

TOWNSHIP OF CENTRE WELLINGTON

EARLY YEARS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

COUNTY OF WELLINGTON CHILDREN'S EARLY YEARS DIVISION

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About this Report

Background

The early years community engagement project was conducted to gather input from families so that their voices can help shape how EarlyON services and licensed child care are planned and delivered in their local community. The early years community engagement project included two online surveys, namely the EarlyON Services Survey and the Child Care Survey. Additional input was gathered through in-person community conversations.

The online surveys were open for people to complete from the beginning of May 2018 to the end of November 2018. In Centre Wellington 49 people completed the online EarlyON Services Survey and 55 completed the Child Care Survey. Two community conversation events were scheduled, one at the Fergus Library on June 15 and at the other at the Museum and Archives on June 25, 2018. No one attended the event at the Fergus Library and one person attended the event at the Museum and Archives. In addition, in-person informal conversations were held with 21 residents at Melville United Church and at the Elora Community Centre.

This report summarizes findings of the early years community engagement project for Centre Wellington and is divided into two sections. The first section presents findings on EarlyON Services and the second section presents findings on Child Care. This report should be read as an appendix to the comprehensive County of Wellington Early Years Community Engagement Final Report.

About Centre Wellington

The Township of Centre Wellington (referred to as Centre Wellington in this report) is one of eight municipalities that make up the Wellington service delivery area. It has a population of 28,191 making it the second largest municipality in the service delivery area based on population size. Below is a brief overview of some of the demographic characteristics of Centre Wellington.

Table 1 Demographic Statistics for Centre Wellington

Demographic Statistic		% of Total Population of Centre Wellington
Total Land Area	407.5km ²	
Total Population (2016)	28,191	
Population percentage change; from 2011 to 2016		5.6%
Francophone Population in Centre Wellington (2016)	345	1.2%
Indigenous Population in Centre Wellington (2016)	860	3%
Total number who speak non-official languages at home in Centre	525	1.9%
Wellington		
German	185	0.7%
Dutch	50	0.2%
Romanian	30	0.1%
Population of Children Birth to 6 years	2,185	7.8%
Population of Children Birth to 12 years	4,180	14.8%
Number of children birth up to 4 years	1,185	4.2%
Number of children 4 to 12 years	2,995	10.6%

Source: The information presented in this table was prepared by the County of Wellington, Children's Early Years Division using data from Statistics Canada's 2016 Population Census.

EarlyON Services Findings

The findings reported here include data from the EarlyON Services Survey questions as well as input that was gathered at in-person community conversations.

Please note that in this report the number of people who responded to a question (respondents) are shown on the corresponding graph. For example, if 49 people answered a survey question then these are shown as "n = 49 respondents" on the corresponding graph.

EarlyON Services Survey Summary Statistics

	Number of Respondents
Total number of people who completed the EarlyON Services Survey in	49
Centre Wellington	
I am a parent/guardian	48
I am a caregiver for children in my home	3
I have/care for children birth to 3 years (i.e. up to 4 years)	47
I have/care for children 4 to 6 years	17

The majority of survey respondents (98%) were parents/guardians. For the purposes of this report, the term parent(s) will be used to refer to parent(s)/guardian(s). The data show that some parents are caregivers who provide care in their homes. The data also show that a number of parents (30.6%) had children in both age groups.

Programming preferences

There are a number of services that EarlyONs are required by the province to deliver. Understanding parents' and caregivers' preferences will help to determine the levels of these services that can be made available in the community. Survey respondents were asked to identify from the list of required EarlyON services those that are of interest to them. The results are shown in Figure 1.

There was interest in all of the required EarlyON services (Figure 1). The most preferred of the EarlyON services was "drop-in, play-based early learning programmes for children and parents/caregivers" (95.9% of respondents).

Other services with high interest were "support and information when you have concerns about your child's development" (65.3% of respondents), "parenting support, information and workshops" (63.3% of respondents) and "information about and connections to specialized community services and other community services for families with young children" (61.2% of respondents).

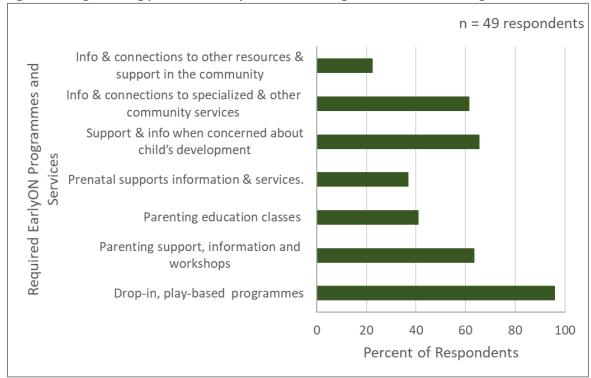


Figure 1. Programming preferences of parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington

Other services that could be offered at the local EarlyON site

In addition to the required EarlyON services, the provincial government allows other services to be offered at EarlyON sites provided they align with the needs and priorities of individual communities. The survey respondents and participants at community conversations were asked to identify other services that they would like to have at their local EarlyON sites. Other services that were identified are:

- First Aid and CPR classes for caring for young children
- Peer Groups e.g. group for moms, breastfeeding group, kids play dates, etc.
- Community information resource including information about local activities for children (e.g. sports), information about child care and mental health services
- Basic needs cupboard for kids' clothes, diapers, etc.
- Community breakfast programme
- Pre-school type programme

Location preferences

The provincial government requires EarlyON services to be located in public spaces, which include schools, municipal and other community buildings as this improves access for all families. Under the Ministry of Education's Schools First Policy, schools are considered the ideal location. Survey respondents were asked to indicate their preferred location to participate in EarlyON services. The results are shown in Figure 2.

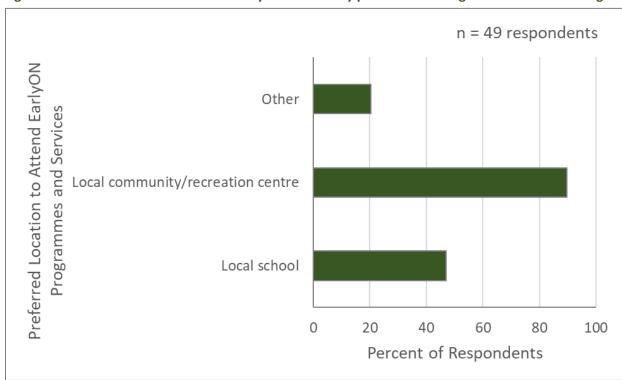


Figure 2. Preferred location to attend EarlyON services by parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington

The majority of respondents (89.8%) indicated that they prefer to attend EarlyON services at "a local community/recreation centre" while 46.9% preferred "a local school." Respondents who indicated "other" (20.4%) were asked to specify their preferred location. "Other" preferred locations identified were library, local play centre and the church (the current EarlyON services location in Fergus). Over a third of survey respondents (36.7%) selected both "a local community/recreation centre" and "a local school", suggesting some flexibility in preferred location.

Comments from survey respondents and participants at community conversations indicated that parents were flexible about location of EarlyON services provided the location had certain attributes or qualities. For example, they preferred EarlyON locations to be close to home or within walking distance, to have parking on site, to be easily accessible including stroller access and to be a designated EarlyON site.



Scheduling preferences

The province requires EarlyON services to be delivered at least 5 days a week, during times that include weekday evenings as well as at least one weekend day. Participation is improved when services recognize and accommodate the work/life schedules of parents and caregivers. To understand the preferred programming times for families in Centre Wellington, the survey asked respondents to select days and times they could attend EarlyON services. The results are shown in Figure 3.

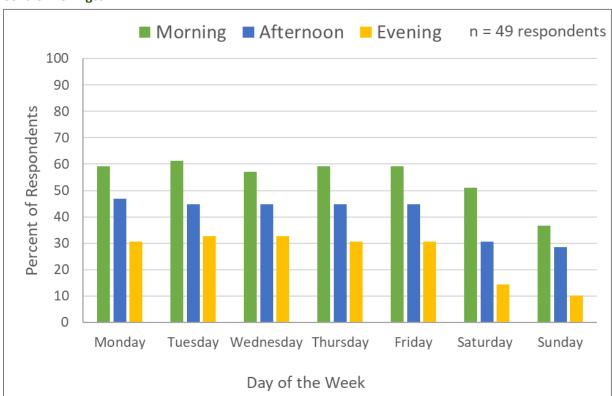


Figure 3. Preferred days and times of the week to attend EarlyON services by parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington

The data show that parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington prefer a variety of programming times, but a greater percentage of survey respondents indicated that they could attend services on weekdays (Monday to Friday) than on weekends (Figure 3).

Weekday mornings were preferred more than afternoons and afternoons were preferred more than evenings, with little variation across days of the week. On weekends, Saturday morning was the most preferred time. In addition, the data show that some survey respondents selected only weekday evenings, weekends, or both. This suggests there are parents and caregivers whose schedules allow them to participate only in services that are offered outside standard working hours.

Comments from participants at community conversations echoed the survey findings, including the high preference for weekday mornings. Participants also indicated that it would be important to have a variety of service times to ensure more options that meet a variety of scheduling needs. In addition, a number of participants at community conversations indicated that they preferred weekend times.



"I like weekday morning programmes"

"Some of the programs are only in the afternoon.... [suggest that] programmes alternate times so everyone has a chance to attend"

"I'd like weekend programmes so that my husband can come"

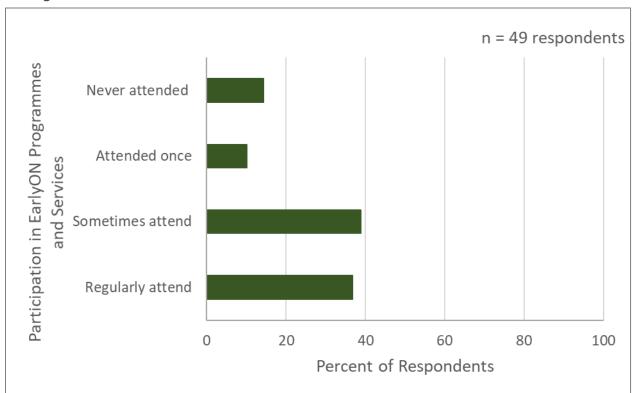
Participants at community conversations



Participation

Understanding how often parents and caregivers participate in existing EarlyON services helps to determine the level of interest and the threshold of programming intensity that would meet the needs of families. Respondents were asked for their current participation frequency in EarlyON services. The results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Frequency of participation in EarlyON services among parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington



The data show that the frequency of participation in EarlyON services varied, but a greater percentage of survey respondents indicated "sometimes attend" (38.8% of respondents) and "regularly attend"

(36.7% of respondents) than "never attended" (14.3% of respondents) or "attended once" (10.2% of respondents).

The finding that about 1 in 7 respondents never participated suggests that there are parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington who could benefit from EarlyON services who are currently not using them.

Location of EarlyON services sites attended by parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington The survey asked respondents who indicated they have participated in EarlyON services at least once (i.e. "regularly attend", "sometimes attend" and "attended once") to identify the EarlyON sites they use. Respondents were free to select any EarlyON sites from a list of sites for the whole service delivery area. The results are shown in Figure 5.

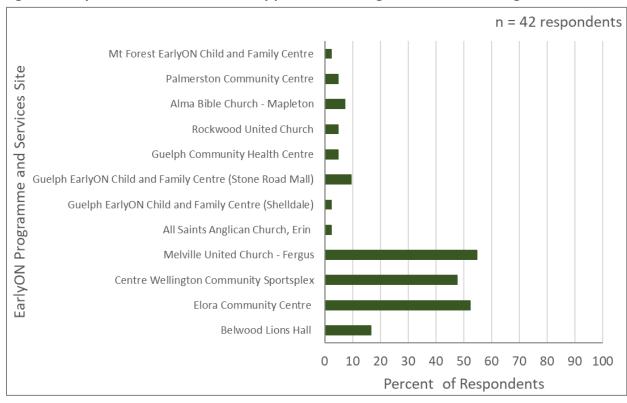


Figure 5. EarlyON services sites attended by parents and caregivers in Centre Wellington

The data show that parents and caregivers use more than one EarlyON services site. Furthermore, the data show that the majority of survey respondents (90.5%) attended EarlyON services sites located in Centre Wellington. The most frequently used sites were Melville United Church (54.8% of respondents), Elora Community Centre (52.4% of respondents), Centre Wellington Community Sportsplex (47.6% of respondents), and Belwood Lions Hall (16.7% of respondents), all located in Centre Wellington (Figure 5).

The data also show that in addition to using EarlyON sites located in their municipality, families travel to locations that are outside Centre Wellington. Nearly a third of survey respondents (28.6%) attended EarlyON services at sites located outside of Centre Wellington. The most frequently used sites outside of

Centre Wellington were Guelph EarlyON Child and Family Centre – Stone Road Mall (9.5% of respondents) and Alma Bible Church in Mapleton (7.1% of respondents; Figure 5).

Preferred method of participating in EarlyON services

All survey respondents were asked whether they would likely participate in EarlyON services in person or online. The results are shown in Figure 6.

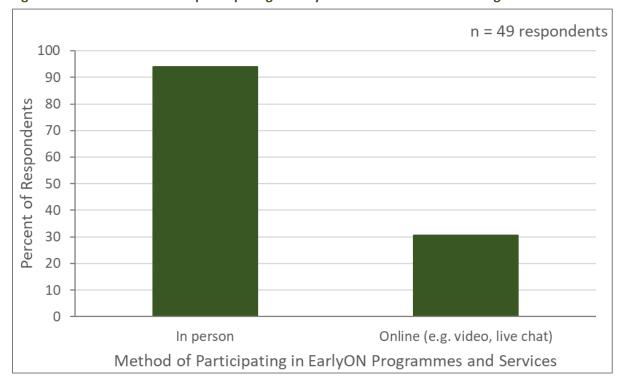


Figure 6. Preferred method of participating in EarlyON services in Centre Wellington

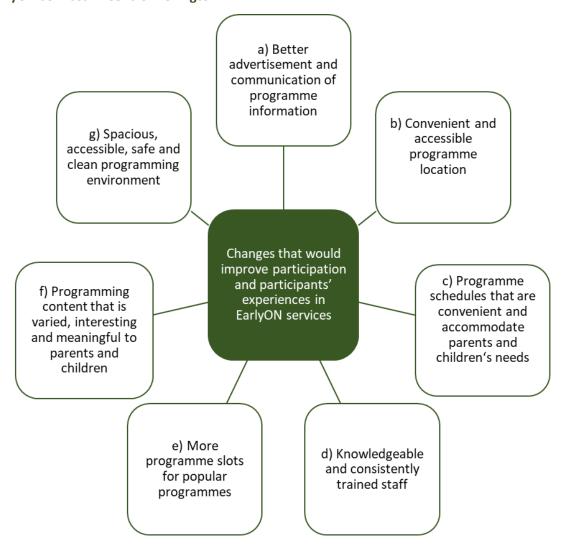
A greater percentage of survey respondents (93.9%) preferred to participate in EarlyON services in person compared to 30.6% who indicated that they would likely participate online (Figure 6). Nearly a quarter of respondents (24.5%) selected both methods.

Changes that would improve participation and participants' experiences in EarlyON services
To gain parents and caregivers perspectives about how EarlyON services can be improved, the survey
asked respondents who indicated that they had never participated in EarlyON services what could be
done so that they would participate. In addition, the survey also asked respondents who indicated they
have participated in EarlyON services at least once (i.e. "regularly attend", "sometimes attend" and
"attended once") for changes that they would like to see to make their experiences better. Additional
input was gathered from participants at community conversations.

Analysis of the responses to these two survey questions showed significant similarities and overlap in what respondents suggested. Therefore, the findings about what would make people participate and what would improve participants' experiences in EarlyON services were combined for reporting purposes.

The suggestions were grouped into seven themes. The results are shown in Figure 7 and described further below.

Figure 7. Suggested changes that would improve participation and participants' experiences in EarlyON services in Centre Wellington



a) Better advertisement and communication of programme information

Lack of awareness appeared to be a barrier to participation and a cause of poor experiences in EarlyON services. Survey respondents suggested better advertisement of EarlyON services in order to attract more people. In addition, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested more timely and clearer communication of programme information. A number expressed frustration with poor communication of information about changes to programme schedules, especially cancellations.



"More awareness or advertisement for it"

"I think better advertisement is needed, programmes have been cancelled a lot lately...
sometimes you just show up and no one is here"

Survey respondents



b) Convenient and accessible programme location

The data show that parents and caregivers feel that having EarlyON services sites located close to home would improve participation and participants' experiences. Furthermore, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested that participation and participants' experiences would improve if EarlyON services sites are located in large, spacious and accessible settings that can accommodate strollers.



"I would come if they were everyday here, currently I also travel to Elora and Belwood for programmes, but Fergus is the closest"

"I wish the Melville location in Fergus was stroller friendly"

- Survey respondent and participant at a community conversation



c) Programme schedules that are convenient and accommodate parents' and children's needs

Survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested that participation and participants' experiences would be improved by making changes to the schedule of EarlyON services. The suggestions included providing more variety in programming time and making EarlyON services schedules that accommodate school routines and the routines of parents and caregivers with young children, particularly naptimes.

For example, suggestions to accommodate school routines included starting EarlyON services after school drop-off time, but ensuring there is no lag between school drop-off time and the start of EarlyON

programmes. To accommodate parents with young children, for example, respondents and participants at community conversations suggested not scheduling programmes during naptimes.



"The 9 am start time is perfect for this community; we drop our older kids off at school at 8:50 then come right here with no awkward lag time"

"....he then naps at 2 in the afternoon. Most of the programs are for morning or 1:30 and that doesn't work with our schedule. For that reason we haven't attended any programmes for a long time"

- Survey respondent and participant at a community conversation



d) Knowledgeable and consistently trained staff

The data show that parents and caregivers feel that having knowledgeable staff who are consistently trained would improve participation and participants' experiences in EarlyON services. For example, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested that EarlyON staff should receive appropriate training so that they can competently and confidently deliver programmes.



"More staff training to have staff who are confident, engaging and enthusiastic about providing programmes for children"

Survey respondent



e) More programme slots for popular programmes

Survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested increasing the number of programme slots for popular programmes, particularly drop-in programmes in order to accommodate the number of participants. In addition, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested providing enough spaces for registered programmes so that they do not fill up.



"More often drop-ins so that drop-ins are less crowded"

"Having a cap on programme registration is a problem as you only have a full class at the first session and then there is typically significant drop off and programmes are not well attended"

- Survey respondent and participant at a community conversation



f) Programming content that is varied, interesting and meaningful to parents and children

Suggestions to improve participation and participants' experiences in EarlyON services included changes to programming content. For example, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested more variety in drop-in play-based programmes, more programming in French and more educational programmes for parents in the form of educational classes and workshops. However, suggestions seem to indicate a preference for education classes to be offered using the more flexible drop-in format rather than the registered format.



"More education opportunities, more support for moms- I've heard of workshops in other areas"

"Most of the classes you have to register for ahead of time. My schedule varies and I would like to be able to drop in to any of the classes as I please"

Survey respondent and participant at a community conversation



g) Spacious, accessible, safe and clean programming environment

Survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested changes to the EarlyON programming environment in order to improve participation and participants' experiences. These suggestions included delivering EarlyON services in spacious and clean venues with clean equipment. In addition, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested having a safe programming environment by ensuring there is adequate parental supervision of children and minimizing risk of injury in play areas.



"I would like a larger facility in Fergus... I currently take my children to ... because their facilities are up to date, larger..."

"Cleaner space and toys... Mats and toys should be cleaned between groups..."

de de de

"Often parents don't supervise their children well"

- Survey respondents and participants at community conversations



Where parents go for answers about parenting and child development EarlyON services are required to provide parents and caregivers with the information they need to support them in their parenting and caregiving roles. The survey asked respondents where they go if they have questions about parenting or child development.

Overall, the data show that parents and caregivers tend to use more than one source of information when they have questions about parenting or child development.

The data were grouped into six categories of where parents and caregivers go for information about parenting or child development. The results are shown in Figure 8.

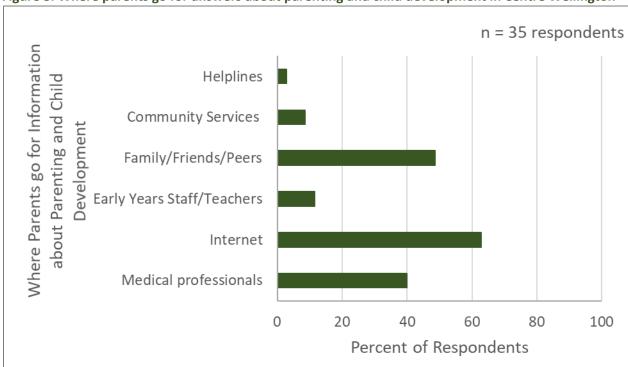


Figure 8. Where parents go for answers about parenting and child development in Centre Wellington

The most frequently used sources of information were the "internet" (62.9% of respondents), "family/friends/peers" (48.6% of respondents), and "medical professionals" (40% of respondents). Only 11.4% of respondents indicated that they go to "early years staff/teachers" for answers about parenting and child development.



"Friends, child's teacher, online resources"

"Internet, Pediatrician"

- Survey respondents



French language and Indigenous programming

EarlyON services are required by the province to ensure that Francophone children and families have access to French language programming and gain enhanced knowledge about language, and Indigenous children and families have access to culturally responsive programming.

The survey asked questions to establish the level of interest in French language EarlyON programming and in EarlyON programming that meets the needs of Indigenous children and families. The results are shown in Figure 9.

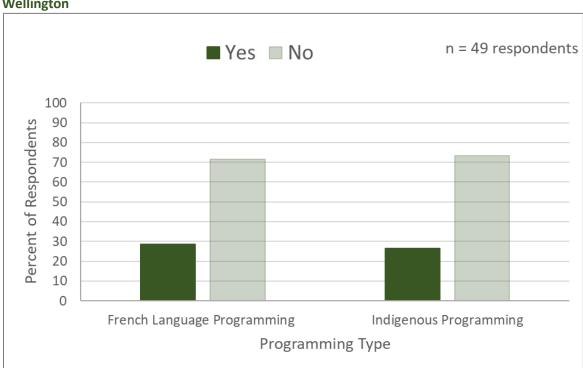


Figure 9. Level of interest in French language and Indigenous EarlyON programming in Centre Wellington

The data show similar levels of interest in French language and Indigenous EarlyON programming. In both cases, just over a quarter of survey respondents indicated that they would attend French language (28.6% of respondents) or Indigenous (26.5% of respondents) EarlyON services if they were available (Figure 9).

Information gathered from participants at community conversations also showed mixed interest in French language and Indigenous programming in the community. Some participants indicated that they would not participate in French language or Indigenous EarlyON programming. Others indicated that they were interested but would not seek out the programmes.



[&]quot;I would come to French and Aboriginal programmes, but not specifically seek them out"

Participant at a community conversation



Child Care Findings

The findings reported here include data from the Child Care Survey questions as well as input that was gathered at in-person community conversations.

Please note that in this report the number of people who responded to a question (respondents) are shown on the corresponding graph. For example, if 41 people answered a survey question then these are shown as "n = 41 respondents" on the corresponding graph.

Child Care Survey Summary Statistics

	Number of Respondents (%)
Total number of people who completed the online Child Care Survey in	55
Centre Wellington	
Number with children birth up to 4 years not attending elementary	41
school	
Currently use some form of child care	22(53.7%)
Do not currently use child care	19(46.3%)
Number with children 4 to 12 years	30
Currently use some form of child care	15(50%)
Do not currently use child care	15(50%)

The majority of people who completed the Child Care Survey had children birth up to 4 years. Sixteen parents had at least one child in both age groups.

Patterns of child care use

Understanding how parents use child care and why they choose to use or not use child care helps to shape plans for licensed child care for the community. Survey respondents were asked a series of questions to help understand patterns of child care use among parents with children birth up to 4 years and with school age children, 4 to 12 years who live in Centre Wellington.

Child care use

The survey sought to understand the extent to which families in Centre Wellington use child care for their children. The survey asked respondents to indicate if they used any form of child care for their children birth up to 4 years and for their children 4 to 12 years. The results are shown in Figure 10.

a) Child care use for children birth up to 4 years

A greater percentage of respondents (53.7%) with children birth up to 4 years indicated that they used some form of child care compared to 46.3% who indicated that they did not (Figure 10).

b) Child care use for children 4 to 12 years

Among survey respondents with children 4 to 12 years, 50% indicated that they used some form of care and 50% indicated that they did not (Figure 10).

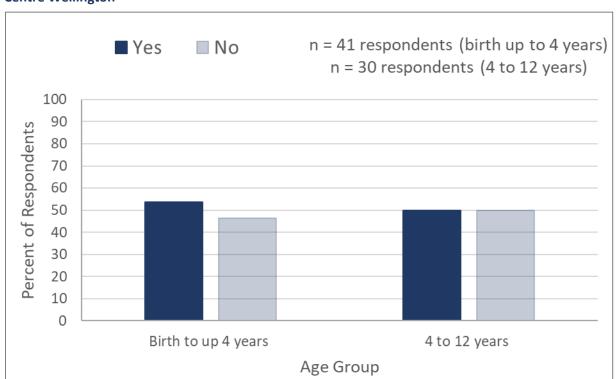


Figure 10. Child care use by survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years and 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington

Forms of care used

The survey also sought to understand the forms of child care used by families in Centre Wellington. Survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years and children 4 to 12 years who indicated that they used child care were asked to select the forms of care they used from a list of options.

a) Forms of care used for children birth up to 4 years

Figure 11 shows forms of care used for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington.

The most commonly used form of care reported by respondents with children birth up to 4 years was "unlicensed private arrangements" (59.1% of respondents). "Licensed child care centre" was used by 31.9% of respondents and 18.2% of respondents indicated that they used "home child care provider" contracted with the County of Wellington.

b) Forms of care used for children 4 to 12 years

Figure 12 shows forms of care used for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington.

The most commonly used form of care for children 4 to 12 years was "unlicensed private arrangements" (73.3% of respondents). A third of respondents (33.3%) indicated "child care programme offered in your child's school", 13.3% of respondents indicated "home child care provider" contracted by the County of Wellington and 6.7% of respondents indicated "licensed child care not in your child's school."

Figure 11. Forms of care used by survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington

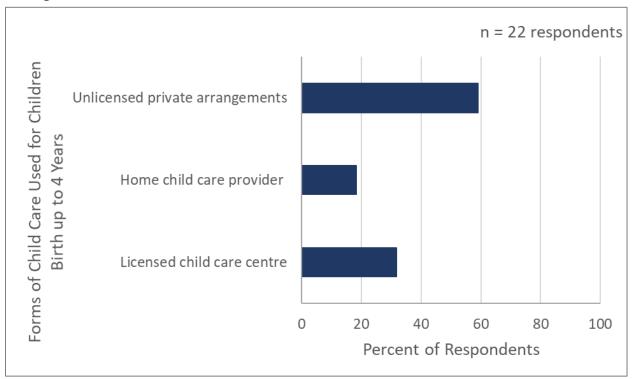
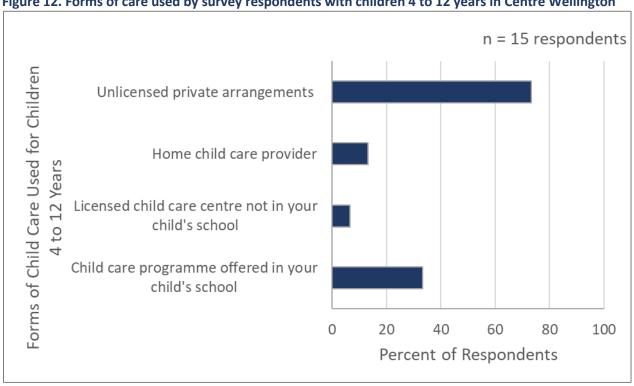


Figure 12. Forms of care used by survey respondents with children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington



Level of interest in licensed child care options

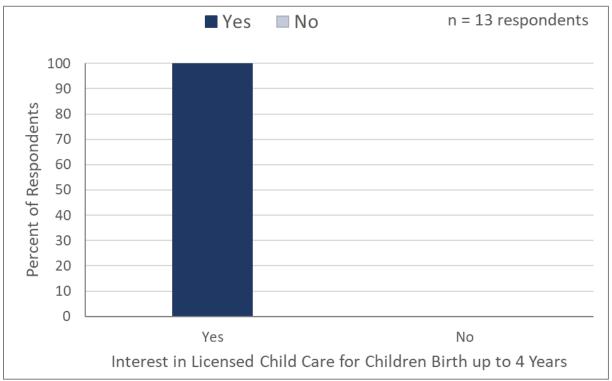
In addition, the Child Care Survey sought to establish the level of interest in licensed child care options for children birth up to 4 years and the level of interest in a variety of school-age care options for children 4 to 12 years.

a) Level of interest in licensed child care (home child care or centre-based) for children birth up to 4 vears

Survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years who indicated that they used "unlicensed private arrangements" were asked if they would use licensed child care if it were available. The results are shown in Figure 13.

All of the survey respondents indicated that they would use licensed child care if it were available.

Figure 13. Level of interest in licensed child care among survey respondents using unlicensed private arrangements for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington



b) Level of interest in child care that is provided in school for children 4 to 12 years

School-age care that is provided at the children's school helps to reduce transitions for children. The survey asked respondents with children 4 to 12 years who indicated that they used some form of care if they would use before and after school care offered in their children's school. The results are shown in Figure 14.

The majority of respondents (93.3%) indicated that they would use before and after school care if it were available in their school compared to 6.7% who indicated that they would not (Figure 14).

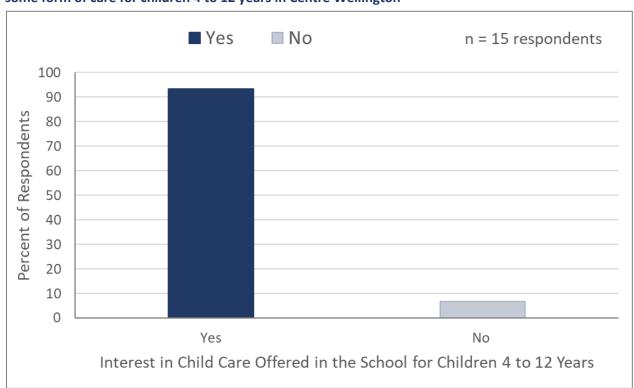


Figure 14. Level of interest in child care that is provided in school among survey respondents using some form of care for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington

Comments from respondents showed that parents are very interested in before and after school care offered at their child's school, but spaces are limited.



"I know for a fact that more than the 19 families they needed filled out that survey saying they needed care. I have spent 5 years looking for a licensed spot and have had to make do with poor quality unlicensed care, while still paying the same amount as I would for licensed space"

Survey respondent



c) Level of interest in care on PD days, school breaks or over the summer for children 4 to 12 years. The survey also asked respondents with children 4 to 12 years who indicated that they used some form of care if they would use care if it were available on PD days, school breaks and over the summer. The results are shown in Figure 15.

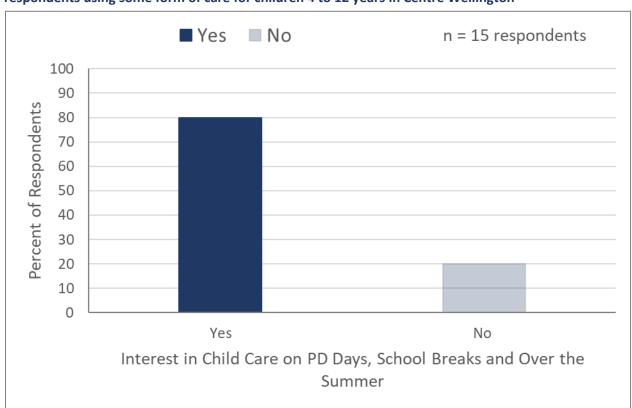


Figure 15. Level of interest in child care on PD days, school breaks and over the summer among survey respondents using some form of care for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington

The majority of survey respondents (80%) indicated that they would use child care on PD days, school breaks and over the summer if it were available compared to 20% who indicated that they would not (Figure 15).

Comments from survey respondents who indicated that they would not use care on PD days, school breaks or over the summer provided a number of reasons, including having alternative care arrangements for children and having work schedules that allowed them to look after their own children.

Comments from survey respondents who were interested in care on PD days, school breaks or over the summer showed that while parents feel that there is a high need for care during these days, they explained that finding spaces that meet the needs of families could be challenging.



"It is difficult to find spaces in camps for the summer and he often attends several different ones, all with different hours... something that I start having anxiety about as early as February of each year"

Survey respondent



How well child care arrangements are working for families

In order to plan and manage child care services so that they are responsive to the needs of local families, the Child Care Survey sought input to help understand how well the child care arrangements of those using care are working for them.

Survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years and children 4 to 12 years, who indicated that they were using some form of child care were asked to explain what was working well and what was not working well with their current child care arrangements.

The explanations from survey respondents about what was working well and not working well with child care arrangements for both age groups varied and have been grouped into themes. In all cases, the data from survey respondents were supported by comments from participants at community conversations.

The themes for what is working well and what is not working well with any form of child care arrangements (licensed and unlicensed) for children birth up to 4 years and 4 to 12 years are shown below. It is important to note that, for both age groups, there was considerable overlap between themes of what was working well and not working well. This may point to the diversity of parents' experiences with child care.

What is working well with child care arrangements for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington

- Care conveniently located close to home
- △ Safe, reliable care environment
- A Reliable, regulated care with access to supports including child care subsidies
- △ Committed, reliable staff

What is not working well with child care arrangements for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington

- ∇ Lack of licensed child care spaces

What is working well with child care arrangements for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington

- Convenient care location
- Meaningful, age appropriate programming
- Convenient hours of operation
- Flexible care options

What is not working well with child care arrangements for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington

- \mathcal{D} Lack of licensed school age care spaces
- \mathcal{D} Inconvenient hours of operation

Challenges finding child care

The Child Care Survey also sought to understand challenges parents face when looking for child care. Survey respondents who indicated they were using some form of child care for their children birth up to 4 years and children 4 to 12 years were asked to indicate challenges they have had finding child care by selecting from a list of challenges.

The results for children birth up to 4 years and 4 to 12 years are shown in Figures 16 and 17, respectively, and represent challenges finding any form of child care – licensed and unlicensed.

Challenges finding child care for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington

Figure 16 shows the challenges finding child care for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington.

The most common challenge finding child care for children birth up to 4 years indicated was "lack of spaces" (86.4% of respondents), followed by "cost" (72.7% of respondents). Over half of survey respondents (54.5%) indicated "hours of operation" and 31.8% indicated "location" as challenges.

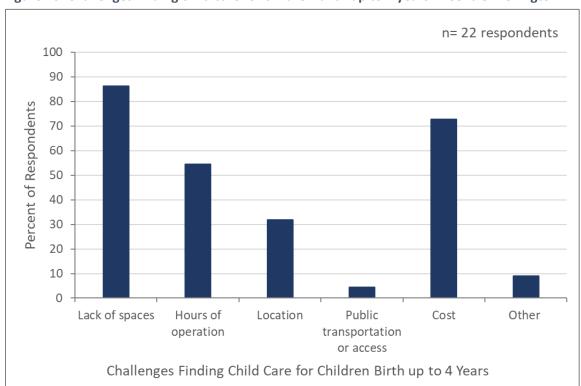


Figure 16. Challenges finding child care for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington

Challenges finding child care for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington

Figure 17 shows the challenges finding child care for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington.

The most common challenge finding child care for children 4 to 12 years indicated was "lack of spaces" (71.4% of respondents), followed by "hours of operation" (50% of respondents) and location (50% of respondents).

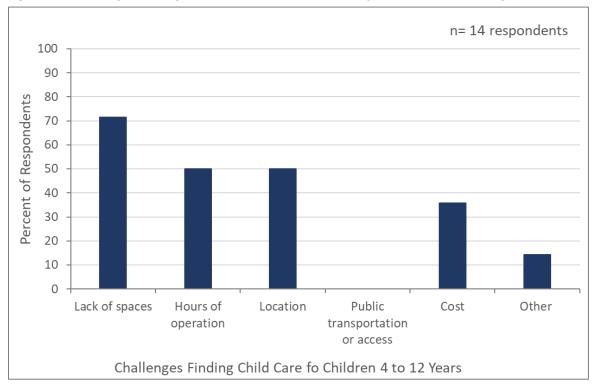


Figure 17. Challenges finding child care for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington

Overall, the results on challenges experienced finding child care for children birth up to 4 years and children 4 to 12 years seem to suggest that for parents with children birth up to 4 years, lack of spaces and cost are the most important challenges to finding child care. On the other hand, lack of spaces, hours of operation and location are the most important challenges to finding child care for parents with children 4 to 12 years.



"Almost impossible for me to find child care for 12 month old. I contacted over 12 individuals both licensed and not, all were full"

"Our monthly daycare expense for 2 children is more than our mortgage payment"

"Lining up before and after school care (as well as holiday/PA day care) is the most stressful thing that myself and most of my friends have had to do"

Survey respondents



Reasons for not using child care

Some survey respondents indicated that they were not using any form of care for their children birth up to 4 years or children 4 to 12 years. Therefore, the survey wanted to understand why they were not using child care.

Survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years and 4 to 12 years who indicated that they were not currently using child care were asked to identify the reasons why they were not using care by selecting from a list of options. The results are shown in Figure 18 and Figure 19, respectively.

Reasons for not using child care for children birth up to 4 years

Figure 18 shows the reasons for not using care indicated by respondents with children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington.

The most common reason for not using child care indicated by survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years was "I will need care in the next 12 months" (57.9% of respondents). In addition, 15.8% of respondents indicated "I don't require care" and "other" while 10.5% indicated "I'm currently looking for care" as the reasons for not using care.

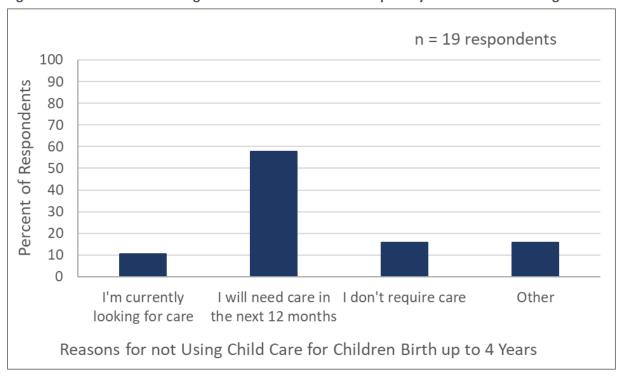


Figure 18. Reasons for not using child care for children birth up to 4 years in Centre Wellington

Survey respondents were able to comment on their reasons for not using care for children birth up to 4 years. The comments suggest that the majority of survey respondents who indicated, "I will need care in the next 12 months" and "I'm currently looking for care" were on maternity leave and would need care in order to return to work.

Explanations from respondents who indicated that "I don't require care" show that they cared for their own children. They included stay at home parents, parents with work schedules that allowed them to

care for their children, and home child care providers. Some relied on care from members of the extended family, especially grandparents.

Some respondents indicated that even though they worked from home and could look after their own children, they were looking for care because they wanted their young children to be in child care so that they can socialize with children their own age.



"Upon my return to work (taking extended leave until my daughter is 18 months) I will need full time care"

"I am a dairy farmer so...we would just like child care more as a way to get our son being around other people and children for social purposes"

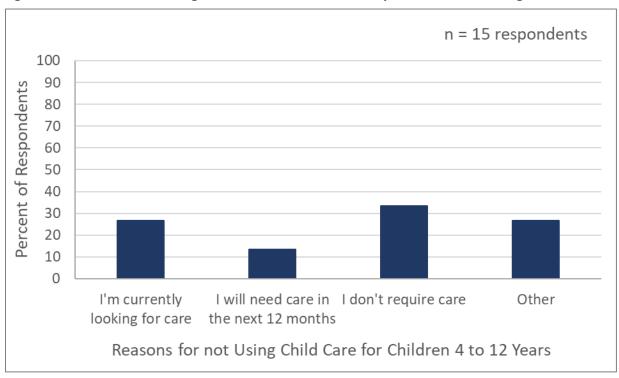
- Survey respondents



Reasons for not using child care for children 4 to 12 years

Figure 19 shows the reasons for not using care indicated by respondents with children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington.

Figure 19. Reasons for not using child care for children 4 to 12 years in Centre Wellington



The most common reason for not using child care for children 4 to 12 years indicated was "I don't require care" (33.3% of respondents). About a quarter of respondents (26.7%) indicated "I'm currently looking for care" and "other" while 13.3% of respondents indicated "I will need care in the next 12 months" as the reasons for not using care (Figure 19).

Survey respondents were able to comment on their reasons for not using care for children 4 to 12 years. The comments suggest that those who indicated "I don't require care" cared for their own children. For example, survey respondents indicated that they adjusted their work schedules in order to care for their children or they worked from home.

Comments from survey respondents suggest that those who indicated "I'm currently looking for care" or "I will need care in the next 12 months" were currently on maternity leave or were experiencing difficulties finding care due to lack of spaces.



"I run a French preschool in my home so I can be home when my kids get on/off the bus"

"Our family had child care set up but was just told our child care provider was closing her business"

"We were wait listed for 2 years and found a sport related after school program when the one we needed did not become available"

Survey respondents



Ideal child care scenario

To understand the desired state of child care by families in Centre Wellington, the survey asked all respondents to describe the ideal child care scenario for their family. The responses were analyzed to identify elements of an ideal child care scenario.

Based on the analysis, 11 elements of an ideal child care scenario were identified which aligned with four themes of adequate spaces, affordable cost, well-arranged care, and high quality care. This is summarized in Figure 20 and described further below. A handful of descriptions emphasized parental or in-home care that is provided by a nanny, other family member or friend as part of their ideal child care scenario.

Adequate spaces

Availability of adequate spaces was a common theme in many of the scenarios described by survey respondents. The elements of an ideal child care scenario related to adequate spaces included having guaranteed full-time, licensed (centre-based and home child care) spaces that include spaces for infants and flexible care options for parents who need them; having guaranteed before and after school care spaces ideally located at the school that include care options during PD days, school breaks and flexible

options for parents who need them; and adequate licensed child care options for Francophone families, including care on PD days.



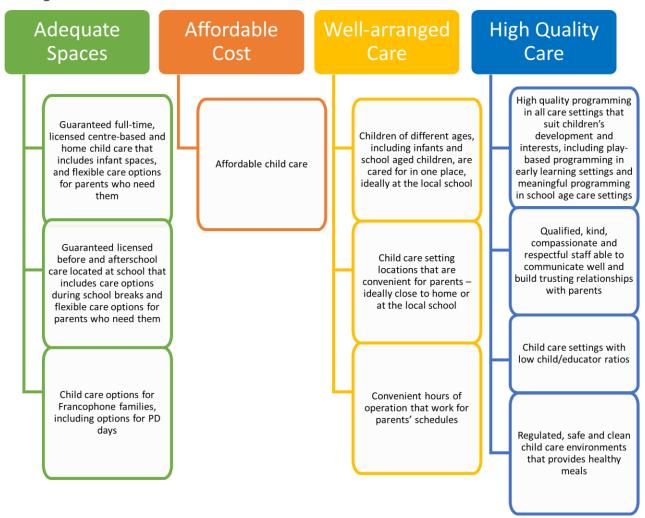
"A spot guaranteed well in advance of when I need care"

"Part-time flexible care for shift workers. I don't want to pay to hold a spot full time when I don't need that"

Survey respondents



Figure 20. Elements of an ideal child care scenario based on input from respondents in Centre Wellington



Affordable cost

The cost of child care was also reflected in many of the ideal scenario descriptions and shows that parents want affordable child care – meaning affordable rates and enough subsidized spaces.



"That would cost less than 1 week of my paycheque every month"

Survey respondent



Well-arranged care

Other ideal child care scenario descriptions emphasized the need for care that is arranged in a way that reduces parental hassles and minimizes transitions for children. The elements of well-arranged care included having one care setting where children of different ages, including infants and school age children, are cared for ideally at the local school for minimal drop-off and pick-up points; child care locations that are convenient for parents, ideally close to home, work place or at the local school; and hours of operation that accommodate parents' schedule, including non-standard work hours.



"Ideally it would be great if the elementary school had both licensed day care attached plus a before and after school programme. One drop off point for both kids"

Survey respondent



High quality care

Furthermore, a number of ideal child care scenario descriptions focused on quality of care and included aspects of staffing, programming, and care environments. The elements related to high quality care included having high quality programming in all care settings that suit children's development and interests, including play-based programming in early learning settings and meaningful programming in school age care settings and having qualified, kind, compassionate and respectful staff able to communicate well and build trusting relationships with parents. Additional high quality care elements included having child care settings with low child to staff ratios. Finally, high quality care settings would have care environments that are regulated, safe clean, and provide healthy meals.



"Committed and friendly staff with certifications"

"Smaller child to teacher ratios"

Survey respondents



Information about licensed child care

Knowledge of fee subsidies

Child care fee subsidy can help to pay for licensed child care, and approved camps and recreation programmes for children up to age 13. It is only available at programmes that are subsidy approved by the County of Wellington. The survey asked all respondents if they knew that families could apply for child care fee subsidies. The results are shown in Figure 21.

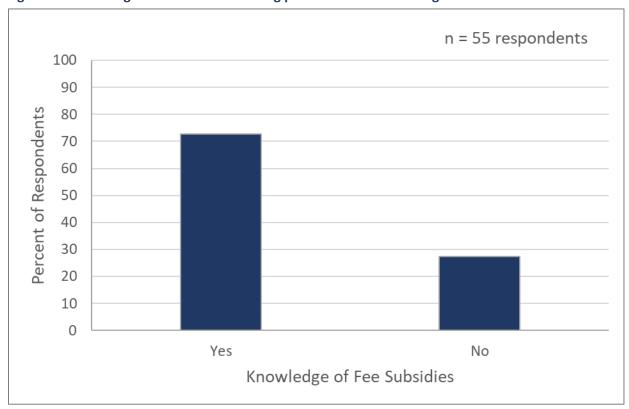


Figure 21. Knowledge of fee subsidies among parents in Centre Wellington

The majority of survey respondents (72.7%) in Centre Wellington indicated that they knew that families could apply for fee subsidies and 27.3% indicated that they did not know (Figure 21).

Sources of information about licensed child care

Finding reliable information about licensed child care helps parents to make informed choices. Survey respondents were asked to indicate where they go to find information about licensed child care. The data were analyzed and sources of information were grouped into eight categories. The results are shown in Figure 22.

In the analysis a distinction was made between internet/online and website. This was because in most cases where a website was identified as a source of information, specific websites were indicated, such as "the Wellington County website", "County/Municipal website", or "Ministry website." In contrast, "internet/online" could refer to internet search engines such as Google. A distinction was also made between internet/online searches and social media platforms such as Facebook in order to capture specifically the prevalence of social media use by parents.

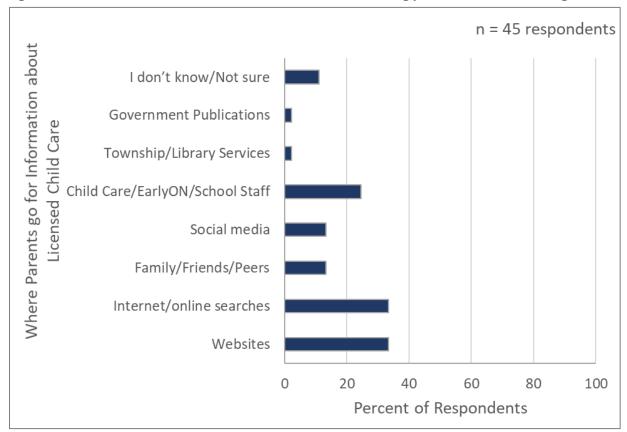


Figure 22. Sources of information about licensed child care among parents in Centre Wellington

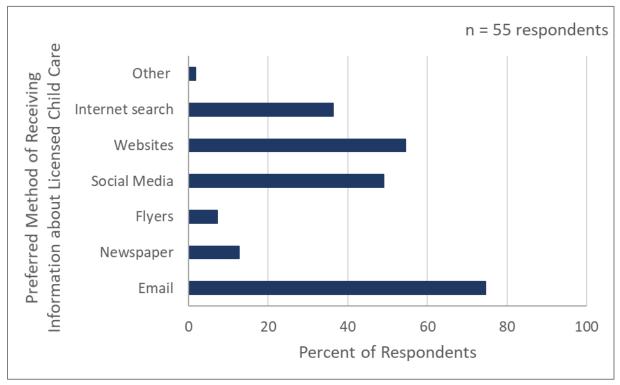
The most frequently identified sources of information about licensed child care were "internet/online searches" (33.3% of respondents) and "websites" (33.3% of respondents). About a quarter of respondents (24.4%) identified "child care/EarlyON/school staff" and 13.3% identified "family/friends/peers" and "social media" (Figure 22).

Preferred method of receiving information about licensed child care

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, the Children's Early Years Division can make available to parents reliable information about licensed child care. Hence, the survey also sought to understand parents' preferred method of receiving information about licensed child care. Survey respondents were asked to select their preferred method(s) of receiving information about licensed child care from a list of options. The results are shown in Figure 23.

The most preferred methods for receiving information about licensed child care were "e-mail" (74.5% of respondents), "websites" (54.5% of respondents) and "social media" (49.1% of respondents). Just over a third of respondents (36.4%) preferred "internet search" and 12.7% preferred "newspapers." "Flyers" (7.3% of respondents) was the least preferred method of receiving information about licensed childcare.







CENTRE WELLINGTON

2019 Early Years Community Engagement Report

EARLYON PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES FINDINGS

Programme preferences:



Most preferred EarlyON programmes and services:

96%

Preferred drop-in play-based learning programmes for children and parents/caregivers.



Location of programmes:

Preference of location to attend EarlyON programmes and services: 90%

Preferred attending programmes at a local community/recreation centre.

47%

Preferred attending programmes at a local school.





Scheduling of programmes:

- · Weekdays are preferred more than weekends.
- Mornings are the most preferred weekday times for attending programmes.
- Saturday morning is the most preferred weekend time.
- Some respondents can only attend programmes on weekday evenings or weekends.



Participation in programmes:



14%

Never attended EarlyON programmes and services.



- Advertise EarlyON Child and Family Centre programmes and services.
- Offer flexible, drop-in programmes with no registration.

Level of interest in French Language programming :

Bienvenue!

29%

Interested in French language EarlyON programmes and services if available. Level of interest in Indigenous programming:

Bozhoo! Tansi! Taanshi! Halu! Kwhe!

27%

Interested in Indigenous EarlyON programmes and services if available.

Where do parents go for answers about parenting and child development: Most frequently used sources of answers:



63% Survey respondents go to the internet.



49%

Survey respondents go to family, friends and peers.



40% Survey respondents go to medical professionals.



CENTRE WELLINGTON

2019 Early Years Community Engagement Report

CHILD CARE FINDINGS

Child care use:

Most commonly used forms of child care by survey respondents who used child care:



For children birth up to 4 years:

Used unlicensed private arrangements

For children birth

For children 4 to 12 years:

Used unlicensed private arrangements

For children 4 to 12 years

How well child care arrangements are working:

For children birth up to 4 years:



Use of licensed

- Care located close to home
- Safe, reliable care environment
- Reliable, regulated care with supports
- · Committed and reliable staff



- Lack of child care spaces
- Lack of flexible care options
- Inadequate staffing and supervision
- Cost that is not affordable

For children 4 to 12 years:



- Convenient care location
- Meaningful programming
- Staff
- Hours of operation
- Flexible care options



- Lack of school age care spaces
- Location too far from home
- Inconvenient hours of operation
- Inadequate programming

Challenges finding child care:

Most frequent challenges finding child care (licensed and unlicensed) indicated by survey respondents:

For children birth up to 4 years:

86% Lack of child care spaces

73% Cost of care

For children 4 to 12 years:

Lack of child care spaces

Hours of operation

Ideal child care scenario:



- Enough licensed child care spaces, including flexible care options.
- Affordable child care.
- Child care locations convenient for parents including one care location for all children.
- Hours of operation that accommodate
 Evidence-based high quality parents' work schedules.
- Regulated care environments that are safe and provide healthy meals.
- · Adequate numbers of qualified and knowledgeable staff with low child/ staff ratios.
- programming in all care settings.
- Adequate child care options for Francophone families.
- · In-home care.

Information about licensed child care:

Most commonly identified sources of information:

Used internet/online searches and websites (e.g. County website)

Used child care/EarlyON/school staff







Most preferred methods of receiving information:

75% Preferred email

Preferred websites