

# The Massachusetts Child Care Study

## Child Care Subsidies, Child Care Needs & Utilization, & Choice of Care Among Low-Income Working Families

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### Five Samples

67 Centers	• 296 Families
55 FCCs	• 102 Families
6 Head Starts	• 50 Families
15 classrooms in 5 public schools	• 58 Families
Waitlists from 2 R&Rs	• 158 Families

### Data Sources

- Data Sources
- Administrative Data
  - Surveys of programs and providers
    - Surveys of families
    - Waitlist survey
  - Case studies and interviews with families
  - Interviews with R&Rs

### Child Care Needs: Reasons for child care/prekA

	Waitlist	Subsidy only	Public school	Head Start	Other Low-Income	Moderate/Higher Income
Prepare child for school	69%	58%	78%	94%	66%	66%
Other children to play with	67%	50%	67%	69%	58%	68%
Parental work or school	90%	96%	58%	62%	86%	92%
Child has special needs	3%	3%	14%	0%	3%	1%

% agree

### Affordability

	Subsidy waitlist	Receive subsidy	Low-Income	Mod/High Income	F
N	110	186	105	208	
For all care for all children	\$420	\$187	\$233	\$971	84.01 ***
Pct of monthly income	24.8%	10.2%	19.6%	18.1%	10.22 ***

Nationally, families who pay for child care, with or without assistance, pay about 7% of their income.

### Accessibility

	Subsidy waitlist	Receive subsidy	Low-Income	Mod/High Income
N	147	184	104	208
There are good choices for child care where I live	46%	57%	59%	59%
I have/had more than one option	29%	53%	45%	67%
I've had difficulty finding the program I want	65%	34%	40%	44%
I've felt I had to take whatever I could get	50%	27%	39%	22%

### Employment

	Subsidy waitlist	Receive subsidy	Low-Income	Mod/High Income
N	155	185	100	207
Not employed	25%	24%	25%	7%
Employed PT	15%	7%	5%	5%
Employed FT	60%	69%	70%	87%
School/Training FT	9%	16%	7%	8%

Head Start families are less likely to be employed full-time than are other low-income families (53% vs. 75% of "Other low-income" - 38% of Head Start families are not employed, 12% of Head Start families are in school full-time).

### Quality

	Centers	Head Starts	Public Schools	FCCs	Kith & Kin
N	310	51	63	120	48
Your child's child care/school is a good place for your child to be.	62%	69%	52%	68%	42%
The people at your child's child care/school do good things for your child.	62%	70%	54%	66%	46%
You have confidence in the people at your child's child care/school.	60%	71%	54%	73%	57%
Your child's child care/school is doing a good job of preparing children for the future.	59%	77%	54%	64%	33%

### Quality

	Subsidy Waitlist	Receive subsidy	Low-Income	Mod/High Income	X <sup>2</sup>
N	101	183	102	207	
Your child's child care is a good place for your child to be	44%	62%	61%	69%	39.81 ***
The staff at your child's child care do good things for your child	42%	63%	58%	70%	32.23 ***
You have confidence in the people at your child's child care	53%	64%	51%	67%	16.15 *
Your child's child care is doing a good job of preparing children for the future	37%	60%	62%	66%	44.05 ***

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001. Note: Satisfaction at the family level

### Perceptions of Inequity

All I do is wait...Maybe if I get welfare I can get child care faster but I don't want to do that...I really don't have good options to find child care."

They told me if I were getting welfare my wait would be two months. But I work. I don't want to be on welfare.

Other families (non-welfare recipients) still need child care assistance just as much and just as quick. Why give them everything. It's not fair that its just for welfare mom.

The voucher system is not fair to working parents. The two-year waitlist is ridiculous and there should be equity for working families and welfare recipients."

To go on welfare is the only easy way to get child care vouchers. I feel very frustrated with the process of a long waiting list."

There is a long wait time for assistance then being told they don't qualify due to high income but I certainly don't feel like I make enough money to get by.

They need to open more slots for working mothers or those going to school. Mothers on welfare get preference and others are left out.

It feels like you have to know someone in order in order to make the waitlist work for you. It is not a fair process.

### Information

I was lucky. I knew someone who knew someone. A friend of the family who runs a daycare recommended that I apply for vouchers.

It is word of mouth. I lucked-up on child care cause I got the referral from a friend.

### Helping Families

There is no way to go to school and work (without a voucher) .I couldn't pay for child care and I don't have anyone to watch my children.

I need to work and make money and my baby needs to be in school...I don't know what I would do if I didn't have a voucher.

I am thankful for vouchers. They help me out a lot.

If I didn't have child care I would do nothing. I wouldn't be able to do anything at all. Not finish school. Nothing.

### Access

It is hard to find openings at the same location for both of my children.

I got child care vouchers when I was in the shelter. But I couldn't find anyone to take my son (infant) so I couldn't meet the work requirements so I lost the voucher.

Center care is too expensive. I have to pay even more for early drop-off (to match work schedule).

Public PreK and Head start offer only part time hours!

I did not qualify for a voucher. Infant child care was a killer..My pay check was either day care or the rent. We are barely getting by.

You want your child to have stability. But its always changing for one reason or another: cost, not a good fit, you move, or something comes up with your child. Finding and keeping good care was a tone of transitions and stress.