

# Survey on Where Parents Look for and Find Information When Selecting Child Care

## AE. About Your Household

NORC is conducting an important survey to learn about how parents look for and use information when they choose child care or early education for their young children. Some parents may use child care or early education, while other parents may not and instead care for their child(ren) themselves. The study is sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families, a federal agency. The information collected will help policymakers understand what parents may need to help find child care and early education. Please have an adult (18 years or older) who lives in this household answer the following questions. The questions take about 20 minutes, and your participation is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. Your information will be kept private. All of your answers will become part of an anonymous group of responses called a data set. The survey findings will only be shared as summary statistics and will not include any information that could identify you or your child(ren). We may link this survey data with other data about the neighborhood or state you live in. Study findings will be put into summary reports and shared publicly but will not contain any names or other information that identifies you. The data, questionnaire, and analysis files will be prepared and submitted to be archived in an online data repository. The archived data will be available to other researchers to access and use but will not contain names or other identifying information. If you have any questions, you may call the NORC Institutional Review Board Administrator, toll free, at 1-866-309-0542.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number and expiration date for this collection are OMB #: 0970-0627, Exp: 05/13/2025.

AE1. First, are there any children under the age of 6 years, including babies, who live in this household?

1. Yes
2. No (EXIT THE INTERVIEW, GO TO DA6)

AE2. Are any of these children under the age of 6 enrolled in kindergarten or higher grades?

1. Yes
2. No

AE3. How many of these children under the age of 6 are not yet enrolled in kindergarten?

\_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF CHILDREN [0-99]  
If 0 (EXIT THE INTERVIEW, GO TO DA6)

AE4. Do any of these children under the age of 6, not yet in kindergarten have a physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that affects the way you provide care for them?

1. Yes
2. No

AE5. How many adults (18 years and older), including yourself live in this household?

\_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF ADULTS [0-99]  
If 0 (EXIT THE INTERVIEW, GO TO DA6)

## A. Introductory Questions

A1. What state do you currently live in?

[DROP DOWN MENU LISTING EACH STATE AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA]

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Throughout this questionnaire, we will ask you questions about child care and early education that families may use when their child is not with the parent or legal guardian. When asking you these questions, we mean all the different types of child care and early education, including child care, sometimes referred to as daycare, Early Head Start, Head Start, preschool/pre-kindergarten programs, nursery school, Montessori or other programs which can be:

- Home-based, which occurs in someone’s home, such as the child’s home or the provider’s home regardless of where they live (such as a self-standing house, apartment that they share with extended members of the family). Home-based care can be paid or unpaid, from family, friends or neighbors, or from someone who operates a child care business in their home.
- Center-based, which occurs in an organization, school, or business that is large or small and not someone’s home.

In the questions throughout this questionnaire, we will be using the term ‘*child care*’ to mean all these different types of child care and early education for children who are not yet in kindergarten.

Please answer this questionnaire thinking about child(ren) in your household who are under the age of 6, but not yet in kindergarten.

A2. Are any of these children under the age of 6 (not yet enrolled in kindergarten) currently enrolled in a child care program?

3. Yes
4. No

## C. Finding Information about Child Care

In this section, we want you to think about different sources of information. By ‘*sources of information*’ we mean any person, thing, or place that may offer information.

		<p>C1) In the past 12 months, have you <b><i>gotten information</i></b> about <b><i>child care</i></b> from these sources? [Code Yes/No]</p>	<p>[IF SOURCE MARKED ‘NO’ IN C1, ASK C2]</p> <p>C2) In the past 12 months, have you <b><i>tried to get information</i></b> about <b><i>child care</i></b> from these sources, without success? [Code Yes/No]</p>
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a. Official government websites such as childcare.gov, quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) [INSERT STATE QRIS NAME], child care licensing website, or an online child care search tool from a state or community organization		1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
b. Commercial websites or apps for parents such as parenting.com and care.com		1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
c. In-person or telephone conversations with organizations that help parents find care		1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
d. Child care providers themselves, whether on their websites, flyers, advertisements, through social media, or visits or calls you made to them		1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
e. Service providers you know, like doctors/pediatricians, social workers, schools, libraries, and clergy. (Please do not include child care providers.)		1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
f. People you don't know, such as on Facebook groups, Yelp ratings, or things you overheard		1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
g. People you know, such as friends, family, employers, or neighbors (even if on social media like Facebook and apps)		1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No

(IF a or b) Yes in C1 OR C2 ABOVE, ASK:

C3. What websites (not including Google), child care search tools, or apps do you recall using? (RECORD UP TO 3.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

(ASK ONLY IF C1 or C2=YES FOR EACH SELECTED SOURCE, ASK C4, C5, C6, C7 AND LOOP BACK TO NEXT SOURCE TO ASK C4, C5, C6, C7 FOR ALL SOURCES SELECTED) How would you rate this source [INSERT SOURCE NAME] for information about child care?	C4) The source has current information (Code One)	C5) The source has the specific information I want to know (Code One)	C6) It has been easy for me to find information from this source (Code One)	C7) I trust the source (Code One)
a. Official government websites such as childcare.gov, [INSERT STATE QRIS NAME], child care licensing website, or an online child care search tool from a state or community organization	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all
b. Commercial websites or apps for parents such as parenting.com and care.com	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all
c. In-person or telephone conversations with organizations that help parents find care	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all
d. Child care providers themselves,	1. Very much	1. Very much	1. Very much	1. Very much

whether on their websites, flyers, advertisements, through social media, or visits or calls you made to them	2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	2. Somewhat 3. Not at all
e. Service providers you know, like doctors/pediatricians, social workers, schools, libraries and clergy. (Please do not include child care providers.)	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all
f. People you don't know, such as on Facebook groups, Yelp ratings, or things you overheard	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all
g. People you know, such as friends, family, employers, or neighbors (even if on social media like Facebook and apps)	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all

(ASK ONLY IF SOURCES WERE SELECTED IN C1 AND C2 ABOVE)

(Code all that apply)

(IF SELECTED, ASK C8a.)

(ASK ONLY IF C8.4 is selected)

(OPEN ENDED)

### T. Types of Information about Child Care

These next questions ask about the types of information about child care you may have looked for in the past 12 months.

T1. Which of the following types of information have you looked for in the past 12 months? (Code all that apply)

1. Hours and days of care
2. How close a provider is to work or home
3. Health and safety conditions at specific providers
4. Age groups that the provider enrolls
5. Where you could get care that you can afford
6. Providers that accept child care financial assistance that you qualify for, such as a subsidy, voucher, scholarship, or certificate
7. Providers that share your culture or values, such as your language or religion
8. Providers that will serve child(ren)'s specific needs
9. Whether provider is taking new children
10. Provider quality
11. None of these [Exclusive –Skip to Section D]
12. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

T2. Thinking about any information you have found, what information did you find most helpful about child care options in your area? (Code all that apply)

1. Hours and days of care
2. How close a provider is to work or home
3. Health and safety conditions at specific providers
4. Age groups that the provider enrolls
5. Where you could get care that you can afford
6. Providers that accept child care financial assistance that you qualify for, such as a subsidy, voucher, scholarship, or certificate
7. Providers that share your culture or values, such as your language or religion
8. Providers that will serve child(ren)'s specific needs
9. Whether provider is taking new children
10. Provider quality
11. None of these
12. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

T3. Thinking about any information you have *not* found, what information would be most helpful to you about child care options in your area? (Code all that apply)

1. Hours and days of care
2. How close a provider is to work or home
3. Health and safety conditions at specific providers
4. Age groups that the provider enrolls
5. Where you could get care that you can afford
6. Providers that accept child care financial assistance that you qualify for, such as a subsidy, voucher, scholarship or certificate
7. Providers that share your culture or values, such as your language or religion
8. Providers that will serve child(ren)'s specific needs
9. Whether provider is taking new children
10. Provider quality
11. None of these [Exclusive –Skip to Section D]
12. Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

## D. Most Recent Decision about Child Care

Please think about the last time you made a decision about child care. For example, you could have chosen a new provider, decided to stop using a non-parental care provider, or could have decided to have child(ren) receive care only from their parents, just to name a few.

D1. What was the decision that you made? (Code one)

1. Chose a new provider
2. Decided to stay with an existing provider
3. Decided to care for this/these child(ren) yourself and/or by your spouse/partner
4. Have not made any decisions about child care [Exclusive – Skip to Section B]
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_

D2. What was your main reason for making that decision about this/these child(ren)'s care at the time?

\_\_\_\_\_

D3. What month and year did you make that decision?

\_\_\_\_\_Month [DROP DOWN MENU: January through December]

\_\_\_\_\_Year [2016-2023]

D4. How old was the child at the time you made that decision? If you made that decision about multiple children, please report the age in years and months of the youngest child at the time you made that decision.

\_\_\_\_\_ Years [0-6] and \_\_\_\_\_ Months [0-11]

D5. How many hours did you spend looking for information to help you make that decision about this/these (child/children)'s child care? (For example, please include time talking with other people, visiting providers, reading about different options, or any other activities that you did to get information for your decision.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Hours [1-999]

D6. How many weeks did you have to consider information and make that decision about this/these child(ren)'s child care? (Code one)

1. Less than 1 week
2. 1 to 3 weeks
3. A month or more

D7. To make that decision, did you consider any new providers who weren't already caring for this/these child(ren)?

1. Yes (ask D7a)
2. No (Go to D8)

D7a. Did you consider one new provider or more than one new provider? (Code one)

1. 1 new provider
2. 2 new providers
3. 3 new providers
4. 4 or more new providers

D8. What, if any, specific information did you try to learn when you made that decision about child care? (Code all that apply)

1. Hours of care
2. How close a provider is to work or home
3. Health and safety conditions at specific providers
4. Age groups that the provider enrolls
5. Where you could get care that you can afford
6. Providers that accept child care financial assistance that you qualify for, such as a subsidy, voucher, scholarship or certificate
7. Providers that share your culture or values, such as your language or religion
8. Providers that will serve child(ren)'s specific needs
9. Whether provider is taking new children
10. Provider quality
11. None of these [Exclusive]
12. Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

D9. When choosing who will care for their children, families may consider what they need for schedules, cost, and children's experiences. When you made that decision, would you say you...

1. Had enough information
2. Had some information, but not enough information
3. Did not have much information at all

D10. Deciding where to send a child for child care can be a hard decision. There are lots of things to consider such as schedules, cost, and children's experiences. This can make it difficult to find a provider that meets all your family's needs. How many options for child care did you have when you made that decision? Would you say you had...

(Code One)

1. No options that met my family's needs
2. 1 option that met my family's needs
3. 2 options that met my family's needs
4. 3 options that met my family's needs

5. 4 or more options that met my family's needs

D11. How well did your decision meet your family's needs, for example, related to schedules, cost, parental work, children's experiences, and other factors? Would you say it met... (Code One)

1. All of your family's needs
2. Most of your family's needs
3. Some of your family's needs
4. Very few of your family's needs

D12. As a result of that decision, did you make a change to your work or family situation? (Code One)

As a result of that care decision...	1. No	2. Yes
a. I or my partner/spouse had to reduce work hours		
b. I or my partner/spouse had to increase work hours		
c. I or my partner/spouse had to change work schedule (e.g., changed shift times)		
d. I or my partner/spouse had to work from home at least some of the time		

D12a. Were there any other changes you made to your work or family situation that you would like to share?

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## Child care that your household uses

B. In addition to a child’s parents, a child may be cared for in non-parental care, such as by other adults in the household, by relatives or friends outside of the household, or by a child care professional in someone else’s home or in a center. Next, I have some questions about the people who care for child(ren) in this household in a typical week.

Please answer for the child(ren) in this household who are under age 6, but not yet in kindergarten.

B1. In a typical week, do you use any non-parental care for this/these child(ren)?	1) Yes 2) No <b>(SKIP TO DA1)</b>
B2. In a typical week, do you use at least five hours of unpaid care by a relative, friend or neighbor for this/these child(ren)?	1) Yes 2) No
B3. In a typical week, do you use any paid or unpaid center-based care, such as a preschool, day care center, public pre-kindergarten, Head Start, or faith-based nursery school, for this/these child(ren)?	1) Yes 2) No
B4. In a typical week, do you use at least 5 hours of paid care from a home-based child care provider for this/these child(ren)? Please include home-based care where the provider is paid to care for this/these child(ren) even if you are not making the payment.	1) Yes 2) No <b>(SKIP TO SECTION DA)</b>
B5. <b>(IF YES TO B4)</b> Did you have a personal relationship with the home-based child care provider before this/these child(ren) started receiving care there? If the child has more than one regular home-based provider, please describe the one who provides the most hours of care for this/these child(ren).	1) Yes 2) No



## DA. Other Information about Your Family

DA1. In a typical week, how many hours did you spend working, in school or training, or commuting to and from these activities?

Please enter 0 if you do not work, go to school, or attend training in a typical week.

\_\_\_\_\_ HOURS [0-168]

DA1a. Are all of these hours that you spend working, in school or training, and commuting to and from these activities between 8am and 6pm Monday through Friday?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

DA2. Do you have a spouse or partner in the household?

1. Yes
2. No (If no, GO TO DA4)

DA3. How many hours does that person spend working, in school or training, and commuting to and from these activities in a typical week? Please enter 0 if your spouse/partner does not work, go to school, or attend training in a typical week.

\_\_\_\_\_ HOURS [0-168]

DA3a. Are all of these hours that person spends working, in school or training, and commuting to and from these activities between 8am and 6pm Monday through Friday?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

**DA6. Thank you for your participation in the survey! Your responses will help public agencies and private organizations improve the information that parents look for and use when selecting child care for their young children.**

DA4. In the past 12 months, did anyone in this household receive child care financial assistance such as subsidies, vouchers, scholarships, or certificates for children of working parents? These programs may also be open to parents who are in school or training.

1. Yes
2. No

DA5. What was your approximate household income, after taxes and deductions, last year? *Please give your best estimate.* Please be assured that your responses to this and all other questions in this questionnaire will not be revealed to any agency except in summary form for all study participants combined.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ [0 – 500,000]

(IF DA5 NOT ANSWERED OR 0, ASK DA5a. ELSE GO TO DA6.)

DA5a. Which of the following categories do you think best describes your total household income after taxes from all sources last year?

1. \$0 - \$20,000
2. \$20,001 - \$40,000
3. \$40,001 - \$60,000
4. \$60,001 - \$80,000
5. \$80,001 - \$100,000
6. \$100,000 or more