

CCEEPRC 2023

Perspectives of New Mexico Families on Child Care Use, Needs and Preferences



CRADLE TO CAREER
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Broad access question

- How does family utilization and non-utilization of child care reflect constrained choices, and for whom?

Approach

- Survey and interview families directly to learn:
 - Gaps between their child care needs/preferences and the child care they actually use
 - Implications for their family

New Mexico context

- 10yr+ bipartisan ECE expansion movement
- Political will for universal free child care
- Dedication of federal stabilization \$\$ for expanded access
- Voter-supported state funding mechanisms to sustain expansion investments/policies

Context-specific access questions

- What would universal access look like for NM's diverse families and communities?
 - NM children:
 - 62% Hispanic
 - 22% White non-Hispanic
 - 11% Native American (23 nations)
 - 17% in immigrant families

Family Perspectives on Access: Sample Learnings

Ex. 1:

CCA's role in supporting family-defined goals

We surveyed WIC-eligible parents of young children, with a statewide sample of 479, as component of 2019 OPRE Child Care Policy Research Partnership grant

Sample:

- 24% had ever enrolled in CCA; 76% had not
- Of the 68% who had never applied for CCA
 - 46% of these had never heard of the program; 30% reporting thinking they wouldn't qualify

Ex. 1:

CCA's role in supporting family-defined goals

Access is a means to support family-defined ends.

Knowing what families are trying to achieve for themselves can support policy that centers families' goals.

Family-defined goals for next two years(full sample):

Financial (59%), career, education/training

But also child school readiness, move to new home, mental health

- ✓ **75% were too overwhelmed or struggling to get started on these goals**
- ✓ **80% said child care was important/very important to achieving these goals**
 - 66% of CCA users said it helped them to reach personal family goals
 - Another 25% said it was of limited help, either because:
 - Copays still too high to make care affordable
 - Worried about losing benefits due to changes in pay, which led them to delay progress towards goals (e.g., marriage, job advancement, education progress)
- ✓ **Just over 50% felt if they wanted to change their employment or education status, it would be too difficult to get the care they need**

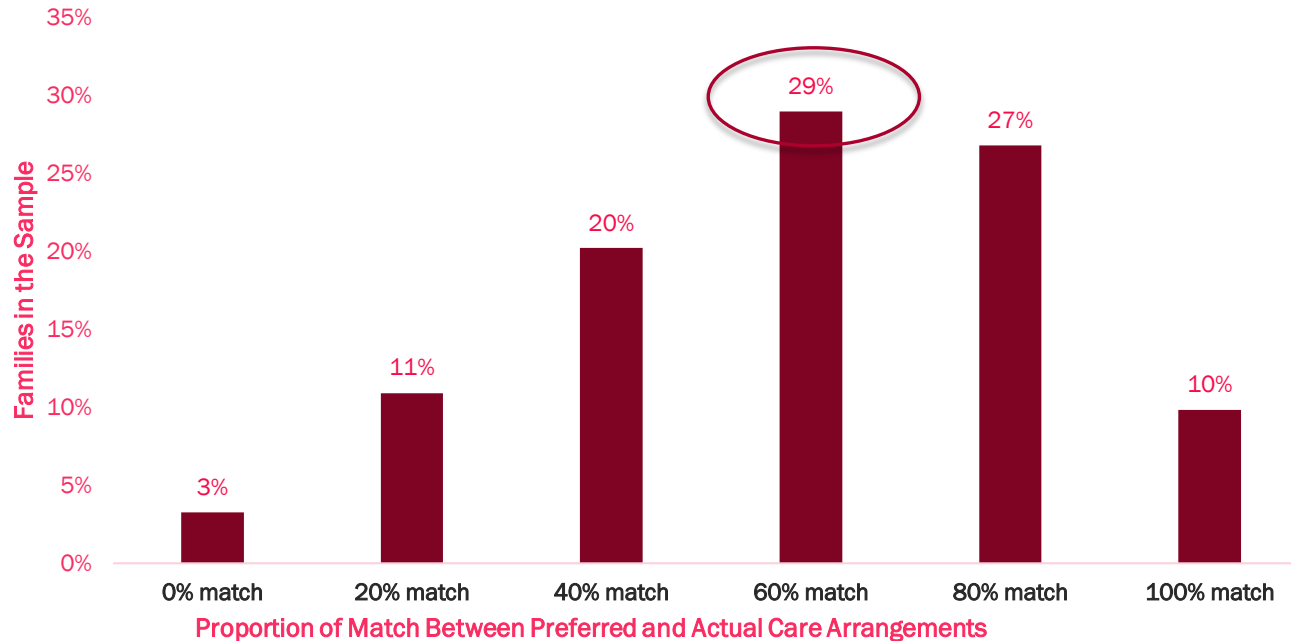
Ex. 2: Alignment of child care preferences and access for subgroups

We surveyed 374 parents of young children statewide, oversampling key NM populations of Tribal, Spanish-speaking, and immigrant/refugee families (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant, 2021)

- Child care use vs preference:
 - **About half were using care outside home, half were not (COVID context)**
 - **More than 90% of those not using care would use some form of early care and education if they faced no constraints to access**
 - Strong preference for center- or school-based settings, across subgroups. 32% prefer home-based care by a relative, 11% by a nonrelative

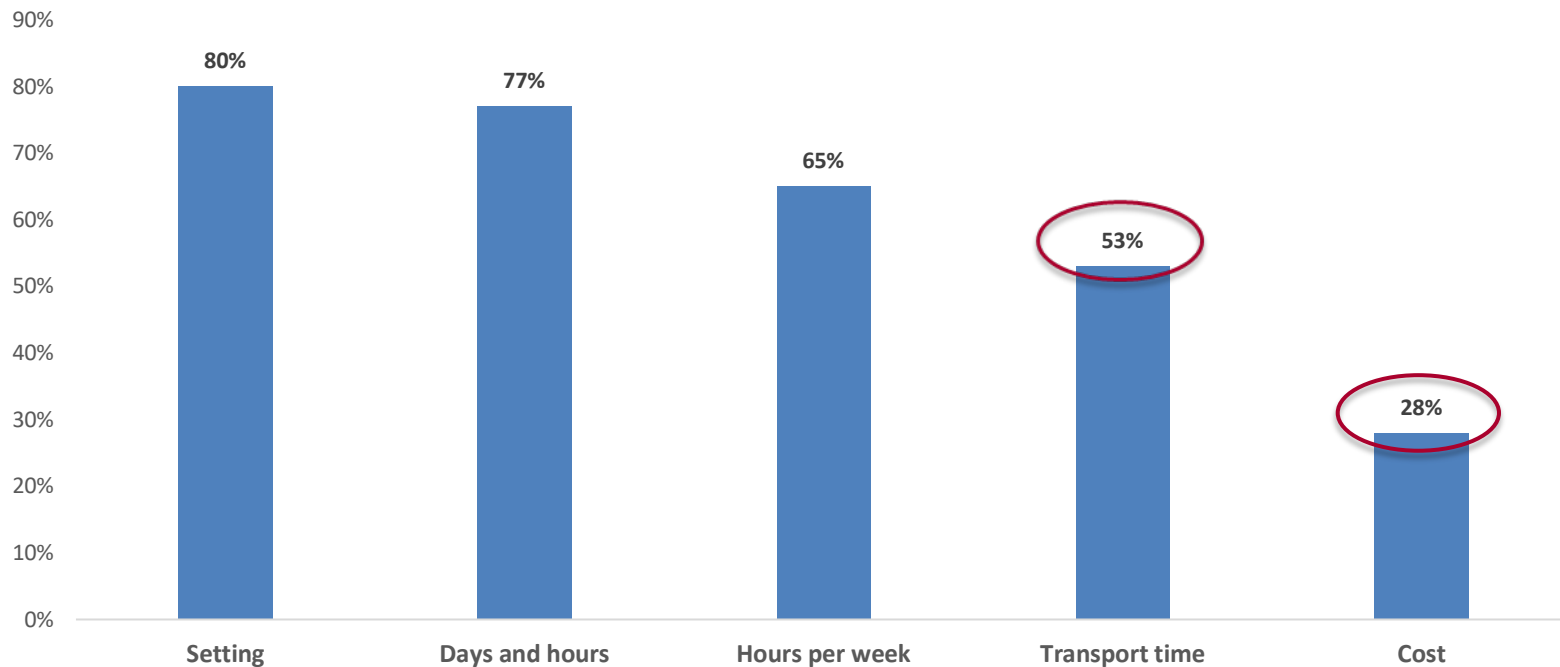
Ex. 2: Alignment of child care preferences and access for subgroups

Match between preferred and actual care arrangements, across five dimensions of access (setting, days/hours open, hours per week, transportation time, and cost)



Ex. 2: Alignment of child care preferences and access for subgroups

Among families using a regular care arrangement, proportion of match between their actual and preferred arrangements on key components of access



Ex. 3:

Culturally-specific child care needs and preferences

We conducted individual and group interviews with Tribal, Spanish-speaking, and immigrant or refugee families across the state (RWJF grant, 2020-2022)

- Sample: n=112
 - 32% Spanish-speaking families
 - 46% Immigrants/refugees (API, and Dari, Arabic, Swahili)
 - 22% Tribal (11 nations)

Ex. 3:

Culturally-specific child care needs and preferences

- Meeting Families' Needs
 - Pronounced **lack of formal care options for families living on Tribal lands**, with complete absence of options for children under 3
 - Infant and toddler care options were perceived as scarce by all, even in the largest metro area in the state
 - Transportation difficulties and lack of flexible/extended care hours (esp Tribal lands)
- Supporting Child Development (highly valued by all groups)
 - Families in Tribal communities: high value on care that would support their children in **learning and maintaining indigenous language and culture**
 - Refugee and API immigrant families: concerns with rapid child **loss of heritage language and culture** in English-only care settings
 - Tribal and Spanish speaking families, in particular, expressed a **lack of trust** that children would be well cared for in child care settings, especially pre-verbal children.

Measuring Family Perspectives on Access

- Methods: Time-intensive, relational, point-in-time
- An ongoing dynamic
 - Changing policy, economic, and employment environments
 - Challenge to measure family awareness
 - Lag time to new response, alignment