

# Design Phase of the National Study of Child Care Supply and Demand (NSCCSD):

## *Cognitive Interview Findings Report for Demand Questionnaire*

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## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Administration for Children and Families or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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## Executive Summary

Within the context of the Design Phase of the National Study of Child Care Supply and Demand, NORC conducted several rounds of cognitive interviews on the three instruments that were developed: a demand questionnaire for parents of children under age 13, a questionnaire for home-based providers of care to children under age 13, and a questionnaire for center-based providers of care to children under age 13. This report documents the methodology, content and findings of four rounds for cognitive testing conducted during the development of the demand questionnaire for parents. The approach taken was progressive, with some topics being tested iteratively across rounds, while other topics were tested only once. Another task on the contract, the Compendium of Measures, documented the extensive and high quality instrumentation already developed for asking households about many aspects of child care usage and preferences. For that reason, cognitive testing on this instrument was focused on questions believed not to have worked well previously, as well as those that were newly developed for the Design Phase activities.

Four rounds of interviews were conducted. Basic summary information about those rounds is presented in the table below:

	Recruitment dates	Interview Dates	Protocol Content
Round 1	May 29-June 6	June 2-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care schedule</li> <li>• Respondent (and spouse) employment schedule</li> <li>• Respondent demographics</li> </ul>
Round 2	June 9-13	June 16-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised Child care schedule</li> <li>• Child care payment, including subsidy</li> <li>• Child care event history</li> <li>• Search for child care</li> <li>• Respondent demographics</li> </ul>
Round 3	June 23-July 3	July 11-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised respondent (and spouse) employment schedule</li> <li>• Household weekly schedule</li> <li>• Parental child care schedule</li> <li>• Non-parental child care provider schedule</li> <li>• Revised child care search</li> <li>• Respondent demographic information</li> </ul>
Round 4	July 21-August 4	August 4-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care provider basic information</li> <li>• Child care payment and revised subsidy questions</li> <li>• Barriers to child care</li> <li>• Child care provider contact information</li> <li>• Home child care provider screener</li> </ul>

Because child care schedules and child care search were the major areas in which new questions were written for the Design Phase, these topics dominated much of the cognitive interviewing with parents. After three iterations, a child care schedule format was adopted as the best of these. That format moves chronologically through the week, determining who cared for the child. Transitions between care were quite challenging to capture appropriately. We did not feel that we were able to draft questions that would enable respondents to meaningfully distinguish between care provided by spouses when both were present.

For search, we posed some unstructured questions initially to capture terminology, salient issues, and other concerns. We then tested a structured section that functioned quite well.

We tested questions asking about children’s prior history with care arrangements; these arrangements seemed to be straightforward to collect, although respondents were less confident of cost and hours details.

Subsidy questions revealed interesting interpretations of such key words as ‘subsidy’, ‘sliding fee scale’ and ‘copayment.’ They also underscored the value of using local program names to enhance parent recognition of subsidy receipt. On the payment side, parents emphasized the importance of irregular and informal compensation for family, friend and neighbor providers.

Two sets of employment/child care barrier questions adopted from prior surveys revealed a great deal of confusion among respondents and were considered unusable for the NSCCSD as a result.

Parents indicated some reluctance to provide contact information for informal providers, primarily out of concern for the privacy of the providers, and occasionally for the safety of children. This reluctance foreshadowed problems for a ‘network sampling’ approach for identifying home-based providers.

A key feature of the tested questions is the inclusion of all age-eligible children in the household rather than only a focal child. Not only were respondents able to distinguish between children and report comfortably on all of them, they mentioned several situations in which focus on a single child would be inappropriate. For example, payment for one child’s care may be tied to payment for another child, or search for an arrangement for one child may involve another child’s care as a key search criterion.

# Parent Cognitive Interview Methodology

## I. Introduction

The purpose of this study, the Design Phase of the National Study of Child Care Supply and Demand, is to inform the implementation of the NSCCSD by providing the client with design options to match their research goals and budget constraints. The NSCCSD will build on the work of the original National Child Care Study and Profile of Child Care Settings conducted in 1989-1990. The NSCCSD is intended to provide a current picture of the supply and demand for child care and early education programs and fill gaps in our understanding of the factors influencing parents' choice of care for their children. In addition, this effort will address other relevant policy and practice questions that can inform discussions and decisions made at the state and national levels regarding early and school-age care services for all children, and in particular, low-income households. Cognitive testing was conducted as part of the development of three separate survey instruments for the NSCCSD-2010, which includes: parent/household (demand), center-based provider (supply) and home-based provider (supply). These interviews with respondents from the target population are a critical component of the survey development process.

## II. Parent Cognitive Interviews

Cognitive interview of parents took place in four rounds from June to August 2008. The purpose of the multiple round structure was to improve each protocol based on information gathered from previous rounds. In addition to the availability to review audio recordings of the interview, a debriefing among project staff was held after each round in order to share relevant information that would inform the subsequent interview protocol. The following table indicates the schedule for each round of cognitive interviewing, including recruitment dates, interview dates and protocol content.

	Recruitment dates	Interview Dates	Protocol Content
Round 1	May 29-June 6	June 2-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care schedule</li> <li>• Respondent (and spouse) employment schedule</li> <li>• Respondent demographics</li> </ul>
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### Respondent Recruitment and Screening

Recruitment for parent cognitive interviews was concentrated in Chicago and Berkeley, CA. These areas were selected because NORC has project staff available in these offices to conduct interviews. In addition, in Round 2, three interviews were conducted in New York City because a staff member was located there during the interview period.

The main recruitment methods were posting hardcopy fliers and internet advertisements. Fliers were put in public locations (i.e., bus stops, grocery stores, coffee shops) as well as other sites that parents and families were likely to frequent (i.e., libraries, Gymboree, etc.) In addition, fliers were sent to local child care providers, including Head Start centers, to be posted in those facilities. The primary internet recruiting sources was Craigslist.org. This yielded the majority of parent

responses. In addition, recruitment advertisements were posted on other listserves, such as through University of California, Berkeley. Over the course of four rounds, approximately 130 individuals responded to the recruitment advertisements via telephone or email. Only two screened respondents were deemed ineligible due to not having children under the age of 13. In addition, there were two rather difficult individuals who responded to the recruiting efforts. One man left several voicemail messages in addition to an email over a two day period as well as contacted multiple NORC staff in an attempt to participate. The second man, completed two screener questionnaires and was not selected based on his responses and then contacted the NORC Berkeley office directly to set up an interview. After being told that he was not selected, he called back and tried to participate under a different name. Due to the strange nature of these interactions, the project director excluded both men from being selected as respondents.

The respondent screening process was critical to selecting an appropriate sample of interview participants. As the protocol for each round included varying survey items, the criteria used to determine parent eligibility changed each round. When an individual responded to the recruitment advertisement, they were asked to complete a series of screener questions in order to assess parent eligibility. These questions change each round based on the survey items included in the interview protocol and were intended to determine how an individual would fit the parent respondent criteria for that round. The goal was to generate a diverse group of respondents that would have more variety in child care needs and usage and be more likely to provide different, important perspectives on the questions being tested. Varying criteria included: number of children, number of child care arrangements, type of child care arrangement, parent work status, and single-parent versus dual-parent households. If it was determined that a parent fit the screening criteria for that round, an individual interview would be set up.

Because the screener interview was quite brief and the screening experience important to gaining respondent cooperation, the screener questionnaire did not include questions about the educational attainment or income levels of potential respondents. Diversity along socio-economic lines, however, was a key requirement for the interview samples. In order to achieve this diversity, we emphasized recruitment activities likely to solicit interest from different groups of individuals. For example, revised recruitment fliers reference Head Start programs in an attempt to attract parents with children enrolled in that program and in turn would fall into a lower income range. We also reviewed responses from completed interviews about education and income in order to fill out

the remaining sample with diverse respondents for subsequent interviews and rounds. Due to the multiple rounds of interviews, this served as a supplement to demographic information collected in the screeners and helped to ensure that there was sufficient respondent diversity not just within but across rounds. As an additional aid, we used impressionistic cues such as conversational information about where the respondent lived, the respondent's type of work, and the respondent's hours of availability to build samples that were diverse in socioeconomic characteristics. Staff knowledge of local neighborhood geographic boundaries and socioeconomic statuses were helpful in this process.

### **Interview Protocol**

In compliance with OMB requirements, each round of parent interviews was limited to no more than nine participants. Each round included the maximum of nine participants (in compliance with OMB requirements) except for Round 3, which only had eight participants. This was because of a late cancellation by a respondent due to her child being sick. Interviews were conducted individually with only the parent respondent and interviewer present. Prior to beginning each session, the interviewer read the IRB-approved informed consent to the parent respondent. The respondent also provided oral consent for audio recording the interview, which was captured on the recording. The interviewer then administered the survey protocol, which, on average, took between one-half and one and a half hours to complete (length varied by protocol and respondent). Upon completion of the interview, the respondent received a \$40 incentive and was asked to sign an incentive receipt as documentation.

All interviews except one were completed in person with the one outstanding completed via telephone. In person interviews were conducted Chicago interviews were held in either the NORC Loop or Hyde Park offices which are located in different areas of the city. Respondents were given choice of interview location based on their convenience. All Berkeley interviews were conducted at the NORC Berkeley office. Due to the fact that NORC does not have a New York City office, each of those interviews were conducted in public locations (e.g., coffee shops) agreed upon by the interviewer and respondent except for one that was held at the respondent's office. The following table displays counts of parent respondent interviews by round and location.

Round	Chicago	Berkeley	New York City	Total
1	7	2	0	9
2	4	2	3	9
3	7	1	0	8
4	7	2	0	9

If they requested, parents were told they could bring their children to the interview; however, only one parent did this. Despite securing parents verbal participation during the screening phase, there were cancellations by parents in rounds two (3), three (5), and four (5). Reasons for cancellations included respondents and interviewers unable to find a common meeting time, sick children, and parents not showing up.

### III. Interview Analyses and Report Writing

#### Interviewer Training

Interviewer training was conducted in May 2008 in Chicago with a conference call connection for staff in the Berkeley office and was led by NORC Senior Survey Methodologist, Bernard Dugoni. In attendance were the project director, survey methodologist, a project survey director and two research assistants (one located in Chicago and another in Berkeley.) The entire group received information on the basic components of cognitive interviewing, including David Mingay’s four-stage approach to the human cognitive system which served as a basis for developing respondent question probes. The survey director and research assistants were trained as cognitive interviewers, which included conducting mock interviews with the Round 1 parent survey protocol in order to become comfortable with the process and get clarification when necessary. Interviewers also had the opportunity to share experiences and ask questions during staff debriefings over the course of the four rounds of interviews.

#### Review of Interviews

In order to inform the development of subsequent protocols, a staff debriefing was held between each round of parent cognitive interviews. In addition, two staff debriefing were held throughout the course of the provider interviews. These gave each interviewer the opportunity to summarize the topics that arose with respondents during that period as well as share experiences relevant to

testing process, such as respondent selection and interviewing techniques. After each debriefing, interviewers sent annotated copies of the protocols or detailed notes to the methodologist in order to document their comments. In addition, each interview was audio-recorded and sent to an external vendor for transcription. These written transcriptions were made available to all project staff for future review and to inform the development of revised protocols as well as the final report.

# Round 1 Parent Interviews

## I. Interview Protocol Criteria and Respondent Sample

Round 1 protocol sought to test data collection of three primary components: child care schedule; respondent (and spouse) employment schedule; and respondent demographics. Recruitment of a diverse respondent group involved screening potential participants based on household and child care usage. These criteria included:

- number of child in the household (one versus multiple)
- number of adults in the household (single parent versus two-parent)
- employment status of parents (work, school, training, none)
- number of child care arrangements used

Nine respondents participated in Round 1 cognitive interviews, including eight women and one man. Two respondents were the only adults in their households. Six respondents had one eligible child in the households, one had two children and two had three children. Respondents ranged in age from 22 to 44 years old. Annual household income ranged from \$26,000 to \$165,000 with four households reporting \$50,000 or less. Five respondents reported using only one regular care arrangement, two used two arrangements and two used three arrangements.

## II. Introduction

- **I1. First, I have some questions about your entire household. Including the adults and all the children, how many people live in your household?**
- **I2. How many of these are adults 18 years of age or older?**
- **I3. (INTERVIEWER: IF ONE ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK: can you tell me your first name? AND WRITE DOWN FIRST NAME AND "SELF" IN RELATIONSHIP COLUMN) (IF MORE THAN ON ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD:.) For each adult living in your household, can you tell me that person's first name and his or her relationship to you?**
- **I4. How many children under 13 years of age are living in your household?**
- **I5. (IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD: For each child under 13, starting with the youngest,) can you tell me his/her first name, age, and relationship to you?**

Overall, respondents did not have any problems answering these questions and providing information about household members.

### III. Child Care types and hours

- Q1. Next I have some questions about various people who cared for your child/children during the last week. Sometimes parents use more than one type of child care for their children. For example, a child may go to Head Start in the morning but to a grandmother's house in the afternoon. Or a child may go to an aunt's house every Monday morning but to a cousin's house to be cared for every Tuesday. Thinking about last week, I'd like to get an idea of (your child)/(each child's) schedule such as when he/she was in care and who cared for her/him. (IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD: Let us start with child care for the youngest child.) Starting last Monday at 1am, please tell me who cared for (CHILD). Please include times that you or another parent were caring for (CHILD). [Q2 & Q3 ASKED FOR ADDITIONAL CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD.]**

Respondents reported using a variety of care arrangements for their children. The following table indicates the types of arrangements used by each respondent.

Type	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Day care center				X	X				
Home-based day care		X					X	X	
Non-relative comes to R home	X								
Relative care	X		X		X				X
Summer/after school care					X	X			
Non-relative care at provider home						X			
Activity			X			X			

Questions arose about what types of arrangements should be regarded as child care, particularly recreational and sports activities. Some respondents were unclear if they should include these in their schedule.

**Respondent C:** I guess there's more clarification...because I think when kids are in the school age they have more activities, so like it could be soccer, whatever activities it may be, so maybe more clarification on if that's okay to insert them there. Because while he might be in and out of the class or the game ultimately they're in the care of the coach or whoever...the adults he's with.

Many respondents stated that they had an easier time recalling most child care arrangements in a chronological fashion rather than by specific child care type.

**Respondent C:** Because I think we did it in chronological; That's when I remembered oh yeah, my sister was with him and my mom was with him, but if I did it by activity I would have probably forgotten about that and I would have forgotten about the birthday party on Friday too.

**Respondent F:** I think that would have been more confusing [to collect it by type of care], rather than just when I can think of the times the time makes me remember where they were and what they were doing.

Respondent D had an easier time telling the hours her child was in care (and relating it to her and her boyfriend's work schedules) but a more difficult time identifying who was caring for him—he was always in day care, but different relatives picked him up depending on her work schedule.

**Respondent D:** I mean I had a simple situation last week, but sometimes if I have to work and his dad has to work at the same time then his auntie might get him from daycare, his grandmother might get him from daycare, his aunt might get him from daycare and that would be kind of different.

In some instances, non-resident partners supplemented child care. Respondent A has a fiancée who is not living in the household and is not the father of her children, but often takes care of kids,

**Respondent A:** If he's not working he don't mind watching them because they are no problem, but at the same time I don't want to... I'd rather my sister watch them because like I say he's a man in the end...so I don't depend on him mostly, mostly I depend on my sister.

Although he was not in the household, she provided information about when he took care of the kids and his employment schedule, which proved to be relevant to the overall household schedule despite the fact that he was not technically a member of the household.

## **Recommendations**

In general, respondents were able to recall provider information for the previous week. The request for information chronologically appeared to help respondents remember that information. Some respondents did appear to have more difficulty reporting proxy information when spouses/partners were directly involved in the drop-off or pick-up of the children from care arrangements. Requesting specific information about child care arrangements by schedule seems to

be the most efficient means of accessing this data. In addition, due to the length limitation in the questions, we do not recommend collecting care arrangements by provider type and then respective hours in care for each arrangement. The schedule allows for that information to be extrapolated as necessary with fewer burdens on the respondent.

In order to address respondent confusion on eligible child care arrangements, we also recommend providing special instructions to clarify which arrangements for school-age children should or should not be included as care arrangements. For all eligible children, we also recommend an emphasis on collecting care arrangements for transition periods (e.g., to and from school or activities.) Relevant questions would include: Who is responsible for the child when s/he is on the school bus?

Another common type of care that needs to be considered is informal and periodic care arrangements such as play dates for children. These arrangements would be collected in the above scenario but need to include a clear indication of who the care provider is and the frequency of the arrangement.

Parents were prone to slip back into reporting the “usual” week rather than specifically last week’s schedule (a common trend across all rounds). We recommend specific and frequent prompt in order to continually remind respondents of the focus week and encourage more accurate responses. In addition, the reference point for collecting the last full week’s data always starting with last Monday and go through Sunday. In order to further clarify the reference week, we recommend including the date of the Monday of the reference week in order to reduce any confusion.

Finally, to address the concerns brought up by Respondent A above, the current response options for Q1 include “child’s non-resident parent”, which should be sufficient for coding these scenarios. Interviewers should be trained to collect household employment schedules only for adult household members and not non-resident parents.

- **Q4. Would you say last week was a typical week with regard to (CHILD1’s) child care schedules? (Yes/No/DON’T KNOW/REFUSED)**  
[ASK Q4a & Q4b FOR ADDITIONAL ELIGIBLE CHILDREN.]

When asked for their interpretation of the term “typical”, respondents stated the following alternate definitions: normal, routine, “nothing out of the ordinary”, exception, and standard.

Overall, the term “typical” did not cause any comprehension problems and we recommend continuing to use it in the questionnaire.

- **Q5. Among the various types of child care you mentioned for CHILD1 just now, (which one of them is/which ones of these are) a regular child care arrangement that you use at least once a week and one week this month?**
- **Q6. Does (CHILD) have any other regular child care arrangements that you did not happen to use last week?**

[IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD, ASK Q7 - Q1]

In general, including a definition of “regular” in Q5 helped many respondents to establish parameters in regards to which arrangements they should include in their response. Some respondents provided additional interpretations to the question that were extensions of the protocol definition.

**Respondent F:** Regular would be at least every weekday or some weekday, some long period of time rather than just a 13-year-old that comes over to watch them for an hour.

Those that were confused about the phrase “at least once a week and one week a month” thought it would be better to associate “regular” with last week’s activities.

**Respondent D:** Like which method of providing did you use most last week, like that. You would understand like okay, he went mostly to the daycare or mostly to grandma’s house, so where did your child go – not where did your child go, but which method of daycare did you use last week the most. Because when you say at least... Well I understood at least one week out of the month, but just kind of like where did he go mostly last week or something like that [would be easier].

Despite some confusion, overall, respondents seemed to be able to provide responses based on the stated definition of regular once clarified by the interviewer.

## Recommendations

While some respondents may have preferred a different frame of reference than the definition provided, it was clear that providing a definition of “regular” was important in giving respondents a scope to consider in their responses. In order to further clarify the definition, we recommend re-phrasing the question as follows:

- **Among the various types of child care you mentioned for CHILD1 just now, (which one of them is/which ones of these are) a regular child care arrangement? By regular, we mean that you use the child care arrangement at least once a week and one week a month?**

This should provide clarity to respondents who do not have “typical” weeks often and use a patchwork of providers to meet their child care needs. By using a concrete definition, respondents can include any of those arrangements that fit within it in their reporting of arrangements without having to define a given week as “typical”.

## IV. Respondent and spouse full employment schedule

- Q11a. **Now I'd like to ask you about your current work situation. Last week, did you do any work for pay or profit? (YES/NO)**
- Q12a (IF YES to Q11a) **Last week, how many hours did you work at your job or all your jobs combined?**
- Q13a **Do you work the same schedule each week? (YES, SAME SCHEDULE/ NO, SCHEDULE VARIES)**
- Q14a (IF NO TO Q11a) **Last week, were you enrolled in a high school, college or university? (YES, ENROLLED/NO, NOT ENROLLED)**
- Q15a (IF YES TO Q14a) **Last week, how many hours were you spent in school?**
- Q16a **Other than high school, college, or university, did you attend any courses or training programs last week designed to help people find a job, improve their job skills, or learn a new job? (YES, IN TRAINING/ NO, NOT IN TRAINING)**
- Q17a (IF YES TO Q16a ) **Last week, how many hours were you in training?**

In response to Q11a, respondents had varying interpretation of “pay or profit”.

**Respondent A:** I thought of pay meaning money and profit meaning free... I just thought when you said that I basically – what came to mind first was okay, pay – okay either I'm getting paid or I'm volunteering.

**Respondent B:** It could be for profit but not necessarily for pay or profit. It could be for any type of stimulus – brain stimulus or any type of community profit... Not necessarily pay, but your own type of profit.

**Respondent C:** I thought that was kind of weird. I would just say do you have a paid job or a full-time job, part-time job or something like that, yeah.

**Respondent D:** I guess you could say wages. That would sound better... It seems like a side job or something like that. You know, like a little temporary job or something, that's what I thought.

While the confusion may not have affected their responses, it may have unnecessarily increased the complexity of the question.

Most respondents felt confident in the weekly total of hours they reported at work, school, or training. Those who did not have consistent weekly schedules or who were engaged in more than one type of work or school appeared to be less confident in their responses. Respondent A noted that she had a harder time remembering her schedule because it changes every week and is not a traditional (9am-5pm) job. She added that it would have been easier to answer these questions if she had her weekly written schedule with her for reference. Respondent C participated in an on-line school, for which she often studies during her lunch break at her job.

**Respondent C:** No, I think that would be the easiest [way to answer these questions], I just think for me it's a little bit more difficult because I'm not going to a traditional school where I do have to commute and I will have a set time. For me it's just kind of whenever you can, so I think for me that's why it was more difficult.

As a result, her schedule reflected a morning commute, work, school, work and evening commute although it was all from the same location.

## **Recommendations**

Based on responses to Q11, we do not recommend dropping the term “for profit” but we recommend adding a definition to clarify what “for pay or profit” means. Respondents responded to Q12-Q17 with relative ease. While more complex schedules caused respondents to feel less confident in their responses, this is relative to others and did not seem to strongly diminish the accuracy of their responses. Therefore, we recommend that the current wording of those questions is sufficient. In addition, responses to Q11a, Q14a, and Q16a are connected to skip patterns that will

take the interviewer to the further probing questions about weekly hours spent in relevant activities and the exact schedule (as asked below) only if it is relevant to the respondent.

- Q18a. Next, I'd like to get your full employment /school/training schedule for last week – beginning on Monday and ending last Sunday. What days did you go to school last week? For each day that you went to school, please tell me when you began and when you ended school. Please also tell me the beginning time and the ending time of your commute to school/back from school.
- Q19a. What days were you in training? For each day that you were in training, please tell me when you began and when you ended training? Please also tell me the beginning time and the ending time of your commute to and back from training.
- Q20a. What days did you work for pay? For each day that you worked, please tell me when you began and when you ended work. Please also tell me the beginning time and the ending time of your commute to and back from work.

[Q18b, Q19b, & Q20b ASKED IF RESPONENT HAS SPOUSE/PARTNER IN HOUSEHOLD.]

Eight of the nine respondents reported working full-time the previous week (defined as over 30 hours per week) and one of those respondents was also enrolled in school part-time. Six of those individuals reported working mostly during “traditional” business hours (9am-5pm). Three respondents reported working weekend hours and four respondents reported having work schedules that vary from week to week. (Only one respondent overlapped between these two categories.) The one respondent who did not work last week said that she periodically does work when she can and the schedule always varies.

Six of the nine respondents live with a spouse or partner and reported employment information for these individuals. Partners/spouses of five of these respondents were working full-time and one partner stayed at home full-time. One respondent reported that her partner had a variable schedule and worked weekends sometimes.

Respondents' views ranged in terms of the effectiveness of the time chart format for collecting employment schedules.

**Respondent E:** No, actually going through the schedule helped because of the recognition process...I like the fact that you go back incrementally in time for the schedule, what did you do here, what did you do there. I think anybody you speak to that would help the process. Some people's memories are better than others obviously.

Just like when you lose something at home your first – let’s go back with everything I did today. That helps the process and you usually find it. That’s the best way.

**Respondent A:** The commute was easier. The hours I worked that’s the problem cause I [work] flex....When I work in the evenings every now and again it will overlap with my morning, but the part that was easiest to remember was the commute, because I know if I have to work in the evening it will take an hour or an hour and a half to be at the store I have to go to...

**Respondent D:** Yeah. I mean I’m guessing I would say have it like daily/hour...how long does it take you to commute to and from work, like an estimate time, and then how long, how many hours a day do you work rather than from 1 AM to 10 o’clock that night. So just basically zeroing in on the questions that you want to ask – how long does it take you to get to work, how long does it take you to...what time do you leave or however you would ask that question. But I don’t think it should be kind of like a time chart. It should be a couple of questions.

### **Recommendations:**

Although some respondents had more complex employment schedules than others, in general, there were not major comprehension or recall errors evident in their responses. The questions would benefit from an additional focus on commute times. Therefore we recommend keeping this set of questions to collect parent employment/school/training schedules.

- **Q21. We are interested in how parents coordinate their own schedules and child care arrangement. Did you have any other activities last week for which you arranged child care (such as going to a doctor’s appointment or visiting a child’s school)? (YES/NO)**
- **Q22. (IF YES TO Q21: ) What were the activities and how long did they take?**

None of the respondents indicated additional activities from the prior week that required child care. One respondent said that they are often easily able to deal with any additional activities that arise because their primary provider is a babysitter who can take the children to appointments and activities. Two other respondents said that they try to make sure to coordinate appointments with their (or their partners) work schedules in order not to rely on finding additional child care. One respondent said this was aided by the fact that she is done with work by 2pm on many weekdays.

Respondents did not have any trouble responding to this question. Respondent E said that those types of incidents were easy to remember because they were outside the normal routine of the week. Respondent F felt that examples provided in the question helped to prompt her memory.

Respondent C said it would be helpful to expand the list of examples in Q21 to include sports or extracurricular activities that might not have been considered in the previous week's child care arrangements. While Respondent D had a relatively easy time recalling last week's activities, she said that in other weeks it would have been more difficult, particularly because it can include her acting as child care provider for another child.

**Respondent D:** For someone who has a stable schedule and one child it's easier, because I take care of my sister sometimes, so I'm having to balance [her son] and my sister...So like two weeks ago I was just like juggling, dropping [son] off, taking him with me, picking my sister up, making sure his dad had dinner. You know it was a lot, so I think the wording is very important because it would confuse some people who have more than one child...Your daycare – if you work on the weekends you're not going to have a daycare center. You're going to have like an individual day babysitter, so that would be different too. I think it's important how you word that.

She offered a question re-wording suggestion: "Did any events happen last week that caused you to get additional daycare or additional babysitting?"

## **Recommendations**

Based on respondent comments, we recommend revising Q21 to read:

- **Did any events happen last week that caused you to get additional daycare or additional babysitting (such as going to a doctor's appointment or visiting a child's school)?**

# Round 2 Parent Interviews

## I. Interview Protocol Criteria and Respondent Sample

Building off of the knowledge gained from Round 1, Round 2 protocol included a revised child care schedule for testing. In addition, survey items related to child care payments were included as well as an event history of child care arrangements. Similar to the previous interviews, Round 2 respondents were recruited based on variation in the number of children in each household and the number of child care arrangements (with a focus on more households with multiple children and using multiple arrangements in order to capture increasingly complex scenarios.) In addition, screening criteria also included variation in the ages of eligible children (focus on more school-age children) and the types of arrangements (at least one respondent using non-sibling relative care, Head Start, and afterschool programs.)

Nine respondents participated in Round 2: seven women and two men. Six respondents had only one age-eligible child, two had two children and one had three children. Five respondents lived with a spouse or partner and four respondents were single. Respondents ranged in age from 21 to 45 years old. Annual household income ranged from \$20,000 to \$120,000 with six respondents reporting \$50,000 or less and one respondent not providing an income amount.

## II. Introduction

- I1. **First, I have some questions about your entire household. Including the adults and all the children, how many people live in your household?**
- I2. **How many of these are adults 18 years of age or older?**
- I3. (INTERVIEWER: IF ONE ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK: **can you tell me your first name? AND WRITE DOWN FIRST NAME AND “SELF” IN RELATIONSHIP COLUMN**)  
(IF MORE THAN ON ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD: )**For each adult living in your household, can you tell me that person’s first name and his or her relationship to you?**
- I4. **How many children under 13 years of age are living in your household?**
- I5. (IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD: **For each child under 13, starting with the youngest,) can you tell me his/her first name, age, and relationship to you?**

While most respondents were able to clearly communicate household member information and relationships, this question did prove difficult for a few respondents because of relationship-specific nuances or temporary living situations. For example, Respondent A initially stated that three people lived in her home, but then said quickly changed her response.

**Respondent A:** It's weird; you know what I'm going to take that back and say 8. My brother is remodeling his house, so...They've been there for like 2 weeks now and it's kind of like they will be there for a couple of months.

Two respondents were cohabitating with their partners, but these partners were not the biological parents of respondents' child(ren) and thus they were uncertain about how to characterize the relationship between their partner and their child(ren). Specifically, respondents sometimes noted that a spouse/partner is living with them and that this person provides care for their child(ren), but the relationship between the two adults is unclear.

#### **Recommendations:**

Respondents in other rounds of interviews did not encounter the same problems as Round 2 respondents to the household roster questions. In particular, while some respondents were confused by categorizing the relationship between resident partners and non-biological children, this question set does not ask the relationship between those two individuals and is not required to determine the household roster as currently stated. Therefore, it is not relevant to revisions for this question set. In contrast, it does appear that these questions would benefit from a further permanency definition for household members (i.e., adult should have been living in the household for at least "X" amount of time to be considered a household member.)

### **III. Child Care: Types and Hours**

Q1. Next I have some questions about various people who cared for your (child/children) during the last week. Sometimes parents use more than one type of child care for their children. For example, a child may go to Head Start in the morning but to a grandmother's house in the afternoon. Or a child may go to an aunt's house every Monday morning but to a cousin's house to be cared for every Tuesday. Thinking about last week, I'd like to know who cared for (your child/all your children). (IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD: Let us start with child care for the youngest child.) Please tell me if any of the following providers cared for (CHILD) last week. (Response options for the following questions were Yes\No\DON'T KNOW\REFUSED.)

1. Did your (HUSBAND/WIFE/PARTNER) take care of (CHILD) when you were not at home last week?
2. (IF R OR SPOUSE NOT CHILD'S PARENT: ) Was (CHILD) cared by his/her non-resident parent last week?
3. Was (CHILD) cared by his/her grandmother or grandfather last week?
4. Was (CHILD) cared by another relative such as (CHILD's) aunt, cousin, or sibling?
5. Was (CHILD) cared by someone who is not related to (CHILD)?
6. Did (CHILD) go to a day care center, nursery, pre-school, or Head Start program last week?
7. Did (CHILD) go to regular school, such as, kindergarten, elementary, or Junior high school last week?
8. Did (CHILD) go to a before or after-school program or to lessons, clubs, sports or similar activities?
9. Did (CHILD) take care of him/herself last week?
10. Was (CHILD) cared for in any other way last week?

Respondents cited a variety of types and combinations of child care providers as demonstrated in the chart below:

Type	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Day care center						X	X	X	
Home-based day care	X				X				
Non-relative comes to R home									X
Relative care	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Summer/after school care	X	X		X					X
Non-relative care at provider home					X		X		
Activity		X							X

The topic of Q1.8 on after-school programs is not relevant for applicants with young children. This creates an odd dynamic between the respondent and the interviewer because a series of questions are asked for which the respondent cannot answer.

There was also confusion about who is considered the care provider in situations where two options are available. During the summer months, one respondent's daughter is accompanied to her daily swimming lessons by her babysitter.

**Respondent I:** [The babysitter] takes her there 5 days a week. She takes her to the Albany Pool and then the instructor works with her for an hour each day....So I am double paying.

The structure of the current protocol does not help decipher whose is responsible for her childcare during these swimming lessons. This would be a circumstance of collecting data about transitional care. Additional definitions can be added to the survey question to distinguish the primary caregiver during those instances versus a coach or activity instructor.

### **Recommendations:**

Overall, Round 1 child care schedule questions were clearer and more effective than this set in Round 2. Therefore, we recommend collecting provider information using a schedule method rather than by child care type. However, in interest of a thorough examination, we are providing some recommendations to improve this question set in the event it is preferred. We recommend that skip patterns are implemented in this question set in order to ensure that respondents only have to answer questions for relevant age groups. This particularly applies to Q1.6, Q1.7, and Q1.8. This addresses the respondent concern above where the interviewer asks extensive questions that don't apply to the specific respondent.

In regards to Respondent I who was unable to distinguish between the babysitter who brought the child to swim lessons and the swim instructor as child care provider, if both adults were present during swim lessons the determining factor would be who the parent considered to the primary care provider (i.e. is "primary" determined by direct contact with the child or the overseer of the activity/child care situation). Additional definitions can be added to the survey question to distinguish the primary caregiver during those instances versus a coach or activity instructor. If the babysitter dropped the child off at swim lessons and then returned later to pick her up, this would be a circumstance of collecting data on transitional care. Collecting data on both of these circumstances is an important issue.

## IV. Specific provider information by child

Q2. For each child care arrangement you mentioned earlier, we'd like to know some details such as the number of hours last week (CHILD) was in care and how much you pay for the care and so on.

- Q2a0. You said that you used [CARE DESCRIBED IN q1 ABOVE] for child care. Please tell me the name of the provider. Initials or first name are OK.
- Q2a1. Thinking about last week, about how many hours was (CHILD) cared for by (PROVIDER)?
- Q2b. Where was (CHILD) cared for?
- Q2c. Does your household pay for (PROVIDER)?
- Q2d. Do you pay
  1. By hour
  2. By day
  3. By week
  4. Every two weeks
  5. By month, or
  6. By year?
  7. Other (specify)
- Q2e1 (IF 1,2,3 to Q2d: ) Last week how much did your household pay for (PROVIDER)?  
ENTER AMOUNT
- Q2e2 (IF 4,5,6,7 to Q2d: ) How much does your household usually pay for (PROVIDER)?  
ENTER AMOUNT

IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD UNDER 13 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK Q2f AND Q2g. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO NEXT ARRANGEMENT OR NEXT CHILD'S CARE IF NO OTHER ARRANGEMENT OR EVENT HISTORY QUESTIONS IF NO OTHER CHILD.

- Q2f. Is this for (CHILD) only, or does it include other children in your household?

IF AMOUNT INCLUDES OTHER CHILDREN, ASK Q2g. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO NEXT ARRANGEMENT OR NEXT CHILD'S CARE IF NO OTHER ARRANGEMENT OR EVENT HISTORY QUESTIONS IF NO OTHER CHILD.

- Q2g. How many other children?
- Q2h. Does another person or organization help pay (PROVIDER) to care for (CHILD)? Does the government, a family member, or another program help pay?
- (IF YES TO Q2H) Q2h1. Who helps pay?
  1. Government agency
  2. Family member
  3. Employer
  4. Other program (specify)
- Q2i. Parents sometimes do other things in return for child care. Last week, did you provide any materials or services as part of your payment for this care, such as volunteering time, or providing materials to the provider?

(IF NO OTHER PAYMENTS NOTED IN Q2c, Q2h or Q2i. ASK: )

- Q2j. Even if you don't formally pay (PROVIDER), do you ever try to help out or bring gifts as thanks for the care they provide (CHILD)?

(Q4a-Q4h and Q6a-Q6h SHOULD BE REPEATED FOR EACH ARRANGEMENT CHILD RECEIVED LAST WEEK.)

- Q2K: About how many hours last week did your spouse care for CHILD?
- Q2L. About how many hours last week did you care for CHILD yourself?

Respondents noted that a chronological discussion (as in Round 1) would be easier to respond to than a list by child care type. Respondent H suggested that respondents be notified in advance of the information they may need to provide.

**Respondent H:** I think if you told us in advance, like we're going to be asking you about how many hours and stuff like that....So that you guys can have more accurate numbers.

In response to Q2a0, respondents who used center based care sometimes provided the organization name while at other times named an individual staff member. This question was a little ambiguous because it stated "Initials or first name are OK " possibly leading respondents to think they needed to name a person.

The payment questions (Q2b-Q2j) were fairly straight-forward for respondents, but more detailed questions about payment could enhance the quality of information the protocol gathers. Seven respondents reported using an informal family or friend provider. Two of these respondents paid this provider (one regularly and the second sporadically). Respondent D said that “sometimes” she pays her daughter’s father for childcare, but informally. She had a difficult time providing an exact payment amount because it varies so much.

The remaining five respondents did not pay these friends and relatives. However, they all reported exchanging some sort of good or service for this arrangement (e.g., groceries, gifts, exchanging child care.)

**Respondent H:** My dad always likes different sports, like he’s a big White Sox fan, so if I see something at the store I know he’ll like I’ll buy it for him. With my mom I like to take her out every so often to go get her nails done. Like if we’re at the store and my dad mentioned something that he likes then I would buy it

**Respondent I:** What I do is I take care of her [friend provider] kids because she works on the weekends...Yes, so they are there from Friday night until Sunday evening. They stay at my house. I provide everything for them, and then Mondays and Tuesdays I would probably maybe take some fruit or some dinner.

Some respondents acknowledge uncertainty when calculating an exact amount for the child care.

**Respondent C:** [providing an exact amount for the cost of childcare is] hard. Because I don’t take care of the books or anything, so the payments I’m just going on ballpark. I’m there but you know.... Trying to figure out how many hours... You assume... It’s not like you sit home each day...on the computer and figure out how much...

Respondent G had some difficulty stating a rate because the amount varies depending on the number of hours her child attends. In addition, she receives a discounted rate for enrolling three children.

The subsidy items (Q2h/Q2h1) did not produce a great deal of information, primarily because only two respondents reported receiving a subsidy. Both respondents knew the name of the organization from which they received the subsidy. More specific subsidy questions in later interview rounds will inform this topic more.

In response to Q2K and Q2L, some respondents had a difficult time distinguishing between which parent was supervising the child when both were at home.

**Respondent F:** In the evenings, yes, but I was there too so....we both were watching her.

**Respondent D:** I never care for her by myself. He's always there... Does that count?

Respondent report of hours spent caring for child may be inaccurate based on this confusion.

### **Recommendations:**

To clarify the confusion related to Q2a0 regarding providing an individual versus center name as provider, we recommend clarifying that when a provider is an individual not associated with a larger organization, the respondent should specify his/her name. When the provider is an organization (i.e., child care center, non-profit or school) the parent should provide the organization name as provider rather than staff members when possible.

Due to the high respondent usage of swapping services and goods in lieu of care arrangements it may be helpful to revise Q2i in order to expand the list of example activities to reflect these circumstances.

- **Q2i: Parents sometimes do other things in return for child care. Last week, did you provide any materials or services as part of your payment for this care, such as volunteering time, exchanging child care services, or providing materials to the provider?**

As demonstrated in Q2K and Q2L, in two-parent households respondents have difficulty saying who is caring for a child at a specific time. Therefore, we recommend including a combined care option. This could be done by either by asking the following question by itself:

- **About how many hours last week did you or your spouse care for CHILD?"**

Or asking it in conjunction with the existing questions:

- **About how many hours last week did your spouse care for CHILD alone?**
- **Q2L. About how many hours last week did you care for CHILD alone?**
- **About how many hours last week did you and your spouse care for CHILD?**

While these revisions will likely improve the accuracy of responses, there remains a burden on the respondent to calculate total hours. In order to avoid this, extracting this information from

household schedules will likely lead to the most accurate data. This revised question set was administered in the Round 3 protocol with similar outcomes. Further recommendations will be discussed in that section.

## V. Event history calendar

Q7. We are also interested in getting a history of child care for (CHILD) since his/her birth. Please think about the [first/next] time that (CHILD) was regularly cared for by someone other than [his/her] parents. By regular child care, we mean a child care arrangement that you use at least 10 hours a week

- Q7a. In what month and year or at what age did (CHILD) (first/next) have [ARRANGEMENT 1] as a regular child care arrangement?
- Q7b. What type of care did [CHILD] have in that arrangement?
  1. RELATIVE
  2. NON-RELATIVE IN CHILD'S HOME
  3. NON-RELATIVE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME
  4. FAMILY DAY CARE
  5. PRESCHOOL, HEAD START, OR DAY CARE CENTER
  6. REGULAR SCHOOL
  7. BEFORE/AFTER-SCHOOL CARE
- Q7B1 (IF 1 TO Q7B: ) What was the relative's relationship to (CHILD)?
- Q7c. How did you find this provider?
  1. KNEW THEM PREVIOUSLY
  2. FOUND ON A PUBLIC LIST
  3. HEARD THROUGH FRIENDS/FAMILY
  4. WAS REFERRED TO PROVIDER
  5. OTHER (SPECIFY)

- Q7c1. What was the main reason that you used this provider?
  1. SO THAT I COULD WORK
  2. TO PROVIDE MY CHILD EDUCATIONAL OR SOCIAL ENRICHMENT
  3. TO GIVE ME SOME RELIEF
  4. TO FILL IN GAPS LEFT BY MY MAIN PROVIDER OR BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL
  5. OTHER(SPECIFY)
  
- Q7D. In what month and year or at what age did [CHILD] stop having that child care arrangement?
- Q7E. At the time that you stopped using that provider regularly, about how many hours each week was [CHILD] cared for by that provider?
- Q7F. At the time you stopped using that provider regularly, about how much were you paying the provider per week to care for [CHILD]?
- Q7G1 (IF YES TO Q7G: ) Altogether, how many arrangements did you use each week for [CHILD] at that time?
- Q7H. What was the main reason that this arrangement ended?
  1. NO LONGER NEEDED CARE
  2. WASN'T SATISFIED WITH CARE
  3. WANTED TO REDUCE CHILD CARE EXPENSES
  4. PROVIDER STOPPED PROVIDING CARE
  5. OTHER (SPECIFY)
  
- Q7I. Did you have another arrangement in place when this arrangement ended?

Q7J. Was [CHILD] cared for in another child care arrangement after this arrangement ended in [month/year]?

Respondents seem to be able to recall their arrangement history, but were less certain on cost and amounts paid – especially because most respondents do not pay by the week, rather by month or year. The wording of the questions also generated some issues. Some respondents noted that their arrangements had not yet ended, were current and on-going indefinitely or that they had simultaneous child care arrangements. This was particularly true with relative providers.

Respondent D reported that going through childcare by the child's age would be easier than by specific providers

Respondent I had difficulty recalling the middle section of their child's care.

**Respondent I:** It can get pretty confusing because you're going right back to the early one and at least for me it's easy to remember the very beginning and the very end, but the middle part becomes a gray zone. So I could be just shooting out in the dark and maybe I could be wrong with some of the age arrangements or the period arrangements. I think the time factor gets me....There's so many things going on so it's very hard to keep track of the real things."

When asked how confident she felt in her answers about payment, Respondent I said:

**Respondent I:** In terms of the people I'm confident. I'm not too confident about the exact time period because it could be – it may not be 9 years; it could be 9½, so the time is a big issue and then the dollar amount became a challenge. Because sometimes I give them a full check. Sometimes I give them a weekly check, so once we make that decision I don't sit down and figure out."

There are also some parents who use child care intermittently throughout their child's life.

**Respondent:** [I] filled in the gaps whenever there was an emergency or someone couldn't watch her...it wasn't anything formal but I always picked up the slack.

The structure of the questions does not easily collect these patchwork types of arrangements.

Q7c1 led to some confusion for respondents. One respondent misinterpreted the question as, "Why did you pick this provider" rather than going through the specific reasons, criteria, or characteristics considered when choosing their child care providers. A number of respondents noted that reputation and prestige were the dominant reason. Others noted that they made their choice based on the availability of family members to watch their child(ren).

**Respondent G:** They're trustworthy, they have a good reputation, recommendations from fellow coworkers.

When asked why respondents picked their providers, responses sometimes indicated that respondents didn't understand the question.

## Recommendations:

In order to capture parents leaving and returning to a single care arrangement multiple times, we recommend providing an option asking if a respondent ever returned to a specific care arrangement and if so when and for how long. In comparison, the event history is only interested in capturing regular arrangements from the past. While the point one respondent makes above is valid in regards to not being able to provide information about patchwork arrangements, this is not the purpose of this question set. This intent should be clarified in the question.

In order to help give contextual support for Q7c1, it may be beneficial to provide response options directly to respondents including an “other (specify)” option rather than code verbatim responses. This may let them know we are looking for information on circumstances rather than characteristics of providers that contributed of their decision. This is particularly an issue for on-going arrangements and especially those with friends, family or neighbors. The alternative would be revising the question to the following: **Why did you need regular child care at this time?** This would also redirect respondents to the intended purpose of the question.

## VI. Open-ended questions for search of child care

- **Q10. Next, I'd like you to tell me as much as you can about the most recent time you searched for child care, whether or not a new arrangement resulted. We are interested in things like what you were looking for, how you how parents are searching, why they are searching, and what they end up with and so on.**

Respondents noted that given certain child care arrangements, the set of questions pertaining to “search” are not applicable. If a respondent uses relative care, no formal search process is followed rather an available family member is asked to provide child care.

**Respondent H:** It was always understood. [that her parents would care for her children.]

This seemed to get at family traditions as relate to child care usage. The current questions do not acknowledge that as an option.

One item that respondents noted was missing from the survey was a direct question about cost. Specifically the role that cost plays in their child-care decision making process; and how cost may limit the options available to them.

Cost seems to be a very important issue for parents, regardless of income. Respondent F recalled the main reason she had to seek daycare was because her, former, part-time nanny wanted to become full-time and demanded several types of compensation in addition to full-time pay.

**Respondent F:** No, I wasn't unsatisfied. She is very good with my daughter. She is very caring, but one I don't think [my daughter] was getting the stimulation and the educational development from her mainly because her main language was Spanish and I didn't think she was getting the socialization with other kids. And also this woman wanted to work full-time, and to work full-time she wanted two weeks of paid vacation, she wanted sick days, she wanted a metro card. She wanted all these crazy things that I couldn't afford.

Two respondents noted that one of their major barriers (to childcare) was their child's special needs.

**Respondent G:** My huge problem is my daughter's special needs, so there are all these regulations like – or maybe I should say preconceived notions that somebody who is special needs cannot go to a regular school or they do not have enough human resources to give a little bit of extra attention to one child. So there was that issue with the amount of personnel in a regular program. If they just had a few additional people my daughter could very well go into that kind of program so I wouldn't be spending through my nose for it.

Respondent F also expressed concern whether the teachers can handle a hyper child [with ADHD].”

### **Recommendations:**

To address concerns by respondents who only use informal relative care, a skip pattern or an additional set of questions about choosing relative care (and how this is done) could be helpful in order to reduce respondent burden and ask relevant questions. Also, allowing respondents who use more informal methods of childcare, like family member care that they do not pay for, to discuss how they came to this arrangement in more detail may prove useful. This may require revising Q10 to directly reference informal or relative child care as well. In order to get a more in-depth perspective of child care searches, follow-up questions about why respondents wanted or chose certain types of childcare could be helpful. Similar question sets were tested in greater detail in Round 3.

# Round 3 Parent Interviews

## I. Interview Protocol Criteria and Respondent Sample

Round 3 intended to test varying approaches to collecting data about child care schedules and parental search for child care. The protocol included revised survey items from Rounds 1 and 2 on these topics. Similar to Round 2, respondents were selected based on the following criteria: number of age-eligible children in the household (more respondents with multiple children selected); age of eligible children (more households with school age children selected); and number of child care arrangements (more households with multiple arrangements or not using non-parental care selected). A new criterion examined for this round was the type of parent employment with a higher selection of respondents who had inflexible or evening and weekend work schedules.

Seven parents participated in the Round 3 parent cognitive interviews. All respondents were women: one ran a single-parent household and six had two or more adults living in the household. Their ages ranged from 23 to 54 years old. One parent had one child under age 13, five had two children and one had three children. Five of seven respondents were married and living with their spouse. Annual reported household income ranged from \$10,000 to \$180,000 with four respondents reporting less than \$50,000 per year. Four respondents had completed some college, while one had a graduate degree, another a bachelor's degree and a third had completed some high school. The majority of respondents (four) reported working part-time, two worked full-time and the last did not work for pay but rather stayed at home with her children.

## II. Introduction

- **I1. First, I have some questions about your entire household. Including the adults and all the children, how many people live in your household?**
- **I2. How many of these are adults 18 years of age or older?**
- **I3. (INTERVIEWER: IF ONE ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK: can you tell me your first name? AND WRITE DOWN FIRST NAME AND "SELF" IN RELATIONSHIP COLUMN)\_(IF MORE THAN ON ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD: )For each adult living in your household, can you tell me that person's first name and his or her relationship to you?**
- **I4. How many children under 13 years of age are living in your household?**

- 15. (IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD: For each child under 13, starting with the youngest,) can you tell me his/her first name, age, and relationship to you and other adults in the household?

Respondents had no trouble reporting the household members and relationships. This is a strong question set.

### III. Parent Whereabouts

- Q1. I'm going to ask you about your current work situation. Last week, did you do any work for pay or profit? [IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, SKIP TO Q1C]
- Q1a Last week, how many hours did you work at your job or all your jobs combined?
- Q1b Do you work the same schedule each week?
- Q1C. Last week, were you enrolled in a high school, college or university?
- [IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, SKIP TO Q1E]
- Q1D(IF YES TO Q1C: ) Last week, how many hours were you spent in school?
- Q1E. Other than high school, college, or university, did you attend any courses or training programs last week designed to help people find a job, improve their job skills, or learn a new job? Please don't count training you attended during work or school times that you've already told me about. [IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, SKIP TO Q3]
- Q1F (IF YES TO Q1E: ) Last week, how many hours were you in training?
- (IF R DOESN'T HAVE SPOUSE/PARTNER, GO TO Q5 AND DO SCHEDULE FOR R AND CHILD)
- Q3. Now I'd also like to know about your spouse's current work situation.
- Last week, did (SPOUSE/PARTNER) do any work for pay or profit? Please include freelance work, work in the military, work for a family-owned business even if s/he did not get paid, and work on his/her own business or farm.
- [Q3a-Q3f, SAME QUESTIONS AS ABOVE BUT FOR SPOUSE]

Similar to Round 1 results, the phrase "work for pay or profit" seemed to confuse many respondents as there was varying interpretation of what "for profit" meant. Respondents provided explanations of their varying interpretations of the phrase.

**Respondent A:** Well working for pay would be a company that pays you on a daily basis – weekly, biweekly however it is, and then you're fully employed and then for profit would be like volunteering and stuff like that.

**Respondent B** [when asked what she thought the phrase]: Actually I wasn't sure whether it was a choice or not. It took me a minute... Working in a company, working in your own business.

**Respondent C:** Confusing, the profit part... I wouldn't even know [examples of "profit"].

**Respondent D:** Pay is like when you have a regular job. Profit is like run your own business or selling something.

**Respondent E:** Going to a job on a day-to-day basis... Maybe be self-employed.

**Respondent F:** Working for someone else... Anything outside of the home, supplements...

**Respondent G:** Employment, some type of exchange for services.

In general, parents interpreted the Q1D school enrollment question to mean participating in classes towards completing a degree at any level.

**Respondent A:** Going to classes – college for other subjects you may be interested in getting a bachelors degree and stuff like that.

**Respondent B:** That's you're an active student, pursuing a degree.

**Respondent D:** That you go to a high school or university.

**Respondent F:** I was thinking you were asking me if I'm enrolled. Almost kind of like a reservation per say that you're registered and they are awaiting your arrival.

Interpretation of Q1E training question ranged from specific skill training to general professional development. Respondents were asked what they thought of when they heard the term "training".

**Respondent A:** It just has to do with learning a skill.

**Respondent B:** Some kind of a workshop or training in some kind of statistical package or software.

**Respondent C:** Starting up, training progress, like for school – training for anything... Training for like a career, maybe not a job specifically but like a career.

**Respondent D:** That you learn a new skill.

**Respondent E:** Enhancing your skills...improvement, development.

In Q3a-f, six of the seven respondents were asked to provide work, school and training information about their husbands or live-in boyfriends. Four of those respondents said they were very certain or equally certain as their answers about their partners work, school or training information as their own. Two respondents were somewhat certain and explained it was due to their spouses fluctuating schedule and weekly variation in the numbers of hours worked.

## **Recommendations**

Similar to Round 1, there was confusion on the Q1 phrase “for pay or profit. The respondent interpretations of the phrases “enrollment” (Q1D) and “training” (Q1E) fit with the intended interpretation of the questions; therefore no changes are recommended to those items. The same changes should be mirrored for Q3a-f in order to clarify requests for partner or spouse’s working, school or training information.

## **IV. Full Schedule and Transition**

[INTERVIEWERS USED ASSOCIATED TABLE TO RECORD HOURLY SCHEDULES FOR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS LISTED BELOW.]

- **Q5. Next, I am going to ask for a schedule for the members of your household last week. Starting at 1am last Monday, please go through the week and tell me when you, personally, were at home, at work, at school, in training, commuting or something else.**
  - **(IF R HAS SPOUSE/PARTNER: ) What about your spouse/partner? Was he/she at home, at work, at school, in training, commuting or something else?**
  - **What about (CHILD)? Was he/she at home, at school, or somewhere else?**
  - **(IF NECESSARY, CLARIFY ON SCHOOL: ) By school we mean any K-12 education, including regular summer school and kindergarten at a local catholic school. Non-school activities include pre-school, before or after school programs, even if they are located in the school building.**
    - **(IF HOME:) Who was caring for him/her?**
    - **(IF SCHOOL: ) Did he attend any before or after school programs in school?**
    - **(IF SOMEWHERE ELSE: ) Where was (CHILD)? Who was caring for him/her?**
- [REPEAT QUESTION SERIES FOR ANY ADDITIONAL CHILDREN]**

[INTERVIEWERS ALSO RECORDED TRANSITION INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES.]

(IF R MENTIONS TRANSITIONS SUCH AS “CHILD WENT TO SCHOOL” OR “CHILD CAME HOME,” ASK: )

- **Q5A1. You just mentioned that (CHILD) went to [PROVIDER/ACTIVITY FROM SCHEDULE]. Who took CHILD there?**
- **Q5A2. (PROBE AS NECESSARY: ) What is your relationship to this person?**
- **Q5B. How did CHILD get there? Did he/she...**
  - Walk,
  - Ride public transportation,
  - Ride in (FILL IN Q5a1)'s own vehicle, or
  - something else?
- **Q5c. Did (ANSWER TO Q5a1) only help the child get from one activity to another or did he/she continue providing care before or after that transition?**
  - Only transition care
  - Continued care before or after the transition
- **Q6. Did you have any activities or events other than work, school, or training last week for which you arranged child care (such as your child being sick or your having a job interview)?**
- **Q6b. (IF YES TO Q6: ) What were the activities, when did they occur, and how long did they take?**

Six of the seven respondents reported having worked the previous week: three full-time and three part-time. Five of those individuals worked during traditional business hours (9am-5pm). One respondent was a stay at home mom and does not work at all. Two respondents had schedules that varied each week. Six of the seven respondents had a spouse/partner who worked last week: four full-time and two part-time. Three of those spouses/partners had varying weekly schedule and three worked some on weekends. (One individual overlapped between these categories.)

Respondents used a variety of child care arrangements and combination as depicted in the following table:

## Child Care Arrangements

Type	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Day care center					X		
Home-based day care						X	
Non-relative comes to R home	X	X					
Relative care			X	X			
Summer/after school care	X				X		
Non-relative care at provider home							
Activity							X

Round 2 protocol schedule questions are preferred to Round 3 set above and as previously noted, Round 1 protocol questions about child care schedules were preferred over Round 2 versions. Regardless, it is still useful to consider how best to reduce redundancy and discrepancies in respondent reporting. From a data review perspective, the method of collecting provider names used in the Round 3 protocol made it more difficult to identify the different care providers than previous protocols. These names have to be picked out of the schedule as there is no comprehensive listing available. In general, parents easily slipping into talking about their schedules in generalities (i.e., that is usually what happens). This included using language in the present rather than past tense.

**Respondent A:** He commutes – I’d say he gets home around 7:30. It all depends.

**Respondent C:** [I went] shopping to the grocery store. Sometimes a half-hour, sometimes an hour.

It was common for respondents to round time periods in this protocol (i.e., commute times, errands, etc.) They would often remember one part well, for example, either a specific departure time or a commute length and would rely on one piece of information to inform the other.

**Interviewer:** Once you got off work at 7 o’clock what did you do?

**Respondent D:** Came home.

**Interviewer:** How long did it take you to get home?

**Respondent D:** About an hour and a half.

**Interviewer:** That would get you home about 8:30?

**Respondent D:** 9.

Respondents were asked to report the level of difficulty they had in reconstructing the weekly schedules and those of their spouses (if applicable) and children. Some respondents indicated that they had a method for tracking their household schedules and it would have been helpful to refer to that calendar. For example, Respondent A used her Blackberry.

**Respondent B:** If I had a calendar or something to look at that might have been easier because I often write it down, a day to day planner – that might be easier. It’s a little hard to recall more than a week back.

Discussing spouse schedules was more difficult for respondents than listing their own schedules, particularly when the respondent was not with his/her spouse.

**Respondent B:** The exact times my husband left the house [were difficult to recall] because I wasn’t actually there. Exact times the children wake up from sleep is very hard to tell because I only wake up when they come and wake me up. It’s really hard to tell exact times. It’s very easy to remember infrequent events like birthday parties and picnics and things like that. It’s hard to remember each day when someone came and they came back

**Respondent D:** [Husband’s] schedule is flexible so he don’t know exactly how much hours he works.

Respondent D was “pretty confident” about when her husband left and returned to the house but not when he was actually at work or other locations. Respondent F also had difficulty remembering her husband’s schedule because he worked irregular hours depending on work availability. She felt that the questions were clearly asked but that she would have some difficulty responding with confidence regardless of the question wording or structure. Recalling children’s exact schedules posed similar problems for respondents.

**Respondent G:** Probably remembering everything the children did [was the most challenging] because sometimes we’ll do small things in between. Some things do not change throughout the week like they are in classes and the soccer, but then what I do between or what we might do right after may change from week to week.

This respondent indicated that it would have been easier for her to recall this information if she had been asked the schedule by child and list activities rather than do it hour by hour each day.

Respondent C suggested asking respondents to write down their schedules for a week and then report it to the interviewer. While this is unlikely feasible within the current design of this study, a recommendation of having respondents use a visual aid or calendar when recalling their schedules might work better.

Respondent B suggested adding examples to Q6 to help parents identify other exceptions when they might need to find other child care arrangements (e.g., going to a movie, dinner or another circumstances related to their children.)

### **Recommendation**

As previously noted, the Round 1 protocol was preferred for collecting child care schedules over Rounds 2 and 3; therefore, we recommend using the Round 1 questions to collect child care and employment schedules. To reduce discrepancies in schedule reporting, we recommend asking child's care schedule first, and then self and spouse's schedule, including checks to pick up any inconsistencies. These checks might include comparing the reported total numbers of hours worked against the calculated number of hours worked extracted from the respondent schedule. A second check may be comparing reported child care and employment schedules and asking about any time a child is not listed as in care but that the respondent (and partner/spouse, if applicable) are reported to be at work. Finally, in order to maintain specific time references to schedule, write question in a way that continually reminds respondents (and interviewers) to think about reference day or week rather than common schedule patterns.

- **Q7a. Would you say that your own schedule last week was your usual weekly schedule?**
  - **YES, USUAL WEEK**
  - **NO, NOT A USUAL WEEK**
  - **NO USUAL WEEK**
- **Q7a1 (IF YES TO Q7a:) Which part of your schedule was the exception/exceptions to your usual week schedule?**

[Q7b-Q7e ask the same as Q7a above but in reference to spouse and children individually.]

One of the top considerations in the point of reference week for respondents was summer versus school year work, child care and activities schedules.

**Respondent A:** Well it's summer time so everything is a little bit up in the air, finding things for them to do. I don't send them to day camp all summer long because it just won't work out. It's how it is you know. Sometimes it's hard when your work is interfering with your children.

**Respondent B:** It's really hard to say. It was my usual summer schedule but my work schedule does change a bit from week to week. It's reasonably typical of what my schedule is like in the summer... [The weekend schedule] varies from week to week. The weekly schedule has less variation.

Respondents provided varying descriptions of what "usual" and "exceptions" meant to them.

**Respondent C:** My home, sleep, work, shopping – those are my normal, but doctor – that's not normal.

**Respondent B:** Actually usual really means to me during the school year

**Respondent D:** Things I always do... If I do something I don't ordinarily do...not the same things [those are unusual.].

One respondent suggested "typical" as a better word than "usual".

**Respondent F:** Usual to me and it should be a nice meaning, a nice flowing pattern, but everything the opposite of that word. I would like to think of usual as routine and scheduled and structured. But to me my usual is like not structured, chaos, nothing set in stone, sporadic, spontaneous, things occur out of thin air. Usual is kind of a downer when it should be an upper.

## Recommendations

The current study design addresses the issue from Q7 of getting information on school year versus summer care arrangements by collecting information about summer arrangements on the demand side but excluding summer-only providers on the supply side. Regardless, it is worthwhile to note respondents' perspectives on this topic. Despite variation in word preference of "usual" and "exception" in this question set, respondents appeared to understand the intent of the question as it currently reads. Therefore, no change is recommended. In addition, respondents did not express concern about their abilities to report on their children and spouses schedules in response to these questions items.

## V. Non-parental Care Hours

- Q11. Let us think about the various people other than you or your spouse/partner who took care of (CHILD) last week. How many hours last week would you say (CHILD) was cared for by (EXTRACT NON-PARENTAL, NON-SCHOOL CARE FROM SCHEDULE)

[(NOTE FOR INTERVIEWERS: ) By school we mean any K-12 education, including regular summer school and kindergarten at a local catholic school. Non-school activities include pre-school, before or after school programs, even if they are located in the school building.]

- Q11B. How many hours last week was (CHILD) cared for by you and/or your spouse/partner? \_\_\_\_\_hours
- Q11c. Among (HOURS R MENTIONED IN Q11B) hours, what percentage of those hours would you say was (CHILD) cared by you alone? \_\_\_\_\_%
- Q11d. What percentage was (CHILD) cared for by your spouse/partner alone? \_\_\_\_\_%

[Q12 and Q13 series asked if there was more than one eligible child in household.]

Deriving the percent of time each child was in combined and individual parental care (including respondent and spouse) was difficult for some respondents (Q11b, Q11c, and Q11d.) Some respondents had difficulty separating the time their children were in care of one or both parents as asked in Q11c.

**Respondent B:** What do you mean by “alone”...The spouse is not in the house or in the house not taking care of the children?

**Respondent F:** When I am doing stuff – it’s not really my husband alone – it’s the both of us.

At times the percentage appeared to be an arbitrary number and some thought it had to add to 100% while others didn’t. Respondents also had difficulty calculating the math on the spot.

**Q:** What percentage was [CHILD] cared for by your boyfriend alone?

**Respondent C:** 10

**Q:** How did you arrive at that?

**Respondent C:** Because I have him the other 80%.

This respondent later contradicted herself by stating that her boyfriend watching another child for the same percentage of time as the child above, but restated that as 90% rather than 80%. She

stated she felt very certain about these responses. In other instances, respondents admitted that the percentages and hours were just guesses.

**Respondent A:** [Responses are] just off the top of my head. I have no idea to be honest with you. I'm probably selling short of myself but I would really have to sit down here with my own piece of paper and decide.

## Recommendations

This question set proved to be difficult for respondents to confidently answer and was filled with contradicting responses. Therefore, we recommend that these questions could not be considered reliable without considerably more detailed questions, which in the light of questionnaire length limitations does not seem to be a high research question priority.

## VI. Search of Non-parental Care

- **Q14.** Next, I'm going to ask you some questions about your latest search for child care, whether or not a new arrangement resulted from the search. We are interested in things like what you were looking for, how you were searching, and what you considered during your search. [FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN: Please think about before or after-school care you searched for, or activities, lessons or other programs outside of the regular school day.]
- **Q14a.** What year and month did you last search for child care? \_\_\_Year \_\_\_Month

(IF R HAS MORE THAN ONE CHILD: )

- **Q14a2.** For which of your children were you searching for care?
  1. CHILD
  2. CHILD2
  3. CHILD3
- **Q14b.** What is the main reason that you searched for child care at that time?
  1. SO THAT I COULD WORK/CHANGE IN WORK SCHEDULE
  2. TO PROVIDE MY CHILD EDUCATIONAL OR SOCIAL ENRICHMENT
  3. TO GIVE ME SOME RELIEF
  4. TO FILL IN GAPS LEFT BY MY MAIN PROVIDER OR BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL
  5. WASN'T SATISFIED WITH CARE

6. WANTED TO REDUCE CHILD CARE EXPENSES
7. PROVIDER STOPPED PROVIDING CARE
8. OTHER(SPECIFY: \_\_\_\_\_)

▪ **Q14c. At the time of that last search, what type of child care were you mostly using for [child]?**

1. PARENTAL CARE ONLY
2. RELATIVE CARE
3. NON-RELATIVE CARE
4. CENTER-BASED CARE
5. LESSONS OR ACTIVITIES
6. OTHER (SPECIFY)

▪ **Q14d. Which of the following describes the kind of care that you were searching for? (CODE ALL THAT APPLY)**

1. **Infant care**
2. **Toddler care**
3. **Evening care**
4. **Weekend care**
5. **Transportation provided**
6. **Meals provided**
7. **Special services**
8. **Lessons or activities**

▪ **Q14e. Did you consider more than one provider as part of your search or did you consider only one provider?**

1. MORE THAN ONE PROVIDER CONSIDERED
2. ONLY ONE PROVIDER CONSIDERED

(IF Q14E=2 THEN ASK Q14F. OTHERWISE GO TO Q14G)

- **Q14F. Who was the one provider whom you considered during your search? Provider name:\_\_\_\_\_**
- **Q14F2 (IF NOT ALREADY STATED: ) What type of provider is this?**
  1. RELATIVE
  2. NON-RELATIVE FAMILY DAY CARE
  3. CENTER-BASED CARE
  4. LESSONS OR ACTIVITIES
- **Q14F3 (IF Q14F2=2,3,4) How did you know about this provider? [RECORD VERBATIM AND CODE]**
  1. KNEW PROVIDER PERSONALLY
  2. FRIENDS/FAMILY HAVE USED THIS PROVIDER IN THE PAST
  3. PROVIDER HAS GOOD REPUTATION IN THE COMMUNITY
  4. NO OTHER PROVIDERS OF THIS TYPE IN THE AREA
  5. SAW ADVERTISEMENT ONLINE OR ELSEWHERE
  6. REFERRAL AGENCY

(IF Q14E=1 THEN ASK Q14G. OTHERWISE GO TO CHILD CARE SEARCH FOR NEXT CHILD OR DEMOGRAPHICS)

- **Q14G. How did you look for providers in your last search?**
  1. Asked friends and family with children
  2. Asked potential contacts who are providers
  3. Resource and referral lists
  4. Posted an ad
  5. Responded to an ad
  6. Yellow pages
  7. Other (SPECIFY)
- **Q14H. Please tell me what providers you considered. (INTERVIEWER: GET AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE)**

- Q14H1. NAME OF PROVIDER
- Q14H2. ADDRESS OF PROVIDER
- Q14H3. What type of provider is that?
- What is your relationship to [PROVIDER]?
- Q14H5. (IF NON-RELATIVE: ) How did you come to consider [PROVIDER] as a provider for [child]?
- Q14H6: Did you do any of the following to learn about this provider?
  1. **Talk to the provider**
  2. **Observe the provider myself**
  3. **See how my child reacts**
  4. **Ask friends and family**
  5. **Ask parents who use the provider**
  6. **Read on-line or publicly available reviews by other parents**
  7. **Look up quality rating systems**
  8. **Ask teachers**
  9. **Other(specify)**
- Q14H7: What was the specific information you tried to learn about [provider]?
- Q14H7\_2: Did you try to learn about?
  1. Type of care
  2. Hours of care
  3. Willingness to accept or availability of subsidies
  4. Financial aid available
  5. Fees charged
  6. Geographic proximity
  7. Public transportation accessibility
  8. Content of program

9. Year round care
  10. Services provided (e.g., transportation, meals, etc.)
  11. Languages spoken
  12. Curriculum/philosophy (including religion)
  13. Licensing status
  14. Other (SPECIFY)
- Q14H8: How much would it have cost you to have [provider] care for [child]?
  - Q14H9: Does the [provider] take subsidies or vouchers?
  - Q14H10. Does the [provider] offer some other financial assistance?
  - Q14H11 (IF YES TO Q14H9 or Q14h10) Was the price you quoted just now reflecting those discounts?
  - Q14H12. How many minutes would it take in travel time for you or some one else to take [child] to [provider]?
  - Q14H13. How well would the provider's schedule have covered the hours of care you needed?
    1. Would have covered hours of care I needed
    2. Would have covered most of hours I needed
    3. Would not have covered most of hours I needed
    4. Would not have covered hours at all
  - Q14h14. How would you rate the overall quality of this provider?
    1. Best I can imagine
    2. Better than I had hoped for my child
    3. Good for my child
    4. Good enough for my child, but not as good as I'd wish for
    5. Only good enough for the short-term
    6. Not good enough for my child

- Q14H15. How much do you think [provider] share your values?
  1. A great deal
  2. Somewhat
  3. Not at all

In general, respondents were comfortable answering these questions. Respondent E stated that the questions didn't make her uncomfortable because she did not think that the information was too personal and noted income questions as an example of a question that might make her uncomfortable.

Some respondents had a much easier time identifying the last date they searched for care (Q14a) than others, depending on how recently the last search occurred. Respondent C quickly answered the questions at first as 2002 but when prompted for follow-up questions, realized that her initial answer was off by three years, making the correct answer 2005. In contrast, Respondent E last searched for child care in June 2008 and had no hesitation in providing this answer with certainty, but noted that if it had been farther back she thought it would have been increasingly difficult to recall.

In response to Q14b, Respondent G indicated that she last look for care for her children in order to keep them "active and involved with other children." "Recreation" or "socialization" is a possible addition to the Q14b response options.

In response to Q14d, respondents described the kinds of care considered in their most recent search according to the available response options (as noted below):

Category	Count (mark all that apply)
1. Infant care	1
2. Toddler care	2
3. Evening care	3
4. Weekend care	1
5. Transportation provided	1
6. Meals provided	2
7. Special services	0
8. Lessons or activities	2

However, when prompted respondents also provided a number of other criteria they considered when looking for care. Respondent C required infant, toddler, and evening care in her search, her final decision for a home-based provider was based on location. Respondent F also searched for home-based providers and focused on cleanliness, inclusion of academic enhancement activities, and how her child related to other children in care. Respondent B was very clear in her caregiver criteria: “Safety, punctuality, patience, whether she had any experience looking after young children, pretty much in that order.” Respondent E also noted safety and security, provider willingness to accept subsidies and quality of care. In addition to the types of services provided by potential caregivers, these were factors that influenced the selection of providers by respondents.

Respondents who considered more than one provider in their most recent search, were asked in Q14G about strategies and resources they used in their search.

Category	Count
1. Asked friend and family with children	4
2. Asked potential contacts who are providers	1
3. Resource and referral lists	2
4. Posted an ad	0
5. Responded to an ad	2
6. Yellow pages	0

Respondents also stated additional search tactics that fit in the “other (specify)” category, the most common of which included making site visits and observing classes and talking to teacher in center based program.

For Respondent D the most recent search for child care was for a one-time child care need during a weekend training she attended. She was able to explain that she only considered relative caregivers for that day. It is unclear from the current question set if search for a single instance of child care is of interest or if only searches for “regular” child care arrangements should be collected.

Q14H1-14H15 explores the search processes for respondents who considered more than one more provider in their most recent search, collecting the following data: provider name and contact information; provider type; specific information the respondent learned about providers and

strategies taken to obtain information; provider fees; providers acceptance of subsidies and other financial aid; provider location and travel time; hours of operation; and general quality of care.

Respondent E is a good summary example of response to this question series. Her most recent search was in May 2008 and was for three children. She needed care because she works full-time. She looked for summer care for two older children and a new day care center for her youngest child because she was not happy with the quality of the previous care arrangement. In her search process, she looked to providers she had used in the past, explored on-line resource and referrals, and asked family and friends for referrals. She considered three centers and one home-based provider. She took her youngest to observe the class, talk to teachers and see how she interacted with the staff and other children. She said primarily she was looking at the quality of care.

**Respondent E:** Making sure that my child is taken care of. Does not have things where she can be harmed. Like making sure that strangers you know – like say you walk in and saying that you come to pick up Taylor you have to show some type of ID, you know, security reasons.

She also considered hours of operations, provider location, and if the providers accepted subsidies. Increased flexibility of home-care providers was also an advantage.

**Respondent E:** Yeah, or sometimes [home care providers] might take them to school for you if you get them there early. If I would have to go to work earlier that's an advantage of the daycare. Home daycares – some of them, and also they provide you sometimes – not all of them, with later hours because if you get stuck – you know things happen versus a daycare center, the only thing with daycare centers when you're late they charge you like a fee per minute after they're closed.

In the end, Respondent E selected a center-based program for her youngest child and YMCA summer camps for her older children. She noted that location and her children's interests were the deciding factors when other factors were equal.

In general, respondents felt comfortable providing detailed information about their search process including the names and addresses of providers considered.

Of the four other respondents who considered multiple providers in their most recent search, two searched for recreational activities for children, one making a final decision based on location and the second on children's interests. Another respondent searched for a nanny and ended up using

the provider who had previously worked for her. And the last respondent chose between two relative providers, making her final decision based on location and cost (one provider accepted subsidies, but wouldn't have charged the respondent a co-payment and the second did not charge anything or receive any subsidies monies.)

## **Recommendations**

Revise the wording of Q14 in order to clarify that respondents should only consider searches for "regular" child care arrangements rather than a search for a single instance of child care (as occurred with Respondent D above). We recommend the following phrasing:

**Q14a: What year and month did you last search for a regular child care? ("Regular" care is defined as at least once a week and one week a month. Please do not include searches for a single child care incident.)**

Overall, respondents seemed comfortable providing search information. However, they were not given an opportunity to discuss additional factors that influenced provider selection (including what might have been the deciding factors.) This is particularly true for respondents who considered only one care arrangement and therefore, skipped the Q14h question series. If this is of research interest, we recommend adding a survey item that asks for the final determining factors for selecting a provider during the last search. In this regard, it is also important to consider that parents with multiple children often take more than one of them into account when making a decision, even if care is only being sought for one child.

# Round 4 Parent Interviews

## I. Interview Protocol Criteria and Respondent Sample

Round 4 delved further into payment of child care and, in particular, subsidy access and usage by respondents. Survey items also explored respondents' experience of barriers between child care and employment. Respondents were screened and selected based on the following criteria: parent employment status (including households with two working parents and single working parent households); multiple child care arrangements (more households with multiple arrangements or use parental care only); subsidy recipients; and types of child care (mix of arrangements, such as center and family-based care, including informal family, friends and neighbor providers.)

In total nine parent respondents participated in the Round 4 parent cognitive interviews, all but one of whom were women. Respondents ranged in age from 30 to 40 years old. Four respondents ran single-parent households. In addition, four parents had only one eligible child (under age 13), four had two and one respondent had three eligible children in the household. Annual household income ranged from \$10,000 to \$200,000 with four respondents reporting less than \$50,000 in annual household income. Five parents reported working full-time and four part-time. Of the latter, two respondents were also attending school.

## II. Introduction

- I1. First, I have some questions about your entire household. Including the adults and all the children, how many people live in your household?
- I2. How many of these are adults 18 years of age or older?
- I3. (INTERVIEWER: IF ONE ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK: can you tell me your first name? AND WRITE DOWN FIRST NAME AND "SELF" IN RELATIONSHIP COLUMN) (IF MORE THAN ONE ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD: )For each adult living in your household, can you tell me that person's first name and his or her relationship to you?
- I4. How many children under 13 years of age are living in your household?
- I5. (IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD IN HOUSEHOLD: For each child under 13, starting with the youngest,) can you tell me his/her first name, age, and relationship to you and other adults in the household?

Similar to previous rounds, respondents did not have trouble understanding this question set and providing subsequent household member information.

### III. General Information About Child Care Arrangement

- C1: (Starting with the youngest child,) please tell me who took care of (CHILD) last week when you didn't? Any one else?
- C2. You've mentioned that (CHILD) was cared for by (PROVIDER FILLED IN FROM C1) last week. Do you use [provider] regularly or is it just a one-time thing? By regularly, we mean the care is used more than once a week and more than one week every month.
- C3. Is there a regular child care arrangement for (CHILD) that you didn't happen to use last week? (1=yes; 2=no; 3=don't know
- C4 (IF C3=1: ) Who usually provides care for (CHILD) but didn't do so last week?  
[Incorporated skip patterns repeat this set if respondent had more than one child.]

Types and combinations of child care arrangements used by the respondents are listed below.

Type	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Day care center	X				X		X		
Home-based day care								X	X
Non-relative comes to R home	X	X		X					
Relative care	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
Summer/after school care		X	X			X			X
Non-relative care at provider home		X							
Activity									

In response to QC1, respondents reported using between two and five different care arrangements for their children. The breakdown of type of providers used was as follows: day care centers (3); home care providers (2); non-relative care provider in respondent home (3); relative care provider (7); summer/after school care (4); and recreational activity (1).

QC2 was meant to filter the “regular” child care arrangements (i.e., used more than once a week and more than one week every month) from those that may only be used sporadically or have been used only once by chance during the reference week. Apparent in many interviews was the importance of further defining “regular” care for the purposes of the survey. It may not be

necessary to explicitly state this in the protocol, but data collection staff should be clear on these definitions in order to be able to handle unusual situations. This challenge was partially due to the fact that interviews were conducted during the summer months when parents might be using different arrangements than those used during the school year. (School year arrangements were often considered “regular” although summer care arrangements often fit within the definition provided in the protocol.) Specifically, there was confusion using the term “regular” in relation to frequency of care. As “regular” care was defined as more than once a week and more than one week a month in, sometimes a parent’s use of provider would start and stop. For example, it might be “regular” for three weeks and then not for a period before starting up again. This may also be an issue for school year recreational activities for children (i.e., football in the fall and soccer in the spring).

In addition, due to the irregular summer schedule, in two interviews respondents had used no child arrangements in the previous week because they were between the “regular” summer and school year schedules. While the protocol included a specific period of reference (last week), one respondent had a difficult time identifying regular care because she was between providers.

**Respondent C:** The regular daycare program they would go to after school closed just now in July, so the question is there a regular childcare arrangement that didn’t happen last week. Not anymore. I don’t know how to answer that.

In order to capture relevant arrangements for purposes of the cognitive testing, interviewers adjusted the protocol slightly to capture further information for both the previous after school program and the summer care that just ended.

In addition, one parent discussed using recreational activities as child care arrangements.

**Respondent B:** Last year the first semester we were also going to Destiny Art Center, which even though it’s an art center it really is another form of childcare for me in terms of have her doing something during the evening...I really think of it as both [child care and an extracurricular activity] because when she’s there it helps me.

Additionally, while it has been agreed that school is not considered a child care arrangement, there continues to be discussion on including voluntary preschool enrollment. One respondent has a special needs child who started preschool at age four, partly so that he can receive the therapy services provided at the program. The respondent thought that that would unlikely be considered a

child care arrangement but also felt that it was necessary to include it because it is voluntary school enrollment.

**Respondent D:** Well, it's voluntary in the sense that he's 4 and even 4 you don't have to send your kids to preschool, but because he has special needs he gets his therapy at school rather than home so we want to send him to school. I was just curious. I don't really think of that as childcare, but in a sense it is because he's not at home and I don't have anyone taking care of him.

In this regard, a program may or may not be child care in a parent's eyes depending on the reason for selecting as well as the inherent characteristics of the activity.

### **Recommendations**

In order to address any discrepancy of "regular" child care arrangements from Q2, we recommend developing a more specific definition in the questionnaire. This would not only include the current frequency definition (at least one day per week and one week per month) but also how to handle arrangements that start and stop throughout the year (e.g, sports or recreational activities). As in Round 3, the issue of summer versus school year care needs to be addressed on the demand side but not the supply. Therefore, these questions should allow for identification of that type of care although "regular" arrangements will not be defined by the time of year during which they are used.

A specific protocol needs to be established in order to understand instances where a respondent did not use any child care the previous week, but that was not a regular week. If this occurs, we recommend that respondents be instructed to refer to what they consider to be a regular week and to provide information for those child care arrangements.

Finally, an additional definition should be developed for what parents consider a "child care arrangement" to be. (This is particularly in reference to the pre-K scenario above, as well as single-activity after-school care.) This will assist parents in supplying their arrangements when there are potential discrepancies.

## **IV. Subsidy Tied to Each Provider**

- **E2. (Starting with the youngest child, ) Does [provider] charge you anything directly for the care of (CHILD)? Please include charges even if you are later reimbursed. [IF YES, SKIP TO E7]**

- E3. Is the [provider] paid by someone or someplace else for the care of (CHILD)? Do not include payments, reimbursements or vouchers that go directly to you. [IF NO, SKIP TO E6]
- E4. Who pays them?
  1. welfare or office of employment services
  2. agency for child development
  3. local or community program
  4. community or religious group
  5. family or friend
  6. employer
  7. other
  8. don't know
  9. refused
- E5. Do you have a co-payment in addition to the payments made by (this source/these sources)?"  
[IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED SKIP TO E9A]
- E5A. How much is your co-payment?
- E5B. Is that per hour, per day, per week, bi-weekly, monthly, or something else?
- E5c. (IF R HAS MORE THAN ONE CHILD WHO USES PROVIDER) Is that amount for (CHILD) only, or for more than one child?
- E6. So this care is provided free by [provider]?  
[IF YES, DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED, SKIP TO E9A; IF NO, GO BACK TO E3]
- E7. Now think about the money you pay for [provider]. Sometimes the amount of money that a parent is charged for a child care arrangement or program depends on how much the family earns. This is sometimes called a sliding fee scale. Is the amount you are charged for the care provided by [provider] determined by how much money you earn?
- E7A. How much do you pay this [provider]? E7AA. Is that per hour, per day, per week, bi-weekly, monthly, or something else?
- E7AB. (IF R HAS MORE THAN ONE CHILD WHO USES PROVIDER) Is that amount for (CHILD) only, or for more than one child?

- E8. Is [provider] also paid or reimbursed directly by any person or program? Do not include payments, reimbursements or vouchers that went directly to you.  
[IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NOT, DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED, SKIP TO S1]
- E8A. Who pays them?
- E9A. Do you receive payments, reimbursements or vouchers that are paid directly to you to cover some portion of the payments you make to [provider] for (CHILD)'s care?  
[IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NOT, DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED, SKIP TO S1]
- E9B. How much do you receive in payments, reimbursements or vouchers that are paid directly to you for [provider]?

In general, the subsidy question set went smoothly; most respondents knew how much they paid for care and if they received a subsidy. This process did not appear to be more complicated with multiple children or arrangements.

One significant issue in this section was the varying interpretations of terms related to subsidy receipt, specifically: sliding fee scale and copayment. The following quotes highlight the variation in respondents understanding of these terms.

Sliding Fee Scale (Q7):

Respondent C said she paid for a provider based on a sliding fee scale related to their income level. She said that she knew that the outstanding amount of the program costs for her children were covered in some other way (what she considered a program subsidy) but she didn't know where those funds came from. This is not subsidy as we have considered it because it was not directly related to the individual payment for their child, but she considered it to be one and included in her response to QE3 & E4.

**Respondent C:** That question about who pay for that second provider because it involves – I know a sliding scale location gives subsidies – I don't know. Just that one question is difficult. The wording is too difficult, too difficult to understand. I'd have to really know what subsidizing means. I'd have to really know what some of the other words you used – is anybody else paying. That really throws me off.

Respondent E made the distinction between interactions related to payment between two parties versus the assistance of a third party.

**Respondent E:** Yeah, I've heard of [sliding fee scale] a lot but they don't call it that. They just call it a regular copayment. The school uses a sliding fee scale. Schools use that. That's their way of calling it the sliding fee scale but honestly it seems to me the sliding fee scale would be more about not dealing with a third party, but more like based on my income and I pay directly to you that would have a third party involved in it. But their perception of sliding fees is not the same as what I think it should be.

Respondent D thought sliding fee scale might be related to the number of children in care rather than based on income.

**Respondent D:** I thought maybe that had to do with like one or two kids, like it would slide higher if two kids were being taken care of versus one because we talked about that a little bit. Yes, I guess income-based would be more straightforward in my mind.

One respondent's (C) child received a scholarship for an academic program and the family was responsible for a set amount to cover the rest. Qualifications for scholarship were income and grades, similar to the sliding fee scale but she didn't consider it to be a sliding fee. Her response fit with the intended definition. Two respondents had never heard of the term sliding fee scale before.

#### Copayment:

Respondent C noted the difference she viewed between "copayment" and "fee":

**Respondent C:** Fee means a big amount – more amount. A copayment means I'm sharing. I'm co-partnering with somebody else and a fee to me means the whole amount.

In comparison, Respondent G thought of "copayment" as payment that is "reduced or discounted, supported" cost in any way. If a parent is paying a reduced rate based on a sliding fee scale this would be considered a copayment. In addition, more than one respondent associated "copayment" with insurance.

**Respondent A:** That just brings up ideas of insurance, co-insurance, so it's saying you have a certain plan to pay for it but then you have to pay a certain co-pay that goes along with the coverage I guess.

**Respondent C:** Where I pay a copayment is with health insurance, which I'm familiar with. My employer pays some and then my copayment is this portion, which is a smaller amount.

Respondent C discussed receiving a sliding fee discount and her perspective of that relationship to “copayment”.

**Respondent C:** I see the correlation between sliding fee scale and copayment, because a sliding fee scale is what your portion that you have to pay for your children. We’ll find monies to cover the rest of the childcare and what it costs, but your portion is going to be this so that’s your copayment.

Other issues arose in which respondents did not pay all or some of the total fee due to reasons other than direct subsidies or sliding fee scale. Some respondents were confused in QE3 about including subsidies or grants to programs that might decrease cost to all participants, not just for their children.

**Respondent G:** I’m not aware of [the provider being paid directly by another person or program] but the center gets funding from the Chicago Public Schools. They have a grant from there, but how much and what it’s for I don’t know.

In this question series respondents also brought up the relationship between employers and child care subsidies. One respondent received a subsidized rate because his employer has a contract with the day care provider. Employees are charged a reduced for using this provider. He also made a suggestion about including employer-sponsored child care that is onsite.

**Respondent A:** The only thing would be kind of that work related subsidized childcare. My wife works at a company that actually offers daycare or childcare for their employees...so I guess that would be a question that refers to things that offer childcare at that facility – the workplace.

Two other employees addressed the opportunity to set aside additional flexible spending funds specifically for child care costs.

**Respondent F:** When I worked full-time and my husband also worked full-time we would have been eligible for the childcare subsidy spending account...up to \$5,000...I don’t know if folks would understand that as getting money back even though it’s their own money, so that might be something you want to think about how to ask people about...The only advantage is that you’re not paying taxes on that amount up to \$5,000 for the year for the entire family.

They did not necessarily consider this to be a subsidy but felt that it was relevant nonetheless.

### Payment

Two respondents brought up the issue of relatives paying the fees for child care arrangements. For example, Respondent B did not know details of payment because the child's grandmother covered the costs.

In response to QE7AB, one respondent paid a set rate for one provider who generally watched one child, but sometimes took care of the second one at no extra charge. The current wording of the question did not account for that variation.

**Respondent D:** It depends. She babysits for [daughter] for Thursdays when I'm working at home and she takes care of [daughter] when [son] is at school. But if both kids are home she takes care of both kids, so sometimes it includes care of both.

This respondent also had a separate regular care arrangement for her daughter, which covered most of the needed care at home. The provider mentioned above appeared to be the exception rather than norm for the daughter's care.

### **Recommendations:**

Despite some confusion about terms, this question section is functioning properly and respondents were able to confidently provide answers. Therefore, we recommend keeping this question set with minor addition. "Co-payment" should be defined in QE5 in order to reduce misinterpretations. We also recommend changing the wording of QE5A to "How much do you pay [provider] yourself?" In QE7, it is important to keep the definition of "sliding fee scale" as it appeared to clarify that term for many respondents. Finally, the list of subsidizing entities in QE4 should include public schools or education agency in order to be more inclusive (as demonstrated in Respondent G's earlier quote.)

## **V. Subsidy in past 12 months: General, not tied to any particular provider**

- **S1. Thinking about the past 12 months, did you ever receive a child care subsidy from the government at any time for any child, including child care money from the welfare office? [IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NOT, DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED, SKIP TO S11]**
- **S2. When did you first receive the subsidy?**
- **S2A. What agency or program did you receive the subsidy from?**

- S2B. What was the care arrangement or provider that the subsidy was paying for?
- S3. Did you discontinue or were you dropped from the subsidy program?  
[IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, SKIP TO S7]
- S4. In what month and year did the subsidy end?
- S6. Why did you (were you) discontinued or dropped from the program?
  1. Because my household went over the income limit allowed by the subsidy program
  2. Because my employer did not want to verify my hours of work for the subsidy program
  3. Because I couldn't get the required minimum of 25 hours of work per week
  4. Because I decided that I didn't want to be bothered any more with the requirements of the subsidy program
  5. Because I did not follow through with my re-certification
  6. Because I underpaid my in-home child care provider
  7. Because the subsidy was not mailed to me or the child care provider on time
  8. Because my welfare-to-work program ended
  9. Other (Specify)
- S7. How much did the government pay for the child care subsidy?
- S8\_A. Did you receive a voucher?
- S8. Is/Was the subsidy paid directly to you or to the child care provider?
- S9. Is/Was subsidy enough to cover your child care expenses for all of your children under age 13?
- S10. How often, during the last 12 months, have you lost child care subsidy money because you missed a day of work?

Subsidy (QS1):

Although some respondents' understanding of "subsidy" varied somewhat, each generally thought of the term as a supplement to the total cost, which fit with the intended meaning of the question.

**Respondent E:** When I think of subsidy I think of assistance based on your income. Not based on your income because income can be a lot and you could have a lot of money too, but if you're low income that to me is assistance or a fixed income – fixed income and low income.

**Respondent A:** [Subsidy] just means kind of a cash back to pay for a certain service.... Government handout. Government incentive.

**Respondent B:** [Subsidy] means that someone else is paying for part of the childcare...partial payment.

The reference to “welfare office” in QS1 was confusing for some respondents. This may have been due to its location as the last word in the question and appeared to stick in respondents’ minds leading them to think that was the only type of government subsidy the question was referring to. Respondent I said she receives Action for Children [the local CCR&R] during the QE series but then answered no to QS1. Respondent E also answered no even though we had just discussed her receiving Action for Children, however she then stopped herself and asked for clarification. Respondent H knew that the child care provider was paid by an outside agency but did not know the name. She also knew that she was responsible for the monthly copayment; however when asked if she received a subsidy she said no because she did not know what that term meant.

Two respondents asked about tax credits as subsidies. Respondents received child care tax credit and were confused if that would be considered a subsidy or not. They had some difficulty answering the S-series questions because of that.

### **Recommendations:**

Despite some confusion, we recommend keeping this question series with minor revisions. First, a definition of “subsidy” could be included in the question set or available for interviewer reference in the event that a respondent does not know what it means. This definition should be broad enough to include an adequate range of subsidy options, including employers and family members. Tax credits and flexible spending plans should probably be considered separately in the survey instrument.

Second, in order to assist respondents in connecting back to their previous responses in Section III, we recommend the following revision to S1:

- **Thinking about the past 12 months, including what you have just told me, did you ever receive a child care subsidy from the government at any time for any child, including child care money from the welfare office?**

Third, we recommend further testing of the extent to which subsidy reports are improved when the local program or office name is supplied to respondents. This can be a difficult effort, but could substantially increase self-reports of subsidy receipt.

## VI. General Awareness Of Subsidy

- **S11. Are you aware of the availability of state or county subsidy programs to help pay for childcare costs? [IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, SKIP TO B1]**
- **S12. Have you ever applied or are you applying for child care financial assistance through a state or county subsidy program? [IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, SKIP TO B1]**
- **S13. Are you currently on a waiting list for child care financial assistance in your county? [INTERVIEWERS: READ IF NECESSARY] In many parts of the country, there are not enough funds to provide financial assistance to every one who qualifies for help. Have you been told by an agency that you qualify for a subsidy or voucher, but that you must wait before you can receive anything?**
- **S14. In the past 12 months, have you had a voucher or been offered a subsidy that you ended up not using? [IF YES, CONTINUE; IF NO, SKIP TO B1]**
- **S15. Why didn't you end up using the voucher or subsidy?**
  1. **Couldn't find a provider who accepts the voucher/subsidy**
  2. **Couldn't find a provider who had open slots for accepting the voucher/subsidy**
  3. **Didn't like the care being offered by the providers I found to use the voucher/subsidy**
  4. **It would have been difficult for me to use the provider I found to use the voucher/subsidy (for example, too far away, hours not right for R's job, etc.)**
  5. **OTHER REASON**

In general, respondents in high socioeconomic ranges could not name local subsidy oversight agencies (e.g, Action for Children) nor did they receive these subsidies. Only one-third of respondents knew the names of these agencies and three out of nine were receiving subsidies. The following table indicates respondent answers.

Respondent	H	I	E	B	C	G	D	F	A
Household Income(2007)	\$14,000	\$19,000	\$35,000	\$45,000	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$180,000	\$200,000
R knows about subsidy agencies (QS11)	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N
R receives subsidy (QS12)	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N

While the majority of respondents did not receive subsidy or know the subsidy source, this did not necessarily prohibit their understanding of the questions beyond the varying interpretations of “subsidy” previously discussed in relation to QS1.

## VII. Barrier Questions

- **B1. Now I am going to ask about the past 12 months. In the past 12 months, how many times did you quit a job, school, job search or a training activity?**
- **B1A. In the past 12 months, how many times did you quit a job, school, job search or a training activity because you had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?**
- **B2. How many times in the past 12 months did you not take a job or not start a training program that was offered to you?**
- **B2a. How many times in the past 12 months did you not take a job or not start a training program because you had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?**
- **B3. In the past 12 months, how many times did you change jobs?**
- **B3A. In the past 12 months, how many times did you change jobs because you had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?**
- **B4. About how many times in the past 12 months did you change your work/school schedules?**

- **B4a. About how many times in the past 12 months did you change your work/school schedules because you had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?**
  
- **B5A. Now thinking about last month, about how many times were you late for work?**
- **B5AA. About how many times in the last month were you late for work because of child care problems?**
- **B5B. Now thinking about last month, about how many times did you miss time from work, school or training?**
- **B5BA. About how many times did you miss time from work, school or training because you had problems arranging child care or keeping a child care arrangement?**

While respondents generally seemed to understand the first part of the barrier question series, there was some redundancy in their responses. In providing her answer to QB1 and QB1A of three times, Respondent C indicated that she “thought of work, training, and relocation” when generating her responses.

**Respondent C:** Oh, one of them was for relocating. I was offered another job but it was in a different state, so then ... childcare comes up right away because it’s a very expensive place, so cost.

**Interviewer:** So that factored into your decision?

**Respondent C:** But because of daycare, where would I send my children because that job would require me [to work] more hour or probably [more] commute time.

**Interviewer:** So because of that situation you decided not to take the job?

**Respondent C:** Right. Time and child care.

QB1/QB1A prompted some respondents to think about opportunities when they would have had to quit a job if they had not been able to make adjustments to their employment or child care schedule. This indicated some overlap between the ways respondents interpreted QB4 as well.

**Respondent E:** Did I lose...did I have to like not work a job because I couldn’t find someone to take care of my daughter. That’s basically what I’m thinking you’re saying when you asked me that question...Lose pay or have to leave an appointment because I couldn’t work ...the hours wasn’t conducive with my work schedule. Let me think on that one. I may have to change the response. Because the last job I did have I had to have my job try to work with me because the school hours wasn’t working with the job I

had so I did have to have a job try to assist me and give me an extra 30 minutes to work early so I can pick my child up on time and they didn't stay late enough. They didn't stay open long enough for me.

In response to QB2 and QB2A, two respondents indicated that they did not accept a job offer in the past 12 months. Respondent I, a full-time student, could not take a job because it conflict with child care availability.

**Interviewer:** You had the opportunity to start a work study job during the summer before the school year began?

**Respondent I:** Exactly. It would have given me a jump on the fall classes of course. I wasn't able to do so because of the scheduling problems. With the work study I would probably be working until 7 in the evening, which of course cuts into dinner time and transit time and things like that. I would never see my children.... I wasn't able to, so I did look for people who could take them. And again that goes into who can [you] trust. I just didn't feel comfortable enough to have my children gone from 7 o'clock in the morning until maybe 8 o'clock at night and then getting dinner and doing everything else. It would have been too much.

Some respondents found this question to be more clear than QB1/QB1A.

**Respondent E:** I would say – actually [the question] was pretty straightforward because that happens to a lot of parents not being able to take positions and I would say looking...have you turned away any jobs. Your question is pretty good – have you turned away jobs because the daycare hours wasn't conducive to the job you were trying to get...

QB3/QB3A prompted one respondent to tell about how she'd been fired from her job because she couldn't work the revised schedule due to child care restrictions.

**Respondent I:** Yes actually, last November. November 20<sup>th</sup> to be exact. I was terminated because I'd asked for 2 hours less on my full-time schedule, which I was working 9 hours but I had other arrangements at that time that were working perfectly whereas they were able to stay with their father for those extra two hours or so. His schedule changed and of course with men you can't really ask them to change their schedule more than yours. So I asked my employer would I be able to leave at 4 as opposed to 6 and at this time I was near Midway Airport. So the transit time is an hour and a half, very close to 2 hours on public transportation. If I were to leave at 4 I would

be able to...and last year their school program lasted until 6, I would be able to guarantee getting there by 6 o'clock to pick up my children and he refused.

There was varying interpretation to the change in schedule questions (QB4/QB4A); some Respondents thought of it as a more long-term change and some thought of it as daily changes (if a meeting ran long or an appointment came up).

**Respondent A:** Yeah, it's usually work related meetings or if there's an issue with having to stay late for work. If there's a deadline to be made then I would stay later than usual. It's that more than anything else or we have a dental appointment that conflicts with that or something like that, some other appointment that conflicts with either picking up or dropping off our daughter

**Respondent C:** I'm thinking about once a month I've had to change my schedule because either the daycare center was closed or the after school program was closed or the school was closed but the childcare center didn't open up yet...Because the center was closed or the school was closed and the center wasn't open, a child was sick and I can't take the child to the center. Or I'm running late and the center will not accept the child after a certain time...I can't go back to work. I have to stay at home with them, so then I had to change my work schedule. And then of course there's the ones where the school ends and the summer program is not open yet. There's like a week window where the summer program doesn't start so I'd have to change my work schedule to maybe work less hours so then I can leave my children at home the less possible amount of time.

**Respondent D to QB4:** I took maternity leave which means I didn't work for 3 months, but my schedule while I was working stayed the same, but for 12 weeks I didn't work at all – so once.

**Respondent D to QB4A:** When you asked the next question [QB4A] after [QB4] it made me think of the fact that I do sometimes change the days I work because of childcare. Like my typical schedule is Wednesday through Friday, but sometimes I'll work Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday because I don't have a sitter on Friday so I need to rearrange days. But I typically don't eliminate a day. I haven't changed my permanent schedule...Well when you asked the first question [QB4] I thought my schedule meaning like how many hours a week do I work, so my overall schedule. When you asked the second question [QB4A] I thought more in terms of my weekly how it's arranged each week.

**Respondent F:** Yes, it's difficult [to answer QB4/QB4A] because I think there are a lot of times people change schedules and sometimes it's partially related to childcare and

sometimes it's not....[I think of ]all of those, either working different days or working reduced hours or coming in early or leaving early, all work hour changes.

The word "late" in QB5/QB5A was a difficult term for some respondents to define. Many said that they either had flexible work schedules or they could make up the time they might have missed when they arrived later than usual.

**Respondent B:** Hmm...we don't really have "late" to work. I don't know how to explain that question...: I've been late to meetings but they don't really call it late.

**Respondent D:** Are we ever really late? [Laughing] I can remember the train being late last week so I got into work 10 minutes late or something, but it didn't mean I worked late that day.

In response to QB5B/QB5BA, respondents asked if certain circumstances, such as vacation would be considered "missing work". Some respondents who had missed work appeared to be estimating the actual number of days.

**Respondent B:** I kind of vaguely remember having to either not attend a meeting because [daughter] had to be at school at a certain time, like 3 or 4 times I was supposed to...participate in an interview for interviewing candidates or to be at a meeting by like 8:30 but she doesn't start school until 9.

**Respondent D:** The first [question QB5B] would have included everything and the second [question QB5BA] I would have excluded vacations and special events like that and just included a sitter not showing up.

### **Recommendations:**

Respondents were often confused by the question content and had difficulty navigating the question length. In addition, respondents seemed to have similar responses to different questions indicating that these triggered varying associations by individual. Due to comprehension issues and lack of response variation, it appears that this question set does not accurately capture respondent barriers to child care. Therefore, we recommend that it not be used.

- **B6. Are child care problems preventing you from working or going to school or training/working more hours?**
- **B7. In the past month, have you [not been able to work, go to school or training/not work as many hours as you would like] because you had problems**

- B7a. finding child care to match your schedule or your current child care is not available for additional hours?
- B7b. finding the kind of child care arrangement or provider that you wanted or you do not want your child to spend more hours in current arrangement?
- B7c. finding child care that was nearby/ your current child care provider is not nearby?
- B7d. with transportation to or from the child care arrangement?
- B7E. with paying for your preferred or ideal child care?
- B7F. finding child care that you could afford/affording additional hours of child care?
- B7G. finding a provider or arrangement that is reliable/your child car provider is not reliable?
- B7H. Finding the quality of child care you want/current child care quality is not ideal?
- B7I. Finding a provider or arrangement that would provide sick care/your provider or arrangement does not provide sick care?
- B7J. Finding child care that would care for young children or infants/ your provider does not care for young children or infants?
- B7K. With the payments or paperwork for your child care subsidies?
- B7L. are there any other reasons why you have not been able to work, go to school or training/not worked as many hours as you would like?

QB7 series was the most confusing for respondents. Several respondents required the questions be repeated in order to clearly understand them or needed the questions to be broken down into separate parts in order to respond.

**Respondent A:** The set of questions...they're a little bit wordy. Something you really had to kind of think about it and then some of the questions were a little bit overlapping and they sounded very similar...Basically all of them came down to the same questions if you have problems not being able to do your job because of certain problems with child care.

**Respondent B:** It's the double negative – 'have you not'... Any of the questions [were confusing] that say "have you not or were you not able to".

**Respondent C:** [The questions] were too complex. I know that each question had to do with either cost, time, location or distance. I was able to categorize those but it seemed a little bit too complex.

**Respondent E:** Break it down a little bit and make it a little shorter, because sometimes when you have long questions and you're trying to keep up with what you're saying and you're adding other stuff on to it. It's like 5 words or 6 words and break it down like that – clear and simple. It's just better as far as answering and then if you ask me for my input back I can easily tell you okay you said this and this is why I said.

In response to QB7b, one respondent said that it's not just an issue of not wanting her children to spend more time in child care that prevents her from working more hours but the fact that she wants to be home with her children. She felt the question didn't account for that option.

**Respondent D:** No, I mean that one now that I think about it says work as many hours as you want – I'm choosing not to work many hours because I want to be home, so I can take back what I said.

Another respondent had difficulty answering B7 series questions for just the last month.

**Respondent F:** I think the reason it's difficult is that it depends on the demographics of the woman that you're asking. I would not be going for positions that are retail or childcare centers. Those tend to have very unpredictable hours and also people don't spend 3 to 6 months in a search process...so the month's framework is going to be pretty difficult for professional women because we plan for these things months in advance... At the beginning of the year I had intentionally worked part-time in order to accommodate the children's school schedule and now I probably would want to go back working full-time and all of those decisions take longer than one month.

As a follow-up, respondents to provide any additional information about barriers they encountered in finding child care. Several respondents noted that it is a challenge to find accredited child care providers.

**Respondent I:** There are not that many licensed qualified providers. Now you have every day babysitters, home providers and things like that, but there's really no way to kind of check them out. You know you'd have the people next door or people down the street of course, but finding someone that you know you can at least track them you know and see that they have a good track record and no complaints and things that's a major problem because they are very spread out.

**Respondent A:** I wouldn't necessarily say barrier but just challenge would be finding very accredited childcare providers. I don't think I've done enough research to know if there are...a specific regulation of policies that govern childcare. I wish there was more

information about that...Something where there's regulations, something you look up if there's complaints or problems with certain childcare providers.

**Respondent C:** Barriers? It would have to do with not knowing. Barriers – not enough publicity, not enough advertising in the neighborhood where I live in.

Provider hours of operation and quality of care were potential barrier addressed by respondents.

**Respondent E:** [There are not] many starting at 6 [AM] and ending at 6 [PM]...If you're working a 9 to 5 job like me, I mostly work in the day, sometimes you may need to start a little earlier, maybe come in a little earlier and stay a little late, but I would say the earlier the better and they don't offer that as much here in the South Side area...They can be kind of strict if you're late picking them up...You still have to pick your child up. You can't stay 10 minutes late [at work] and say I'm coming 10 minutes because [the provider] came in late and opened the daycare up too late...so they need more 6 to 6.

**Respondent F:** Cost, reliability, quality, part also depends on the age of the children. When my children were much younger I changed babysitters for the babies because of the quality of the providers that I would care a little bit less about than the actual quality of the providers because the children are a little older

Other respondents discussed the use of more informal arrangements (family, friends, and neighbors) in relationship to barriers to child care.

**Respondent A:** Yes, I would say I guess reliability, yeah. [Family friend and parents] not as reliable as I would like... they say they're available and then sometimes they're not.

**Respondent E:** [Her aunt is] pretty much available for me because she doesn't really work a 9 to 5 job which is good. She is independent so she has her own business and she has a big family to also help too, help me as well. If she's not there I have a cousin or somebody there to help me too, so it hasn't been a problem for her at all.

For some respondents, using family, friends and neighbor care is essential to filling the gap when formal providers are no longer available and for others those individuals are not as reliable as formal providers.

### **Recommendations:**

This question set was more confusing to respondents than the first set of barrier questions. While the concepts of this questions series were clear to respondents, the question structure was almost

universally agreed to be too long and confusing. Therefore we recommend eliminating this question set from the instrument.

## VIII. Provider Information

- **P1. We also need the basic contact information of your providers. Can you please give me the name, street address, and the telephone number of the various providers who cared for your child last week?**

### **INTERVIEWERS SAY THE FOLLOWING WHEN NECESSARY:**

**We are interested in finding out whether or not parents are able to provide the contact information of their child's provider and whether or not they are willing to provide the information. We need providers' contact information because we will be doing a survey on child care providers in addition to a survey on parents to get a comprehensive view of the supply and the demand of child care and the child care market in the U.S.**

All but one respondent was willing to provide contact information for their child care providers although some were hesitant to do so and wanted to know more about how the information would be used. Respondents cited numerous concerns about providing the information.

**Respondent A:** [Giving information about] Actual family members actually made me a little uncomfortable because it's personal information I'm not sure I want to give out because that's someone personal information. The security of my child is number one [concern]. Obviously you know the name and address of where my child is going to be. It's not something that I want you to know.

**Respondent B:** When it was a personal person – if it's a center I don't feel so bad and since her grandparents are out of the country I don't feel so bad, but for the persons who live in the country that was kind of awkward... I think if it was information about whether it's like how far is it from you or even just the street address without a name I think that should be fine.

**Respondent C:** Yes, so I think that question might be uncomfortable for somebody who has like a restraining order against – they don't want their child – somebody picking up their child and then maybe just... A restraining order of somebody that's after them that would want to hurt a child, so I would feel uncomfortable maybe giving out the contact information where my children actually have been.

**Respondent D:** I think it would be hard to get that information from people [if they didn't know you]. I don't know that it's not worth asking, but I might wait until the end and say what you're going to do with it because I would want to know how it's going to

be used. The way you asked it is suddenly you asked what are the addresses and contact information, but I think I would want a whole explanation of “we would like to ...,” contact them or whatever and then explain why it’s important and say you would never use this information for any other purposes and then say will you please list the [providers].

**Respondent E:** Depending on what your motive is. If your motive is to look up and find information about me then no. You’re not believing what I’m saying. If you’re using that information because you’re trying to see if you can work with that school and what kind of programs or what can you set up where the school can work with my hours since I have 30 minutes to open up or whatever then that’s fine.

**Respondent F:** I’m trying to think why [that question made her uncomfortable]. It depends on what you’re going to use that information for. If you’re going to survey childcare programs it’s pretty easy to find all the childcare programs in the neighborhood, so I’m not sure why you would need that kind of information... I don’t think it’s the contact information [rather than just the provider name] but I think it’s the thought that it’s one thing to say do you know about these different childcare programs and it’s another thing to say tell me the childcare programs your child had gone to and when and so on. Somehow people would just feel like you would be able to trace their child and find their child.

**Respondent I:** I wouldn’t have any [concerns]. I guess that would be primarily because of where you’re located, your reputation. And again that means a lot.

All respondents said that they would be willing to pass a survey or call in telephone onto their provider to facilitate participation. All but one respondent indicated that they would feel comfortable giving provider name and contact information after checking with the providers.

- **FOLLOW-UP PROBE: H: We are testing the best way to ask for providers’ contact information. I’m going to read you three revisions. Please tell me which one you are most comfortable with answering.**
  1. **We need provider’s contact information because we want to talk to some of the providers to learn more about the services they provide so that we will have a complete picture of the demand and the supply of child care in the United States. Can you please give me the name, street address, and the telephone number of your provider?**
  2. **We need your provider’s contact information to help us learn about distances families travel for their child care, and to learn who else is also using this provider. Can you please me the name, street address, and the telephone number of your provider?**

3. **We understand that people don't usually remember their provider's name, street address or telephone number even though they know how to get there. Can you give me the name, street address, or telephone number of your provider?**

Respondents' opinions on these probe options are listed below:

**Respondent A:** Actually I think all those are still rather evasive. I would think the best way to get to this question – you're basically asking a distance question, how far away from where you live or work, how far is the provider from you. I think the best thing is to ask them can you give me a ballpark estimate of how many miles is it from her home to the provider or from your workplace to the provider. I don't think you need more than that information. I know you want specifics; you're doing a study, but if someone says 5 miles that's I think is enough or they can look it up for you. They can go up to a map or something on Yahoo or MapQuest and actually give you actual mileage, but asking for actual addresses I don't think is a good thing

**Respondent B:** I think I like the third one, but it almost – like I still think you need to ask would you feel comfortable. We understand you might not remember but would you be comfortable providing that information

**Respondent C:** The first sounds professional. The second one sounds more demanding because you say we need, and then the third one is not professional. Even though if I may not be somebody that talks professionally but I would expect whoever is asking the questions to ask professionally, so that third one I didn't like.

**Respondent D:** The first two seem a little bit harsh like we need this and give it to me. The third one is nicer – could you please, but it's also kind of testing them like well we know most people don't remember, let's see if you do...For some reason the first one was... I was a little less comfortable with...I guess it might put into my head like oh I don't want somebody to take my childcare provider...The second one I wouldn't feel uncomfortable about because you're just finding out about distance, but I might reword it to be more polite. The third one might make people feel like they are being quizzed.

**Respondent E:** I like the first one – the services. That stood out for me, the quality of service, so I like the first one.

**Respondent F:** I think I like the first one better. The second one is too specific talking about who else uses the provider and the distances. The first one gives the background of why you want the information... The third one doesn't tell the parents why you want the information. It would raise the same concerns I have [about providing contact information].

**Respondent G:** I think the first one is the best...Because it tells you why you need it and not very particular because the second question like we want to know very particular how far you travel to there. The third one is people will feel confused – why you need it and I don't even remember it.

**Respondent I:** The very first one...The other two – the last one especially hinted at deception for me, because a person that's taking their children somewhere they know that information to assume that they would not remember it. Again it borders on deception for me. The second one I would say a person would generally say to you this is how far I travel. I can provide you that information without giving [specific contact information]. So it doesn't really give them the full view of what it is that you actually need.

### **Recommendations:**

Most respondents felt that the first formulation was the most informative and direct explanation of why they are being asked for the provider information. However, some respondents still felt it was a bit too demanding. Therefore, we recommend rewording the statements to read as follows:

**We would like to collect provider's contact information because we want to talk to some of the providers to learn more about the services they provide so that we will have a complete picture of the demand and the supply of child care in the United States. Can you please give me the name, street address, and the telephone number of your provider?**

## **IX. Screening to identify home-based child care providers**

- **H1. One last question about child care. Do you (or does anyone in your household) provide care to a child under the age of 13 who is not your child or a child in your legal custody (foster-, step-, or adopted child)?**

A number of respondents were confused by the example provided at the end of the question (foster-, step, or adopted child). Some respondents thought at first that reference was inclusive rather than exclusive.

**Respondent D:** Then – okay, I might simplify the question and say something like does anyone else in your home provide childcare to any children that are not their own. And then if they say yes say who and what relationship they are or what the situation is and then figure out whether they fall into the category of home provider or not, whether than saying someone who is not a stepchild or foster child. I think that part made it confusing.

I started thinking about those types of kids rather than thinking about what the question was.

**Respondent F:** I thought you meant providing care for a child regularly and somebody living with us sort of like a foster child or adopted child.

Other respondents referenced informal child care arrangements that they have with other family, friends and neighbors. These generally do not involve paying directly for care but trading services or covering children's meal and travel expenses while in care.

**Respondent D:** I have a group of friends in my neighborhood who kind of they have kids the same age so they'll drop a child off and they'll go do grocery shopping while their child is playing with the other child at this other house. I think that happens a lot, especially like stay-at-home moms who...don't have regular childcare do that just so that they have sometime to go run errands or have time by themselves.

**Respondent B:** [The number of children] can vary, so that – because there's two single mothers so that she can have a life with her boyfriend, like I end up I take the kids for a weekend... Yeah, but not [a trading of services] all the time because there are other kids that come to the house as well that have sleepovers I take care of so their mothers can [go out].

In response to QH1, respondents provided information about themselves and other individuals as potential eligible home care providers. Respondent C provides care for a child who is not her own approximately 30 hours per week. She charges \$10 per day for up to 5 hours of care and \$20 per day if she cares for the child for more than 5 hours. Respondent E has a family friend who runs a home child care center where she cares for about four children (and is licensed to care for up to seven), including a school age child she takes to school. She thought that the hours of operation were 7am-5:30pm. Respondent F had previously used a home care provider for her children who watched ten children with an assistant. The provider was open from 6:30am-6:30pm and the respondent paid her either \$120 or \$150 per child each week.

Follow-up probe:

- **How do you think about a grandmother who lives in the same house and cares for the child should answer this question?**
- **What about a grandmother who lives in her own house and cares for the grandchild should answer this question?**

- **What about a parent who doesn't live with his or her child, but does provide regular care to that child? How would he/she answer this question?**

In answering the above probes, respondents considered a variety of factors to determine their responses to these scenarios, including legal guardianship, residency relationships, and if provider is paid.

**Respondent C:** A parent who doesn't live with a child but cares – provides for the child I would say no. It legally may not be theirs. That's a tricky one. Because the question says legally – legal custody. They may not have legal custody of that child, but if you're taking care of that child and legally it's not yours so you would have to say yes.

**Respondent E:** It depends. If they need the money then they've got programs to help stuff like that. It's been done. You've got grandparents and relatives keeping other kids and stuff, but if they find a way to make extra money off of that they're going to do it. I see them doing that as far as money wise financially. I don't see a lot of them doing it to just be doing it, no.

#### **Recommendations:**

Based on respondents' general understanding of this question, we recommend retaining QH1 with minor revisions seen below:

- **H1. One last question about child care. Do you (or does anyone in your household) provide care to a child under the age of 13 who is neither your own child nor a child in your legal custody?**