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Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment

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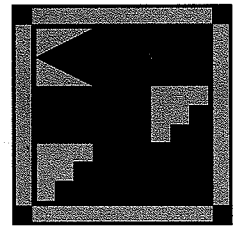
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Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment

May 2000



C E N T E R
for
F A M I L I E S
at
P U R D U E
U N I V E R S I T Y

Sponsored by the Vigo County
Childcare Needs Assessment Committee

This report was written by:
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Funded by Community Coordinated Child Care Wabash Valley, Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Association, Vigo County Step Ahead Council, and United Cerebral Palsy Wabash Valley

Preface

In November 1999 the Center for Families at Purdue University in conjunction with the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Indiana State University were awarded the contract to assess child care needs in Vigo County. The needs assessment is funded by the Vigo County Childcare Needs Assessment Committee whose members include: Community Coordinated Child Care Wabash Valley, Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Association, Vigo County Step Ahead Council, and United Cerebral Palsy of Wabash Valley.

The needs assessment was conducted by Dr. Gail Johnston Ulmer, a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Center for Families and Dr. Barbara Clauss, an Assistant Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences at Indiana State University. Dr. Ulmer designed the surveys with the assistance of the Needs Assessment Committee. She also entered and analyzed the data. Dr. Clauss provided all onsite assistance in Vigo County, she conducted the focus groups and attended all meetings with the Needs Assessment Committee. The key community professional interviews were done with the assistance of a Purdue graduate student, Pamela Robinson. The needs assessment is based on a model developed by Dr. James Elicker, Associate Professor of Child Development and Family Studies at Purdue University, and his research team in the summer of 1997.

Planning meetings were held in Terre Haute with the Needs Assessment Committee in December 1999 and January 2000. Collection of needs assessment data began in February 2000 and ended in mid April. Data gathering methods included reviews of existing data, phone interviews, survey questionnaires, and focus group interviews.

This report is the result of efforts by the Purdue and ISU research team, Vigo County Childcare Needs Assessment Committee members, and many community members. The child care needs we identify and our recommendations will provide a basis for discussion and planning of more effective child care support and services in Vigo County. These services will benefit children, families, employers, and communities throughout the county.

Acknowledgements

This child care needs assessment could not have been completed without the support of members of the Vigo County Childcare Needs Assessment Committee. Their input and assistance throughout the needs assessment process have been invaluable. The committee provided feedback on survey drafts and also assistance in identifying both focus group participants and interview subjects. In addition, Gail Gottschling of the ISU Child Care Center, provided helpful feedback on the provider survey. Tara Lane of the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Association provided the map of the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone used in the surveys. Finally, some members of the Committee participated in phone interviews as community professionals.

The researchers would also like to thank the following persons for helping to coordinate focus group interviews: Liz Andres, Jacquie Denehie, Gail Gottschling, Tara Lane, Gwen Lee-Thomas, and LaNeeca Williams.

Finally, the researchers would like to thank the Vigo County School Corporation, the Terre Haute Housing Authority, the Vigo County Chamber of Commerce, Cheryl Smith and Community Coordinated Child Care Wabash Valley, and Tara Lane for their help in distributing child care surveys. Their dedication made this needs assessment possible.

Executive Summary

The Needs Assessment Study

The purpose of the 2000 Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment Study, conducted by the Purdue University Center for Families and Indiana State University Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, was to provide information useful for developing a comprehensive plan for child care services in Vigo County. This information includes:

- Current supply and demand for child care
- Types of child care needed but not available
- Common child care problems and their impact on families
- Level of business support for child care services
- Child care provider issues
- Recommendations for meeting child care needs in the county.

The needs assessment was conducted using: 1) existing information relevant to child care needs; 2) phone interviews with community professionals; 3) focus group interviews with parents; and 4) parent, business, and provider child care survey questionnaires.

Findings

Supply and Demand for Child Care

1. The demand for child care in Vigo County is expected to remain stable or decline in the next 5 years.
2. Community professionals overwhelmingly agree that there is a shortage of quality child care in Vigo County.
3. There is a limited supply of quality infant care and also special needs care in the county.

Types of Care Needed but Not Available

1. Lack of care for children when they are sick was the most common problem identified by parents surveyed.
2. Other types of child care in Vigo County are in short supply including: Less expensive quality after-school, summer, and nighttime and evening care.
3. Vigo County parents expressed some interest in more business-sponsored care such as on-site or near-site day care.

Child Care Problems and Their Impact on Families

1. Vigo County parents are concerned about the cost of child care. Many low income and single parents are unable to afford quality child care.
2. Many Vigo County parents are forced to miss work or leave early due to child care problems.
3. Parents living in the Enterprise Zone have problems with transportation to and from after-school care.
4. Lower income parents may not be aware that they qualify for child care vouchers.
5. Parents complained of long waiting lists for child care vouchers and also for the Waiver Program for families with a special needs child.

Level of Business Support for Child Care Services

1. Businesses often do not support child care services for their employees, particularly small businesses and businesses in the Enterprise Zone.

Child Care Provider Issues

1. Many providers, including licensed providers, do not have waiting lists particularly for non-infants.
2. Most providers work Monday through Friday, daytime hours only.

3. Cost is a significant barrier to expansion for many providers.
4. Many providers do not provide care for children with special needs. Most do not have wheelchair ramps or other adaptations for the disabled.
5. Coordination with providers is important for scheduling training programs.

Recommendations for Action

Increase the Supply of Quality Child Care

1. There is a need to increase the quality of care in Vigo County. There are different ways to work towards this goal, including:
 - a. Existing providers (licensed and unlicensed) need to be better monitored.
 - b. More unlicensed providers need to be encouraged to become licensed.
 - c. Finally, all providers need to be encouraged to receive further training.
2. Explore ways to increase the number of slots for infants in Vigo County. Provide incentives (e.g., money or equipment) and additional training to providers that are willing to take infants.
3. Provide incentives for existing providers or new providers to receive training to care for children with special needs. Stipends for training are especially important here to educate more providers about caring for special needs children. In addition, encourage existing programs for special needs children to be more accommodating to all special needs children.

Support Families Needing Child Care

4. Parents are concerned about the cost of child care. At the same time they would like the care their children receive to be high quality. Parents need to be educated about what to expect to pay for quality care. In addition, subsidizing child care for all families, or at least for low to moderate income families may be a goal to work towards.
5. Explore ways to decrease the waiting time for the 4-C Voucher program and also for the Waiver Program (families with a special needs child).

6. Lower income parents need to be informed about what types of assistance are available to them for child care. Many reported not knowing whether they were eligible for the child care voucher program.
7. Finally, the child care plan developed for the county needs to be location specific. The needs of parents in the Terre Haute Enterprise Zone differ to some extent from those in the county as a whole. These specific needs should be taken into consideration when formulating a comprehensive child care plan for Vigo County.

Assist Businesses in Supporting Child Care

8. Businesses need to be encouraged to provide better child care support services for their employees. There is a need to educate local businesses about the impact of child care problems on their employees. Many employees with young children are forced to miss work, leave work early, and/or have concentration problems at work as a result of child care problems. One way to deal with these problems would be to encourage more business sponsored care such as on-site or near-site day care. There is very little currently in Vigo County. This would allow parents a more stable child care situation for their children and would also reduce the stress of traveling to child care.

Support Child Care Providers

9. More evening and nighttime care is needed. Providing financial incentives for existing providers to stay open longer would encourage more evening and nighttime care.
10. Grants to assist with the expansion of facilities are needed. Cost is a major barrier to expansion for many facilities.

Overview of the Needs Assessment Study

In November 1999 the Center for Families at Purdue University in conjunction with the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Indiana State University were awarded the contract to assess the child care needs in Vigo County. The needs assessment is funded by the Vigo County Childcare Needs Assessment Committee whose members include: Community Coordinated Child Care Wabash Valley, Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Association, Vigo County Step Ahead Council, and United Cerebral Palsy of Wabash Valley. The needs assessment was conducted by Dr. Gail Johnston Ulmer, a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Center for Families and Dr. Barbara Clauss, an Assistant Professor of Family and Consumer Sciences at Indiana State University. The needs assessment is based on a model developed by Dr. James Elicker, Associate Professor of Child Development and Family Studies at Purdue University, and his research team in the summer of 1997.

Planning meetings were held in Terre Haute with the Needs Assessment Committee in December 1999 and January 2000. Collection of data took place between February and April 2000. The following data collection methods were used: 1) examination of existing data; 2) phone interviews with key community professionals; 3) focus group interviews with parents; and 4) parent, business, and provider survey questionnaires.

The research questions were:

1. What is the current and projected demand for child care services in Vigo County? What is the current child care supply?
2. What types of child care services are needed but not available to families?
3. Do families living in the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone differ in their child care needs from other families in Vigo County?
4. What are the most common child care problems experienced by Vigo County families? How do these problems affect families?
5. Are there any child care needs and problems specific to families with a special needs child?
6. Do businesses in Vigo County support for child care services? What types of support do they provide?

7. What are recommendations for meeting Vigo County's child care needs in the next five years?

Review of Existing Data

Existing Vigo County data relevant to the needs assessment was gathered and examined along with the collection of new child care data. The existing information came from the U.S. Census, Internet resources, the SIFT Profiles (Status of Indiana Families), and other sources. Population trends such as birth rates, and school enrollments are examined along with employment, and child care supply and demand.

Vigo County is located in West Central Indiana. The county is the 15th largest in Indiana with a population of 104,940 in 1997, including 6,346 people under age 5.¹ The largest employer in the county is Indiana State University, located within the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone. The Vigo County unemployment rate fell at a slower rate than the state average between 1992 and 1997. By 1997, the county unemployment rate was 5.8%.² The overall poverty rate for Vigo County was 15.1% in 1993.³ The child poverty rate was 21.4% in the same year (children under 18). Both of these rates were above the state average (11.9% and 17.3%, respectively for the state). Poverty rates were also higher in the Enterprise Zone than in the county (37.8% in 1990 for all persons in the Zone).⁴ Finally, the median household income for all households was \$27,881 in 1993 (\$31,055 for the state).⁵

Race, Age, and Family Structure

Vigo County was 92.7% white, 5.6% African American, and 1.7% other race in 1990. By 1998 the distribution was 92.1% white, 6.1% African American, and 1.8% other race.⁶ In contrast to the county as a whole, the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone was 88.6% white, 9.4% African American, and 5% other race in 1990.⁷ Along with the racial distribution, the age distributions of both the county and the Zone can be compared. The Zone residents tend to be slightly younger on average than the County as a whole. The median age in the Zone in 1990 was 31.8 years. The same year the median age in Vigo County (including the Zone) was 33.0

¹ *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

² *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

³ *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

⁴ *1998 Indiana Enterprise Zone Annual Report.*

⁵ *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

⁶ US Census Bureau, *STATS Indiana*, 1999.

⁷ Information courtesy of Tara Lane, Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Association.

years.⁸ There were 17,483 persons age 12 and under in the county in 1990 (16.5% of total population). *Table 1* contains the number of persons by age in the county. There were approximately 2768 persons age 12 and under in the Zone in 1990 (13.5% of the total Zone population).⁹

Table 1. Population Age 12 and Under in Vigo County, 1990

Age Group	Number	% of Total Pop'n
0-2 years	3991	3.76%
3-5 years	3949	3.72%
6 years	1321	1.25%
7-12 years	8221	7.75%

Family structure also varies between the Zone and Vigo County as a whole. In 1990 there were 12,492 families with children under 18 in the county and 1906 families in the Zone. Of these families, 9432 (75.5%) were traditional or two parent families in the county. At the same time there were 1147 traditional families with children under age 18 in the Zone (60% of all Zone families). Single parent families are always a concern because they tend to have lower incomes than two parent families. There were 2,457 single parent families with children under 18 in the county in 1990 (19.7% of all families). There were 664 single parent families (35% of all families) in the Zone. Thus, there was a higher percentage of single parent families, usually female headed, in the Zone. Finally, about 5.4% of all children under 18 in the county lived in an other relative household (non-parent) and 1.8% lived in a non-relative household in 1990.¹⁰

Special Needs Population

There are currently about 120 children aged birth to 3 years in Vigo County with physical or developmental disabilities.¹¹ In addition, there were 276 preschoolers (age 3-5 years) in Vigo County that received some type of services for Special Needs.¹²

Population Trends and Projections

Vigo County had an estimated total population of 104,940 in 1997. This represents a 1.1% decline in population from 1990 (1990 population = 106,107).

⁸ US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population and Housing Characteristics. Population and Housing Characteristics for Census Tract and Block Numbering Areas, Terre Haute, IN MSA.*

⁹ The number of persons age 12 and under in the Zone is an estimate. The Census does not provide year by year age breakdowns by census tract.

¹⁰ US Census Bureau, 1990 Household Relationship Data.

¹¹ Information courtesy of Jane Greer of First Steps, May 2000.

¹² Information courtesy of Dr. Marilyn Ferris, Covered Bridge Special Education Director.

The state population grew by 5.8 percent during the same time period. The county is one of five counties in the state that lost population between 1990 and 1997.¹³ According to published projections, Vigo County's population is predicted to continue declining at a small rate over the next 5 years.¹⁴ Population trends will impact the future child care needs of the county. Trends for births, school enrollment, and recent population projections are examined below.

Birth Trends

Vigo County had 1,358 births in 1997.¹⁵ This represents a birth rate of 12.9 births for every 1000 persons in the county. The Indiana birth rate was 14.2 in 1997. The Vigo County birth trends show a decline in the actual number of births between 1992 and 1997 (117 fewer births in 1997).

Public School Enrollment Trends

There is one public school corporation in Vigo County: Vigo County School Corporation. For the 1999-00 school year the Vigo County School Corporation had an enrollment of 16,227 students.¹⁶ Of these students, the kindergarten through 3rd grade enrollment was 5,417 students, and the 4th through 8th grade enrollment was 6406 students.¹⁷ There were an additional 624 students in nonpublic schools and 183 being home-schooled (these numbers are for the 1998-99 school year but are similar to those for the 1999-00 year). The total projected enrollment for the School Corporation in the 2000-01 school year is 16,618. This represents a 0.37% decline (loss of 129 students) in overall enrollment between the current and next year's school years for the public school system. Additional enrollment projections through the 2003-04 school year show that public school enrollments will continue to decline over the next five years.

Population Projections

Recent population projections have predicted a steady decline for the Vigo County population through the year 2020. According to the Indiana Business Research Center, Vigo County's population will fall to 103,890 by 2000 and 102,896 by 2005. This represents a projected decline of 2044 persons between 1997 and 2005. The projected decline could indicate a decline in the demand for child care in the next 5 to 6 years.

¹³ *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

¹⁴ *Population Projections of Indiana Counties: 2000 to 2020*, Indiana Business Research Center, 1998.

¹⁵ *Indiana Natality Report*, Indiana State Department of Health, 1997.

¹⁶ Access Indiana Website

¹⁷ The kindergarten through 3rd grade enrollment numbers includes 95 students in pre-kindergarten.

Employment

Vigo County had a 5.8% unemployment rate in 1997. This is slightly larger than the state average in 1997(3.5%) but lower than the Vigo County unemployment rate in 1992 (6.7%). In 1997 there were 3000 unemployed persons in the county.¹⁸ The largest percentage of employed adults are employed in service industries (27.9%), followed closely by retail trade industries (25.6% in 1996).¹⁹

Previous Studies

No child care needs assessments have been done in Vigo County in the past few years. There was a Community Needs Assessment done by the United Way in 1994. The needs assessment briefly addressed child care, finding that more child care was needed in the county.

Child Care Supply and Demand

Currently there are 19 licensed child care centers and 22 child care ministries/private schools exempt from licensing in Vigo County.²⁰ In addition to the centers, there are 124 licensed home day care providers in the county.²¹ There are also an unknown number of unlicensed home care providers in the county. In 1990 the Family and Social Services Administration estimated that 42% of the children under age 6 needing day care in Vigo County were in licensed day care homes/centers.²² Finally, there is also one Head Start Center in the county with 120 slots for children ages 3-5 (22 of the slots are for a home-based program). There are currently 28 children on the waiting list for Head Start.

Conclusions

Vigo County is located West Central Indiana. Based on population projections, birth trends, and school enrollment projections the population of the county should continue to decline at a slow but steady rate over the next five years. The overall population is projected to decline at a steady rate. School enrollments are predicted to decline over the next five years. Birth trends in the past few years have shown slight year to year deviations but a declining number of births during the 1990s. In addition, employment figures show relatively low unemployment rates.

¹⁸ *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

¹⁹ *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

²⁰ Information courtesy of 4-C, May 2000.

²¹ *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*. Note: the accuracy of this numbers is unknown.

²² *Status of Indiana Families 1999: Living Poor in Indiana*

Based on the information gathered, Vigo County will not experience growth in the overall demand for child care in the next few years, although there may be some year to year fluctuation as the birth rates vary. At the same time, there is currently a shortage of licensed child care based on the number of kids eligible and the amount of care available.

Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment

Introduction

Child care issues are important to communities. Each year businesses and industries lose money due to lost work time from employees' child care problems. A national survey conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures found that 80% of employers reported that their employees were forced to miss work due to child care problems.²³ One way to deal with this issue is to identify where the biggest child care needs are in a county and develop a comprehensive plan to deal with some of the needs. In order to identify where the biggest child care needs are in Vigo County three different methods were used: Phone interviews, survey questionnaires, and focus group interviews. The first section of this report gives findings from phone interviews done with key community professionals in Vigo County. This section will give an overall perspective on child care issues. The next section contains the results of survey questionnaires given to parents, businesses, and child care providers in Vigo County. This section provides the clearest indication of the issues parents face in dealing with child care issues. The section also provides an indication of what types of child care are available in the county and what interest employers have in the child care issue. The final section of this report contains parent focus group interview data. This section provides more in-depth information on the child care issues parents deal with as well as issues their perceptions on what is needed in the county with respect to child care. All of these sections together will help to provide a picture of the child care needs in Vigo County and will be a first step in developing a comprehensive child care plan for the county.

Section 1: Interviews with Key Community Professionals

Interviews were conducted with key community professionals or "key informants" to learn about their perceptions of current child care needs in Vigo County. Key informants are persons with an informed perspective on families and child care in the county. Key informants were identified through members of the Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment Committee as well as other key informants. Thirteen potential key informants were identified. Initial contact was made to all potential informants by phone. Ten key informants agreed to be interviewed. We were unable to reach the other three potential informants. When a professional agreed to be interviewed an interview was scheduled. All interviews were done by

²³ *Ahead of the Curve: Why America's Leading Employers Are Addressing the Needs of New and Expectant Parents*, Families and Work Institute, 1998.

phone and lasted between 45 minutes and one hour, on average. The interviews were conducted by a Purdue graduate assistant. A standard interview protocol was used. Each professional was asked about the child care needs of parents, providers, and the county in general. A copy of the interview protocol is included in *Appendix A*. The interviews were not taped but notes were taken by the interviewer with the consent of the interviewee. All interviews were conducted between February and April 2000.

Following the interviews, information from each interview was summarized. The summaries were analyzed according to the following categories:

- Supply of quality child care available
- Types of child care in short supply
- Factors parents consider when making choices about child care
- Parents' complaints about child care
- Unmet child care needs of families in the county
- Possible solutions to unmet child care needs

Child Care Supply

Community professionals were asked if they felt there was an adequate supply of quality child care for all families in Vigo County. Ninety percent of the professionals (9 out of 10) said no, there was not an adequate supply of child care in the county. One professional said that she wasn't sure if the supply of quality child care adequate. No professionals said there was an adequate supply of child care in the county. Professionals mentioned that infant/toddler care, care for children with special needs, and quality care at a low cost were very difficult to find.

Professionals were then asked why they thought there was not an adequate supply of child care in the county. Professionals cited different reasons for their answer including a lack of adequate training for providers, parent's comfort level with providers, quality of some licensed homes, and long waiting lists for quality care. In addition, they noted that providers often do not want to deal with the time and expense it takes to care for infants and toddlers.

Types of Child Care in Short Supply

Professionals were also asked to discuss the types of child care they see as being in short supply in Vigo County. Six of the 18 types of child care listed by professionals (many professionals listed more than one type) concerned the need for more infant and toddler care, particularly infant care. As one provider discussed, once providers take an infant they will continue to provide care for the infant as they grow past infancy, thus taking up a spot at the child care. In addition, many

providers will not take children until they are potty trained. This presents a burden for parents with infants and young toddlers. The second most common type of child care in short supply listed by professionals was care for children with special needs, such as children in a wheelchair (5 out of 18 mentioned this). According to one professional, providers are sometimes afraid to take special needs children, often due to liability issues. Along with infant and toddler care and special needs care, professionals also listed a variety of other types of care in short supply in the county. Only one or two professionals mentioned the other types of child care needs in short supply, so these needs may not be as widespread or as pressing as infant/toddler care and special needs care. Professionals cited the need for more quality child care (such as care with age appropriate stimulation), after school care, nighttime care, sick care, and more quality center care (with good preschools).

Factors Parents Consider when Choosing Child Care

Community professionals were asked to think about the parents that they are familiar with in Vigo County and list the most important factors these parents consider when making choices about child care. Professionals cited 4 main categories of factors that they considered to be important to parents in making choices about their child care: Cost, quality, convenience, and availability. Because professionals could list more than one factor, 32 total factors were listed. These 32 responses were categorized into the 4 categories. The most frequently cited category was cost of child care. Professionals said that cost was a big factor parents consider when choosing child care. Twenty-five percent of the factors listed had to do with cost. Cost is particularly a concern for parents living on a limited income. Parents have difficulty if all or most of their discretionary income is going to pay for child care.

In addition to the cost of child care, professionals also emphasized that parents are concerned with the quality of care their child receives and the convenience of that care. Both categories were cited 7 of 32 times. Quality of care includes a desire for licensed child care with accredited teachers. In addition, parents look for age appropriate stimulation and appropriate health precautions. Some parents also feel more comfortable with a child care center that has mixed age-groups. Related to quality of care, parents are also concerned with the safety of the care their children receive (2 of 32). Quality is important to parents because they are concerned with their child's welfare. Along with quality, parents would also like their child care to be convenient. Convenience incorporates many different factors. Parents are concerned with the location of child care. Parents do not want to have to drive a long way for child care. Parents need child care to be flexible because often their work hours are not flexible. According to one professional, it is often

difficult for parents to get a better paying job if they do not have child care with flexible hours. Many jobs in the county have varying shifts and split shifts. This makes it difficult for parents without flexible childcare.

The other main category of factors cited by professionals was the availability of child care (4 out of 32). Here availability is defined as the availability of appropriate child care for parents. According to one professional, parents need to be able to find an appropriate child care provider for their child. For example, parents who have a child with disabilities often have trouble finding appropriate care. Facilities/individuals are often intimidated by children with physical or behavior problems and are unwilling to care for them. Finally, both cultural diversity and the type of facility were also cited by two professionals as important factors to parents when choosing child care. One professional said that parents often look for cultural diversity when choosing child care. In terms of type of facility, some parents are looking for a family daycare, others for a day care center, and still others prefer to leave their children with relatives because they are more likely to have the same culture and values.

Child Care Problems for Families

Key Community professionals also were asked to discuss some of the child care problems they felt Vigo County parents face. The professionals listed 20 complaints. Overwhelmingly the biggest issue professionals discussed was availability of child care. Sixty percent of the complaints listed dealt with availability problems. Availability problems included lack of special needs care, sick care, evening care, and infant/toddler care. Complaints about special needs care dealt primarily with the lack of care available in general. But parents also complain that providers tend to focus only on the disability and not the child when making their decision to care for them. Providers also often do not have adequate staff to accept children with more than the typical needs (e.g., they will not accept a child who is not able to walk). Finally, there are some other related availability issues that parents complain about including long waiting lists for child care (particularly for quality child care), and lack of child care with flexible hours.

Along with availability of care, about 25% of the complaints (or 5 out of 20) cited quality of care. Professionals reported parents as being concerned with crowding in child care, and also having communication breakdowns with providers about discipline and other issues. Professionals were also concerned that sometimes parents were more concerned with finding any care than the actual quality of the care. Finally, another 15% of complaints cited the cost of child care as a common complaint of parents.

Unmet Child Care Needs of Vigo County

Professionals were asked to identify what they thought were the most critical unmet child care needs of Vigo County. Twenty-seven critical unmet needs were identified. Professionals could list as many needs as they felt were important. Everyone listed at list two needs and five persons identified three or more needs. The critical unmet needs can be grouped into three categories: Availability, quality, and cost.

Availability of child care was overwhelmingly cited as a critical need. Three quarters of the needs cited (20 out of 27) could be categorized as child care availability needs. Of these 20 availability needs, 6 (30%) referred to infant/toddler care; 4 (20%) referred to availability of special needs child care; 3 (15%) referred to the need for after school care; 3 (15%) referred to the need for summer care; and the final 3 referred to sick care (1), nighttime care (1), and part-time care (1). With respect to after school care, professionals are concerned about the lack of care for all school age children and also for children with special needs. According to the community professionals, child care availability issues seem to affect lower income, and single parent families the most. These availability problems are common throughout the county.

Community professionals were asked to provide some reasons why they felt the need was not being met. As would be expected, professionals listed a variety of reasons as to why availability of child care was a problem in Vigo County. Infant/toddler care is more expensive to provide than other care. Special needs care also has the same problem as well as lack of education and experiences working with children with disabilities. Summer care is a problem because it is short term. Structured summer programs are especially an unmet need.

Along with availability, the second critical unmet need cited by professionals was quality child care. Six out of 27 or 22% of the unmet needs cited could be categorized as quality issues. Quality issues include both education for care providers (e.g., more training)²⁴ and better quality of care for children (especially quality infant/toddler care). Professionals indicated that all families (including middle income families) are affected by the quality of child care. Likewise the need for higher quality child care is widespread throughout Vigo County.

The final, critical unmet need in Vigo County is the affordability or cost of child care, although to a much lesser extent than availability and quality needs. Four percent (1 out of 27) of the unmet needs cited were cost issues. Families, particularly low income are affected by the cost of child care. According to one

²⁴ See Appendix B for a discussion of resources available to providers and the licensing process.

professional, a large number of mothers in Vigo County stay home to take care of their children because their salary would not be high enough to cover child care costs.

Possible Solutions for Unmet Child Care Needs

Professionals were asked to discuss possible solutions to the child care needs facing Vigo County. Professionals suggested a variety of different solutions ranging from encouraging more state and federal funding for child care to matching the child care available to the needs. In general, the solutions suggested by professionals can be grouped into 2 broad categories: Financial, and provider training.

In terms of financial solutions, the majority of professionals said that more federal or state funding was needed to increase the quality of childcare. Better funding could be used to encourage providers to care for infants. Funding could also be used to help bridge the gap between what parents can afford and the actual cost of child care. Funding could further be used to supplement the incomes of providers and lower the provider-child ratio. Additionally, if providers were paid higher salaries this would attract better educated persons to the profession. This could improve the quality of care children receive.

Related to financial solutions is the need for more provider training to increase the quality of care available to families in Vigo County. Both of these issues are tied together. More outside funding could be used to provide assistance for specialized training to care for infants and also children with special needs. In addition if licensing standards were raised, more training for providers would be required. Establishing more regulations about when providers must have certain types of training and how much training they must have would also increase the quality of providers. Finally, 4-C or Community Coordinated Child Care Wabash Valley has taken some steps to increase the quality of child care in Vigo County. 4-C mandates the reporting of health and safety problems by providers. They provide consumer education to parents and also have a newsletter for providers.

Child Care Advertising

Finally, professionals were asked if they thought child care programs should be advertised. The majority of professionals (9 out of 10) did not have a problem with programs advertising, particularly if it allowed parents to know what types of child care were available to them. Parents are often unaware of the child care options available to them. One professional said she would rather see the money used for programs instead of public relations.

Partnerships for Child Care

All the professionals interviewed said that they would like to see agencies and businesses in Vigo County be encouraged to form partnerships to meet the child care needs of the county. Many felt this would be a positive thing for both businesses and families. Onsite child care (at businesses) would be ideal. This would allow parents to spend some time during the day with their child. The stability of the child care situation would also make for a happier productive worker and would enable employers to keep their employees longer. There is currently on-site daycare in Vigo County at Union Hospital and at Indiana State University. In order for a child care partnership to work businesses need to be educated about the child care needs of their employees and how these issues affect the quality of their workforce.

Conclusions

The overwhelming majority of community professionals interviewed felt that the supply of quality child care in Vigo County was inadequate. Lack of infant/toddler care and also care for children with special needs were the most frequently cited deficits in the county. Suggestions on how to improve the child care situation varied. Four central themes emerged from the interviews: Cost, convenience, quality, and availability of child care. Each of these categories represented important factors parents use in choosing child care. They also represent critical unmet child care needs in Vigo County, particularly availability and quality.

Recommendations

Community professionals proposed a number of different solutions to the unmet child care needs facing Vigo County. Of their solutions and the needs that they indicated three recommendations emerge.

1. There is a need to encourage increase availability of quality child care in Vigo County, particularly quality infant care. One way to start would be to provide additional funding to providers that care for infants or who are willing to open up slots to additional infants. Increased availability of training opportunities to providers with an interest in caring for infants are also necessary.
2. Likewise, more child care is needed for children with special needs. Stipends for training are especially important here to educate more providers about caring for special needs children. In addition, making additional funding available to

providers willing to care for children with special needs might increase the number of slots available.

3. There is a need to work on forming partnerships among business and agencies in Vigo County. More onsite child care at places of employment is a goal to work towards. In order for this to work, businesses must be educated about effects of child care needs on their employees and the quality of work produced by their employees. Thus, more networking with local business, particularly with human resource representatives, needs to be done. One way to start the networking process would be to organize a seminar for local business representatives to educate them about the child care needs and problems parents with young children face. Emphasis on the problems child care issues create for parents and ultimately business (e.g., lost work days, stress) would be important.

Section 2: Survey Questionnaires: Parents, Business, and Provider

“Caring, safe, learning environment- Parent, Survey Questionnaire,

[What are the top 3 things you look for in choosing a child care provider?]

The second data analysis method used was survey questionnaires. Three different survey questionnaires were developed based on the brainstorming list provided by the Vigo County Childcare Needs Assessment Committee. Surveys were developed for parents, businesses, and child care providers in the county. The surveys allowed the researchers to collect quantitative data from different child care constituencies. The surveys

were designed to take about 5-15 minutes to complete. The business survey was the shortest and the provider the longest.

Parent Surveys

In the parent survey, parents were asked to complete questions about their work hours, the ages of their children, the current child care they use and the type of child care they would prefer to use, the problems they have experienced with child care, the effect of the problems, the amount they pay for child care, whether they receive financial assistance for child care, and what issues are important to them when choosing child care. The surveys were administered in elementary schools, to preschools, and to persons receiving Housing Authority assistance. Parents of first and second grade students at selected elementary schools were asked to complete the surveys (557 surveys). Seven schools were selected based on their demographic characteristics. Schools in both the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone and out in the county were selected. Approval to survey school parents was obtained from the Vigo School Corporation Superintendent. Surveys were dropped off at the respective schools and picked up after a specified period of time. Surveys were also distributed to parents at a preschool for children with special needs. This preschool was chosen because the Needs Assessment Committee had a special interest in the needs of families with special needs children (200 surveys). Surveys were distributed in the monthly Housing Authority Newsletter by the Housing Authority (570 surveys). Housing Authority parents were asked to complete and return the surveys in a prepaid envelope. Finally, 150 parent surveys were distributed to city workers via their work mailboxes. Only 3 city worker surveys were returned and of these, 2 families did not live in Vigo County. Because of the poor return rate and poor quality of the city worker survey data these surveys are not included in the analysis. A copy of the parent survey is included in *Appendix C*.

Business Surveys

Along with parent surveys, surveys were also distributed to a sample of local businesses and to child care providers. The business surveys (see *Appendix D*) were sent to 247 local businesses in a special mailing by the Chamber of Commerce. The businesses were randomly selected from a list of business maintained by the Chamber. The businesses were asked to complete the surveys and return them to Purdue University in a prepaid envelope. The surveys contained questions for each business on their number of employees, the hours/shifts their employees work, the employers contribution to child care support services, and their policies regarding time off for child care.

Provider Surveys

Finally, 215 child care providers in Vigo County received surveys in their monthly newsletter distributed by 4-C's or Community Coordinated Child Care. These providers represent about half the list of providers receiving the newsletter. Providers on the 4-C list qualify to receive 4-C voucher payments for child care. An additional 17 providers received a survey in a special mailing done by the researchers. These providers are not eligible to receive voucher payments from 4-C's. All providers were asked to complete and return the surveys to Purdue University in a prepaid envelope. The provider survey contained questions about the type of facility, licensing, provider to child ratio, hours of business, provider training, costs, and special needs services (see *Appendix E*). In addition, each survey (parent, business, and provider) contained a map on the last page that asked the respondent to indicate if they lived or their business was located in the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone.

Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means and frequencies. Parent surveys were analyzed for all families and then for families living within the Urban Enterprise Zone. Business surveys were analyzed first for all businesses, then by number of employees, and finally by Zone versus non Zone. The provider surveys were also analyzed first for all providers and then for providers in the Zone. All survey respondents are anonymous and can not be identified in the surveys.

Parent Surveys Results

A total of 176 completed surveys were received. The overall return rate was about 13% (1327 surveys were distributed). The return rate was the highest for the school surveys (22%), followed by the preschool (9%). The return rate was the lowest from the Housing Authority (6%) but this is not unexpected given that an

unknown number of housing authority recipients may not have children under age 12.

Location

Table 2 contains the location of survey respondents by their place of residence and where they work. The overwhelming majority of respondents live and work in Terre Haute. This is expected given the population distribution of Vigo County.

Table 2. Location of Respondents

Town	Live	Work
Terre Haute	122	124
New Goshen	9	2
Prairie Creek	8	0
West Terre Haute	8	1
Vigo County	7	7
Other Town ^a	21	4
Out of County/State	0	13
Do Not Work	-	23
Total Respondents	176	176

^a Towns include: Riley, Fontanet, Burnett, North Terre Haute, Sandcott, East Glen, Seelyville, St. Mary of the Woods, Sandford, Shepardsville, and Libertyville.

Besides Terre Haute, the second largest group of respondents live in New Goshen (9), followed by Prairie Creek (8), and West Terre Haute (8). About 13% of respondents (23) indicated that they did not work outside the home. These respondents tended to have at least one non-school age child and have 1 or 2 children under age 12.

Zone Residents

Of the respondents in the parent survey, 24 or 13.6% indicated that they currently live in the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone. This is the area comprising about 2.76 square miles with 7,857 residents in 1998.²⁵ The population in the Zone tends to differ from the rest of Vigo County in its racial makeup (Zone is 9.4% African American as compared with 4.9% in the rest of the county) and its age structure.

²⁵ Zone population data were taken from the 1998 Indiana Enterprise Zone Annual Report.

Age of children

There were 322 children aged 12 and under in the 176 families that responded to the parent survey. Families had an average of 1.9 children age 12 and under with the number ranging from 1 child to 4 children. Families were not asked to include the number of children they had over age 12 so many family sizes are larger than indicated here. The mean or average age of the children 12 and under in the families responding was 6.01 years. Overall, 24% (42) of the families responding to the survey had at least one child age 2 or younger, 39% (69) of the families had a child between ages 2 and 5, 15% (26) of the families had a child over age 5 and under age 7, and 70% (124) of the families had at least one child between ages 7 and 12. Children that are not yet school age provide the greatest demand for child care, particularly for all day childcare. Parents with school age children are mostly concerned with after school care and sometimes before school care. The age distribution of children whose parents completed the survey is similar to the age distribution of all children in Vigo County.²⁶

Work

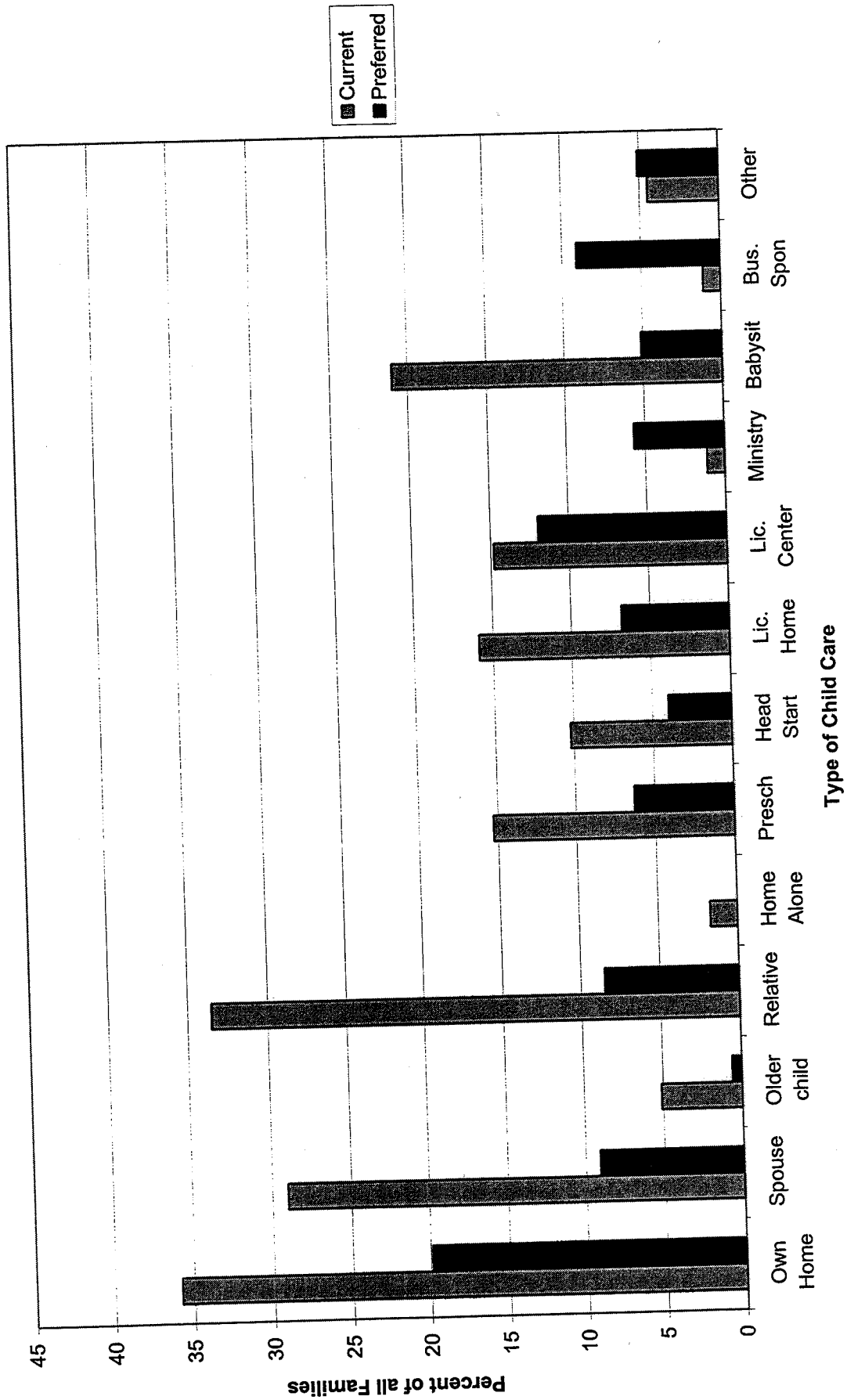
Respondents were asked how many hours per day and days per week they work. Twenty-three respondents reported not working outside the home. Of those respondents that did work outside the home, respondents worked an average of 4.80 days per week. The range of days per week worked was 1 to 7 days. Employed respondents also reported working an average of 7.99 hours/day. Respondents worked from 2 to 12 hours a day. When categorized by shift, the majority of respondents worked first shift or daytime hours (93 or 61% of employed respondents). In addition, a few respondents reported working 12-hour day shifts (5) and part-time during the day (9). A relatively smaller number of respondents worked evenings or second shift (11 full-time, 7 part-time) and a few respondents worked third shift (2 for 8 hours, 5 for 12-hour night shift). In general, parents responding to the survey were most likely to work during the day and therefore are most likely to need daytime childcare.

Types of Child Care Currently Used and Preferred and Satisfaction with Current Child Care Arrangements

Respondents were asked to indicate the type(s) of child care they currently use and the type(s) they would prefer to use (*Figure 1*). In general respondents were more likely to indicate the types of child care they currently use than the types of child care they prefer to use. This may be a function of satisfaction with current

²⁶ Based on population estimates by age group for Indiana Counties from the Indiana Business Research Center, 1997 data.

Figure 1: Current and Preferred Child Care for All Families



child care or just reluctance to indicate preferences. In the survey, 72% of all respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their current childcare arrangements. In addition, only 6.3% said they were on a waiting list for childcare.

The majority of respondents currently use family for child care. Family includes themselves, their spouse or partner, an older child, or other relative. The largest category of current care is caring for own child at home (35.8%), followed by care by a relative (33.5%), care by a spouse (29%), and care by a babysitter or unlicensed family child care provider (21%). Respondents were asked to indicate as many forms of child care they currently used. Many checked more than one form. The least common categories of care currently being used by the respondents in Vigo County are business sponsored child care (1.1%), childcare ministry (1.1%), and children staying home alone (1.7%).

At the same time, when asked what type(s) of child care respondents would prefer the largest percentage of respondents indicated that they would still prefer to stay home to care for their children themselves (19.9%). But much smaller

My wife stays home to avoid all those childcare problems.”, Parent, Survey

percentages indicated they would prefer their spouse (9.1%) or their relative (8.5%) to care for their children. A larger percentage indicated that they would prefer business sponsored child care

program either on site or near their work place (9.1%) than currently use business sponsored childcare (1.1%). At the same time fewer parents indicated that they would prefer to use a babysitter or unlicensed care giver (5.1%) than currently use this type of care (21%).

Use by Location

Figure 2 contains the same use and preference information for families living in the Zone. Families in the Zone were more likely to use preschool as a form of child care and also more likely to use a licensed center than all families in the county. At the same time, Zone families were also more likely to prefer a licensed center and also a babysitter or unlicensed home care than all families in the county.

Finding Current Child Care Situation

Parents were also asked to indicated how they found out about their current child care situation (*Figure 3*). The overwhelming majority of parents found their current arrangements either through a family member (27.3%) or a friend or co-worker (22.2%). Only a small proportion of respondents learned of their current situation through a sign or poster (5.1%), a newspaper advertisement (1.7%), or the phonebook (1.7%). Finally, some respondents (16.5%) learned of their current

Figure 2: Current and Preferred Child Care for Families in the Enterprise Zone

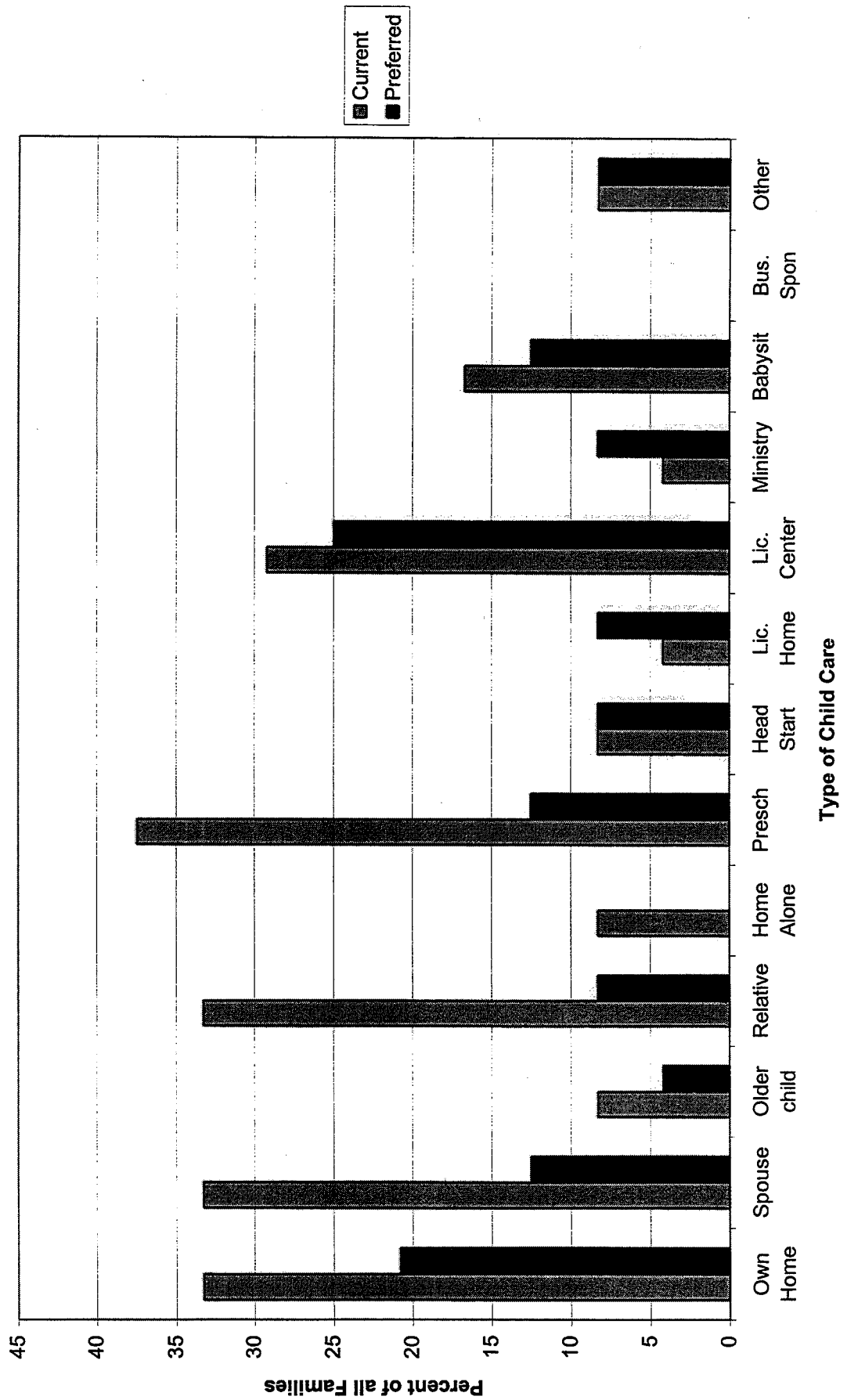
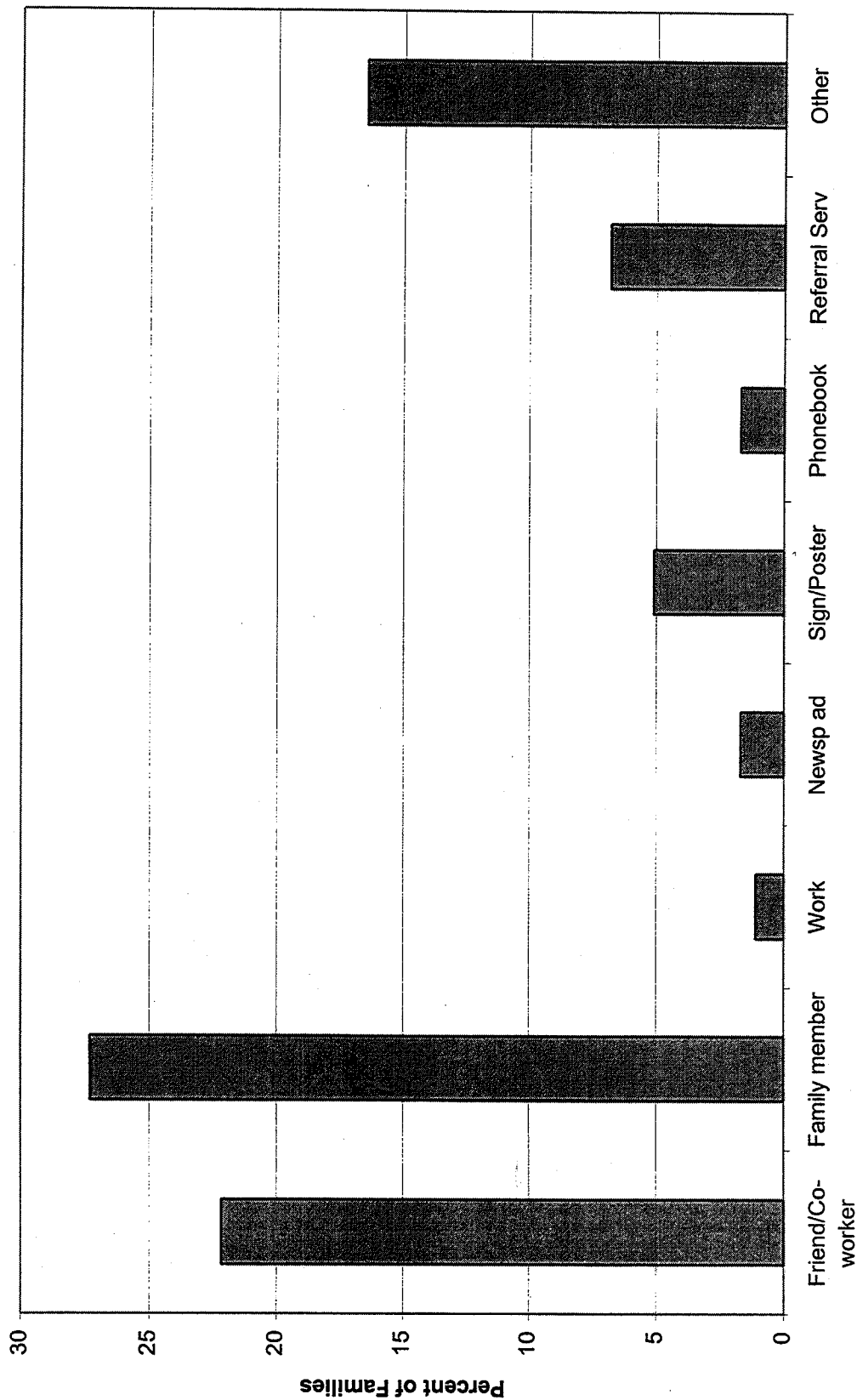


Figure 3: Source of Current Child Care Arrangements



How Found Current Child Care Arrangements

arrangements through ways not listed on the survey, these include: Child's school, church members, another daycare provider, and from owning a daycare themselves.

Child Care Problems

Respondents were then asked to indicate the problems they have had with child care in the last 12 months. The results for all respondents are listed in *Figure 4*. Respondents could indicate more than one problem. Thirty-three percent of respondents indicated that they had problems finding care for a sick child in the last 12 months. The next highest category of problems respondents indicated was that the cost of child care was too high (29%) followed by no care available during evening or nighttime hours (27%). At the other end of the spectrum the problems experienced least by respondents were unsafe child care (only 1.1%) and low quality child care (4.0%). This may be a reflection of the characteristics of persons who filled out the survey, persons with some knowledge of what to expect from in child care. Or it also may reflect parents' reluctance to acknowledge or even an awareness of the quality of the child care they are currently using.

"Had to call in sick because child is sick"

"Need help paying childcare costs."

"Low quality after school care."

Parents, Survey

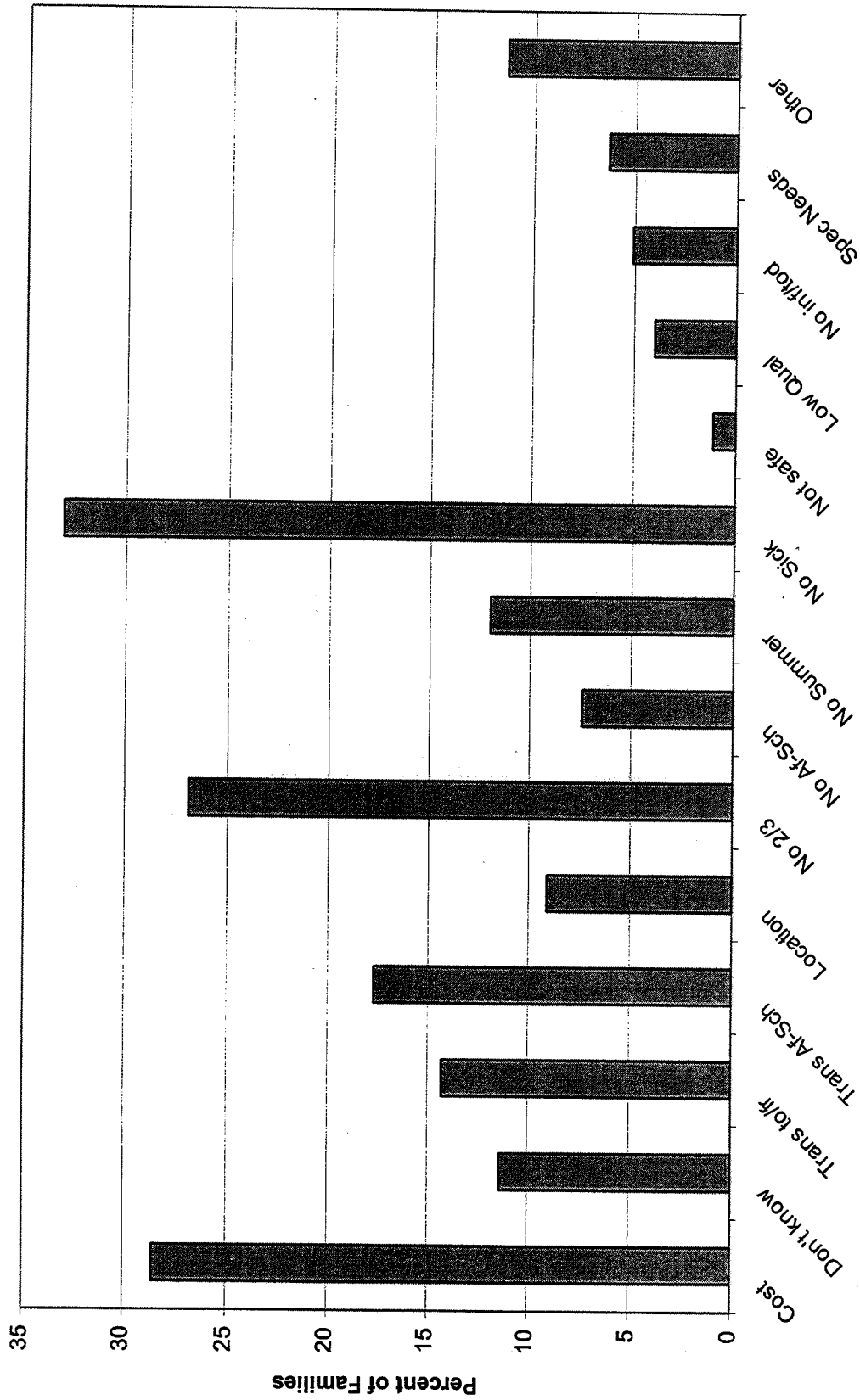
Problems by Location

When the problems are examined for families in the Zone (*Figure 5*), problems finding care for a sick child remained the largest category. In contrast with all families in Vigo County, lack of evening and nighttime care is tied with sick care at 37.5%. Lack of second and third shift care is a bigger problem for families living in the Zone than in the county as a whole. Similarly, lack of transportation to or from after-school care is also a bigger problem for families living in the Zone. Finally summer child care is also more of a problem for Zone families. The differences in problems faced between Zone families and all families illustrate that geographic specific child care problems do exist in Terre Haute and strategies undertaken to find child care solutions need to take these differences into account.

Impact of Child Care Problems on Families

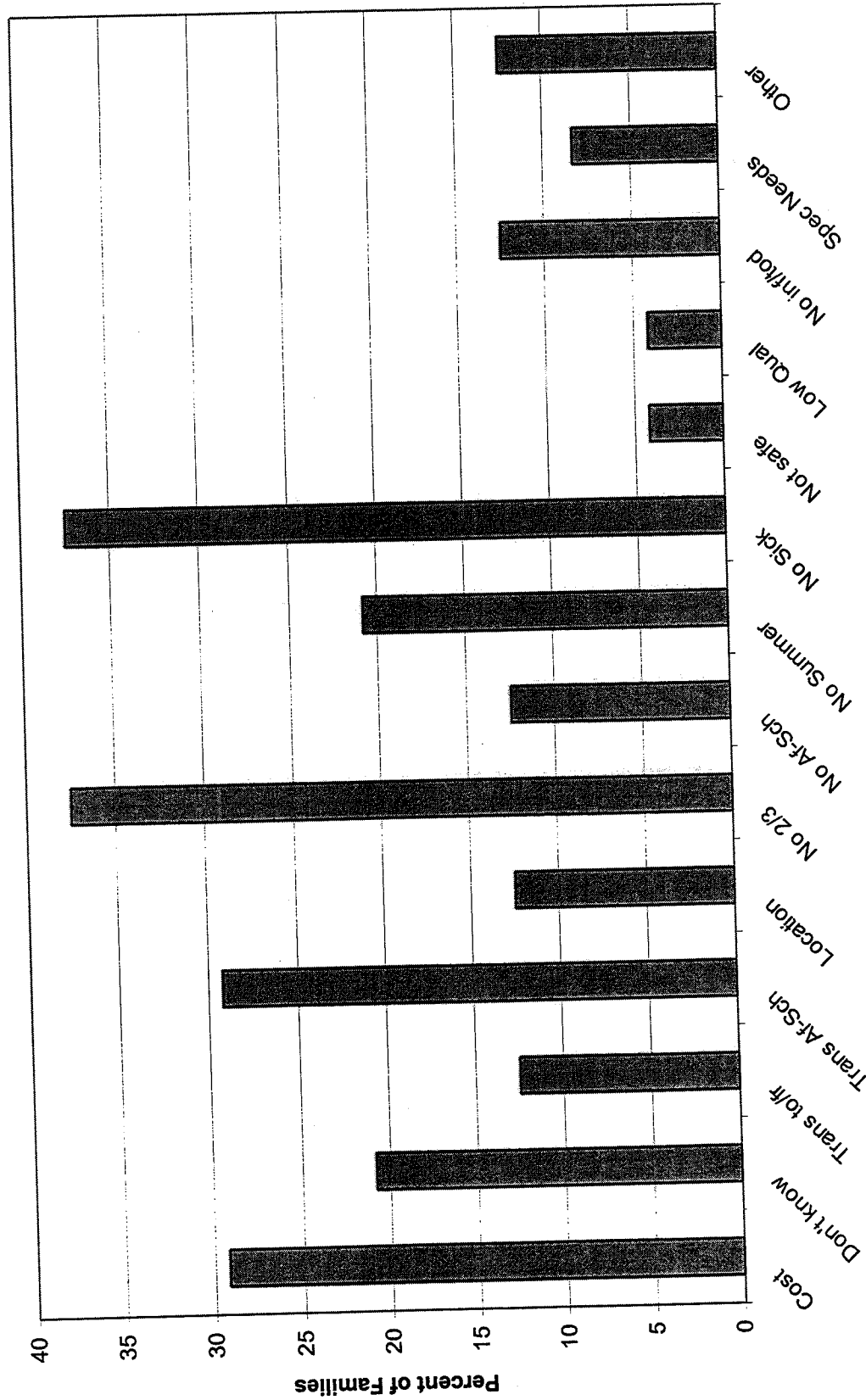
In addition to reporting the child care problems they faced; respondents were asked how these problems affected them in the last year (*Figure 6*). Respondents were given 4 choices and could check as many as they wanted. The largest category was missed work. Thirty-seven percent of all parents reported missing

Figure 4: Child Care Problems Experienced by All Families



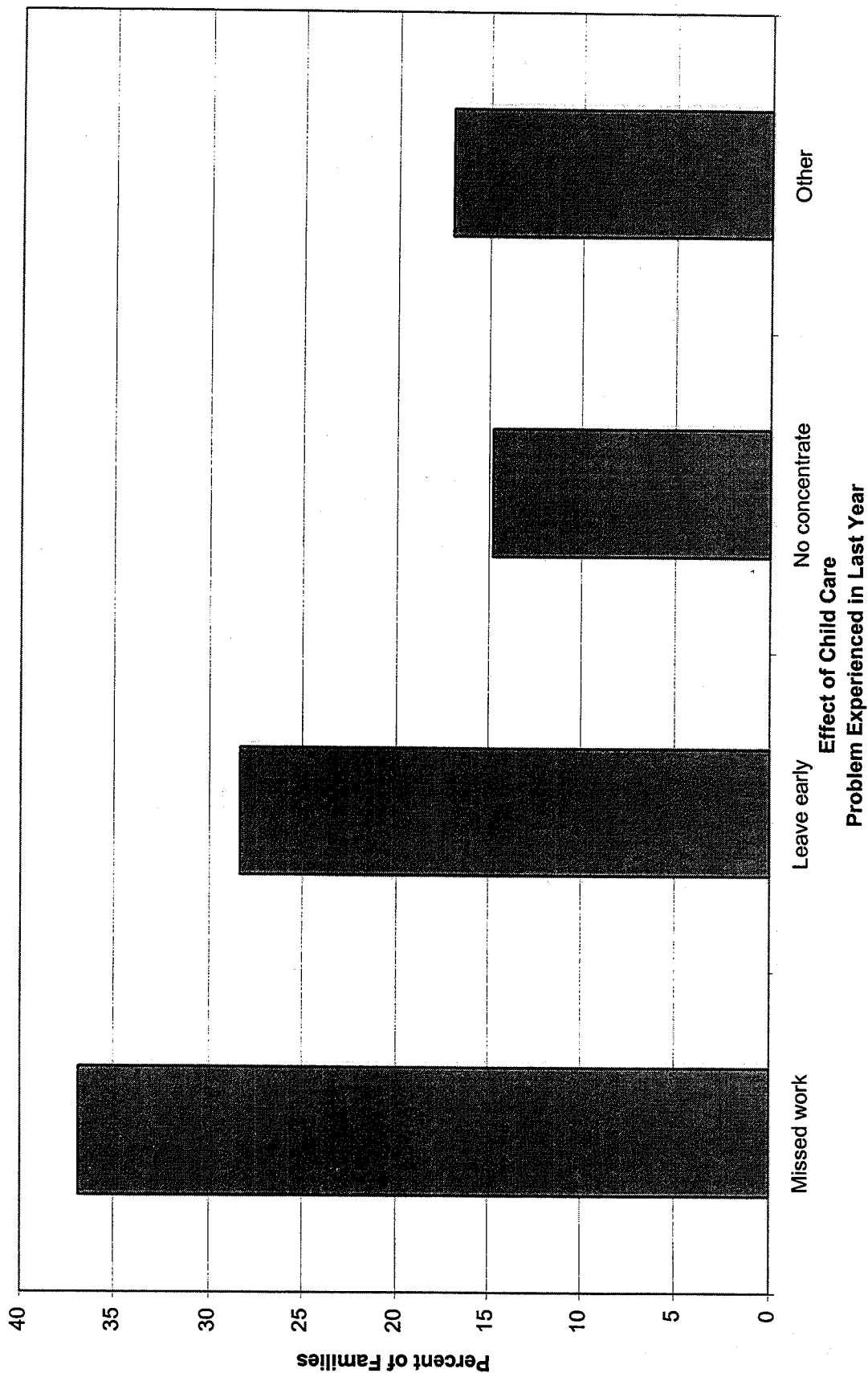
Child Care Problems Experienced in Last 12 Months

Figure 5: Child Care Problems Experienced by Families in the Enterprise Zone



Child Care Problems Experienced in Last 12 Months

Figure 6: Effect of Child Care Problems for All Families



"I can't work because I can't afford childcare."

"I had to quit my job due to childcare costs."

Parents, Survey

hours or days of work in the past year due to child care problems. Of those that reported missing work, 53 persons answered an additional question about how many days of work they missed during the past year due to child care problems, usually when children are sick. The average number of days missed was 5.84 days. The range of days missed was from half a day to

20 days. Two respondents missed 1 day while 1 respondent missed 20 days.

Along with missed work, 28.4% of parents also reported that they had to leave early in the past year due to child care problems. And about 15% of respondents indicated that they had had problems concentrating at work due to child care issues. All three of these problems have implications for both workers and employers. Workers are not as productive as they could be because of problems with their child care. At the same time employers lose money due to lost work time and poor quality of work. One recent national study found that women with children under age 6 missed an average of 8.5 days of work per year due to family-related issues (e.g., when children are sick).²⁷ At the same time men with children under age 6 also missed an average of 5 days of work.

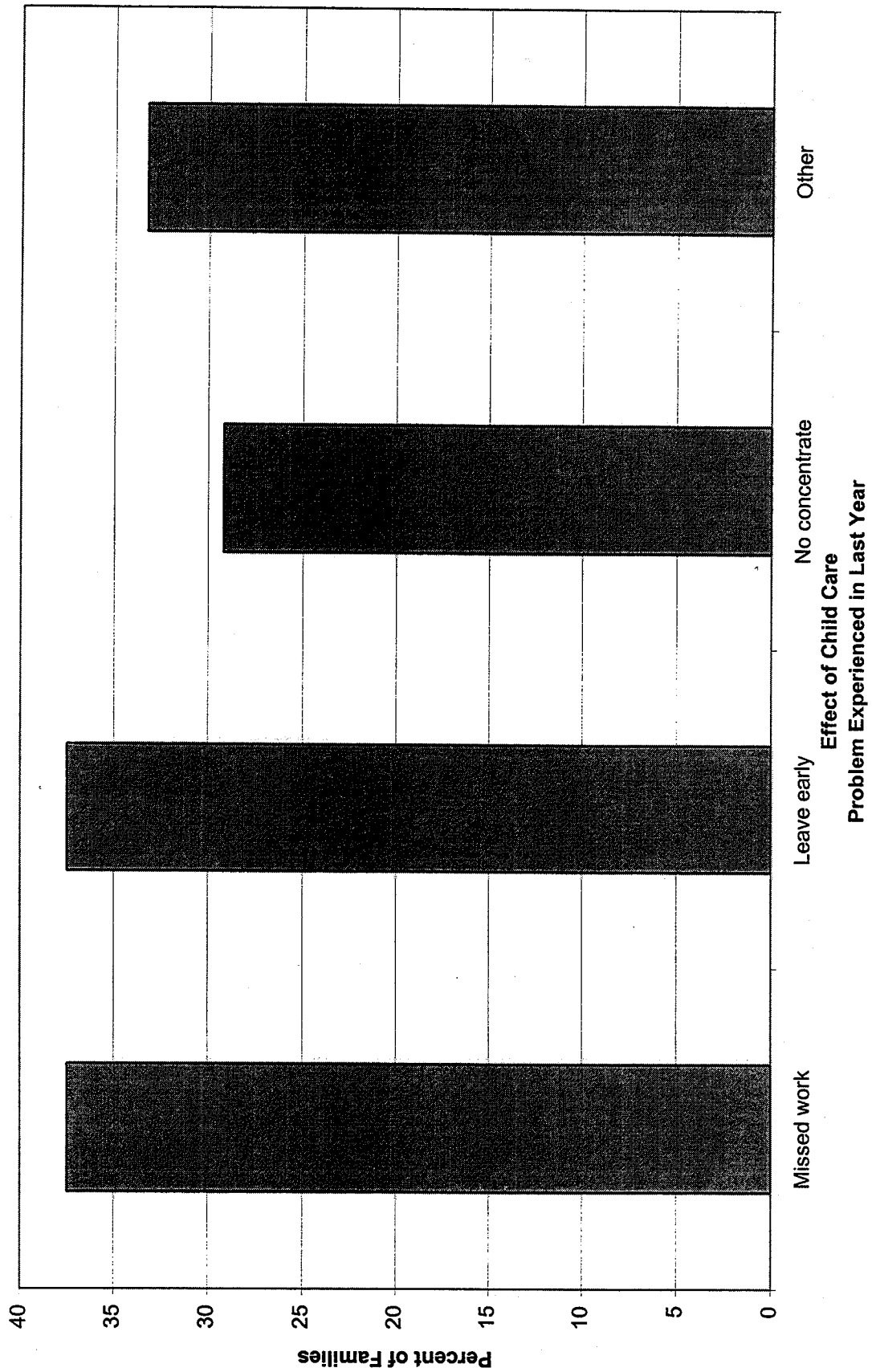
Respondents also listed some other problems they experienced due to child care problems. These problems include: Lost employment opportunities, difficult to find care to fit college class schedule, still had to pay when child sick, had to go into work late, and have trouble finding evening care for special needs child.

Effect of Problems by Location

Figure 7 contains the effect of child care problems for families living in the Zone. A higher percentage of parents living in the Zone reported effects from child care problems. More reported not being about to concentrate at work (29% versus 15% for all families). Similarly a higher percentage of parents in the Zone reported other problems than all families, although the other problems reported were similar.

²⁷ *Ahead of the Curve: Why America's Leading Employers Are Addressing the Needs of New and Expectant Parents*, Families and Work Institute, 1998.

Figure 7: Effect of Child Care Problems for Families in the Enterprise Zone



Income and Child Care Costs

Table 3. Child Care Costs by Age of Child

Age of Child	Hours of Care/wk	Average Cost/wk	Cost Range
Under 24 months	40 hours	\$66.78	\$30.00-\$150.00
2-5 years	40 hours	\$75.89	\$30.00-\$180.00
6 years	20 hours	\$42.22	\$0.00-\$110.00
School-age	10 hours	\$22.57	\$8.80-\$55.00
Overall cost^a		\$66.68	\$0.00- \$240.00

^a This is the average overall cost per family (for all children in a family) as reported by survey respondents.

Family Income

Figures 8 and 9 contain the family income of level of all families and families in the Zone, respectively. Families in the Zone were more likely to have a lower income than all families in Vigo County. Fifty-eight percent of Zone families reported an income of less than \$20,000 a year (33% of all families). In contrast, 18.8% of all families reported an income of over \$50,000 a year while no Zone families did. The median household income for all households in Vigo County was \$30,403 in 1995.²⁸ Families responding to the survey had a similar income distribution (median income between \$20,000 and \$34,999/year).²⁹

Quality Received Versus Cost

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt the quality of child care they received was equivalent to the amount of money they paid (Figure 10). Of the families that answered the question, most agreed that the quality they currently receive is equal to what they pay (about 37%). A smaller percentage (23%) said the quality they receive is more than what they pay. Finally, a very small percentage (5%) said the quality of the child care they currently receive is less than what they pay. In other words, most parents felt they were getting what they pay for or more from their child care. This would be consistent with their earlier reported satisfaction with their current child care.

Financial Assistance

Almost 15% of parents surveyed reported receiving financial assistance for child care. The majority of these parents received financial assistance for child care

²⁸ Source: Bureau of the Census, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program. Model-Based Income and Poverty Estimates for Vigo County, Indiana 1995.

²⁹ The median income value is the value where 50% of families have an income lower than the value and 50% of families have an income greater than the value.

Figure 8: Family Income Level - All Families

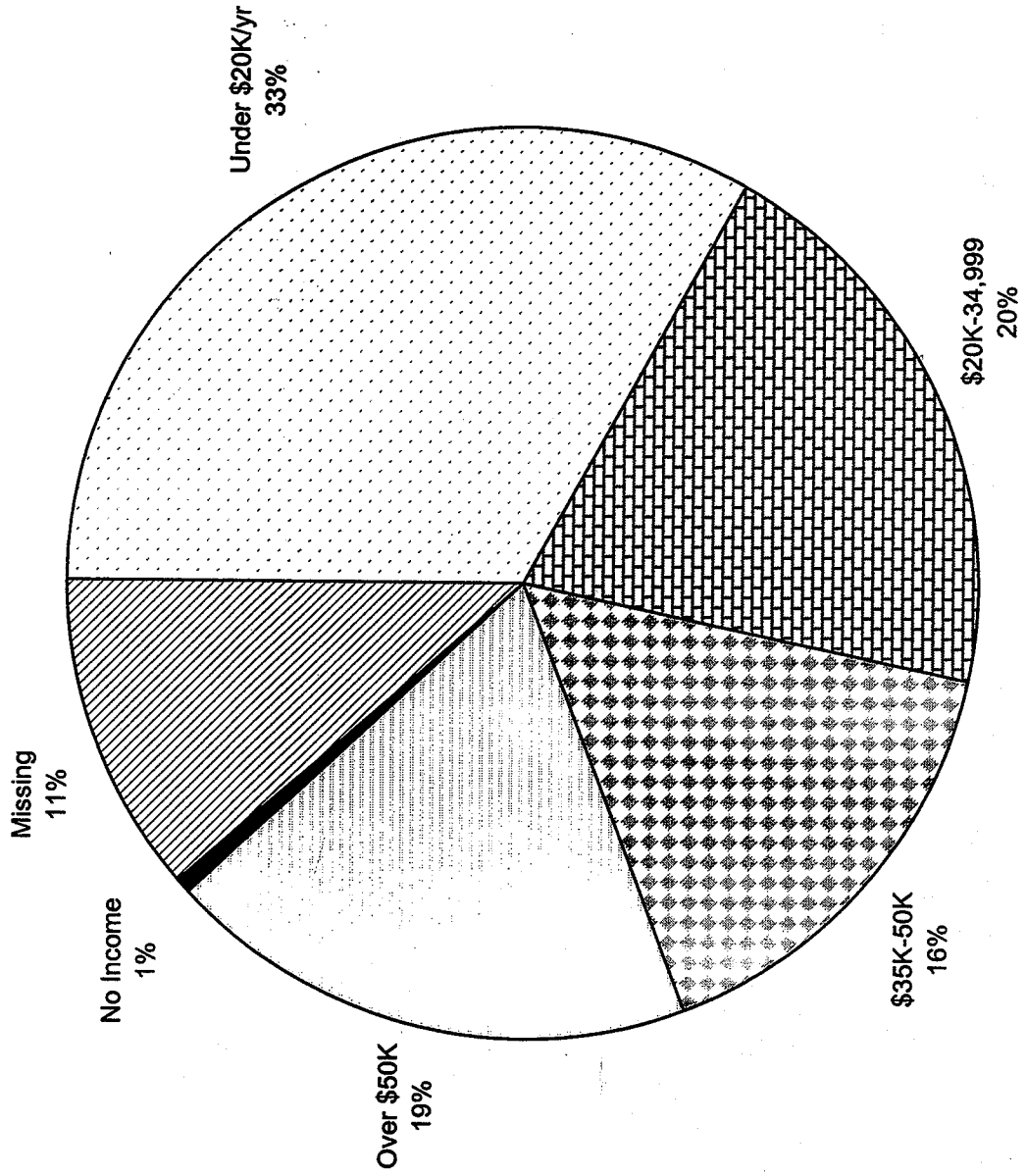


Figure 9: Family Income Level - Enterprise Zone Families

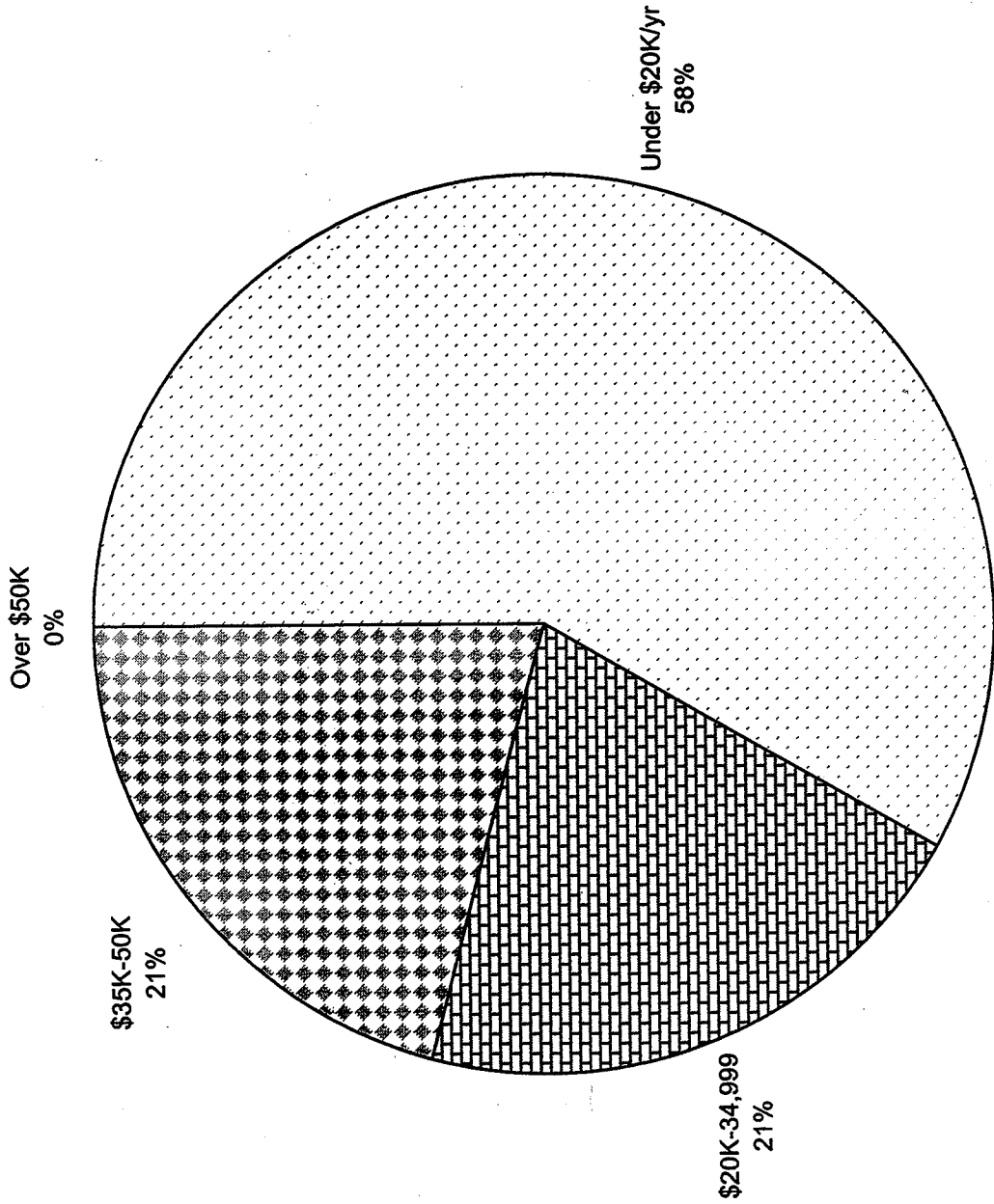
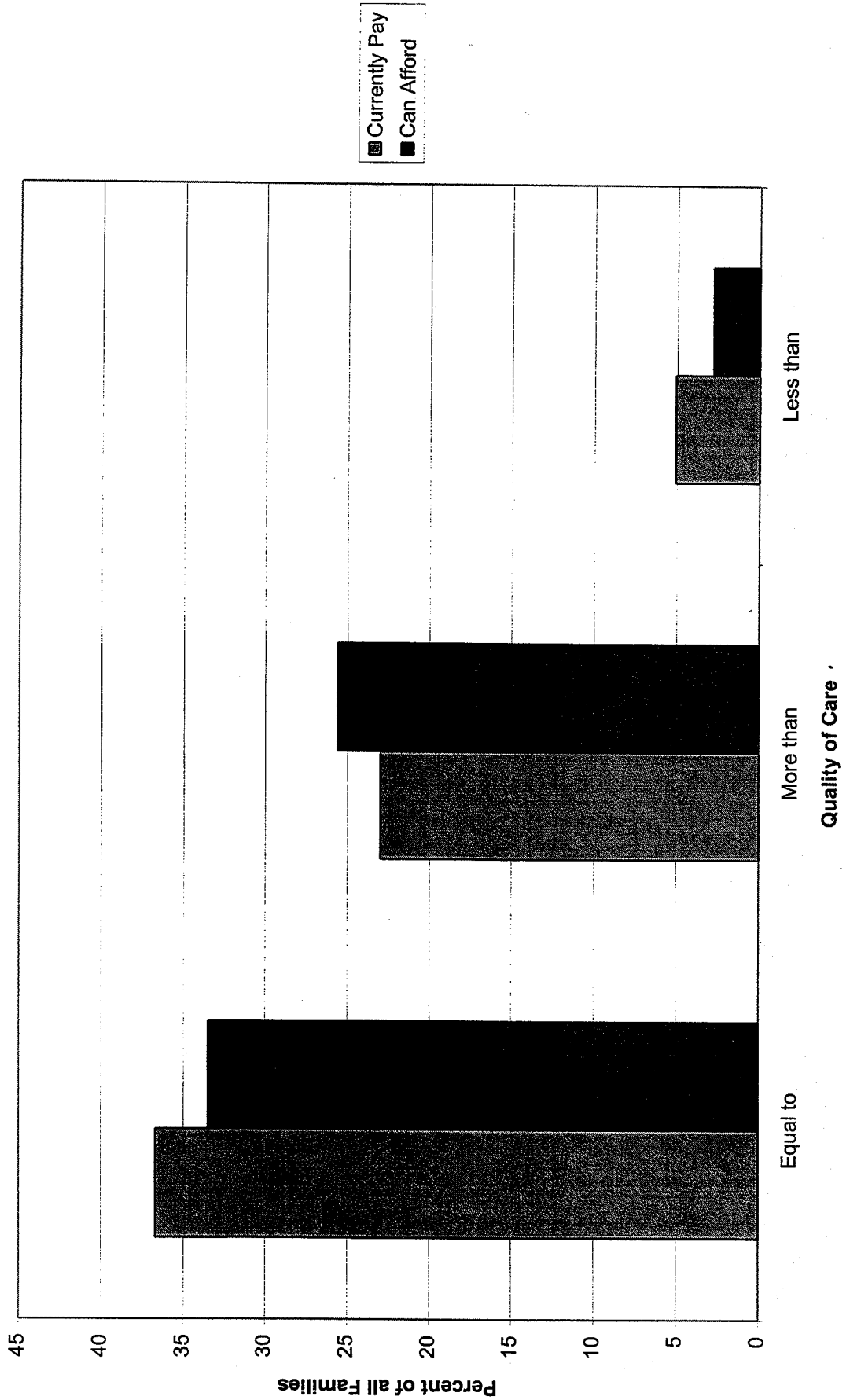


Figure 10: Quality of Child Care Received Versus Quality Desired



from 4-C's, Community Coordinated Child Care Wabash Valley. An additional three respondents received Medicaid and/or food stamps and one respondent received a

"No, I do not know what that is, please explain."

Parent, Survey when asked if family qualified for voucher payments.

Head Start scholarship for child care. Only 3 respondents reported being on a waiting list for child care financial assistance. Respondents were also asked if they were eligible to receive voucher payments for child care from 4-C's. Eight percent said that were eligible but only 5.1% reported actually receiving vouchers. Many

respondents did not answer the question about eligibility for voucher payments (23%). More importantly though, 18.2% of parents said they were not sure if they were eligible for vouchers. Of this 18.2%, 62.5% reported an income under \$20,000/yr. This relatively high percentage of respondents that did not know if they were eligible may be an indication that more education of what types of child care assistance are available in Vigo County is necessary.

Issues Important to Parents when Choosing Child Care

The final section of the survey questionnaire asked parents to list the top 3 things they look for when choosing a child care provider. This was an open-ended

"A responsible person, trustworthy, and willing to work for what they want."

"Quality of care, dependability, and good relationship between child and caregiver."

Parents, Survey

question so parents were able to list anything they wanted. There were 370 total responses to the question. Overall, about 78% of the responses could be categorized as quality of care issues. The other 22% are issues relating to the location, cost, and miscellaneous issues. When broken down by

specific category, the top three categories parents said were important in their child care decision were the environment of the home or center (20%), the qualifications of the caregiver (15.7%), and safety issues (12.4%). Environment of the home refers to the way children are treated, a caring and loving environment, and if children are happy in their child care situation. These issues were important for parents. Other issues list as top 3 issues by parents were educational programs and a learning environment (12.2%), location and convenience of the child care (10%), quality child care (in general)(9.5%), cleanliness and appearance of the child care (8.6%), cost (6.5%), and miscellaneous issues (5.1%). The miscellaneous issues dealt with a variety of issues including care for a special needs child, nutritious meals, a bible based program, transportation, and having an outside play area. Parents seem to

be aware of many of the important things they should look for when choosing a child care provider such as different aspects of quality care.

Conclusions

Parent surveys were completed by parents throughout Vigo County. While the sample of parents was not randomly-selected nor was it representative of all parents in Vigo County, the survey results do provide some indication of the child care needs of parents in the county. The majority of parents completing the survey were satisfied with their current child care arrangements. Parents were most likely to use family (themselves or relatives) to care for their children. Parents living in the Zone were more likely to use preschool care and also licensed center care than all families in the county. Along with their current child care arrangements, parents identified some problems they have experienced with child care. Lack of sick care, high child care costs, and no evening or nighttime care were the problems identified by the largest number of parents. For parents living in the Zone, lack of evening and nighttime care was tied with sick care as the biggest problem. As a result of these and other problems stemming from child care many parents said they were forced to miss work, leave work early, or had problems concentrating when they were at work.

Business Survey Results

The business surveys were distributed to 247 businesses in Vigo County. Of the 247 distributed 82 were returned with an overall response rate of 33%. The 82 surveys returned are analyzed by their location (Zone or non-zone) and also by their number of employees (less than 30 or 30 or more). The overall results show that businesses in Vigo County do not do much for their employees with regard to child care.

Size of Businesses and Hours of Operation

The businesses completing the survey had an average of 80 employees. The majority of businesses were open first shift or during the day (57%). An additional 9.8% were open both first and second shift and 20.7% were open all 3 shifts (24 hours). The hours of operation for the employers is consistent with the hours parents indicated that they needed child care (most needed first shift or daytime hours). Employers with fewer than 30 employees were less likely to be open 24 hours/day.

Employer Support for Child Care

Employers were asked to identify their support for child care services and assistance. *Figure 11* contains the employer support results for all business and businesses in the Zone and not in the Zone. *Figure 12* contains the same results for businesses with fewer than 30 employees and those with more than 30 employees. The results show that very few businesses have either an on-site or an off-site child care facility. Larger businesses were the most likely to provide these services. Similarly, businesses are unlikely to subsidize child care for their employees. Businesses are more likely to offer their employees' flexible spending accounts for child care, particularly larger ones (32.6%) and those not in the Zone (37%). Finally, less than half of all businesses offer some kind of child care support for their employees, most of this support takes the form of flexible work hours, flex time, or working with individual employees to deal with their needs.

Convenience of Services

When asked how *convenient* they felt the child care services their company provides for their employees are; only 2.4% said they were very convenient. The majority did not know (37.8%). Another 14.6% said they were somewhat convenient and 8.5% said they were inconvenient (only businesses that provide services were asked to complete this question).

Tracking of Time Off for Child Care Problems

Businesses were also asked if they kept track of the amount of time their employees take off due to child care issues, either formally or informally. The majority of businesses said they did not keep track (75.6%). This percentage was higher for businesses with fewer employees (80.6%) than those with more employees (71.7%). This is most likely due to the more formal nature of larger companies.

Absenteeism Policies for Child Care Problems

Finally, businesses were surveyed about their company's policy regarding the time employees take off for child care issues. *Figure 13* contains a break down of the policy. Over half of all employers said employees must use either vacation days or take unpaid leave if they need to be absent. Employers generally listed more than one option. The least likely option listed was an unexcused absence for employees, of these the majority were businesses in the Zone. *Figure 14* contains the same policy information for large and small businesses.

Figure 11: Employer Support for Child Care Services

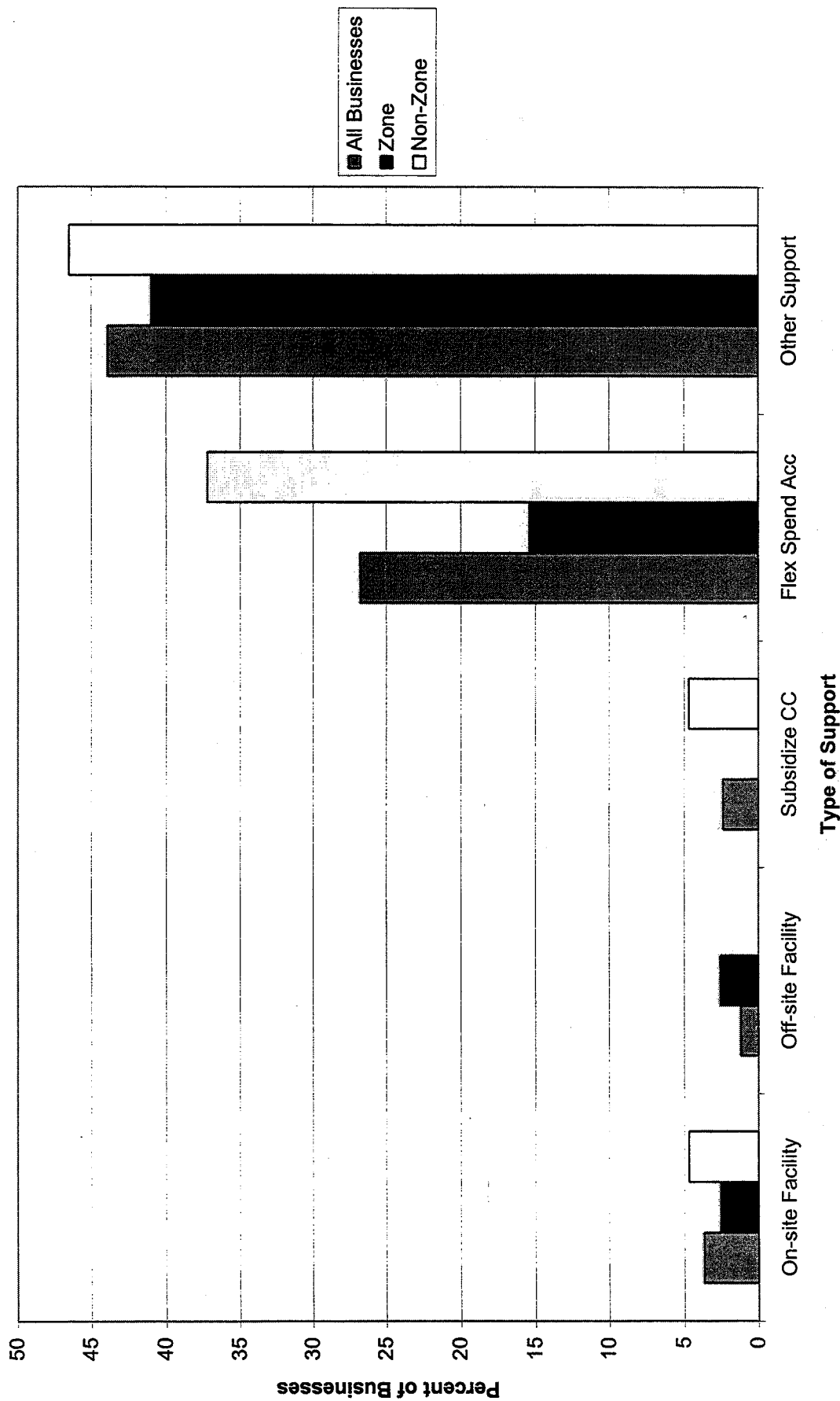


Figure 12: Employer Support for Child Care Services by Number of Employees

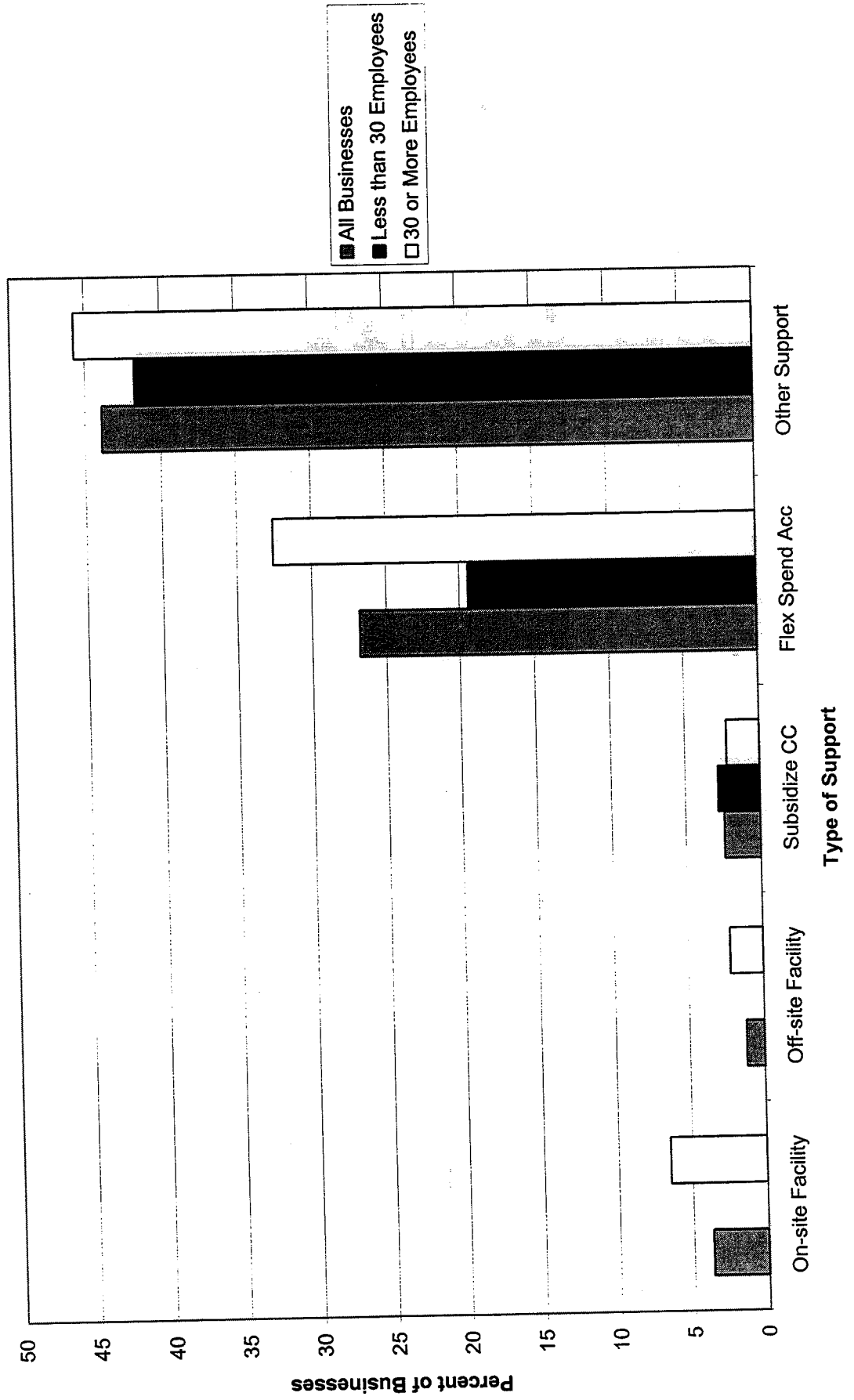


Figure 13: Employer Policy for Child Care Absence

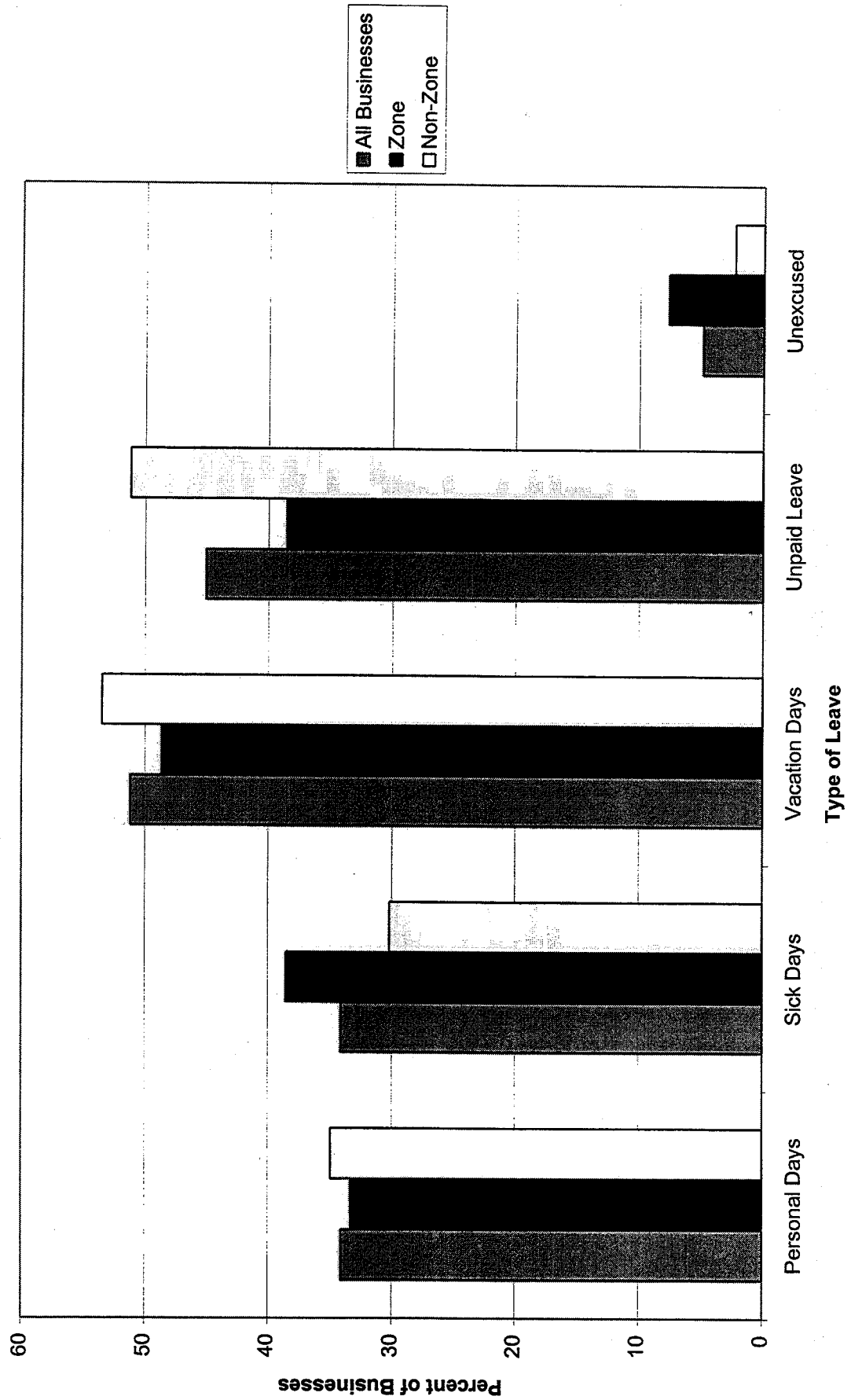
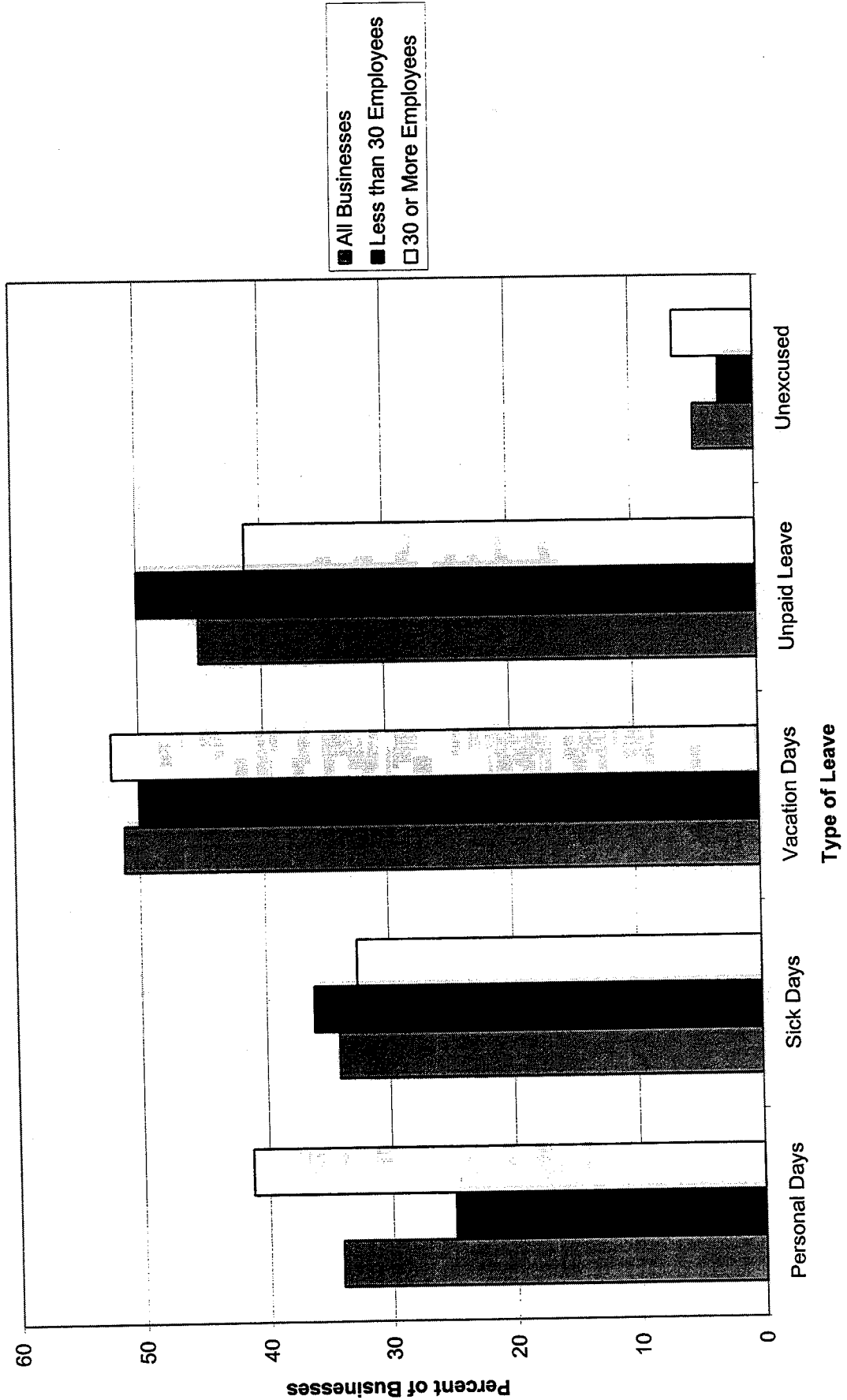


Figure 14: Employer Policy for Child Care Absence by Number of Employees



Business Survey Conclusions

The majority of businesses do not currently do much to support the child care needs. In many cases they are not doing anything at all. Very few businesses provide on-site child care, off-site child care, or subsidize child care. Larger businesses and those not in the Zone were more likely to offer flexible spending accounts for child care. Larger companies were more likely to monitor employees time off for child care, but most companies (large or small) do not do any monitoring. Finally, employees are more likely to use their vacation days or take unpaid leave if their children are sick.

Child Care Provider Survey Results

The final set of surveys were sent to child care providers. Of the 232 providers surveyed 48 returned the survey for a response rate of 20%. One survey was excluded from the analysis because the facility was located out of Vigo County. Fifteen percent of the survey respondents were located in the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone. The majority of the providers completing the survey were in-home providers (82.6%). This is expected because the majority of providers in Vigo County are in-home providers. Almost 9% of the surveys returned were from privately owned centers, followed by religious organizations (4.3%), Montessori (2.2%), and other (2.2%). The analysis is done here for all providers and then by location for selection issues. Issues such as licensing, hours, size of facilities, child-provider ratios, age of children, immunizations, type of program, transportation, illness, vacation, security issues and liability, staff training, financial issues, plans for expansions, and special needs care are discussed.

Licensing and Accreditation

The majority of respondents completing the survey were licensed (80.4%). Seventy-one percent of providers in the Zone were licensed, whereas, 82% not in the Zone were licensed. In addition, 8 facilities or 17.4% report being accredited. There may be some confusion among providers about the difference between accreditation and licensing. There are actually only 2 child care homes in the county that are accredited (by NACCH, National Association of Child Care Homes) and one center (by NAEYC, the National Association for the Education of Young Children).

Hours

Almost all facilities were open Monday through Friday. Only 11 facilities said they were open on Saturdays (of these 11, 2 were only open for emergencies or sometimes). Seven facilities were open on Sundays (one of the 7 was open only for

emergencies). Thus, most child care in Vigo County seems to be during the week. Of the weekday facilities, only one facility was open 24 hours/day. The majority of weekday facilities were open during daytime hours (52.2% were open 12 hours during the day). Four facilities were open for 2nd shift care (the latest closed at 11:30pm). Only the 24-hour facility was open during the nighttime hours. These hours do coincide with both the parent and business surveys with respect to hours needing care and hours open. There does seem to be a lack of nighttime care available among the providers.

In addition, facilities had an average of 13.34 full-time spaces and only 3.71 part-time spaces. Sixteen or 35% of the facilities did not offer any part-time spaces. Eighteen or 39% of the facilities offer drop-off care, while another 9% offer drop-off care sometimes (a couple of facilities said when they have space they offer it). The Zone facilities completing the survey were more likely to offer drop-off care (57%) than the facilities not in the Zone (36%). At the same time, most of the part-time spaces were located out of the Zone. Many of these spaces may be for preschool or after-school care only.

Size of Facility

The facilities ranged in size from caring for 1 child (usually a relative) to 80 children (center). The average number of children under age 12 cared for was 15.7 children. For in-home providers the mean was 10.2 children (range from 1 to 36 children). For facilities that took infants (under age 1), the mean was 3.6. Most of these facilities had only 1 or 2 infants (72% of facilities with infants). Facilities in the Zone had an average of 19.7 children, while those not in the Zone had a mean of 15 children. Only 43.5% of facilities reported being full. In addition, 37% said they had a waiting list. A couple providers that were not full did have a waiting list for infants.

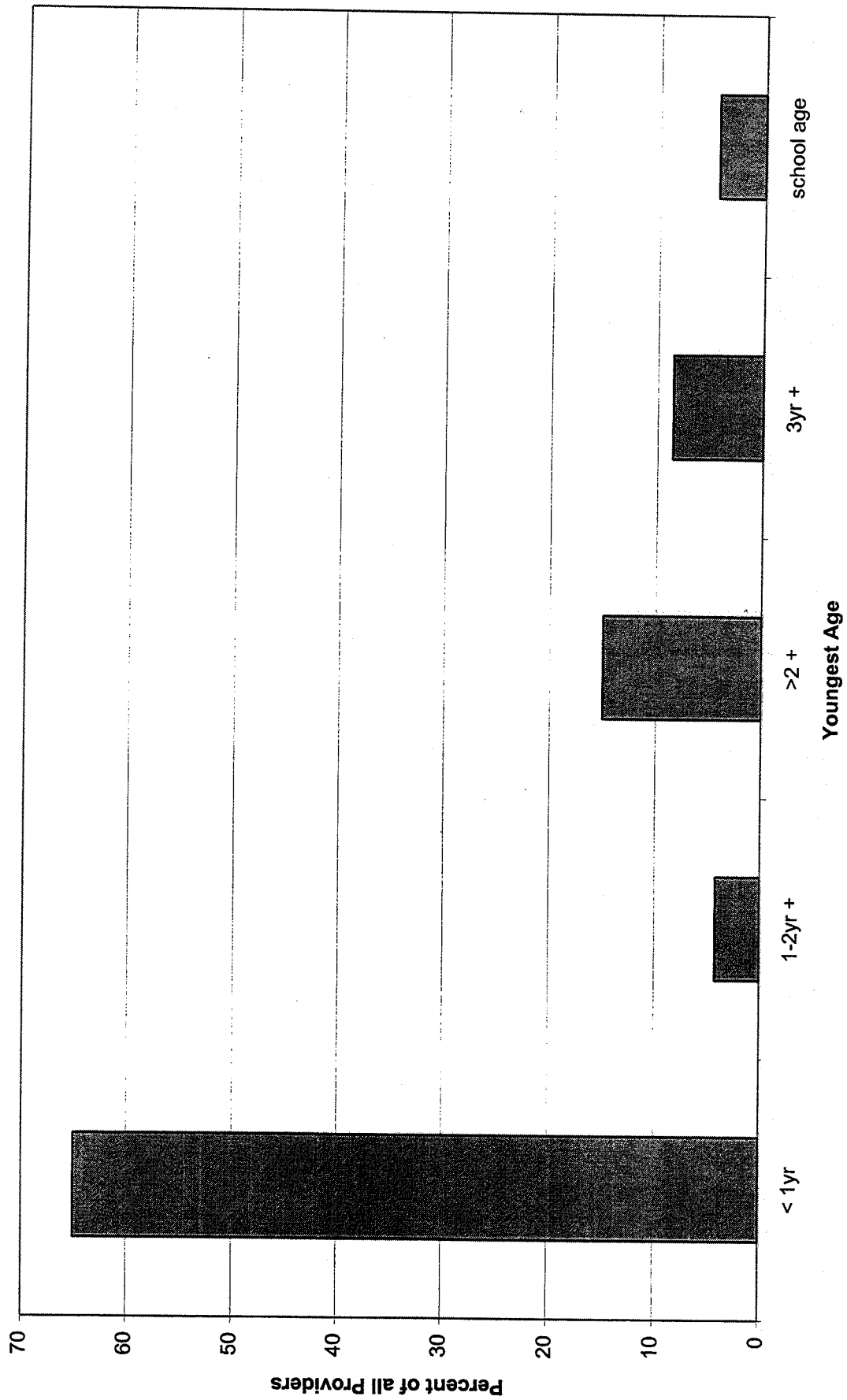
Child-Provider Ratios

Related to the size of the facilities is the number of children per provider or the child-provider ratio. The average child-provider ratio was 6:1 or 6 children for every one provider. The range of ratios reported was 1:1 to 13:1. Facilities in the Zone tended to have higher child-provider ratios than those not in the Zone (4.7:1 to 6.2:1, respectively). This is probably a function of more center-based care in the Zone.

Age of Children

Providers also reported the age range of children that they care for. Providers listed a variety of different ages. *Figure 15* contains these age ranges categorized by the age of the youngest child the facility will care for. A large number of facilities reported caring for a child under age 1 (65%). At the same time, only

Figure 15: Youngest Age of Children Cared for by Provider



4.5% cared only for school aged children (most of these were relatives). These results are interesting given the reported lack of infant care in Vigo County. As shown earlier most facilities care for only one or two infants and this limits the actual number of spaces open to infants versus older children.

Immunizations

Almost all providers reported that the children they care for were up to date on their immunizations. The mean immunization rate was 98.8%. Only 3 facilities reported that their children were all not up to date on their immunizations. In addition, another 3 facilities did not answer the question.

Type of Program

Providers were asked if they offer educational programs at their facility. The majority of providers or 78% did offer some type of educational programming. Most of these programs involved preschool education. Some facilities had a more formal education program than others. Overall, more did something with education than did not. This reflects more quality care. Providers not in the Zone were more likely to offer educational programs (82%) than providers in the Zone (57%).

Transportation

A little over half of the facilities completing the survey (54%) said they provide some form of transportation for the children they care for. The transportation generally took the form of transportation to kindergarten, school, field trips, and to the doctor (usually for relative care only). Transportation by providers is slightly more common among providers out of the Zone (56%) than those in the Zone (43%). Transportation to and from after-school programs is one problem stressed by Zone parents in the parent surveys.

Illness

Only a small number of providers (13%) accept children when they are sick. An additional 13% of providers will accept sick children if they are not contagious or under special circumstances. Only 8 providers or 17% have special provisions in their facility for children that are sick. Most of these have a room set aside for sick children. In-home providers are more likely to have a sick room.

If providers are ill and unable to work, the majority of in-home providers have back-up help or substitutes that can come in and take over (76%). A small proportion of in-home providers have to close if they are sick (11%), and only one provider reported having no plan for illness. Among the centers survey, all had substitutes available if a staff member became ill.

Vacation

Providers dealt with their own vacations in a couple different ways. Most providers gave parents advance notice of their vacation, generally one month to a few months. Providers were likely to assist families in finding alternative care during their vacation. Some providers wrote their vacations into their contract. Providers were likely to close around the Christmas holidays and for a couple weeks in the summer. Centers were likely to have other staff cover vacations or to close at specified times during the year (such as Christmas) and staff could take their vacation then. Most providers attempted to make their vacation the least amount of burden on families as possible with advance notice and assistance in finding alternative care.

Security Issues and Liability

Only about a quarter of providers said they believe security is needed at their facility. Child care centers were more likely to have security than home providers. There was not much difference in security needs between Zone providers and Non-Zone providers. If providers felt security was necessary at their facility, they were asked what security steps they have taken. Providers listed a variety of different security measures they have taken including: Keeping doors locked, checking ID's (center), keeping lists of who can pick up a child, fencing in the outside area, alarms on windows, and not advertising that home is a daycare. Liability was not a problem for most providers. Only 4 providers said they have concerns about liability. One said cost was an issue, and 2 said they would like further information about liability insurance.

Staff Training

Most providers report that their staff and themselves have received some kind of training (87%). These trainings include: CPR, First Aid, Universal Precautions, classes at Ivy Tech, 4-C meetings, conferences and seminars, CDA or Child Development Associate's degree, Second Helping (a provider workshop offered by 4-C to help prevent provider burnout), and Nutrition workshops. Providers were most likely to have taken either CPR (54%) or First Aid (37%) classes. Most providers and their staffs attended a training session at least once a year (43%). Only 4 providers (9%) report not attending any trainings. Providers generally learned of the trainings from mailings or newsletters, or letters from 4-C.

Financial Issues

Table 4 contains the weekly rates for providers. Over 95% of providers reported their rates. These rates varied by the age of the child. A few providers

offered a sliding scale based on a family's income level (9% of providers). More providers were likely to offer a discount rate for families with more than one child under their care (61%).

Table 4. Weekly Child Care Rates by Age of Child

Age of Child	Hours of Care/wk	Average Cost/wk	Cost Range
Under 24 months	40 hours	\$73.68	\$50.00-\$90.00
2-5 years	40 hours	\$68.87	\$50.00-\$82.00
6 years		\$64.55	\$30.00-\$90.00
School-age		\$44.03	\$25.00-\$72.50

Providers were also asked about their actual costs but not enough providers answered the question for the results to be reliable. Many providers do not seem to be aware of what their weekly costs actually are. Providers did report that they relied on subsidies, vouchers, grants, and the food program to make up the difference between what they charged and their actual costs.

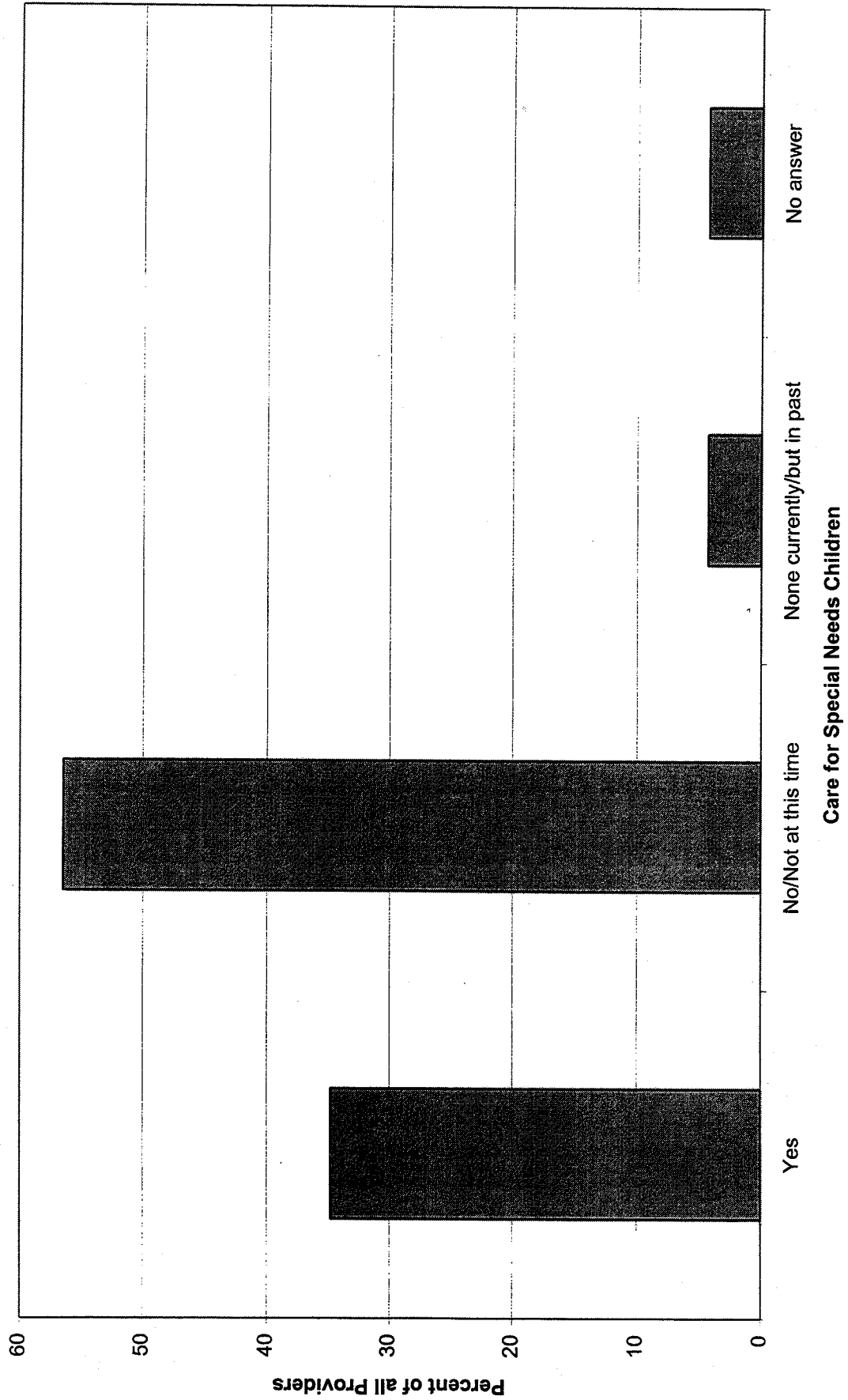
Plans for Expansion

Facilities were asked if they currently had plans to expand their facility. About 33% of facilities said they have plans to expand. (57% of Zone facilities and only 28% of non-Zone facilities had expansion plans). An additional facility said they would like to expand in the future and still another said they would like to expand but had no funds to do so. While about one-third of facilities had expansion plans they also faced some barriers to that expansion. The primary barrier was cost. Expansion is expensive. Most expansion plans involved buying property, expanding current facilities, or converting part of their house into a larger facility. One provider said they needed, "\$4000 to convert garage into daycare room." Another barrier to expansion was finding a new facility or property to buy in the right location. As one provider said, "buying another home for expansion [is a barrier]." Finally, one provider mentioned that finding enough quality help is also a barrier.

Special Needs Care

The final set of questions has to do with special needs care. Providers were asked if they currently care for children with special needs, such as cerebral palsy, autism, asthma, or Down's Syndrome (see *Figure 16*). Thirty-five percent of providers said they do currently care for children with special needs, while 56.5% said they do not or they do not at the current time. Providers reporting caring for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, autism, asthma, allergies, cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome, and speech disorders. Only three providers reported setting aside a specific number of spaces for children with special needs.

Figure 16: Currently Care for Children with Special Needs



About 11% of providers had a wheelchair ramp or other adaptations for the disabled in their facility. Of this 11%, 2 were in-home providers. Providers listed some specific adaptations they had made to care for special needs children. These ranged from one-on-one care for children with emotional problems to handicapped adaptations to a facility for children with physical problems.

Provider Survey Conclusions

Of the providers that completed the survey, the majority were licensed facilities. Most were open during the day, Monday through Friday. Many facilities care for infants, but most of these only had one or two infants. Immunization rates for the children they care for are very high. Many providers offered some type of education programming for their children, particularly facilities in the Zone. About half of facilities provided some form of transportation. The majority of facilities said security was not a problem. Many providers attended some type of training at least once a year. Some providers did have plans to expand with cost being the most significant barrier to expansion. Finally, less than half of providers care for children with special needs. Most providers did not have a wheelchair ramp or other adaptations for the disabled in their facility.

Recommendations

Based on the **parent surveys** the following recommendations can be made:

1. Parents are concerned with the costs of child care. At the same time they would like the care their children receive to be high quality. There needs to be more education of parents as to what to expect to pay for quality care. In addition, subsidizing child care for all families, or at least for low to moderate income families may be a goal to work towards.
2. Licensed sick care is needed in Vigo County. This is a big problem for many parents. Before much work goes into this, further discussions with parents need to take place about what types and in what situations they would be interested in using sick care.
3. There is a need to educate local businesses about the impact of child care problems on their employees. Many employees with young children are forced to miss work, leave work early, and/or have concentration problems at work as a result of child care problems. One way to deal with this problem would be to encourage more business sponsored care such as on-site or near-site day care.

There is very little currently in Vigo County. This would allow parents a more stable day care situation for their children and would also reduce the stress of traveling to child care.

4. Lower income parents need to be informed about what types of assistance are available to them for child care. Many reported not knowing whether or not they were eligible for the child care voucher program.
5. Finally, the child care plan developed for the county needs to be location specific. The needs of parents in the Terre Haute Enterprise Zone differ to some extent from those in the county as a whole. These specific needs should be taken into consideration when formulating a comprehensive child care plan for Vigo County.

Based on the **business surveys** the following recommendation can be made:

6. Businesses need to be encouraged to provide better child care support services for their employees. Further education of businesses about child care and the impact the issues have on their employees and their productivity is important.

Based on the **provider surveys** the following recommendations can be made:

7. Providers need to be more educated about the difference between licensing and accreditation. In addition, more providers in the county should be encouraged to become licensed.
8. More evening and nighttime care is needed. Incentives for existing providers to stay open longer would encourage more evening and nighttime care.
9. All providers need to be encouraged to attend at least one provider training a year. This would help to increase the quality of child care available in Vigo County.
10. Grants to assist with the expansion of facilities are needed. Cost is a major barrier to expansion for many facilities.
11. More providers need to be encouraged to care for children with special needs. Financial incentives for additional operating expenses and training costs would be one way to encourage more providers to take special needs children.

Section 3: Focus Group Interviews

Five focus groups interviews were conducted with parents in Vigo County. Focus group participants were selected based on their type of employment, their specific child care needs, or their demographic characteristics. Overall there were 18 participants with an average of 3.6 participants per group. The size of the groups varied from 2 to 5 participants. There were 2 males and 16 female participants in the focus groups. Focus groups were conducted with parents at Indiana State University, parents working shift work, parents working in food service (some shift work), minority parents³⁰, and parents with a special needs child. The focus groups were held at a location convenient for parents. The focus group interviews took between 45 minutes and 2 hours and were conducted by Dr. Barbara Clauss. Participants were asked questions about their current child care arrangements, their preferred type of child care, problems they have experienced with child care, the effects of these problems, community resources available to them, and the unmet child care needs of Vigo County. *Appendix F* contains the Focus Group Protocol that was used.

Types of Child Care Families Prefer

Parents were first asked to describe the type of child care they currently use and what type of child care would be their preferred type. The majority of parents used a licensed family home, a licensed center, or relatives. Many parents used a combination of child care types. The parents of special needs children were more likely to use respite care³¹ or skilled nursing care. Most parents were somewhat satisfied with their current child care arrangements particularly the parents using licensed care but a few expressed their desire to stay home with their children or to have their children at home.

“... Preferably I would like to stay at home with my children myself. Or have someone in the house that could.” Minority Parent.

³⁰ The minority participants were all African American. Efforts were made to contact parents of other minorities but they were unable to participate in the focus group.

³¹ Respite Care, as defined by one participant, is state dollars that were originally designed “to help keep people in their home, rather than going to an intermediate care facility”. And to give the caregiver some respite. Respite care can not be used when the caregiver is at work or school.

"The daycare I have right now I feel very comfortable leaving them there [licensed family home]. When I pick them up in the evening ..., they look the same way they did when I dropped them off. They are clean, their hands are washed...." Food Service Parent.

"Well it is my preferred [type] because it's my family and I know what kind of care she's getting." Shift worker Parent

"I have my preferred type [home health care through the Waiver Program], it is just that I wish I had more. I wish I had a bigger pool of people ...and I am not complaining, I couldn't get through my life without what I have. But having to make a schedule a month ahead [is difficult]." Special Needs Parent

What Parents Look for in a Child Care Provider

Parents discussed a variety of different things they looked for when choosing a child care provider. One issue that emerged was that parents look for different things at different times in their lives, depending on their situation and also on the age of their child or children. According to one parent,

"Before we used to look for whether there was space. Now I think I looked at the staffing, how many children do we have versus adults, because I have an understanding of how many we are supposed to have..."

The top three things parents look for when choosing a child care provider can be grouped into four categories: Environment, Provider Characteristics, Location, and Cost. Environment refers to the environment of the child care facility or the environment that is created by having a child care provider in your home. Parents were concerned about safety and cleanliness of child care facilities.

"The first girl I went to, she had 3 of her own children and she couldn't keep them under control let alone others. She had a basement with some rickety wood steps going down into the basement and no safety gate up... I went to 3 or 4 places like that...", Shift worker Parent

Parents were also concerned about the child-provider ratio.

"Because all these daycare places, they get so, these women get greedy, they get tons of children that they have all day long and there is no one woman that can watch 12-13 toddlers. And I have seen them try it.", Food Service Parent

Finally, parents in all five focus groups said the comfort level of their child in the environment or with the provider was very important. Parents stressed that they looked for child friendly environments where providers genuinely liked caring for children and were not just in it for the money.

"...And then how my child feels comfortable there.", Shift worker Parent

"They have to like your child." Special Needs Parent

Along with the environment of the child care facility, parents also said they look at characteristics of the provider. Parents looking for child care outside their home tended to look for a licensed or accredited provider, the experience and age of the provider including references for the person that ran the facility, and providers willing to work with parents. Parents with a special needs child, particularly those that had providers come into their homes were also concerned with finding providers with specific skills (both in nursing and pediatric development) and also providers with integrity and those that were willing to respect the privacy of the family.

"...integrity, I mean it has to be a really honest person, because my child can't tell me.", Special Needs Parent

"And confidentiality, I mean not that people don't know [my child] is disabled but I would not want to think that somebody that comes to my house is talking about what I don't have, what I do, and what I don't do.", Special Needs Parent

The two other categories of things parents said they looked for when choosing a child care provider were the location of the child care (at least one parent in 4 out of the 5 groups mentioned this) and the cost of child care (3 out of 5 groups). In terms of location, parents seemed to want child care either near their home or their place of business. One parent also mentioned that the facility needed to be in a good neighborhood.

Child Care Problems

Parents were also asked to discuss some of the problems they have had with child care. Parents actually did not have many complaints about their current child care situation. This is not surprising since many were satisfied with their arrangements. The problems they did discuss include: Cost, relative care, illness, communication with providers, and child-provider ratios. Many parents also discussed that despite the horror stories they had heard about child care they were very satisfied with their current situation.

Cost

Parents were concerned about the cost of child care, particularly those with lower incomes and single parents. At the same time they realized that child care providers had to make a living.

"I try to only work in the daytime while they are at school and then I don't have to pay a babysitter and I can keep my check." Food Service Parent

Parents of special needs children were concerned that their caregivers were not paid a high enough wage and were not reimbursed for their mileage. This low income makes it especially hard to attract good people to care for their children.

As one parent said,

"[The] money available doesn't match the skills needed." [pay is \$7 an hour for respite workers], Special Needs Parent

According to another parent,

"I have had my best luck with nursing students or special education students from ISU. Because they are a little more receptive and they are willing to learn. ...unfortunately it pays the kind of money where people come off the street looking for a job, but yet you need someone who is not that person just off the street looking for a job.", Special Needs Parent

Relative Care

Parents discussed some of the problems they have had with having relatives watching their children. One parent discussed the philosophical parenting differences between the relative and herself.

"We have our moments, because they are family and they have got kids before. A lot of times they think I am not doing the right thing.", University Parent

A different issue special needs parents sometimes dealt with was the inability to use relatives to care for their special needs child.

"I mean with my [non special needs child] if I just need somebody to be in the house with him in a pinch my [family member] could stay with him but there is no way we could do that with [special needs child].", Special Needs Parent

Many parents either currently use relative care or have used it some time in the past.

Sick Child

Finally, parents discussed the issue of sick child care. Unless a child care provider is licensed to take sick children they will not take care of a child that is sick. For parents this is often a big problem. Many end up taking days off work to stay home with their children. This is particularly burdensome for parents that only get paid for hours they work.

"Where I work we don't get paid for sick days.", Shift worker Parent

"[When child is sick], that of course affects us all. If all the kids get sick somebody has got to be there. Who is going to miss work, who can take time off, who can't make up the hours.", Minority Parent

Parents also complained that their children were more likely to become sick because they were in child care. They felt that other parents often send their kids to daycare knowing they are sick.

Communication with Providers

A couple parents discussed that they would like providers to communicate what problems their child may be having at the child care facility with them. They felt that often the communication lines weren't as open as they should be. This seemed to be more common for parents with children in a child care center situation.

Child-Provider Ratio

Finally, some parents were concerned about the child-provider ratios at the facilities where they leave their children. They felt a lower child to provider ratio was

better. Too many children can lead to poor supervision and tension among the children.

"The only major problem I had with a daycare provider is she has a lot of kids, she keeps infants through school aged. ...On nice days they can all go out and play and they have a good time. When they are locked up in the house there is just so much fighting, they all irritate each other.", Shift worker Parent

Impact of Child Care Issues on Family and Work

The child care problems parents face can impact all aspects of their family's life. Parents discussed the impact these issues have had on their family and their work life. One of the big issues parents discussed was having to miss work or having to limit the work they can do because they were not able to find child care.

"I have given up a lot of jobs, dream jobs, you know things that would have been a lot better for us now days.", Food Service Parent.

"[We] could make better money in the evening if you know you had someone to watch your child." "Oh, yeh, there are a lot of times we could pick up a lot of extra hours, there are a lot of extra parties we could pick up but...how would you manage.", Food Service Parents

Parents also discussed that some shifts were harder to find someone to watch their children during than others. Early morning hours and also before school was a problem, along with 2nd shift or evening hours. One parent also discussed how she had to quit work and stay home with her children when they were young as a result of poor quality child care.

"When it comes to the safety, my little girl is real mellow, real light, I mean she is like a dream child to take care of. Well she was coming home with bite marks on her, severe bite marks to where they were just terrible. Well you don't go back to your job the next morning when your child has these kinds of bites on them.", Food Service Parent

Besides loss of job opportunities parents also discussed other ways that child care impacted their lives. Some expressed experiencing guilt for leaving their children in child care.

"I just felt like juggling with the kids having everybody watch them and it has really made me feel guilty because I feel like I am not spending enough time with them.", Food Service Parent

"Well see in a way it is fun though because I do get, like my oldest daughter, I didn't have any time with her when she was a baby. I didn't even bond at all because I had to take her to daycare, I had to go to class, and so now I actually see her [second child] when she took her first steps ...", [Parent that now stays home with her children]

Childcare issues can also put stress on marriages:

"We have not allowed the child care issue to get in the way, but somebody always has to stay home and watch the kids. And many times, I will tell you who suffers, it is [my husband] and I. Because it is our relationship together.", Special Needs Parent

"[Daycare problems] do put stress on marriages too when you have to figure out [what to do].", Minority Parent

What Would You Do If You Lost Your Provider Tomorrow?

Parents were asked what they would do if they suddenly lost their provider. Some parents felt this would be a bigger problem than others, but most said it would be a big problem because they were very satisfied with their current arrangements. Parents with school age children were less concerned with the prospect of losing their child care than those with younger children, particularly infants. Most parents said finding another provider would be very difficult.

"There is no replacement in Terre Haute. There is no daycare open I have called them all. ...It is very difficult to get an infant into childcare.", Parent of an infant

"It would be hard because it is rare to find people like I have got right now.", Satisfied parent with licensed home daycare

"I could [find child care tomorrow], ...I mean she is the lady that lives right across the street from my babysitter, but she is not as clean. You know I mean her house isn't as clean and it would be a real problem. I mean I know in a pinch I could take them there and she would let me but I would have to eventually find someone else.", Food Service Parent

For other parents, the issue would have a much greater long-term impact on their lives, particularly parents with a special needs child.

"I don't know, you know we would have to reevaluate our situation and maybe someone would have to give up a job. And that would change things. Then we would feel like we are taking steps backward to get forward again. But that might be the only option we have.", Minority Parent

"It would be a nightmare. ...I think I would just as soon have my wife quit work and take on a second job as opposed to looking for another daycare provider.", Shift worker Parent

"We simply could not function for very much time after we lost the provider. I mean I could do it for a month maybe, but [my child's] needs are so high we could not function.", Special Needs Parent

County Resources Utilized and Unmet County Needs

Resources Available

After discussing their own child care issues, parents were asked to discuss the child care needs of Vigo County. Parents were first asked to discuss what support they have found in the community to meet their children's needs. 4-C's was identified as a resource some parents had used to find their current child care arrangements. But some parents, particularly those in the shift worker focus group said they were unaware that 4-C's existed when they were searching for child care. Instead they relied on friends, family, and co-workers to provide them with a list of possible providers. Parents also said they were aware of after-school care at the elementary schools, and drop-off care at the Y.

Parents of special need children emphasized that while there were resources available for their children, when they actually tried to use the resources many would not accept their child.

"We seem to have a lot of organizations who touch on special needs and maybe have lots of meetings and do lots of things but not a lot of real hands on going on things. I hear about it but don't see it in action.", Special Needs Parent

"You might find a program that you want your child to attend but they won't accept your child, who clearly by the description on the paper should, meet their needs.", Special Needs Parents

Unmet Needs in Vigo County

Finally parents were asked what they would like to see happen in Vigo County in the next few years with respect to child care. Parents made many different suggestions including: More affordable child care, more quality child care, more on-site child care at businesses, less waiting time for assistance, education and awareness of special needs care, and better regulation of providers. One parent made this interesting comment about child care in Vigo County,

"As I think about it there is not a lot of focus on child care in this community, people are too busy working.", Food Service Parent

Quality Child Care

Parent would like to have more quality child care in Vigo County. They said more licensed child care, particularly more licensed infant care is needed. They also suggested that additional regulation on child-provider ratios would be a good idea. This would further increase the quality of child care.

More Affordable Child Care

Along with more quality child care parents said they would like to see more affordable child care, including more affordable after-school care.

"It seems like they could have something less expensive and affordable that you know would be a good provider for them.", Food Service Parent

Special Needs Care

Parents with special needs children had a few suggestions specific to their own situation. They would like to see more education of providers about caring for a special needs child, including better targeting of people that would be good providers. This might allow for a pool of more competent caregivers. In addition, they would like to see more networking of parents and also agencies that provide services to special needs children.

"Many parents are not aware of the services available to them.", Special Needs Parent

They would like to see parents given information about services before they even leave the hospital or as soon as a diagnosis is made.

On-site Child Care at Businesses

Parents would like to see more on-site child care or at least more business or corporate support for child care. Parents working at ISU said there was a need for more child care there. They felt this was needed for all ISU workers and students to have access to child care on campus. For example, the food service workers interviewed worked at the university but were technically Marriott employees so were not eligible for campus daycare. One interesting issue to note about the expressed desire for on-site care is that some parents, particularly those in the shift worker focus group were skeptical as to whether their employers would ever sponsor on-site child care. They were also unsure if they would use it if it were available.

Assistance

The waiting time to receive 4-C Vouchers and also to be placed on the Waiver program for a special needs child was of concern to parents.

"We were on 4-C, gosh it has been a while now, but we were on that waiting list for over a year.", Parent who used to receive child care vouchers

The wait is particularly onerous for parents with a special needs child. Some parents reported being told that their minimum time spent on the waiting list for the Waiver program would be 7 years.

"And there are thousands of people on the Waiver waiting list. Like [parent] has been on the list for 3 years." "But the thing of it is they only open up like 3 or 4 slots a year. And the list just keeps getting longer and longer...", Special Needs Parents

Along with the long wait to receive assistance parents in one focus group suggested that they would like to voucher program to provide a short period of transition when parents no longer qualify anymore.

"...but then once I became employed, they [4-C] dropped us from those services just immediately like that, we were behind for I don't know how long trying to just catch up. They didn't give us the opportunity to get prepared.",
Parent

Regulation of Providers

Finally parents discussed some issues relating to more monitoring of existing and new providers. In almost all the focus groups parents complained about the quality of child care facilities they saw when they were searching for child care. Many of these facilities were on the list given to them by 4-C. Parents seem to have a misperception of the role of 4-C. They expect the agency to be more of a monitoring agency than it actually is.

"...and 4-C needs to update their list... One of the names that was on the list as someone they recommended... We went out there, it was horrible, there were children being verbally abused right in front of us. They warehouse them...", University Parent

"...But there are a lot of house day cares and things that you can walk in there and kids should just not even be in there. ...if 4-C's was more in tune with who [was watching the kids], walk in and pop in on these daycares if the parents are seeing it more than the agency is seeing it then I think that is a problem.", Minority Parent

Summary

Parent focus groups provided valuable information about the child care needs of Vigo County. Providers felt that there was not enough quality child care available in Vigo County. Although most were satisfied with their current child care arrangements they said finding alternative care would be very difficult if not impossible. Parents would like to see more quality child care including more infant care, they would like care to be affordable, better special needs care and access to resources, less waiting time to receive child care assistance, more on-site or business sponsored care, and more monitoring of providers.

Recommendations

Based on the child care **focus group interviews** the following recommendations could be made:

1. There is a need to increase the quality of care in Vigo County. One way to do this would be to better monitor existing providers.
2. Encourage more unlicensed providers to become licensed. This would help to improve the quality of the child care available. At the same time, encourage licensed providers to receive further training.
3. Explore ways to increase the number of slots for infants in the county. Provide incentives (e.g., money or equipment) to providers that are willing to take infants.
4. Provide incentives for existing providers or new providers to receive training to care for children with special needs. In addition, encourage existing programs for special needs children to be more accommodating to all special needs children.
5. Explore ways to decrease the waiting time for the 4-C Voucher program and also for the Waiver Program for families with a special needs child.

2000 Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment:

Summary of Findings

Supply and Demand for Child Care

1. The demand for child care in Vigo County is expected to remain stable or decline in the next 5 years.
2. Community professionals overwhelmingly agree that there is a shortage of quality child care in Vigo County.
3. There is a limited supply of quality infant care and also special needs care in the county.

Types of Care Needed but Not Available

1. Lack of care for children when they are sick was the most common problem identified by parents surveyed.
2. Other types of child care in Vigo County are in short supply including: Less expensive quality after-school, summer, and nighttime and evening care.
3. Vigo County parents expressed some interest in more business-sponsored care such as on-site or near-site day care.

Child Care Problems and Their Impact on Families

1. Vigo County parents are concerned about the cost of child care. Many low income and single parents are unable to afford quality child care.
2. Many Vigo County parents are forced to miss work or leave early due to child care problems.
3. Parents living in the Enterprise Zone have problems with transportation to and from after-school care.
4. Lower income parents may not be aware that they qualify for child care vouchers.

5. Parents complained of long waiting lists for child care vouchers and also for the Waiver Program for families with a special needs child.

Level of Business Support for Child Care Services

1. Businesses often do not support child care services for their employees, particularly small businesses and businesses in the Enterprise Zone.

Child Care Provider Issues

1. Many providers, including licensed providers, do not have waiting lists particularly for non-infants.
2. Most providers work Monday through Friday, daytime hours only.
3. Cost is a significant barrier to expansion for many providers.
4. Many providers do not provide care for children with special needs. Most do not have wheelchair ramps or other adaptations for the disabled.
5. Coordination with providers is important for scheduling training programs.

Recommendations for Action

Increase the Supply of Quality Child Care

1. There is a need to increase the quality of care in Vigo County. There are different ways to work towards this goal, including:
 - a. Existing providers (licensed and unlicensed) need to be better monitored.
 - b. More unlicensed providers need to be encouraged to become licensed.
 - c. Finally, all providers need to be encouraged to receive further training.
2. Explore ways to increase the number of slots for infants in Vigo County. Provide incentives (e.g., money or equipment) and additional training to providers that are willing to take infants.
3. Provide incentives for existing providers or new providers to receive training to care for children with special needs. Stipends for training are especially important here to educate more providers about caring for special needs children.

In addition, encourage existing programs for special needs children to be more accommodating to all special needs children.

Support Families Needing Child Care

4. Parents are concerned about the cost of child care. At the same time they would like the care their children receive to be high quality. Parents need to be educated about what to expect to pay for quality care. In addition, subsidizing child care for all families, or at least for low to moderate income families may be a goal to work towards.
5. Explore ways to decrease the waiting time for the 4-C Voucher program and also for the Waiver Program (families with a special needs child).
6. Lower income parents need to be informed about what types of assistance are available to them for child care. Many reported not knowing whether they were eligible for the child care voucher program.
7. Finally, the child care plan developed for the county needs to be location specific. The needs of parents in the Terre Haute Enterprise Zone differ to some extent from those in the county as a whole. These specific needs should be taken into consideration when formulating a comprehensive child care plan for Vigo County.

Assist Businesses in Supporting Child Care

8. Businesses need to be encouraged to provide better child care support services for their employees. There is a need to educate local businesses about the impact of child care problems on their employees. Many employees with young children are forced to miss work, leave work early, and/or have concentration problems at work as a result of child care problems. One way to deal with these problems would be to encourage more business sponsored care such as on-site or near-site day care. There is very little currently in Vigo County. This would allow parents a more stable child care situation for their children and would also reduce the stress of traveling to child care.

Support Child Care Providers

9. More evening and nighttime care is needed. Providing financial incentives for existing providers to stay open longer would encourage more evening and nighttime care.

10. Grants to assist with the expansion of facilities are needed. Cost is a major barrier to expansion for many facilities.

Appendices

- A. Key Informant Interview Protocol
- B. Supplementary Information on Child Care in Vigo County
- C. Parent Survey Questionnaire
- D. Business Survey Questionnaire
- E. Provider Survey Questionnaire
- F. Parent Focus Group Protocol

Appendix A: Key Informant Interview Protocol

2000 Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment Key Informant Interview Protocol 2/17/00

I. Introduction

Hello, my name is *(insert name here)*, and I am from Purdue University. We are working with the Vigo County Childcare Needs Assessment Committee on a child care needs assessment for Vigo County. The purpose of this needs assessment is to identify critical unmet child care needs and to develop a comprehensive child care plan for Vigo County.

I am calling you to request a 20 to 25 minute phone interview to gain your informed perspective on families and child care within the county. If you agree to the interview, summaries of your main points may be used in the final needs assessment report in combination with other informants' comments. Your name would be listed in the final report as a participant, but your name will not be attributed to any statement or opinion. Names of interviewees will be included in the final report in order to show that a broad representation of experts in the county have contributed their knowledge to the needs assessment. I will take notes on our conversation, but the interview will not be tape recorded.

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

[If yes] Do you have 25 minutes for the interview now, or would another time be more convenient?

[If no] Thank you for your time and have a nice day.

II. Questions

A. Family Issues

First I am going to ask you a few questions about the families you know and the child care issues they face.

1. For the parents you are familiar with in Vigo County, what are the most important factors they consider when making choices about child care?

[Probe to get at least 3 considerations – make sure the considerations are defined clearly by the informant]

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. Why do you think these factors are the most important to the parents?

3. What are the most common complaints you hear from parents about child care in Vigo County?

II. Provider Issues

Now I am going to ask you some general questions about child care and child care providers in Vigo County.

A. Is there an adequate supply of quality child care for all families in Vigo County?

*[If the supply is inadequate] Why is this?
[Remember to probe for root causes!]*

B. What types of child care do you see in short supply in the county? (i.e., Age, shifts, part vs full time, sick care, drop by care, special needs care)

C. What resources are available to child care providers in the County? What are the differences in what's available to Licensed and unlicensed providers? (i.e., training, financial support, etc....)

III. General problems in child care

Next, I am going to ask you a few questions about the overall child care needs in Vigo County. I'd like you to consider the most critical unmet child care needs in the county.

NEED 1:

What would you consider to be one of the unmet child care needs within the county?

What types of families are most affected by [Need 1]?

How widespread throughout the county is [Need 1]?

What are some of the reasons this need is not being met? [*Probe for more than one reason if appropriate*]

NEED 2:

What would you consider to be another of the unmet child care needs within the county?

What types of families are most affected by [Need 2]?

How widespread throughout the county is [Need 2]?

What are some of the reasons this need is not being met? [*Probe for more than one reason if appropriate*]

NEED 3:

What would you consider to be another of the unmet child care needs within the county?

What types of families are most affected by [Need 3]?

How widespread throughout the county is [Need 3]?

What are some of the reasons this need is not being met? [*Probe for more than one reason if appropriate*]

V. Possible Solutions

We have discussed a variety of child care needs facing both parents and providers. These include ... (reread existing list of unmet needs)

A. How do you think these needs could best be addressed?

B. Should child care programs be advertised?

C. Should agencies and businesses in Vigo County be encouraged to form partnerships to meet the child care needs of the county? (i.e., infant care in church buildings)

- Do you think employers would be interested in this?

- Are you aware of any possible funding sources?

VI. Special Questions [for select interviews only]

1. What agencies in Vigo County are available to assist with childcare issues?
2. How are facilities or individuals licensed and/or accredited in the county?

3. Are there individuals available in the county to assist with licensing and accreditation processes?
4. Is there a training program for caregivers in Vigo County?
5. Do we need a program in Vigo County to train and assist caregivers?
6. Is insurance a requirement for caregivers or only an option?

VII. Additional information on child care in Vigo County

Is there anything else you would like to add about child care in Vigo County that we have not touched upon yet?

VIII. Needs Assessment Questions

Finally, can you suggest any other people with an informed perspective on child care in the county that we should contact for these interviews?

[Closing and Thanks]

Appendix B. Supplementary Information on Child Care in Vigo County¹

1. Agencies available to assist with child care issues:

- 4-C: Community Coordinated Child Care Wabash Valley
- Vigo County Step Ahead Council

2. How individuals are licensed:

- Persons interested in becoming licensed can call 4-C and get a free information packet on licensing. There is also a Provider Service Coordinator available to talk with individuals about how to become licensed.
- Providers interested in becoming licensed must also attend a New Provider Orientation Training.
- After completing the training the provider must complete the appropriate paperwork and submit it to the Licensing Bureau.
- A licensing specialist then inspects the home looking for safety and health concerns.
- After they pass inspection:
 - Providers must also become certified in CPR and First Aid.
 - They need to pass a child welfare check, a criminal history check, and sex offender registry check.
 - There is a second workshop they must attend.
 - Finally, if they fulfill all of these requirements they can get licensed.
- The licensing process takes about one month on average.

3. Assistance available to help with licensing and accreditation processes:

- Vigo County Office of Family and Children:
 - Nancy Harper, Licensing Specialist
 - Lisa Cossette, Family Case Manager
- Provider Link Association, a support group for providers
 - Meets one Wednesday a month
 - Holds periodic training workshops for group members
- Mentor program, where a provider serves as a mentor to a new provider.
- Step Ahead Council:
 - Providers can apply for specific grants through Step Ahead.
 - Licensed Providers: can get grants for fencing; indoor/outdoor play equipment; cribs, playpens, high chairs, and other infant equipment

¹ Information courtesy of interviews with Louise Anderson, Vigo County Step Ahead; Cheryl Smith, 4-C; and Lisa Cossette, Licensing Consultant for Child and Family Services

- Vigo County Public Library:
 - Has a program for providers where the library delivers books to their home.

4. Training programs for caregivers:

- Child Development classes at Ivy Tech:
 - These classes allow providers to increase their training and knowledge of child development.
 - Providers can earn a certificate in Childhood Development.
 - Scholarships are available from the Step Ahead Council to earn a Child Development Associate Degree (CDA) from Ivy Tech.
- 4-C offers various workshops.
- Trainings are available for providers that participate in the Food Program
- Conferences
- Indiana State University offers a Child Development degree.

5. Is a program to train and assist caregivers necessary?

- Need to find a way to have providers take advantage of what is currently available (e.g., classes at Ivy Tech).
- Providers often find it difficult to take advantage of what is already being offered because they do not have the free time to do it.

6. Insurance: requirement or option?

- Unknown

Vigo County Parent Child Care Survey

If you are a parent or guardian of a child 12 or under, please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. This information will be used by local organizations to plan better services for Vigo County children and families now and in the future. This survey is completely voluntary.

- 1. **Do you live in Vigo County?**
If yes, in what town do you live? _____
If no, where do you live? _____
- 2. **Do you work in Vigo County?**
If yes, in what town do you work? _____
If no, where do you work? _____

- 3. **When do you work?**
Number of hours per day? _____
Number of days per week? _____
What hours do you work? (e.g., 7am-3pm, 11pm-7am, etc...) _____

4. Are you currently a student?

5. How many people currently live in your household, including yourself?

6. What are the ages of your children for whom you need child care?
(Write the age of each child, in years.)

7. Tell us about the child care you currently use and about the child care you would prefer to use, if possible. (Check *all* that apply in both columns).

<i>I Currently Use</i>	<i>I Would Prefer</i>	
_____	_____	I care for my own child at home.
_____	_____	My spouse or partner cares for my child at home.
_____	_____	My older child(ren) care(s) for my child at home.
_____	_____	My relative (grandparent, sister, mother, aunt, etc.) care(s) for my child.
_____	_____	My child(ren) stay(s) home alone and take care of themselves.
_____	_____	Part-time preschool or nursery school.
_____	_____	Head Start
_____	_____	Licensed family child care home
_____	_____	Licensed child care center
_____	_____	Child Care Ministry – Church affiliated child care
_____	_____	Babysitter or <i>unlicensed</i> family child care provider
_____	_____	Business sponsored child care (on site or near business)
_____	_____	Other (Please specify): _____

8. How did you find out about your current child care situations?

(Please circle all that apply)

- a. friend/co-worker
- b. family member
- c. business/company where work
- d. newspaper ad
- e. sign/poster
- f. phonebook
- g. referral service
- h. other

9. Are you satisfied with your current child care situation?

10. Are you currently on a waiting list for child care?

11. Which of the following problems have you experienced in the past 12 months?

(Check all that apply to you).

- Cost is too high for the type of child care that I need
- I do not know about child care that is available to me.
- Transportation to or from child care is difficult or not available.
- Transportation to or from after-school care is a problem.
- Location of child care is not convenient.
- No care available during evening or night hours.
- No after-school care available.
- No care is available during the summer
- Child care is not available when my child is sick.
- Child care I use is not safe.
- Child care I use is low quality (e.g., doesn't offer good experiences for kids,....)
- I can't find care for my infant or toddler (i.e., birth to 3 years)
- Child care is not available for my child with special needs.
- Other problem(s). Please describe: _____

12. How do the child care problems you identified in the last question (#11) affect you?

(Check all that apply)

- Missed hours, days of work (If you check this item please indicate about how many days you have missed in the last year ____).
- Had to leave work early
- Couldn't concentrate on my work.
- Other. Please describe: _____

13. What is your current family income?

- a. Under \$20,000/year
- b. \$20,000-34,999/year
- c. \$35,000-50,000/year
- d. Over \$50,000/year

14. How much do you normally pay for child care each week for each child?

a.

Age of Child	Hours of Care/wk	Cost /wk
Example: 3 years	40 hours	\$65

b. Is the quality of the child care you receive...

- equal to what you pay
- more than what you pay
- less than what you pay

c. Would the quality of the child care you would like to have cost ...

- what you can afford
- more than you can afford
- less than you can afford

15. Do you receive any financial assistance with child care?

If yes, what kind of assistance do you receive?

16. Are you currently on a waiting list for financial assistance for child care?

17. Do you qualify for child care vouchers?

If yes, are you currently receiving voucher payments?

18. What are the top 3 things you look for in choosing a child care provider?

Vigo County Business Child Care Survey

This survey is intended for businesses in Vigo County. The Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment Committee would like to learn more about the relationship between local businesses and child care needs. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. This information will be used to help develop a comprehensive child care plan for Vigo County. This survey is completely voluntary.

1. How many employees do you have? _____

2. What hours/shifts do your employees work?

3. As an employer ...
 - a. Does your company have or sponsor an on-site child care facility for the employees?
 - b. Does your company have or sponsor an off-site child care facility for the employees?
 - c. Does your company subsidize child care for your employees?
 - d. Do you offer flexible spending accounts for child care expenses?
 - e. Are there other ways your company provides child care support for employees (i.e., flexible work hours or flex time)?

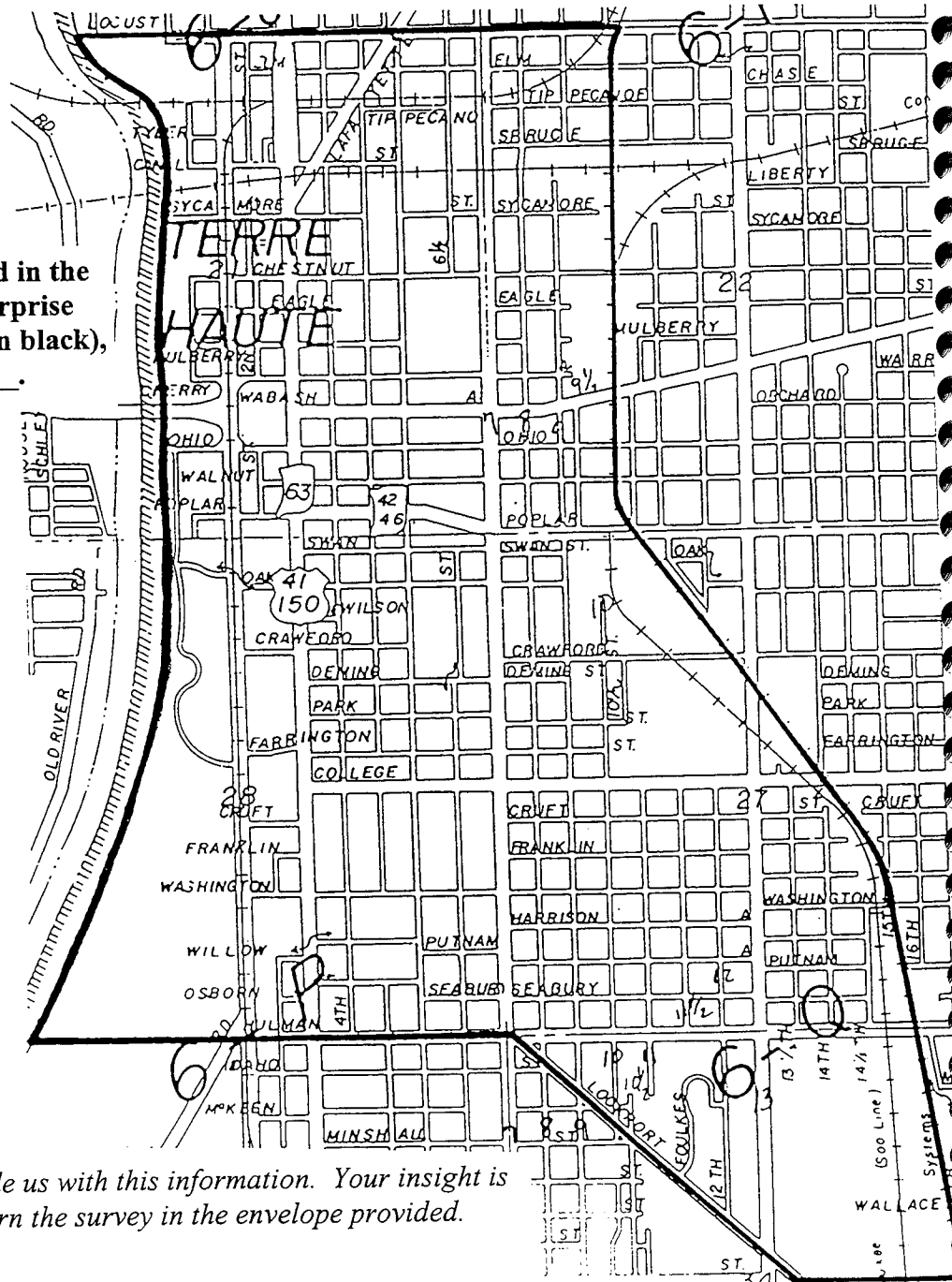
4. If your company provides some type of child care support services, how convenient do you think these services are for your employee?
 - a. Very Convenient
 - b. Somewhat Convenient
 - c. Not Very Convenient
 - d. Inconvenient
 - e. Unknown

Go to next page

5. Do you keep track of the amount of time employees take off due to child care issues? (either formally or informally)
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

6. What is the company's policy regarding the time employees take off for child care issues? Employees must use:
 - a. Personal days
 - b. Sick days
 - c. Vacation days
 - d. Unpaid leave
 - e. Unexcused
 - f. Unknown

7. If your business is located in the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone (the area outlined in black), Please check here _____.



Thank you for taking the time to provide us with this information. Your insight is valuable and appreciated. Please return the survey in the envelope provided.

Vigo County Provider Child Care Survey

This survey is intended for child care providers in Vigo County. The Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment Committee would like to learn more about the child care providers in the county. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. This information will be used to help develop a comprehensive child care plan for Vigo County. This survey is completely voluntary.

If you run a day-care in your own home please fill out the survey. If you work at a child care center please have the director or administrator complete the survey. Thank you.

1. **What type of child care facility/program do you run? (Please circle as many as apply)**
 - a. In home provider
 - b. Privately owned center
 - c. Publicly funded or subsidized center
 - d. Corporate center for employees
 - e. Religious organization
 - f. Head Start
 - g. Montessori
 - h. Other

2. **Is your home/facility licensed?**

3. **Is your home/facility accredited? If yes, by what accrediting agency(ies)?**

4. **How many providers (staff) do you have per child?** _____

5. **What is the age range of the children you care for?** _____

6. **How many child care spaces does your facility have for children 12 and under?** _____

a. Of those spaces how many are for infants (under age 1)? _____

b. Are all your spaces currently full? _____

c. Do you currently have a waiting list? _____

7. **Note the hours under the appropriate day(s) that your facility is open.**

For example, Monday

6am-6pm

Days	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Weekend
Hours						

8. Full /Part-time care:

- a. How many of your spaces are for full-time care? _____
- b. How many are part-time? _____
- c. Do you provide drop-off or short term care? _____

9. Do you have any plans to expand your facility?

If yes, what are the possible barriers to your expansion (e.g., cost)?

10. How many of the children you care for are up to date on their immunizations?

How many are not?

11. Illness or Sickness:

- a. Do you accept children when they are sick?
- b. If yes, do you make any special provisions for children that are sick? (e.g., special sick room)
- c. If you are an in-home provider, what happens if you are sick and unable to work?
- d. If you run a child care center, do you have substitutes available if your staff is sick?

12. Vacations:

- a. If you are an in-home provider, what provisions do you make if you want to take a vacation?
- b. If you run a child care center, how do you handle staff vacations?

13. Do you offer educational programs for children at your facility? If yes, what type?

14. Do you provide any transportation for children?

15. Do you believe security is needed at your facility?

If yes, what steps have you taken?

16. Provider Training:

a. Identify the types of training you and your staff have completed.

b. How often do you and your staff participate in professional development?

- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Every six months
- Once a year
- Other _____

c. How do you learn about new trainings?

17. How do you learn about regulation changes?

18. Do you currently have any problems with liability? (i.e., need to purchase additional insurance)

19. Child care charges:

a. How much do you charge per child/week?

Age of Child	Cost of Care/week
Birth – 24 months	
2-5 years	
Kindergarten	
School-age	
Other (Please indicate)	

- b. Do you have a sliding scale based on parent's income?
- c. Do you have a discount rate for families with more than one child under your care?

20. Cost of Services

- a. What is your expense per child/week to provide care?

Age of Child	Actual Cost of Care/week
Birth – 24 months	
2-5 years	
Kindergarten	
School-age	
Other (Please Indicate)	

- 21. Do you have any special funding to cover the gap between the price and the actual cost? (i.e., subsidies, vouchers, grants, donations, etc....)

- 22. Do you currently care for children with special needs? (For example, cerebral palsy, autism, asthma, Down's Syndrome)
If yes, what types and how many children?

- 23. Do you set aside a specific number of spaces for children with special needs?

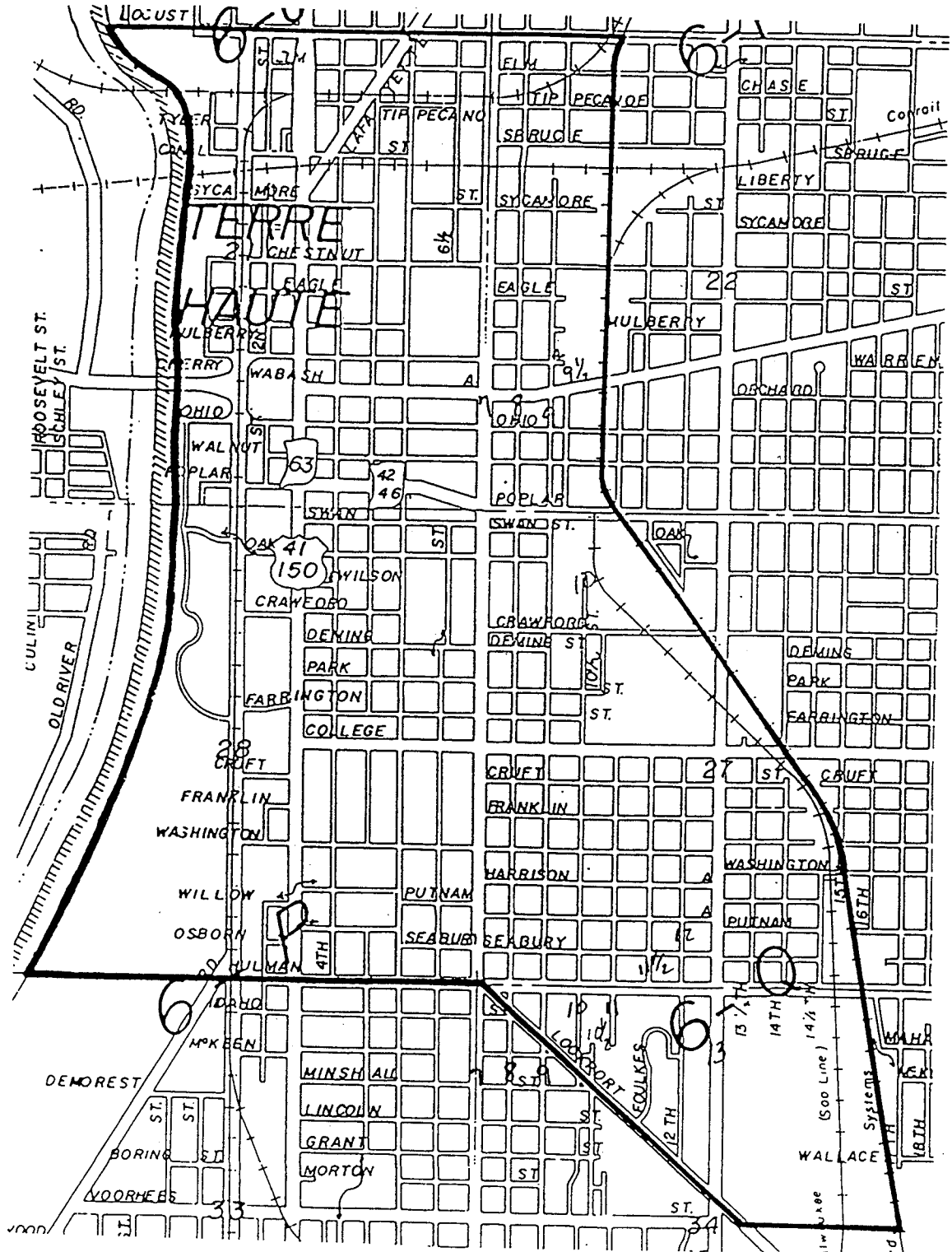
If yes, how many of those spaces are currently filled?

- 24. What types of accommodations do you have for children with:

- a. Physical Disabilities
- b. Learning Disabilities
- c. Emotional Impairments

- 25. Do you have a wheelchair ramp or other adaptations for the disabled in your facility?

26. If your facility is located in the Terre Haute Urban Enterprise Zone (the area outlined in black), Please check here _____.



Thank you for taking the time to provide us with this information. Your insight is valuable and appreciated. Please return the survey in the envelope provided.

Appendix E: Parent Focus Group Protocol

2000 Vigo County Child Care Needs Assessment Parent Focus Group Protocol

Introduction:

Thank you for coming. As you know, our discussion will revolve around the issue of child care in Vigo County. My name is [insert name], and this is [insert name]. We are from Indiana State University and have been asked to facilitate the discussion for the next hour.

You were each selected because you share certain things in common that are of particular interest to us, specifically, you are all parents of [insert title here]. We are particularly interested in your views because we want to hear the thoughts and experiences of as many parents in the county as we can.

The overall purpose of this discussion is to give you each the opportunity to express your views on the current status of child care in the county and to help us become aware of any unmet needs that you are experiencing.

It might be helpful if we all work for the same definition of child care. For this discussion, child care includes any way in which your child is cared for when you are at work or school.

We ask that you be as honest as possible in expressing your views. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers but rather there may be different experiences or differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. To ensure that people feel safe to share their views, we ask:

1. That people feel free to share their views while respecting other's views,
2. That only one person speak at a time,
3. That you speak up so that we can hear your experiences, and
4. That you feel free to "pass" on a subject that you do not feel comfortable discussing.

This discussion will be taped for our use in accessing the child care needs of the county in the future. No names will be directly linked to any comments made. If you will follow along on the handout, I will read to you the conditions of informed consent

which ensures that you understand how our discussion will be used and what your rights are ...[read the informed consent form and collect signed forms]

1. Opening Question

Okay, let's begin by briefly getting to know each other. Why don't each of you tell us

- a. Your name,
- b. Where you live and how long you've lived there,
- c. How many children you have and their ages, and

Would you begin? [start with someone in the room]

Introductory Questions

2. What type(s) of child care do you currently use?

Are you satisfied with your current child care arrangements?

Is this your preferred type of care?

Is that type of preferred care available to you now? Why or Why not?

3. What are the top 3 things you look for in choosing a child care provider?

Key Questions

4. Okay, now we would like you to think a little deeper about the issues behind your needs. What are some of the problems or complaints that you have regarding your child care experiences?

5. How do such child care problems affect you, your children, or other family members?

[Possible probe: For instance, how is your work affected? Your personal life?, Your family relationships]

6. What if you lost your child care provider tomorrow. What would it be like to find a replacement?

Specific Issues for Special Needs Parents Only:

1. How do you define special needs?
2. Have you had problems finding child care for you special needs child?
If yes, what kinds of problems?

3. What kind of support have you found in the community for you child's needs?
4. What needs to be done to improve the support for families with a special needs child?

Ending Question

7. What would you like to see happen in Vigo County in the next few years with regard to child care?

Closing

Well, our time is up. We would like to take the opportunity again to thank you for participating.