



Child Care Needs Assessment Report 2022: Erie, Huron and Ottawa Counties

Ensuring that each young child is established on a path that allows him or her to reach his or her potential creates lifelong benefits for the child, their family, and the entire community. The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) works closely with partners dedicated to ensuring families have what they need to have healthy infants and equip young children, age birth through twelve years, to succeed in school and life.

This report will use information from three (3) main sources that identify major areas of work and community focus. The categories are Community Level Census Data, Child Care Supply and Demand data, and Needs Assessment data and anecdotal responses. This report focuses on three counties in North Central Ohio - Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties.

Every day parents across North Central Ohio make difficult decisions about who will care for their children when they go to school and to work. Some choose center-based programs. Others select providers who care for children in the provider's home. Yet others choose to have family, friends, or neighbors care for their children. Regardless of the provider and setting, parents want stable, affordable child care where their child is safe, happy, healthy, and learning. Too often, however, parents experience challenges when trying to access quality care, which in turn makes it difficult to maintain employment or enroll in college or training. High child care costs price some parents out of the market. Finding a provider on short notice is challenging for some parents—particularly for parents of infants, toddlers, and children with special needs. Finding a provider that is open when they work can be especially difficult for parents who work second or third shift. These challenges cannot be overcome by parents and providers alone. Child care must be a part of our efforts to improve access and support for the Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties workforce.

Improving the region's child care system can be a tricky balance between parental choice, high quality services and the knowledge that parents are the "first and best" teachers in a young child's life. These issues if not addressed can have serious consequences for our region's children, and we need to turn our attention to child care for three important reasons:

1. Access to high-quality child care can change the trajectory for our children's lives.
2. Access to high-quality child care can help families escape poverty.
3. Access to high-quality child care is important to the region's economic development.

Child care serves a two-pronged approach in any community. It impacts the lives of the children who are supported by it, but it also serves as a workforce support allowing parents to access employment and to work knowing their child is cared for and is safe.

CHANGING CHILDREN'S LIVES

Research has firmly established the importance of the first thousand days of life to the intellectual and emotional development of children. What happens in this period can have a lifelong impact. Early investments can increase children's future education success, make them less likely to rely on social welfare programs, and make them more likely to succeed in the labor force. The majority of children under four years of age are being raised in households where all parents are working, and many of these young children spend the majority of their waking hours in child care. If investments are going to reach children in their first thousand days, these investments are going to need to be delivered, at least in part, through the child care system.

HELPING FAMILIES ESCAPE POVERTY

Access to high-quality, reliable child care can be a difference-maker for low-income parents seeking access to the labor market. Unreliable child care can cause parents to miss work and potentially lose their jobs, and for low-income families, this job loss can start a cascade of negative consequences, including the loss of a vehicle or home, which can make it difficult to again access the labor market. These negative consequences can push a family deep into poverty. By contrast, access to high-quality child care makes it easier for parents to work. It reduces their absenteeism and turnover. It allows them to stay in the labor market for longer continuous periods, increasing their productivity and wages. It can help them move from poverty to the middle class.

IMPROVEMENTS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The region's unemployment rate has fallen below 4.4 percent (December 2021), and while this seems like a positive, this is a level at which businesses struggle to fill open positions. The lack of readily available workers means that businesses may become reluctant to increase investments in the region. This low unemployment rate, however, masks the fact that the region has many people across the skills spectrum who would work if they could access high-quality, affordable child care. If high-quality child care were easier to access, more parents could enter the workforce, helping to alleviate the talent shortage. In addition, the increased availability of high-quality child care would reduce absenteeism, and thereby increase overall worker productivity.

In August of 2021, local philanthropy began a conversation on child care based on identified community need that grew into a regional focus that now includes the business and education communities. An employee survey was distributed and more than 400 responses were received. Consultants with the Child Care Resource Center who gathered input from the region will summarize that feedback and identify a number of ways to address this critical issue.



WHAT PARENTS WANT

Throughout this engagement effort, parents reported that they want quality, affordable child care where their child is safe, happy, healthy and learning. From survey responses we heard the following top 5 concerns from parents (employees):

1. Cost of quality child care is very expensive: In the Erie, Huron and Ottawa county region the cost of care annually for an infant is \$8,000. To send a college freshman to The Ohio State University is between \$8,000 - \$11,000 annually, and at least with a college freshman families have the ability to save for the high cost of education.
2. Sick Child Care: Currently in the state of Ohio children cannot be in group care if they are sick. However, there are examples from other states on how this can be done. This item would require focused work, including public policy changes, funding to support pilots and a commitment to this needed but currently unavailable strategy.
3. Care available during non-traditional hours: care options for the most part in this region of Ohio open at 6:30am and close at 6:00pm. There are family child care homes that offer extended hours of care, but there is not enough non-traditional hours available for the need in this region.
4. Family friendly employer policies: Many of the anecdotal responses in the employee survey shared frustration with policies that do not reflect the needs of employees.
5. Onsite or near site child care: Many respondents shared that having an onsite or near site child care option would allow them to work, pick up shifts (last minute), and to work full time instead of part time hours for regional employers.

*Many of these situations were worsened during the pandemic.

1. THE COST OF CHILD CARE

In Ohio, single parents pay 43.8% of their income for center-based infant care. Married parents of two children living at the poverty line pay 62.6% of their household income for center-based child care. The average price of center-based infant care in Ohio is nearly the same as the average tuition and fees at a public four year college or university.

Annual Price of Child Care - Ohio

Center-based		Family Child Care Homes
\$10,009	Infant Care	\$7,592
\$18,267	Infant and a 4 year old	\$14,038

Annual Price of Child Care – Erie, Huron and Ottawa Counties

	ERIE COUNTY			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School-age
Child Care Center	\$8,580	\$8,372	\$7,592	\$4,368
Family Child Care Home	\$7,644	\$7,176	\$6,604	\$5,616
Preschool Only			\$7,592	
School-age Only				\$3,900

	HURON COUNTY			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School-age
Child Care Center	\$8,164	\$7,488	\$7,332	\$4,316
Family Child Care Home	\$8,112	\$7,904	\$6,552	\$5,616
Preschool Only			\$7,592	
School-age Only				**\$0.00

	OTTAWA COUNTY			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School-age
Child Care Center	\$8,372	\$7,384	\$5,668	\$5,980
Family Child Care Home	\$8,112	\$8,112	\$7,332	\$6,500
Preschool Only			\$4,628	
School-age Only				\$2,756

**no standalone school age programs located in Huron County

Price Comparison in Ohio - Annual



Center-based
Infant Care
\$10,009



Public four-year
average college or
university tuition
\$10,790



Average annual
mortgage payments
\$14,964

Percent of Unsubsidized Income Spent on Child Care - Ohio

Center-based		Family Child Care Homes
11.0%	Infant child care – married couple family	8.3%
20.1%	Two children – married couple family	15.4%
43.8%	Infant child care- single parent	33.2%
79.9%	Two children – single parent	61.4%
62.6%	Married family with two children at the poverty line	55.9%

These percentages of a family's income are without child care subsidy support included. It depicts what the full cost of care would do to a family's budget if help is not available and the impact that has on the workforce.

Survey Results – COST OF CHILD CARE

Below are the questions that relate directly to the cost of child care. However, please refer to the addendum for full survey results. The additional comments from parents and caregivers throughout the entire survey reference the cost of care as a serious barrier to work.

Q12: If your child care needs were not met, please explain why (check all that apply)

Answered: 409 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The cost of care was too high	15.40%	63
Couldn't find anyone to care for my children	27.63%	113
Care was too far away	5.62%	23
My child has special needs that couldn't be accommodated	2.93%	12
Care wasn't available when I needed it	25.92%	106
Transportation was an issue	4.40%	18
All needs were met	17.85%	73
N/A	22.98%	94
Other (please specify)	22.98%	94
Total Respondents: 409		

Q13: Please rate the following items according to what concerns you most about your child care situation

Answered: 409 Skipped: 0

	NOT CONCERNED			VERY CONCERNED	N/A	TOTAL
Finding care that meets my work hours	21.74% 40	10.87% 20	23.91% 44	28.26% 52	15.22% 28	184
Being able to afford the care I want	23.13% 34	22.45% 33	25.85% 38	23.81% 35	4.76% 7	147
Reliability of my caregiver (s)	17.27% 19	22.73% 25	25.45% 28	20.91% 23	13.64% 15	110
Quality of child care environment	12.77% 12	12.77% 12	24.47% 23	41.49% 39	8.51% 8	94
Finding a convenient location	22.39% 15	32.84% 22	20.90% 14	8.96% 6	14.93% 10	67
Transporting my child to care daily	45.31% 29	25.00% 16	7.81% 5	6.25% 4	15.63% 10	64
Safety Issues	27.94% 19	19.12% 13	20.59% 14	25.00% 17	7.35% 5	68
Trying to make emergency arrangements	13.07% 23	9.66% 17	19.89% 35	38.64% 68	18.75% 33	176

Here are some of the anecdotal comments from the survey:

“The cost of childcare is difficult to justify to continue to work sometimes”

“I am part-time now but when working full time I have to find out family members work schedule and see if they are available to watch my kids until I get off of work. Child care cost too much.”

“Child care needs are being met, but at a basic level. It is also expensive, as much as rent or a house payment each month”

“Paying for childcare (a barrier to work)”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Some communities have established scholarship funds for child care, which are then managed centrally. This can particularly assist low income workers or persons just entering the workforce. The Child Care Resource Center has provided this service for other communities as a central resource for families.
2. Employers can set up a child care subsidy program that could be scaled over time paying for a percentage/flat rate for employees with children in care. Child care subsidies are an effective and moderately inexpensive way to reduce employees' parenting burdens. Employers can offer subsidies two ways:
 - Direct Payments: Businesses pay a set amount to employees with children. Employees spend the money however they see fit.

- **Partial Care Subsidy:** Businesses partially subsidize child care with select centers or child care homes. Employees and employers share the cost of child care.

These choices give employers flexibility in choosing what their employees really need. It also allows businesses to budget for and scale up the percentage of support over time. While this may seem like a costly expense, doing so will help businesses retain talent and keep employee morale high.

3. To encourage businesses to provide child care to their employees, the federal government offers companies a tax credit to help cover some of the associated costs. The Employer-Provided Child Care Credit, under [the Internal Revenue Code Section 45F](#), offers employers a tax credit of up to 25% of qualified child care expenditures and 10% of qualified child care resource and referral expenditures, both detailed below. The credit is capped at \$150,000, meaning employers would have to spend around \$430,000 to receive the full credit, and any further spending exceeding that amount would not be reimbursed.
4. Employers can provide a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA), which is a pre-tax benefit account used to pay for eligible dependent care services, such as preschool, summer camp, before and after school programs and even adult daycare services. This provides an account for employees to pull funds pre-tax which saves an average of 30% on dependent care services by reducing the overall tax burden as funds are withdrawn from their paychecks and placed into the DCFSA account before taxes are deducted. Employers are able to contribute to these accounts and also see savings on taxes.

2. SICK CHILD CARE SERVICES

Sick child care means child care services provided to children who as a result of mild illness cannot attend the family's regular child care provider. In Ohio, this is not a regular service provided to families. The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services require child care programs to install policies that exclude children from care when they have one of the following:

- Temperature of 100 degrees in combination with any other symptom
- Three episodes of diarrhea within 24 hours
- Severe coughing - Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes or redness of the eyes
- Untreated or infected skin patches
- Unusually dark urine or gray or white stool
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied with other signs of illness

There are examples around the country that could be used to create a sick child care programs for Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties. This however is a bigger lift for communities to create and fund. This is something that the community could pose as a long term strategy for the region.

Survey Results – SICK CHILD CARE

Sick child care was not included in the survey as a benefit or possible growth area for the region. It was however mentioned in the open ended section of many of the survey questions. Child Care

serves a need for working families, but when a child is mildly ill they cannot be included in a group care environment in the State of Ohio.

Each day children younger than 12 years of age with both parents working are too sick to attend school or child care. This causes working parents to be absent or tardy from their jobs from 5 to 29 days per year caring for ill children. The costs associated with lost time can be significant to employers.

Here are some of the anecdotal comments from the survey:

“I feel guilty taking a sick day if my children have an appointment or need to stay home sick because of the lack of substitute teachers in our district.”

“Would like to have the option to work from home if child is sick and I have work I can do at home - same with calamity days and school delays. A flex time schedule/bank would be helpful as well.”

“Being able to leave in case of emergency without repercussions”

“That kids are sick all the time, and it is especially hard to send them to school or the sitter with the current public health situation”

“When a child is sick and you have no child care, the parent ultimately has to stay home with the child until they are better. This causes racking up points that I think should be a lesser amount (1 or 2 instead of 3)”

“Challenges that come with special needs children. Flexibility.”

“It's hard when school is closed or kids are on quarantine to find child care”

“Due to COVID my children have been kept home from school a few times. I've had to stay home with them, and I have accrued attendance points due to this.”

“Due to COVID and having a child under 3, and with COVID changes, I do not want to expose a child to the risk of COVID in a daycare that is unvaccinated by staff or with children whose parents refuse to wear masks and follow proper CDC guidelines. This has made finding people to watch a child difficult at times in emergencies”

“One of my children needed to be out of school for 8 days for quarantine. This put a huge amount of stress on my family.”

“Ability to take off for sick kids”

“Special needs children need to be cared for by people who know and understand their needs”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The State of Ohio will not license a child care program to provide sick child care services. But there are ways to provide such a service in communities. This particular strategy would require a community plan, time to identify partners and a cost effective way to provide the service. Because medical staff are an integral part of this strategy's success having a medical system or hospital as a partner would be ideal.

The Child Care Resource Center would be able to assist with a deeper look into this strategy. The best plan would be a community collaborative approach to meet this specific and new strategy. There are two examples of sick child care facilities in Ohio. The first example uses a brick and mortar option or can assign a caregiver to your home, not unlike a “visiting nurse” type program. It is ZakaiCare located in the Cincinnati area.

The other is Nanny Poppinz. This service supplies “Sick Children Nannies” that can be deployed once you are enrolled in their program.

3. CARE AVAILABLE DURING NON-TRADITIONAL HOURS

Non-traditional hours are the hours between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on weekdays, and between 12:00 a.m. Saturday and 6:00 a.m. Monday.

Today's job market requires many employees to work shifts that start or end after most child care programs open or close. More and more businesses operate around the clock. Many companies work in shifts, which means employees work in the early mornings, evenings, nights, rotating schedules, weekends, holidays or extended hours. These non-traditional schedules affect the lives of millions of families.

Hospital employees are but one example of working parents who work unusual hours and face special difficulties in finding child care or family support. From hotel staff to police officers to retail workers to factory employees whose services are needed beyond the typical work day, finding child care to match non-traditional schedules can be tough.

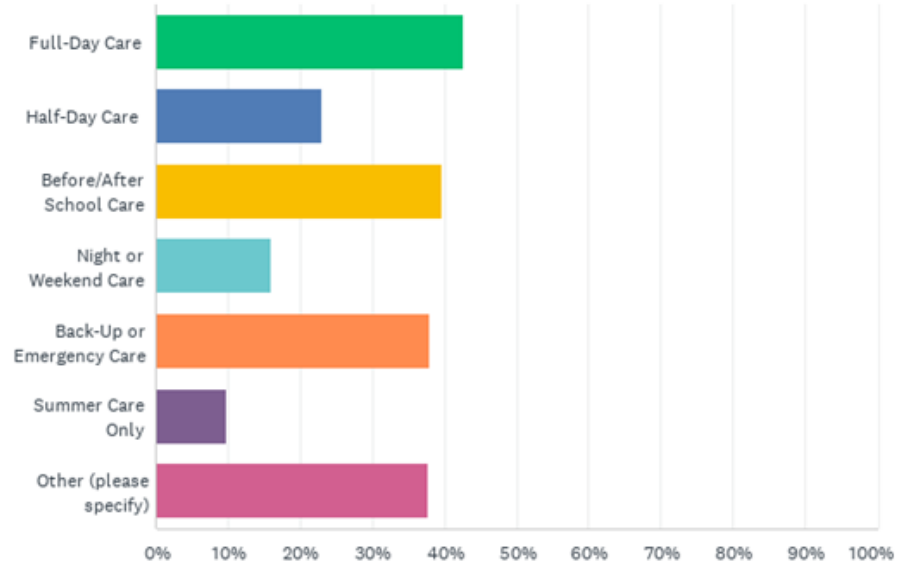
Changing schedules and unusual hours in a job are serious issues for many working parents. There are currently few child care programs for those families that need care during non-traditional hours. Most child care centers and providers operate Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Parents need child care during their working hours, whenever they may be. The search for child care can be difficult and the choices few.



Survey Results - CARE AVAILABLE DURING NON-TRADITIONAL HOURS

Q10: Check all the kinds of care needed by your children over the past 12 months while you worked.

Answered: 409 Skipped: 0



Q12: If your child care needs were not met, please explain why (check all that apply)

Answered: 409 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
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Trying to make emergency arrangements	13.07% 23	9.66% 17	19.89% 35	38.64% 68	18.75% 33	176

Q17: Check all of the following care options that you currently need or will need in the near future:

Answered: 409 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
None of the above	20.78% 85
care close to home	46.70% 191
care close to work	31.54% 129
special needs care	4.65% 19
summer camp (school-age child)	17.85% 73
bilingual care	0.73% 3
care for early mornings	29.34% 120
care for evenings	21.03% 86
care on weekends	15.16% 62
All day preschool	17.11% 70
part day preschool	11.25% 46
afterschool program	30.32% 124
before school program	20.05% 82
Other (please specify)	18.09% 74
Total Respondents: 409	

Here are some responses included by employees in the survey:

“One parent has to stay home due to lack of child care”

“My uncle is disabled and able to help out at the moment instead of paying rent. But, we are hoping to soon have an infant and he cannot take care of an infant so we will be starting all over again with child care.”

“35 minutes from work and 20 min from home. Takes an hour total to get to work in the morning.”

“If daycare closes or is not available, no back up options for child care”

“The majority of my call offs have been because of child care issues. We have only been in Ohio for 1 year and have no family here to help out. I had to change positions at work to no longer work weekends or holidays because of the childcare issue.”

“I have no family or friends within 50 miles of here. My wife I both work full time and have absolutely no one else who can assist us. After school programs are all suspended due to COVID, I have no idea what to do.”

“When asked to flex up and those hours are on night shift and the other parents work night shift and no one to watch my child but still doesn't seem to matter to director”

“Affordable child care with flexible hours including overnight.”

“It is hard to find child care coverage in the evenings. I would also be able to pick up more frequently if child care was provided by my employer.”

“We are so short staffed with so many shifts and hours needed picked up. Many of us have children and thus, we can't pick up extra. If child care was provided during shifts, partially paid for especially for the extra work hours, and if daycares were open for "nurses hours," I believe that more people would work extra. I most certainly would.”

“I work weekend nightshift and have to have a family member watch my child as there is no overnight options for care.”

“Limited alternate childcare options”

“Adult care day time, night time and weekends”

“Summer care when oldest is out of school”

“Need Before school/After school care at school (this is closed on school closure days however)”

“Day care closed several times due to lack of staff”

“I work night shift hours which makes it more difficult to find sitters and care options”

“Weekend care is not an option with child care sites, no family in Ohio to help”

“Don't trust many people with my child, when I do they have no availability.”

“Child care is typically unavailable when call in texts go out with limited time frame or hours that are needed to work”

“The daycare only accepts full-time enrollment so I end up paying for 40 hours a week when I only need 16-24 hours of care”

“Start times for child care near me still make me late for work due to my commute”

“Overnight needed but no help given”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) is funded to locate and analyze gaps in care (emergent needs) and recruit and maintain child care in five counties in North Central Ohio, including Erie and Huron counties and the YWCA Child Care Resource and Referral (Toledo) does the same for Ottawa County.

Due to the worldwide pandemic child care professionals and programs (of all types) were forced into retirement or were unable to stay financially viable due to restrictions and limitations due to the virus. We are working with existing programs to expand service hours of operations, adding more classrooms (for high need age groups), to apply for county department of job and family service subsidy contracts to accept low income families. Child Care businesses operate on a very thin profit margin. The pandemic and the financial impact on these child care businesses has made it difficult to keep their doors open let alone consider expansion. Child Care will need financial support from the community to address the access issues parents are sharing above.

Some communities are addressing the difficulty of finding child care for non-traditional hours through a variety of traditional and innovative approaches. For example, an employer in Kentucky has set up an on-site child care center open 24 hours a day to fit the company's various work schedules. In North Carolina, managers at Purdue Farms initiated discussion with local family child care providers when they planned a shift change for employees and anticipated a shortage of child care. In other areas, employers have joined together to create child care centers and to offer services for their combined company employees. Still other community-based resource and referral agencies have worked with existing child care to recruit and train providers who can offer non-standard schedules.

4. FAMILY FRIENDLY EMPLOYER POLICIES and SUPPORTS

Businesses can establish a work environment and policies that enable employees to effectively balance and fulfill both their work and family responsibilities. Providing flexible working arrangements while attending to organizational needs can have positive outcomes for both employers and employees.

Higher productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover, increased job satisfaction, improved organizational effectiveness — these and other benefits can be achieved through family-friendly policies that help individuals achieve a healthy and productive work-life balance. Regardless of size and industry, all organizations can share in the benefits of flexible, family friendly employment policies. Stronger, healthier families contribute to stronger, healthier businesses and empower our community to grow and prosper.

Survey Results - FAMILY FRIENDLY EMPLOYER POLICIES and SUPPORTS

Survey responses detailed specific policies or lack thereof as reasons for dissatisfaction in their jobs.

"I am a SAHM primarily. That is my full time job right now. I work part-time right now. Someday this will change, but for now taking care of my children has to be my priority. I have found it difficult to find childcare that starts early enough in the morning for me to work 1st shift. I have also found it difficult to find a child care provider that will take children variable days of the week or even less than full time."

"As a mother of 2, I have had 2 maternity leaves, both unpaid. It is very difficult to come back from maternity leave in a difficult financial position with no vacation time. Even harder sending a 3 month old into a child care environment significantly increases the likelihood of illness. Yet the few times that I needed to be with my baby due to illness I was given points and my minimal vacation time that was acquired from working after leave was taken from me. After my second maternity leave I was diagnosed with COVID, so again I was given points and my minimal vacation time was taken again. If my child care falls through last minute and I cannot find help, I am penalized and my vacation time is taken.

When my father-in-law was dying from cancer I was almost written up from having to call off 5 days within a 9 month period due to not having child care (as my mother in law is our primary caregiver). I was given a written warning that I was close to a write up. Having to use vacation time to attend conferences, concerts, etc that last 1-1.5 hours at school. Having to work when I am sick myself to stay in good standing as an employee.

I was made to take my maternity leave early (1 week) since census was low, giving me one less week with my baby. Having to stop nursing prematurely, because 5 minutes is not enough to prep, pump, and clean up. Plus meetings over lunch did not accommodate for pump time. The mental load of not being able to take a true day off for a year after returning from maternity leave in fear of needing it for the unexpected. There are minimal last minute options if child care falls through, especially around the holidays."

"Our point structure and inflexible work options (particularly the ability to work from home) is a huge barrier for when your child is sick and unable to attend school or daycare options, especially while they are little."

"Company paid maternity leave. I used all of my PTO for maternity leave and still cannot get it built back up (14 months later). It is stressful to never have a safety net of PTO. Flexibility with work schedule/attendance policy due to child care issues. Updated COVID attendance policies that take into consideration daycare and school policies. We currently have a point system and it is extremely stressful when I have to call off due to my child not able to attend daycare. Daycares have changed to zero tolerance policies and won't let my child attend even if she has a runny nose. They also have to frequently close for quarantine due to a positive COVID case in the class. Over the last 6 months I have accumulated enough points to be written up and have exhausted every minute of PTO due to my daughters daycare following the state regulations to keep our children as safe as possible during these times."

"When they restructured our vacation package, it decreased our ability to take sick time. Although I rarely miss work for being sick myself, my young children are often ill and daycare will not allow them to stay at the center during that time. I feel that there is a lack of balance between having enough sick time to care for my children properly and enough vacation time to enjoy time with my kids when they

are healthy. Vacation and sick time are both important for mental and physical health. Family health is important especially for mothers who tend to carry most of the weight caring for sick children in our society. As a company that employs mostly women, I'd hope we can do better.”

“I am unable to get child care for my child other than family members and some days, they are not available so I have to use sick days. I would like more flexibility in my schedule or onsite child care, or even some money to use to help with child care costs so I can enroll my child in part time day care options.”

Family friendly policies really do help with employee satisfaction with their job, lower absenteeism and tardiness and over time increase employee productivity. Listening to your staff's needs can actually save you investments in turnover costs and creates a positive and collaborative working environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Investing in family friendly policies is good for families, businesses and the local economy. But for too many parents in this region of Ohio, policies, such as paid maternity leave, flexible schedules, child care and sick leave that includes time needed for family members, are not a reality.

The bottom line is that efforts to support employees' work-family priorities are good business. The policies are neither “perks” nor “giveaways”. These tools will help attract, motivate, and retain employees who are more likely to be more dedicated, more focused, more innovative, and more productive.

Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties are fortunate to have access to both the Erie County Economic Development Corporation and Firelands Forward. Funding these organizations to provide access to training, support and services that could impact local businesses and allow for greater recruitment and retention. They have access and the expertise to provide businesses wanting to expand their current policies or to start from scratch with others. They are able to assist businesses in scaling family friendly policies from basic to having a large scale impact on a business becoming a “premier” place to work.

5. ONSITE or NEAR SITE CHILD CARE SERVICES

Child care challenges are a major stressor risk for working parents. The cost of child care can exceed the cost of college tuition in many places, and spaces in affordable, high-quality programs are in very short supply. As a result, increasing numbers of valuable employees are cutting back hours or leaving their jobs due to the struggles of balancing the demands of work with responsibilities at home. As the average age of parenthood rises, more of these employees are in high-level positions, making their departure more disruptive to business and their replacement more costly to hire.

Businesses that implement on-site employee daycare enjoy advantages that include:

- **Increased talent pool:** Family-friendly employers appeal to a broader range of qualified candidates, retaining skilled parents who might otherwise opt out of the workforce and attracting talented prospects who have or who would like to start a family.
- **A competitive edge:** Child care benefits are a potent strategy for filling positions quickly, ensuring a reliable talent pipeline to drive competitiveness.
- **Retain future leaders:** On-site care helps to retain promising employees with children, enabling employers to build a loyal team of talented employees who can rise within the organization to provide future leadership.

- **Enhanced engagement:** Solving child care challenges for employees significantly increases productivity and keeps employees stay engaged and motivated.

This strategy can be achieved through multiple options by contracting with an onsite child care company that would establish, design and manage the program for the corporation. In local communities there are child care businesses that can establish onsite or near site options via a contract relationship.

Survey Results - ONSITE or NEAR SITE CHILD CARE SERVICES

Q7: If you answered yes to #6, which on the list below is the most important to you?

Answered: 383 Skipped: 26

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Paid maternity leave or paid leave for new parents	15.40%	59
Parent coaching services	0.52%	2
Child Care referral services	0.26%	1
Pay a portion of child care cost	7.57%	29
Provide a flexible spending account (FSA) that includes child care expenses	2.61%	10
Provide flexible working arrangements (work from home, flex-time, compressed work week, job sharing)	22.98%	88
Provide training or information sessions highlighting child development, financial counseling, community services, etc.	0.52%	2
Onsite or near site child care services	10.18%	39
Ability to bring your child to work in an emergency	5.22%	20
N/A	19.32%	74
Other (please specify)	15.40%	59
TOTAL		383

The survey had a glitch and I added an additional question that allowed respondents to choose more than one choice. For the category of Onsite or Near Site Child Care Services there were 23 (7.32%) more respondents that chose it as important to them (see full survey in addendum).

Here are comments shared throughout the survey on the need for onsite or near site child care:

“Have day care on site at work. A lot of places offer it, and we could get more people to work here”

“Onsite or near site child care services that accommodate for overnight shifts”

“It is hard to find child care coverage in the evenings. I would also be able to pick up more frequently if child care was provided by my employer.”

“Onsite child care while at work. Work overlaps with school hours.”

“It would be great if my employer had a child care program”

“The majority of my call offs have been because of child care issues. We have only been in Ohio for 1 year and have no family here to help out. I had to change positions at work to no longer work weekends or holidays because of the child care issue.”

“Weekend care is not an option with childcare sites, no family in Ohio to help”

“Child care is typically unavailable when call in texts go out with limited time frame or hours that are needed to work”

“Start times for child care near me still make me late for work due to my commute”

“When it comes to my children how can i pick one concern? This doesn't make sense to me. It all concerns me. I want someone reliable, I want my employer to be more understanding, I want someone who is knowledgeable to watch my kids somewhere safe while not costing me half my paycheck.”

“35 minutes from work and 20 min from home. Takes an hour total to get to work in the morning.”

Many employees report that they would be more productive and available to their employer if there was an onsite or near site option available. The return on investment for an onsite or near site child care option that meets the specific needs of your workforce out ways the cost to offer the benefit in the long term.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The CCRC has worked with employers in the past on creating innovative solutions for near site or onsite child care services. Here are some examples:

- We work with existing child care in the area/areas where employees work to set up child care networks for either one or a collaborative of businesses to meet issues related to access, proximity or specific age ranges or times of the day/night. Employers would purchase child care slots for their employees and either pay the full cost of care or a percentage of the cost would be shared with the employee in need. This solution also helps the child care program keep their programs full and financially viable.
- We can assist a community to create a large new program in their community that would be strategically located to meet employee needs and would be designed to operate needed hours and days of the week. This is an expensive, upfront strategy that could be shouldered by more than one business to meet community need.
- Onsite child care can be a game changer for any employer. Given the responses in the survey parents are unable to pick up shifts, work outside traditional work hours or work full time because of limitations experienced with child care. Onsite child care provides child care during the hours needed for any employee, but it also provides back-up child care and if created in a hospital or medical center can also provide sick child care. Examples in Ohio and around the country have even opened their programs to the public when the capacity within the child care program was not reached with just employees. The cost of operating a full service child care center onsite is real. Many businesses have contracted with high quality, corporate child care organizations to create and operate these programs. Some have even created the centers with these organizations (partially funded), but built it near the worksite (some even next to) but it was not a program of the business, but rather a separate child care entity.

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

Overview of the Child Care System in the 3 county region:

Ohio is a mixed market state with several different types of licensed child care programs. This report does not include data about unlicensed/unregulated child care programs.

Child Care Centers are licensed to care for 12 or more children depending on size of building. Children are typically grouped according to age. The number of staff assigned to each group depends upon the age of child with youngest children requiring a higher adult to child ratio. Centers may be licensed to operate 24 hrs and may be licensed by either the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) or the Ohio Department of Education (ODE).

Family Child Care homes are either Type A or Type B. Type A are licensed for up to 12 children at one time with two adults and Type B are licensed for up to 6 children at one time with one adult. Children are not separated by age in family child care homes. Family child care homes may be licensed to operate 24 hours or all shifts to meet family needs. Family child care homes are licensed by ODJFS.

Preschool – only programs are free standing programs, many located in places of worship and public schools, licensed to care for children typically between 3 and 5 years old with children grouped by age. The child to adult ratio is based on age of child. Preschool capacity is determined by size of building. Preschools are usually operated half days offering morning and afternoon sessions. Preschools may be licensed by ODJFS or ODE or they may be dually licensed. Some child care centers offer preschool programming with extended day care.

School Age Only Programs are stand alone programs, many located in schools or community facilities like YMCAs and recreation centers, licensed to care for children typically 5 – 12/13 years old. School age programs are licensed by ODJFS or ODE but many operate unlicensed and are managed by corporations who lease space. Capacity of licensed school age programs is based on size of building. School age programs may operate before and after school, during school breaks and summer. Information about programs serving at risk youth (13 – 18 years old) is not included in this report. Child care centers may offer school age programming.

Summer Camps are licensed by ODJFS to operate two or more continuous weeks 7 or less hours each day, during the summer and school breaks. Summer camps serve school age children only.

Ohio Child Care Subsidy is available to eligible families (families with income of up to 185% of Federal Poverty Level) which may cover up to 100% of child care costs. Families with higher income may be eligible for partial subsidy of their child care costs and they pay the remainder. For complete information about the Ohio child care subsidy/publicly funded child care click [here](#). Families who receive the subsidy may only enroll their children at licensed child care programs. ODE licensed preschools may have funding available to reduce family costs depending upon location of preschool.

Family Friend and Neighbor care – unlicensed/unregulated, informal child care typically provided in homes. No group size regulation, no formal payment structure. It is legal in Ohio to operate a child care business in a home with 6 or fewer children present at one time. Family friend and neighbor care is not part of the Ohio child care subsidy (voucher) program and parents eligible to receive this subsidy cannot use it at unlicensed/unregulated program.

Infant – child from birth to 23 months old

Toddler – child from 2 – 3 years old

Preschool – child from 3 -5 years old not in school

School age – child 5 years old and above in school

Complete licensing information may be found [here](#).

Number of child care providers & capacity by county

County	# of Child Care Centers	TYPE OF CARE				Total # of Child Care Programs (all types)	Total Capacity
		# of Family Child Care Programs	# of Preschool only	# of School Age only Programs	# of Summer Camps		
Erie	15	10	13	3	0	41	2,242
Huron	12	11	10	0	0	33	1,210
Ottawa	10	3	6	3	0	22	1,025

Please note: The Child Care Resource Center provides supports to interested child care providers who choose to open a child care home or Center business. <https://ccrcinc.com/professionals/provider-services/child-care-business-supports/>

Population* of children who would potentially need child care

County	Under 5 years	5 – 9 years	9 – 15 years
Erie	4,251	3,650	4,500
Huron	3,662	3,778	4,256
Ottawa	1,700	1,988	2,385

*population data from US Census [American Community Survey](#)

Where are the licensed child care providers and centers located?

City	Total Number of Programs (all types)	Licensed Total capacity	Ages Served/Capacity
Bellevue	10	511	Infants 20 Toddlers 39 Preschool 181 School age 49

City	Total Number of Programs (all types)	Licensed Total capacity	Ages Served/Capacity
Castalia	2	72	Preschool 36 School age 36 NOTE: no infant/toddler care in Castalia. All care available is provided by two child care centers serving preschoolers and school agers. No licensed family child care in Castalia.
Collins	1	23	Preschool 23 NOTE: no infant/toddler or school age care available in Collins. All care available is provided by one preschool serving 23 children. No child care centers or licensed family child care in Collins.
Curtice	1	6	NOTE: 1 family child care provider in Curtice who can care for up to 6 children at one time, no more than 2 under the age of 2.
Elmore	3	70	Infant 7 Toddler 10 Preschool 34 School age 13 NOTE: 1 family child care provider in Elmore who can care for up to 6 children at one time, no more than 2 under the age of 2. One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Center that only serves preschoolers. One ODJFS Licensed Child Center that serves all age groups.
Genoa	5	228	Infant 5 Toddler 14 Preschool 134 School age 75 NOTE: 1 family child care provider in Genoa who can care for up to 6 children at one time, no more than 2 under the age of 2. One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Center that serves all age groups. One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Center that only serves preschoolers. One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Center that serves preschool and school age (two toddler slots) One ODE Licensed Preschool Program, capacity unknown
Greenwich	1	29	Preschool 29

City	Total Number of Programs (all types)	Licensed Total capacity	Ages Served/Capacity
			<p>NOTE: no infant/toddler or school age care available in Greenwich. All care available is provided by one preschool serving 29 children. No centers or licensed family child care in Greenwich.</p>
Huron	6	306	<p>Preschool 247 School Age 59 (only open during school year) NOTE: no infant/toddler care available in Huron. All care available is provided by 4 preschools serving 29 children and two school age programs. No licensed family child care in Huron.</p>
Lakeside Marblehead	2	92	<p>Preschool 56 School age 36 NOTE: no infant/toddler or school age care available in Lakeside Marble Head. No licensed family child care or centers in Lakeside Marble Head. All care available is provided by the ODE Licensed elementary school for preschoolers and school agers.</p>
Martin	1	27	<p>Infant 0 Toddler 2 Preschool 20 School age 5 NOTE: Only care available is provided by an ODJFS Licensed Child Care Center that serves mainly preschoolers.</p>
Milan	4	252	<p>Infant 12 Toddler 27 Preschool 166 NOTE: no school age care available in Milan. No licensed family child care in Milan.</p>
Monroeville	2	47	<p>Preschool 47 NOTE: no infant/toddler or school age care available in Monroeville. No licensed family child care or centers in Monroeville. All care available is provided by two preschools.</p>
New London	3	114	<p>Infant 4 Toddler 5 Preschool 88 School Age 19</p>

City	Total Number of Programs (all types)	Licensed Total capacity	Ages Served/Capacity
Norwalk	15	585	Infant 20 Toddler 23 Preschool 283 School age 20
Oak Harbor	4	290	Infant 10 Toddler 14 Preschool 64 School age 180 NOTE: No licensed family child care or centers in Oak Harbor. One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Centers that serves all ages. One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Centers that serves only preschoolers. One ODE Licensed Preschool program, capacity unknown One ODE Licensed that serves only school agers
Port Clinton	5		Infant 7 Toddler 13 Preschool 144 School age 148 NOTE: No licensed family child care providers in Port Clinton. One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Center that serves all ages. Two ODE Licensed Preschool programs open only during the school year One ODJFS Licensed Child Care Center that serves only preschoolers. One ODE Licensed program that serves only school agers and is only open during the school year
Plymouth	1	6	NOTE: 1 family child care provider in Plymouth who can care for up to 6 children at one time, no more than 2 under the age of 2.
Sandusky	24	874	Infant 113 Toddler 163 Preschool 452 School Age 146

City	Total Number of Programs (all types)	Licensed Total capacity	Ages Served/Capacity
Vermillion	5	420	Preschool 160 School age 260 NOTE: no licensed family child care programs are located in Vermillion, no infant/toddler care. All care available is at 4 preschools and one private faith based elementary school.
Wakeman	1	25	Preschool 25 NOTE: the only care available in Wakeman is a public school preschool that operates during the school year.
Willard	5	224	Infants 12 Toddlers 16 Preschool 143 School age 53

What are the hours of operation/days available of child care programs in Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties?

County	# of programs open between 6am-6pm	# of programs open between 6pm - midnight	# of programs open between midnight – 6am	# of programs open weekends	# of programs open year round	# of programs summer only	# of programs school year only
Erie	41	7 (family child care homes only)	6 (family child care homes only)	8 (family child care homes only)	24	0	15
Huron	33	11 (family child care homes only)	3 (family child care homes only)	2 (family child care homes only)	20	0	13
Ottawa	22	0	0	0	10	0	12

What is the average weekly cost of care in Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties?

	Erie			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Child Care Center	\$165.00	\$161.00	\$146.00	\$84.00
Family Child Care Home	\$147.00	\$138.00	\$127.00	\$108.00
Preschool - Only			\$146.00	
School age - Only				\$75.00

	Huron			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Child Care Center	\$157.00	\$144.00	\$141.00	\$83.00
Family Child Care Home	\$156.00	\$152.00	\$126.00	\$108.00
Preschool - Only			\$146.00	
School age - Only				\$0.00**

**no standalone school age programs located in Huron County

	Ottawa			
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool	School Age
Child Care Center	\$161	\$142	\$109	\$115
Family Child Care Home	\$156	\$156	\$141	\$125
Preschool - Only			\$89	
School age - Only				\$53

*for weekly full time care(defined by ODJFS as 60 or more hours weekly), any age of child, all types of care for more information about child care determinations click [here](#)

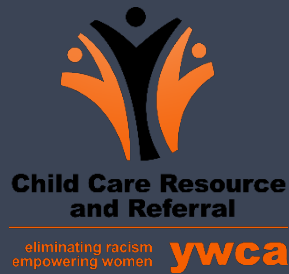
Child care is not a just a family issue, it is a business issue. It affects how we work, when we work and for many, why we work. Moving forward, child care infrastructure could also influence where people choose to work. Communities/Businesses that provide high-quality child care strategies not only differentiate themselves from the competition but will also create a “sticky” benefit that fosters retention. Employees are less likely to move to a new job or community if it also means moving their child care from an environment they love and trust. It is up to communities/businesses to think creatively about ways to build the child care infrastructure needed to help working parents keep working for their families, and the economy as a whole.

The CCRC is excited to be a part of this community conversation and can provide guidance on creative strategies for funders to support their communities, businesses to support their employees and at the same time placing investments in high quality child care at the forefront.

End Notes

1. **Child Care Resource Center:** Regional resource and referral agency serving Erie, Huron, Lorain, Sandusky and Seneca counties. CCRC supplied the supply and demand data, cost of care data and conducted the employee and employer survey in Erie County. CCRC is the author of this report.

2. **Firelands Foreward:** Firelands Forward was commissioned by The Firelands Partnership – a business driven engine dedicated to advancing economic competitiveness and quality of life in the Firelands region.
3. **YWCA Resource and Referral Agency:** Regional resource and referral agency serving Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Williams and Wood Counties. The YW supplied the supply and demand data, cost of care data for Ottawa County.
4. **Child Care Aware:** state and national cost of care information
5. **US Census - American Community Survey:** population data
6. **Internal Revenue Service:** Tax credit information for businesses that provide child care for employees
7. **Ohio Department of Job and Family Services:** Information on child care subsidy, licensing and Step Up To Quality.
8. **Employee Survey Completed by Erie County Employees**



This report was commissioned by Firelands Forward and the Erie County Economic Development Corporation to better understand child care and its direct impact on the workforce. The Child Care Resource Center with support from the YWCA of Northwest Ohio supplied the data and authored this report.

The data used in this report was pulled in February and March of 2022. As efforts move forward and the impact of COVID begins to fade data will need to be re-examined.

Child Care Resource Center
440-242-0413

YWCA of Northwest Ohio
419-241-3235

Firelands Forward
419-366-0286