



Provision of Early Care and Education during Non-Standard Hours

INTRODUCTION

Affordability is one of the critical barriers to accessing early care and education (ECE) for many parents and guardians of young children. Another is finding ECE for the days and hours needed. This is particularly true for the many parents and guardians who do not work during “standard” work hours—i.e., 8am to 6pm, Monday through Friday—but who work evenings, overnight shifts, on the weekends, or have varying work schedules that change from week to week or month to month.

This fact sheet uses data from the newly available National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) to describe the flexibility of available ECE in the U.S. Specifically, we provide nationally representative estimates of the percentage of ECE providers serving young children (aged birth through 5 years) who offer services during non-standard hours as well as those who permit parents flexibility in scheduling and in payment for services. Estimates are presented separately for center-based providers as well as three types of home-based providers: ‘listed’ providers who appear in official state and national lists of ECE services; ‘unlisted, paid’ providers who are not on official lists but receive payment for caring for children; and ‘unlisted, unpaid’ providers who are not on official lists and do not receive payment for the care they provide. [Please see NSECE Fact Sheet 2015-43 ‘*Who Provides Home-based Care?*’ for further information about NSECE classifications of home-based ECE.]

NON-STANDARD HOURS OF ECE

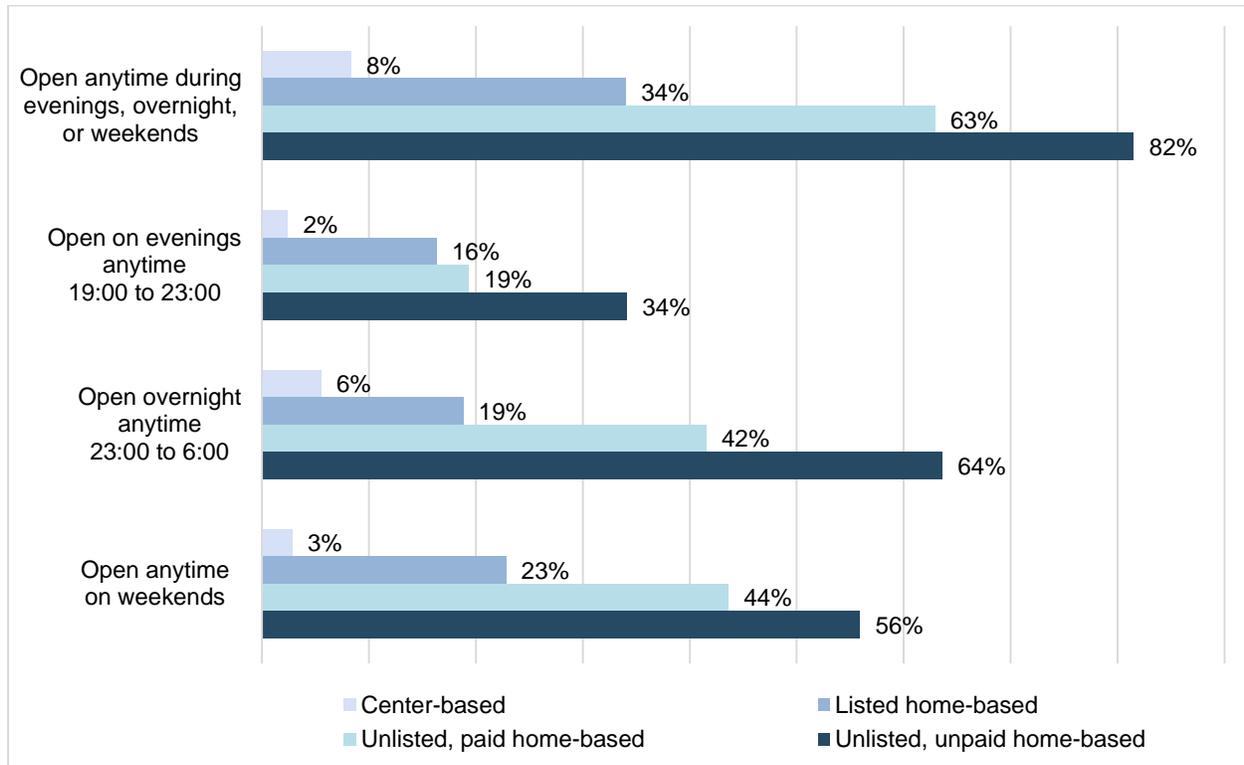
In the NSECE, ECE providers reported their start and stop times for each day of the week prior to the interview, Monday through Sunday. This information identifies providers who offer care during weekday evening hours (between 7pm and 11pm), weekday overnight (11pm-6am), or over the weekend

The National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) is a set of four integrated, nationally representative surveys conducted in 2012. These were surveys of: 1) households with children under age 13, 2) home-based providers of ECE, 3) center-based providers of ECE, and 4) the center-based provider workforce. Together they characterize the supply of and demand for ECE in the United States and permit better understanding of how well families’ needs and preferences coordinate with providers’ offerings and constraints. The study is funded by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The data for this fact sheet come from interviews completed in 2012 with 5,240 home-based providers and 7,770 center-based providers providing care to at least one child birth through age five years, not yet in kindergarten.



(midnight Friday through midnight Sunday), as well as the number of hours of care provided at each of those times. A provider can provide care during more than one type of non-standard time period.

Exhibit 1. Share of Providers Offering Non-standard Hours Care Serving Children 0 through 5 years, Not Yet in Kindergarten



Center-based ECE providers are the least likely of all these ECE providers to offer any type of care during non-standard hours, as shown in Exhibit 1; only 8 percent report doing so. Two percent of center-based providers offer evening care, 6 percent offer overnight care, and 3 percent offer weekend care.

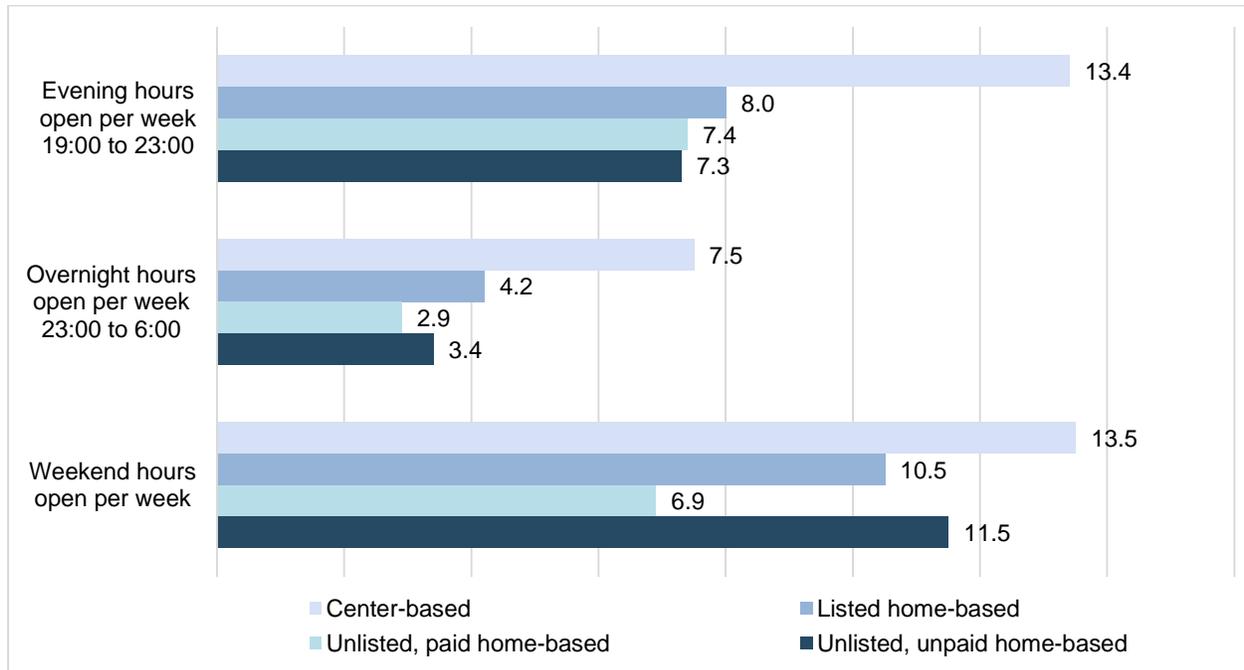
Although home-based ECE providers are more likely than center-based ECE providers to offer non-standard hours of care, the percentage that does so differs by type of home-based provider (see Exhibit 1). **Eighty-two percent of unlisted, unpaid home-based providers offer some care during non-standard hours. This is followed by 63 percent of unlisted, paid home-based providers and only 34 percent of listed, home-based providers.**

ECE providers of all types are more likely to provide overnight care or weekend care than evening care. For example, among unlisted, unpaid home-based providers, 64 percent provide overnight care and 56 percent provide weekend care, while only 34 percent provide evening care. The finding that overnight care is more common than evening care is somewhat counterintuitive. There are two likely reasons for this finding. First, the actual timeframe of the evening category is only four hours (7pm to 11pm), smaller than that of the other categories. Second, as we see below, ECE providers who provide evening care tend to be open for a higher proportion of hours during that timeframe than are providers open during other non-standard hours times.

In addition to the availability of any ECE during non-standard hours, the quantity of the care available is important to parents. **Center-based, listed home-based and unlisted unpaid home-based providers who offer any ECE during non-standard hours offer on average 13 to 14 hours of such care per week. In contrast, unlisted paid home-based ECE providers offering any non-standard hours care provide an**

average of 9 hours of such care per week. [Total weekly hours of non-standard hours care are not shown in Exhibit 2.]

Exhibit 2: Among Providers Offering Any Non-standard Hours Care, Mean Number of Hours of Nonstandard Care by Provider Type



As noted above, ECE providers who offer particular types of non-standard hours care provide more hours of evening care and weekend care, on average, than overnight care (see Exhibit 2). This is true across all ECE provider types. For example, center-based providers offer more than 13 hours of evening care and weekend care, on average each week, and only 7.5 hours of overnight care. The relatively low number of overnight hours (about 1.5 hours per day) suggests that much of this care is likely occurring early in the morning just before the regular-hours day begins, and not for the full overnight period.

The few center-based ECE providers who provide each type of non-standard hours care—evening, overnight, and weekend—offer more hours of such care, on average, than do home-based providers who offer non-standard hours care. For example, among ECE providers who offer evening non-standard care, center-based providers offer an average of 13.4 hours per week compared to between 7 and 8 hours per week among home-based ECE providers. As shown in Exhibit 1, about 8 percent of center-based providers provide care during any of these hours, while the share of home-based providers doing so is much greater (between 16 and 82 percent)

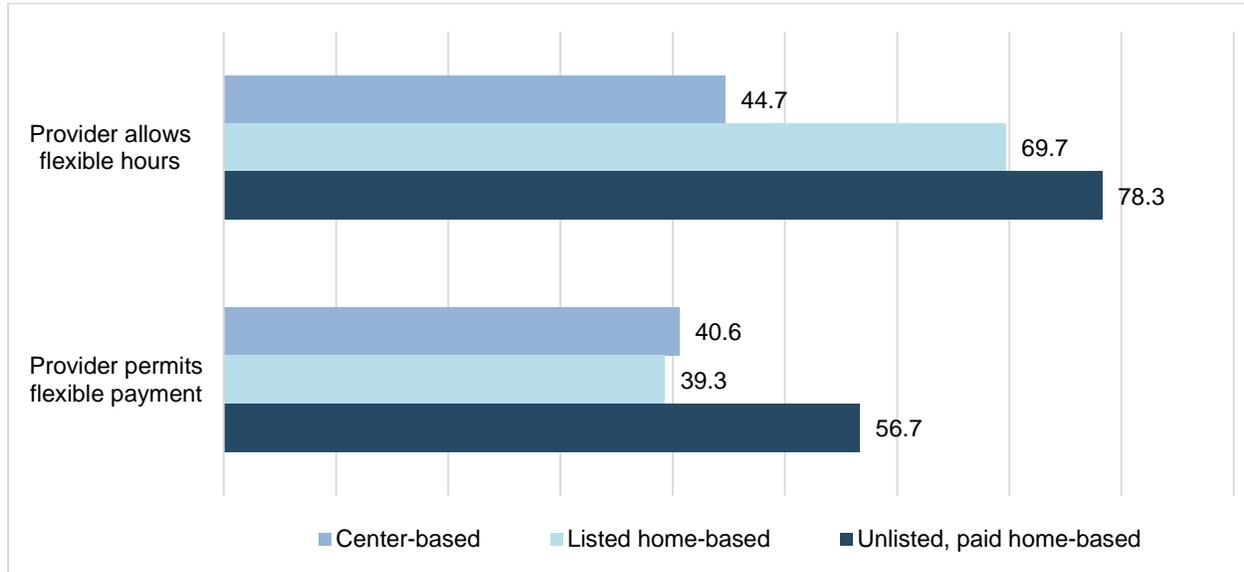
FLEXIBLE TIMING OF CARE AND FLEXIBLE PAYMENT

Some parents and guardians, such as nurses, protective services personnel, or retail workers, may work irregular schedules that vary in days of the week or hours of the day. ECE providers can be most supportive of these schedules if they allow parents some flexibility in when their children can use care, and only require parents to pay for the care that they use each week. However, flexible scheduling and payment can impose uncertainty on providers in terms of staffing and financial planning.

NSECE data on flexible schedules and payments focus on providers caring for at least one child with whom they had no prior personal relationship. That is, all center-based care and some home-based care. These ECE

providers are identified as offering flexible schedules if they report that they allow parents to use their services on schedules that vary from week to week. ECE providers are identified as allowing flexible payment if they permit parents to pay for and use varying numbers of hours of care each week (whether at the parents' convenience, from a set of schedule options, or beyond a minimum number of hours).

Exhibit 3: Percent of ECE Providers Offering Flexible Hours and Flexible Payment, by Provider Type



Note: Data include all center-based programs and any home-based provider caring for at least one child with whom there was no prior personal relationship.

Exhibit 3 shows the percentage of ECE providers allowing flexible scheduling (top bars) and flexible payment (bottom bars). [Data are restricted to providers caring for at least one child with no prior personal relationship. More than 90 percent of listed but only 65 percent of unlisted paid home-based providers serve a child with no prior personal relationship and so report on flexibility.] Home-based providers are more likely to provide flexible scheduling (at least 70 percent) than are center-based providers (45 percent). **Flexible payments are more common among unlisted-paid, home-based providers (57 percent) than among listed, home-based or center-based providers (about 40 percent).** While center-based providers are almost equally likely to offer flexible scheduling (45 percent) and flexible payments (41 percent), home-based providers are about twenty percent more likely to allow flexible schedules than flexible payments.

SUGGESTED CITATION

National Survey of Early Care and Education Project Team (2015). Fact Sheet: Provision of Early Care and Education during Non-Standard Hours. (OPRE Report No. 2015-44). Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/national-survey-of-early-care-and-education-nsece-2010-2014>