



2019

CITY OF GUELPH

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 Guelph, 288 people completed the EarlyON Services Survey and 96 completed the Child Care Survey. Two community conversation events were scheduled, one at the West End Community Centre on Nov 9 and another at the Victoria Road Recreation Centre on Nov 15. Neither were attended. In addition, in-person informal conversations were held with 16 residents at the Guelph Community Health Centre, and during the Two Rivers, Westwood and Brant Waverly playgroups.

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

The City of Guelph (referred to as Guelph in this report) is one of eight municipalities that make up the Wellington service delivery area. It covers an area of 87.2km² making it the smallest municipality in terms of geographic area, but the largest based on population size. Below is a brief overview of some of the demographic characteristics of Guelph.

Table 1. Demographic Statistics for Guelph

Demographic Statistic		% of Total Population of Guelph
Total Land Area	87.2km ²	
Total Population (2016)	131,794	
Population percentage change; from 2011 to 2016	8.3%	
Francophone Population in Guelph (2016)	2,335	1.8%
Indigenous Population in Guelph (2016)	3,975	3%
Total number who speak non-official languages at home in Guelph	13,320	10.1%
Mandarin	1,540	1.2%
Vietnamese	1,230	0.93%
Punjabi	1,125	0.85%
Population of Children Birth to 6 years	10,565	8%
Population of Children Birth to 12 years	19,745	15%
Number of children birth up to 4 years	5,940	4.5%
Number of children 4 to 12 years	13,805	10.5%
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 287 people answered a survey question then these are shown as “n = 287 respondents” on the corresponding graph.

EarlyON Services Survey Summary Statistics

	Number of Respondents
Total number of people who completed the EarlyON Services Survey in Guelph	287
I am a parent/guardian	265
I am a caregiver for children in my home	47
I have/care for children birth to 3 years (i.e. up to 4 years)	251
I have/care for children 4 to 6 years	110

The majority of survey respondents 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 of the parents were caregivers who provided care in their homes. While there were more survey respondents with children birth to 3 years than 4 to 6 years, there were parents with children in both age groups.

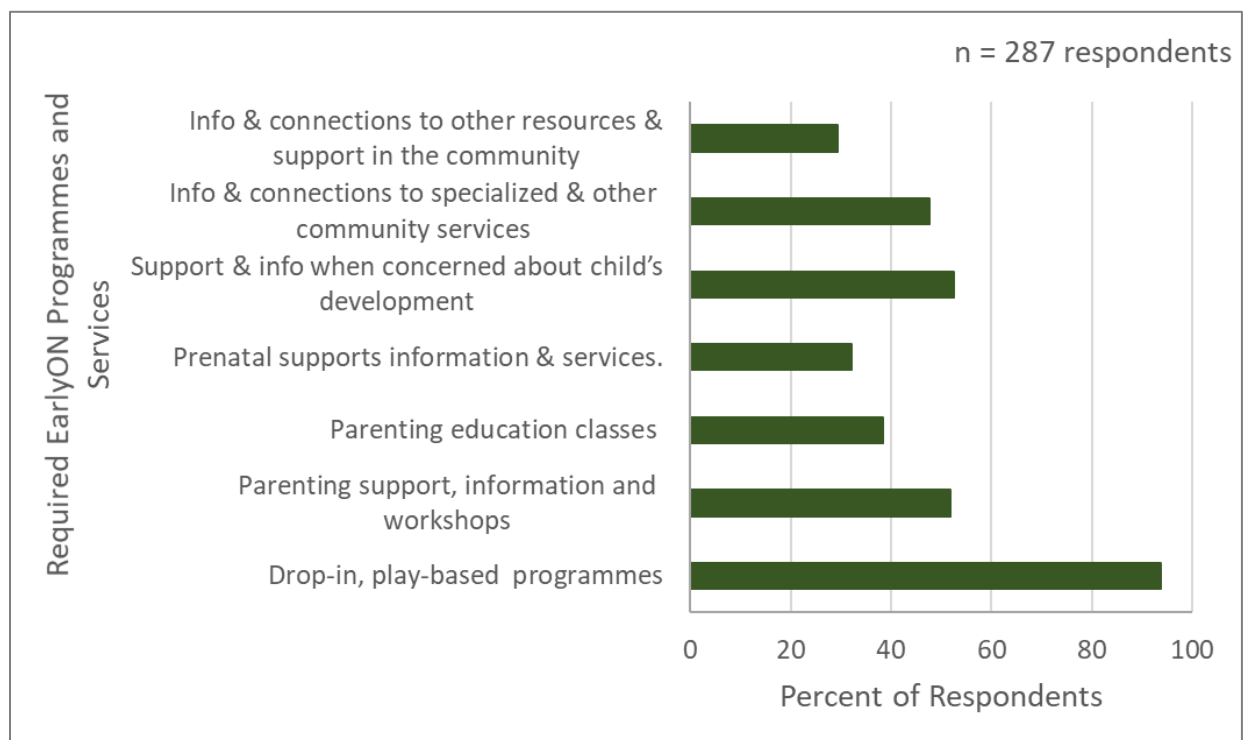
Programming preferences

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” (93.7% of respondents).

Other programmes with high interest were “support and information when you have concerns about your child’s development” (52.6% of respondents), “parenting support, information and workshops” (51.9% of respondents) and “information about and connections to specialized community services and other community services for families with young children” (47.7% of respondents).

Figure 1. Programming preferences of parents and caregivers in Guelph



Other services that could be offered at the local EarlyON site

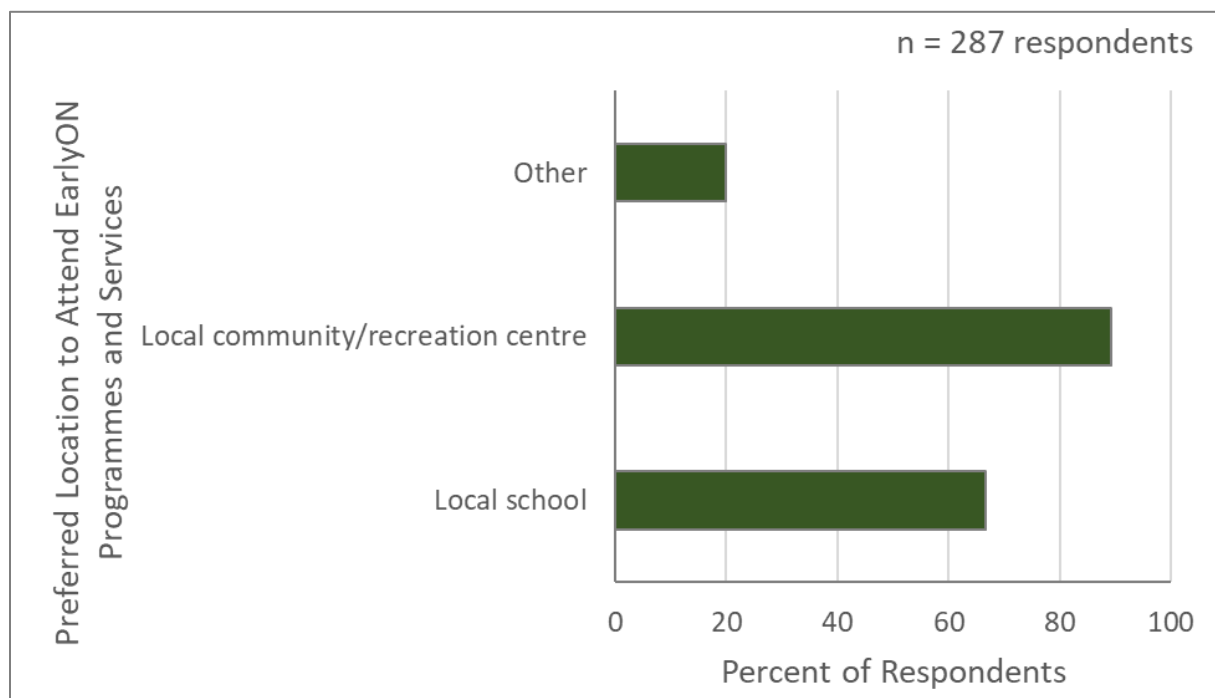
In addition to the required EarlyON services, the provincial government allows other services to be offered at EarlyON sites provided they align with the needs and priorities of individual communities. The survey respondents and participants at community conversations were asked to identify other services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

- Classes and activities for all age groups, e.g. music lessons, family style fitness and active living programmes, art programmes, cooking classes, ASL classes.
- Community programmes and supports, e.g. toy library, library books, registry for licensed child care, licensed child care, list of activity clubs/organizations, information in available in French.
- Peer support groups, e.g. group for parents of premature children, baby groups, groups for caregivers (home child care providers), ESL support groups, groups for new moms.

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 Guelph



The majority of respondents (89.2%) indicated that they prefer to attend EarlyON services at “a local community/recreation centre” while 66.6% preferred “a local school”. Respondents who indicated “Other” (19.9%) were asked to specify their preferred location. “Other” preferred locations identified included churches, libraries, the mall, parks/outdoor locations. Over half of respondents (59%) 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, respondents preferred the location to be close to home or within walking distance, have parking on site, the easily accessible including stroller access, have adequate space and be welcoming. Respondents also indicated that they would prefer dedicated locations where programmes are offered consistently.



“I don't usually drive so I would really only attend programmes up to 20/25 minute walking distance.”

“Wherever as long as there is parking and stroller access”

“A dedicated centre for providing EarlyON services”

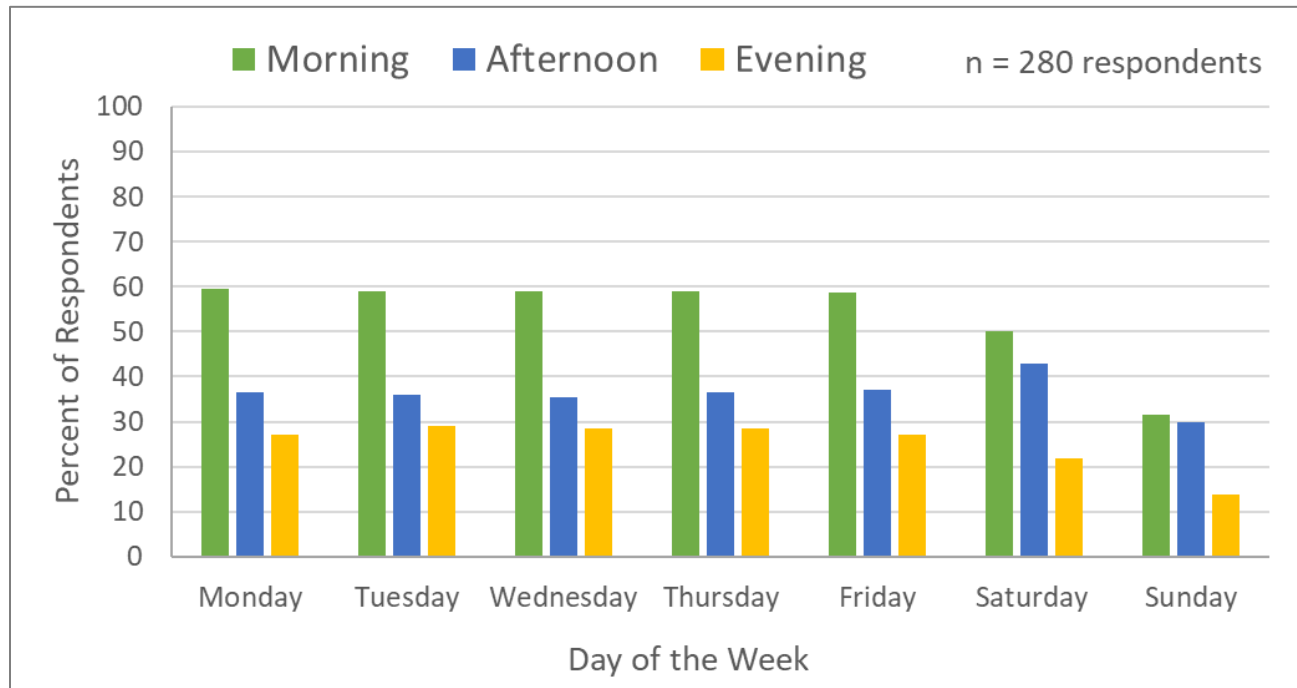
- Participants at community conversations



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 Guelph, 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 Guelph



The data show that parents and caregivers in Guelph 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 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 programmes that are offered outside standard working hours.

Comments from participants at community conversations echoed the survey findings. Participants' preferred programming schedules that fit with their own work/life schedules. In addition, a number of participants at community conversations indicated that they preferred weekend programmes.



“I’d also like programmes to either start or run in to later in the day, maybe starting at 3.
That way we could have naps but then come back”

“Weekend programmes are also needed so dads get a chance”

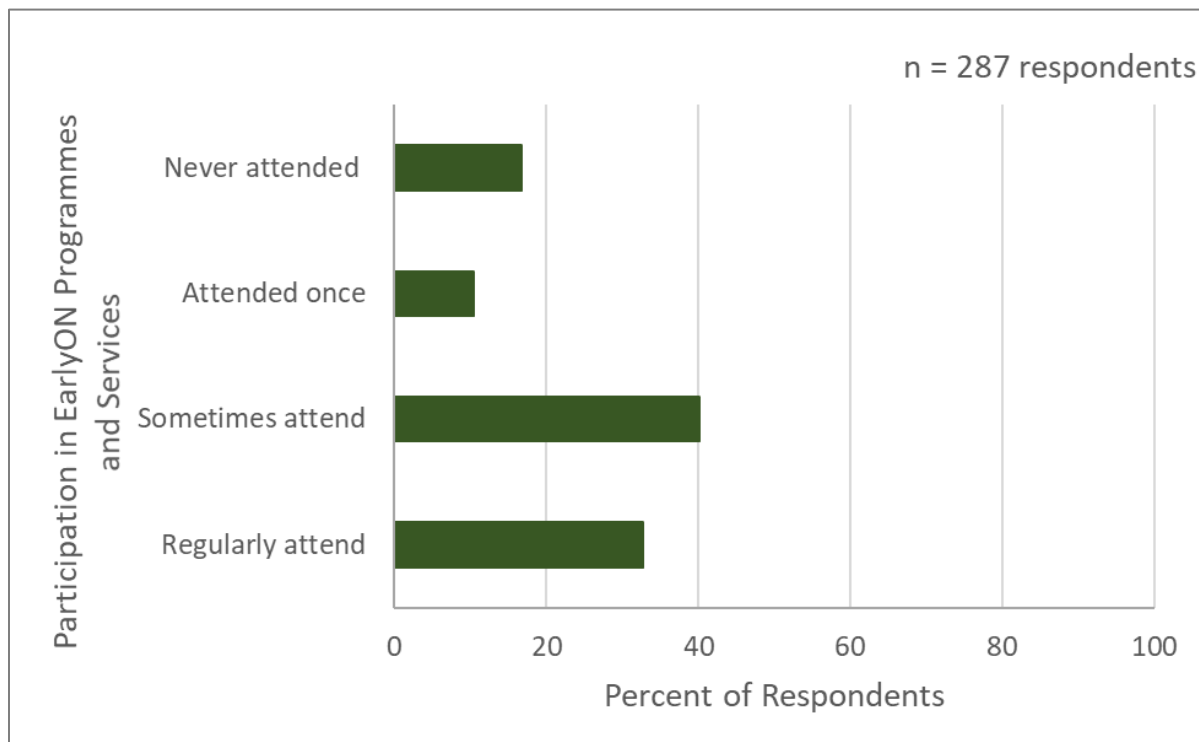
- Participants at community conversations



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 Guelph



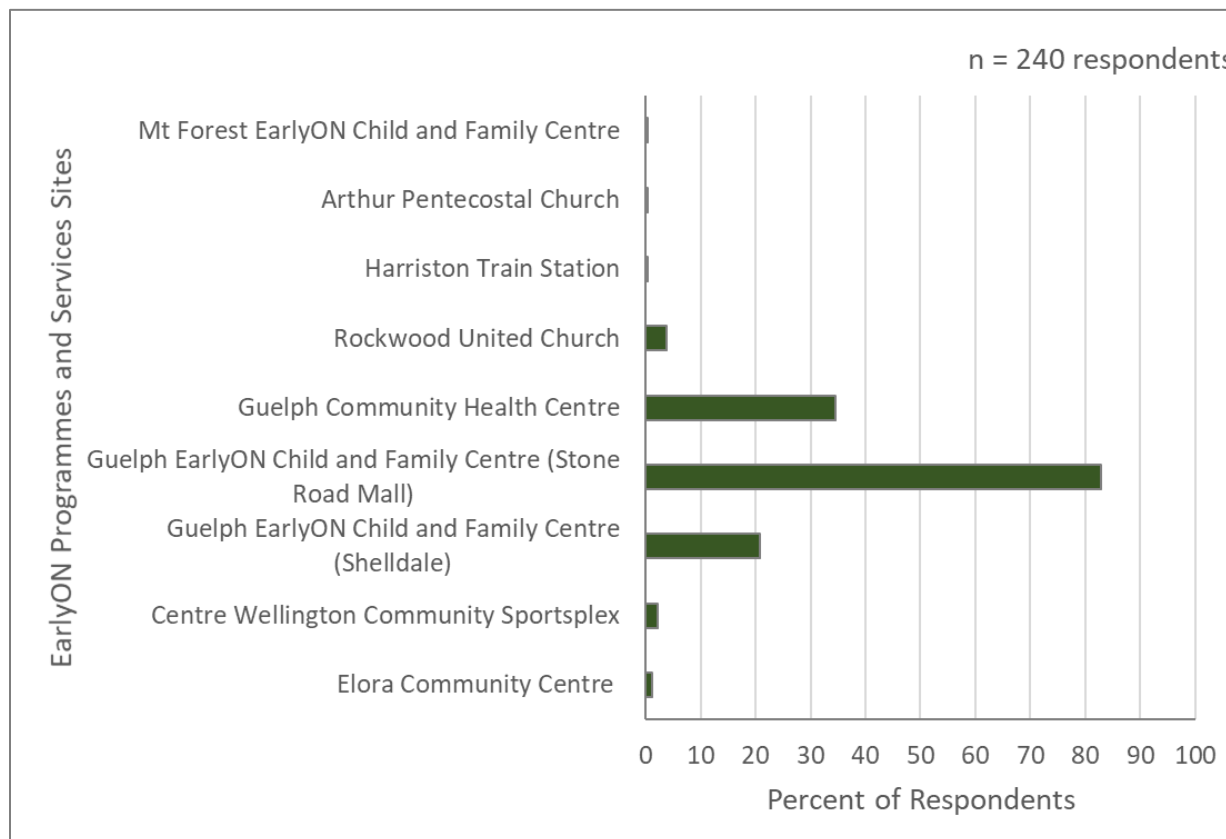
The data show that the frequency of participation in EarlyON services varied, but a greater percentage of survey respondents indicated “sometimes attend” (40.1% of respondents) and “regularly attend” (32.8% of respondents) than “never attended” (16.7% of respondents) or “attended once” (10.5% of respondents).

The finding that about 1 in 6 respondents never participated suggests that there are parents and caregivers in Guelph who could benefit from EarlyON services who are currently not using them.

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

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 Guelph



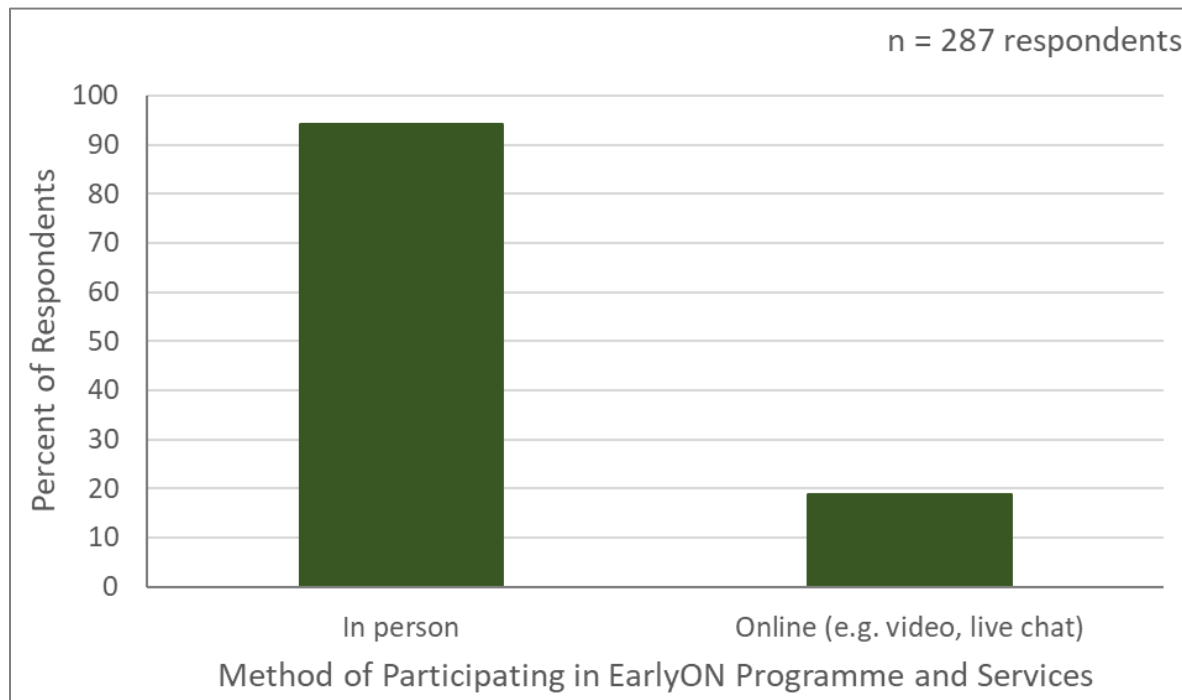
The data show that parents and caregivers use more than one EarlyON services site. Furthermore, the data show that the majority of survey respondents in Guelph (97.5%) attended EarlyON services sites located in Guelph. The most frequently used sites were Guelph EarlyON Child and Family Centre – Stone Road Mall (82.9% of respondents), Guelph Community Health Centre (34.6% of respondents), and Guelph EarlyON Child and Family Centre – Shelldale (20.8% of respondents; Figure 5).

The data also show that in addition to using EarlyON sites located in their municipality, families travel to locations that are outside Guelph but at much lower frequencies. EarlyON sites outside of Guelph that were visited by Guelph residents include Rockwood United Church in Guelph/Eramosa (3.8% of respondents), Centre Wellington Community Sportsplex (2.1% of respondents), and Elora Community Centre (1.25% of respondents). Very few respondents also indicated that they visited Harriston Train Station, Arthur Pentecostal Church and Mount Forest EarlyON Child and Family Centre (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 Guelph



A greater percentage of survey respondents (94.1%) preferred to participate in EarlyON services in person compared to 18.8% who indicated that they would likely participate online (Figure 6). Only 13.2% of survey respondents selected both methods.

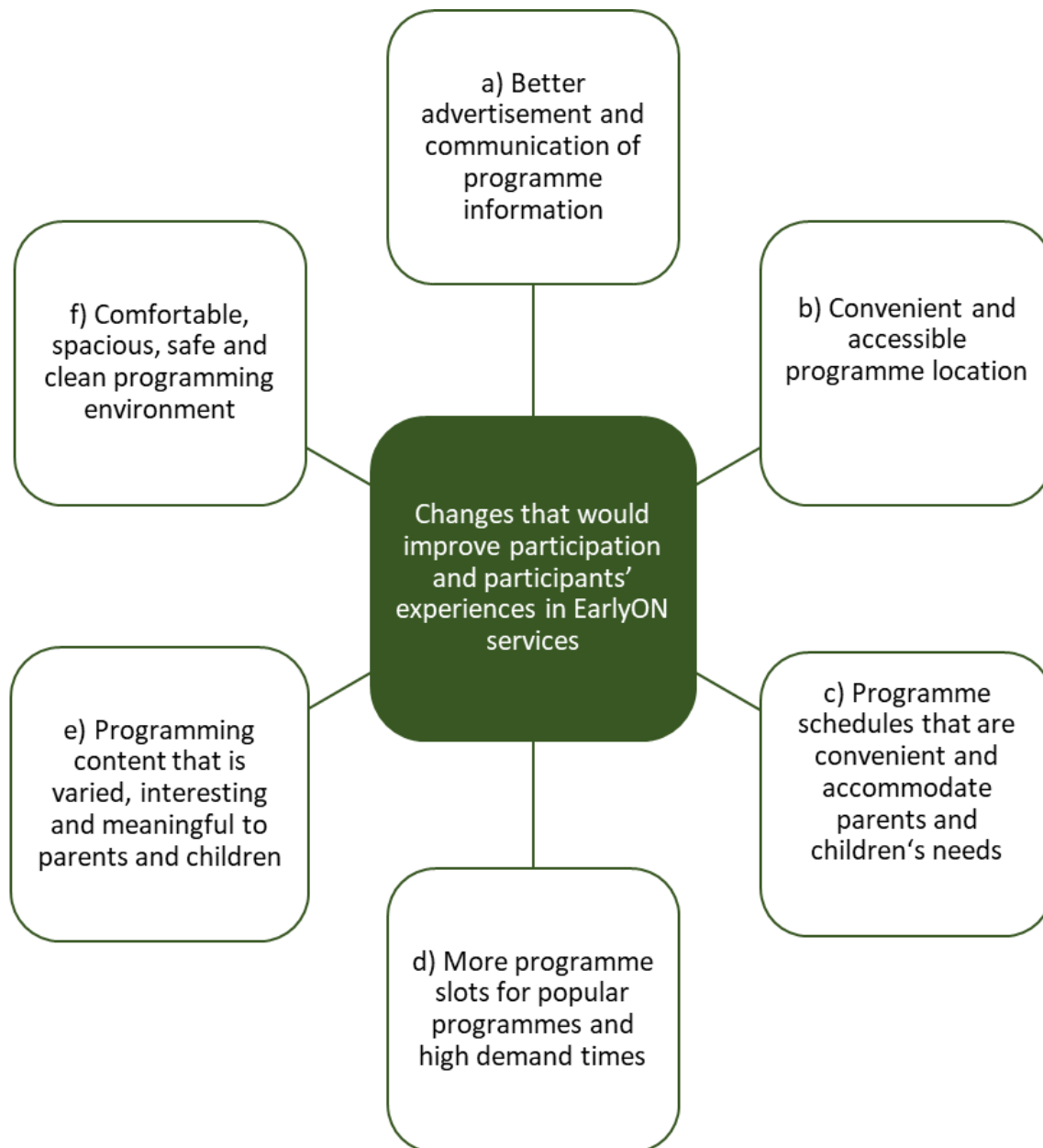
Changes that would improve participation and participants' experiences in EarlyON services

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.

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 Guelph



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 and participants at community conversations suggested better advertisement of EarlyON services in order to attract more people to programmes and to improve participants' experiences. In addition, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested improvements to the way information about EarlyON services is communicated, including better registration processes, and clearer, more accessible programme schedules.



“Better advertising, I don’t really know about them”

“Easy access to information online as it currently is tough to find”

- 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, preferably within walking distance, 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 were distributed fairly across Guelph.



“If centres weren’t so far I would go more often, especially in the summer”

“Please try to always have 1 on each side of the City. 1. North, 1. South or 1 East , 1 West”

- Survey respondents



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. EarlyON services schedules would need to accommodate school routines, schedules of working parents and scheduling needs of parents and caregivers with younger children, particularly naptimes.



“Your 2-4 drop in does not work as I have older children”

“More evening activities so my husband could attend after work”

“I have not attended EarlyON programmes very much in the past year since my second child was born, as morning and afternoon drop-in times tend to be during nap times”

- Survey respondents



d) More programme slots for popular programmes and high demand times

Survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested a number of changes to EarlyON programme levels in order to improve participation and participants' experiences. For example, they suggested increasing the number of programme slots or programming space for popular programmes, particularly drop-in programmes, in order to accommodate the increase in number of participants.

In addition, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested increasing programme slots or space during periods of high demand, such as during school breaks and in response to weather conditions. For example, they suggested increasing programme slots during the winter.



"A lot more drop ins"

"More space in programs or more programs offered - couldn't get into classes I wanted"

"In winter have more spots available"

- Survey respondents



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 having more French language programming, more variety in drop-in play-based programmes. Some suggested that programming be structured so that it is age-specific. In addition, there were suggestions to have parent-focused programmes in the form of information sessions or workshops on specific topics of interest, parenting courses, having various support groups and programmes tailored to dads.



"More activities, outdoor play opportunities"

"More set times for different age levels"

"Playgroups are mostly moms too; I think we need more dad groups in Guelph.... The drop-ins are perfect; I still talk to the moms but I'm usually the only dad"

- Survey respondents and participants at community conversations



f) Comfortable, spacious, 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 having comfortable, spacious, safe and clean programming space and equipment.

In addition, survey respondents and participants at community conversations suggested having an environment that is not crowded, facilitates interactions among participants and is welcoming.



“Bigger spaces”

“Safer setting...concerns with previous experience with encountering high individuals when attending with son”

“I like the smaller playgroups, I can talk to the other moms and the facilitators better”

- Survey respondents and participants at community conversations



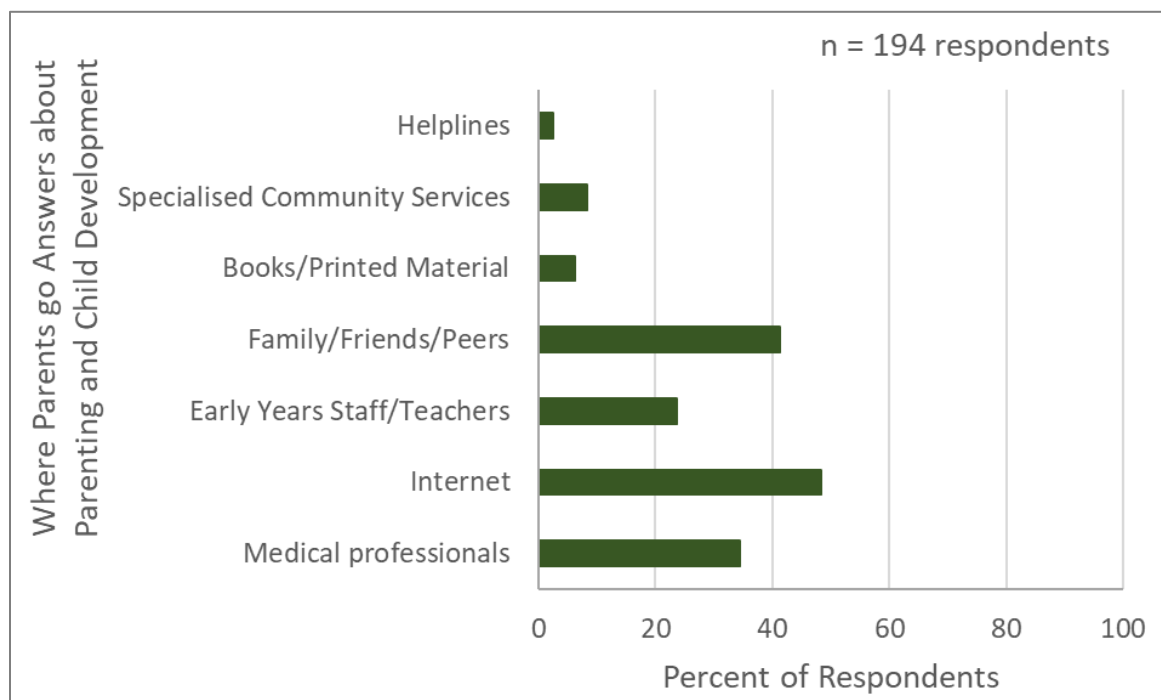
Where parents go for answers about parenting and child development

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 seven 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 Guelph



The most frequently used sources of information were the Internet (48.4% of respondents), family/friends/peers (41.2% of respondents), and medical professionals (34.5% of respondents). Nearly a quarter of respondents (23.7%) indicated that they go to early years staff/teachers for answers about parenting and child development.



“Google, mom, friends, doctor”

“Family doctor, public health nurse, early years centre facilitator, internet, friends”

- Survey respondents

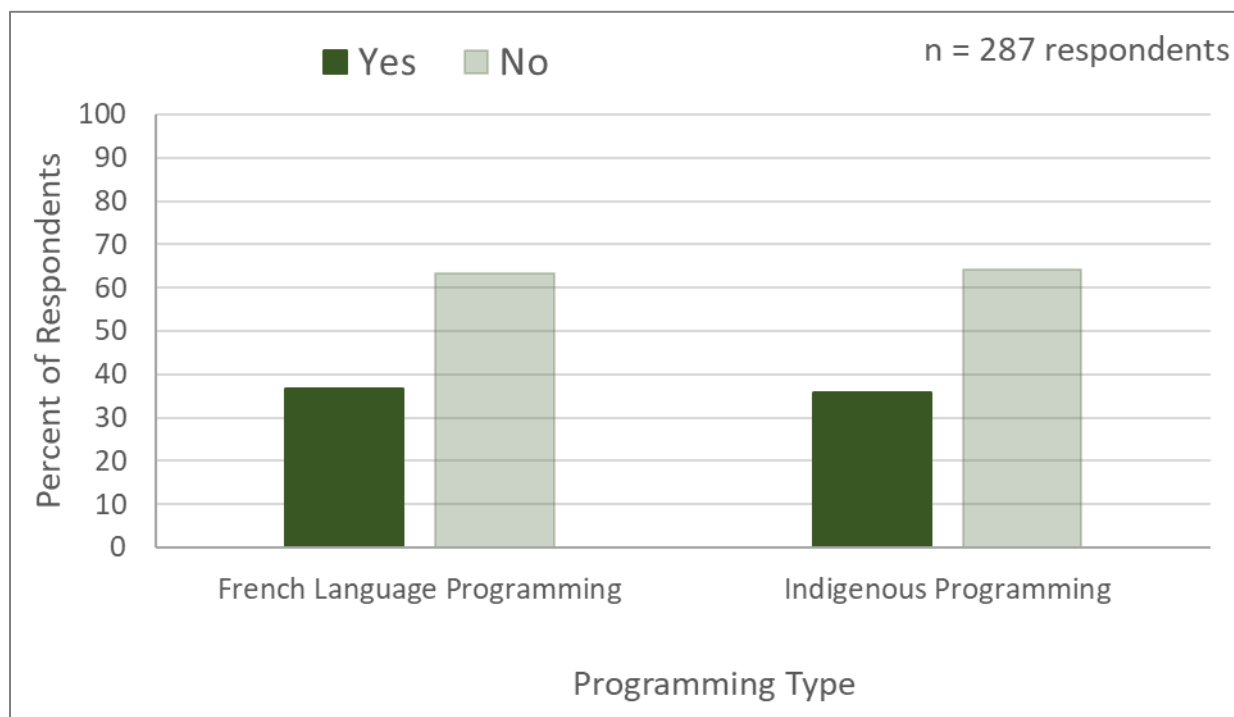


French language and Indigenous programming

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 Guelph



The data show similar levels of interest in French language and Indigenous EarlyON programming. In both cases, just over a third of survey respondents indicated that they would attend French language (36.6% of respondents) or Indigenous (35.9% 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. While some participants said they would not participate in French language or Indigenous programmes, most of those who commented said that they would attend if the programmes were available.

Parents' interest in French language EarlyON programming tended to be linked to children's enrolment in French immersion schools. In addition, some of those who were interested in Indigenous EarlyON programming indicated that they would participate provided the programmes are open to non-Indigenous people.



"I think French programmes are needed, especially in areas with a French immersion school nearby"

I'd probably come to Aboriginal (if you don't have to be Aboriginal)

- Participants at community conversations



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 66 people answered a survey question then these are shown as “n = 66 respondents” on the corresponding graph.

Child Care Survey Summary Statistics

	Number of Respondents (%)
Total number of people who completed the Child Care Survey in Guelph	96
Number with children birth up to 4 years not attending elementary school	66
Currently use some form of child care	41 (62.1%)
Do not currently use child care	24 (36.4%)
Did not respond	1(1.5%)
Number with children 4 to 12 years	49
Currently use some form of child care	27 (55.1%)
Do not currently use child care	22 (44.9%)

Among people who completed the child care survey, 68.8% had children under the age of 4 and 63.5% had children 4 to 12 years of age. There were parents who 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 Guelph.

Child care use

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

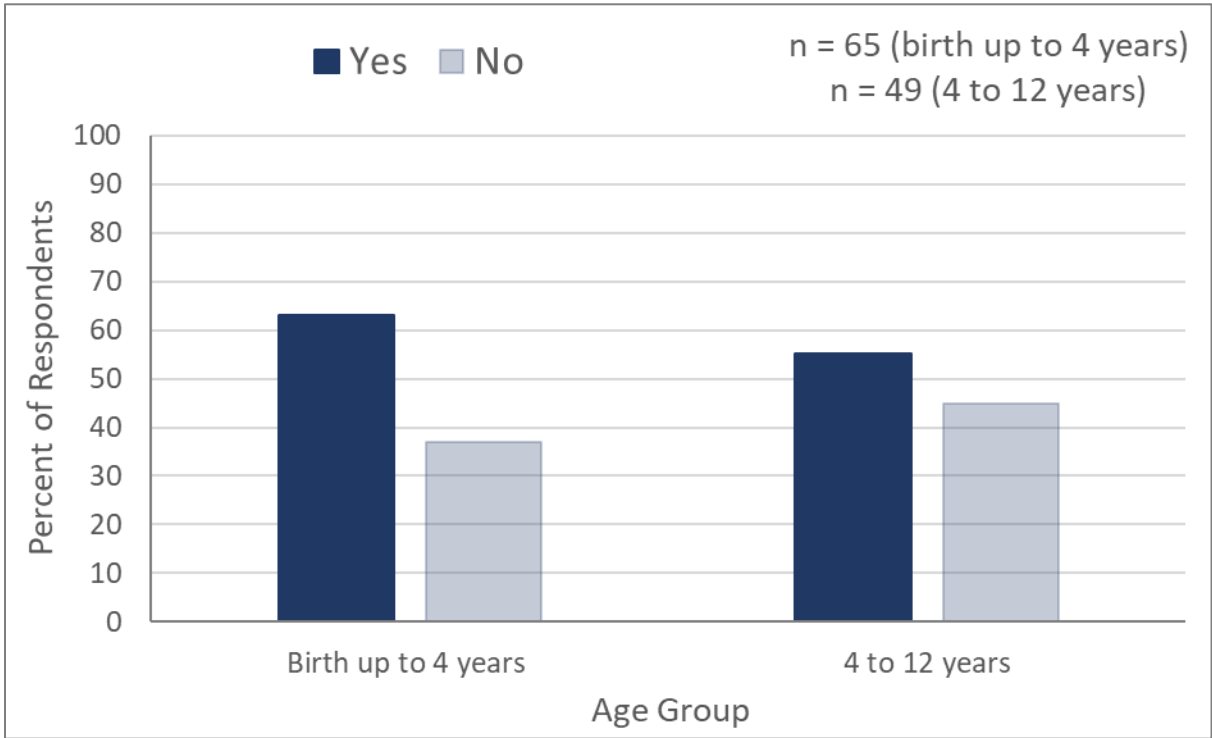
a) Child care use for children birth up to 4 years

A greater percentage of respondents with children birth up to 4 years (63.1%) indicated that they used some form of child care compared to 37% 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 (55.1%) indicated that they used some form of care compared to 44.9% 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 Guelph



Forms of care used

The survey also sought to understand the forms of child care used by families in Guelph. 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 Guelph.

The most commonly used form of care reported by respondents with children birth up to 4 years was “licensed child care centre” (65.9% of respondents). “Unlicensed private arrangements” was used by 26.8% of respondents and 9.8% 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 Guelph.

The most commonly used form of care for children 4 to 12 years indicated was “child care programme offered in your child’s school” (55.6% of respondents) followed by “unlicensed private arrangements” (44.4% of respondents). About a fifth of respondents (18.5%) indicated “licensed child care not in your child’s school.” None of the survey respondents reported using “home child care provider” contracted by the County of Wellington.

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

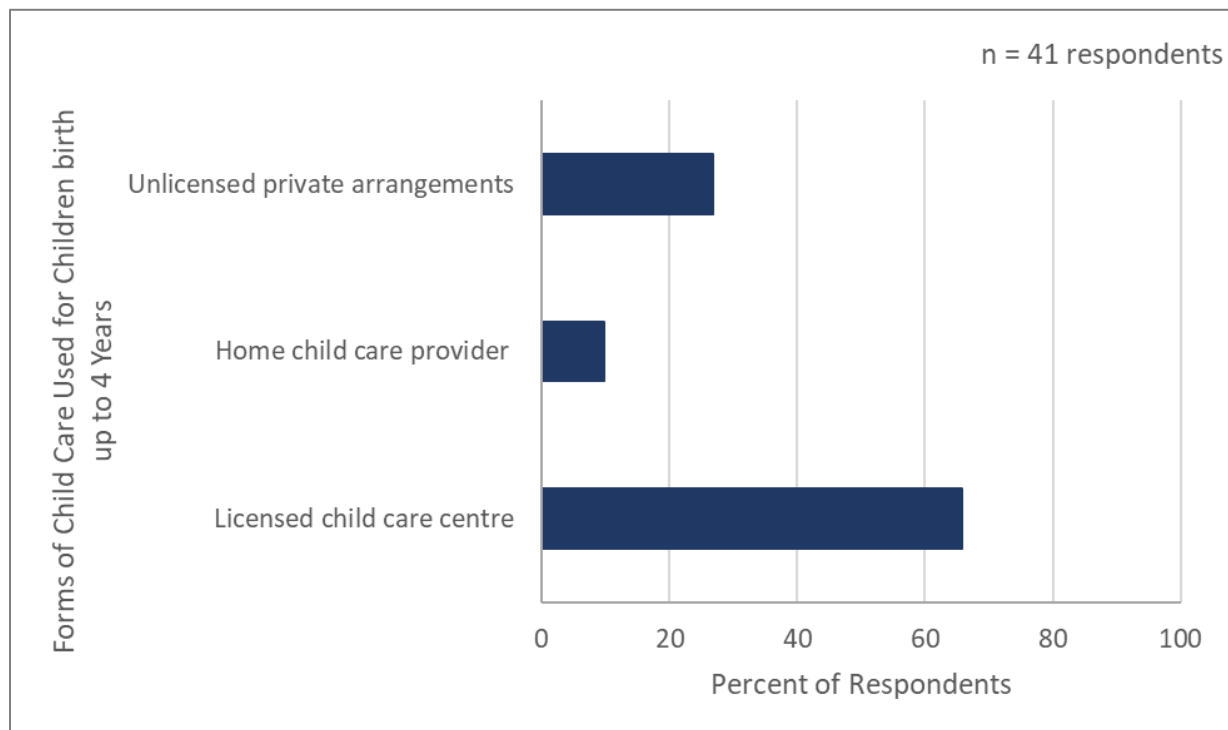
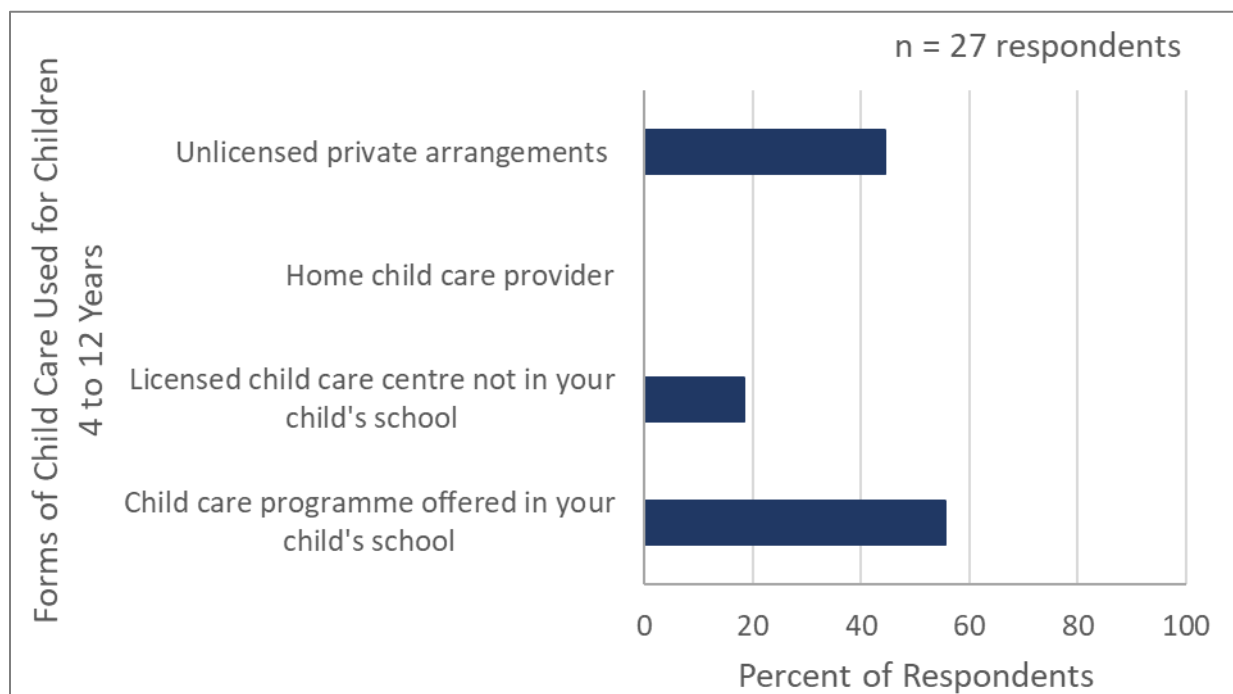


Figure 12. Forms of care used by survey respondents with children 4 to 12 years in Guelph



Level of interest in licensed child care options

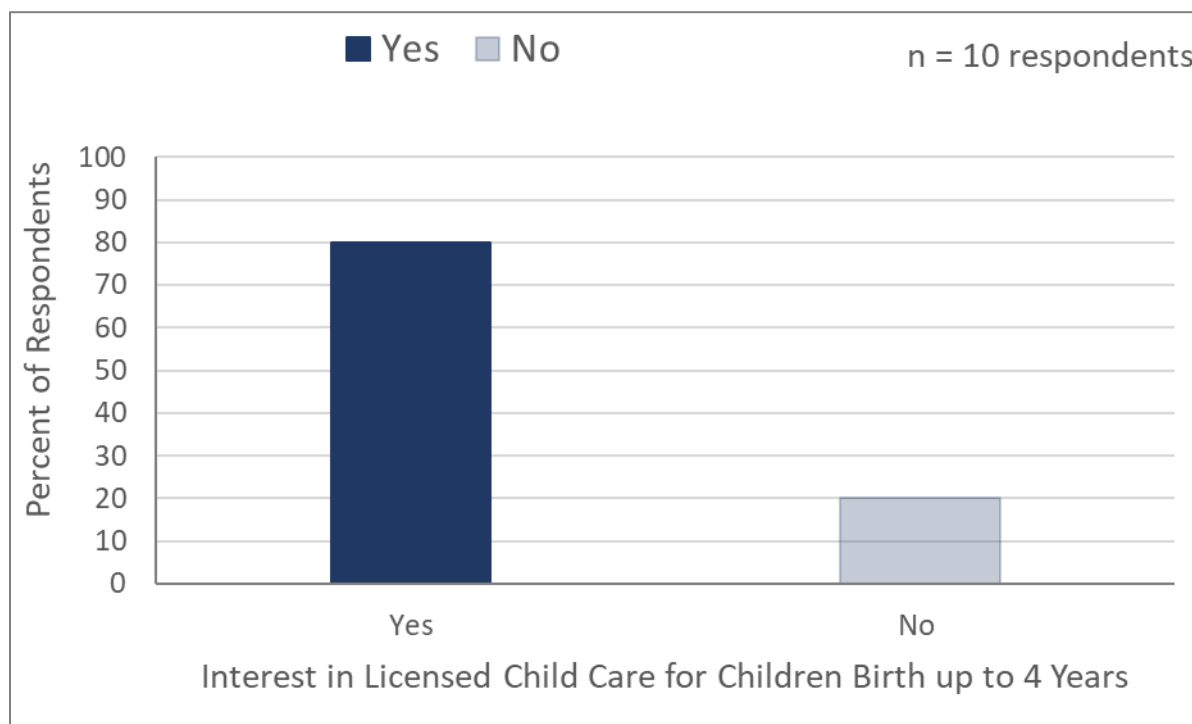
In addition, the Child Care Survey sought to establish the level of interest in licensed child care options for children birth up to 4 years and the level of interest in a variety of school-age care options for children 4 to 12 years.

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.

The majority of survey respondents (80%) indicated that they would use licensed child care for their children birth up to 4 years if it were available compared to 20% who indicated that 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 Guelph



Comments from survey respondents who indicated that they would not use licensed child care for their children birth up to 4 years suggest that some preferred the small group size offered at their unlicensed arrangements while others believed there was no difference between licensed and unlicensed providers.



“I feel there’s no difference between a licensed or unlicensed provider. They both follow the same rules”

- Survey respondent

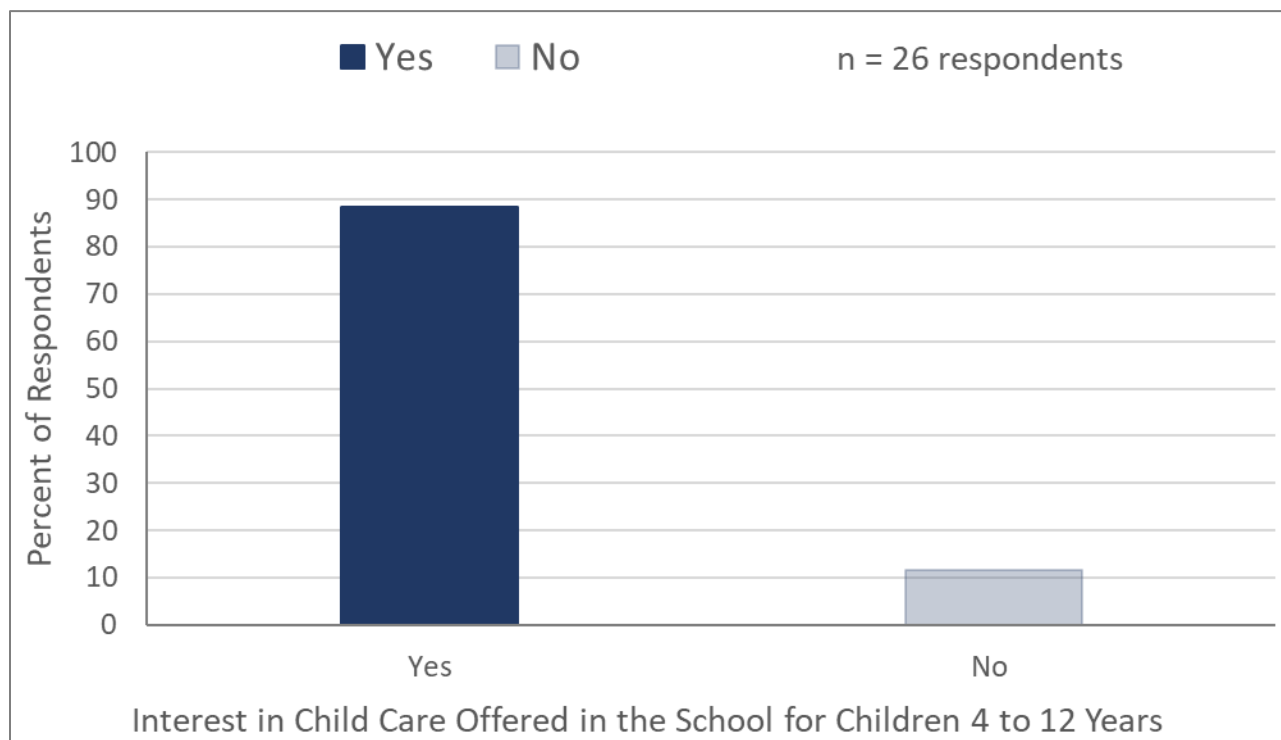


b) Level of interest in child care that is provided in school for children 4 to 12 years

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 (88.5%) indicated that they would use before and after school care if it were available in their school compared to 11.5% who indicated that they would not (Figure 14).

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



Comments from survey respondents who were interested in care offered in the school showed that parents preferred school-based care for a number of reasons, including minimizing transitions for their children. However, the survey respondents also explained that finding spaces was challenging.



“Yes I would use it but there are none”

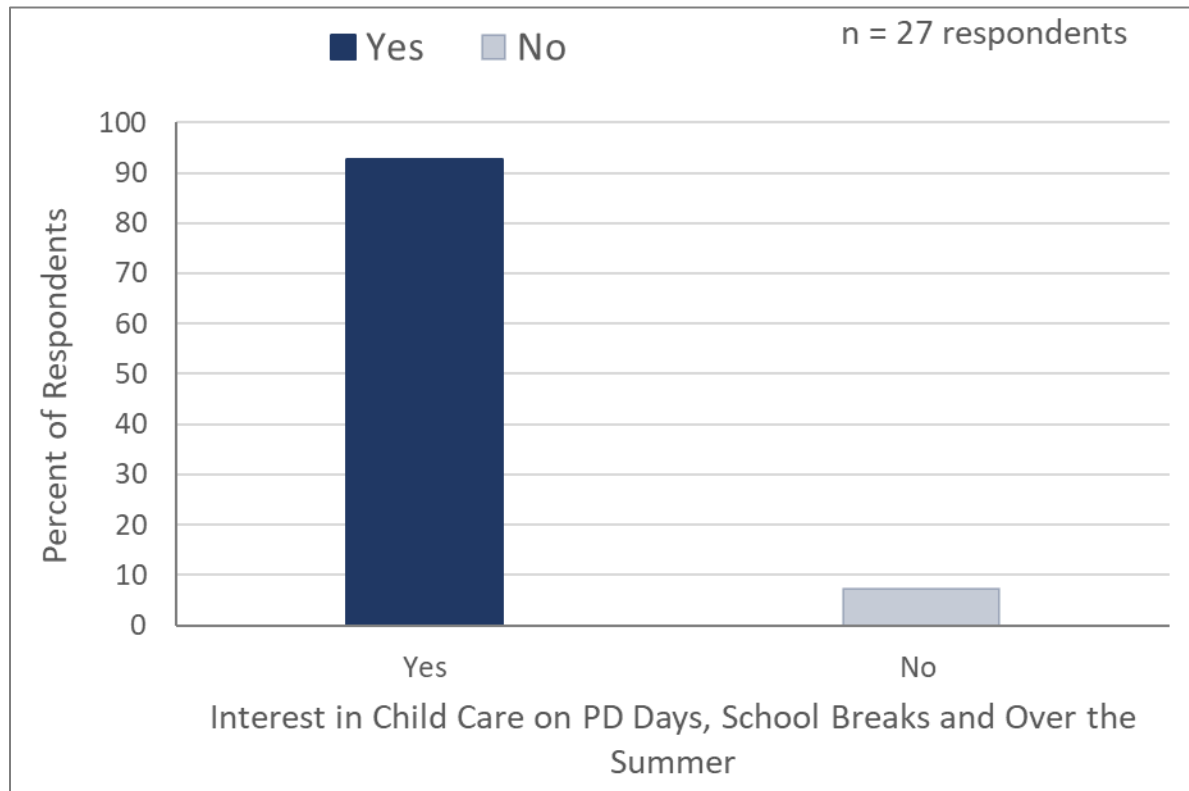
- Survey respondent



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 Guelph



The majority of survey respondents (92.6%) indicated that they would use child care on PD days, school breaks and over the summer if it were available compared to 7.4% 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 children who were old enough to stay home alone, and having work schedules that allowed them to look after their own children.

Survey respondents who indicated they were interested in care on PD days, school breaks and over the summer, explained that they would use care on these days provided certain conditions were met. For example, the care would need to be close to home, and to provide programming that is meaningful to the children. In addition, the care, particularly during the summer, would need to be continuous with minimal transitions and disruptions for children.



“I definitely require child care for the summer and on PD days. My husband and I work full time”

“Nice and close and a place that is familiar is always helpful”

“In the summer we enroll in camps, but then that means a new camp every week which is a lot of adjustment for a 5 year old....”

- Survey respondents



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 Guelph

- 👍 Knowledgeable, responsive staff
- 👍 Convenient hours of operation
- 👍 Convenient location of care
- 👍 Regulated settings that provide healthy meals
- 👍 Safe, supportive care environments

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

- 👎 Lack of licensed child care spaces
- 👎 Cost of care that is not affordable
- 👎 Lack of flexible care options

- 👎 High staff turnover and large group sizes
- 👎 Inconvenient hours of operation
- 👎 Unreliable care arrangements

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

- 👍 Convenient location of care in school
- 👍 Knowledgeable, caring and supportive staff who offer quality programming
- 👍 Convenient hours of operation
- 👍 Affordable cost of care

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

- 👎 Lack of school age care spaces and care options
- 👎 Inconvenient care location
- 👎 Unregulated care with no oversight
- 👎 Inadequate programming
- 👎 Cost of care that is not affordable
- 👎 Poor communication between staff and parents

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 Guelph

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

The most common challenge finding child care for children birth up to 4 years indicated was “lack of spaces” (80% of respondents), followed by “cost” (54.3% of respondents). “Hours of operation” was indicated as a challenge by 34.3% of respondents and 25.7% of respondents indicated “location” as a challenge to finding care.

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

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

The most common challenge finding child care for children 4 to 12 years indicated was “lack of spaces” (70% of respondents), followed by “hours of operation” (45% of respondents). “Cost” was indicated as a challenge by 40% of respondents and 25% of respondents indicated “location” as a challenge to finding care.

Figure 16. Challenges finding child care for children birth up to 4 and 4 to 12 years in Guelph

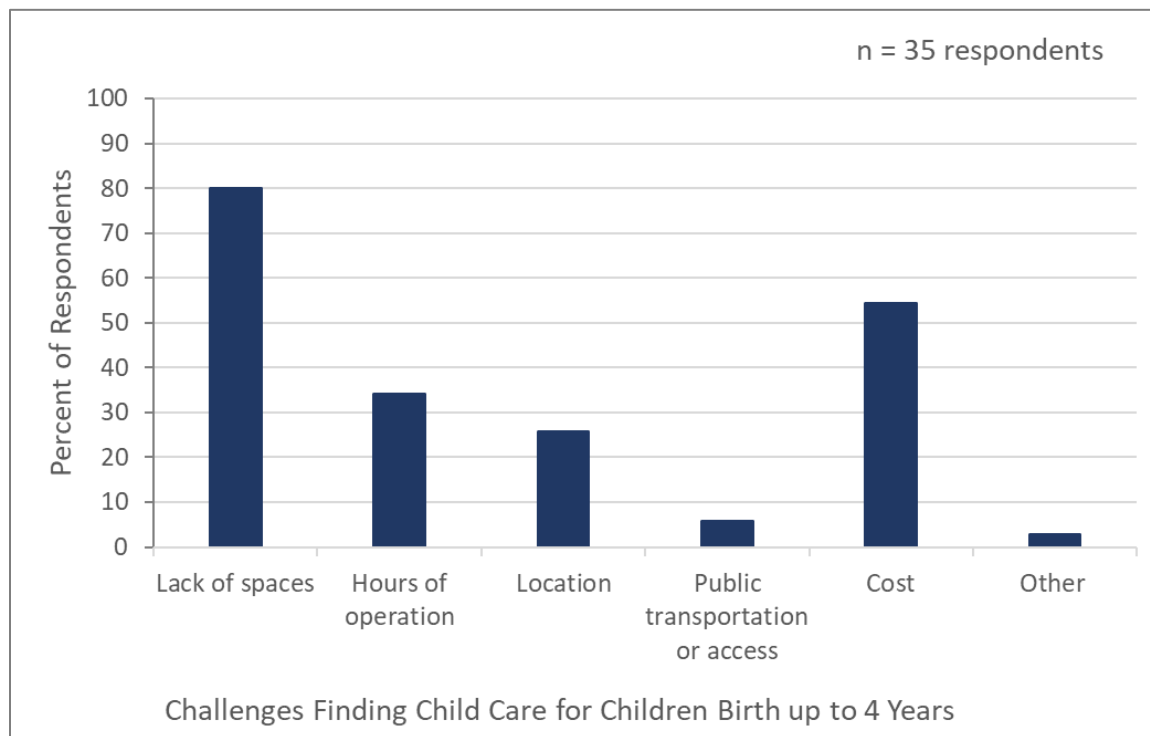
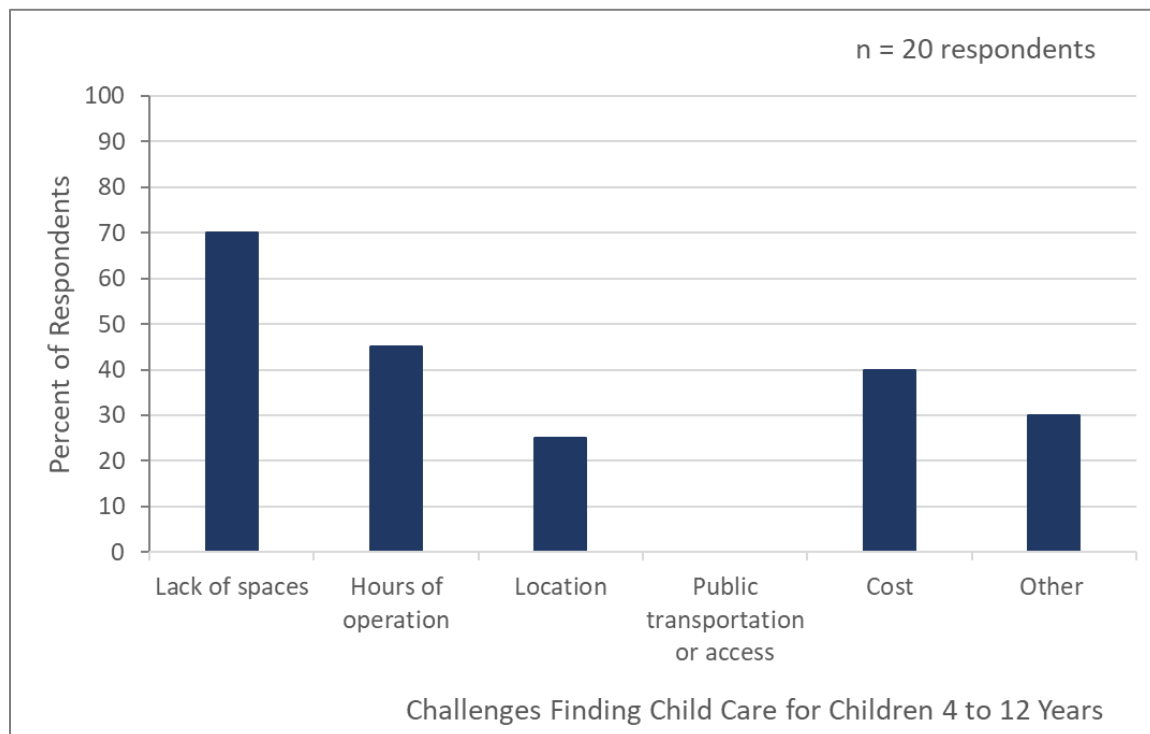


Figure 17. Challenges finding child care for children 4 to 12 years in Guelph



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, and hours of operation are the most important challenges to finding child care for parents with children 4 to 12 years.



“I put my son on licensed care lists when he was four days old and it wasn’t early enough to get him a spot in a licensed centre”

“Very expensive option for twins, and not eligible for subsidy”

“Heure d'ouverture et payé à plein temps quand seulement 2 à 3 jours par semaine sont besoin. [Hours of operation and paying for full-time care when only 2 to 3 days per week are needed]”

- 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

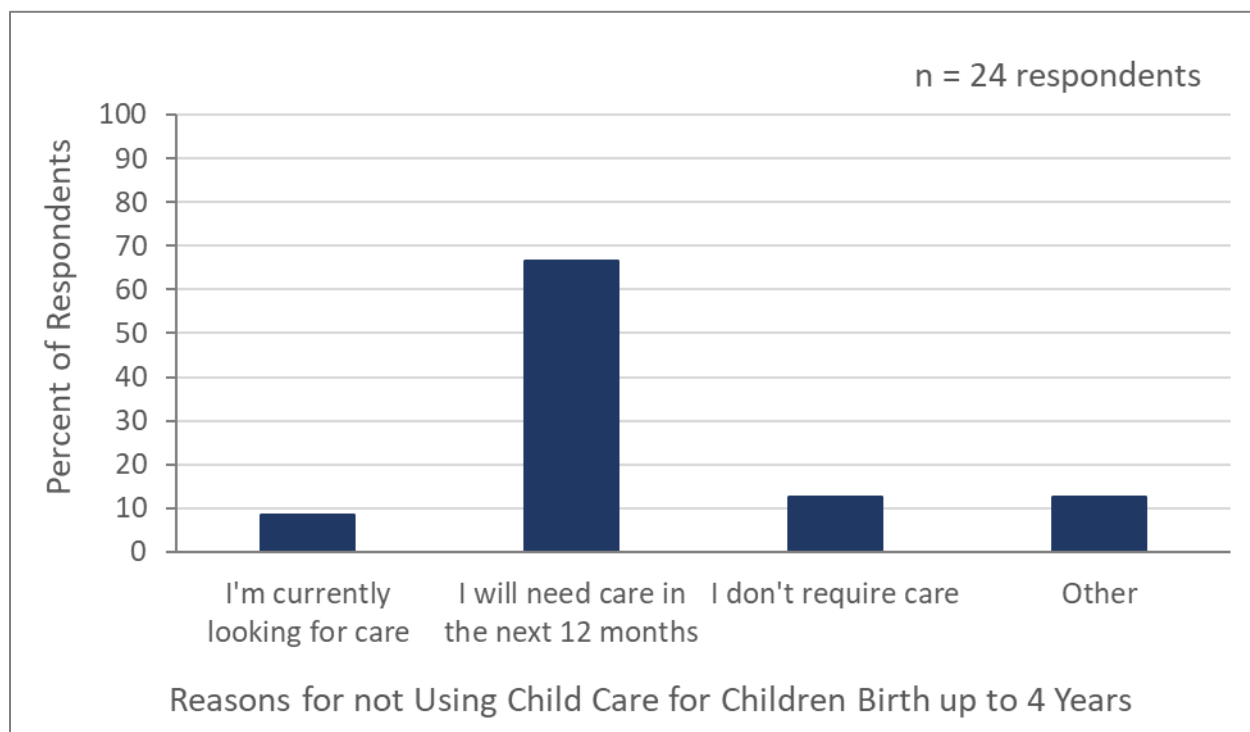
Figure 18 shows the reasons for not using care indicated by respondents with children birth up to 4 years in Guelph.

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” (66.7% of respondents). In addition, 12.5% of respondents indicated “I don’t require care” and “Other” while 8.35% indicated “I’m currently looking for care” as the reasons for not using care.

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 some of them had work schedules that allowed them to care for their children.

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



“Our parental leave is finishing up and we will be starting care shortly but have not yet started care”

- Survey respondent



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

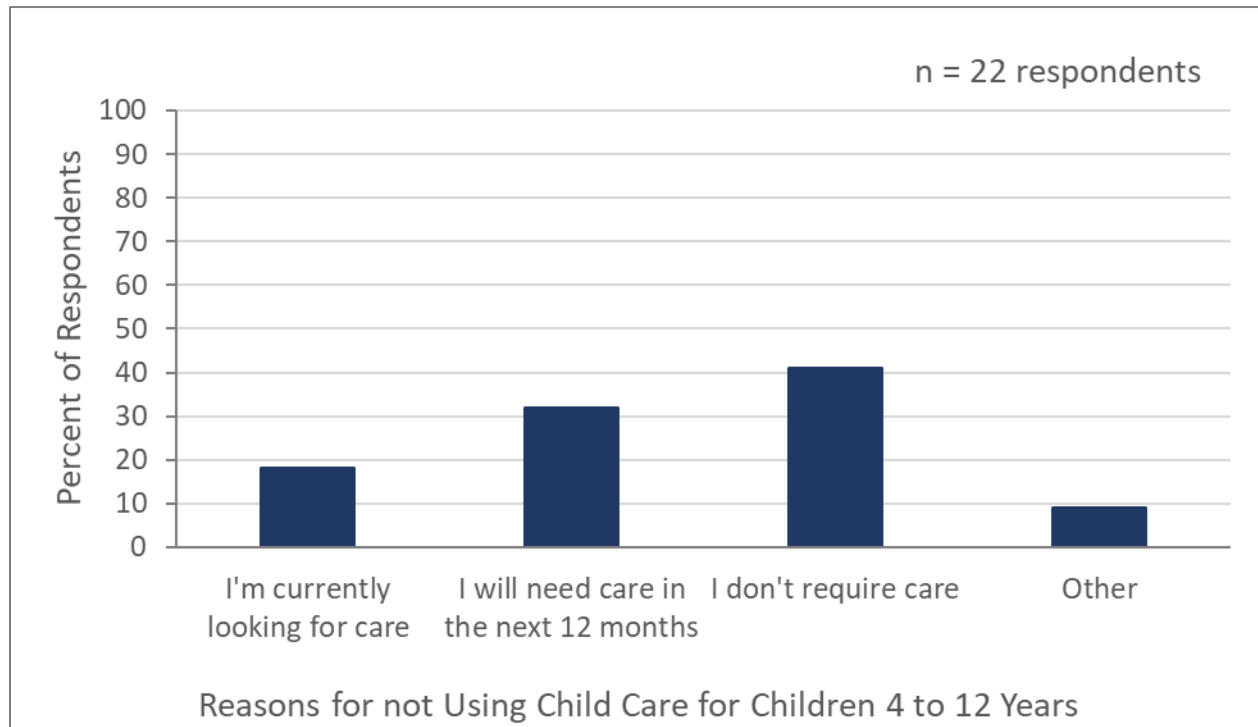
Figure 19 shows the reasons for not using care indicated by respondents with children 4 to 12 years in Guelph.

The most common reason for not using child care for children 4 to 12 years indicated was “I don’t require care” (40.9% of respondents). About a third of respondents (31.8%) indicated “I will need care in the next 12 months”, 18.2% indicated “I’m currently looking for care” and 9.1% indicate “Other” 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” had a variety of care arrangements for their children. These arrangements included parents looking after their own children as stay at home parents or by working from home. In addition, some respondents indicated that members of the extended family, particularly grandparents, cared for their children.

Comments from survey respondents suggest that some of those who indicated “I’m currently looking for care” or “I will need care in the next 12 months” were transitioning back to work (either from maternity leave or working from home) or were looking for care but were experiencing difficulties finding spaces.

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



“We live with grandparents who help with child care on a daily basis”

“My husband is currently able to be at home for my children but he will be starting a full-time position in January 2019, which will require before and after school care”

“I have been looking for care for the past year (when my 4 year old was 3) but was unable to find it. As a result of this (and not being able to find before and after school care for my other two children) I was unable to work”

- Survey respondents

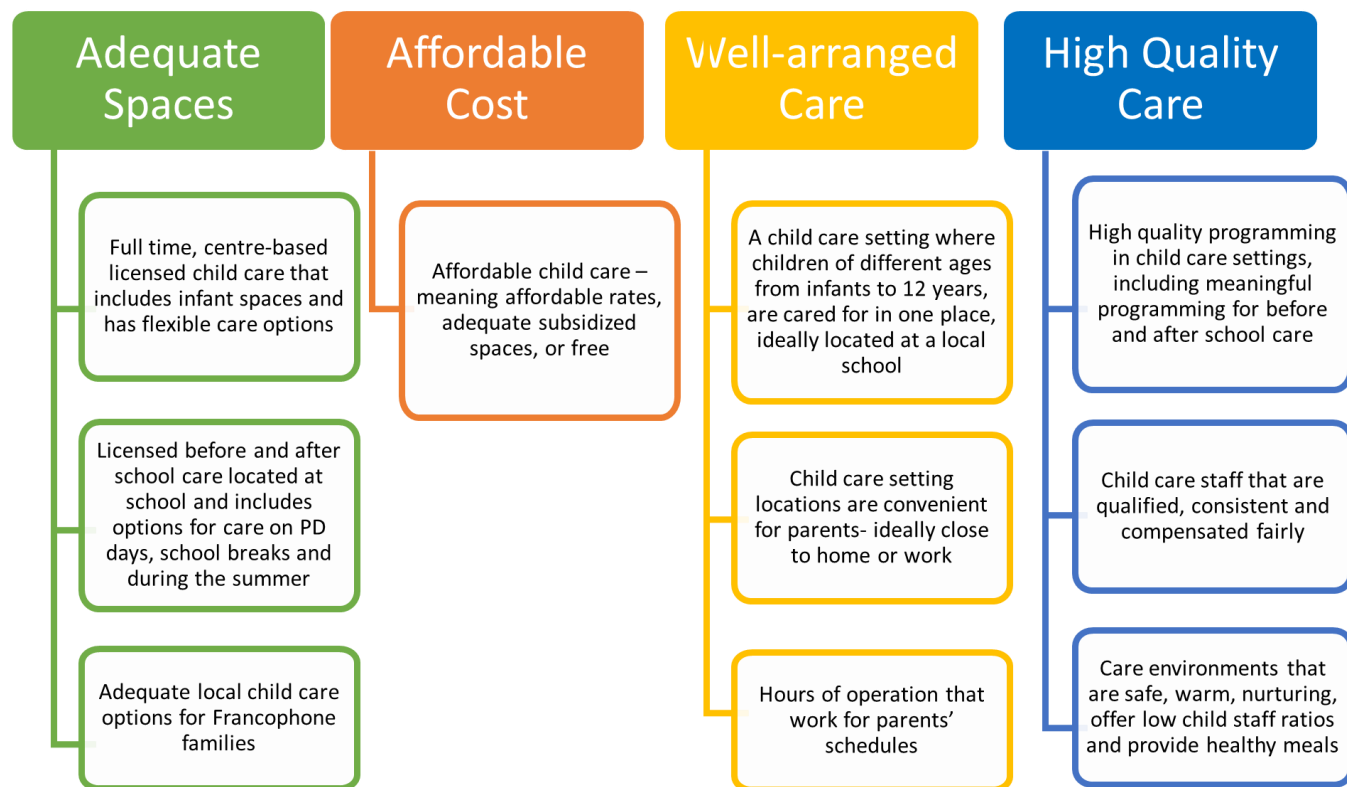


Ideal child care scenario

To understand the desired state of child care by families in Guelph, 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, 10 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.

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



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, centre-based licensed child care that includes infant spaces and has flexible care options; having licensed before and after school care located at school and includes options for care on PD days, school breaks and during the summer; and adequate local child care options for Francophone families. Survey respondents also indicated that they would like back-up care for when their child is too ill to go to a centre.



“Would love high quality, centre based child care in the City of Guelph”

“Flexible hours and some kind of back-up daycare service for when my child is too ill to go to daycare but perfectly fine to be cared for by someone other than parents”

- Survey respondents



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 – meaning affordable rates, adequate subsidized spaces, or free.



“We're \$800 behind in bills this month alone because we pay over \$2,000 a month in child care expenses; double our 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 a child care setting where children of different ages, from infant to 12 years, are cared for in one place, ideally located at a local school; child care setting locations that are convenient for parents, ideally close to home or work; and hours of operation that work for parents' schedules.



“I would prefer one centre that could take the baby, who would be 12 months and the older two after school. It is nearly impossible to find a centre or home care provider to take all three”

- 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 child care settings, including meaningful programming for

before and after school care and having child care staff that are qualified, consistent and compensated fairly. In addition, high quality care elements would have care environments that are safe, warm, nurturing, offer low child staff ratios and provide healthy meals.



“Caring, well trained, patient staff”

“Overall we are looking for a safe, licensed caregiver that plays with our child”

- Survey respondents

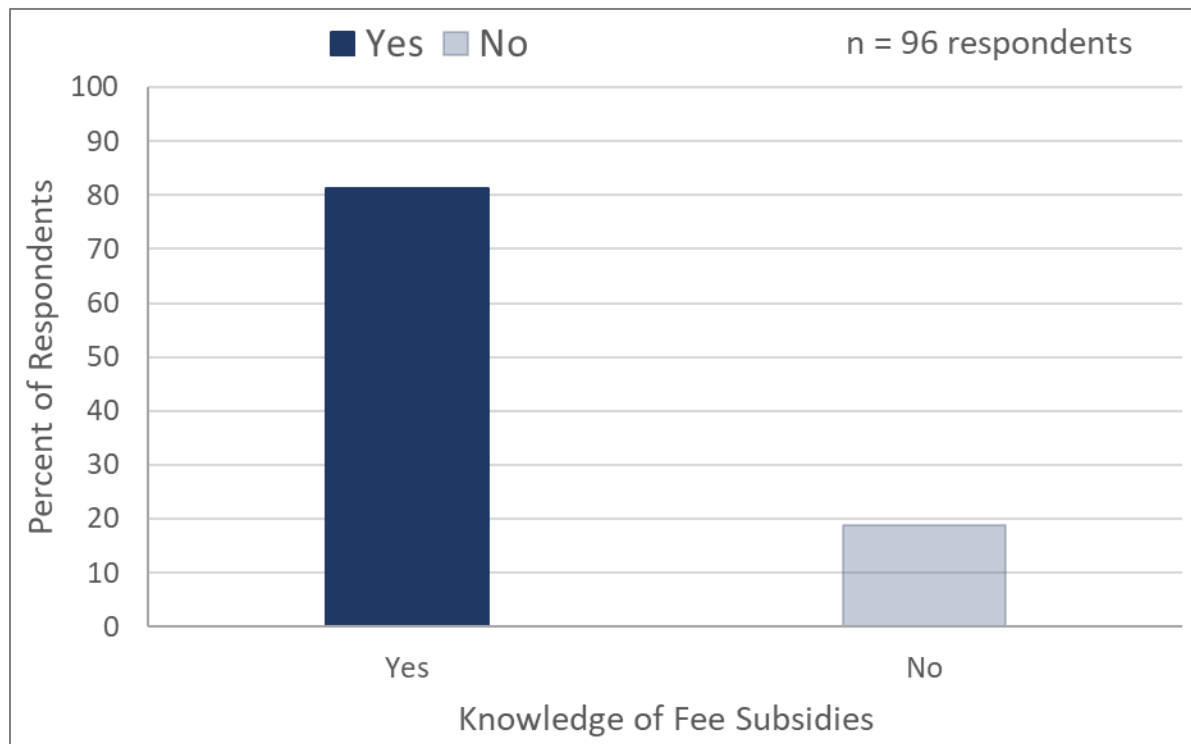


Information about licensed child care

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 Guelph



The majority of survey respondents (81.3%) in Guelph indicated that they knew that families could apply for fee subsidies and 18.8% indicated that they did not know (Figure 21).

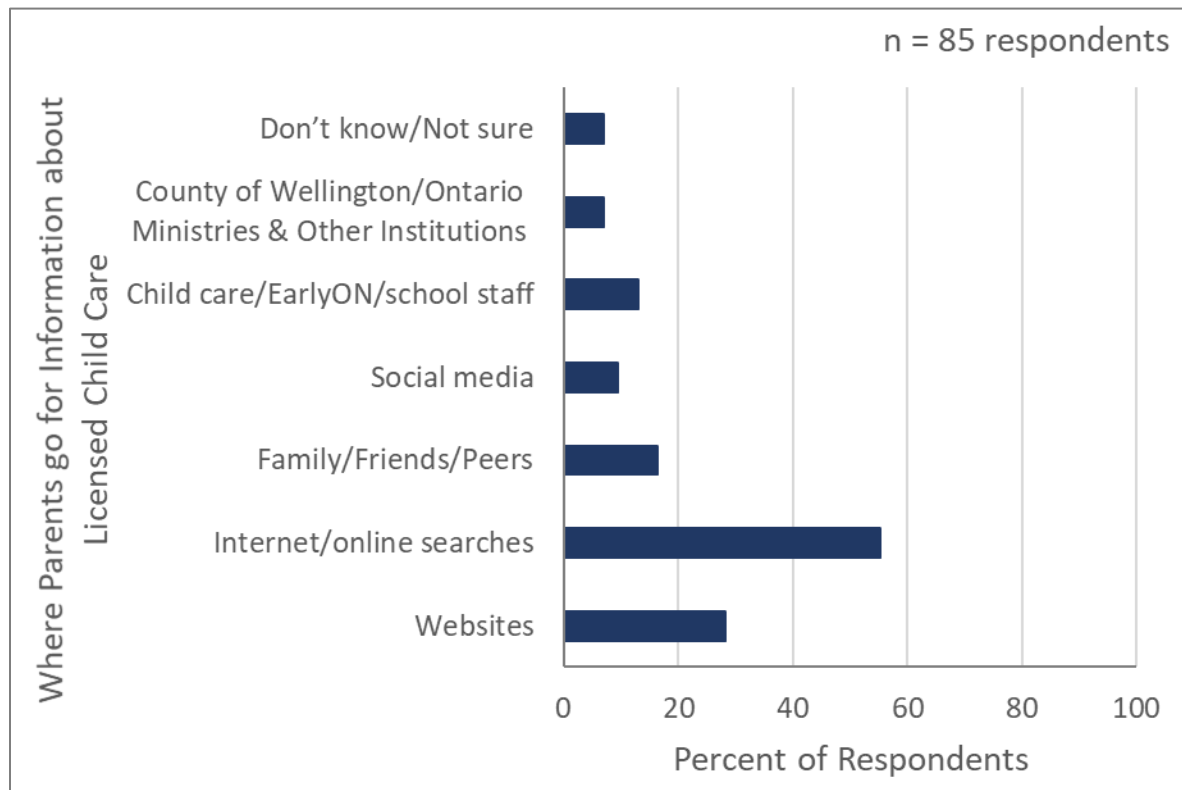
Sources of information about licensed child care

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 seven 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.

The most frequently identified source of information about licensed child care were internet/online searches (55.3% of respondents), followed by websites (28.2% of respondents). “Family/friends/peers” was identified by 16.5% of respondents and 12.9% identified “child care/EarlyON/school staff. About a tenth of survey respondents (9.4%) identified “social media” as a source of information about licensed child care.

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

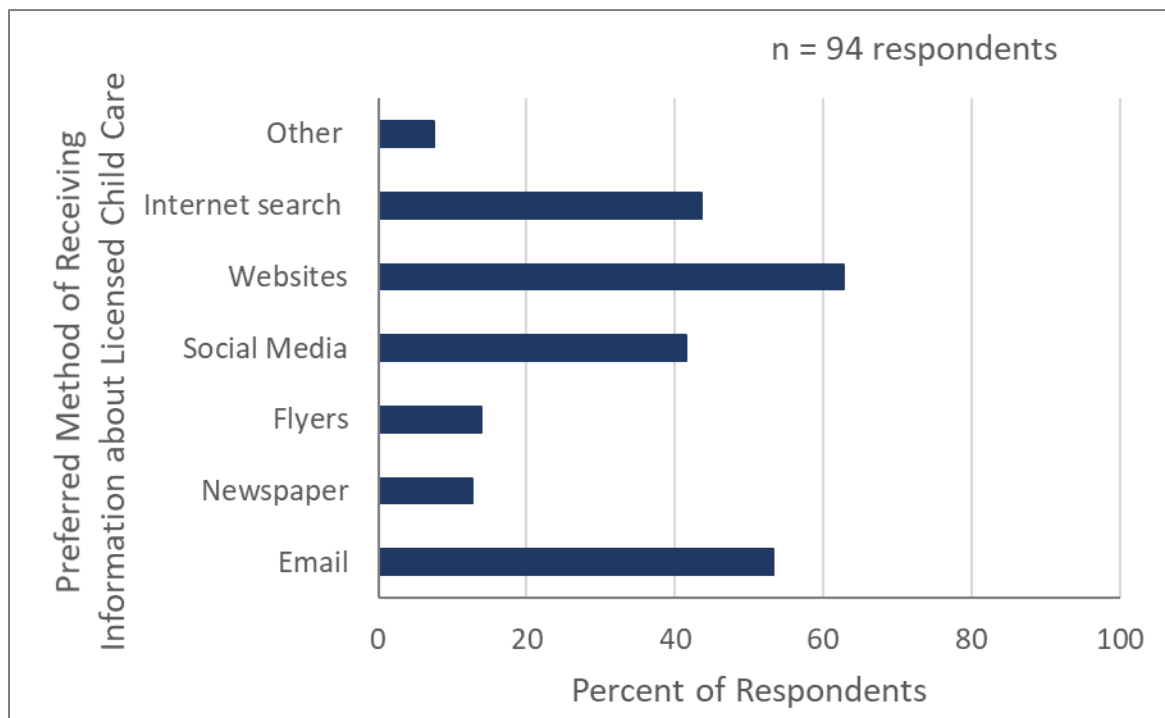


Preferred method of receiving information about licensed child care

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 “websites” (68.4% of respondents) and “e-mail” (63.2% of respondents). “Internet search” was preferred by 43.6% of respondents and 41.5% preferred “social media”. “Flyers” (13.8% of respondents) and “newspapers” (12.8% of respondents) were the least preferred methods of receiving information about licensed child care.

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





GUELPH

2019 Early Years Community Engagement Report

EARLYON PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES FINDINGS

Programme preferences:



Most preferred EarlyON programmes and services:

94% Preferred drop-in play-based learning programmes for children and parents/caregivers.

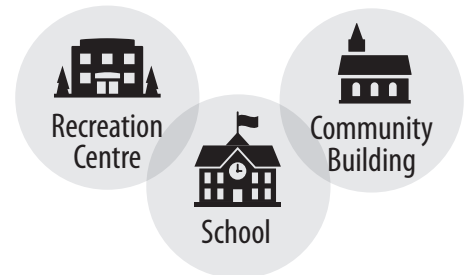


Location of programmes:

Preference of location to attend EarlyON programmes and services:

89% Preferred attending programmes at a local community/recreation centre.

67% 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:



17% → Never attended EarlyON programmes and services.

- Advertise EarlyON programmes and services.
- Offer programmes at more locations across the city.
- More scheduling options including during weekends.
- Programming to include child care

Level of interest in French Language programming :

Bienvenue!

37% Interested in French language EarlyON programmes and services if available.

Level of interest in Indigenous programming:

Bozhoo!
Tansi! Taanshi!
Halu! Kwhe!

36% 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:



49% Survey respondents go to the internet.



41% Survey respondents go to family, friends and peers.



35% Survey respondents go to medical professionals.



GUELPH

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:

66% Used licensed child care centre.

For children 4 to 12 years:

56% Used child care programme offered at the child's school.

Use of licensed home child care:

10% For children birth up to 4 years.

0% For children 4 to 12 years.

How well child care arrangements are working:

For children birth up to 4 years:



- Knowledgeable, responsive staff
- Convenient hours of operation and location
- Quality programming
- Regulated settings that provide healthy meals
- Safe, supportive care environments



- Lack of child care spaces
- Cost of care that is not affordable
- Lack of flexible care options
- High staff turnover and large group sizes
- Inconvenient hours of operation
- Unreliable care arrangements

For children 4 to 12 years:



- Convenient location of care in school
- Knowledgeable, caring and supporting staff who offer quality programming
- Convenient hours of operation
- Affordable cost of care



- Lack of school age care spaces and care options
- Inconvenient care location
- Unregulated care with no oversight
- Inadequate programming
- Cost of care that is not affordable
- Poor communication between staff and parents

Challenges finding child care:

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

For children birth up to 4 years:

80% Lack of child care spaces

54% Cost of care

For children 4 to 12 years:

70% Lack of child care spaces

45% 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 parents' work schedules.
- Regulated care environments that are safe and provide healthy meals.
- Qualified, knowledgeable and consistent staff that are well compensated.

- Evidence-based high quality programming in all care settings.
- Adequate child care options for Francophone families.

Information about licensed child care:

Most commonly identified sources of information:

55% Used internet/online searches

28% Used websites (e.g. County website)



Most preferred methods of receiving information:

63% Preferred websites

53% Preferred e-mail