



2019

TOWN OF ERIN

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 Erin 33 people completed the EarlyON Services Survey and 40 completed the Child Care Survey. Two community conversation events were scheduled, one at the Erin Community Centre on June 12 and the other at the Hillsburgh Library on June 19, 2018. No one attended the event at the Erin Community Centre and three people attended the event at the Hillsburgh Library. In addition, informal in-person conversations were held with five residents at All Saints Anglican Church in Erin.

This report summarizes findings of the early years community engagement project for Erin 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 Erin

The Town of Erin (referred to as Erin in this report) is one of eight municipalities that make up the Wellington service delivery area. It covers an area of 297.8km² and has a population of 11,439 making it the fifth largest municipality in the service delivery area based on both geographic area and population size. Below is a brief overview of some of the demographic characteristics of Erin.

Table 1 Demographic Statistics for Erin

Demographic Statistic		% of Total Population of Erin
Total Land Area	297.8km ²	
Total Population (2016)	11,439	
Population percentage change; from 2011 to 2016	6.2%	
Francophone Population in Erin (2016)	210	1.8%
Indigenous Population in Erin (2016)	320	2.8%
Total number who speak non-official languages at home in Erin	245	2.1%
Polish	60	0.5%
Portuguese	45	0.4%
Russian & Ukrainian	15 each	0.1% each
Population of Children Birth to 6 years	620	5.4%
Population of Children Birth to 12 years	1,475	12.8%
Number of children birth up to 4 years	355	3.1%
Number of children 4 to 12 years	1,120	9.8%
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 33 people answered a survey question then these are shown as “n 33 = respondents” on the corresponding graph.

EarlyON Services Survey Summary Statistics

	Number of Respondents
Total number of people who completed the EarlyON Services Survey in Erin	33
I am a parent/guardian	29
I am a caregiver for children in my home	9
I have/care for children birth to 3 years (i.e. up to 4 years)	26
I have/care for children 4 to 6 years	19

The majority of survey respondents (87.9%) 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 (36.4%) had children in both age groups.

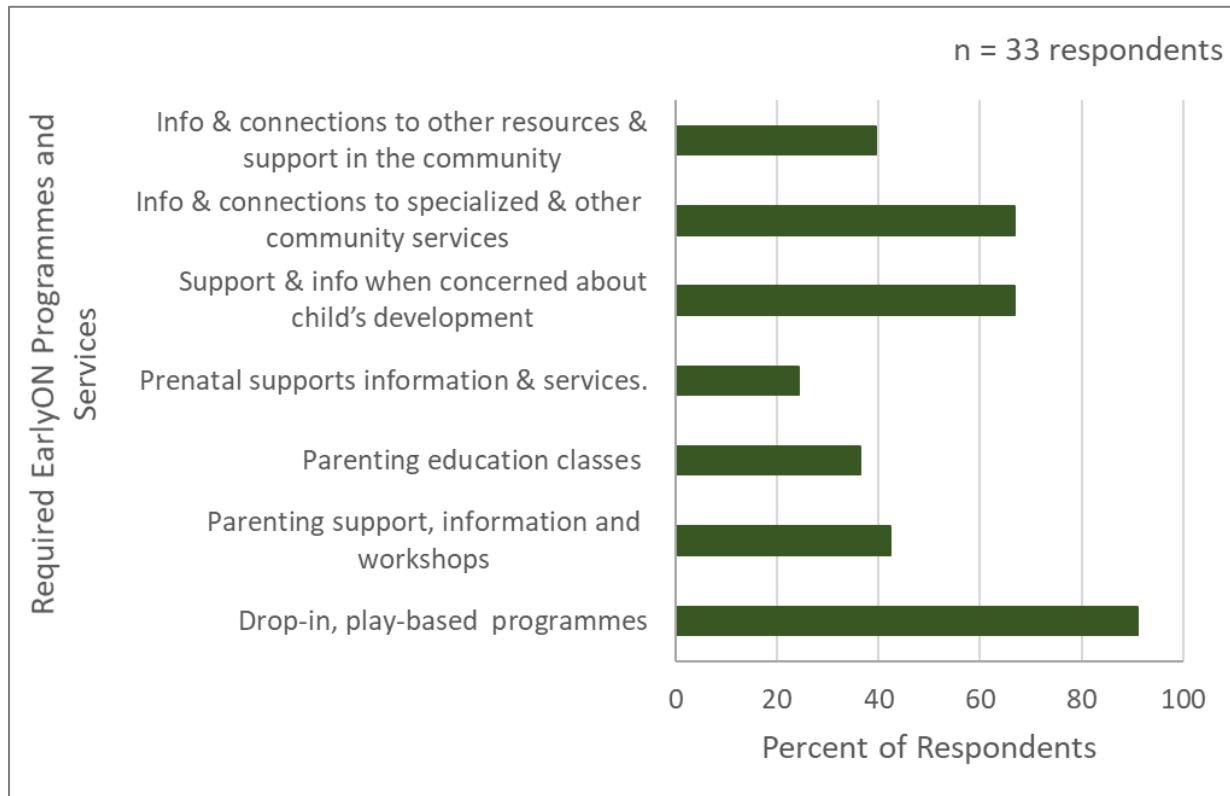
Programming preferences

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 programmes 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 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” (90.9% of respondents).

Other programmes with high interest were “support and information when you have concerns about your child’s development” (66.7% of respondents) and “information about and connections to specialized community services and other community services for families with young children” (66.7% of respondents).

Figure 1. Programming preferences of parents and caregivers in Erin



Other services that could be offered at the local EarlyON site

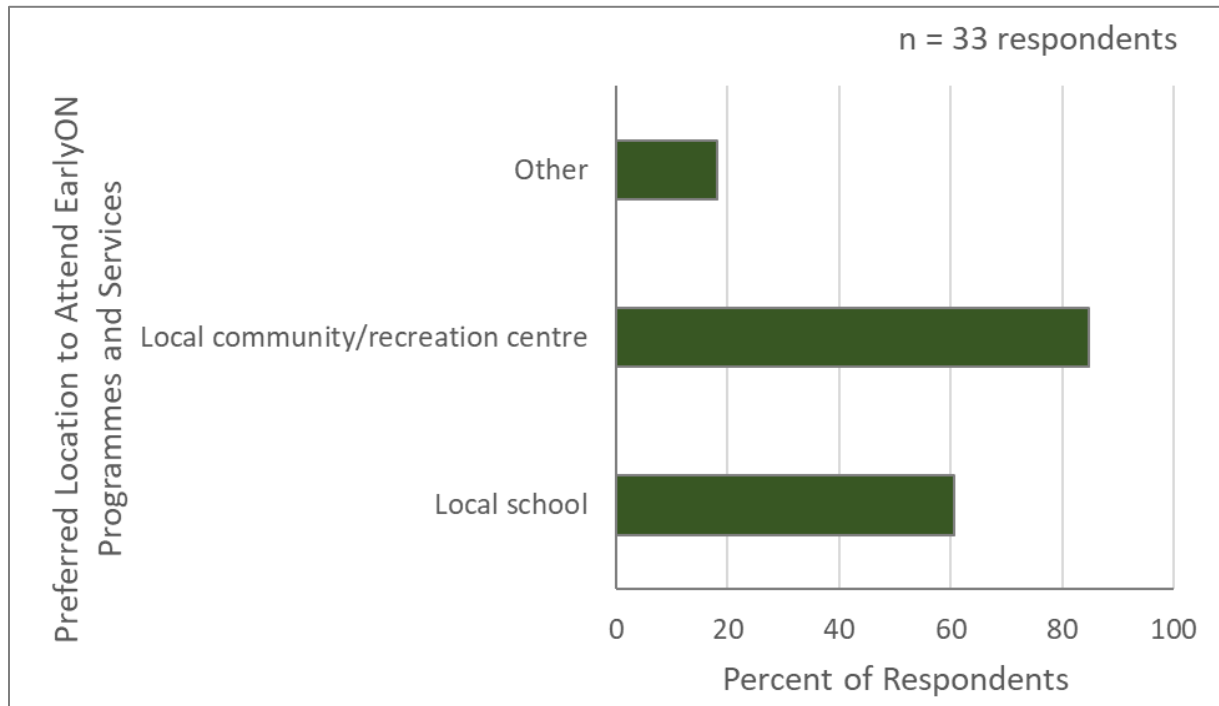
In addition to the required EarlyON services, the provincial government allows other services to be offered at EarlyON sites provided they align with the needs and priorities of individual communities. The survey respondents and participants at community conversations were asked to identify other services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

- Child care services
- Before and after school care
- Ad-hoc, occasional babysitting
- Breakfast programmes
- Yoga
- Programmes for dads and supports for grandparents
- Appointments for specialized services (e.g. CMHA)
- Food drives for foodbanks

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. Schools are considered the ideal location. 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 Erin

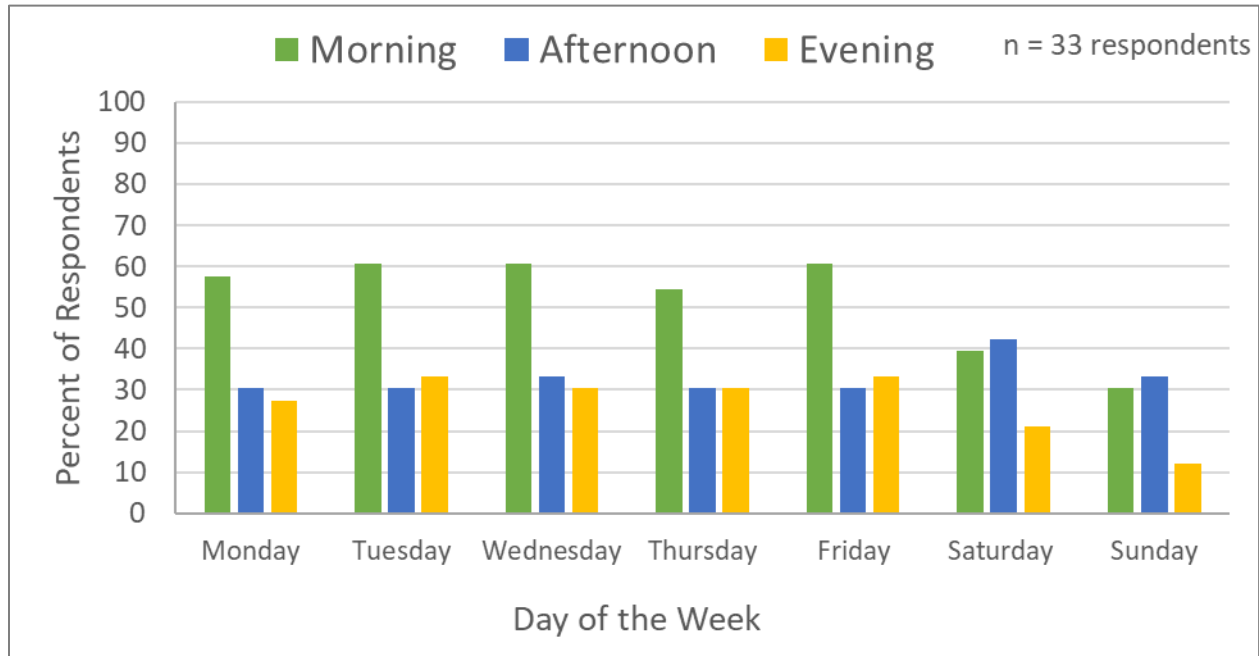


The majority of respondents (84.8%) indicated that they would like to attend EarlyON services at “a local community/recreation centre” while 60.6% preferred “a local school”. Respondents who indicated “Other” (18.2%) were asked to specify their preferred location. “Other” preferred locations identified were the church, parks and trails. Over half of respondents (57.6%) selected both “a local community/recreation centre” and “a local school”, suggesting some flexibility in preferred location.

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 also improved when services recognize and accommodate the work/life schedules of parents and caregivers. To understand the preferred programming times for families in Erin, 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 Erin



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

Weekday mornings were preferred more than afternoons and evenings with little variation across days of the week. On weekends, Saturday afternoon was slightly preferred more than Saturday morning and than all times on Sunday. 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 programmes that are offered outside standard working hours.

Comments from participants at community conversations echoed the survey findings, including the high preference for weekday morning programmes. However, some expressed general satisfaction with the current programme schedules and suggested that extending programming times would be challenging in small communities. In addition, there were a number of participants at community conversations who indicated that they preferred weekend programmes either because they needed something to do on weekends or it was the only time that worked for them.



“Mornings are the best time for programmes”

“My husband would be more likely to come if there were weekend hours”

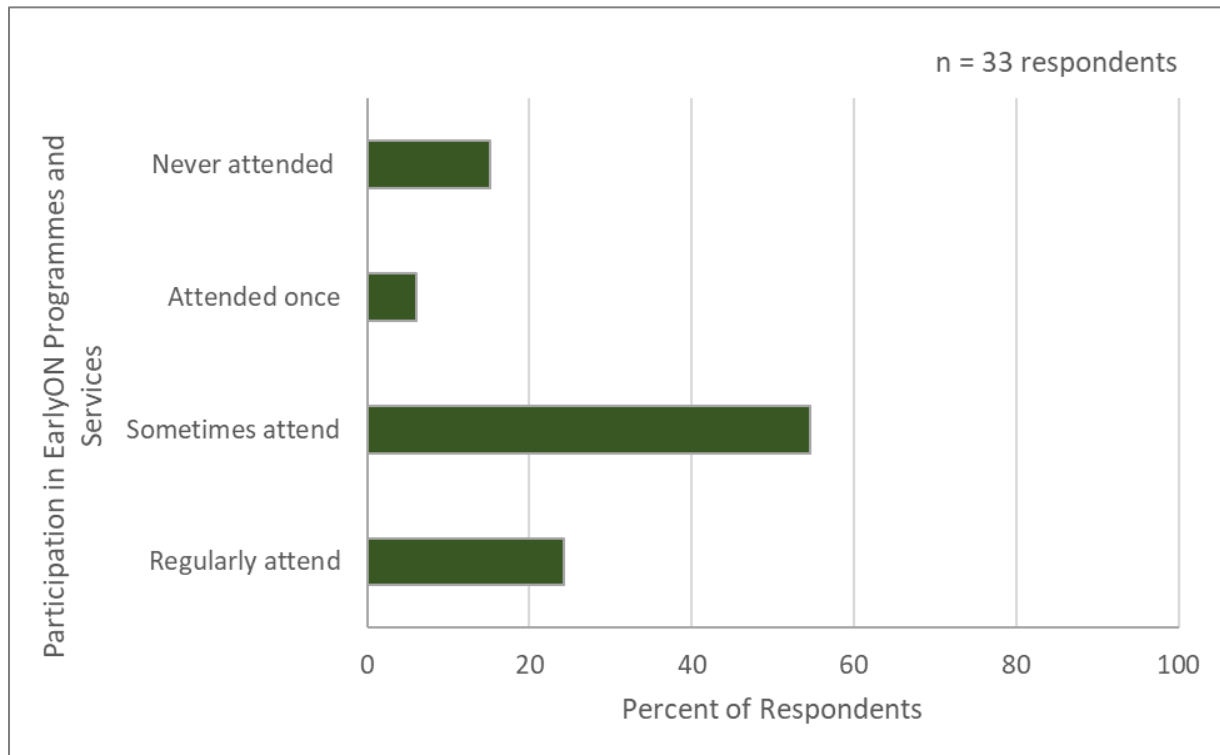
- Participants at community conversations



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 Erin



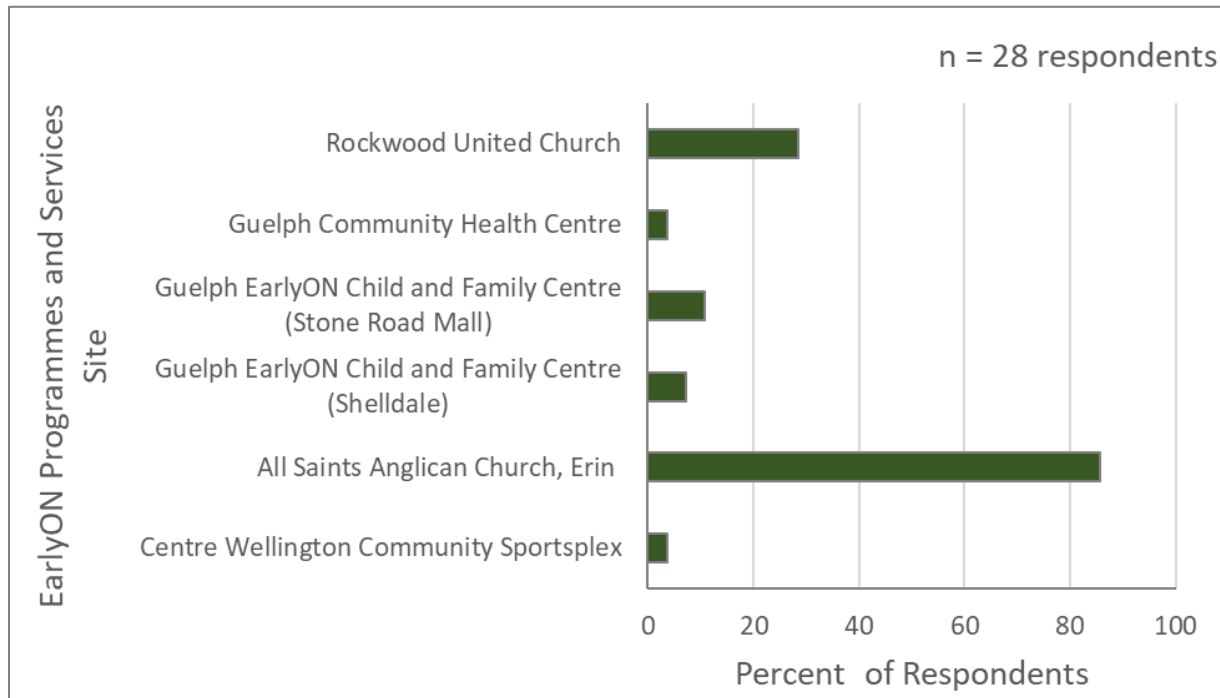
The data show that the frequency of participation in EarlyON services varied, but a greater percentage of survey respondents indicated “sometimes attend” (54.4% of respondents) and “regularly attend” (24.2% of respondents) than “never attended” (15.2% of respondents) or “attended once” (6.1% of respondents).

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

Location of EarlyON services sites attended by parents and caregivers in Erin

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 Erin



The data show that parents and caregivers tend to use more than one EarlyON services site. Furthermore, the data show that the majority of survey respondents (85.7%) attended EarlyON services at sites located in Erin. The most frequently used site was All Saints Anglican Church in Erin.

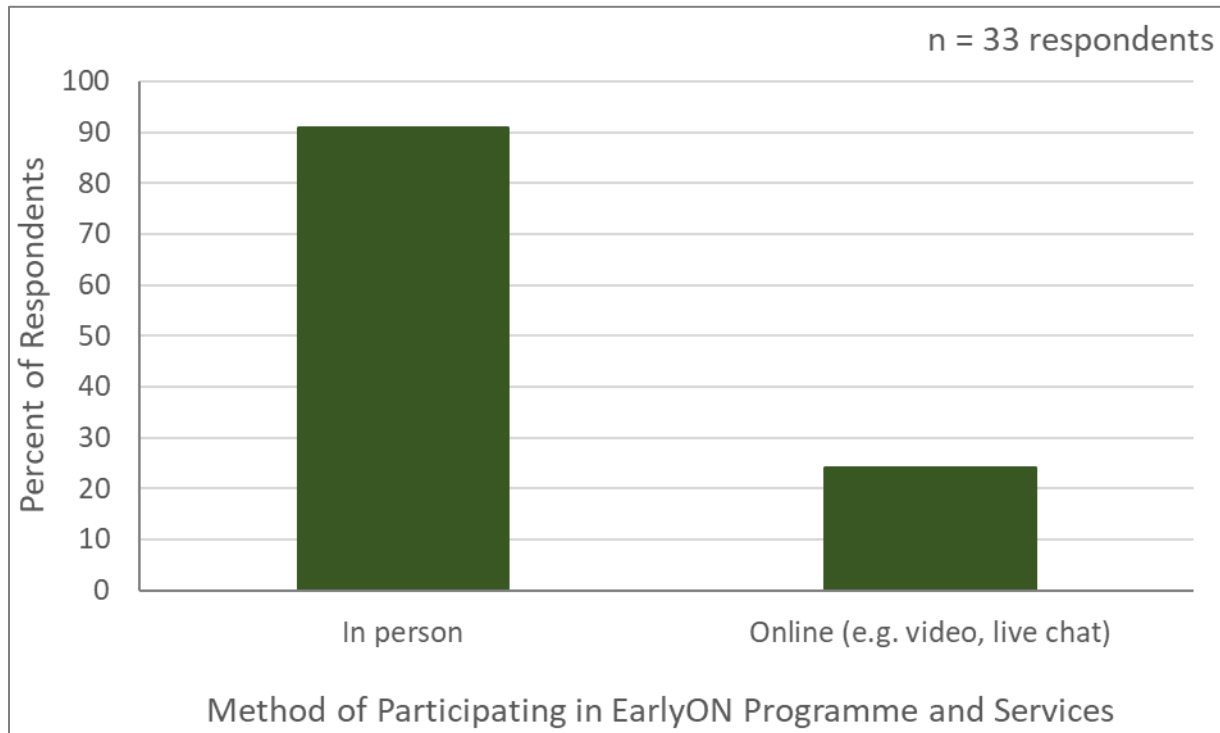
The data also show that in addition to using EarlyON sites located in their municipality, families travel to locations that are outside Erin. More than a third of survey respondents (39.3%) attended EarlyON services at sites located outside of Erin. The most frequently used site outside of Erin was Rockwood United Church in Guelph/Eramosa (28.6% 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.

The majority of survey respondents (90.9%) preferred to participate in EarlyON services in person compared to 24.2% who indicated that they would likely participate online (Figure 6). About 1 in 7 respondents (15.2%) selected both methods.

Figure 6. Preferred method of participating in EarlyON services in Erin



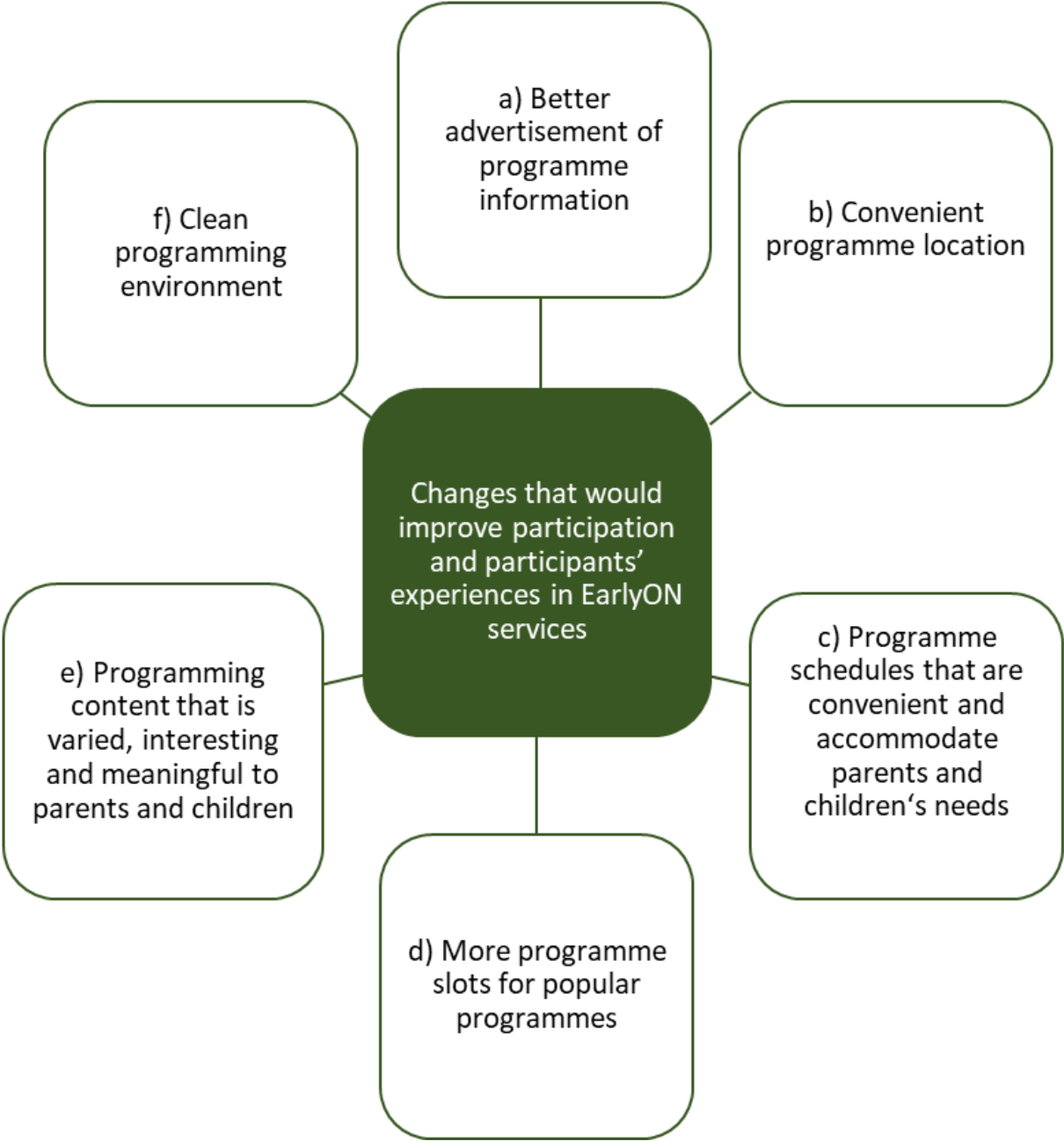
Changes that would improve participation and participants' experiences in EarlyON services

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 six 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 Erin



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 changes to programme schedules, especially cancellations.



“I don’t know much about them here but the girl gave us a card so we’ll look into them”

“Better and more social media presence would get so many more moms”

“I think everything with EarlyON works really well, but sometimes when there’s cancellations they don’t post anywhere, that’s really frustrating”

- Survey respondents and participants at community conversations



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.



“Programme to be local within Hillsburgh, as I currently am unable to drive with more than 2 children and I care for 5”

- Survey respondent



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, particularly for drop-in programmes. For example, suggestions included having more afternoon programmes and having all-day drop-in programming.



“One day a week where the centre is open all day for drop in instead of just specific times”

- Survey respondent



d) More programme slots for popular programmes

Survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested increasing the number of programme slots so that parents and caregivers have more opportunities to participate.



“I love the programmes. More opportunities to go to is always welcomed. I try to go to as many as possible”

“I think we could use more stuff around here though, I get bored”

- Survey respondent and participant at a community conversation



e) 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.



“I like outdoor programmes, I wish there was mud kitchen in Erin like there is in Rockwood”

“Offrir les services en français. [Offer services in French]”

“I’d also like to see some parenting information sessions, especially a nutritionist”

- Survey respondents and participants at community conversations



f) Clean programming environment

Survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested ensuring that the EarlyON programming environment is clean would improve participation and participants’ experiences.



“No rugs (they get so dirty)”

- Survey respondent



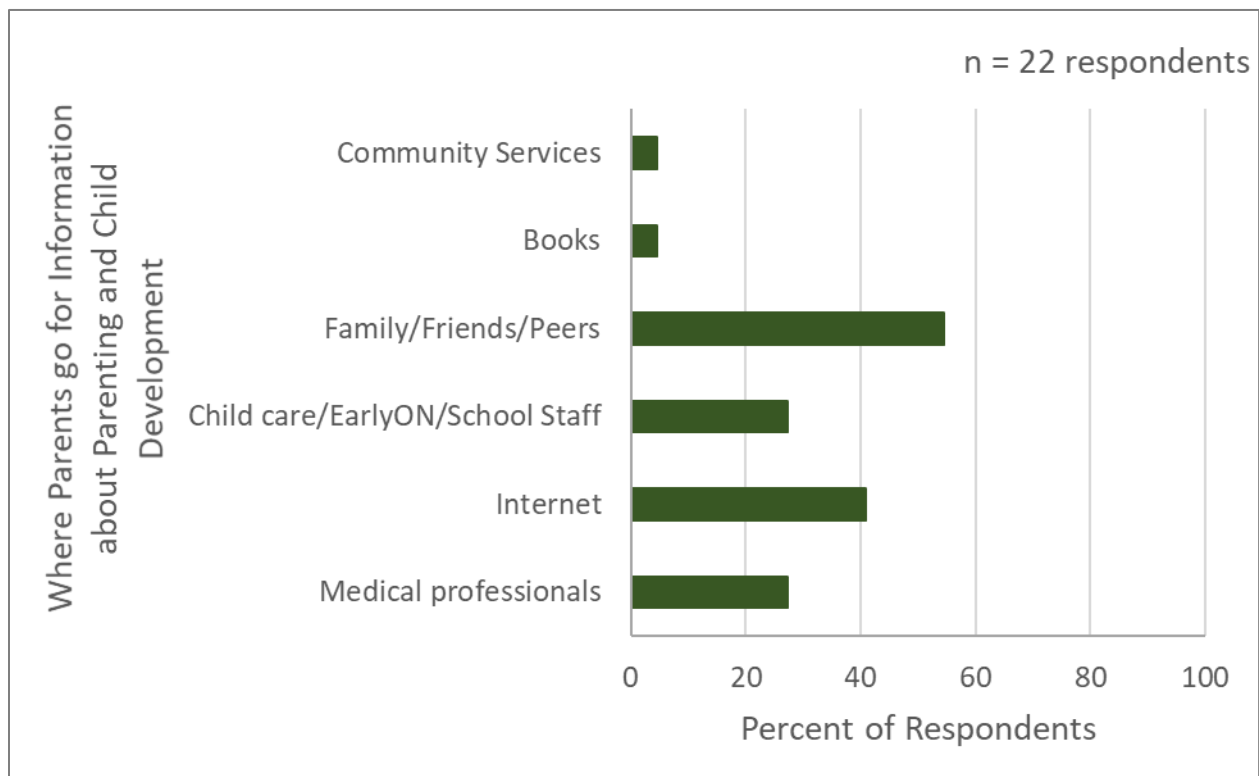
Where parents go for answers about parenting and child development

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 Erin



The most frequently used source of information were family/friends/peers (54.5% of respondents) and the internet (40.9% of respondents). Just over a quarter of respondents indicated that they go to medical professionals (27.3% of respondents) and child care/EarlyON/school staff (27.3% of respondents) for answers about parenting and child development. Respondents also indicated that they asked providers of community services (4.5% of respondents) and used books (4.5% of respondents) for answers.



“le médecin, les autres mères et le centre de la petite enfance. [the doctor, other mothers and EarlyON child and family centre]”

“Midwife, online (but don't like it as much)”

- Survey respondents

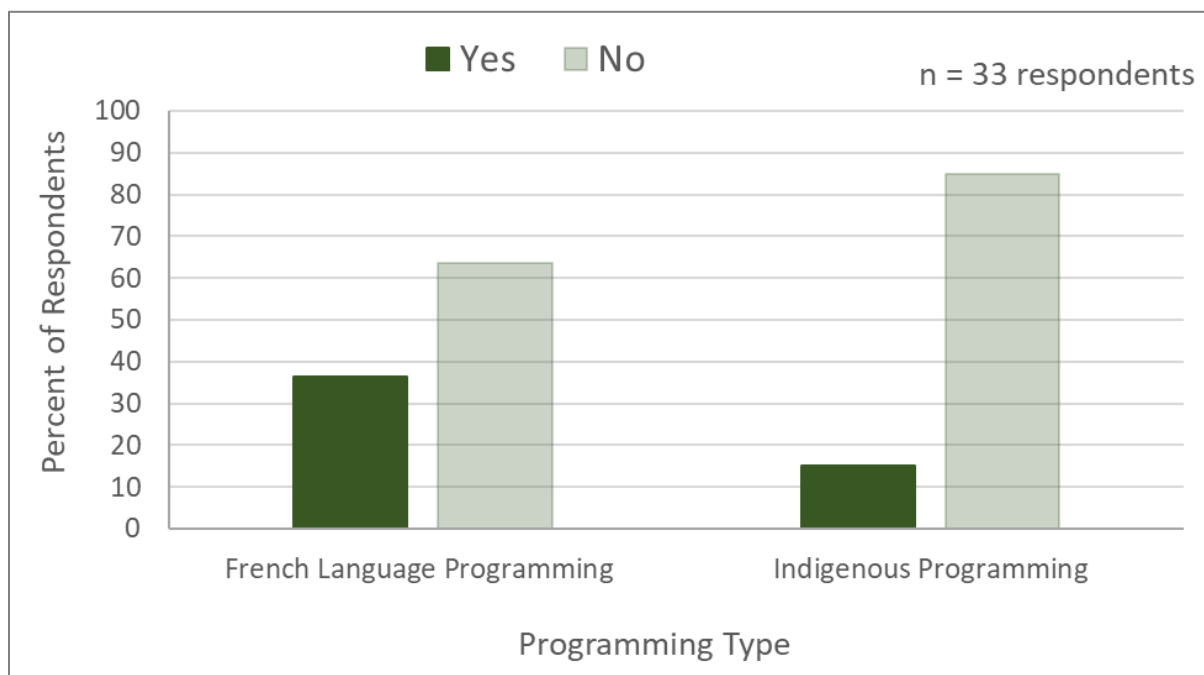


French language and Indigenous programming

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 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 Erin



The data show similar patterns in the level of interest in French language and Indigenous programmes (Figure 9). In both cases, a greater percentage of survey respondents indicated that they would not attend compared to those who said they would. Nearly a third of survey respondents (36.4 %) indicated

that they would participate in French language EarlyON programming while 15.2% indicated that they would participate in Indigenous EarlyON programming if they were available.

Information gathered from participants at community conversations showed interest in Indigenous programming, while a number said they would participate in French language programming. Interest in participating in French language programming was often linked to children's enrolment in French immersion schools.



“I’d come if there was some French in programmes, my oldest son is in French immersion”

- 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 18 people answered a survey question then these are shown as “n = 18 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 Erin	40
Number with children birth up to 4 years not attending elementary school	18
Currently use some form of child care	8 (44.4%)
Do not currently use child care	10 (55.6%)
Number with children 4 to 12 years	27
Currently use some form of child care	16 (59.3%)
Do not currently use child care	11 (40.7%)

The majority of people who completed the Child Care Survey had children 4 to 12 years. Five 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 Erin.

Child care use

The survey sought to understand the extent to which families in Erin 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.

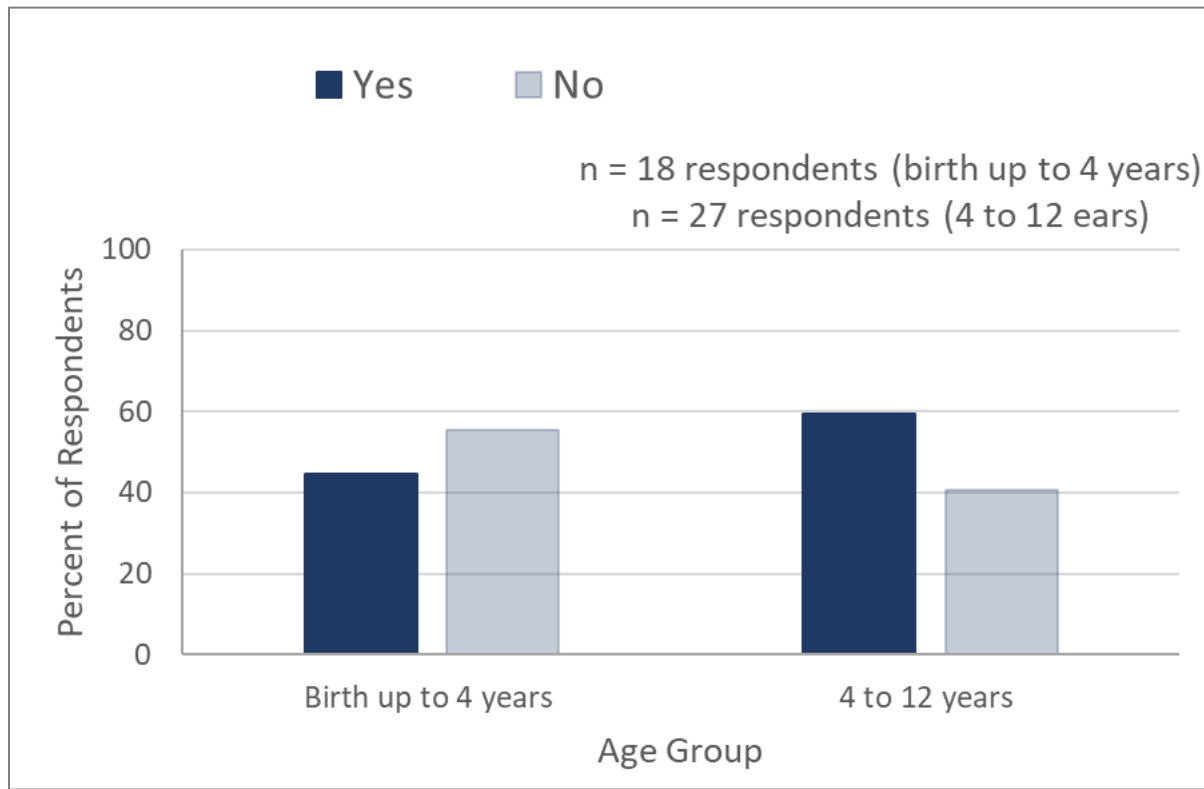
a) Child care use for children birth up to 4 years

A smaller percentage of survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years (44.4%) indicated that they used some form of child care compared to 55.6% who indicated that they did not use child care (Figure 10).

b) Child care use for children 4 to 12 years

Among survey respondents with children 4 to 12 years, a greater percentage (59.3%) indicated that they used some form of care compared to 40.7% who indicated that they did not use child care (Figure 10).

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



Forms of care used

The survey also sought to understand the forms of child care used by families in Erin. 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 from a list of options the forms of care they used.

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 Erin.

The most commonly used form of care reported by respondents with children birth up to 4 years was “unlicensed private arrangements” (75% of respondents). “Licensed child care centre” was used by 25% of respondents and no one reported using “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 Erin.

The most commonly used form of care for children 4 to 12 years was “unlicensed private arrangements” (62.5% of respondents). Nearly a third of respondents (31.3%) indicated “child care programme offered in your child’s school”, 6.3% of respondents indicated “licensed child care not in your child’s school.” No one reported using “home child care provider” contracted with the County of Wellington.

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

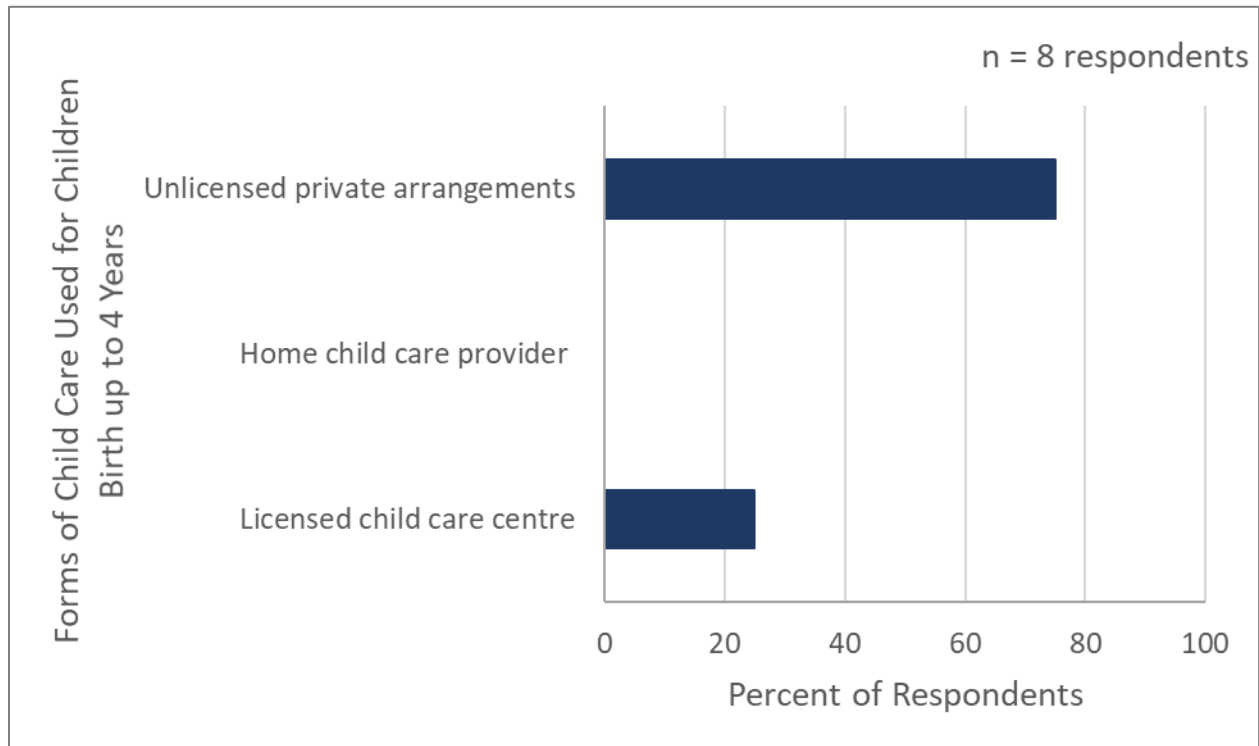
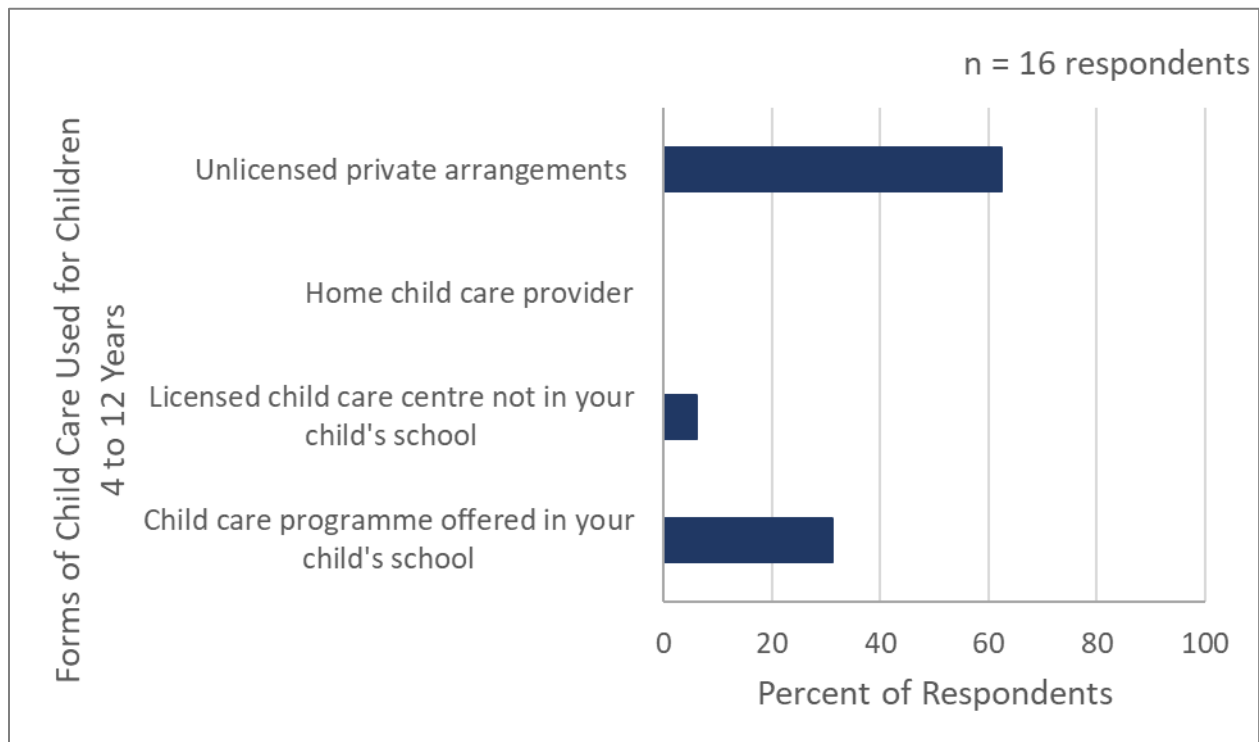


Figure 12. Forms of care used by survey respondents with children 4 to 12 years in Erin



Level of interest in licensed child care options

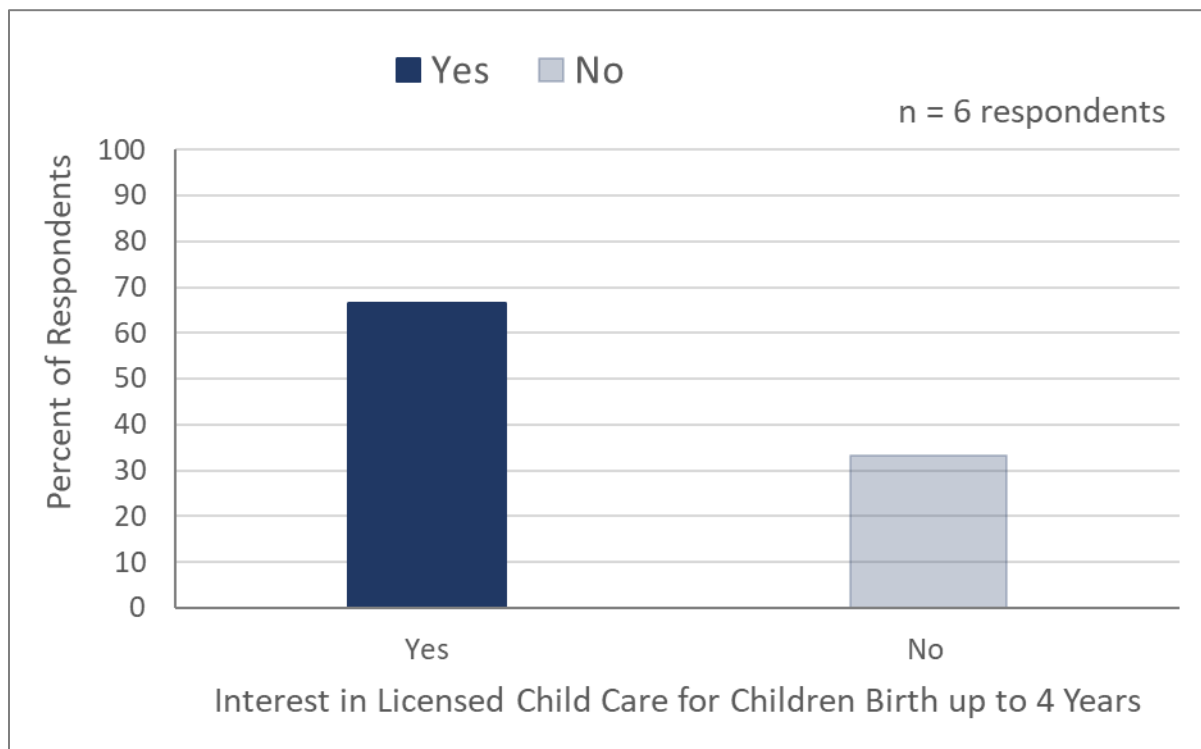
In addition, the Child Care Survey sought to establish the level of interest in licensed child care options for children birth up to 4 years and the level of interest in a variety of school-age care options for children 4 to 12 years.

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

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.

Two thirds of the respondents (66.7%) indicated that they would use licensed child care if it were available and 33.3% said they would not.

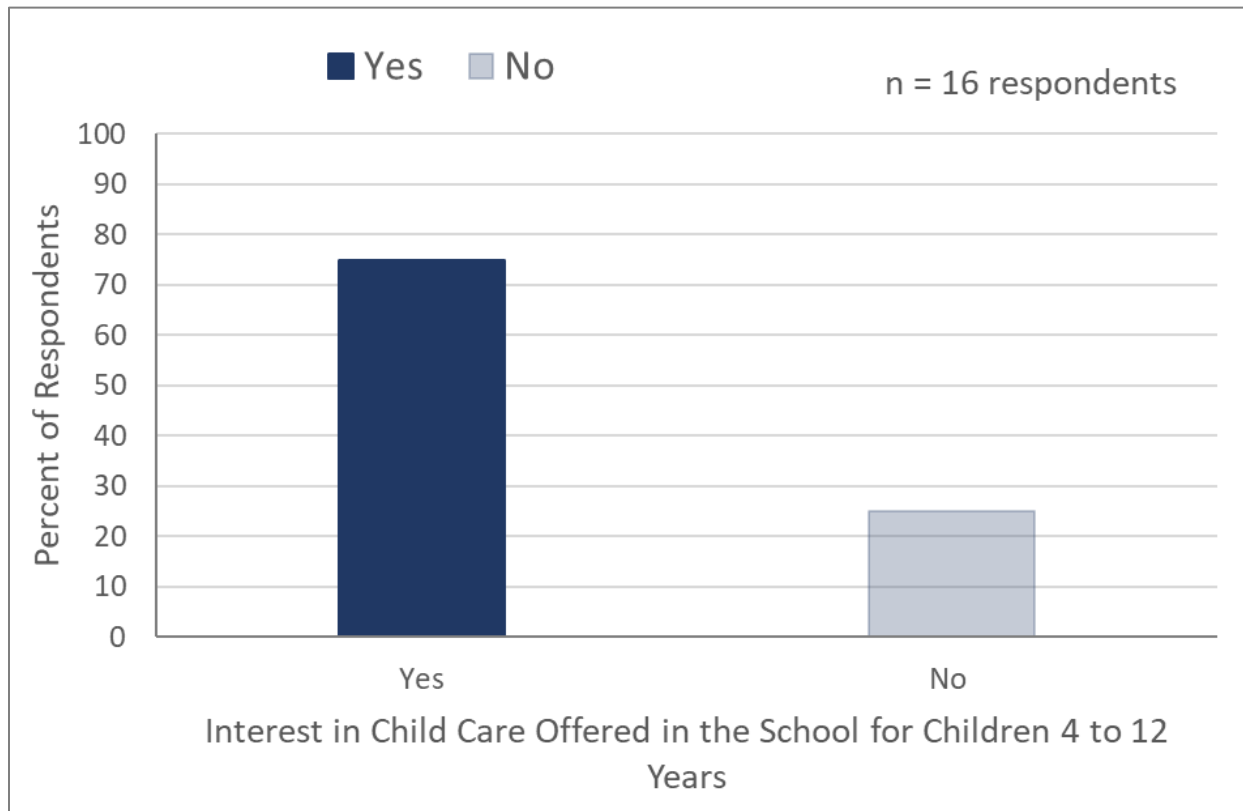
Figure 13. Level of interest in licensed child care among survey respondents using unlicensed private arrangements for children birth up to 4 years in Erin



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 if it were available. The results are shown in 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 Erin



The majority of respondents (75%) indicated that they would use before and after school care if it were available in their school compared to 25% who indicated that they would not (Figure 14).

Survey respondents who were not interested in care offered varied explanations. For example, some explained that they were happy with their current care arrangements, and others said that school based care would make children spend too much time at school.

Survey respondents who were interested in care offered at school explained that they would only use the care under certain conditions. For example, respondents said the care would have to offer flexible options, have hours of operation that fit parents’ schedules, and be affordable.



“Require part time care for extended before and after. The spot needs to be flexible as days would change weekly”

“Depending on drop off times, would have to be by 6am”

“I do use before and after care but I cannot continue due to cost”

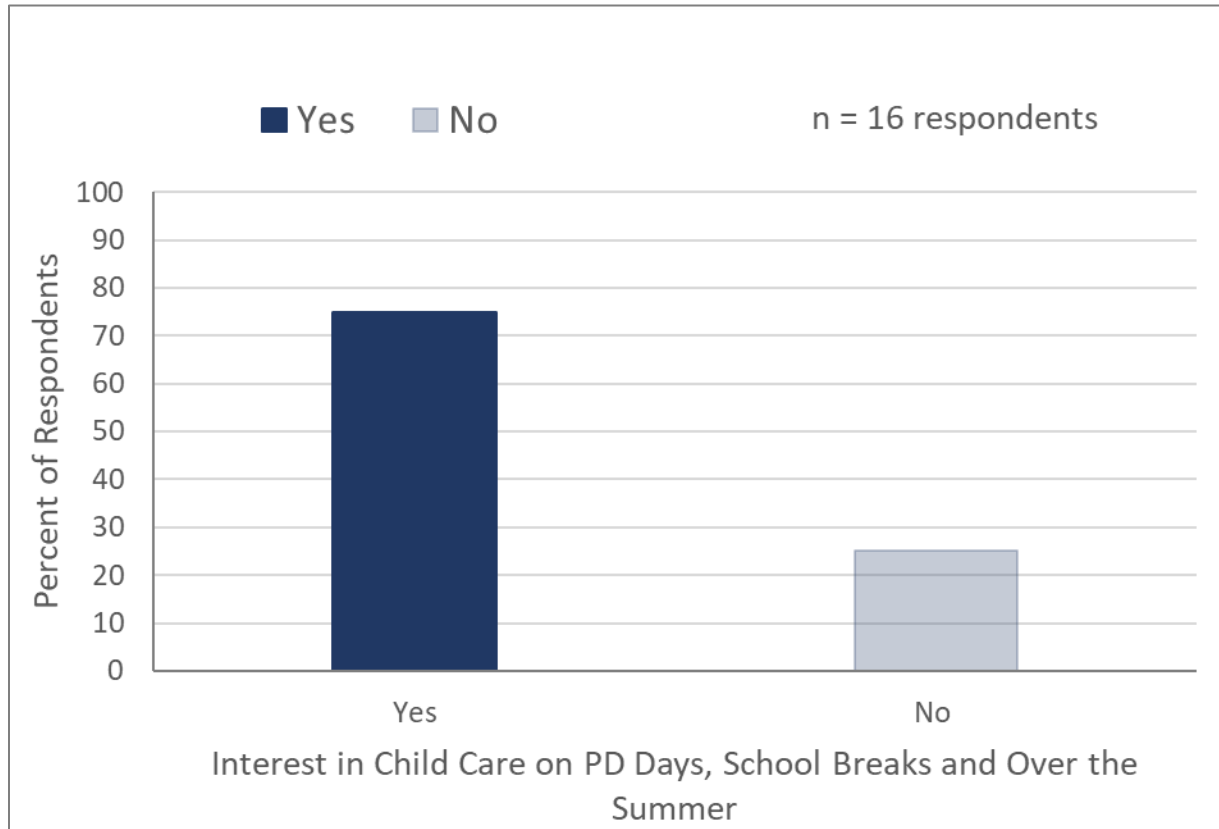
- Survey respondent



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 Erin



The majority of survey respondents (75%) indicated that they would use child care on PD days, school breaks or over the summer if it were available compared to 25% who indicated that they would not (Figure 15).

Comments from respondents who indicated they would not use care on PD days, school breaks or over the summer suggested that they had other care arrangements.

Comments from survey respondents who indicated that they would use care on PD days, school breaks and over the summer suggested that for some, the use of care would depend on cost and hours of operation.



“If it was less than my daycare and had early drop-off”

- 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 was 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 Erin

- 👍 Convenient hours of operation

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

- 👎 Inconvenient hours of operation during the summer

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

- 👍 Caring caregivers
- 👍 Convenient care location close to home
- 👍 Flexible, reliable and safe care
- 👍 Affordable cost of care

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

- 👎 Lack of school age care spaces, particularly for before school care
- 👎 Inconvenient hours of operation
- 👎 Unreliable care arrangements
- 👎 Cost of care that is not affordable

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.

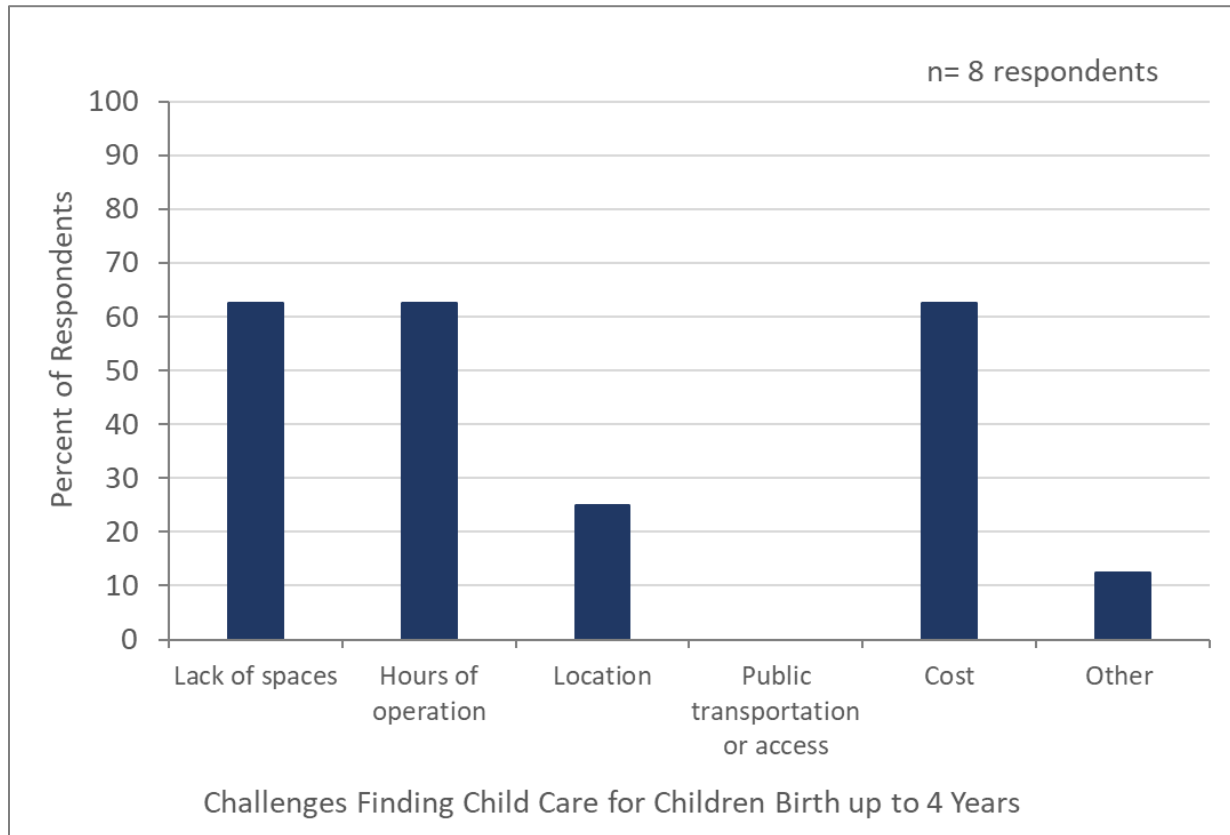
The results are shown in Figures 16 and 17, respectively, and represent challenges finding any form of child care – licensed and unlicensed.

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

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

The most common challenge finding child care for children birth up to 4 years indicated were “lack of spaces” (62.5% of respondents), “hours of operation” (62.5% of respondents) and “cost” (62.5% of respondents). A quarter of the survey respondents (25%) indicated “location” as a challenge.

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

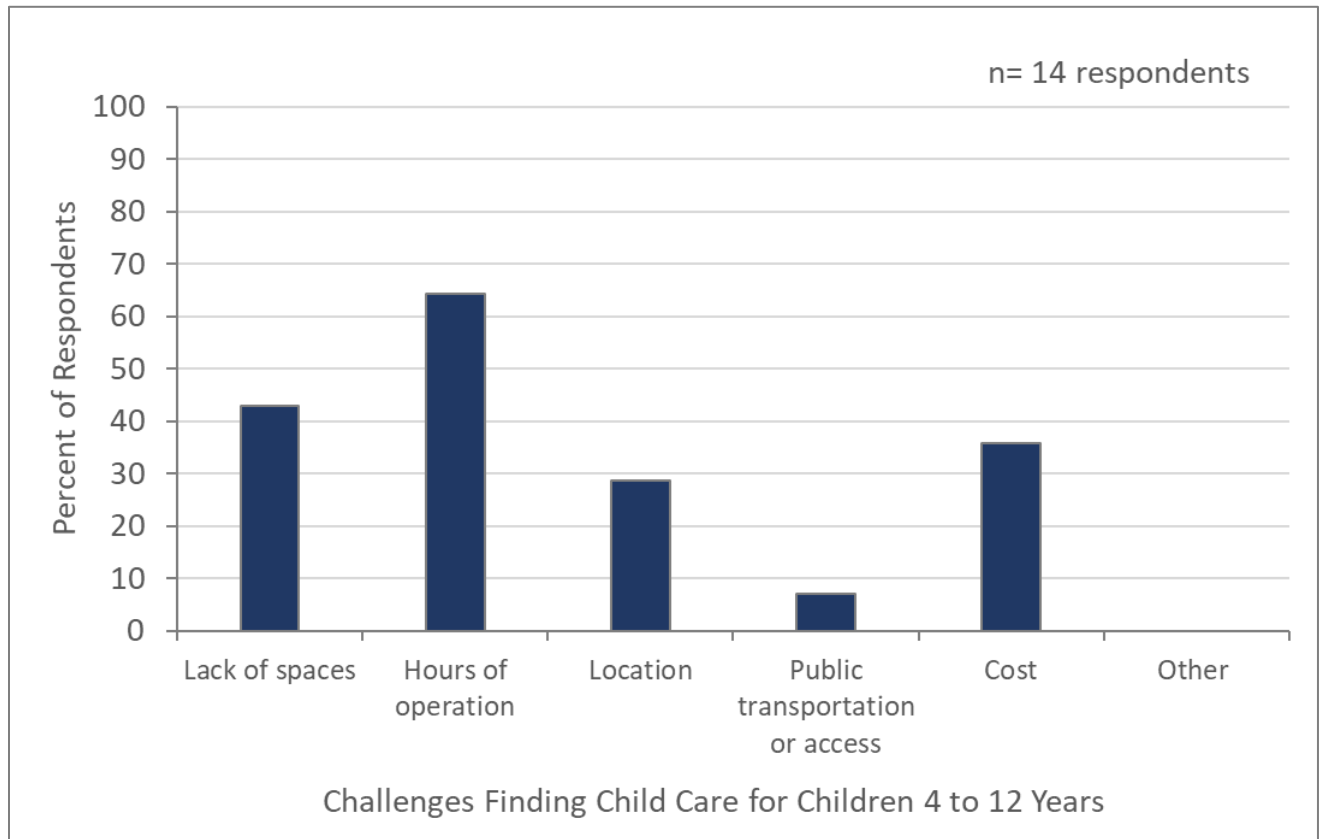


Challenges finding child care for children 4 to 12 years in Erin

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

The most common challenge finding child care for children 4 to 12 years indicated was “hours of operation” (64.3% of respondents), followed by “lack of spaces” (42.9% of respondents) and cost (35.7% of respondents). Just over a quarter of respondents (28.6%) reported “location” as a challenge to finding child care.

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



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 in Erin, the most important challenges finding child care for both age groups are lack of spaces, hours of operation and cost.



“Require part-time care spot as well as extended hours (early morning to evening)”

“I am a legal guardian of my grandson 2. We were hoping to retire in the near future but with the cost of child care we will have to work a lot longer”

“Require after 5pm care”

- 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.

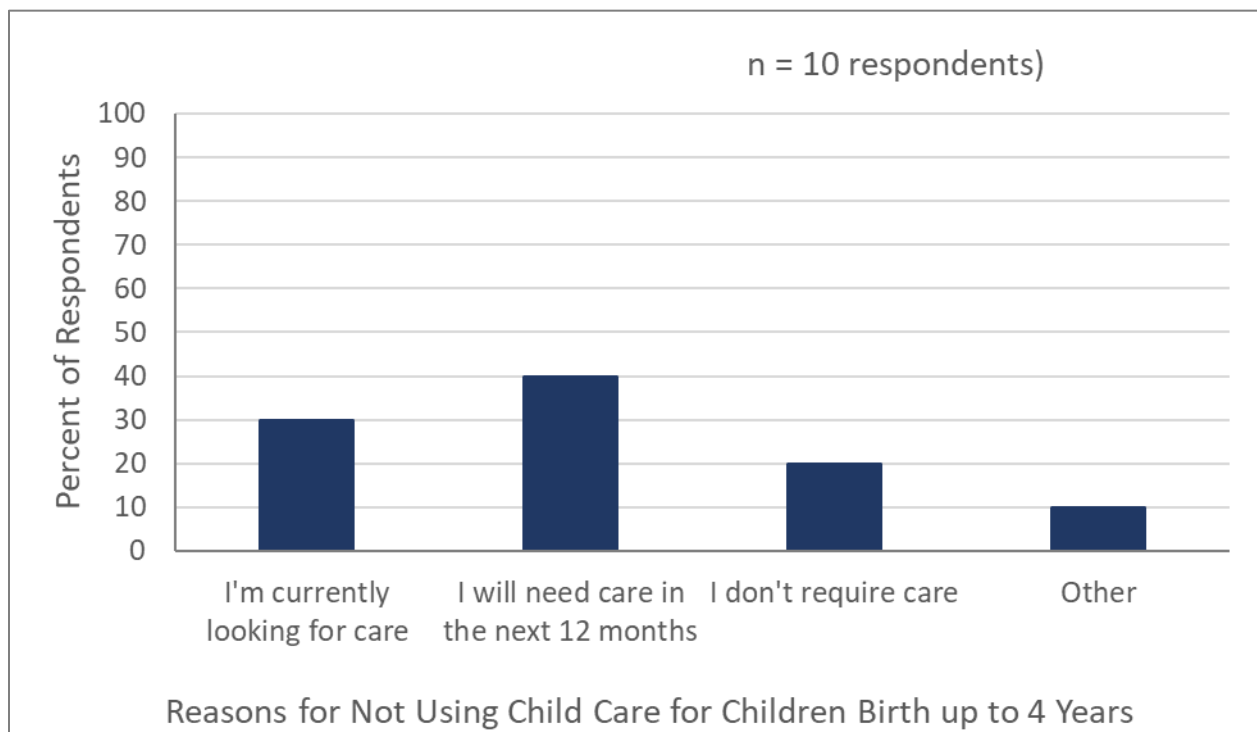
Survey respondents with children birth up to 4 years and 4 to 12 years who indicated that they were not currently using child care were asked to identify the reasons why they were not using care by selecting from a list of options. The results are shown in Figure 18 and Figure 19, respectively.

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 Erin.

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” (40% of respondents). In addition, 30% of respondents indicated “I’m currently looking for care”, 20% indicated “I don’t require care” and 10% indicated “Other” as the reason for not using care.

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



Survey respondents were able to explain their reasons for not using care for children birth up to 4 years. The explanations 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” suggest that they cared for their own children.



“Currently on maternity leave, will need child care when I return to work in September”

“I’m a stay at home mom with my child”

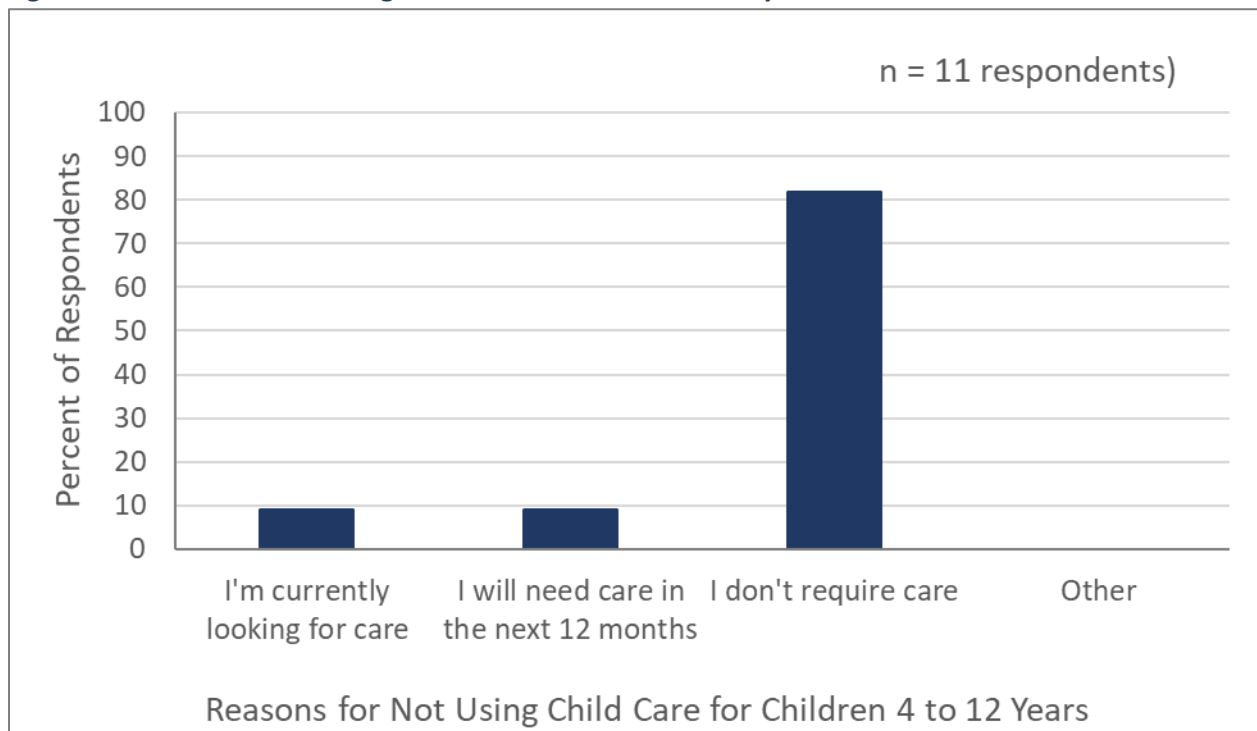
- Survey respondents



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 Erin.

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



The most common reason for not using child care for children 4 to 12 years indicated was “I don’t require care” (81.8% of respondents). In addition, 9.1% of survey respondents indicated “I’m currently looking for care” and “I will need care in the next 12 months” as the reasons for not using care (Figure 19).

Explanations from survey respondents who indicated “I’m currently looking for care” highlighted the difficulties they experienced finding school age care spaces that meet their needs.

Survey respondents with children 4 to 12 years who indicated “I don’t require care” provided a variety of explanations for why they did not require care. For example, they indicate that the children were old

enough to look after themselves, there were older siblings who cared for younger ones, and parents were able to organize their work schedule to care for their children, including working from home.



“She's 12 and independent and no care required for her”

“Have older children who care for 9 year old”

“I work from home and have a flex schedule”

- Survey respondents



Ideal child care scenario

To understand the desired state of child care by families in Erin, 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, nine 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 few 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 full-time licensed centre-based child care with flexible care options for parents who need them, and having before and after school care located at school with flexible care options including care during school breaks.



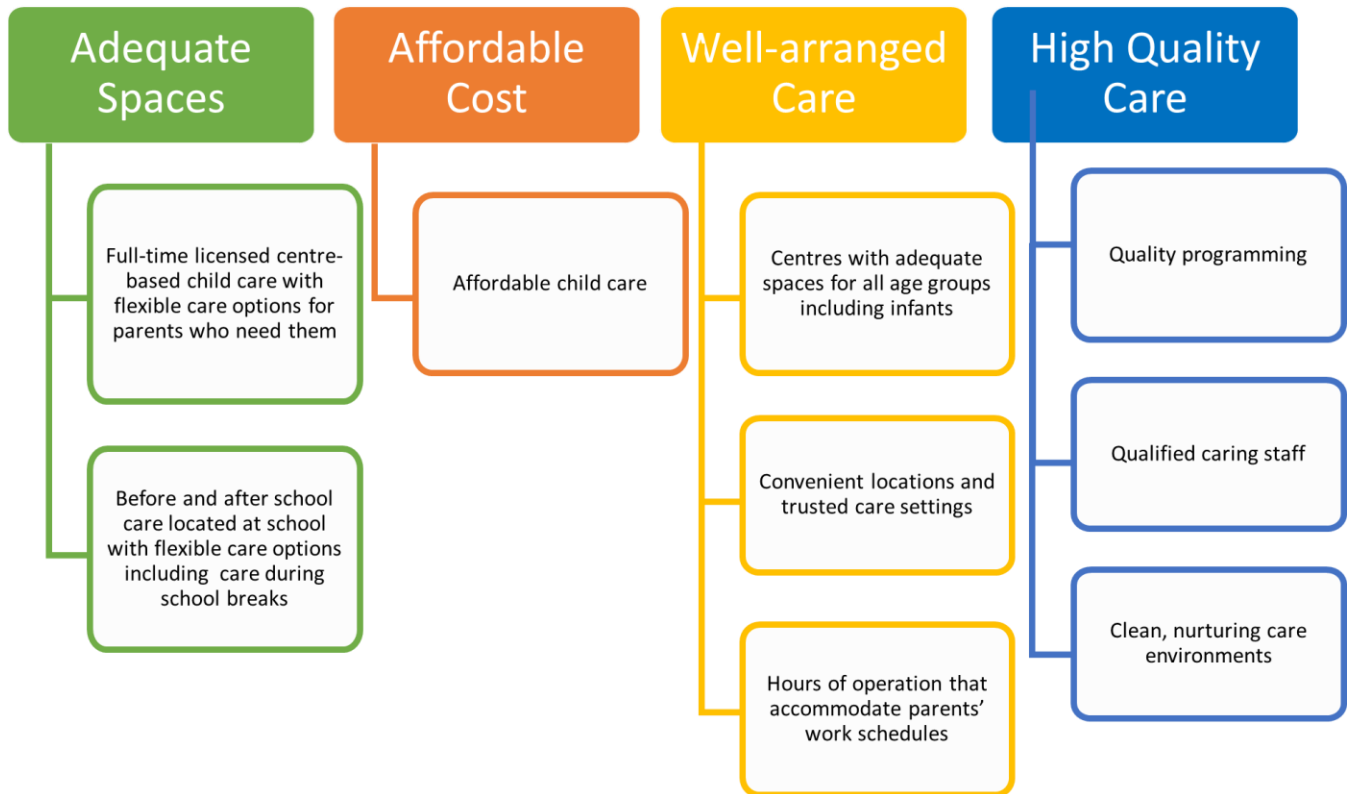
“I would like a centre to send my child to learn and grow. I don't want more babysitters,”

“Provider who offers part time availability and is flexible with days changing weekly”

- Survey respondents



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



Affordable cost

The cost of child care was also reflected in many of the ideal scenario descriptions and show that parents want affordable child care.



“Also, one that is less expensive than a mortgage payment”

- 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 minimize transitions for children. The elements of well-arranged care included having centres with adequate spaces for all age groups including infants, convenient locations and trusted care settings, and hours of operation that accommodate parents’ work schedules.



“My children will be 3 years old and 10 months when I return to work. Ideally, they would both be in the same center so I don’t have to make two stops”

- Survey respondent



High quality care

Furthermore, a number of ideal child care scenario descriptions focused on quality of care and included aspects of programming, staffing and programming environment. The elements related to high quality care included having high quality programming in all care settings, qualified caring staff, and clean, nurturing care environments.



“I want quality childcare. Erin really needs a good centre to send their children where they are safe”

“...in the hands of caring educators”

“Clean and loving environment where my children are well cared for an active”

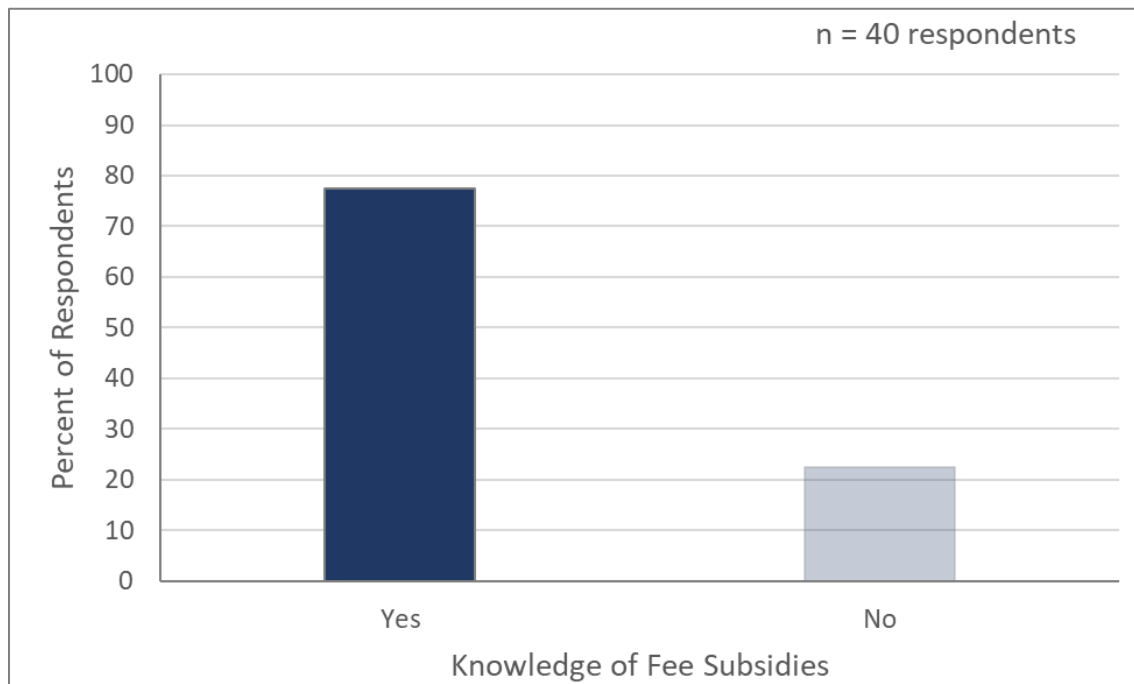
- Survey respondents

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 child care fee subsidies among parents in Erin



The majority of survey respondents (77.5%) in Erin indicated that they knew families could apply for child care fee subsidies and 22.5% indicated that they did not know (Figure 21).

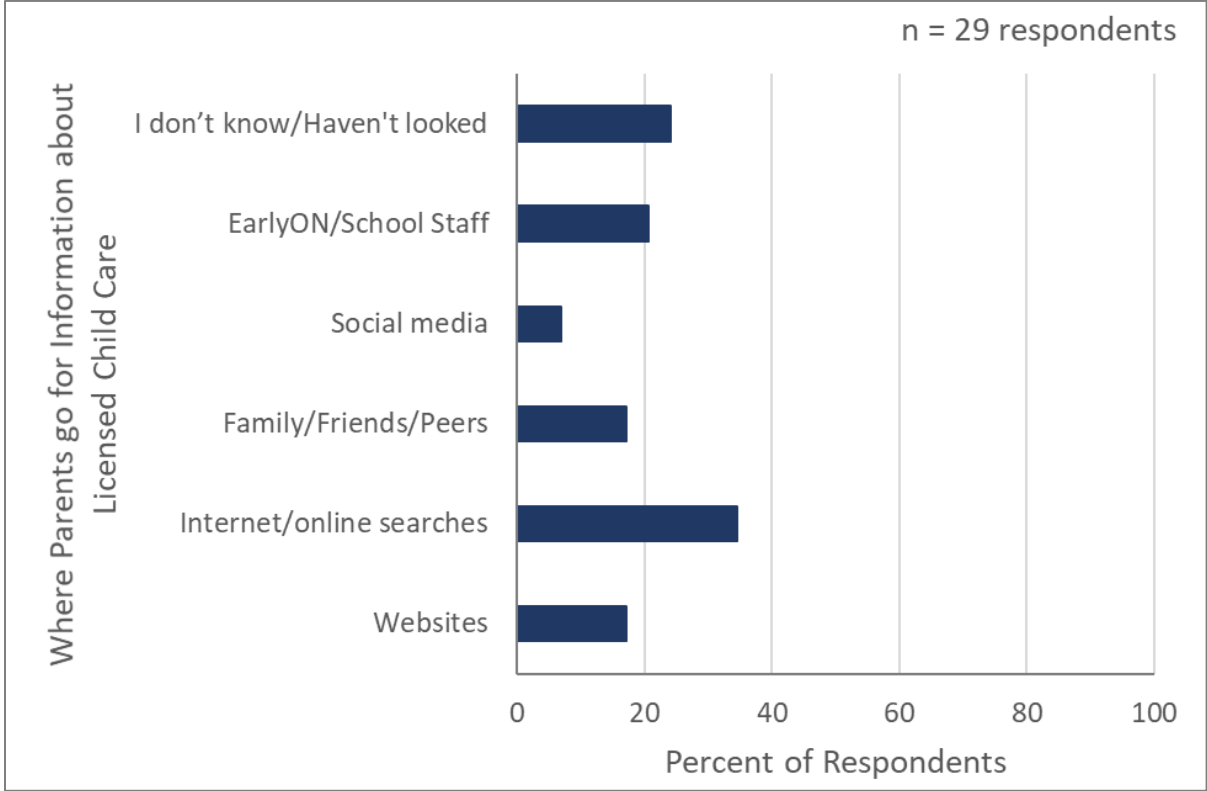
Sources of information about licensed child care

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 six 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.

The most frequently identified sources of information about licensed child care were internet/online searches (34.5% of respondents), EarlyON/school staff (20.7% of respondents), and family/friends/peers and websites (17.2% of respondents each). Interestingly, about a quarter of respondents (24.1%) indicated that they did not know where to go or had never looked for information about licensed child care.

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

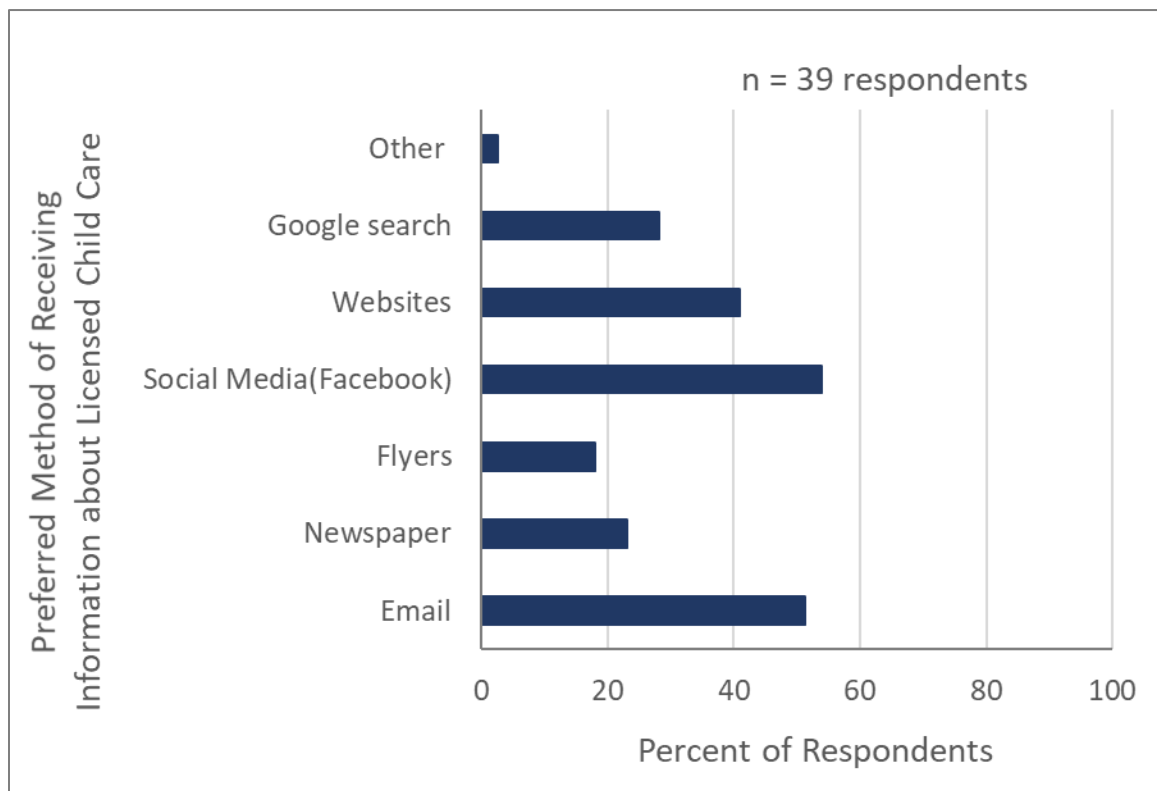


Preferred method of receiving information about licensed child care

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 from a list of options their preferred method(s) of receiving information about licensed child care. The results are shown in Figure 23.

The most preferred methods for receiving information about licensed child care were social media (53.8% of respondents), e-mail (51.3% of respondents) and websites (41% of respondents). Just over a quarter of respondents (28.2%) preferred “Google search” while 23.1% preferred “newspapers”. “Flyers” was the least preferred method (17.9% of respondents). One respondent who indicated “Other” explained that they receive information about licensed child care through other people.

Figure 23. Preferred method of receiving information about licensed child care in Erin





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2019 Early Years Community Engagement Report

EARLYON PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES FINDINGS

Programme preferences:



Most preferred EarlyON programmes and services:

91% Preferred drop-in play-based learning programmes for children and parents/caregivers.

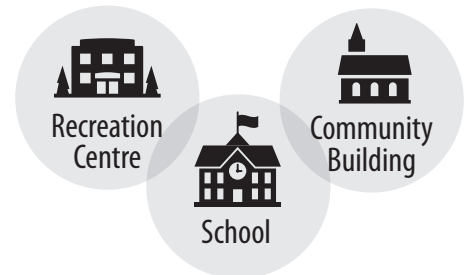


Location of programmes:

Preference of location to attend EarlyON programmes and services:

85% Preferred attending programmes at a local community/recreation centre.

61% 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 and afternoon are the most preferred weekend times.
- Some respondents can only attend programmes on weekday evenings or weekends.



Participation in programmes:



15% Never attended EarlyON programmes and services.



- Advertise EarlyON programmes and services.

Level of interest in French Language programming :

Bienvenue!

36% Interested in French language EarlyON programmes and services if available.

Level of interest in Indigenous programming:

Bozhoo!
Tansi! Taanshi!
Halu! Kwhe!

15% 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:



41% Survey respondents go to the internet.



55% Survey respondents go to family, friends and peers.



27% Survey respondents go to medical professionals and child care/ EarlyON/school staff



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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:

75% Used unlicensed private arrangements

For children 4 to 12 years:

63% Used unlicensed private arrangements

Use of licensed home child care: 0% For both children birth up to 4 years and children 4 to 12 years.

How well child care arrangements are working:

For children birth up to 4 years:



- Convenient hours of operation.

For children 4 to 12 years:



- Caring caregivers.
- Convenient care location close to home.
- Flexible, reliable and safe care.
- Affordable care.



- Inconvenient summer hours of operation.



- Lack of school age care spaces and care options.
- Inconvenient hours of operation.
- Unreliable care arrangements.
- Cost of care that is not affordable.

Challenges finding child care:

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

For children birth up to 4 years:

63% Lack of child care spaces
Cost of care
Hours of operation

25% Location

For children 4 to 12 years:

64% Hours of operation

43% Lack of child care spaces

Ideal child care scenario:



- Enough licensed child care spaces, including flexible care options
- Affordable child care
- One care location for all children from infants to school age
- Hours of operation that accommodate parents' work schedules
- Qualified caring staff
- Quality programming
- Convenient and trusted care settings
- In-home or parental care

Information about licensed child care:

Most commonly identified sources of information:

35% Used internet/online searches

21% Used EarlyON/school staff



Most preferred methods of receiving information:

54% Preferred social media

51% Preferred e-mail