cost of day care due to compliance with rules and regulations.*
- *Finding reliable child care providers that they can trust. This is likely in the backs of the minds of the parents due to abuse to a child that was received from an in-home day care provider. The other challenge is the high cost of child care.*

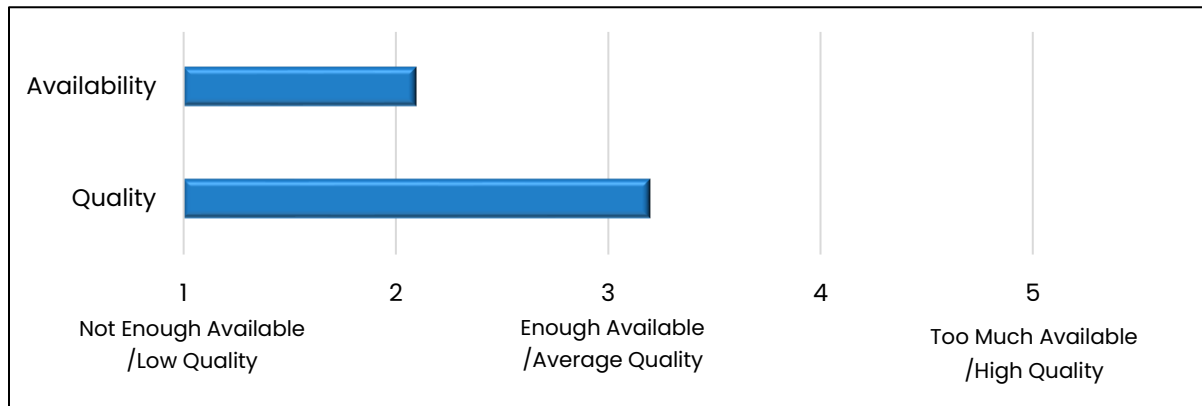
Employers were asked what opportunities should be explored to help address the child care supply in Adair. Comments received were:

- *Grants, donations, and fundraising to build a new center.*
- *Larger facilities with more staff.*
- *Unknown.*

Employers were asked to rate the *availability* of child care in the Adair-Casey area on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not enough available (there is a deficit), 3 enough available (just right), and 5 highly available (there is a surplus); the higher the score, the more available. The average rating is 2.1. Employers were then asked to rate the *quality* of child care in the Adair-Casey area on a

scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 average quality, and 5 high quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). The average rating is 3.2.

Figure 3: Employer Ratings of Child Care in the Adair-Casey Area



Employers were asked to provide additional thoughts about their employees' needs related to child care. Comments received were:

- *The more spots we have for child care, the greater chance we have of hiring young families in our community.*
- *We do not have employees with kids that need childcare.*

The final question asked employers to provide any additional comments they had about child care in Adair. Comments received were:

- *The more spots we have for child care, the greater chance we have of keeping families in our community. This would also create more hiring and job opportunities for our community.*

Child Care Provider Survey Results

A total of 4 child care providers, all located in the 50002–zip code, completed the survey. Among the participating programs, 2 are home-based and 2 are centers. One (1) of the home providers is registered with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), while the other is not. When asked for more details, the home provider that is not registered indicated they have never been registered with HHS and are not interested in becoming registered. The provider was given the option to explain why; the following comment was received:

- *At our current enrollment, the cost outweighs the benefit. It may be an option once we move into the new, larger space as long as enrollment supported it.*

Among the center-based programs, 1 is licensed with HHS while the other is exempt from being licensed.

Providers answered questions about the length of time their child care program has been in operation, and how much longer they plan to provide care (home providers only). Among centers, 1 has been in business 20 years or longer, while 1 has been in business between 1 and 4 years. One (1) home provider has been in business between 10 and 19 years, while 1 has been in business less than 1 year. Both home providers plan to continue providing care for 5 or more years.

Table 28: Years Child Care Business Has Been in Operation

	20+ Years	10 to 19 years	5 to 9 years	1 to 4 years	Less than 1 year
Centers/Preschools	1	---	---	1	---
Homes	---	1	---	---	1

The capacity is assigned to a center or registered home by HHS is based on usable square footage, there are often reasons for the provider setting a lower preferred capacity, such as the ability to staff all classrooms, or large spaces like multi-purpose rooms in centers counted in the total license that do not work well for a classroom.

The center that is licensed by Iowa HHS reported that they have a legal capacity of 30 children, they prefer to operate at 30, and they currently have 34 children enrolled. The center that is not required to be licensed reported that they prefer to operate at 130, and they currently have 116 children enrolled.

The registered home has a legal capacity of 12 children, they reported their preferred capacity is 4 children, and their current enrollment is 5 children. The nonregistered home has a legal capacity of 5 children; they reported their preferred capacity is 6 and they currently have 2 children enrolled. *See table on the next page.*

Table 29: Participating Programs by Type

	Total Providers	Legal Capacity	Preferred Capacity	Full-Time Enrollment	Part-Time Enrollment
Licensed Centers/Preschools	1	30	30	25	9
License Exempt Centers	1	N/A	130	90	26
Registered Homes	1	12	4	5	0
Non-Registered Homes	1	6	6	2	0
Totals	4	48	170	122	35

The centers reported they have 22 employees, 7 full-time (36 hours per week or more) and 15 part-time (35 hours per week or less). During the previous 12 months, 4 full-time and 0 part-time employees left the centers (voluntarily or involuntarily), and currently there are no vacant positions. When asked how hiring staff had been over the last 12 months, 1 center indicated it was somewhat easy and 1 center indicated it was somewhat difficult. Comments received were:

- *Hard to find and keep staff.*
- *We have 3 staff that are year-round employees. The other 13 are summer staff only. The numbers provided are based on summer enrollment.*

The registered home providers indicated they do not have employees. The non-registered home reported they have 1 part-time co-provider, assistant, or employee. During the previous 12 months, neither provider had employees depart (voluntarily or involuntarily), and currently neither provider has vacant positions. No related comments were provided.

Table 30: Employees & Vacant Positions within Child Care Programs

	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Full-Time Departures	Part-Time Departures	Full-Time Vacancies	Part-Time Vacancies
Centers/Preschools	7	15	4	0	0	0
Registered Homes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Registered Homes	0	1	0	0	0	0

When asked if they had to limit enrollment or close a classroom due to not having enough staff during the last 12 months, 25% indicated yes. Comments received were:

- *We have a small center so are limited on open space. Staff call ins.*

When asked if in the last 12 months they had turned away families or put them on a waitlist due to lack of openings, 50% indicated yes. Comments received were:

- *We have a small center so are limited on open space.*

All 4 programs (100%) indicated they provide care between the hours of 6:00 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, year-round. None of the providers are open for what are considered extended hours (after 6:30 pm) or on weekends.

Providers were asked, during a typical year, how many days their program closes for planned holidays, vacation, staff training, etc. Seventy-five percent (75%) plan to be closed between 6 and 10 days, while 1 (25%) plan to be closed 20 or more days per year. As a follow up, the providers were asked if parents pay tuition for the days the program plans to be closed. Seventy-five percent (75%) indicated yes, while 25% indicated no. Comments received were:

- *The Club charges a single fee for after-school care and a single fee for summer care.*

Providers were then asked if their program ever closes unexpectedly. One hundred percent (100%) indicated yes. Comments received were:

- *Only if I am very ill do I close unexpectedly.*
- *Due to weather.*
- *Limited to emergency situations when no other coverage is available.*
- *The Club is closed when the school district closes for bad weather.*

As a follow up, the providers were asked if parents pay tuition when there are unexpected closures. Seventy-five percent (75%) indicated yes, while 25% indicated no. Comments received were:

- *They pay the weekly rate unless we are closed for more than a day.*

Child care providers were given a list of factors that parents may consider when looking for child care and asked to indicate which one factor seems most important to parents that contact them looking for child care. Seventy-five percent (75%) indicated dependable staff or provider is the most important factor. Other factors that selected include tuition rates or price, which was selected by 25%. *See table on the next page.*

Table 31: Factor Most Important to Parents Inquiring About Care

	Percentage of Providers
Available space/timing of enrollment	---
Care includes preschool	---
Dependable staff or provider	75%
Drop-in or occasional care	---
Educational curriculum used	---
Health and safety policies	---
Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating system	---
Location	---
Open on non-school days	---
Part-time options	---
Positive interactions between staff and children	---
Second-shift/evening care	---
Secured entrance	---
Special needs care	---
Third shift/overnight care	---
Transportation to and from school or preschool	---
Tuition assistance or scholarships	---
Tuition rates or price	25%
Upkeep or appearance of the facility and playground	---
Weekend care	---

Many child care providers will participate in programs that improve business operations or provide funding to off-set costs. Providers were asked about multiple federal and state programs available to licensed centers, registered homes, and some non-registered homes. Overall, the child care programs indicated they are aware of the opportunities, with the licensed center and registered home being a current or past participant of a few of the programs.

Table 32: Child Care Programs Participation in Funding Opportunities

	Current or Past Participant	Aware of, But Never Participated	Not Familiar With/Not Heard Of
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	--- 1 home	2 centers ---	--- 1 home
Iowa HHS Child Care Assistance (CCA)	1 center ---	1 center 1 home	--- 1 home
Child Care Assistance (CCA) Program for Child Care Workforce	1 center ---	1 center 1 home	--- 1 home
Agreement with school to provider Statewide Preschool Program (4-year-old preschool)	--- ---	1 center 1 home	1 center 1 home

As a follow up, providers were asked about additional programs involving quality improvement, technology, and education. The child care programs indicated they are aware of all of the

opportunities, with the licensed center and registered home being a current or past participant of a couple of the programs.

Table 33: Child Care Programs Participation or Knowledge of State Programs

	Current or Past Participant	Aware of, But Never Participated	Not Familiar With/Not Heard Of
Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) Quality Improvement Rating System	---	2 centers 2 homes	---
TEACH Scholarship Program	---	2 centers 2 homes	---
Child Care WAGE\$® salary supplement	---	2 centers 2 homes	---
FieldPrint Fingerprinting	---	2 centers 1 home	---
Current opportunity for HHS-funded monthly subscription fees for either Playground or brightwheel child care management software	1 center ---	1 center 2 homes	---

Child care providers were also asked how many children in their program are receiving or are eligible for some form of financial assistance such as child care assistance, the food program (CACFP), or other needs-based grants or scholarship programs. One (1) program indicated they have 4 children that are eligible.

Providers were asked a series of open-ended questions about being a child care provider, what they saw for the future of child care, and any other comments they have about child care. Responses to these questions are listed below.

Providers were asked if they had the opportunity, would they wish to expand their current child care program to serve more children. Seventy-five percent (75%) said yes. Those responding yes were asked to explain how they would expand. Comments received were:

- *We could expand to not only enroll more children, but we could separate the age groups more appropriately.*
- *We are in the process of remodeling a designated daycare space in our finished garage. When the remodel is complete, we will have room to accommodate more children.*
- *The Club is always looking for ways to improve and grow.*

In a separate question, respondents were asked to explain how they would expand. Comments received were:

- *We would expand by obtaining a new center with more rooms in it.*
- *We are in the process of remodeling a designated daycare space in our finished garage. When the remodel is complete, we will have room to accommodate more children.*
- *We are currently working with a 3rd school district to provide care for more school aged children.*

If you wish to expand your program, what kind of support would you need to be able to serve more children? Comments received were:

- *We would need more grants and donations to get a different building that would be bigger and more capable of accommodating more children.*
- *Enrollment.*
- *Funding is the biggest obstacle. As the club continues to grow, we will need to look into more year-round staff. Being non-profit, funds are always a challenge.*

Providers that indicated they are not interested in expanding were asked to explain why. Comments received were:

- *I want to avoid burn out.*

What is the greatest challenge or barrier for expanding an existing child care program, and what solutions would help? Comments received were:

- *We do not have the space in our current building to expand. A different location would help.*
- *More interested parties would help fund the remodel quicker.*
- *Space, funding, staffing.*

What is the greatest challenge or barrier for starting a new child care program, and what solutions would help? Comments received were:

- *Too many rules and regulations. Specifically, I would like to operate an in-home daycare in a secondary building on our property without needing to be a licensed center.*
- *Starting a new child care program would be challenging by needing to find new staff.*
- *Funding and staffing.*

How do you think the community could better support child care providers? Comments received were:

- *Be understanding that they do also get sick. If there is illness in the center, the staff do get sick also and would need to call in.*
- *The community is very supportive of our Boys and Girls Club.*

What challenges do you see in the future for child care in the Adair-Casey area?

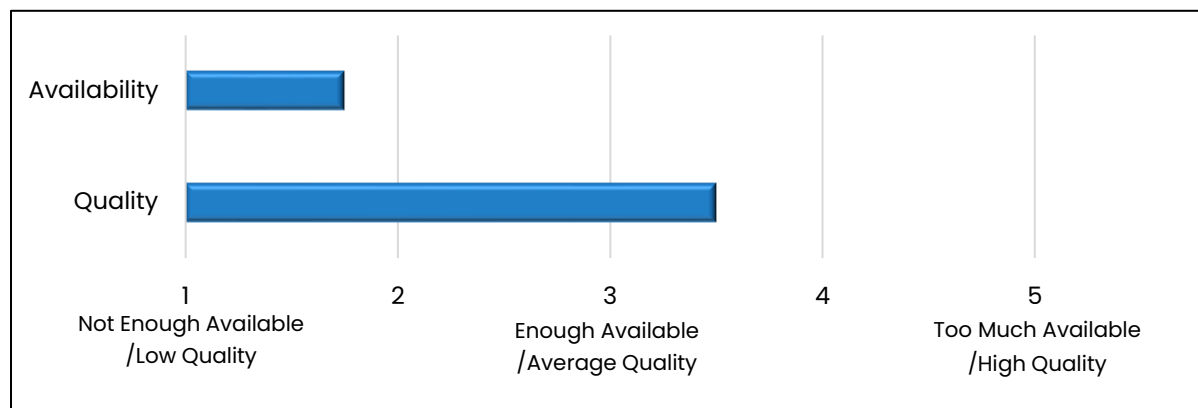
- *Lack of providers.*
- *There are not many daycare providers in the Adair-Casey area.*
- *The always rising prices of non-school age children childcare. Also, quality of childcare available.*

What opportunities do you see in the future for child care in the Adair-Casey area? Comments received were:

- *Opportunities in the future would be for Little Smiles to expand and have more available spaces and be able to separate the age groups correctly not only for safety but to teach them appropriately.*
- *I feel that there is a need for quality infant/toddler childcare that is affordable for local families.*

Child care providers were asked to rank the *availability* of child care in the Adair-Casey area on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not enough available (there is a deficit), 3 enough available (just right), and 5 highly available (there is a surplus); the higher the score, the more available. The average rating is 1.75. Providers were then asked to rank the *quality* of child care in the Adair-Casey area on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 quality, and 5 high quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). The average rating is 3.5.

Figure 4: Child Care Provider Ratings of Child Care in the Adair-Casey Area



The final question allowed providers to share any additional comments they had about child care in the Adair-Casey area. No comments were received.

Parent Survey Results

A total of 61 individuals accessed the parent survey. Of those, 31 surveys were fully completed, and 14 surveys were “disqualified”. The remaining 16 were not finished and submitted.

Among the disqualified surveys, 7 were disqualified because they indicated they do not have children. An additional 7 were disqualified because they indicated they do not use child care and have no intention of using child care within the next five years. Those not using care and not planning to were allowed to provide comments about their reasons. Comments received were:

- *Kids are getting older.*
- *Kids will be old enough to stay home.*
- *I refuse to use Boys & Girls Club. But if Little Smiles increased their age range, we would happily come back.*

A total of 31 individuals that currently have children ages 12 or younger and prefer child care in Adair completed the parent survey. These parents provided information about their current and future child care needs. Some questions required an answer while others did not, therefore responses from all questions are included in the aggregate data, even if an individual did not complete all survey questions.

Using the most popular responses, a parent would be described as married (84%) and living in the 50002–zip code (61%). They work first shift Monday through Friday in Adair (36%), and the nature of their job is agriculture, fishing, hunting (23%). Their spouse also works first shift Monday through Friday in Adair (46%), and the nature of their job is also agriculture, fishing, hunting (46%). They currently use child care in Adair (89%), Monday through Friday. They use child care 40 to 49 hours per week or more for younger children, less than 10 hours per week for before and after school care, and 30 to 39 hours per week for school age children during the summer. They are satisfied with their current child care provider (93%).

Parents were asked where they live. Sixty-one percent (61%) live in Adair, while 39% live outside the community. Parents that live outside of Adair were asked if the availability of child care in Adair influenced their decision to live elsewhere. One hundred percent (100%) indicated no, it had not. *See table on the next page.*

Table 34: Parents' Place of Residence

Geography	Percent of Parents
Adair (50002 zip code)	61%
Anita (50020 zip code)	10%
Casey (50048 zip code)	23%
Massena (50853 zip code)	3%
Stuart (50250 zip code)	3%

In a separate question, parents were asked which school district their children are enrolled in or will be enrolled when they become school aged. Eight four percent (84%) indicated Adair-Casey Community School District, while 10% selected CAM Community School District, and 6% selected West-Central Valley Community School District. *See table on the next page.*

Table 35: School District Where Children Are Enrolled

District	Percent of Parents
Adair-Casey Community School District	84%
CAM Community School District	10%
West-Central Valley Community School District	6%

The most common industry or occupational nature for the current parent who completed the survey (self) is agriculture, fishing, hunting (23%). The most common occupation among their spouses or partners is also agriculture, fishing, hunting (46%). *See table on the next page.*

Table 36: Nature of Job or Occupation

	Self	Spouse or Partner
Accommodations & Food Service	---	---
Administrative & Waste Management	3%	---
Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting	23%	46%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3%	---
Construction	6%	12%
Educational Services	13%	4%
Finance & Insurance	16%	4%
Health Care & Social Assistance	13%	8%
Information	3%	---
Management of Companies	---	---
Manufacturing	---	8%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	---	---
Professional, Scientific & Technical	3%	4%
Public Administration	3%	---
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	---	---
Retail Trade	---	4%
Transportation & Warehousing	---	---
Utilities	3%	---
Wholesale Trade	---	---
Other Services	10%	12%
Do not work	---	---

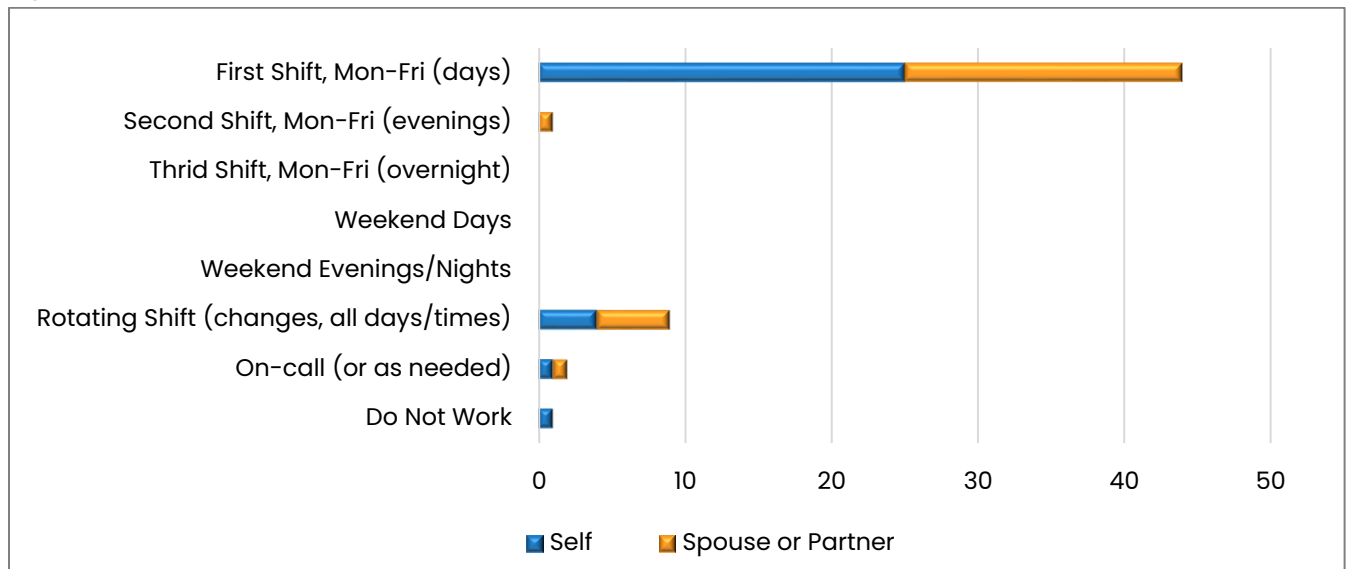
Parents were asked what town their job is in or where they do most of their work. Thirty-six percent (36%) indicated their own job is in Adair and 46% indicated their spouse's or partner's job is in Adair. *See table on the next page.*

Table 37: Parents' Place of Employment

	Self	Spouse or Partner
Adair	36%	46%
Altoona	---	4%
Ames	---	4%
Anita	3%	4%
Atlantic	---	4%
Casey	13%	8%
Des Moines metro	23%	15%
Dexter	---	4%
Exira	---	4%
Greenfield	10%	---
Massena	3%	---
Menlo	3%	4%
Sidney	---	4%
Stuart	6%	---
Travel	3	---

Most parents and their spouse or partner work first shift, Monday through Friday. Eighty-one percent (81%) of those completing the survey (self) and 73% of their spouses or partners work first-shift, Monday through Friday.

Figure 5: Current Parent Work Schedules



The most common child care related benefit parents receive from their employer is a flexible schedule if regular child care is not available (35%) followed by dependent care flex spending accounts (26%). Thirty-two percent (32%) of parents indicated neither their employer, nor their

spouses or partner's employer offers any of these benefits that were listed, while 10% are unsure of child care related benefits offered.

Table 38: Child Care Related Benefits Offered by Employer

	Percent of Parents
Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts	26%
Financial assistance to help employees pay for child care	6%
Flexible schedule if regular care is not available	35%
Work from home options if regular care is not available	26%
Child care information included in employee orientation	3%
Child care information included in employee handbook	3%
Other	6%
Unsure if employer offers any of these	10%
Employer does not offer any of these	32%

Parents were asked if they or their spouse or partner had declined employment or withdrawn from the workforce during the last 12 months due to child care. Sixteen percent (16%) (5 parents) indicated "yes". Comments received were:

- *Not many options in Adair.*
- *Child care is too expensive. Save more money with me staying home.*

Parents were asked, as of today whether they or their spouse or partner is not working (unemployed) because of child care challenges. Ten percent (10%) (3 parents) indicated "yes". Parents had the option to explain; no comments were received.

Parents were asked if child care challenges are currently limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment (Ex. Working part-time when full-time preferred or not working within preferred field). Twenty-six percent (26%) (8 parents) said "yes". Comments received were:

- *Child care is too expensive.*
- *Working fewer hours and less days due to availability and expense of care.*
- *I work some weekends and that is difficult without reliable daycare.*

Parents were asked to indicate how many children are living in their household by age groups. The "Households" column of the following table shows how many parents indicated they have at least one child in each age group, while the "Children" column reflects how many total children are represented in the survey. Because some households have children in each age group, the household's column may be duplicative and therefore cannot be totaled. A total of 62 children are represented in the survey.

Table 39: Children Represented in Parent Survey

	Households	Children
Ages 0 to 2	19	20
Ages 3 to 4	18	18
Ages 5 to 6	9	9
Ages 7 to 12	10	15
Total	N/A	62

Forty-five percent (45%) of parents indicated they plan to have or adopt more children in the next 5 years. In a separate question, 32% indicated that the availability of child care in Adair has impacted their decision to have or adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family.

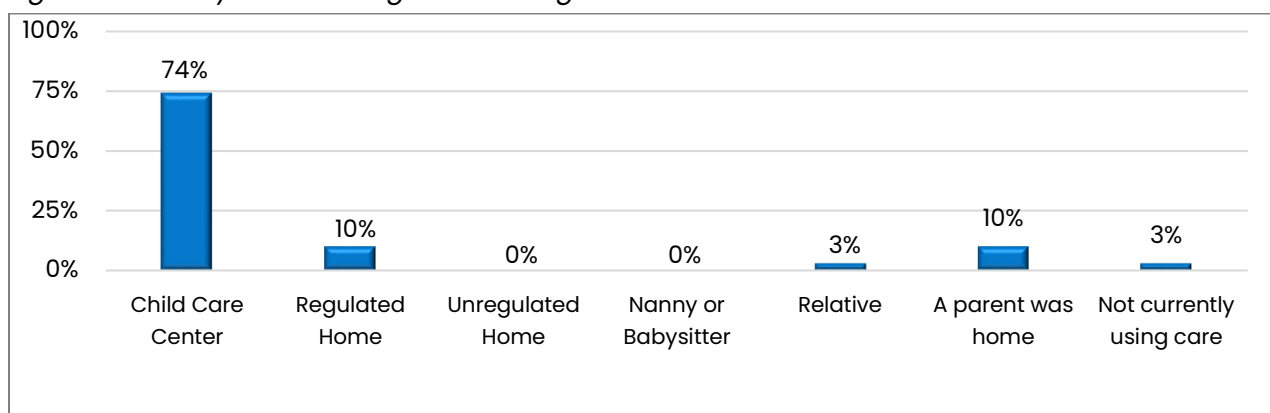
Comments received were:

- *No room for babies.*
- *In past years it did hinder our decision to foster more children.*
- *Delayed having additional children due to waitlist.*
- *No infant spaces in current center.*
- *The possibility of no spots available.*

Ninety percent (90%) of parents indicate they are currently using some form of “outside” child care such as a child care center or home provider with a formal arrangement. In addition, 3% use a relative, 3% use a stay at home or work from home parent, while 3% are not using any form of child care. Among the 3 parents not currently using outside care, 100% indicated they are likely to use some form of outside child care in the next five years.

When asked for specific details about their primary child care setting during the last 12 months, 754% of indicated they are using a center, followed by 10% using a regulated home, and 10% that had a parent home with their children. *See figure on the next page.*

Figure 6: Primary Care Setting Used During the Last 12 Months



A list of effects child care may have on parents' jobs was presented, and parents asked to select all that apply to their own or their spouse's or partner's job in the last 12 months. The effects most commonly experienced by parents are had to leave work early (59%), missed a day of work because provider was closed or on vacation (52%), arrived late to work (37%), and missed a day of work because the provider was full and did not have a lot for your child (37%). Nineteen percent (19%) of parents indicated they experienced no problems related to work because of child care. Those that selected 'Other' were asked to explain. No comments were received.

Table 40: Effects of Child Care Challenges on Job

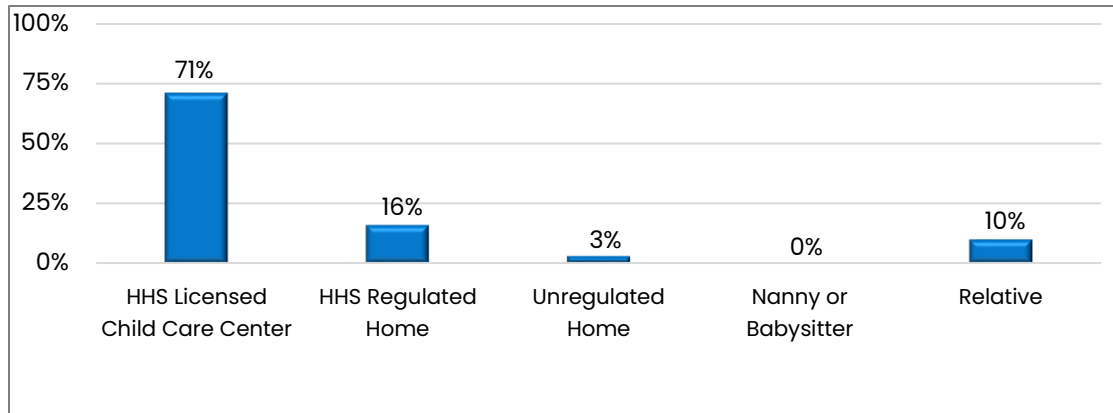
	Percent of Parents
Missed a day of work because provider was closed or on vacation	52%
Missed a day of work because the provider was full and did not have a slot for your child	37%
Did not accept a desired job offer	15%
Arrived late to work	37%
Had to leave work early	59%
Unable to work overtime	7%
Unable to travel for work	11%
Lower productivity	22%
Unable to accept a different work schedule or shift	19%
Had to reduce the number of hours worked	15%
Received disciplinary action (not including firing)	---
Quit a job	---
Got fired	---
Considered changing jobs to one that works with child care	22%
Had to change jobs to one that works with child care	11%
Took a job that does not fit my/their skills	7%
Had to leave child home alone to go to work	---
Had to take child to work with me/them	22%
Had to supervise child while working from home	26%
Other (see comments below)	4%
Experienced no problems related to work and child care	19%

Nineteen percent (19%) of parents indicated that there are changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow them to perform better at work. Comments received were:

- *More staffing so that vacations and sickness do not cause the daycare to be out of ratio.*
- *Current daycare is the opposite direction from work for both my husband and me.*
- *Staying fully staffed*

Parents were asked if all choices are available and you are selecting child care today, which setting would you most prefer. The top choice is a center (71%), followed by a regulated home (16%) and a relative (10%). Overall, 87% prefer a child care setting that is regulated by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—either a licensed center or regulated home (a.k.a. registered home).

Figure 7: Preferred Child Care Setting



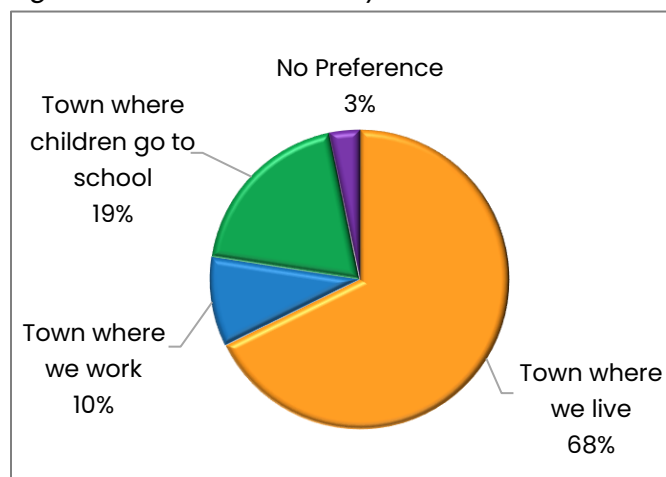
Parents were asked if their children are in their preferred child care setting. Overall, 81% indicated their children are in their preferred type of care. Reasons why children are not in the preferred setting include location, affordability, hours, and ages served.

Table 41: Reason Children Are Not in Preferred Type of Care

	Percent of Parents
Provider not accepting enrollments	---
Location too far away	4%
Not able to afford	4%
Not conveniently located	4%
Not open for extended or nontraditional hours	4%
My children are not the right age for preferred arrangement	4%
Transportation to and from school/preschool not available	---
Other	---
Children are in my preferred type of care	81%

The most preferred proximity if they were choosing child care today is the town where the family lives, which was selected by 68% of parents. The second most preferred is the town where children go to/will go to school (19%).

Figure 8: Preferred Proximity of Child Care



Parents were asked where their current child care provider is located and what location they would prefer. Eighty-nine percent (89%) are currently using care in Adair. If picking care today, the most preferred town is Adair (87%) followed by Casey (6%).

Table 42: Location of Child Care

	Current Location	Preferred Location
Adair	89%	87%
Anita	7%	0%
Casey	0%	6%
Des Moines Metro	4%	0%
Greenfield	0%	3%
Not disclosed	0%	3%

Parents were asked several questions about the average number of hours of child care they use per week, preferred child care schedule, and current and preferred drop-off and pick-up times. Most parents with children age 2 or younger use 30 hours a week or more. The majority of those with children that are preschool age (3 and 4) are still using full-time care, while more than a quarter use part-time care.

Parents with school age children use care part-time during the school year and full-time during the summer. Eighty nine percent (89%) use 10 to 19 hours per week during the school year. During

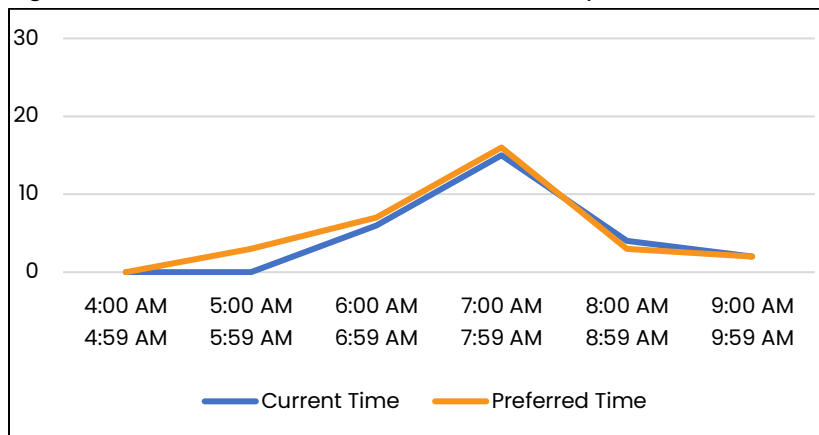
the summer, the majority (55%) use 30 to 39 hours per week, while 45% use 40 to 49 hours per week.

Table 43: Average Hours per Week Child Care Currently Used

	Less than 10 Hours	10 to 19 Hours	20 to 29 hours	30 to 39 hours	40 to 49 hours	50 or more
Age 0 to 2	---	---	29%	29%	36%	6%
Age 3 to 4	---	6%	25%	19%	50%	---
Age 5 to 12 during school year	---	89%	---	---	11%	---
Age 5 to 12 during summer	---	---	---	55%	45%	---

Currently, the most popular hour to drop-off children is from 7:00 am to 7:59 am (56%) (15 parents), followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am (22%) (6 parents). Parents were also asked their preferred drop-off times. The most preferred drop-off times are still 7:00 am to 7:59 am (52%) (16 Parents), followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am (23%) (7 parents).

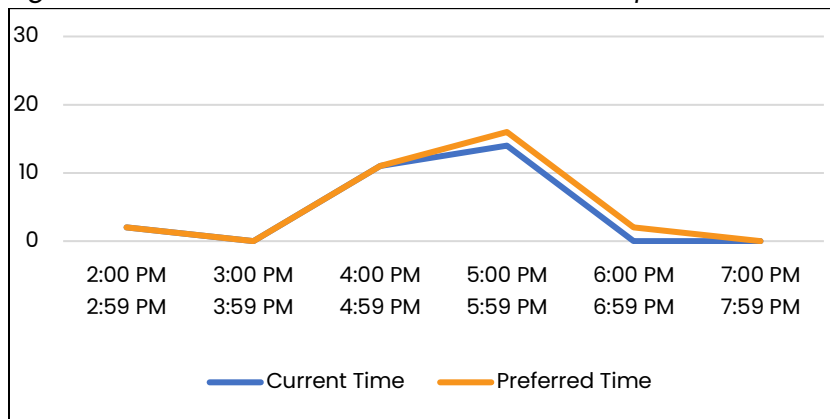
Figure 9: Parents' Current and Preferred Drop-off Times



When it comes to picking up children from care, 5:00 pm to 5:59 pm (52%) (14 parents), followed by 4:00 pm to 4:59 pm (41%) (11 parents). Some parents selected pick-up times between 2:00 am and 7:59 am. Because most parents reported they work first-shift and drop their children off for care between 5:00 am and 8:59 am, FCF suspects these parents intended to choose “pm” rather than “am.” Those responses were counted with those responding between 2:00 pm and 7:59 pm.

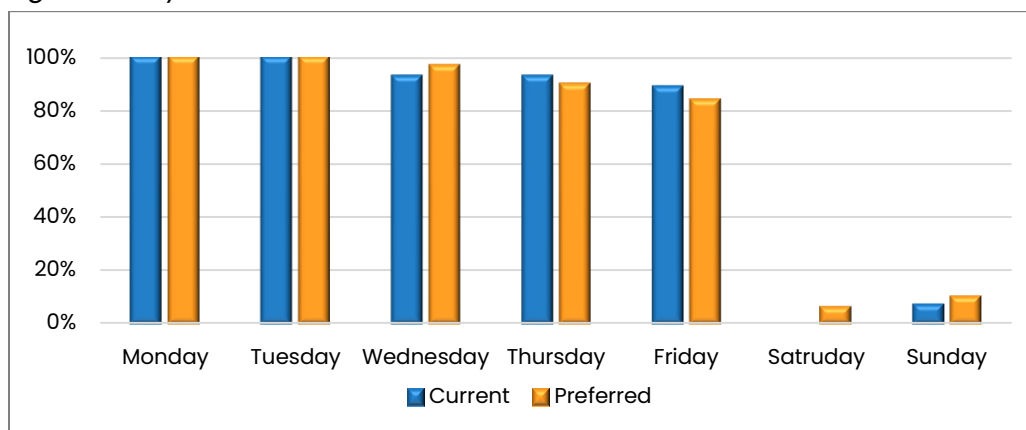
Parents were also asked their preferred pick-up time. The most preferred time of parents is 5:00 pm to 5:59 pm (52%) (13 parents), followed by 4:00 pm to 4:59 pm (35%) (11 parents). Again, some parents selected times between 2:00 am and 7:59 am, which appears to have been in error based on the majority reporting they work first shift and drop their children off for care between 5:00 am and 8:59 am. Those responses were counted with those responding between 2:00 pm and 7:59 pm. *See figure on the next page.*

Figure 10: Parents' Current and Preferred Pick-Up Times



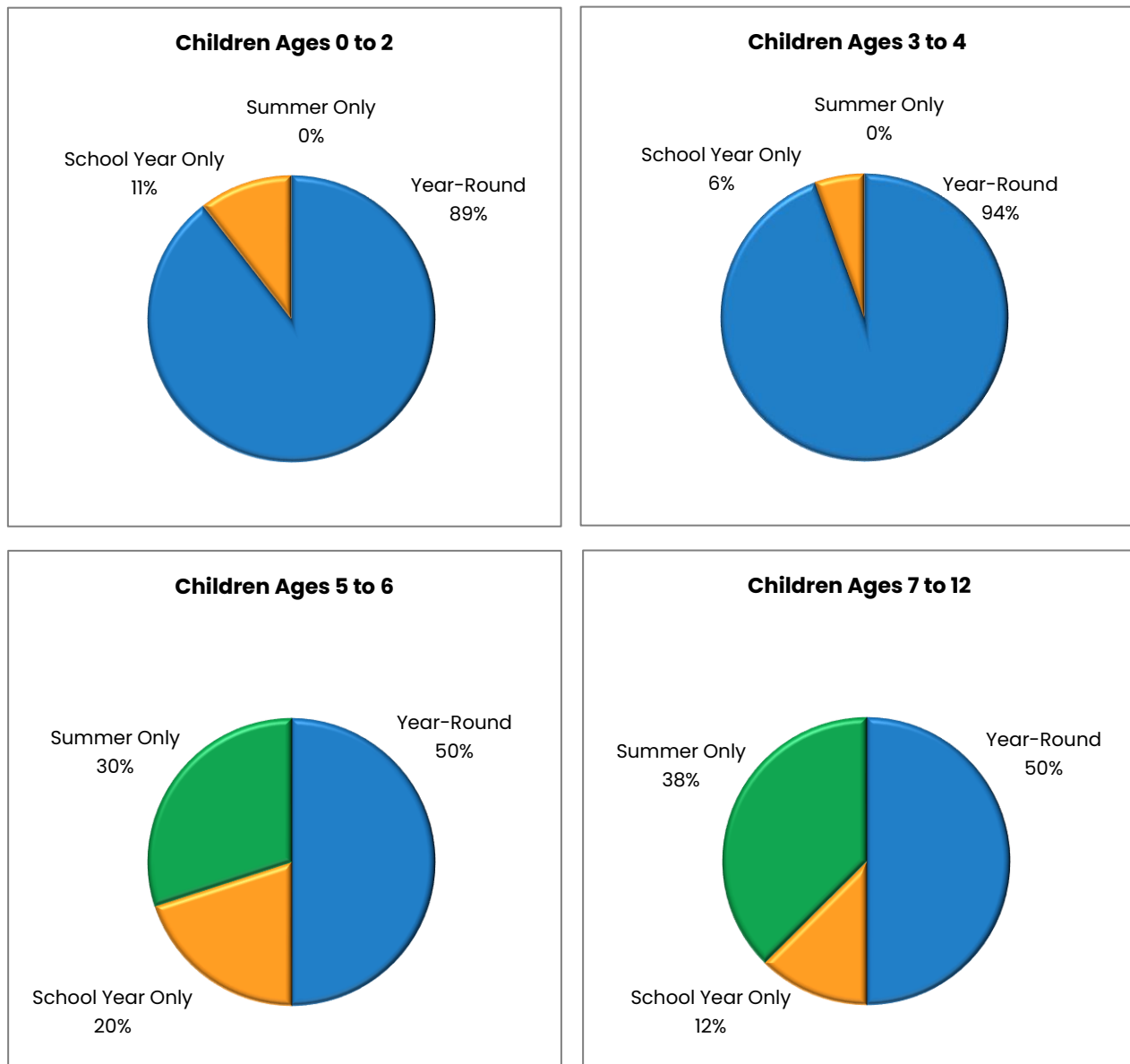
Most parents indicated they are using care Monday through Friday (ranging from 100% to 89% per day), while none use care on Saturday and 7% use care on Sunday. When it comes to preferred days for care, Monday through Friday is still the most preferred, ranging from 100% to 84% per day. Six percent (6%) prefer Saturday care and 10% prefer Sunday care.

Figure 11: Days Parents Use Child Care vs. Prefer to Use Child Care



When asked what their preferred time of the year would be if they were selecting child care today, most parents prefer year-round care for all age groups. For children ages 0 to 2, 89% prefer to use child care year-round, followed by school year only (11%). For children ages 3 to 4 (preschool age), 94% prefer year-round, followed by school year only (6%). For children ages 5 to 6, 50% prefer year-round, followed by summer only (30%). For children ages 7 to 12, 50% prefer year-round, followed by summer only (38%). See figure on the next page.

Figure 12: Time of Year Families Prefer to Use Child Care

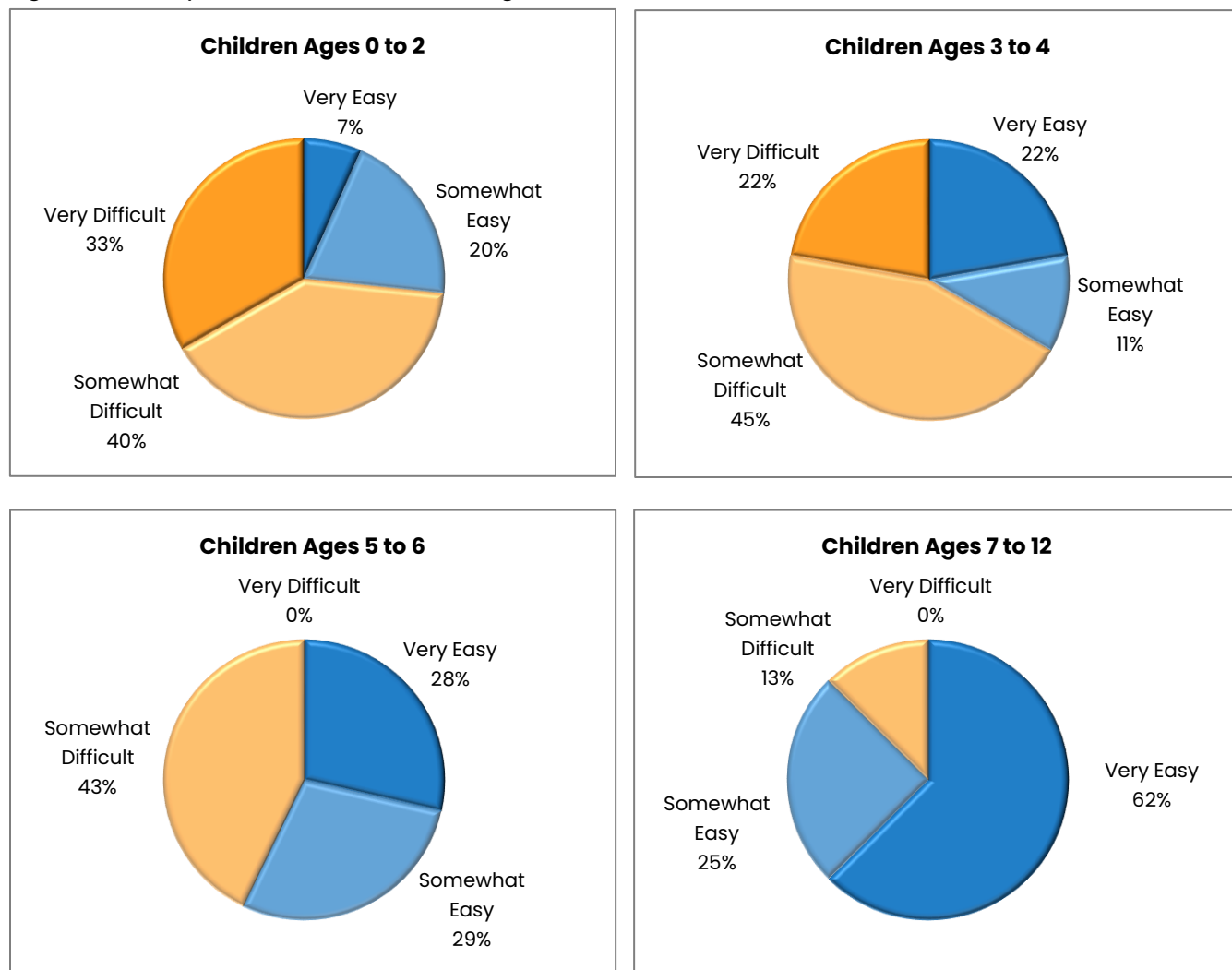


Parents were asked if they had looked for child care in the last 12 months, and if they had, how easy or difficult it had been depending on the age of their child. Overall, parents that have children that have not started elementary school yet had a harder time, than parents with older children.

Among the parents that have children age 0 to 2 and looked for care, 73% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty, either somewhat difficult (40%) or very difficult (33%). Among the parents that have children age 3 to 4 and looked for care, 67% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty, either somewhat difficult (45%) or very difficult (22%). Among the parents that have children age 5 to 6 and looked for care, 43% indicated it was

somewhat difficult, no parents indicated it was very difficult. Among the parents that have children age 7 to 12 and looked for care, 13% indicated it was somewhat difficult, no parents indicated it was very difficult.

Figure 13: Ability to Find Child Care During Last 12 Months



As a follow up, parents were asked, if you experienced obstacles finding child care in the last 12 months, what they were. Comments received were:

- *Other centers within 20 miles are full. Any other center would be out of our daily route.*
- *Everything is full.*
- *Waitlists all around.*
- *Nothing affordable in the area. Refuse to use little smiles. Prefer in home care.*
- *Boys and girls club is our life saver.*
- *Limited openings.*

- *Open spots.*
- *Centers full and no in homes.*
- *In the last twelve months I have not struggled, the prior 3 years they were in 3 different daycares due to struggles finding appropriate care.*
- *Everyone was full.*
- *Number of locations that weren't full. Prices.*

Despite difficulties finding care, parents indicate they are satisfied with their provider. Overall, 93% of parents are satisfied with their current provider, while just 7% are not. Those that are not satisfied were asked to explain. Comments received were:

- *When fully staffed and not asked to keep kids home.*
- *Opposite direction from work for both my husband and I adding 30 minutes to our commute minimum.*
- *Too small of a space. Age groups aren't broken up appropriately.*

Respondents were given a list of factors that are often important to parents when choosing child care and told to select all that apply to them. The top choices among are dependable provider/staff (87%), health and safety policies (81%), and location (74%). *See table on the next page.*

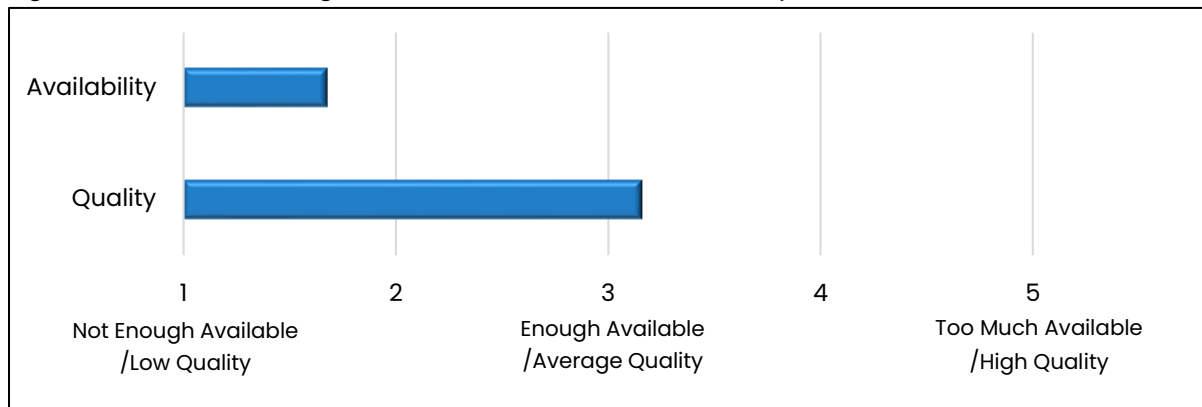
Parents were then asked to select the single factor that is most important to them. The most important factor is dependable provider/staff (39%), followed by positive interactions between staff and children (32%). *See table on the next page.*

Table 44: Important Factors When Selecting Child Care

	All Factors that are Important	Single Most Important
Available space/timing of enrollment	68%	3%
Care includes preschool	42%	3%
Dependability	87%	39%
Drop-in or occasional care	26%	---
Educational curriculum used	71%	---
Health and safety policies	81%	3%
Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating system	16%	---
Location	77%	10%
Multiple providers/staff present	58%	---
Open on non-school days	45%	---
Part-time options	29%	---
Positive interactions between staff and children	74%	32%
Second shift/evening care	10%	---
Secured entrance	35%	---
Special needs care	13%	---
Third shift/overnight care	---	---
Transportation to and from school or preschool	35%	---
Tuition assistance or scholarships	10%	---
Tuition rates or price	35%	6%
Upkeep or appearance of the facility and playground	65%	---
Weekend care	13%	3%

Parents were asked to rate the *availability* of child care in the Adair-Casey area on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not enough available (there is a deficit), 3 enough available (just right), and 5 highly available (there is a surplus), the higher the score, the more available. The average rating is 1.58. Parents were then asked to rank the *quality* of child care in the Adair-Casey area on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 quality, and 5 high quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). The average rating is 3.16. See figure on the next page.

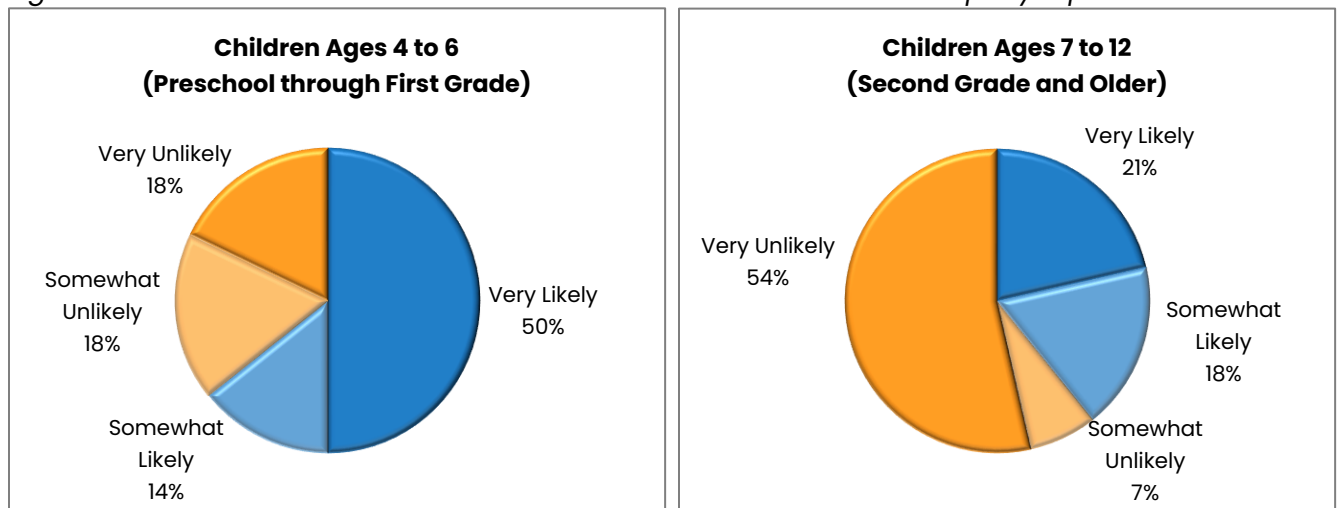
Figure 14: Parents' Ratings of Child Care in the Adair-Casey Area



Parents were asked a series of questions related to Little Smiles relocating to a larger facility and expanding services. The first question was, Little Smiles is considering expanding to serve more children. If there were more spaces available at Little Smiles for children ages 4 and older, how likely are you to enroll your child, now or when they are old enough?

Parents were asked to answer separately for children ages 4 to 6, preschool through first grade and for children ages 7 to 12, second grade and older. Most parents with children ages 4 to 6 are likely (64%), while most parents with children ages 7 to 12 indicated they are unlikely (61%).

Figure 15: Likelihood to Enroll Older Children in Care if Little Smiles & Company Expands



As a follow up question, parents were asked to explain in more detail why they chose that answer. Parents indicating there are likely (both age groups) provided the following comments:

- *Would love the option of older care if not ready for the Boys and Girls Club.*
- *Currently attending Little Smiles and happy with the current environment.*
- *I need daycare to stay in Adair.*

- *The staff have been great with my baby, and I trust them to continue to care for him as he grows.*
- *It would be nice to have options for preschool options.*
- *My son will be turning 4 soon.*
- *Would like more individualized care options for early grade school wrap around care. Have flexibility in taking children to work/tagging along as children get older (7+)*
- *Very likely.*
- *Need somewhere for the kids to go.*
- *More.*
- *If rooms/activities are age based*
- *Would love to be able to take him to this daycare if it were in Greenfield.*

Parents indicating there are unlikely (both age groups) provided the following comments:

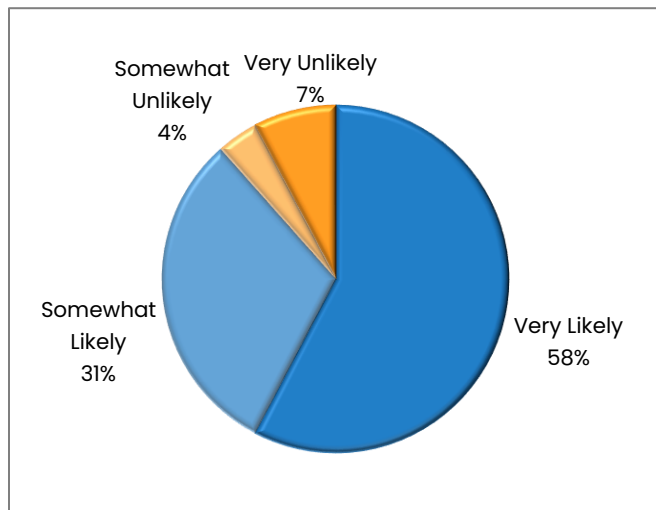
- *Boys and girls club attendance is too large for younger age group. Little smiles would need more area to separate 4 to 6-year-olds and keep them engaged.*
- *Boys & Girls Club.*
- *Club is cheaper.*
- *Need preschool care.*
- *Bad history with little smiles and their policies. Refuse to take my children here.*
- *I have had some bad interactions in the past with staff and directors. I allay feel as though it has changed and there is not as much direction and structure given to the kids in activities and daily schedules.*
- *Have not had good experiences there, years ago and recently.*
- *Since they are old enough for boys and girls club they will go there. It's more affordable and has activities geared towards the school age child.*
- *My children this age will attend boy and girls club.*
- *Boys and girls club is ok, but there are too many kids.*
- *The Boys and Girls club should be utilized for school age kids.*
- *Boys and Girls Club.*
- *I would use Boys and Girls Club.*
- *During this next school year my youngest will still attend one day a week then after that he will be in school full-time and will be able to attend boys and girls club with his older brother during the summers.*
- *No older children.*
- *We have club.*
- *Use of the Boys and Girls Club when they are of age to use that service.*
- *Boys And Girls Club provides a great service seems to me like each provider could focus on their strengths and particular age group. I know the Boys And Girls Club is not a*

daycare provider, but they do an excellent job accommodating even kids that need a little extra help.

- *Have relative who will be retired by then.*

The next question asked parents if three-year-old preschool was available at Little Smiles, how likely are you to enroll your child, now or when they are old enough. Among those that answered this question, the majority, 58%, are very likely to enroll their child.

Figure 16: Likelihood to Enroll in Three-Year-Preschool if Little Smiles & Company Expands



Comments received from all parents were:

- *Not having 3 yr old preschool will be the reason we seek different daycare at that stage. We will be driving off our daily route to incorporate 3-year-old preschool. We will consider continuing education (4 yr old preschool) in the community where 3 yr old preschool is provided.*
- *Would have LOVED 3-year-old preschool when kids were this age!*
- *Would be a great option to have preschool on site.*
- *My baby is almost 4 and goes to ACGC Preschool.*
- *I have a child that would qualify but I don't trust Little Smiles to the point I drive out of town for care to avoid using their services. I couldn't trust that my children were being watched or even fed appropriately.*
- *I would like the ability to get my children a head start.*
- *I would have enrolled my kids had this been an option.*
- *Already enrolled in a center where children should be getting similar benefits and have the socialization.*

- *I didn't care for school that much so adding years of schooling for my kids isn't high on my priority list though I do enjoy the amount of learning he receives now from Little Smiles.*
- *It's a good head start for school.*
- *I am a lot more interested in the safety and reliability of daycare than the educational aspect. We are fortunate to have all day four-year-old preschool in the ACGC district, which I think is the preschool need.*

At the conclusion of the survey, parents were asked several open-ended questions about child care in the Adair-Casey area. Each question and the responses received are on the following pages.

What is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge? Comments were received from 20 parents. Comments received were:

- *Availability-will a spot be open when the child is born. Reliability-inconsistent staff as operating expenses are high. High tuition cost-operating is expensive not enough left to pay staff a competitive wage to other local jobs.*
- *Space, availability, stability, trust, and good environment for playing and learning.*
- *Just finding somewhere that is not filled up.*
- *Not enough daycare spots.*
- *More space/dependable staff/good working environment.*
- *Weekend care, offering some hours on weekends. Even half days.*
- *Finding reliable and trustworthy care providers that is affordable.*
- *I think the biggest challenge is being able to trust the people you take your kids to, as well as paying for a place where you hope they get some structure and then finding out that they don't. I think resolving that challenge would be finding a good director, I think that is key to the way your younger staff act. I also think along with finding a good director comes having a good structure and a good schedule for the kids to learn and not run around like crazy. This also could make the staff more stressed with more injuries and yelling happening. Anybody can work there so there are people that do it for the paycheck and not for the children. I feel if you're going to work with kids you need to be able to understand, and value the job.*
- *Reliability and trusted providers.*
- *A reliable place for child care. A new center that has adequate space for children and staff.*
- *Reliable, safe, and not expensive (minimums and limits on hours).*
- *The growing cost of quality childcare and challenges associated with adequate staffing (in terms of quantity and quality).*

- *Space/Availability Expansion.*
- *Lack of options for providers.*
- *Just having spots available and to fix the need more space and more staff.*
- *Not enough kid spots and limited staff.*
- *Staffing.*
- *Reliable dependable staff to keep the daycare is open. Scrambling to find care for when providers have sick days or appointments is very frustrating. Providers need to make adequate wages, making sure we are enrolled in all of the state programs to help train staff and increase their wages and have decent facilities is important to maintaining all daycare facilities.*
- *Reliable workers.*

The next question asked parents, what opportunities do you see for the future of child care in the Adair-Casey area? Comments were received from 13 parents. Comments received were:

- *More child care is needed to draw in more children to the school district so we can keep a local elementary. Having a 3-year-old preschool would draw in out-of-town families that may stay in Adair-Casey district long term. Benefit local business's trying to recruit new employees.*
- *The need for childcare for kids 0-5 is huge. We need a 3-year-old preschool to match Guthrie Center's daycare. This will keep our districts in line.*
- *Expanding to hold more kids.*
- *3-year-old preschool.*
- *Growth and more job opportunities.*
- *I would like to see a state certified in-home provider.*
- *What I see for the future of child care is finding good help, expanding, but not bringing so much on that you can't give proper care. I see it becoming a space where people both want to work and want to take their kids to.*
- *We've had employees turn down or quit due to child care issues.*
- *Opportunity for growth, there are a lot of young and growing families in the community who need or will need reliable care.*
- *3-year-old preschool and a large center for multiple age groups.*
- *Hopefully to grow and maybe more options.*
- *Bigger center.*
- *More kids.*

The final question asked parents to share any additional comments they have about child care in the Adair-Casey area. Comments were received from 4 parents. Comments received were:

- *Need affordable in-home care provider for age 4 and under. Boys and Girls Club is amazing for the school age kids and excited they are taking preschoolers now.*
- *Boys and Girls Club is great for school age but gives some anxiety due to the large number of kids. A small school age option would be great. In younger ages there appears to be a shortage of quality care.*
- *Little Smiles has been great for our kids, but the building definitely needs some updates and appears to have physically out of room!!!*
- *My personal experience has been that ages 0 to 5 have been the most challenging to find care for, so I feel that the childcare improvements should focus on that area.*

CHILD CARE GAP ANALYSIS

Calculating the gap in a child care market takes into consideration multiple factors, and as solutions to address this gap are considered, it must be kept in mind that not all families will utilize child care, and those that do have a variety of needs with some children attending full-time while others attend only part-time and therefore may share a space. If there is exactly one space for each child, some spaces would not be utilized or would be utilized in a manner that would not allow the child care provider to maintain a sustainable business model.

The following summary of the supply and demand provides an estimation of the gap between the number of children likely to use regulated child care and the number of estimated spaces available in programs currently regulated by Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or centers that are not required to be licensed, for the Adair-Casey area.

According to the US Census Bureau there are 343 children ages 0 to 11 in the 50002 and 50048 zip codes, referred to here as the Adair-Casey area. Of those, First Children's Finance (FCF) estimates 261 have all parents working. If it is assumed these families are represented by responses of the parents that participated in the child care needs survey, then approximately 226 of the children are from families who prefer a child care setting that is either HHS regulated or a license-exempt center. According to Iowa HHS along with self-reported data from local child care programs, there are 164 spaces available in HHS regulated or license-exempt centers. That means there is a shortage as high as 62 child care spaces among all age groups. The greatest deficit is for ages 0 to 2, followed by school age children, and then preschool.

Table 45: Estimated Child Care Gap in the Adair-Casey Area

	Children w/All Parents Working	Likely to Use Regulated Care	Regulated Child Care Spaces	Child Care Gap
Ages 0 to 2	64	55	18	(37)
Ages 3 to 4	35	30	26	(4)
Ages 5 to 11	162	141	120	(21)
Total	261	226	164	(62)

As solutions for child care are being developed, the preferences of parents should be taken into consideration. The majority of parents prefer a licensed center and prefer care located in the town where they live. They desire child care year-round, Monday through Friday. The largest group prefers to drop off their child between 7:00 am and 7:59 am, and to pick them up between 5:00 pm and 5:59 pm. When selecting child care, the most important factor to parents is dependable provider or staff.

KEY FINDINGS

These key findings are based on research and conditions of the child care market in the Adair-Casey area as of September 2025. If the community or the child care environment changes significantly, these key findings may be affected.

Finding 1: Most families in the Adair-Casey area have all parents participating in the labor force. According to the US Census Bureau as of 2023, 78% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 77% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in the Adair-Casey area have all parents in the labor force. All parents in the labor force means if a family is headed by a couple, both parents are working and if it is headed by a single parent that parent is working. The state-wide averages are 76% and 81%, respectively.

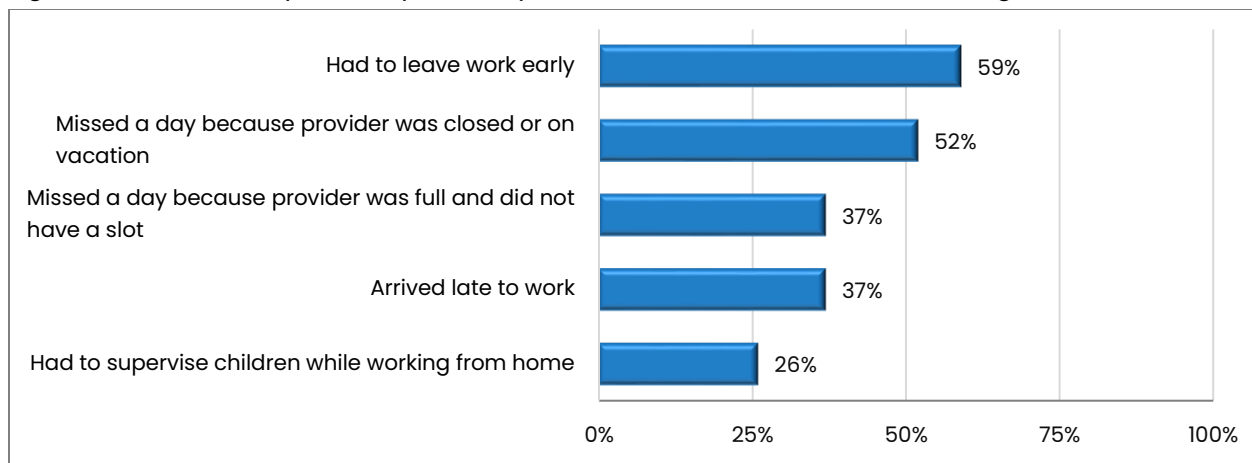
Figure 17: Families in the Adair-Casey Area with All Parents in the Labor Force



Through the child care needs survey conducted as part of this study, parents were asked several questions related to their employment and their use of child care. The majority of parents indicate both they and their spouse or partner work first shift, Monday through Friday, and their job is in Adair.

Finding 2: Parents report that child care challenges are adversely impacting their job. Through the child care needs survey, parents report the ways their job has been impacted over the last 12 months because of child care challenges. The top adverse effects reported by working parents were, had to leave work early (59%), missed a day of work because the provider was closed or on vacation (52%), missed a day of work because the provider was full and did not have a slot for my child (37%), arrived late to work (37%), and had to supervise children while working from home (26%). See figure on the next page.

Figure 18: Adverse Impacts Reported by Parents Due to Child Care Challenges

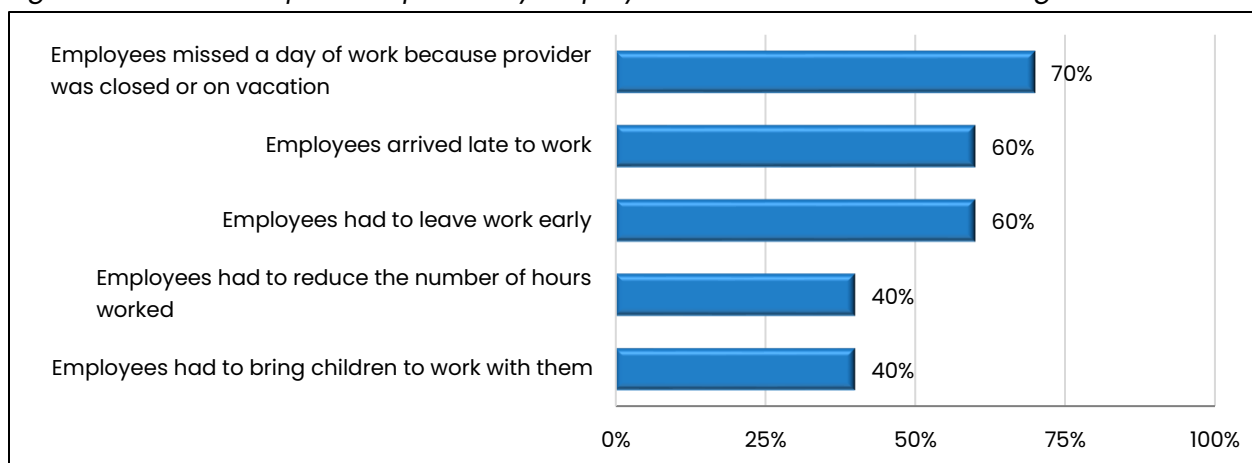


Through similar but separate questions, parents were asked to share more about how child care challenges have impacted their or their spouse's or partner's job over the last 12 months.

- 26% are experiencing limited employment, such as being forced to work fewer hours or only being able to accept positions that have hours when they can secure child care.
- 16% have declined employment or withdrawn from the workforce.
- 10% are not working (unemployed).

Finding 3: Employers indicate child care challenges are affecting their employees. Through the child care needs survey, employers reported the ways their employees have been impacted by child care challenges over the last 12 months. The top adverse effects experienced were, employees had to leave work early (65% of employers), employees missed a day of work because their child care provider was closed or on vacation (57% of employers), employees arrived late to work (51% of employers), and employees had to bring their child to work with them (24% of employers).

Figure 19: Adverse Impacts Reported by Employers Due to Child Care Challenges



Through similar, but separate, questions employers indicated they also experienced limited productivity and absenteeism in the last 12 months as a direct result of childcare challenges experienced by their employees. Thirty percent (30%) of employers indicated they had experienced challenges related to productivity. Some of the related comments received were:

- *When staff members cannot find daycare or a substitute daycare provider, they spend time solving their child care issues.*
- *Doctor visits and children being sick.*

Through another question, 50% of employers indicate they experienced absenteeism. Some of the related comments received were:

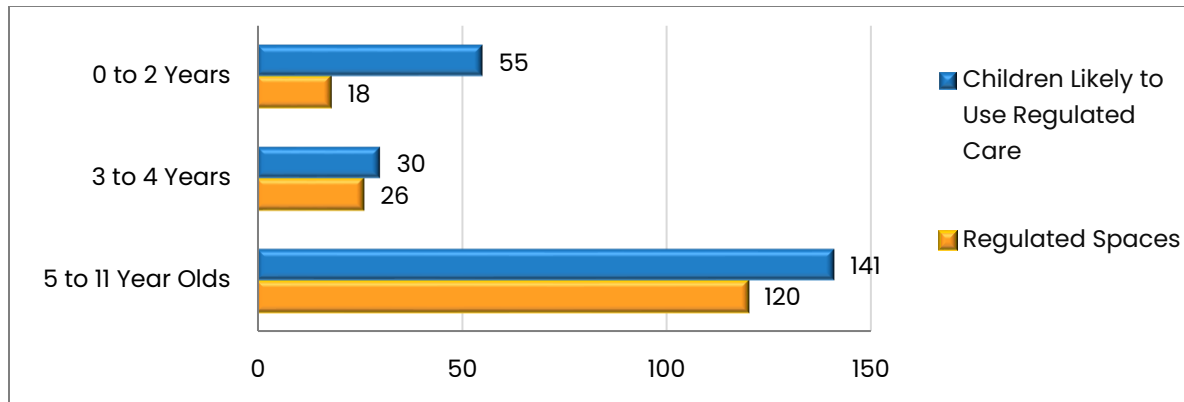
- *When staff members cannot find daycare or a substitute daycare provider, they don't come to work.*
- *Take days off unplanned.*
- *If a child becomes ill or has to stay home from school, our employees will miss a day of work to stay home and take care of child.*

Finding 4: Child care providers are full and turning away families. Through the child care needs survey conducted as part of this study, child care providers were asked if they had turned away families or put them on a waitlist due to a lack of spaces or openings in their program during the last 12 months. Among those that participated, 50% (both homes and centers) indicated yes.

Finding 5: There is a shortage of child care spaces in the Adair-Casey area. In the market area, the 50002-zip code (Adair area) and the 50048-zip code (Casey area), there are an estimated 305 children ages 0 to 11. Based on the percentage of families that have all parents working and parents' preferences of child care settings, First Children's Finance estimates 226 are from families who prefer a child care setting that is either regulated by HHS or is a center-based program that meets other rules and regulations (aka "regulated care"). According to Iowa HHS along with self-reported data from local child care programs, there are 164 regulated spaces available. That means there is a shortage as high as 62 child care spaces among all age groups.

When broken down by age group, the child care gap analysis shows there is a deficit of 37 spaces for ages 0 to 2, a deficit of 4 spaces for ages 3 to 4, and a deficit of 21 spaces for children ages 5 to 11 (school age). *See figure on the next page.*

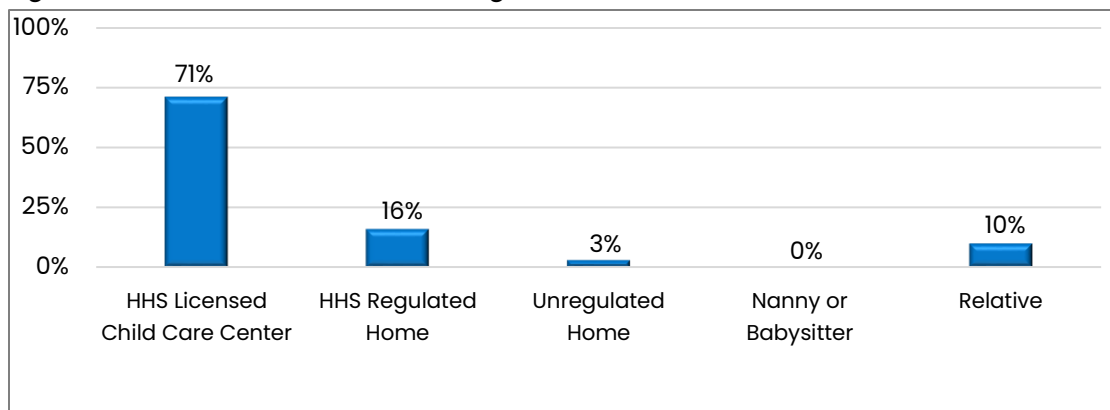
Figure 20: Children Likely to Use Regulated Care vs. Regulated Spaces Available



Finding 6: Most parents prefer to use a child care center.

Through the child care needs surveys parents were asked if all choices are available and you were selecting child care today, which setting you would most prefer. The top choice was a licensed center, was selected by 71% of parents.

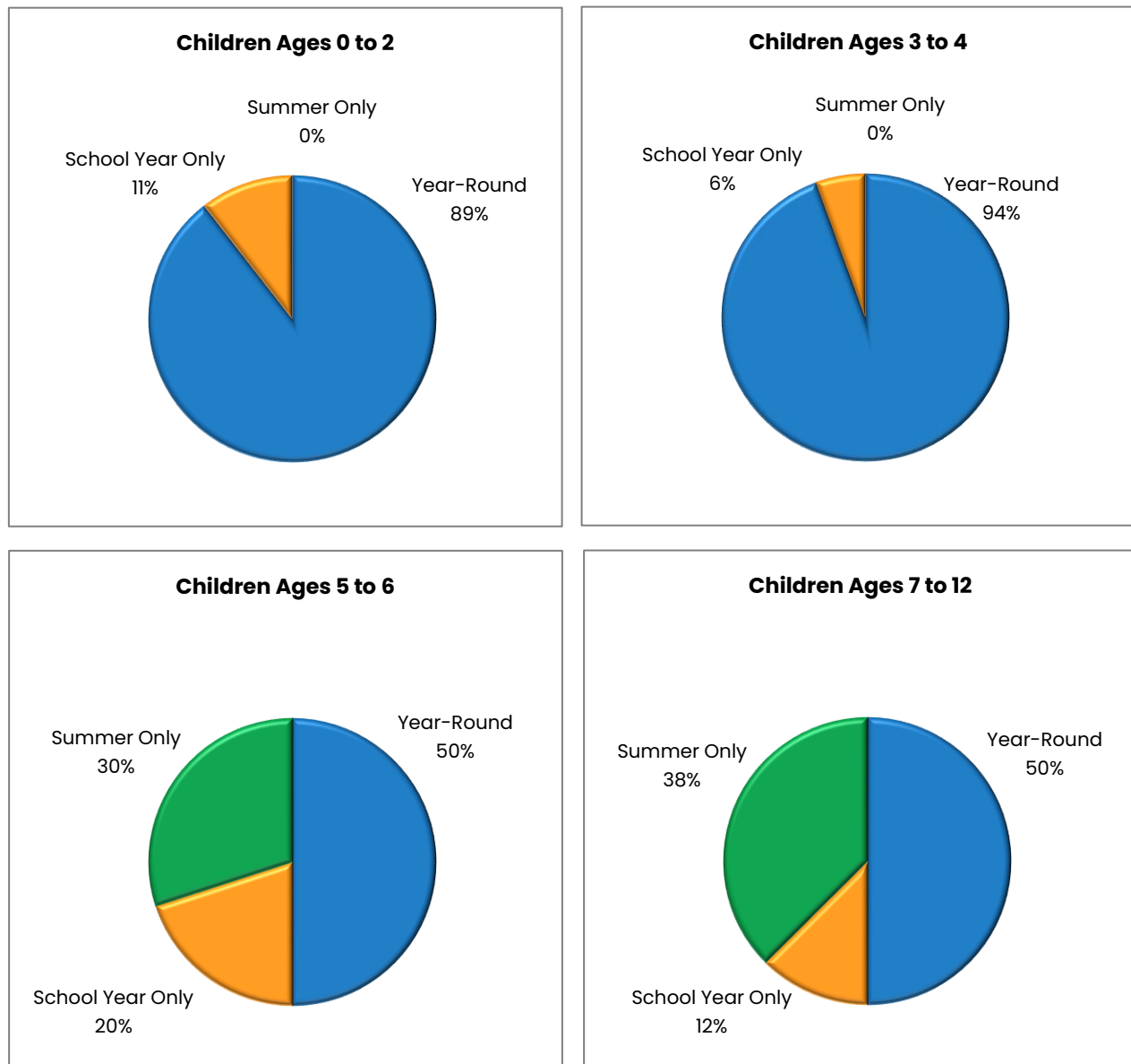
Figure 21: Preferred Child Care Setting



Finding 7: Most parents prefer to use child care year-round.

Through the child care needs surveys parents were asked if you were selecting child care today, what is your preferred time of year. The top choice is year-round for all age groups. Among parents with children ages 0 to 2, 89% prefer year-round care while 94% of parents with children ages 3 to 4 prefer year-round care. Parents of school age children also prefer year-round care, with 50% of parents with children ages 5 to 6 preferring year-round care, and 50% of parents with children ages 7 and older preferring year-round care. See figure on the next page.

Figure 22: Time of Year Families Prefer to Use Child Care

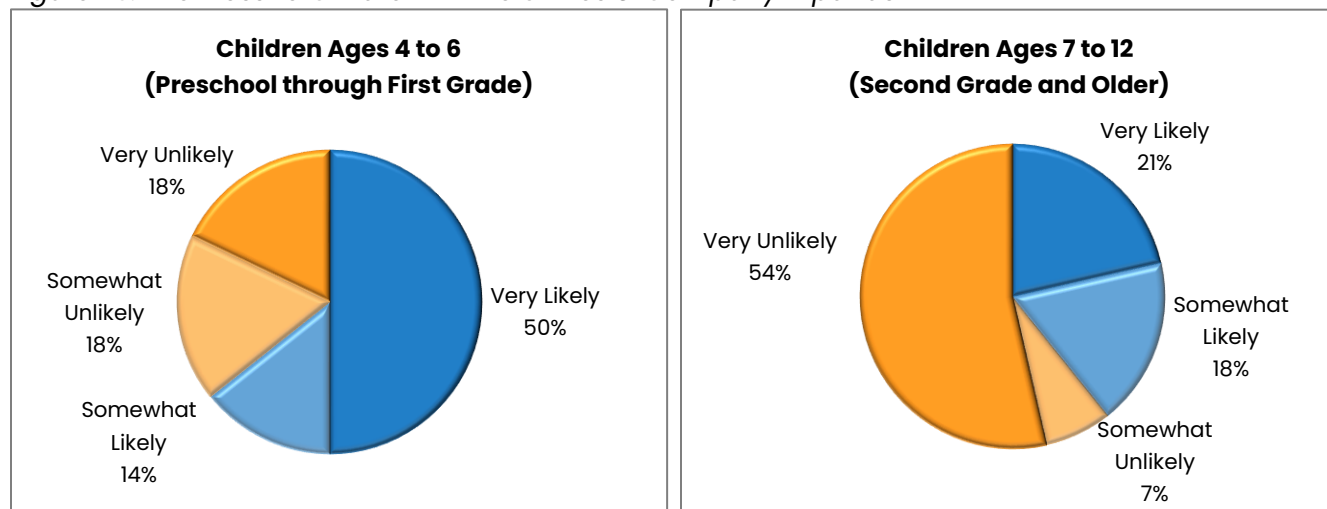


Finding 8: Parents with children age 4 to 6 are very likely to enroll at Little Smiles if more space was available. Due to the size of the facility, Little Smiles currently limits enrollment to children age 4 and younger to assure compliance with Iowa child care regulations. Parents that completed the child care needs survey were asked if Little Smiles were to expand and there were more spaces for children ages 4 and older, how likely are you to enroll your child, now or when they are old enough.

When it comes to enrolling children ages 4 to 6 (preschool through first grade), 50% of parents indicated they are very likely, and an additional 14% are somewhat likely. Among parents with children ages 7 to 12 (second grade and older), 21% indicated they are very likely to enroll their

child at Little Smiles if the program was to expand, and an additional 18% indicated they are somewhat likely.

Figure 23: Likeliness to Children if Little Smiles & Company Expands

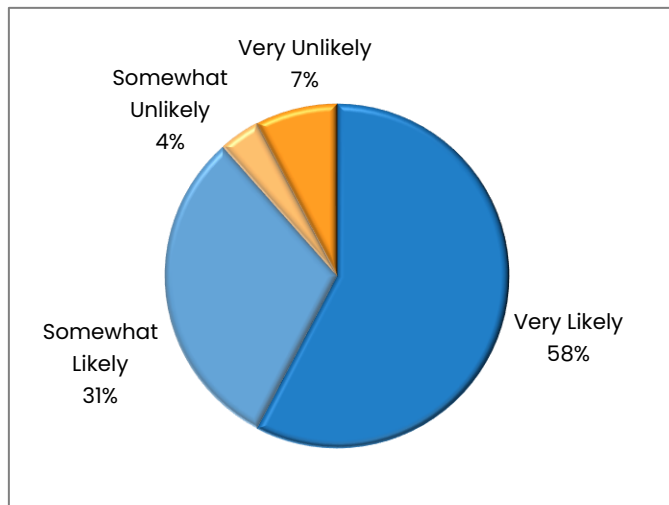


A sampling of comments from parents indicating very likely or somewhat likely are:

- *Would love the option of older care if not ready for the Boys and Girls Club.*
- *Currently attending Little Smiles and happy with the current environment.*
- *I need daycare to stay in Adair.*
- *The staff have been great with my baby, and I trust them to continue to care for him as he grows.*
- *Would like more individualized care options for early grade school wrap around care.*
Have flexibility in taking children to work/tagging along as children get older (7+)

Finding 9: Parents are very likely to enroll their child in three-year-old preschool at Little Smiles if it was offered. Parents that completed the child care needs survey were asked if Little Smiles were to be offering three-year-old preschool, how likely are you to enroll your child, now or when they are old enough. Among those that answered this question, the majority, 58%, indicated they are very likely to enroll their child in three-year-old preschool at Little Smiles. See figure on the next page.

Figure 24: Likelihood to Enroll in Three-Year-Preschool if Little Smiles & Company Expands



A sample of comments from parents were:

- *Not having 3 yr old preschool will be the reason we seek different daycare at that stage. We will be driving off our daily route to incorporate 3-year-old preschool. We will consider continuing education (4 yr old preschool) in the community where 3 yr old preschool is provided.*
- *Would have LOVED 3-year-old preschool when kids were this age!*
- *Would be a great option to have preschool on site.*
- *I would like the ability to get my children a head start.*