



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, May 06, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Library Community Room - 805 1st Street East

AGENDA

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Workshops are not Public Hearings. No member of the public or interested party has the right to make a presentation or address the Council on an item under consideration in a workshop or a study session.

During the City Council Work Session, the Council will primarily discuss and debate items intended to be formally considered at a future City Council Meeting. However, the Council may at any noticed meeting, including a City Council Work Session meeting, take action on any item shown on the posted agenda as a potential action item. The City Council Work Session meeting is a regular meeting of the Independence City Council.

MEETING OPENING

Call the Meeting to Order

PRESENTATIONS

- [1.](#) Sewer and Water Rates
- [2.](#) Proposed WWTP Capacity Information
- [3.](#) Child Care Market Analysis Results

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- [4.](#) Department Report – Fire Department
- [5.](#) Department Report – Library
- [6.](#) Department Report – Parks & Recreation
- [7.](#) Department Report – Police

NEW BUSINESS

- [8.](#) Purchase of Camera for Utilities Department
- [9.](#) 1500 6th Ave. NE Drainage Easement
- [10.](#) Down Payment Assistance Application
- [11.](#) Fiscal Year 2025 Home Rehab Program
- 12.** Council Topics
- 13.** Mayor Topics
- [14.](#) City Manager Topics

Attached is a project update report from Crawford Engineering

ADJOURNMENT

This agenda is subject to change.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Sewer and Water Rates

DISCUSSION:

As Staff has been working through the process of reviewing Sewer and Water Rates in relation to figuring out debt payments that will be necessary for the new Wastewater Treatment Plant, Staff feels it is now necessary to have a conversation with Council about what the future may look like in relation to the new treatment plant and the debt required to fund the plant. While Staff is continuing to apply for grants and look for all funding options, we must assume worse case scenario when planning – that is that the Sewer Utility Fund will need to fund the entirety of the debt payments for the plant.

Attached are spreadsheets prepared by Speer Financial, the City's Financial Advisors, showing options for potential funding levels over multiple years for the Sewer Rates of the City. Additionally, Staff has asked them to prepare and provide an overview of current Water Rates as well as there are needed projects on the Water system that would likely require an increase in rates as well.

Maggie Burger from Speer Financial will be on hand to answer questions and discuss with the Council as discussion occurs on this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

Assumes a \$43,060,000 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan. No CDBG, No Federal Appropriation, No Cash Used

City of Independence, Iowa

Sewer

Net Income Summary and Debt Service Coverage

Proposed

Series 2024 \$43,060,000 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan

Fiscal Year	Accounts	0.0%		0.0%		25.0%		40.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%	
		2023	3013	2024	3013	2025	3013	2026	3013	2027	3013	2028	3013	2029	3013	2030	3013	2031	3013
Operating Revenue:																			
Sewer charges for service		\$	2,599,258	\$	2,599,258	\$	3,249,073	\$	4,548,702	\$	4,639,676	\$	4,732,469	\$	4,827,118	\$	4,923,661	\$	5,022,134
Misc. Revenue			238		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-
Infrastructure Fee \$ /mo/ accounts			-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-
Net Operating Revenue		\$	2,599,496	\$	2,599,258	\$	3,249,073	\$	4,548,702	\$	4,639,676	\$	4,732,469	\$	4,827,118	\$	4,923,661	\$	5,022,134
Annual Increase in O/M					2%		2%		2%		2%		2%		2%		2%		2%
Operating Expense:																			
Operation and Maintenance		\$	1,243,615	\$	1,268,487	\$	1,293,857	\$	1,319,734	\$	1,346,129	\$	1,373,051	\$	1,400,512	\$	1,428,523	\$	1,457,093
Misc. Expenses			-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-
Operating Expense:		\$	1,243,615	\$	1,268,487	\$	1,293,857	\$	1,319,734	\$	1,346,129	\$	1,373,051	\$	1,400,512	\$	1,428,523	\$	1,457,093
Net Operating Income:		\$	1,355,881	\$	1,330,771	\$	1,955,215	\$	3,228,967	\$	3,293,547	\$	3,359,418	\$	3,426,606	\$	3,495,138	\$	3,565,041
Calculation of Debt Service Coverage:																			
Minus: Transfer to Savings																			
Income Available For Debt Service		\$	1,355,881	\$	1,330,771	\$	1,955,215	\$	3,228,967	\$	3,293,547	\$	3,359,418	\$	3,426,606	\$	3,495,138	\$	3,565,041
2021 Sewer Revenue Ref Bonds - \$1,388,000		\$	195,200	\$	509,072	\$	512,054												
2018 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan - \$1,562,050			95,320		95,960		95,560		95,140		95,700		95,220		95,720		95,180		95,620
2024 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan - \$43,060,000							592,075		2,828,150		2,827,940		2,827,493		2,827,780		2,827,748		2,828,368
Total Debt Payment		\$	290,520.00	\$	605,032.00	\$	1,199,689.00	\$	2,923,290.00	\$	2,923,640.00	\$	2,922,712.50	\$	2,923,500.00	\$	2,922,927.50	\$	2,923,987.50
Debt Service Coverage			4.67x		2.20x		1.63x		1.10x		1.13x		1.15x		1.17x		1.20x		1.22x
Cash Available		\$	1,065,361	\$	725,739	\$	755,526	\$	305,677	\$	369,907	\$	436,705	\$	503,106	\$	572,211	\$	641,053
Cash Balance (Beginning of Year)		\$	6,549,526	\$	7,291,738	\$	8,017,477	\$	8,773,003	\$	9,078,680	\$	9,448,587	\$	9,885,292	\$	10,388,398	\$	10,960,609
Ending Cash Balance		\$	7,291,738	\$	8,017,477	\$	8,773,003	\$	9,078,680	\$	9,448,587	\$	9,885,292	\$	10,388,398	\$	10,960,609	\$	11,601,662
Speer Financial, Inc.			08/Apr/24																
AVG MONTHLY BILL			\$71.90		\$71.89		\$89.86		\$125.81		\$128.32		\$130.89		\$133.51		\$136.18		\$138.90
% increase in avg bill					0.0%		25.0%		40.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%
fiscal year			2023		2024		2025		2026		2027		2028		2029		2030		2031
Avg Mo. Bill Based On Revs / by # of Accounts		\$	71.90	\$	71.89	\$	89.86	\$	125.81	\$	128.32	\$	130.89	\$	133.51	\$	136.18	\$	138.90

City of Independence, Iowa

Net Income Summary and Debt Service Coverage

Series 2024 \$43,060,000 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan

2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%		2.0%			
2032	3013	2033	3013	2034	3013	2035	3013	2036	3013	2037	3013	2038	3013	2039	3013	2040	3013	2041	3013	2042	3013
\$	5,122,577	\$	5,225,028	\$	5,329,529	\$	5,436,119	\$	5,544,842	\$	5,655,739	\$	5,768,853	\$	5,884,230	\$	6,001,915	\$	6,121,953	\$	6,244,392
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
\$	5,122,577	\$	5,225,028	\$	5,329,529	\$	5,436,119	\$	5,544,842	\$	5,655,739	\$	5,768,853	\$	5,884,230	\$	6,001,915	\$	6,121,953	\$	6,244,392
2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	
\$	1,486,235	\$	1,515,960	\$	1,546,279	\$	1,577,205	\$	1,608,749	\$	1,640,924	\$	1,673,742	\$	1,707,217	\$	1,741,361	\$	1,776,188	\$	1,811,712
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
\$	1,486,235	\$	1,515,960	\$	1,546,279	\$	1,577,205	\$	1,608,749	\$	1,640,924	\$	1,673,742	\$	1,707,217	\$	1,741,361	\$	1,776,188	\$	1,811,712
\$	3,636,342	\$	3,709,068	\$	3,783,250	\$	3,858,915	\$	3,936,093	\$	4,014,815	\$	4,095,111	\$	4,177,014	\$	4,260,554	\$	4,345,765	\$	4,432,680
\$	3,636,342	\$	3,709,068	\$	3,783,250	\$	3,858,915	\$	3,936,093	\$	4,014,815	\$	4,095,111	\$	4,177,014	\$	4,260,554	\$	4,345,765	\$	4,432,680
96,020	95,380	95,720	96,020	95,280	95,520	95,720	95,880	2,827,585	2,827,400	2,827,758	2,827,603	2,827,908	2,827,618	2,827,705	2,828,115	2,827,793	2,827,710	2,827,813			
\$	2,923,605.00	\$	2,922,780.00	\$	2,923,477.50	\$	2,923,622.50	\$	2,923,187.50	\$	2,923,137.50	\$	2,923,425.00	\$	2,923,995.00	\$	2,827,792.50	\$	2,827,710.00	\$	2,827,812.50
1.24x	1.27x	1.29x	1.32x	1.35x	1.37x	1.40x	1.43x	1.51x	1.54x	1.57x											
\$	712,737	\$	786,288	\$	859,772	\$	935,292	\$	1,012,906	\$	1,091,677	\$	1,171,686	\$	1,253,019	\$	1,432,761	\$	1,518,055	\$	1,604,868
\$	11,601,662	\$	12,314,399	\$	13,100,687	\$	13,960,460	\$	14,895,752	\$	15,908,657	\$	17,000,335	\$	18,172,021	\$	19,425,040	\$	20,857,801	\$	22,375,856
\$	12,314,399	\$	13,100,687	\$	13,960,460	\$	14,895,752	\$	15,908,657	\$	17,000,335	\$	18,172,021	\$	19,425,040	\$	20,857,801	\$	22,375,856	\$	23,980,724
\$141.68	\$144.51	\$147.40	\$150.35	\$153.36	\$156.43	\$159.55	\$162.75	\$166.00	\$169.32	\$172.71											
2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%											
2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042											
\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
\$	141.68	\$	144.51	\$	147.40	\$	150.35	\$	153.36	\$	156.43	\$	159.55	\$	162.75	\$	166.00	\$	169.32	\$	172.71

Speer Financial, Inc.

Item #1.

Assumes a \$39,290,000 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan. No CDBG, No Federal Appropriation, No Cash Used

Uses \$3,770,000 of Sewer Cash

Sewer

City of Independence, Iowa

Net Income Summary and Debt Service Coverage

Proposed

Page 1

Series 2024 \$39,290,000 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan

		0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	15.0%	15.0%	16.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Fiscal Year	Accounts	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
		3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013
Operating Revenue:										
Sewer charges for service	\$	2,599,258	\$ 2,599,258	\$ 2,859,184	\$ 3,288,061	\$ 3,781,271	\$ 4,386,274	\$ 4,473,999	\$ 4,563,479	\$ 4,654,749
Misc. Revenue		238	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Infrastructure Fee \$ /mo/ accounts		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Operating Revenue	\$	2,599,496	\$ 2,599,258	\$ 2,859,184	\$ 3,288,061	\$ 3,781,271	\$ 4,386,274	\$ 4,473,999	\$ 4,563,479	\$ 4,654,749
	Annual Increase in O/M		2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Operating Expense:										
Operation and Maintenance	\$	1,243,615	\$ 1,268,487	\$ 1,293,857	\$ 1,319,734	\$ 1,346,129	\$ 1,373,051	\$ 1,400,512	\$ 1,428,523	\$ 1,457,093
Misc. Expenses		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Operating Expense:	\$	1,243,615	\$ 1,268,487	\$ 1,293,857	\$ 1,319,734	\$ 1,346,129	\$ 1,373,051	\$ 1,400,512	\$ 1,428,523	\$ 1,457,093
Net Operating Income:	\$	1,355,881	\$ 1,330,771	\$ 1,565,327	\$ 1,968,327	\$ 2,435,142	\$ 3,013,222	\$ 3,073,487	\$ 3,134,957	\$ 3,197,656
Calculation of Debt Service Coverage:										
Minus: Transfer to Savings										
Income Available For Debt Service	\$	1,355,881	\$ 1,330,771	\$ 1,565,327	\$ 1,968,327	\$ 2,435,142	\$ 3,013,222	\$ 3,073,487	\$ 3,134,957	\$ 3,197,656
2021 Sewer Revenue Ref Bonds - \$1,388,000	\$	195,200	\$ 509,072	\$ 512,054						
2018 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan - \$1,562,050		95,320	95,960	95,560	95,140	95,700	95,220	95,720	95,180	95,620
2024 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan - \$39,290,000				540,238	1,699,475	2,049,453	2,649,338	2,649,980	2,649,385	2,649,553
Total Debt Payment	\$	290,520.00	\$ 605,032.00	\$ 1,147,851.50	\$ 1,794,615.00	\$ 2,145,152.50	\$ 2,744,557.50	\$ 2,745,700.00	\$ 2,744,565.00	\$ 2,745,172.50
Debt Service Coverage		4.67x	2.20x	1.36x	1.10x	1.14x	1.10x	1.12x	1.14x	1.16x
Cash Available	\$	1,065,361	\$ 725,739	\$ 417,475	\$ 173,712	\$ 289,989	\$ 268,665	\$ 327,787	\$ 390,392	\$ 452,483
Cash Balance (Beginning of Year)	\$	6,549,526	\$ 7,291,738	\$ 8,017,477	\$ 8,434,952	\$ 4,838,664	\$ 5,128,653	\$ 5,397,318	\$ 5,725,105	\$ 6,115,497
Draw down of cash					(3,770,000.00)					
Ending Cash Balance	\$	7,291,738	\$ 8,017,477	\$ 8,434,952	\$ 4,838,664	\$ 5,128,653	\$ 5,397,318	\$ 5,725,105	\$ 6,115,497	\$ 6,567,980
Speer Financial, Inc.										
10/Apr/24										
AVG MONTHLY BILL	\$71.90	\$71.89	\$79.08	\$90.94	\$104.58	\$121.32	\$123.74	\$126.22	\$128.74	
% increase in avg bill	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	15.0%	15.0%	16.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	
fiscal year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	
Avg Mo. Bill Based On Revs / by # of Accounts	\$ 71.90	\$ 71.89	\$ 79.08	\$ 90.94	\$ 104.58	\$ 121.32	\$ 123.74	\$ 126.22	\$ 128.74	

City of Independence, Iowa

Net Income Summary and Debt Service Coverage

Series 2024 \$39,290,000 Sewer Revenue SRF Loan											
2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	
3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013
\$ 4,747,844	\$ 4,842,801	\$ 4,939,657	\$ 5,038,450	\$ 5,139,219	\$ 5,242,003	\$ 5,346,843	\$ 5,453,780	\$ 5,562,856	\$ 5,674,113	\$ 5,787,595	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
\$ 4,747,844	\$ 4,842,801	\$ 4,939,657	\$ 5,038,450	\$ 5,139,219	\$ 5,242,003	\$ 5,346,843	\$ 5,453,780	\$ 5,562,856	\$ 5,674,113	\$ 5,787,595	
2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	
\$ 1,486,235	\$ 1,515,960	\$ 1,546,279	\$ 1,577,205	\$ 1,608,749	\$ 1,640,924	\$ 1,673,742	\$ 1,707,217	\$ 1,741,361	\$ 1,776,188	\$ 1,811,712	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
\$ 1,486,235	\$ 1,515,960	\$ 1,546,279	\$ 1,577,205	\$ 1,608,749	\$ 1,640,924	\$ 1,673,742	\$ 1,707,217	\$ 1,741,361	\$ 1,776,188	\$ 1,811,712	
\$ 3,261,609	\$ 3,326,841	\$ 3,393,378	\$ 3,461,245	\$ 3,530,470	\$ 3,601,080	\$ 3,673,101	\$ 3,746,563	\$ 3,821,495	\$ 3,897,925	\$ 3,975,883	
\$ 3,261,609	\$ 3,326,841	\$ 3,393,378	\$ 3,461,245	\$ 3,530,470	\$ 3,601,080	\$ 3,673,101	\$ 3,746,563	\$ 3,821,495	\$ 3,897,925	\$ 3,975,883	
96,020	95,380	95,720	96,020	95,280	95,520	95,720	95,880				
2,649,428	2,688,983	2,699,080	2,699,493	2,699,410	2,699,815	2,699,653	2,699,895	2,699,488	2,699,403	2,699,585	
\$ 2,745,447.50	\$ 2,784,362.50	\$ 2,794,800.00	\$ 2,795,512.50	\$ 2,794,690.00	\$ 2,795,335.00	\$ 2,795,372.50	\$ 2,795,775.00	\$ 2,699,487.50	\$ 2,699,402.50	\$ 2,699,585.00	
1.19x	1.19x	1.21x	1.24x	1.26x	1.29x	1.31x	1.34x	1.42x	1.44x	1.47x	
\$ 516,161	\$ 542,479	\$ 598,578	\$ 665,733	\$ 735,780	\$ 805,745	\$ 877,729	\$ 950,788	\$ 1,122,007	\$ 1,198,522	\$ 1,276,298	
\$ 6,567,980	\$ 7,084,141	\$ 7,626,620	\$ 8,225,198	\$ 8,890,931	\$ 9,626,711	\$ 10,432,456	\$ 11,310,184	\$ 12,260,973	\$ 13,382,980	\$ 14,581,502	
\$ 7,084,141	\$ 7,626,620	\$ 8,225,198	\$ 8,890,931	\$ 9,626,711	\$ 10,432,456	\$ 11,310,184	\$ 12,260,973	\$ 13,382,980	\$ 14,581,502	\$ 15,857,800	
\$131.32	\$133.94	\$136.62	\$139.35	\$142.14	\$144.98	\$147.88	\$150.84	\$153.86	\$156.93	\$160.07	
2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	
2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
\$ 131.32	\$ 133.94	\$ 136.62	\$ 139.35	\$ 142.14	\$ 144.98	\$ 147.88	\$ 150.84	\$ 153.86	\$ 156.93	\$ 160.07	

Speer Financial, Inc.

Water

City of Independence, Iowa

Net Income Summary and Debt Service Coverage

Proposed

Water Revenue Analysis

Fiscal Year	2023		2024		2025		2026		2027		2028		2029		2030		2031	
	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013	Accounts	3013

Operating Revenue:																		
Water charges for service	\$	1,291,499	\$	1,330,244	\$	1,370,151	\$	1,411,256	\$	1,453,594	\$	1,497,201	\$	1,542,117	\$	1,588,381	\$	1,636,032
Misc. Revenue		9,816		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-
Infrastructure Fee \$ /mo/ accounts		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-

Net Operating Revenue	\$	1,301,315	\$	1,330,244	\$	1,370,151	\$	1,411,256	\$	1,453,594	\$	1,497,201	\$	1,542,117	\$	1,588,381	\$	1,636,032
Annual Increase in O/M				2%		2%		2%		2%		2%		2%		2%		2%

Operating Expense:																		
Operation and Maintenance	\$	456,906	\$	466,044	\$	475,365	\$	484,872	\$	494,570	\$	504,461	\$	514,550	\$	524,841	\$	535,338
Misc. Expenses		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-		-

Operating Expense:	\$	456,906	\$	466,044	\$	475,365	\$	484,872	\$	494,570	\$	504,461	\$	514,550	\$	524,841	\$	535,338
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Net Operating Income:	\$	844,409	\$	864,200	\$	894,786	\$	926,384	\$	959,024	\$	992,740	\$	1,027,567	\$	1,063,539	\$	1,100,694
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Calculation of Debt Service Coverage:

Minus: Transfer to Savings

Income Available For Debt Service	\$	844,409	\$	864,200	\$	894,786	\$	926,384	\$	959,024	\$	992,740	\$	1,027,567	\$	1,063,539	\$	1,100,694
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2021 Water Revenue Bonds, Series 2021	\$	89,058	\$	93,195	\$	92,675	\$	92,155	\$	91,355	\$	95,555	\$	94,450	\$	93,345	\$	97,070
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Total Debt Payment	\$	89,058.00	\$	93,195.00	\$	92,675.00	\$	92,155.00	\$	91,355.00	\$	95,555.00	\$	94,450.00	\$	93,345.00	\$	97,070.00
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Debt Service Coverage		9.48x		9.27x		9.66x		10.05x		10.50x		10.39x		10.88x		11.39x		11.34x
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Cash Available	\$	755,351	\$	771,005	\$	802,111	\$	834,229	\$	867,669	\$	897,185	\$	933,117	\$	970,194	\$	1,003,624
Capital Projects Line		(414,000)		(414,000)		(414,000)		(414,000)		(414,000)		(414,000)		(414,000)		(414,000)		(414,000)
Cash Balance (Beginning of Year)			\$	2,720,467	\$	3,077,472	\$	3,465,583	\$	3,885,812	\$	4,339,480	\$	4,822,666	\$	5,341,783	\$	5,897,977
Ending Cash Balance	\$	2,720,467	\$	3,077,472	\$	3,465,583	\$	3,885,812	\$	4,339,480	\$	4,822,666	\$	5,341,783	\$	5,897,977	\$	6,487,601

Speer Financial, Inc.

24/Apr/24

AVG MONTHLY BILL	\$35.99	\$36.79	\$37.90	\$39.03	\$40.20	\$41.41	\$42.65	\$43.93	\$45.25
% increase in avg bill		2.2%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
fiscal year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Avg Mo. Bill Based On Revs / by # of Accounts	\$ 35.99	\$ 36.79	\$ 37.90	\$ 39.03	\$ 40.20	\$ 41.41	\$ 42.65	\$ 43.93	\$ 45.25

City of Independence, Iowa

Net Income Summary and Debt Service Coverage

Water Revenue Analysis											
3.0%		3.0%		3.0%		3.0%		3.0%		3.0%	
2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	
3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013	3013
\$ 1,685,113	\$ 1,735,667	\$ 1,787,737	\$ 1,841,369	\$ 1,896,610	\$ 1,953,508	\$ 2,012,113	\$ 2,072,477	\$ 2,134,651	\$ 2,198,691	\$ 2,264,651	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
\$ 1,685,113	\$ 1,735,667	\$ 1,787,737	\$ 1,841,369	\$ 1,896,610	\$ 1,953,508	\$ 2,012,113	\$ 2,072,477	\$ 2,134,651	\$ 2,198,691	\$ 2,264,651	
2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	
\$ 546,045	\$ 556,966	\$ 568,105	\$ 579,467	\$ 591,057	\$ 602,878	\$ 614,935	\$ 627,234	\$ 639,779	\$ 652,574	\$ 665,626	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
\$ 546,045	\$ 556,966	\$ 568,105	\$ 579,467	\$ 591,057	\$ 602,878	\$ 614,935	\$ 627,234	\$ 639,779	\$ 652,574	\$ 665,626	
\$ 1,139,068	\$ 1,178,701	\$ 1,219,631	\$ 1,261,901	\$ 1,305,553	\$ 1,350,630	\$ 1,397,178	\$ 1,445,243	\$ 1,494,872	\$ 1,546,116	#####	
\$ 1,139,068	\$ 1,178,701	\$ 1,219,631	\$ 1,261,901	\$ 1,305,553	\$ 1,350,630	\$ 1,397,178	\$ 1,445,243	\$ 1,494,872	\$ 1,546,116	\$ 1,599,026	
\$ 95,720	\$ 94,190	\$ 82,660	\$ 61,140								
	-										
\$ 95,720.00	\$ 94,190.00	\$ 82,660.00	\$ 61,140.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
11.90x	12.51x	14.75x	20.64x								
\$ 1,043,348	\$ 1,084,511	\$ 1,136,971	\$ 1,200,761	\$ 1,305,553	\$ 1,350,630	\$ 1,397,178	\$ 1,445,243	\$ 1,494,872	\$ 1,546,116	\$ 1,599,026	
(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	(414,000)	
\$ 6,487,601	\$ 7,116,949	\$ 7,787,460	\$ 8,510,432	\$ 9,297,193	\$ 10,188,746	\$ 11,125,377	\$ 12,108,555	\$ 13,139,798	\$ 14,220,670	\$ 15,352,786	
\$ 7,116,949	\$ 7,787,460	\$ 8,510,432	\$ 9,297,193	\$ 10,188,746	\$ 11,125,377	\$ 12,108,555	\$ 13,139,798	\$ 14,220,670	\$ 15,352,786	\$ 16,537,812	
\$46.61	\$48.00	\$49.45	\$50.93	\$52.46	\$54.03	\$55.65	\$57.32	\$59.04	\$60.81	\$62.64	
3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	
2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	
\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
\$ 46.61	\$ 48.00	\$ 49.45	\$ 50.93	\$ 52.46	\$ 54.03	\$ 55.65	\$ 57.32	\$ 59.04	\$ 60.81	\$ 62.64	



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Proposed WWTP Capacity Information

DISCUSSION:

At the April City Council Work Session, the Council inquired about the before and after capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant in relation to the upcoming plant project. Attached is a spreadsheet with additional information related to the current and proposed loadings for the plant.

Bradley Lake from Strand Engineering will be on hand to answer questions and discuss with the Council as discussion occurs on this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

City of Independence
City Council Meeting
May 6, 2024

Projected New Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity (Max. Day Basis)

	Existing Load Estimates	Projected (2046)	Percentage Increase
Population (See Notes 1 and 2)	6,064	6,695	10%
Residential/Commercial Maximum Day Loads Received			
BOD5 (lbs/day)	3,000	3,300	10%
TKN (lbs/day)	350	380	9%
Industrial Maximum Day Loads Received			
BOD5 (lbs/day)	5,600	9,000	61%
TKN (lbs/day)	560	890	59%
Maximum Day Influent Loads			
BOD5 (lbs/day)	8,600	12,300	43%
TKN (lbs/day)	910	1,270	40%
Permitted Industrial Loadings - Maximum Day			
BOD5 (lbs/day)	6,900	TBD	TBD
TKN (lbs/day)	210	TBD	TBD
Estimated Plant Rated Capacity (See Note 3)			
BOD5 (lbs/day)	10,650	20,000	88%
TKN (lbs/day)	200	1,500	650%
Percent of Design Capacity			
BOD5	81%		
TKN	455%		

Notes:

- 1) Existing population is from 2020 Census Data.
- 2) Projected population growth rate is from Buchanan County and regional planning groups.
- 3) New estimated plant rated capacity requires agency approval. New plant rated capacity in excess of existing plant rated capacity could result in more stringent effluent limits.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Child Care Market Analysis Results

DISCUSSION:

In 2023, First Children's Finance was commissioned by the City of Independence to conduct a Child Care Market Analysis. This analysis provides relevant child care data, child care market analysis, and First Children's Finance's key findings of the child care market of Independence, Iowa. The analysis was made possible in part through a Rural Child Care Market Study grant received by the City of Independence through the Empower Rural Iowa initiative, a program administered by the Center for Rural Revitalization, a division of Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Special thanks goes to Buchanan County Economic Development for their Director's leadership and assistance as we have worked through this analysis.

Angie Rae Duncan, Business Development Manager for First Children's Finance and Lisa Kremer, Director of Buchanan County Economic Development will be on hand to answer questions and discuss with the Council as discussion occurs on this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

The Status of Child Care in Independence, Iowa

May 6, 2024

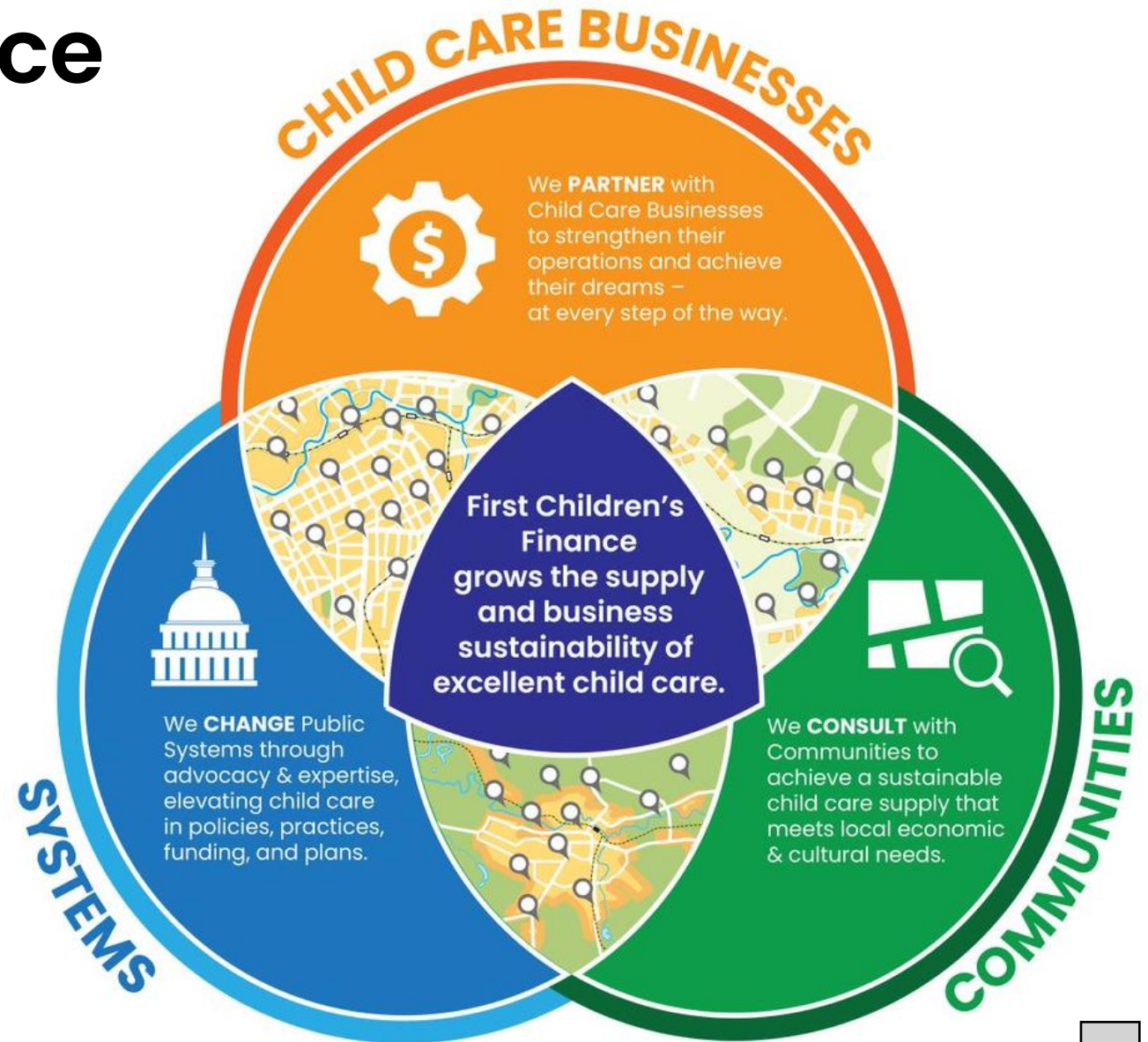


First Children's Finance

National nonprofit organization established 1991, serving Iowa since 2006.

Staff experience and expertise in business, economic development, and child care.

Significant support from Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Northwest Area Foundation, and USDA-Rural Development.



Project Steering Committee

Brad Bleichner, Mayor of Independence

Carrie Mattson, Geater Machine & Manufacturing

Cynthia Phillips, Independence Community School District

Kathryn Jensen, Independence City Council

Kay Reidy, Independence Community School District

Kelly Walton, Kidsville Early Learning Center

Kevin Jimmerson, Independence Mental Health Institute

Lisa Kremer, Buchanan County Economic Development

Lisa Wood, Child Care Resource & Referral

Maria Drilling, Independence Premium Foods

Mary Janssen, Child Care Resource & Referral

Matt Schmitz, City of Independence

Melissa Trumbauer, Geater Machine & Manufacturing

Michelle McBride, Buchanan County Health Center

Molly Hocken, Community Volunteer

Nikki Barth, Independence Chamber of Commerce

Tyler Rassmussen, EPM Iowa Real Estate

Project Funders and Partners

This project was made possible in part through a Rural Child Care Market Study grant received by City of Independence through the Empower Rural Iowa initiative, a program administered by Center for Rural Revitalization, a division of Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Project Components

Child Care Market Analysis

Strategic Plan for Child Care

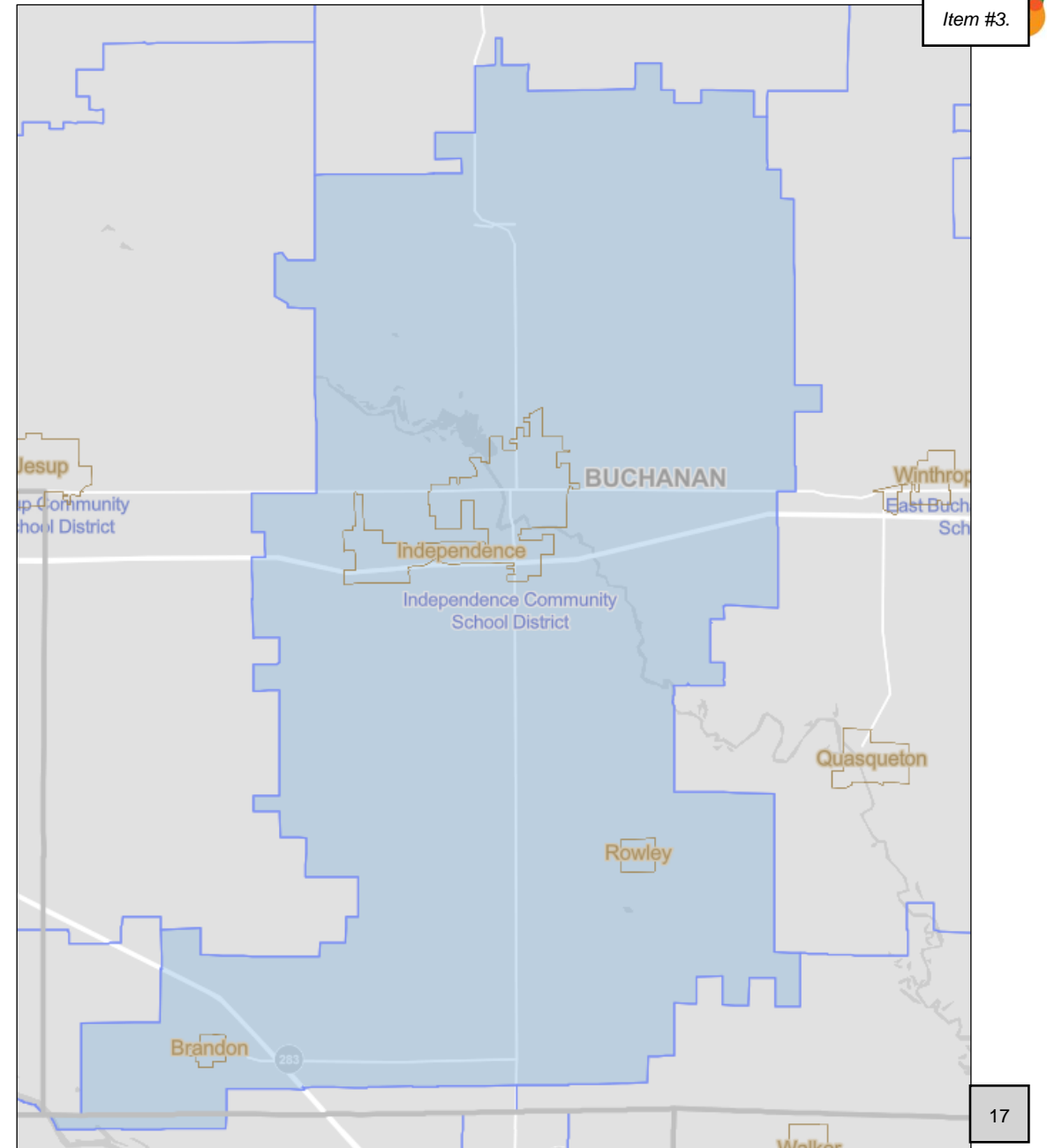
Market Area

Demographic Research

Boundaries of the Independence Community School District

Parent Survey Respondents

Any parent that is currently using, or that would prefer to use, child care in Independence regardless of where they live.



Market Area Snapshot

Independence area total population increased, while number of children ages 0 to 11 decreased over last 10 years.

- As of 2022 total population is 9,148 (+267 since 2012)
- As of 2021 there are 1,153 children (-193 since 2012)

Largest industry for employment is manufacturing.

Average weekly wage for manufacturing is \$1,113.

Total regulated child care spaces in Buchanan County has decreased over last 5 years (net change -74 spaces).

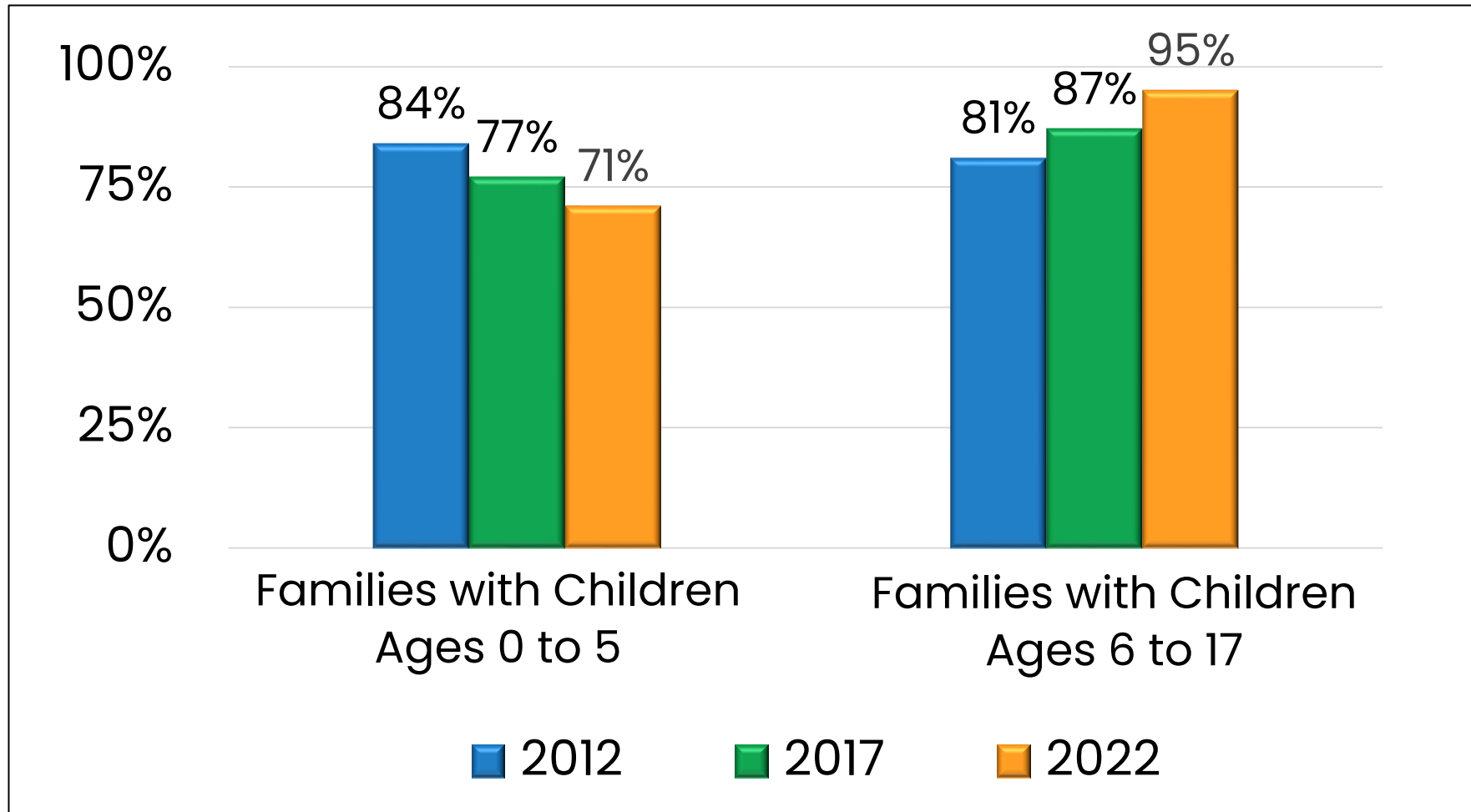
Child Care Market Analysis

Key Findings

1. The percentage of families with young children and all parents in the labor force is declining.
2. Parents are having difficulty finding child care.
3. Parents indicate child care challenges are affecting their job.
4. There is a shortage of child care spaces among all age groups.
5. Parents want center-based child care.
6. Median income of families with children is higher than the Child Care Assistance (CCA) threshold.
7. Child care centers are willing to expand.
8. Few employers are currently impacted by child care.
9. Some employers are willing to donate or make a contribution for child care.

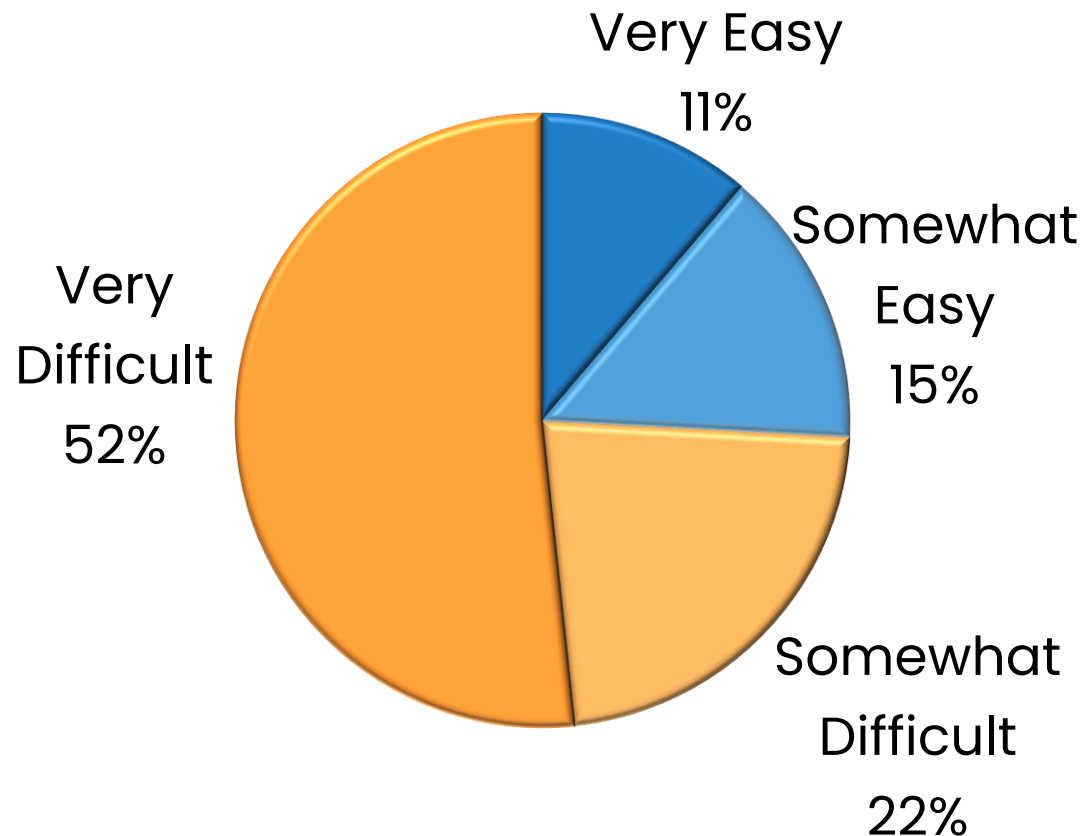
Finding 1: The percentage of families with young children and all parents in the labor force is declining.

Item #3.

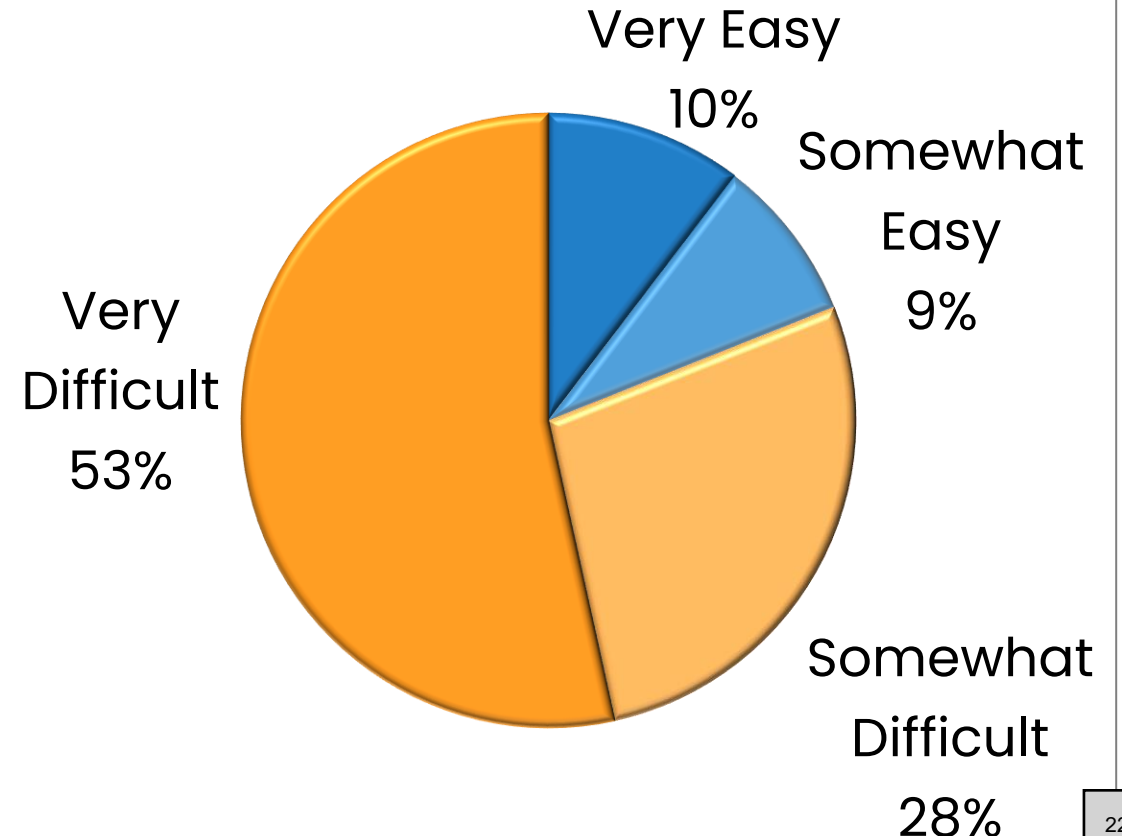


Finding 2: Parents are having difficulty finding child care.

Children Ages 0 to 5



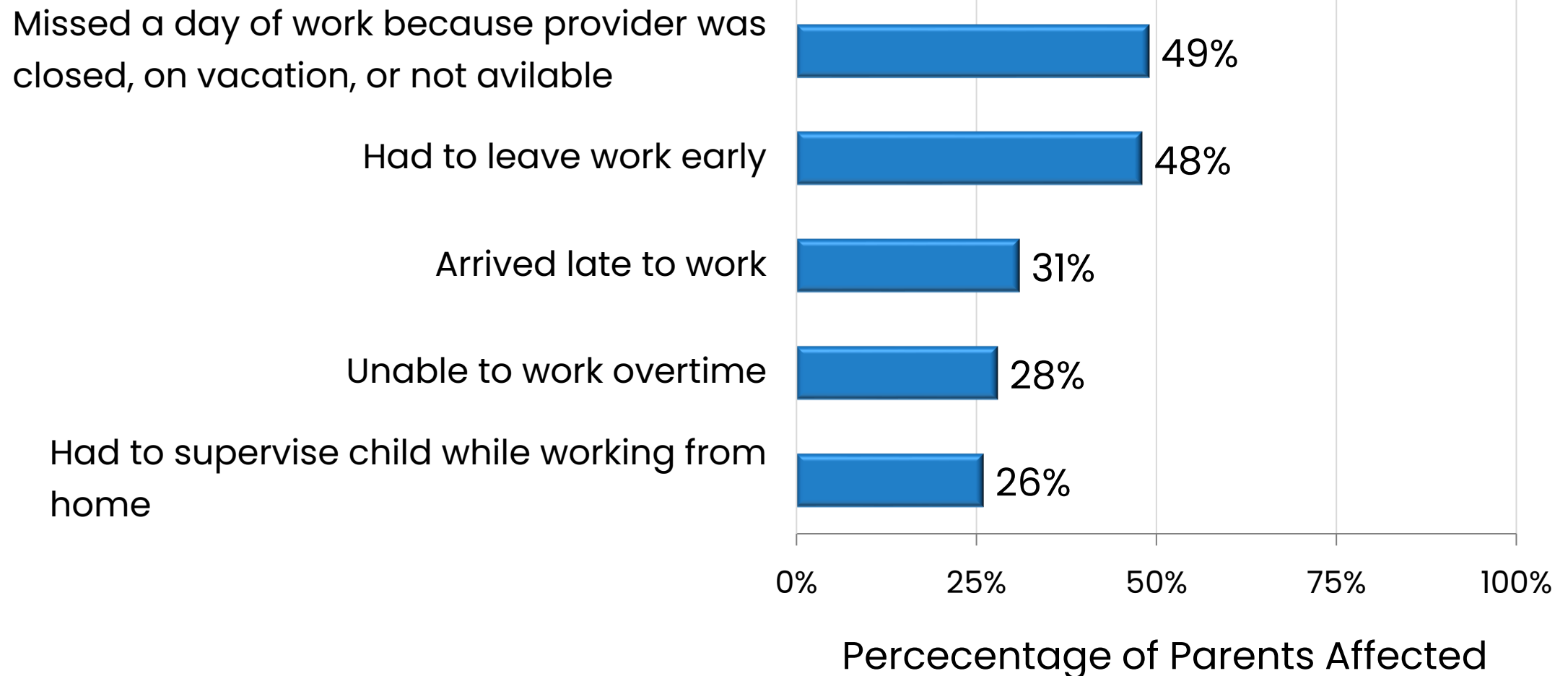
Children Ages 5 to 12



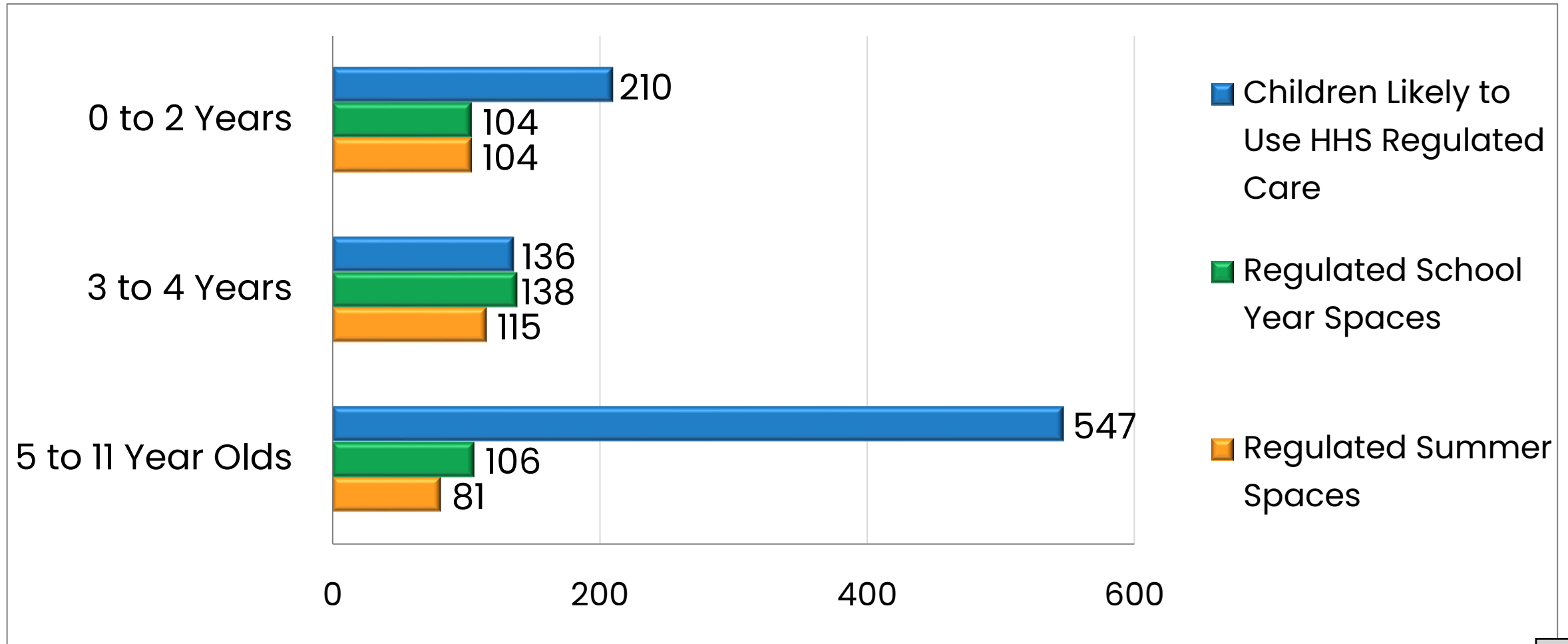
Obstacles Experienced by Parents

- *Everywhere had a waitlist. We chose an in-home provider (we were not completely excited about) because they were the only ones that did not have a waitlist.*
- *Few spots are available for infants.*
- *Finding childcare with spots open yet affordable.*
- *Summer child care.*
- *Lack of openings in high quality setting.*
- *Finding a provider that transfers to and from school.*

Finding 3: Parents indicate child care challenges are affecting their job.



Finding 4: There is a shortage of child care spaces among all age groups.



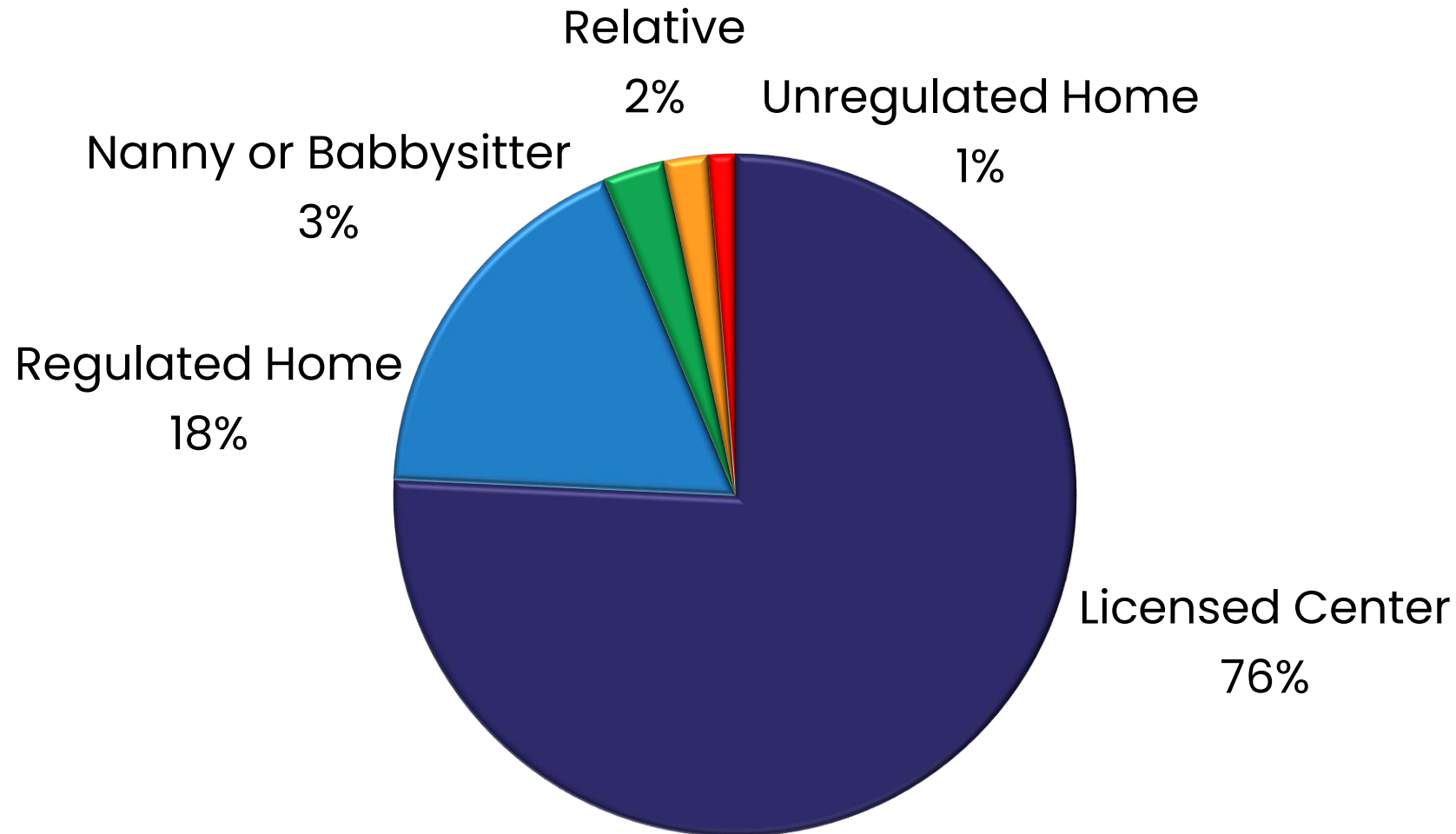
Child Care Gap Analysis

	Likely to Use Regulated Care	School Year Spaces	School Year Gap	Summer Spaces	Summer Gap
Age 0 to 2	210	104	-106	104	-106
Age 3 to 4	136	138	+2	115	-21
Age 5 to 11	547	106	-441	81	-466
Total	893	348	-545	300	-593

How is the Gap Covered Today?

- Legal Unregulated Care
- Unemployment
- Under-employment
- Family, Friends, & Neighbors
- Out of Area Care

Finding 5: Parents want center-based child care.

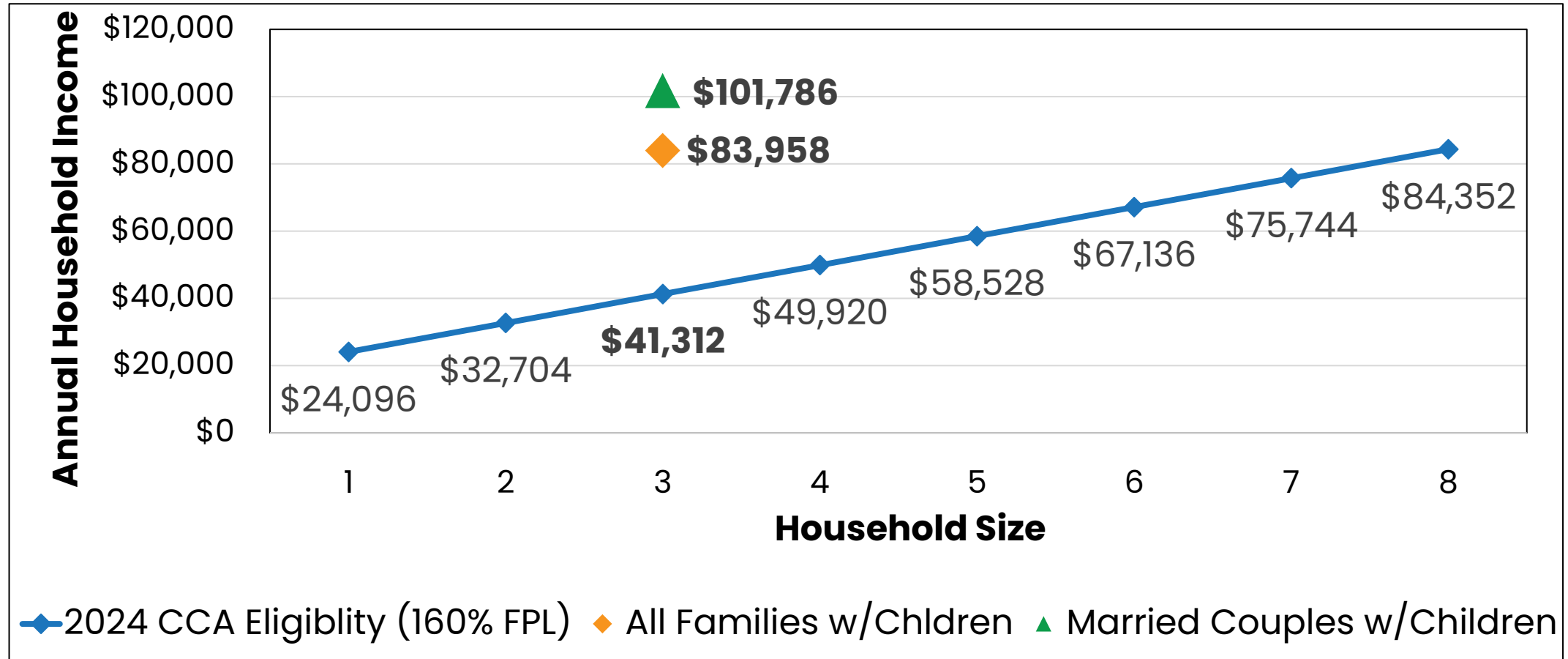


Parents also want...

- Drop-off between 7:00 am and 7:59 am (47%)
- Pick-up between 4:00 pm and 4:59 pm (37%)
- Monday through Friday (90%–96% per day)
- Year-round care
 - Ages 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) (83%)
 - Ages 5 to 12 (61%)

Finding 6: Median income of families with children is higher than the Child Care Assistance (CCA) threshold.

Item #3.



Note: Income data from US Census Bureau, CCA threshold calculated by FCF using data from US Department of Health & Human Services.

Finding 7: Child care centers are willing to expand.

3 out of 4 child care centers willing to expand to serve more children if the opportunity were presented

- *We would need to expand our building or find a new site to relocate to.*
- *We wish to offer full day preschool so parents wouldn't need to transport kids in the middle of the day. Or we wish we would have transportation. We wish we could have enough kids in morning and afternoon to have two sections of preschool.*
- *We could add on to our building.*

Finding 8: Few employers are currently impacted by child care.

- Does your business have any challenges related to productivity because of employees' child care challenges?
- Does your business have any challenges related to absenteeism because of employees' child care challenges?
- Has your business had difficulty hiring due to child care options or challenges in the area?

For each question, only 1 employer (the same employer) answered yes.

Comments from all employers

- *None reported, however, we know the possibility exists.*
- *If they are we are not aware this is why they are calling as they do not say it is directly because of childcare.*
- *We list hours of operations and disclose in the interview process what hours are to be expected.*
- *Our most recent applicants do not have young children. I imagine that daycare hours would be a challenge with our 10-hour day schedule for prospective employees.*

Finding 9: Some employers are willing to donate or make a contribution for child care.

Employers are willing to make a donation or financial contribution for:

- Build, remodel, or expand a child care center (3 employers)
- Scholarships for their own employees (3 employers)
- Scholarships for all children (2 employers)
- Pay the tuition of a vacant slot in order to reserve or hold that slot for an employee who takes over payment (2 employers)
- Pay a portion (but not all) of the wages of a child care center director (2 employers)
- General operation of a child care program (2 employers)

Strategic Plan for Child Care

VISION FOR CHILD CARE

Independence will continue to be a thriving community with accessible, quality child care choices that allow employers to attract and retain workforce.

CHILD CARE GOALS AND STRATEGIES



GOAL 1

Support the efforts of child care businesses to be sustainable by facilitating partnerships and providing access to business resources.



GOAL 2

Maintain the existing supply of regulated child care and add a minimum of 50 new regulated spaces by 2029.

Goal 1: Support the efforts of child care businesses to be sustainable by facilitating partnerships and providing access to business resources.

Strategy 1- The Child Care Steering Committee will facilitate partnerships between child care centers and local businesses.



Goal 1: Support the efforts of child care businesses to be sustainable by facilitating partnerships and providing access to business resources.

Strategy 2- The Child Care Steering Committee will provide a local connection to regional and statewide business resources and supports for both existing and prospective child care providers.





Goal 2: Maintain the existing supply of regulated child care and add a minimum of 50 new regulated spaces by 2029.

Strategy 1– The Child Care Steering Committee will identify viable locations for an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services licensed child care center.

Options that will be explored:

- Vacant lots to build a new facility.
- Remodel and expand the former Starlight Cinema building.
- Add an addition to an already operating child care facility.
- Other existing buildings not currently used for child care.



Goal 2: Maintain the existing supply of regulated child care and add a minimum of 50 new regulated spaces by 2029.

Strategy 2– The City of Independence and the Child Care Steering Committee will inform the community of the need for more regulated child care spaces, and the efforts made toward exploring options to increase the number of spaces available.

Strategy 3– The City of Independence, through an RFP process, will identify an entity to operate an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensed child care center in the former Starlight Cinema building.



Goal 2: Maintain the existing supply of regulated child care and add a minimum of 50 new regulated spaces by 2029.

Item #3.

Strategy 4- The Child Care Steering Committee will develop and implement a campaign to attract additional child care providers.

Putting This Plan Into Use Next Steps





First Children's Finance

Iowa Regional Office Connections

Web: www.FirstChildrensFinance.org

Email: InfoIA@FirstChildrensFinance.org

Social: www.facebook.com/FirstChildrensFinancelowa

Child Care Market Analysis

Independence, Iowa

January 2024

Child Care Market Analysis
Independence, Iowa
January 2024

Prepared for:

City of Independence

Prepared by:

First Children's Finance
Iowa Regional Office
1601 22nd Street, Suite 305
West Des Moines, IA 50266

Iowa Regional Director: Heidi Schlueter
Project Lead: Angie Rae Duncan, Senior Business Development Specialist

This project was made possible in part through a Rural Child Care Market Study grant received by City of Independence through the Empower Rural Iowa initiative, a program administered by the Center for Rural Revitalization, a division of Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Additional project coordination was provided by Buchanan County Economic Development.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2023, First Children's Finance was commissioned by City of Independence to conduct this *Child Care Market Analysis*. This analysis provides relevant child care data, child care market analysis, and First Children's Finance's key findings of the child care market of Independence, Iowa.

The data in this report has been collected from three original surveys developed by First Children's Finance along with data provided by the US Census Bureau, US Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, and Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. This analysis is First Children's Finance's professional interpretation of the data available as of the date of this report. The information and analysis presented in this document are intended to provide a basis for sound business and community planning decisions, but no warranty is stated or implied as to completeness or accuracy.

PUTTING THIS STUDY INTO USE

Based on First Children's Finance's analysis, it can be concluded that the families in the Independence area have varying needs and preferences, and the current child care options are not meeting the needs of all parents.

This report can be used by employers and other community members that may be considering recruiting or adding new child care businesses, to better understand what parents most prefer for settings and offerings. It can also be used by both existing and future child care programs to understand the families wanting child care and to make operational decisions, such as what ages to care for, hours of operation, and understanding what factors are important to parents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the purpose of this *Child Care Market Analysis*, the child care market area is defined as the boundaries of the Independence Community School District, which includes communities of Independence, Brandon, and Rowley, as well as the adjacent unincorporated areas around those communities. The market area is located in Buchanan County, which is located in northeast Iowa.

The US Census Bureau estimates that in the Independence Community School District (CSD) boundaries, the total population has increased while the number of children ages 0 to 11 has decreased over the last 10 years. The total population as of 2022 is 9,148 and the total number of children ages 0 to 11 is 1,153. Taking into consideration the data collected through this study, First Children's Finance estimates there are 893 children whose families are likely to use an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services regulated child care setting, either licensed child care centers or registered child development homes.

In the Independence CSD area, the average family size is 2.94 people and the median income for families with children under the age of 18 is \$83,958 per year and the median income for a married couple with children is \$101,786. According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of Quarter 1 of 2023, there was an average of 6,783 people employed by companies in Buchanan County, and the average weekly wage among those workers was \$885. The industry that employs the most people is manufacturing and the average weekly wage in that industry was \$1,113.

A key part of this analysis was a survey to gain input from parents on their child care needs and preferences, compared to the current supply. A total of 231 individuals reported they currently have children ages 12 or younger, this group is referred to as "current parents". Another 8 individuals reported they do not currently have children but do plan to have or adopt in the next 5 years, this group is referred to as "future parents". Using the most popular responses, a current parent would be described as married (87%) and living in the boundaries of the Independence Community School District (91%). They work first-shift Monday through Friday (81%) in Independence (65%), and the nature of their job is health care & social assistance (28%). Their spouse also works first-shift Monday through Friday (83%) outside of Independence (56%), and the nature of their job is manufacturing (22%). They currently use child care in Independence (89%), Monday through Friday. They use child care 40 to 49 hours per week for younger children, less than 10 hours per week for before and after school care, and 40 to 49 hours per week for older children during the summer. They are satisfied with their current child care provider (79%).

Using the most popular responses, a future parent would be described as married (63%) and living in the boundaries of the Independence Community School District (100%). They work first-

shift Monday through Friday (75%) in Independence (88%), and the nature of their job is either finance & insurance (38%) or health care & social assistance (38%). Their spouse also works first-shift Monday through Friday (80%) in Independence (100%), and the nature of their job is manufacturing (20%).

For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they make. According to longitudinal research, the child care environment parents choose will have lasting effects on their child. When there are not enough child care spaces in a community, finding *any* care is a challenge; and options for *quality* care that meet the needs and preferences of families can be even more challenging.

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet families' varying needs and preferences. The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available. Through a child care needs survey developed by First Children's Finance and conducted in the Independence area in 2023, it was determined that most of the parents that are likely to use "outside" care want their child in a setting that is regulated by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. The most preferred child care setting is a licensed child care center.

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) data shows that as of January 2024 there are 348 spaces within 9 HHS regulated child care programs in Independence. There are 4 HHS licensed centers and preschools (284 licensed spaces) and 5 registered child development homes (64 spaces). Two (2) of the 4 centers operate year-round while the other 2 operate school year only. One (1) of the registered child care homes operates 7-days a week during the day, while another operates 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

Participants in the child care needs survey confirmed there is a shortage of child care spaces. When asked if they had difficulty finding child care, 74% of parents with children ages 0 to 5 (not in kindergarten) that had looked for care in the last 12 months and 81% of those with children ages 5 to 12 (school age children) that had looked for care in the last 12 months indicated they had difficulty. When asked what challenges they had faced, the majority of parents named an obstacle related to not being able to get a space in the program or setting they prefer.

Key Findings of This Analysis

Complete details of these key findings are contained in this report. These key findings are based on research and conditions of the current child care market. If the community or the child care environment changes significantly, current findings may be affected.

Finding 1: The Percentage of Families with Young Children and All Parents in the Labor Force is Declining

According to data from the US Census Bureau the percentage of families that have children ages 0 to 5 and that have all parents in the labor force has been decreasing over the last 10 years. As of 2022, 71% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 95% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in the Independence Community School District (CSD) area have all parents in the labor force. Five years ago in 2017, those numbers were 77% and 87% respectively, and in 2012 they were 84% and 81%.

Finding 2: Parents are Having Difficulty Finding Child Care

Among parents that had looked for care in the last 12 months for their children ages 0 to 5, 74% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty—either somewhat difficult (22%) or very difficult (52%). And among those that looked for care for ages 5 to 12, 81% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty—either somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (53%).

Finding 3: Parents Indicate Child Care Challenges are Affecting their Job

Over the last 12 months, parents have experienced child care challenges that have in turn affected their job. The adverse effects experienced by at least 25% of parents that participated in the child care needs survey were: missed a day of work because the provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (49%), had to leave work early (48%), arrived late to work (31%), unable to work overtime (28%), and had to supervise child while working from home (26%).

Finding 4: There is a Shortage of Spaces Among All Age Groups

There are 1,153 children ages 0 to 11 in the Independence Community School District (CSD) boundaries. Of those, First Children's Finance (FCF) estimates 960 have all parents working and 893 of those are from families who prefer to use Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulated child care. As of May 2024, there will be 332 regulated spaces in Independence, of which 332 will be available during the school year and 300 will be available during the summer. The *Child Care Gap Analysis* shows there will be a shortage of 545 spaces during the school year and a shortage of 593 spaces during the summer. This gap may be worsened by families that live in other communities but prefer regulated child care in Independence.

Finding 5: Parents Want Center-Based Child Care

The most preferred child care arrangement chosen by both current and future parents through the child care needs survey was a licensed child care center, which is preferred by 76% of all respondents. There are currently 284 spaces within licensed centers (which also includes preschools), and after May 2024 that number will drop to 268, of which 220 will be available year-round.

Finding 6: Median Income of Families with Children is Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold

The median income for families with children under the age of 18 in the Independence Community School District (CSD) is \$83,958, and that income jumps to \$101,786 for married couples with children under the age of 18. According to the federally determined poverty level that went into effect January 2024, 160% FPL, the threshold a family's income cannot exceed to qualify for child care assistance, is \$41,312 for a household of 3, and \$49,920 for a household of 4.

Finding 7: Child Care Centers are Willing to Expand

All 4 of the licensed centers in Independence participated in the child care needs survey and at the time of the survey (October 2023), 3 of the 4 indicated they would expand if they had the opportunity. In order to expand those centers indicated they would need assistance with finding staff and funding for the expansions.

Finding 8— Few Employers are Currently Impacted by Child Care

Through the child care needs survey employers were asked if their business has any challenges related to productivity, absenteeism, or has had difficulty hiring due to child care options or challenges in the area. For each question, only 1 employer (the same employer) answered yes.

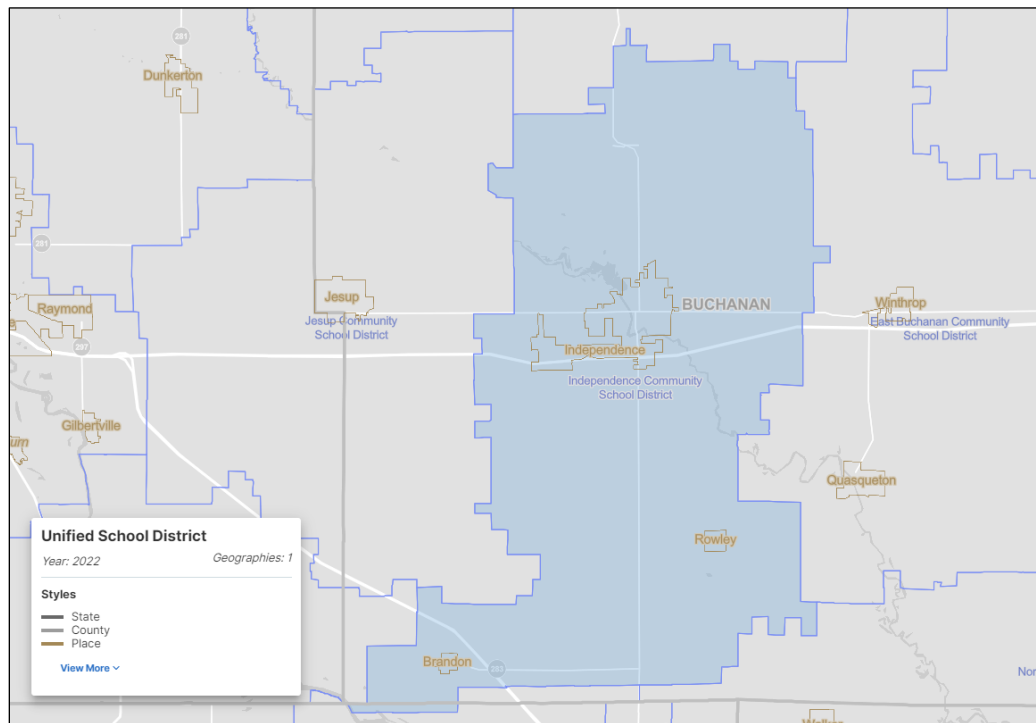
Finding 9—Some Employers are Willing to Donate or Make a Contribution to Child Care

Employers that participated in the child care needs survey indicated their business is willing to assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or support child care businesses through various actions. The top ways employers are willing to help are to make a donation or financial contribution to build, remodel, or expand a child care center, or to make a donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for their own employees.

MARKET DESCRIPTION

Market Area

For the purpose of this *Child Care Market Analysis* the market area is defined as the Independence Community School District (CSD), which includes the communities of Brandon, Independence, and Rowley, as well as the unincorporated areas adjacent to these cities.



Note: Map from US Census Bureau (2022)

Population and Demographics

Population

According to the US Census Bureau, as of 2022 the population of the market area (Independence CSD) is 9,148. This is a net change of +267 since 2012 when the population was 8,881. During the same time period, the city limits of Independence and Rowley each also saw a positive net change or increase in population.

Table 1: Population Change

	2012	2022	Net Change
Independence CSD	8,881	9,148	+267
Brandon city limits	353	348	-5
Independence city limits	5,988	6,106	+118
Rowley city limits	289	353	+64

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2012, 2022)

Fertility

Fertility reflects how many women give birth each year and it may be helpful to give an estimate of how many babies are born each year. It must however be recognized that a single birth may result in more than one child, and there are circumstances where the new born child may not live within the community after the birth. As of 2022 there were 1,922 women age 16 to 50 living in the Independence CSD. The US Census Bureau estimates that 129 (7%) of them gave birth in the prior 12-month period. Overall, 4% were both in the labor force and gave birth. The overall percentage of women in Independence that gave birth and that are in the labor force was very similar at 3%. In Brandon and in Rowley the percentage of women both giving birth and in the labor force was higher at 6% in Brandon and 100% in Rowley.

Table 2: Fertility by Community

	Women 16–50	Gave Birth	% Gave Birth	Gave Birth and In Labor Force	% Gave Birth and in Labor Force
Independence CSD	1,922	129	7%	71	4%
Brandon city limits	89	6	7%	5	6%
Independence city limits	1,343	99	7%	42	3%
Rowley city limits	88	9	10%	9	100%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2022)

Children Ages 0 to 11

Within the Independence CSD as of 2012 there were 1,346 children ages 0 to 11 and in 2022 there were 1,153, a net change of -193. Among the communities within the district Independence and Rowley each experienced a net decrease in the number of children ages 0 to 12 from 2012 to 2022. The loss in Independence was the largest at -225. Brandon was the only community that experienced a net increase.

Table 3: Population Ages 0 to 11

	2012	2022	Net Change
Independence CSD			
Age 0 to 5	749	567	-182
Age 6 to 11	597	586	-11
Total Ages 0 to 11	1,346	1,153	-193
Brandon city limits			
Age 0 to 5	23	19	-4
Age 6 to 11	34	44	+10
Total Ages 0 to 11	57	63	+6

	2012	2022	Net Change
Independence city limits			
Age 0 to 5	574	391	-183
Age 6 to 11	392	350	-42
Total Ages 0 to 11	966	741	-225
Rowley city limits			
Age 0 to 5	32	14	-18
Age 6 to 11	41	8	-33
Total Ages 0 to 11	73	22	-51

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2012, 2022)

Race

Being aware of the racial composition of the community can help child care owners and operators provide child care that is inclusive and welcoming to all families. Within the Independence CSD 97.9% of the population identifies as one race, while 2.1% is two or more races. The majority of residents are White (96.1%), followed by two or more races (2.1%), and Black or African American (1.6%). Among the individual communities, these percentages look very similar.

Table 4: Race

	Independence CSD		Brandon city limits		Independence city limits		Rowley city limits	
Total Population	9,148	100%	348	100%	6,106	100%	353	100%
One Race	8,955	97.9%	342	98.2%	5,938	97.3%	352	99.8%
White	8,796	96.1%	339	97.4%	5,794	94.9%	350	99.2%
Black or African American	147	1.6%	3	0.8%	134	2.2%	2	0.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	8	0.1%	0	---	6	0.1%	0	---
Asian	0	---	0	---	0	---	0	---
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	---	0	---	0	---	0	---
Some Other Race	4	0.1%	0	---	4	0.1%	0	---
Two or More Races	193	2.1%	6	1.8	168	2.7%	1	0.2%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2022)

Hispanic or Latino

Being aware of the cultures within the community can help child care owners and operators create an inclusive child care program that recognizes and welcomes families from different cultures. As of 2022, 3.2% of the residents in the Independence CSD are Hispanic or Latino, with the largest group being Mexican (2.3%).

Table 5: Hispanic or Latino Origin by Specific Origin

	Independence CSD		Brandon city limits		Independence city limits		Rowley city limits	
Total Population	9,148	100%	348	100%	6,106	100%	353	100%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	301	3.2%	26	7.5%	275	4.5%	0	0%
Mexican	216	2.3%	26	7.5%	190	3.1%	0	---
Puerto Rican	0	---	0	---	0	---	0	---
Cuban	0	---	0	---	0	---	0	---
Dominican	0	---	0	---	0	---	0	---
Honduran	4	0.1%	0	---	4	0.1%	0	---
Salvadorian	68	0.7%	0	---	68	1.1%	0	---
Columbian	13	0.1%	0	---	13	0.2%	0	---
Other Hispanic or Latino	0	---	0	---	0	---	0	---

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2022)

It can be helpful to look the languages families speak at home to determine if there may be barriers for parents that do not speak English. In the Independence CSD 2.6% of residents speak a language other than English at home. After English, the most common language spoken at home is Spanish with 2.4%. Among the 225 residents in the school district that speak a language other than English at home, 68% also speak English very well. Nearly all residents in the school district that speak a language other than English at home live in the community of Independence, with 204 of the 225 living there. The community of Brandon has 1 resident that speaks Spanish, and Rowley has no residents that speak a language other than English.

Table 6: Primary Language Spoken at Home

	Independence CSD		Brandon city limits		Independence city limits		Rowley city limits	
Population Age 5 and older	8,624	100%	329	100%	5,746	100%	339	100%
Speaks Only English	8,399	97.4%	328	100%	5,542	95.5%	339	100%
Speaks Language Other than English	225	2.6%	1	<1%	204	3.5%	0	0%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	203	2.4%	1	<1%	182	3.1%	---	---
Other Indo-European Language	16	0.2%	---	---	16	0.3%	---	---
Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	0	0.0%	---	---	0	0.0%	---	---
Other Languages	6	0.1%	---	---	6	0.1%	---	---
Speaks Language Other than English	225	100%	1	100%	204	100%	---	---
Speaks English Very Well	153	68%	1	100%	132	65%	---	---
Speaks English Less than Very Well	72	32%	---	---	72	35%	---	---

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2022)

Educational Attainment

The education level of parents may influence their job choice or the industry they work in, which in turn determines their child care needs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the Independence CSD just under one-third (31.6%) of the population age 18 to 24 has some college an associate's degree, or a bachelor's degree or higher. When it comes to the population age 25 and older, that percentage nearly doubles to 60.7%. *See table on next page.*

Table 7: Educational Attainment

	Independence CSD		Brandon city limits		Independence city limits		Rowley city limits	
Total Population 18-24	655	100%	46	100%	432	100%	70	100%
Less than High School	161	24.6%	14	30.4%	121	28.0%	11	15.7%
High School Graduate, or equivalent	309	47.2%	8	17.4%	211	48.8%	27	38.6%
Some College or Associate's Degree	124	18.9%	24	52.2%	78	18.1%	8	11.4%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	61	9.3%	0	---	22	5.1%	24	34.3%
Total Population age 25+	6,534	100%	209	100%	4,295	100%	229	100%
Less than High School	242	3.7%	27	12.9%	196	4.6%	8	3.5%
High School Graduate, or equivalent	2,328	35.6%	93	44.5%	1,559	36.3%	84	36.7%
Some College, No Degree	1,616	24.7%	40	19.1%	1,050	24.4%	48	21.0%
Associate's Degree	755	11.6%	30	14.4%	457	10.6%	40	17.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	1,593	24.4%	19	9.1%	1,033	24.1%	49	21.4%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2022)

Working Families

As of 2022 there are 3,853 households in the Independence Community School District (CSD), of which 2,373 are family households, and 1,016 of those have children under the age of 18. The average household size is 2.32 persons, while the average family household size is 2.94 persons. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of all households are family households, while just over one-quarter (26%) of all households have children under the age of 18.

The median income¹ for all households is \$72,177, while the median income of families is \$87,614, and \$83,958 for families with children under the age of 18. When it comes to parents in the workforce, 71% of families with children ages 0 to 5 and 95% of families with children ages 6 to 17 have all parents working. All parents working means if there are two parents in the home they both work, or if there is a single parent that parent is working. *See table on next page.*

¹ Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount.

Table 8: Household Types and Characteristics

	Independence CSD	Brandon city limits	Independence city limits	Rowley city limits
Total Households	3,853	126	2,641	124
Average household size	2.32	2.76	2.26	2.85
Median household income	\$72,177	\$58,750	\$63,042	\$59,167
Family Households	2,373	73	1,452	91
Average family size	2.94	3.79	3.02	3.2
Median family income	\$87,614	\$67,321	\$86,484	\$75,893
Family Households w/children under 18	1,016	35	733	35
<i>Married couples</i>	704	23	463	20
<i>Male householder (no spouse present)</i>	97	0	90	7
<i>Female householder (no spouse present)</i>	215	12	180	8
Median income for families w/children under 18	\$83,958	\$78,750	\$80,365	---
<i>Median family income married couples</i>	\$101,786	\$104,375	\$99,479	\$113,750
<i>Median family income male (no spouse present)</i>	\$41,042	---	\$41,333	---
<i>Median family income female (no spouse present)</i>	\$23,011	\$24,000	\$19,659	---
Households w/children ages 0 to 5	558	19	391	14
Number with all parents working	395	16	246	10
Percent with all parents working	71%	84%	63%	71%
Households w/children ages 6 to 17	1,360	73	975	39
Number with all parents working	1,296	67	937	31
Percent with all parents working	95%	92%	96%	80%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2022)

Economy in the Area

Labor Force and Unemployment

A competitive job market can make it hard for child care programs to attract and retain quality staff. According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of November 2023 the total labor force (residents age 16 or older that are choosing to participate in the workforce) living in Buchanan County was 11,280 (data by individual cities or school district boundaries is not available). Of those, 10,990 are employed, while 290 (2.6%) were unemployed. In comparison, in November 2018 the total labor force was 11,420 with 11,210 employed, and 210 (1.8%) unemployed. This data indicates there are 140 fewer workers living in Buchanan County than there were 5 years ago.

Place of Work and Time Leaving Home

According to the US Census Bureau as of 2022, there is a total of 4,754 workers age 16 and over in the Independence CSD, of those 64.9% work in the county where they live, 34.3% work outside the county but within Iowa, and 0.8% work out of state. The most popular hour for residents to leave home to go to work is 7:00 am to 7:59 am (27.5%), and the mean travel time is 20.9 minutes.

Table 9: Place of Work and Time Leaving Home to Go to Work

	Independence CSD	Brandon city limits	Independence city limits	Rowley city limits
Total workers 16 years and over	4,754	184	3,077	198
Workers who worked from home	7.7%	2.2%	6.0%	12.1%
<i>Time leaving home to go to work</i>				
12:00 am to 4:59 am	6.0%	3.9%	7.1%	3.4%
5:00 am to 5:29 am	5.8%	6.7%	7.5%	9.2%
5:30 am to 5:59 am	12.4%	17.2%	11.7%	5.7%
6:00 am to 6:29 am	7.0%	11.1%	7.0%	13.2%
6:30 am to 6:59 am	9.3%	5.6%	10.4%	11.5%
7:00 am to 7:29 am	15.4%	8.9%	9.1%	6.3%
7:30 am to 7:59 am	12.1%	10.6%	16.3%	5.2%
8:00 am. to 8:29 am	9.6%	6.1%	9.8%	13.8%
8:30 am to 8:59 am	3.0%	1.7%	2.2%	12.1%
9:00 am to 11:59 pm	19.4%	23.3%	18.9%	19.5%
Mean travel time (minutes)	20.9 mins.	23.2 mins.	20.3 mins.	20.2 mins.
<i>Place of Work</i>				
Within county of residence	64.9%	42.4%	66.0%	75.8%
Outside county of residence	34.3%	57.6%	32.8%	24.2%
Outside Iowa	0.8%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%

Note: Data from US Census Bureau (2022)

Employees and Wages

According to Iowa Workforce Development, as of Quarter 2 of 2023, there is an average 6,783 people employed by companies located in Buchanan County, and the average weekly wage of those working at these companies is \$885. Of all the industries based in Buchanan County, the industry that employs the most people on average is manufacturing (1,515), followed by health care & social assistance (1,092). Average wages range from a low of \$265 per week for accommodations & food service, to a high of \$2,798 per week for management of companies. See table on next page.

Table 10: Employees and Wages for Buchanan County

	Q1 2023		
	Total Locations	Average Employment	Avg. Wk. Wage
Accommodations & Food Service	35	393	\$265
Administrative & Waste Management	24	91	\$1,071
Agriculture, Fishing & Hunting	34	211	\$897
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	8	44	\$275
Construction	79	465	\$972
Educational Services	26	720	\$776
Finance & Insurance	36	214	\$1,250
Health Care & Social Assistance	71	1,092	\$879
Information	11	58	\$1,418
Management of Companies	4	6	\$2,798
Manufacturing	41	1,515	\$1,113
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	4	11	\$1,441
Other Services (except Public Admin)	26	92	\$611
Professional, Scientific, Technical	30	132	\$1,088
Public Administration	30	347	\$811
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	11	14	\$806
Retail Trade	70	891	\$565
Transportation & Warehousing	48	236	\$1,063
Utilities	4	21	\$1,695
Wholesale Trade	37	230	\$1,215
Total	629	6,783	\$885

Note: Data from Iowa Workforce Development (2023)

Child Care and Preschool Workforce and Wages

Most child care and preschool workers fall under one of three categories as defined by the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system: Childcare Workers², Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare³, or Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education⁴. See table on next page.

² SOC Definition: Attend to children at schools, businesses, private households, and childcare institutions. Perform a variety of tasks, such as dressing, feeding, bathing, and overseeing play. Illustrative examples: Au Pair, Daycare Provider, Nanny.

³ SOC Definition: Plan, direct, or coordinate academic or nonacademic activities of preschools or childcare centers and programs, including before- and after-school care. Illustrative examples: Childcare Center Administrator, Head Start Director, Preschool Director.

⁴ SOC Definition: Instruct preschool-aged students, following curricula or lesson plans, in activities designed to promote social, physical, and intellectual growth. Illustrative examples: Home-based Preschool Teacher, Nursery School Teacher, Preschool Head Start Teacher.

Table 11: Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Area Childcare and Preschool Workforce

	Total Employment in LWA	Total Jobs Statewide	Entry Wage	Mean Wage	Experienced Wage
Childcare Workers	1,010	5,250	\$8.50	\$10.45	\$11.42
Education & Childcare Admin, Preschool & Daycare	190	1,170	\$14.21	\$20.21	\$23.20
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	890	5,370	\$9.74	\$15.10	\$17.78

Note: Data from Iowa Workforce Development (2022)

According to Iowa Wage Report Data from Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) for Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Area⁵ for 2022, the entry wage⁶ for Childcare Workers in the region is \$8.50 per hour, while the mean⁷ wage is \$10.45 per hour and experienced wage⁸ is \$11.42 per hour. There are 1,010 of these workers in the area, and 5,250 across the state.

For Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare in the workforce region, the entry wage is \$14.21 per hour, the mean wage \$20.21 per hour, and experienced wage \$23.20 per hour. There are 190 of these workers in the area, and 1,170 across the state.

For Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education, the entry wage in the area is \$9.74 per hour, the mean wage \$15.10 per hour, and experienced wage \$17.78 per hour. There are 890 of these workers in the area, and 5,370 across the state.

⁵ Northeast Iowa Local Workforce Area- Aggregate data for the counties of Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hancock, Howard, Mitchell, Winnebago, Winneshiek, Worth.

⁶ Entry Wage is the average of the lowest third of reported wages for the occupation.

⁷ Mean Wages is the average wage and is computed by dividing the estimated total wage for an occupation by its weighted employment.

⁸ Experienced Wage is the average of the upper two-thirds of reported wages for the occupation.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Early Care and Education Environments in Iowa

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet each family's varying needs and preferences. These include:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- School-Based Programs
 - School-Age Care
 - Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program
- Registered Child Development Homes
- Legal Unregulated Home Care
 - Nanny or Au Pair
 - Family, Friend or Neighbor care

The educational experiences are different for each type of care and most communities desire to have multiple types of care and education available.

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services⁹

In Iowa, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) oversees programs that fall into three categories—Licensed Centers, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes. The level of regulation and requirements placed on the provider varies based on the type. *See table starting on page 23 for a side-by-side comparison.*

Licensed Centers

Licensed Centers include child care centers (including child care programs operated by school districts), preschool programs, and Head Start. A center can care for larger groups of children, which are typically separated by age groups according to specific staff-to-child ratios. All centers are required to have an Iowa HHS inspection prior to opening and an annual inspection after that. A licensed center may apply for a Child Care Assistance¹⁰ Provider Agreement and may participate in the voluntary Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating system¹¹.

⁹ Information in this section adapted from “Child Care Overview”. Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. <https://hhs.iowa.gov/childcare/overview>.

¹⁰ Child Care Assistance (CCA) is a tuition assistance program available to children of income-eligible parents. The tuition reimbursement is paid directly to the child care program based on the child's attendance.

¹¹ IQ4K is voluntary rating system for Licensed Centers and Preschools, Registered Child Development Homes, Head Start programs, and child care programs that are operated by school districts. Participating providers achieve a rating on a

Registered Child Development Homes (a.k.a. Registered Homes)

Anyone caring for more than 6 children at a time is required to register with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Registered child development homes can provide care for up to 8, 12 or 16 children at a time depending on the registration level. Registration levels A, B, or C are based on the providers' experience and if there are any assistants or co-providers present. These programs are required to have an Iowa HHS inspection prior to opening and an unannounced annual inspection after that. A registered child development home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with HHS and may participate in the voluntary ChildNet¹² program and IQ4K.

Child Care Homes

Child Care homes can care for 5 or fewer children at any given time. These programs are not required to register but have the option to do so. A Child Care Home may apply for a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement with HHS. Child Care Homes serving children eligible for child care assistance must complete an unannounced inspection once per year to assure compliance with health, safety, and fire standards. These providers are not eligible to participate in ChildNet or IQ4K.

See table starting on next page for a side-by-side comparison of child care provider requirements.

scale of 1 to 5, by meeting key indicators of quality in the areas of nutrition & physical activity, professional development, leadership & administration, family & community partnerships, environment, teaching staff qualifications, and teaching & learning for centers, and the areas of nutrition & physical activity, professional development, family & community partnerships, environment, provider qualifications, and teaching & learning for homes.

¹² ChildNet certification is a requirement for Child Care Home providers wishing to achieve a Level 2 and higher in the Iowa Quality Rating System. To earn ChildNet certification, the provider must complete the ChildNet training series with Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), enroll in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and demonstrate 100% compliance with the Iowa Department of Human Services' Registration checklist through a certification visit with their local CCR&R Child Care Consultant.

Table 12: HHS Requirements for Child Care Providers in Iowa

	Non-Registered Home w/out HHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/HHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Licensed Center
State Regulated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum Capacity ¹³	6	6	8	12	8	16	Varies by license
Inspection prior to Registration/Licensing			•	•	•	•	•
Annual Facility & Records Inspection		•	•	•	•	•	•
Minimum age of caregiver		18 years	18 years	20 years	21 years	21 years	Lead teacher 18 years
Iowa child abuse registry check ¹⁴		•	•	•	•	•	•
Iowa criminal records check ⁷		•	•	•	•	•	•
National (FBI) Fingerprint-based records check		•	•	•	•	•	•
Experience required				2 years or 1 year w/child related degree	5 years or 4 years w/child related degree	5 years or 4 years w/child related degree	Combination of experience and education
Minimum education required				High school or GED	High school or GED	High school or GED	Director/ On-Site Supervisor High school or GED
Minimum pre-service & orientation trainings		•	•	•	•	•	•
Professional Development (every 2 years)		6 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	24 hours	
CPR and First Aid Certification		•	•	•	•	•	•
Mandatory Reporter Training		•	•	•	•	•	•

Table continues on next page.

¹³ A home provider's own children are included in their legal capacity. Their school-age children are not unless they are being home-schooled.

¹⁴ Iowa child abuse registry and Iowa criminal records checks are required for all household members age 14 and older.

	Non-Registered Home w/out HHS agreement	Non-Registered Home w/HHS agreement	Child Development Home A	Child Development Home B	Child Development Home C (1 provider)	Child Development Home C2 (2 providers)	Licensed Center
Emergency Preparedness Response Training		•	•	•	•	•	•
Non-smoking environment		•	•	•	•	•	•
Fire-extinguishers and smoke detectors		•	•	•	•	•	•
2 direct exits				•	•	•	•
Space requirements				•	•	•	•
Quiet area for sick children				•	•	•	•
Reference letters			3 letters of reference				

Adapted from: Iowa Department of Human Services (2011)

<https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/ChildCareRequirements.aspx>.

Additional HHS Requirements for Child Care Providers in Iowa

- Non-Registered Homes may have up to 6 children, as long as at least one child is school-aged.
- Child Development Home A: Limit of 6 preschool children with a maximum of 4 aged 24 months or younger. Of these, no more than 3 can be 12 months of age or younger. They can also care for 2 school-aged children for a total maximum of 8 children in care at any one time.
- Child Development Home B: Limit of 8 preschool children with a maximum of 4 children aged 24 months or younger. Of these, no more than 3 can be 12 months of age or younger. They can also care for 4 school-aged children for a total maximum of 12 children in care at any one time. When there are more than 8 children present for more than 2 hours, an assistant 14 years or older needs to be present.
- Child Development Home C (2 providers): Limit of 14 preschool children with a maximum of 6 aged 24 months or younger. 2 additional school-age children can also be in care for a total maximum of 16 children in care at any one time. Whenever there are more than 8 children present, the business co-provider needs to be present.
- Child Development Home C (1 provider): Limit of 8 children with a maximum of 4 aged 24 months or younger.
- Center and preschool staff to child ratios: babies up to 23 months 1:4; 2-year-olds 1:7; 3-year-olds 1:10; 4-year-olds 1:12; 5-year-olds and older 1:15.

Iowa Department of Education

Iowa's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program administered by the Iowa Department of Education provides an opportunity for all young children in the State of Iowa to enter school ready to learn by expanding voluntary access to quality preschool curricula for all four-year-old children. Participating school districts receive funding to offer at least 10 hours of preschool per week during the school year. Districts may provide the preschool directly or contract with a community partner to provide preschool on their behalf.

Until January 2016 some schools that offered child care, preschool (other than the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program), or before and after school care, were exempt from being licensed with Iowa HHS, because they were overseen by the Iowa Department of Education. Now many of those programs need to be licensed as a child care center under HHS. An instructional program for children who are attending prekindergarten, as defined by the State Board of Education under Iowa Code section 256.11, or a higher grade level and are at least four years of age, or are at least three years of age and eligible for special education under chapter 256B, administered by a public or nonpublic school system accredited by the Department of Education or the State Board of Regents, or a nonpublic school system that is not accredited by the Department of Education or the State Board of Regents, is exempt from child care licensing under HHS.

Legal Unregulated Care in Iowa

In Iowa, parents may choose “family, friend, or neighbor care” or another unrelated caregiver such as a nanny or au pair. These types of care are not regulated and typically not tracked, unless the provider has an agreement with HHS to accept child care assistance, at which time they are considered a Child Care Home as described earlier. Because these providers are “off the radar” and data is not available, the data in this section does not include unregulated providers. These homes are reflected in the column titled “Non-Registered Home without HHS agreement” in the table above.

Iowa Early Care and Education Supply

The total number of HHS regulated child care providers and child care spaces across Iowa has changed over the last few years. According to Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) data, from 2017 to 2022 the total number of child care providers in Iowa declined by 24%, yet the total number of child care spaces increased by 5%. During that same time, across Child Care Resource & Referral of Northeast Iowa (Region 2)¹⁵ the total number of child care programs declined by 22%, while the number of child care spaces declined by 1% (208 fewer spaces), and the total number of children ages 0 to 5 declined by 3% (1,164 fewer children).

¹⁵ Includes the counties of Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hancock, Howard, Mitchell, Winneshiek and Worth.

Industry changes that occurred during this time that may have influenced these changes are:

- As of January 2016, child care, preschool (other than the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program), and before and after school programs operated by a school district are no longer exempt from licensing. In some communities this resulted in a shift with some spaces previously counted under the Department of Education being counted under HHS.
- Starting in September 2016, all child care center staff, registered child development home operators, and child care home operators that accept Child Care Assistance were required to take the 12-hour “Essential Child Care Preservice” training.
- As of July 2017, Child Care Home operators that accept Child Care Assistance were required to complete preservice training, have their home inspected at least once a year, and meet other regulations that had not previously been required.
- Since being established in 2007, participation of school districts in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program has increased significantly. Overall participation of school districts reached 99% in 2022, with 324 of 327 districts participating. Overall enrollment has increased from 5,126 children in 2007, to 24,497 children in 2022. As more districts participate, this has increased the number of child care spaces under both HHS and Department of Education.

Buchanan County Early Care and Education Supply

According to Child Care Resource & Referral data, from 2017 to 2022 Buchanan County experienced a net decrease of 74 regulated child care spaces (historical data is not available for individual communities). The lost spaces were among licensed centers (-22) and child care homes (-68). During the that time, there was a net increase in spaces within registered child development homes (+16).

Table 13: Programs and Spaces in Buchanan County

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Net Change
Total Programs	37	34	33	23	21	24	-13
HHS Centers & Preschools	8	9	9	9	9	9	+1
Dept. of Ed. Programs	2	2	2	2	2	2	---
Registered Child Dvpmt. Homes	11	9	13	12	10	11	---
Child Care Homes	16	14	9	0	0	2	-14
Total Spaces	873	863	870	787	779	799	-74
HHS Centers & Preschools	633	649	649	611	611	611	-22
Dept. of Ed. Programs	40	40	40	40	40	40	---
Registered Child Dvpmt. Homes	120	104	136	136	128	136	+16
Child Care Homes	80	70	45	0	0	12	-68

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.

Iowa HHS data shows that as of January 2024, there are 9 HHS regulated programs with a collective capacity of 348 spaces within the market area. Those child care programs breakdown as follows:

- Licensed Child Care Centers and Preschools- There are 4 licensed child care centers and preschools, which account for 284 spaces.
- Registered Child Development Homes- There are 5 registered child development homes, which account for 64 spaces.
- Child Care Homes- There are no child care homes.

The following table shows the child care programs tracked by HHS within Independence, there are no regulated programs located in either Brandon or Rowley, the other communities within the school district boundaries. It is possible there are additional home providers or school-based programs not listed because they are not regulated by HHS, comparable data is not available for those programs.

Table 14: HHS Licensed Centers and Preschools in Independence, January 2024

Program Name	Hours	HHS Capacity	Child Care Assistance	IQ4K Level	Ages	Year-Round
Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool, Independence	8:15 am–11:15 am Mon–Thurs	16	No	4	3 yrs.	No
Kidsville Early Learning Center, Independence	6:00 am– 6:00 pm Mon–Fri	145	Yes	---	0–12 yrs.	Yes
Moser Preschool and Daycare, Independence	5:30 am– 5:30 pm Mon–Fri	75	Yes	2	0–12 yrs.	Yes
St. John School, Independence	7:00 am– 6:00 pm Mon–Fri	48	Yes	3	3–12 yrs.	No

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (2024)

Table 15: HHS Registered Child Development Homes in Independence, January 2024

Program Name & Type	Hours	HHS Capacity	Child Care Assistance	IQ4K Level
Candace Turner (Level B), Independence	6:00 am– 5:30 pm Mon–Fri	12	Yes	1
Cynthia Michaels (Level B), Independence	24-hours/day 7 days/week	12	Yes	---
Jennifer Fisher (Level C2), Independence	7:00 am– 4:30 pm 7 days/week	16	Yes	---
Melody Barker (Level A), Independence	7:00 am – 5:00 pm Mon–Fri	8	Yes	---
Sarah Horn and Deanna Armstead (Level C2), Independence	6:30 am– 5:30 pm Mon–Fri	16	Yes	---

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (2024)

Residents of the market area are served by 1 public school district, Independence Community School District and 1 private school, St. John Elementary School. The Independence Community School District (CSD) is based out of Independence, and all buildings are located in Independence. The district also serves the communities of Brandon and Rowley. There are 3 buildings for preschool through 6th grade, and one building for middle school and high school. The Early Childhood Center houses preschool, East Elementary houses Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and West Elementary houses grades 3 through 6. Certified enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year was 1,380 students, with 718 of those being elementary (PK-6th).

St. John Elementary School is a private school based out of Independence, that serves PK through 8th grade. Certified enrollment for the 2022-2023 school year was 168 students, with 137 of those being in PK through 6th grade. St. John also offers before and after school care for students enrolled in Pre-K (age 3) and older during the school year. The program accommodates up to 48 children from 7:00 am until school starts, and from school dismissal until 6:00 pm. The before and after school care, along with three-year-old preschool, is regulated by Iowa HHS.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) is available through Independence Community School District. According to certified enrollment numbers reported to the Iowa Department of Education for the 2022-2023 school year, there were a total of 116 students enrolled in SWVPP. The district operates their own SWVPP program and has community partner agreements with 4 other organizations to offer SWVPP. The community partners are Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool, Kidsville Early Learning Center, Moser Preschool and Daycare, and St. John Elementary School.

Table 16: Statewide Voluntary Preschool Enrollments

School District/Community Partner	2022-2023 Enrollment
Independence Community School District	39
Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool	11
Kidsville Early Learning Center	22
Moser Preschool and Daycare	22
St. John Elementary	22

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Education (2023)

Local Price Point

Over the last 5 years, the average weekly tuition rates for care within a licensed center within Buchanan County has increased for ages two and up, while it has fluctuated for infants and toddlers. Besides individual providers changing their rates, changes in the average tuition rates can be the result of providers going out of business, new providers coming into the market, providers no longer reporting their tuition rates if they stop accepting child care assistance, or

homes that let their registration expire and no longer report their tuition to HHS (centers cannot let their license expire or the license will be revoked). When comparing rates, it is important to note that some providers charge tuition that is all-inclusive, while others may charge separate fees, charge for specific items, or require parents to furnish supplies, snacks, or other items, and some programs operate full-time while some are only part-time.

According to Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, as of July 2022, the average weekly tuition for care in a licensed center in Buchanan County ranged from a low of \$138.15 for school age care, to a high of \$161.55 for infant and toddler care. Before & after school care averaged \$65.80.

Table 17: Average Weekly Tuition Rates of Licensed Centers, Buchanan County

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Infant	\$147.60	\$160.65	\$157.95	\$154.80	\$157.05	\$161.55
Toddler	\$147.60	\$160.65	\$157.95	\$154.80	\$157.05	\$161.55
Two-Year-Old	\$135.90	\$112.57	\$147.60	\$148.05	\$149.85	\$153.90
Three-Year-Old	\$132.30	\$112.57	\$144.90	\$145.80	\$145.80	\$145.80
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$130.05	\$112.57	\$144.00	\$145.80	\$145.80	\$145.80
School-Age (full time)	\$126.45	\$102.57	\$126.90	\$135.90	\$135.45	\$138.15
Before & After School	\$48.10	\$59.00	\$51.20	\$62.60	\$61.20	\$65.80

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.

Over the last 5 years, the average weekly tuition for care in a registered home in Buchanan County has increased, after a significant drop in 2018. As of July 2022, average weekly tuition ranged from a low of \$137.25 for age two and older, to a high of \$148.50 for infant care. Before & after school care averaged \$61.00.

Table 18: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Homes, Buchanan County

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Infant	\$132.30	\$112.57	\$130.28	\$136.80	\$138.60	\$148.50
Toddler	\$132.30	\$112.57	\$130.28	\$136.80	\$138.60	\$140.85
Two-Year-Old	\$132.30	\$112.57	\$130.28	\$136.80	\$138.60	\$137.25
Three-Year-Old	\$132.30	\$112.57	\$130.28	\$136.80	\$138.60	\$137.25
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$135.90	\$112.57	\$130.28	\$136.80	\$138.60	\$137.25
School-Age (full time)	\$135.90	\$102.57	\$132.90	\$136.80	\$138.60	\$137.25
Before & After School	\$60.40	\$59.00	\$63.80	\$60.80	\$61.60	\$61.00

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral.

With a portion of residents out-commuting to other counties and school districts boundaries that cross county lines, the average rates in neighboring counties can be informative. Average weekly tuition at both licensed centers and registered child development homes varies from county to county. The following data is the most up to date available, therefore it may be slightly different than the annual data for Buchanan County in the previous section.

When it comes to average weekly tuition for care in a licensed center as of January 2024, Linn County has the highest average for infants through full-time school age care, while Delaware County has the highest average for before & after school care. In contrast, Benton County has the lowest average for all ages for full-time, while Buchanan County has the lowest average for before & after school care.

Table 19: Average Weekly Tuition at Licensed Centers in Surrounding Counties

	Buchanan	Benton	Black Hawk	Clayton	Delaware	Fayette	Linn
Infant	\$176.63	\$172.50	\$210.94	\$184.30	\$191.65	\$191.88	\$247.30
Toddler	\$176.63	\$172.50	\$209.26	\$184.30	\$191.65	\$190.21	\$243.23
Two-Year-Old	\$171.88	\$160.25	\$188.65	\$187.70	\$187.92	\$179.17	\$225.92
Three-Year-Old	\$151.79	\$133.84	\$174.21	\$164.40	\$184.58	\$168.13	\$188.30
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$153.63	\$142.05	\$176.96	\$162.50	\$182.50	\$165.75	\$186.43
Full-time School Age	\$147.50	\$124.75	\$149.76	\$152.67	\$161.67	\$157.75	\$164.70
Before & After School	\$57.00	\$60.00	\$86.87	\$60.00	\$202.50	\$168.75	\$112.42
Total HHS Centers	9	10	72	8	9	9	126
Spaces w/in Centers	643	680	5,692	395	459	598	14,113

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, as of 1/16/24

When it comes to average weekly tuition for care in a registered home, Blach Hawk County has the highest average for infants through four- & five-year-old, while Fayette County has the highest for full-time school age care plus before & after school care. In contrast, Clayton County has the lowest average for infants through three-year-old, while Benton County has the lowest for full-time school age care plus full-time school age care. Rates could not be reported for Delaware County due to confidentiality, there is only one registered home.

Table 20: Average Weekly Tuition at Registered Homes in Surrounding Counties

	Buchanan	Benton	Black Hawk	Clayton	Delaware	Fayette	Linn
Infant	\$155.94	\$147.50	\$162.41	\$145.63	N/A	\$160.00	\$150.22
Toddler	\$155.94	\$146.25	\$160.38	\$145.63	N/A	\$160.00	\$151.25
Two-Year-Old	\$152.81	\$145.42	\$160.48	\$1440.00	N/A	\$158.59	\$148.84
Three-Year-Old	\$152.81	\$144.58	\$158.92	\$1440.00	N/A	\$158.59	\$146.92
Four- & Five-Year-Old	\$153.21	\$137.73	\$160.50	\$1440.00	N/A	\$170.21	\$149.18
Full-time School Age	\$155.36	\$115.00	\$150.36	\$1440.00	N/A	\$160.36	\$136.72
Before & After School	\$150.00	\$60.00	\$99.83	N/A	N/A	\$151.88	\$77.29
Total Registered Homes	8	13	113	5	1	8	98
Spaces w/in Reg. Homes	100	152	1,244	60	8	92	1,012

Note: Data from Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, as of 1/16/24

Child Care Assistance in Iowa

Child Care Assistance (CCA) is available to the children of income-eligible parents to help pay for care at Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) approved child care programs while a parent or caretaker works or attends school. Child care programs are reimbursed directly from HHS when they provide care to a family that qualifies. As of July 1, 2023, the income eligibility limit for those initially applying for CCA is 160% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or 200% if they have a child with special needs. According to the federally determined poverty threshold that went into effect as of January 2024, 160% of FPL is equivalent to \$41,312 for a household of 3, and \$49,920 for a household of 4. Once approved a family's income will be checked annually, and they continue to be eligible if their income does not exceed 225% of FPL, which is equivalent to \$58,095 for a household of 3, and \$70,200 for a household of 4.¹⁶

Reimbursements to the provider are based on the number of units a child attends each week but cannot exceed the number approved by HHS. A unit is a half-day (up to 5 hours). In most cases, a child that attends full time, five days a week would be approved for 10 units (2 half-day units, for 5 days) or less, depending on several factors, including the parent or caretaker work or school schedule. A child care provider is reimbursed at a rate equal to the amount they would charge a private pay family (or equivalent), with a maximum reimbursement rate based on whether or not the provider participates in the IQ4K quality rating system (QRS). At this time, 8 of the 9 HHS regulated child care programs in Independence accept child care assistance, and of those 8 programs, 2 centers and 1 home participate in QRS/IQ4K allowing them to be reimbursed in some cases at a higher rate than programs that do not participate.

The following table shows the maximum amount child care providers can be reimbursed. These rates went into effect March 1, 2023. *See table on next page.*

¹⁶ Starting July 5, 2023, HHS implemented a one-year pilot program which allows the child care workforce to apply for Child Care Assistance (CCA) for their own children even if they are over the family income limit, as long as they meet all other CCA eligibility criteria, and the child will be cared for by someone other than the parent/guardian if approved.

Table 2i: Half-Day Maximum CCA Reimbursement Rates

Age Group	No QRS		QRS Level 1 or Level 2		QRS Level 3 or Level 4		QRS Level 5	
	Basic Care	Special Needs	Basic Care	Special Needs	Basic Care	Special Needs	Basic Care	Special Needs
Licensed Centers								
Infant/Toddler	\$23.21	\$51.94	\$23.21	\$51.94	\$23.21	\$51.94	\$24.05	\$51.94
Preschool	\$18.98	\$30.43	\$19.50	\$30.43	\$20.00	\$30.43	\$21.00	\$30.43
School Age	\$15.00	\$30.34	\$15.50	\$30.34	\$16.00	\$30.34	\$17.00	\$30.34
Child Development Home A or B								
Infant/Toddler	\$14.00	\$21.00	\$14.00	\$21.00	\$14.00	\$21.00	\$15.00	\$21.00
Preschool	\$12.75	\$19.13	\$13.00	\$19.13	\$13.75	\$19.13	\$15.00	\$19.13
School Age	\$11.25	\$16.88	\$12.50	\$16.88	\$13.00	\$16.88	\$13.50	\$16.88
Child Development Home C								
Infant/Toddler	\$15.25	\$22.88	\$15.25	\$22.88	\$15.25	\$22.88	\$16.25	\$22.88
Preschool	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$15.00	\$22.50	\$16.00	\$22.50
School Age	\$13.00	\$19.50	\$13.75	\$19.50	\$14.50	\$19.50	\$15.00	\$19.50
Child Care Homes (not registered)								
Infant/Toddler	\$12.98	\$19.47	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Preschool	\$12.50	\$18.75	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
School Age	\$10.82	\$16.23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: Data from Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (2023)

CHILD CARE NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS

In September 2023, three electronic surveys developed by First Children's Finance were distributed for the purpose of determining how child care affects employers and parents, as well as to gain insight from child care providers about the current challenges and opportunities they are experiencing. To ensure there were no biases and to maintain confidentiality, surveys were distributed electronically and then collected and analyzed by First Children's Finance. Comments made by survey participants are shared verbatim as long as an individual respondent, local employer, or child care program cannot be identified, in which case the comment may have been partially reported or edited to remove the identifying information.

Employer Survey Results

A total of 9 companies participated in the employer survey. Employers indicated their companies represent the following industries: Educational Services; Finance & Insurance; Manufacturing; Professional, Scientific & Technical; and Other Services.

Collectively they employ 951 individuals, with 759 of those working at or reporting to their Independence location. Of those working or reporting to their Independence location, 693 are full-time and 66 part-time. There are 101 full-time and 0 part-time vacant positions at their Independence locations.

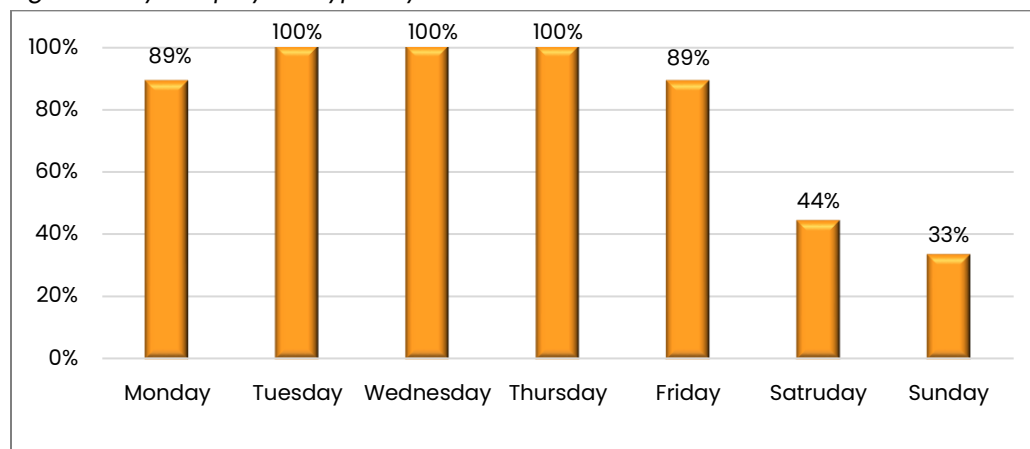
Table 22: Employees & Vacant Positions at Independence Locations

	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Total Employees	Full-Time Vacancies	Part-Time Vacancies	Total Vacancies
First Shift (days)	534	39	573	41	0	41
Second Shift (evenings)	93	21	114	36	0	36
Third Shift (overnight)	21	0	21	24	0	24
Rotating Shift	45	6	51	0	0	0
Total	693	66	759	101	0	101

In a separate question, employers were asked how many new positions they plan to add at their Independence location in the next 3 years. Sixty-seven percent (67%) report they do plan to collectively add 199 positions. Most of those, 4 employers, plan to add less than 10 positions, while 1 plans to add 80, and 1 plans to add 100.

When asked which days of the week their employees typically work, 1 indicated they operate Monday through Thursday, 3 indicated they operate Monday through Friday, 2 operate Monday through Saturday, 1 operates Tuesday through Friday plus Sunday, and 2 operate Monday through Sunday (7 days).

Figure 1: Days Employees Typically Work



When it comes to hours of operation the largest group, 56% (5 employers), operate first shift on the days they do operate. Hours of operation vary among employers, but all occur between 6:00 am and 6:00 pm. Thirty-three percent (33%) (3 employers) operate 24-hours, with 1 operating Monday through Friday (weekdays) and 2 operating Monday through Sunday (7 days). The remaining 11% (1 employer) operate first and second shift Monday through Friday.

Employers were asked if some or all of their employees work set shifts, and the hours for each shift. The following comments were received:

- 7:00 am to 2:30 pm, 3:00 pm to 10:30 pm, and 10:00 pm to 6:30 am.
- 7:30 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday, and 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday through Friday.
- First shift- 6:00 am to 4:30 pm, second shift- 4:30 pm to 2:30 am, third shift- 8:00 pm to 6:00 am. Weekend shift- 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
- One employer gave 25 different schedules, which can be summarized as the following:
Day shifts- start between 4:40 am and 10:00 am, and end between 2:30 pm and 6:00 pm.
Evening shifts- start between 12:00 pm and 5:30 pm, and end between 9:00 pm and 2:00 am.
Overnight shifts- start between 7:45 pm and 3:00 am, and end between 5:00 am and 12:00 pm.

Twenty-two percent (22%) of employers indicated there are sometimes changes or fluctuations in their hours or days of operations. Comments received about schedule fluctuations were:

- *Holidays, slow volumes.*
- *Depending on the amount of [product] coming in, we may need to reduce hours to 6 hours a day, altering schedules by 2 hours at start or end times during hot weather.*

Employers were asked what percentage of their employees are female. Overall, employers were spread out, with the largest group, 33%, indicating their workforce is 0% to 25% female.

Table 23: Composition of Workforce

	Percent of Employers
Female 0% to 25%	33%
Female 26% to 50%	22%
Female 51% to 75%	22%
Female 76% to 100%	22%

Employers were asked to estimate the percentage of employees who report to their Independence location that have children age 12 or younger. Forty-four percent (44%) reported less than one-quarter of their employees have children, while 56% reported between one-quarter and one-half of their employees have children.

Table 24: Percentage of Employees with Children

	Percent of Employers
0% to 25% have children	44%
26% to 50% have children	56%
51% to 75% have children	0%
76% to 100% have children	0%

Employers were asked to estimate the percentage of their workforce that works in Independence also lives within Independence. The majority reported that more than half of their workforce lives in Independence. Eleven percent (11%) reported up to one-quarter of their workforce lives in Independence, 33% reported between one-quarter and one-half, 44% reported one-half to three-quarters, and 11% reported more than three-quarters.

Table 25: Percent of Employees Living in Independence

	Percent of Employers
0% to 25% work in and live in Independence	11%
26% to 50% work in and live in Independence	33%
51% to 75% work in and live in Independence	44%
76% to 100% work in and live in Independence	11%

Thirty-three percent (33%) of employers indicated their company had employees that departed during the last 12 months as a direct result of child care challenges. Collectively they lost 6 employees. As a follow up, employers were then asked a series of questions about productivity, absenteeism, and other challenges as they relate to child care.

When it comes to employee productivity, 11% of employers indicated they had challenges related to productivity due to employee's child care challenges, while 33% were unsure, and 56% said they did not. Comments received were:

- *None reported, however, we know the possibility exists.*
- *With our need to have people work on 2nd and 3rd shift, daycares are not open typically after 6:00 pm, or are not open overnight to accommodate them (if single parents).*

When asked about absenteeism due to employee's child care challenges, 11% of employers indicated they had experienced challenges, while 44% were unsure, and 44% had not. Comments received were:

- *None reported to Human Resources.*
- *If they are, we are not aware that is why they are calling in, as they do not say it is directly because of childcare.*
- *During bad weather or non-school days related to bad weather several daycares close so our employees need to leave work early or not come in at all.*

In a separate question, 11% of employers indicated they had experienced difficulty hiring due to child care options or challenges in the area, 33% were unsure, and 56% had not. Comments received were:

- *We list hours of operations and disclose in the interview process what hours are to be expected.*
- *Lack of day care options in the area.*
- *Our most recent applicants do not have young children. I imagine that daycare hours would be a challenge with our 10-hour day schedule for prospective employees.*

Employers were given a list of common effects their employees (not job applicants) may experience due to child care challenges and were asked to select all that they are aware of as having affected their employees in the last 12 months. The challenges that were indicated by at least one-quarter of the employers were employees arrived late to work (44%), missed a day of work because their child care provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (33%), and had to leave work early (33%). Overall, 44% indicated their employees experienced no issues related to work and child care. *See table on next page.*

Table 26: Effects of Child Care Challenges on Employees

	Percent of Employers
Missed a day of work because their provider was closed, on vacation, or not available	33%
Missed a day of work because their provider did not have room or space for a child	22%
Did not accept a desired job offer	22%
Arrived late to work	44%
Had to leave work early	33%
Unable to work overtime	11%
Unable to travel for work	0%
Lower productivity	0%
Unable to accept a different work schedule or shift	22%
Have had to reduce the number of hours worked	22%
Received disciplinary action (not including firing)	11%
Quit a job	11%
Got fired	11%
Had to change jobs to one that works with their child care arrangement	11%
Took a job that does not fit their skills	0%
Had to leave their child home alone to go to work	22%
Had to bring their child to work with them	11%
Other	0%
Our employees experienced no issues related to work and child care	44%

Employers were asked if their company currently offered any child care related benefits to their employees (they were asked to select all that apply). The majority of employers (78%) indicated they offer dependent care flex spending accounts, while 0% indicated they offer financial assistance to help employees pay for child care, both of these typically result in some costs for the employer to pay an entity to administer the program. Twenty-two percent (22%) indicated they do not offer either benefit.

Table 27: Child Care Related Benefits Currently Offered

	Percent of Employers
Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts	78%
Financial assistance to help employees pay for child care	0%
None of the above	22%

Employers were then asked what prevents their company from offering any or some of the benefits listed above. Comments received were:

- Financial component of benefit offering and number who would utilize the benefit.

- *The only employees besides [specific position] work part-time or flex shifts-childcare is not an issue.*

Employers were then given a second list of child care related benefits and asked which they offer to their employees (they were asked to select all that apply). The benefits on this list typically do not result in the employer incurring additional costs. If an employee's regular child care arrangement is not available, 44% of employers said they offer flexible schedules while 33% of employees said they offer work-from-home options. None of the employers provide employees with child care information in employee orientation, or the employee handbook. Overall, the majority, 56%, indicated they offer none of the benefits listed.

Table 28: Non-Financial Child Care Related Benefits Offered

	Percent of Employers
Child care information is included in employee orientation	0%
Child care information is included in an employee handbook	0%
Flexible schedules if their regular child care arrangement is not available	44%
Work-from-home options if their regular child care arrangement is not available	33%
None of the above	56%

Employers were then asked what prevents their company from offering any or some benefits listed above. Comment received was:

- *Childcare information not provided to employer to handout to new employees.*
- *Manufacturing is dependent on people being present.*
- *I let people know where to go if child care is needed, however, we usually lose applicants because we don't have 1st shift opportunities.*
- *Manufacturing doesn't really allow for flexibility in location or time.*

Employers were asked to share any other ways their business assists employees with child care. The following comments were received:

- *Pay for a spot or spots for eligible employees.*
- *Flexibility in changing shifts if necessary.*

Employers were asked how their business would be willing to assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or supporting child care businesses. A list of options was provided, and respondents asked to select all that apply. The two most popular responses with 33% each were donation or financial contribution to build, remodel, or expand a child care center and none of the above. The second most popular responses were annual donation or financial contribution

for a portion (but not all) of the wages of a child care center director and other. Those selecting other were asked to specify. Comments received from those indicating “other” were:

- *Unknown.*
- *We have discussed before/after school building use but it has not been voted in.*

Table 29: Child Care Solutions Employers are Willing to Consider

	Percent of Employers
Provide space for on-site for a child care center (owned & operated by another entity)	11%
Own and operate a child care center (either on-site or off-site)	0%
Provide a significant donation or financial contribution as match for a grant application	11%
Donation or financial contribution for build, remodel, or expand a child care center	33%
Donate land or provide a financial contribution to purchase land to build a larger child care center	11%
Directly employ the Center Director (paying wages and benefits) in order to help reduce operating costs	11%
Annual donation or financial contribution to a child care center that is equal to the wages of a child care center director	11%
Annual donation or financial contribution for a portion (but not all) of the wages of a child care center director	22%
Other (see comments below)	22%
None of the above	33%

Next employers were given another list of ways a business may assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or supporting child care businesses. Respondents were asked to select all that apply. The largest group, 33%, indicated “other”. Comments to explain other were all related to being unsure or not knowing specifically at this time.

Table 30: Ways that Employers are Willing to Support Child Care Businesses

	Percent of Employers
Appoint an employee to serve on the Board of Directors of a child care program	22%
Provide child care providers access to purchase supplies through our company to take advantage of bulk pricing or discounts	22%
Provide in-kind services to reduce expenses of a child care program (ex. bookkeeping, payroll, maintenance, cleaning, etc.)	11%
Donation or financial contribution for the operation of a child care program	22%
Donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for your employees	22%
Donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for all children	22%
Pay a child care provider the tuition of a vacant slot in order to reserve or hold that slot for one of your employees (with the employee taking over payment upon enrolling)	22%
Other	33%
None of the above	22%

Comments received from those indicating “other” were:

- *Unknown.*
- *Not sure at this time.*
- *This would have to be on a case-by-case basis and voted on by our session.*

Employers were asked what they think is the biggest challenge facing parents in regard to child care, and what will resolve that challenge. Comments received were:

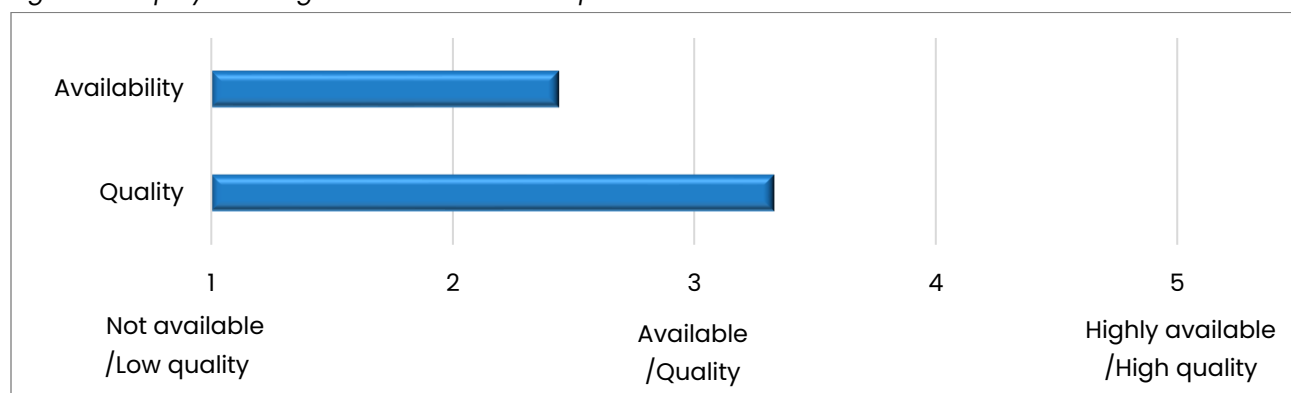
- *Finding care that is suitable for their individual needs.*
- *Cost and availability of child care.*
- *For [us] specifically, it is the fact that we run a 7-day a week operation and our employees are required to work on weekends and holidays as scheduled.*
- *There are not enough child care providers in Independence. While our business is not currently affected, my local friends with children often complain about this, specifically the lack of space at [center]. Funding would be the biggest key.*

Employers were asked what opportunities they think should be explored to help address the child care supply in Independence. Comments received were:

- *How many children are without care or having to use friends/family or alternatives?*
- *Add a daycare at a reasonable price.*
- *More than 2 child care centers. Child care that is open late nights or over nights.*
- *Funding to expand Kidsville and to pay daycare employees a higher wage to reduce turnover and attract applicants.*

Employers were asked to rate the *availability* of child care in Independence on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 available, and 5 highly available (the higher the score, the more available). The average rating was 2.44. Employers were then asked to rate the *quality* of child care in Independence on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 quality, and 5 high quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). The average rating was 3.33.

Figure 2: Employer Ratings of Child Care in Independence



Employers were asked to provide additional thoughts about their employees' needs related to child care. Comments received were:

- *At our Independence branch, we currently only have one employee (lives outside of Independence) that utilizes child care provided by a relative also outside of Independence, therefore I do not have data on availability or quality of child care in Independence as it affects our local business.*
- *From what I have heard, the 2 child care centers in town offer great care for the little ones, there just isn't enough room for more OR enough people to care for the children.*

The final question asked employers to provide any additional thoughts about the supply of child care in Independence. Comments received were:

- *Since we don't have employer it's a guess on our end of what we have got needs. I know many bring their kids to Indee for school from other towns... Oelwein for example.*
- *It seems like a lot of in-home daycares don't last long. I hope that they will reach out to you with their feedback so they can be supported as well.*

Child Care Provider Survey Results

A total of 8 child care providers completed the survey. All 8 are located in the 50644-zip code. Four (4) home-based providers and 4 child care centers are represented. The centers are licensed, and all 4 home providers are registered child development homes with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Providers answered questions about the length of time they have been providing care, and how much longer they plan to provide care (home providers only). Two (2) of the centers have been operating for over 20 years while the other 2 have been operating between 10 years and 19 years. Three (3) of the home providers indicated they have been in operation between 10 and 19 years, while 1 has been in operating 1 to 4 years. Two (2) home providers indicate they intend to continue providing child care for an additional 5 or more years, while 1 intends to provide care for 4 more years, and 1 intends to provide care for 3 more years.

Table 31: Years Child Care Business Has Been in Operation

	20+ years	10 to 19 years	5 to 9 years	1 to 4 years	Less than 1 year
Licensed Center/Preschool	2	2	---	---	---
Registered Homes	---	3	---	1	---
Unregistered Homes	---	---	---	---	---

The providers that participated reported they collectively have 319 children enrolled, 171 full-time and 148 part-time. Although the capacity is assigned to a center or registered home by HHS is based on usable square footage, there are often reasons for the provider setting a lower preferred capacity, such as having enough staff to use all classrooms, or large spaces like multi-purpose rooms in centers counted in the total license that do not work well for use as a classroom on a regular basis.

The center reported they prefer to operate at a capacity that is different than the maximum they are allowed by HHS. Based on the capacity self-reported by the centers, they have combined legal capacity is 286 children, while their preferred capacity is 296, and they currently have 271 children enrolled. Based on the registration levels reported by the providers, FCF has determined the registered homes have a combined legal capacity of 48 children, while they self-reported their combined preferred capacity is 40, and they have 48 children enrolled. *See table on next page.*

Table 32: Participating Programs by Type

	Total Providers	Legal Capacity	Preferred Capacity	Full-Time Enrollment¹⁷	Part-Time Enrollment	Total Enrollment
Licensed Center/Preschool	4	286	296	133	138	271
Registered Homes	4	48	40	38	10	48
Unregistered Homes	0	---	---	---	---	---
Total	8	334	336	171	148	319

The centers reported they have 59 employees, 32 full-time (36 hours per week or more) and 27 part-time (35 hours per week or less). During the previous 12 months, 12 full-time and 22 part-time employees left (voluntarily or involuntarily), and currently there are 6 vacant positions, 3 full-time and 3 part-time. When asked how hiring staff had been over the last 12 months, 50% (2 centers) indicated it was somewhat easy and 50% (2 centers) indicated it was very difficult. There was space to allow centers to explain, no comments were received.

The registered home providers indicated they have 3 staff or assistants, 2 full-time (36 hours per week or more) and 1 part-time (35 hours per week or less). During the previous 12 months they did not have any staff or assistants leave, and currently there are no vacant positions. When asked how hiring staff had been over the last 12 months, all 4 registered homes indicated they have not tried to hire staff or assistants during the past 12 months.

Table 33: Employees & Vacant Positions at Independence Locations

	Full-Time Employees	Part-Time Employees	Total Employees	Full-Time Vacancies	Part-Time Vacancies	Total Vacancies
Licensed Center/Preschool	32	27	59	3	3	6
Registered Homes	2	1	3	0	0	0
Unregistered Homes	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total	34	28	62	3	3	6

When asked if they had to limit enrollment or close a classroom due to not having enough staff during the last 12 months, 1 center and 1 home indicated yes. Comments received were:

- *We had to cut half our school age program for summer time because of no staff. We also limited our toddler and infant room.*
- *Limited enrollments to help keep my current co-provider. We've needed to scale back numbers due to behaviors of children.*

¹⁷ It is possible for a child care program to have more children enrolled than what their capacity allows due to varying attendance schedules of the children.

When asked if they had turned away families or put them on a waitlist due to lack of openings during the last 12 months, 75% of the providers (2 centers and all 4 homes) indicated yes.

Comments received were:

- *I have turned away infants to school age. School age because they need transportation, and I can't do that. My next spots open are already filled.*
- *Usually, infants because we choose to not have as many to prevent burn-out. But also like four 3-year-olds.*
- *Three newborns, I am currently full in infants and toddlers. I will not have room in the near future as I only want to care for 4 children total.*
- *I constantly get calls asking for Infant or school age care.*
- *We don't anticipate any openings. We receive several calls a week from families looking for care from here or even wanting care from out of town looking to move to town. Our wait list is approximately 180+ kids. At this point in time, we also don't offer to put parents on the wait list unless they request it.*
- *Infant and school age due to staffing issues.*

All 8 providers operate between the hours of 5:00 am and 6:00 pm (exact hours for each program vary), Monday through Friday. None of the programs provide care for what are considered extended hours (after 6:30 pm) or weekends. Fifty percent (50%) operate year-round, while 50% operate during the school year. The programs that close down over the summer months collectively offer 88 spaces.

Providers were asked when parents contact you about child care, which factor is most important to them, and were asked to select one from a multiple-choice list. Seventy-five percent (75%) indicated it was available space or timing of enrollment, while 13% indicated it was second shift or event care, and 13% indicated it was transportation to/from school or preschool. *See table on next page.*

Table 34: Factor Most Important to Parents Inquiring About Care

	Number of Providers	Percent of Providers
Available space/timing of enrollment	6	75%
Care includes preschool	---	---
Dependable staff or provider	---	---
Drop-in or occasional care	---	---
Educational curriculum used	---	---
Health and safety policies	---	---
Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating improvement system	---	---
Location	---	---
Part-time options	---	---
Positive interactions between staff and children	---	---
Second shift/evening care	1	13%
Secured entrance	---	---
Special needs care	---	---
Third shift/overnight care	---	---
Transportation to and from school or preschool	1	13%
Tuition assistance or scholarships	---	---
Tuition rates or price	---	---
Upkeep or appearance of the facility and playground	---	---
Weekend care	---	---

Many providers will participate in programs that provide funding to off-set costs. Providers were asked about multiple federal and state programs available to licensed centers, registered homes, and some unregistered homes. Overall, the centers are participating in or at least aware of almost every program listed. The homes also are participating in or aware of many of the programs. The programs with the most indicating they are not familiar with are either new or are not typically useful to home providers.

Table 35: Child Care Programs Participation in Funding Opportunities

	Current or Past Participant	Aware of, But Never Participated	Not Familiar With/Not Heard Of
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	3 centers	1 center	---
	3 homes	1 home	---
Iowa Child Care Assistance Program (CCA)	3 centers	1 center	---
	3 homes	1 home	---
Child Care Assistance (CCA) Pilot Program for Child Care Workforce	1 center	2 centers	1 center
	2 homes	1 home	1 home
Agreement with school to provide Universal Preschool (4-year-old preschool)	4 centers	---	---
	---	3 homes	1 home

As a follow up, providers were asked about additional programs involving quality improvement, technology and education are also available. The centers were either participating in or aware of

all of the programs listed. All centers indicated they are a current or past participant or aware of all programs listed, with the exception of 1 newer program. Homes were also participating in or at least aware of most programs.

Table 36: Child Care Programs Participation or Knowledge of State Programs

	Current or Past Participant	Aware of, But Never Participated	Not Familiar With/Not Heard Of
Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating improvement system	4 centers 2 homes	--- 2 homes	--- ---
TEACH Scholarship Program	4 centers 2 homes	--- 2 homes	--- ---
Child Care WAGE\$® salary supplement	4 centers ---	--- 4 homes	--- ---
FieldPrint Fingerprinting	1 center 2 homes	3 centers 1 home	--- 1 home
Current opportunity for HHS funded monthly subscription fees for either Playground or brightwheel	1 center ---	2 centers 3 homes	1 center 1 home

Child care providers were also asked how many children enrolled in their program are receiving or are eligible for some form of financial assistance such as child care assistance, the food program (CACFP), or other needs-based grants or scholarship programs. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the programs (4 centers and 2 homes) indicated they do have enrollments, that are receiving or eligible for some form of financial assistance related to child care. Collectively they reported 64 total children of which 72% are enrolled full-time.

Providers were asked a series of open-ended questions about being a child care provider, what they see for the future of child care, and any other comments they have about child care. Each of these questions and responses are shared below.

Providers were asked if they had the opportunity, would they wish to expand their current child care program to serve more children. Three (3) centers said yes, while no homes said yes. Respondents were asked to explain how they would expand.

Comments received from those answering yes were:

- We wish we could offer full day preschool so parents wouldn't need to transport kids in the middle of the day. Or we wish we had transportation. We wish we would have enough kids in the morning and afternoon to have two sections of preschool.
- We serve the school.
- We would need to expand our building or find a new site to relocate to.
- We could add on to our building.

Comments received from those answering no were:

- We serve the school.
- I'm lacking the space to add more children.
- Doesn't seem to be enough people looking for jobs so dependable help would be hard to find. The extra bookwork involved would be a hassle.

If you wish to expand your program, what kind of support would you need in order to be able to serve more children? Comments received were:

- *Additional staff.*
- *Financial support for renovations. We survive each month on our own budget but having an additional loan hovering over us will get difficult.*
- *Staffing and finances.*

What is the greatest challenge or barrier for expanding an existing child care program and what solutions would help? Comment received was:

- *Funding and staffing and space.*
- *Staffing does concern me, but we are currently sitting well with staff, and I have hope this barrier is getting better. Again, its financials off needing additional space.*
- *Staffing and finances.*
- *My biggest barrier is space in my home.*
- *Childcare burnout. I tried taking more but it caused more stress for us with children's behavior.*
- *Would need a bigger location and dependable employees.*

What is the greatest challenge or barrier for starting a new child care program and what solutions would help? Comment received was:

- *Supplies needed...cribs, changing table, toys, etc.*
- *Having help to run it.*
- *Finding reliable quality applicants.*
- *Funding and initiative.*
- *We would not start a new one.*
- *Supports.*

How do you think the community could better support child care providers? Comments received were:

- *More volunteers.*
- *We need donated services or financial donations. Our program is a nonprofit and we only charge what we need to do to survive as we want to be money conscious for*

parents. I have many maintenance needs and no manpower on staff, and administrative needs with limited administration staff (payroll - accounting).

- Schools provide more transportation options. If I am at my full capacity, I cannot transport any children. No busing options for preschoolers is also a problem.
- More help with the cost of food.
- A big help would be for the school to provide bus service within a block from my program for preschool and school age.

What challenges do you see in the future for child care in Independence? Comments received were:

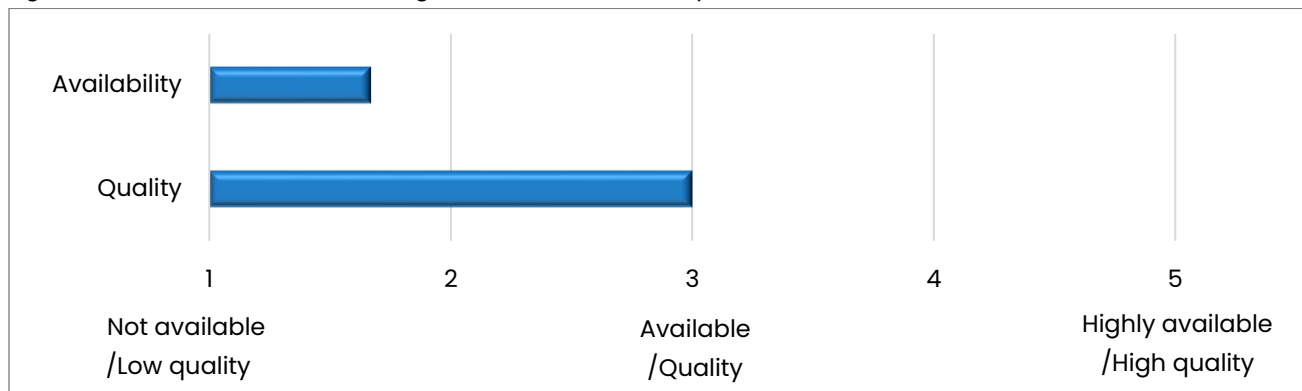
- No availability and costs are rising, and people can't afford it. And they can't retain staff as it is.
- Not available.
- We need more open spots.
- Staffing and finances for better wages.
- I think the biggest thing is just finding new providers that stay providers and don't quit soon after starting.
- People don't stick with it because the stress of families expecting too much out of us and not wanting to pay us more. It's expensive to run.
- Lack of quality reliable applicants for a center. Home day cares can't take on the load (number of children) that a center could and the amount of young infants waiting to get in to a daycare keeps growing.
- Transportation...providers are getting away from transporting kids and school age care.

What opportunities do you see in the future for child care in Independence? Comments received were:

- More assistance available.
- We need more home daycares and center-based daycare providers. This will bring more employees and employers into our city. I also work in real estate and one of the many topics we run into while showing homes to new prospective community members is - is there available childcare?
- Not sure.
- Really hard to say. Without another large daycare facility, home daycare providers would have to take on more and the quality may decrease due to having a larger group. I also know of 3 home daycare providers that quit this year and went back to the workforce. Taking on more children could lead to more providers quitting. Maybe a partnership with some of the larger companies in town would be an opportunity to add more centers.

Child care providers were asked to rank the *availability* of child care in Independence on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 adequate, and 5 highly available (the higher the score, the more available). The weighted average was 1.63. Providers were then asked to rank the *quality* of child care in Independence on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 quality, and 5 high quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). The weighted average was 2.75.

Figure 3: Child Care Provider Ratings of Child Care in Independence



The final question allowed providers to share any additional comments they had about child care in Independence. No comments were received.

Parent Survey Results

A total of 408 individuals accessed the parent survey. To assure that results reflect data that will be most useful to the community to address child care challenges in Independence, the surveys were filtered and only the responses of those that currently have children ages 12 or younger or plan to have or adopt children in the next 5 years, that indicated that if selecting child care today Independence is their preferred location, and that completed and submitted their survey are reflected in this report. Surveys that were not included were because either the individual does not have children, they indicated they do not wish to use child care (such as those that have a stay-at-home parent) or they do not have children and do not plan to have or adopt in the next five years. Also not included due to the possibility of duplication are surveys that were started but not completed and submitted.

The following results reflect surveys from 231 individuals that have children ages 12 or younger and are currently using or would prefer to use child care in Independence, this group is referred to as “current parents”. Also included are the surveys from 8 individuals that do not currently have children but do plan to have or adopt in the next 5 years, this group is referred to as “future parents”. Current parents completed questions that provide information about both their current and their future or preferred child care use, while future parents completed only questions about their anticipated future child care use. Some questions were required while others were not, therefore responses from all questions are included in the aggregate data, even if an individual did not complete all survey questions.

Using the most popular responses, a current parent would be described as married (87%) and living in the boundaries of the Independence Community School District (91%). They work first-shift Monday through Friday (81%) in Independence (65%), and the nature of their job is health care & social assistance (28%). Their spouse also works first-shift Monday through Friday (83%) outside of Independence (56%), and the nature of their job is manufacturing (22%). They currently use child care in Independence (89%), Monday through Friday. They use child care 40 to 49 hours per week for younger children, less than 10 hours per week for before and after school care, and 40 to 49 hours per week for older children during the summer. They are satisfied with their current child care provider (79%).

Using the most popular responses, a future parent would be described as married (63%) and living in the boundaries of the Independence Community School District (100%). They work first-shift Monday through Friday (75%) in Independence (88%), and the nature of their job is either finance & insurance (38%) or health care & social assistance (38%). Their spouse also works first-shift Monday through Friday (80%) in Independence (100%), and the nature of their job is manufacturing (20%).

Parents were asked if they live in the boundaries of the Independence Community School District, 91% of current parents and 100% of future parents indicated yes. Those that indicated no were asked to specify where. The following table shows the parents that indicated they live within the Independence CSD and outside, and a breakdown of where within or outside the district.

Table 37: Parents' Place of Residence

	Current Parents	Future Parents
Within Independence CSD	91%	100%
Independence (50644 zip code)	84%	100%
Brandon (52210 zip code)	2%	0%
Hazleton (50641 zip code)	0%	0%
Quasqueton (52326 zip code)	0%	0%
Rowley (52329 zip code)	4%	0%
Walker (52352 zip code)	0%	0%
Outside Independence CSD	8%	0%
Arlington (50606 zip code)	0%	0%
Cedar Rapids (52403 zip code)	0%	0%
Coggon (52218 zip code)	0%	0%
Delhi (52223 zip code)	0%	0%
Hazleton (50641 zip code)	0%	0%
Jesup (50648 zip code)	0%	0%
La Porte City (50651 zip code)	0%	0%
Lamont (50650 zip code)	0%	0%
Manchester (52057 zip code)	1%	0%
Maynard (50655 zip code)	0%	0%
Oelwein (50662 zip code)	1%	0%
Quasqueton (50644 zip code)	1%	0%
Winthrop (50682 zip code)	2%	0%

Parents that live outside of the Independence CSD were asked if the availability of child care in Independence has influenced their decision to live elsewhere. Sixteen percent (16%) (6 parents) indicated yes. Comments received were:

- *However, it does make the Independence area less appealing when it is nearly impossible to get into Kidsville and there is no after school program once kids start school. Every Friday being an early out for school aged kids coupled with all of the other early dismissals makes it difficult on those that have both parents working. An after-school program would be a game changer.*
- *We have contemplated moving to Independence but are aware of the lack of child care available, which has been a large factor in our decision to stay put for now.*

Comments continued... Has the availability of child care in Independence influenced your decision to live elsewhere?

- *I live on a family farm but work in Independence and need to have the ability to lessen the amount of hours required for daycare by having my children in daycare where I work.*
- *Finding childcare since moving to this area has been a challenge. We have been on the waitlist for Kidsville Daycare center for over a year and a half. It has been especially challenging to find after school childcare that would provide transportation from school to daycare as my husband and I both work full time and cannot leave work to pick up our oldest.*
- *I had to keep my daughter in Cedar Rapids due to being on a waiting list for over a year for childcare. None were available that take State CCA.*

In a separate question, parents were asked if their children are enrolled in or are most likely to be enrolled in the Independence Community School District when they are old enough. The majority of current parents (93%) and all future parents (100%) answered yes. Parents that answered no, were asked to name the district.

Table 38: School District Where Children Are Enrolled

	Current Parents	Future Parents
Independence Community School District	93%	100%
East Buchanan CSD	2%	0%
Jesup CSD	2%	0%
Oelwein CSD	<1%	0%
St. John Catholic School, Independence	<1%	0%
Union CSD	<1%	0%
Wapsie Valley CSD	<1%	0%
West Central CSD	<1%	0%
West Delaware CSD	1%	0%

The most common industry or occupational nature for the parent who completed the survey (self) was health care & social assistance (25%). The most common occupation among the spouses or partners for current parents was professional, scientific, & technical (15%). When it comes to future parents, the most common industry or occupational nature for the parent who completed the survey (self) was a tie between finance & insurance (38%) and health care & social assistance (38%). The most common occupation among the spouses or partners for future parents was utilities (40%). See table on next page.

Table 39: Nature of Job or Occupation

	Current Parents		Future Parents	
	Self	Spouse or Partner	Self	Spouse or Partner
Accommodations & Food Service	2%	3%	0%	0%
Administrative & Waste Management	1%	1%	0%	0%
Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting	3%	5%	0%	20%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction	3%	11%	13%	0%
Educational Services	15%	7%	13%	0%
Finance & Insurance	7%	8%	38%	0%
Health Care & Social Assistance	28%	9%	38%	0%
Information	0%	1%	0%	0%
Management of Companies	2%	3%	0%	0%
Manufacturing	14%	22%	0%	20%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas	0%	0%	0%	0%
Professional, Scientific & Technical	2%	6%	0%	0%
Public Administration	1%	1%	0%	0%
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	2%	1%	0%	0%
Retail Trade	2%	2%	0%	0%
Transportation & Warehousing	1%	5%	0%	0%
Utilities	1%	2%	0%	40%
Wholesale Trade	0%	1%	0%	0%
Other Services	13%	14%	0%	20%
Do not work	4%	3%	0%	0%

In a separate question, parents were asked where their job is located, or where they do most of their work. Among current parents, for the individual completing the survey (self) the most popular location is Independence (65%), followed by Waterloo (9%). For the spouse or partner of current parents the most popular location is again Independence (45%), followed by Cedar Rapids (13%). When it comes to future parents for the individual completing the survey (self) the most popular location is Independence (88%), followed by Waterloo (13%). For the spouse or partner of future parents 100% work in Independence. *See table on next page.*

Table 40: Town Where Job is Located

Town	Current Parents		Future Parents	
	Self	Spouse/ Partner	Self	Spouse/ Partner
Independence	65%	45%	88%	100%
Brandon	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Cedar Falls	4%	9%	0%	0%
Cedar Rapids	7%	13%	0%	0%
Center Point	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Dubuque	0%	1%	0%	0%
Dyersville	0%	1%	0%	0%
Elkader	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Evansdale	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Fairbank	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Fayette	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Hazelton	1%	1%	0%	0%
Hiawatha	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Iowa City	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Jesup	2%	2%	0%	0%
La Porte City	0%	1%	0%	0%
Manchester	3%	2%	0%	0%
Middle Amana	0%	1%	0%	0%
Oelwein	2%	4%	0%	0%
Rowley	1%	1%	0%	0%
Urbana	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Vinton	1%	0%	0%	0%
Walker	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Waterloo	9%	10%	13%	0%
Winthrop	0%	1%	0%	0%
Black Hawk County	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Delaware County	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Eastern Iowa	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Across United States	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Travels all over	0%	6%	0%	0%
Other, not specified	0%	1%	0%	0%

The majority of current parents and their spouse or partner work first-shift, Monday through Friday. For the individual completing the survey (self) 81% work first-shift, Monday through Friday, while 83% indicate their spouse or partner also work first-shift, Monday through Friday. The next most common schedule is rotating shift for both self and their spouse or partner. For future parents, the most common shift for the individual completing the survey (self) 75% work first-shift, Monday through Friday, while 80% indicated their spouse or partner also works first-shift,

Monday through Friday. The next most common schedule for self is rotating shift and for the spouse or partner it is on-call or as needed.

Figure 4: Current Parent Work Schedules

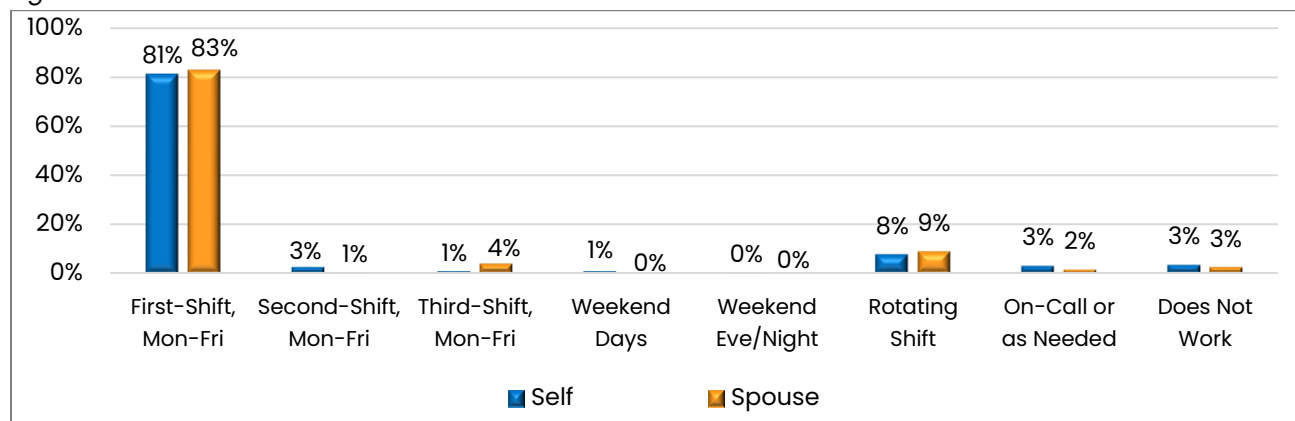
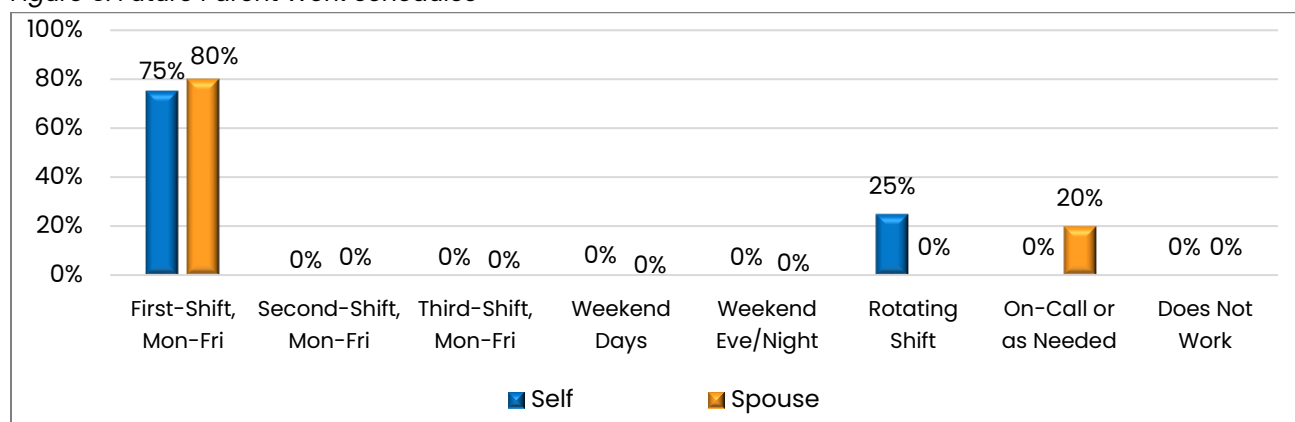


Figure 5: Future Parent Work Schedules



The most common child care related benefit offered by employers of current parents is dependent care flex spending accounts (40%), while the most common for future parents is work from home options if their regular child care arrangement is not available (25%). Approximately 9% of current parents and 63% of future parents indicated they are unsure what benefits their or their spouse's or partner's employer offers, while 43% of current parents and 13% of future parents indicated neither their employer nor their spouse's or partner's employer offers any of these benefits. See table on next page.

Table 41: Child Care Related Benefits Offered by Employer

	Current Parents	Future Parents
Dependent Care Flex Spending Accounts	40%	13%
Financial assistance or scholarships to help pay for child care	0%	0%
Flexible schedule if your regular arrangement is not available	13%	0%
Work from home options if your regular arrangement is not available	10%	25%
Child care information included in employee orientation	0%	0%
Child care information included in employee handbook	1%	0%
Other	3%	0%
Unsure if employer offers any of these	9%	63%
Employer does not offer any of these	43%	13%

Those that selected other were asked to explain. Comments received were:

- *Makes her own schedule.*
- *I do not work and I need daycare to work.*
- *I work in daycare and childcare is free, I bring them with me to work.*
- *Retired.*
- *Stays at home.*
- *Does not offer child care.*

Parents were asked if they or their spouse or partner had declined employment or withdrawn from the workforce during the last 12 months due to child care. Seventeen percent (17%) (40 parents) said yes. Comments received were:

- *No, but it's a constant tug of war battle. Our provider takes a lot of days off.*
- *We are... able to make our own schedule but due to child care unavailability one parent has extremely limited availability and has to decline clients often.*
- *Had to go back to part time after leaving [employer] and can't afford childcare at the time until I find another factory.*
- *I am unable to work due to not having reliable childcare.*
- *Childcare is only offered Monday through Friday, 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. Me and my spouse work jobs requiring work outside of these dates and times.*
- *Work different shifts so we don't have to worry about anyone but relatives because we can't find daycare.*
- *Had to drop out of final year of college and was already accepted into a medical college for the following year.*
- *I need a better job but worry about being able to find and pay for child care. Most well-paying jobs I can get are 2nd or 3rd shift.*
- *Unable to find daycare prior to 6:00 am or after 6:00 pm.*
- *I've turned down opportunities.*

Comments continued... Have you or your spouse or partner declined employment or withdrawn from the workforce during the last 12 months due to child care?

- *Wife stays at home with kids and cannot take a job.*
- *One adult did over a year of stay-at-home child care due to availability and waiting to find job with scheduling flexibility.*
- *Had to move my work schedule to weekend due to not being able to afford child care and finding a center or in-home with 2 open spots.*
- *Childcare is difficult to maintain and turned down a job opportunity that required more need for childcare.*
- *Can't afford daycare so cut hours at work.*
- *As an educator, I was hired for a summertime position. I didn't have reliable childcare, so I had to decline the position.*
- *When my mom is ill, has appts, or out of town, I have to take off work to watch my daughter who is 5.*
- *Currently my husband works from home, but if he didn't, which where he works could change, we wouldn't have childcare. I might have to stop working on certain days to pick kids up and drop them off. Also, would have to watch after school as well.*
- *I stay home because we are unable to find reliable child care.*
- *I had to shorten my working hours due to child care.*
- *My son had to attend a daycare in Black Hawk County as there were not enough spots in the daycare that open early enough for me to drive to my job and home. When people commute 30 plus minutes they can't go to in-homes and there is no room in the 2 daycare centers we have.*
- *Became a stay-at-home mom during the week & work weekends due to childcare prices/availability in our area. My partner is able to be home to help on occasion but not regularly.*
- *We've declined work for her the past 4 years until our daughter was able to have surgery. My spouse will return to work soon.*
- *Not making enough to afford 2 kids in daycare.*
- *We were unable to find a place that accepted CCA and was QUALITY for over a year.*
- *It was close until we found other arrangements.*
- *Can't afford to send both kids to daycare so wife quit her job to be with the kids.*

Parents were asked, as of today if they or their spouse or partner is not working (unemployed) because of child care challenges. Six percent (6%) (14 parents) said yes. Comments received were:

- *I wish to work and would love to find childcare for my kids that is reliable so I can be a dependable employee.*
- *Expense, time of day that child care is offered, dates that child care is offered, etc. Childcare is only offered to us, Monday - Friday 6:00 am - 6:00 pm.*
- *Cannot finish Degree or clinicals due to no available childcare.*
- *Too expensive.*
- *I cannot afford childcare for 1 kid full time and 2 other kids part time after school. We do not qualify for help from the state for childcare assistance.*
- *We haven't been able to find reliable child care.*
- *Not enough options, not enough availability at places we like.*
- *Too expensive, but don't qualify for assistance with husband's income.*
- *Can't afford to send both kids to daycare so wife quit her job to be with the kids.*

Parents were asked, as of today are child care challenges limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment (Ex. Working part-time when full-time preferred or not working within preferred field). Thirty-two percent (32%) (75 parents) said yes. Comments received were:

- *I am only working part time instead of full time due to childcare drop off/pick up times conflicting with my work schedule.*
- *I had to change jobs.*
- *Spouse has wanted to find another type of employment with full time hours but has not been able to due to not being able to find childcare.*
- *Provider takes a lot of time off.*
- *I can only work part time because I have to have family watch my son and they work also.*
- *I am unable to get childcare, so I am unable to work.*
- *My spouse works part-time to stay home and watch our children due to childcare date and time restrictions, as well as childcare cost making working less realistic.*
- *Not being able to work in desired field due to childcare availability and restraints.*
- *We have to pick up before 5:00 pm. We both work until 5:00 so he takes the cut.*
- *Trying to find a job closer to home with less of a commute so we can pay less childcare.*
- *I work PRN and some days daycare is not available on the days I want to pick up.*
- *My 11-year-old rides bus home with my 6-year-old because there isn't enough room for him in a center.*
- *I work in daycare specifically for the child care. I would be happy making more with almost any other company.*

Comments continued... As of today are child care challenges limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment?

- *Often have to use time off/unpaid time to stay home with kids when care is unavailable. We have no other childcare option.*
- *Can only find part time that will allow me to get child to and from school during 1st shift hours.*
- *When kids are sick they cannot go to the center due to state regulations. And no back up wants to take them when sick (leading to work missed).*
- *Somewhat. My job has a traditional schedule some days, but the schedule can change at any time making it extremely hard to provide an accurate childcare schedule in advance. Our child has grandparents in the area, which helps, but if there was a provider that offered flexibility to adjust day-off, that would be great. That said, I understand this could be a problem with staffing.*
- *Can't work the times I'm needed due to child care costing/opening.*
- *One adult is doing very limited part time hours that revolve around school and childcare availability and working where that can work instead of preferred field and pay rate.*
- *Working weekends.*
- *If we were able to get more childcare we would be able to pick up more shifts.*
- *Staying at home full time and assisting my husband with our ... business however I can without having childcare. Been on the waitlist at Kidsville for 1 ½ years.*
- *Does not allow for a second job.*
- *Working part time when needing full time.*
- *No child care to apply at other jobs and work various hours or even over time.*
- *I am unable to afford to go to work because of the cost of daycare and we don't qualify for help from the state for daycare assistance.*
- *When my current daycare is closed, I do not have a backup daycare.*
- *I can't work more than part time due to lack of child care.*
- *No but it is something we have discussed based on how challenging our current arrangement is.*
- *Not working as many hours as we should because of childcare and school hours.*
- *There are 2 centers in town and they are full. In-home day care are open for limited hours and not enough time to travel outside Independence and back.*
- *It's not worth working when more than half of your check goes to daycare. It makes more sense for me to stay home.*
- *Stay at home mom during the week to care for children and working part-time on the weekend while partner is home to care for children.*

Comments continued... As of today are child care challenges limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment?

- *Spouse unable to take a promotion due to no childcare during the hours needed for the promotion with my nurse hours, and promotion not enough to allow me to quit but they might when my spouse returns to work. We will see.*
- *I would get a better paying job that would help out but the job I currently have works with me so I can meet the needs of the children.*
- *I work part time from home to be available before school and after school due to lack of daycare options in this area.*
- *Frequent call-ins/leaving work early/starting work late due to child care needs or transportation for child.*
- *My work place offers multiple schedule options with a potential day off. Given the availability of childcare I am stuck with only one option.*
- *Only working 3 days a week due to lack of common sense daycare.*
- *Working part time.*
- *I work based on the hours offered by daycare, if I didn't have that constraint, I would be able to pursue a higher paying position.*
- *Current daycare is not reliable and causes one parent to have to stay home frequently.*
- *Sometimes if the sitter is sick or has to have [time] off one of us has to stay home with the kids.*
- *Many times current daycare provider is sick or has other obligations, during these times I have to take off of work and still have to pay for the daycare for the week.*
- *Work hours are dependent on the times that day care facility is open and closed.*

Parents were asked to indicate how many children were living in their household by age groups. The "Households" column of the following table shows how many parents indicated they have at least one child in each age group, while the "Children" column reflects how many total children are represented in the survey. Because some households have children in each age group, the household's column may be duplicative and therefore cannot be totaled. There are 176 households with at least 1 child age 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) and 161 households with at least 1 child ages 5 to 12. A total of 498 children are represented in the survey. In addition to the children represented here, 36% of current parents indicated they plan to have or adopt more children in the next 5 years. See table on next page.

Table 42: Children Represented in Parent Survey

	Households	Children
0 to 5 (not started Kindergarten)	176	248
5 to 12	161	250
Total	N/A	498

Twenty-three percent (23%) (52 parents) of current parents and 13% (1 parent) of future parents indicated that the availability of child care in Independence has impacted their decision to have or adopt children or caused them to limit the size of their family. Comments received were:

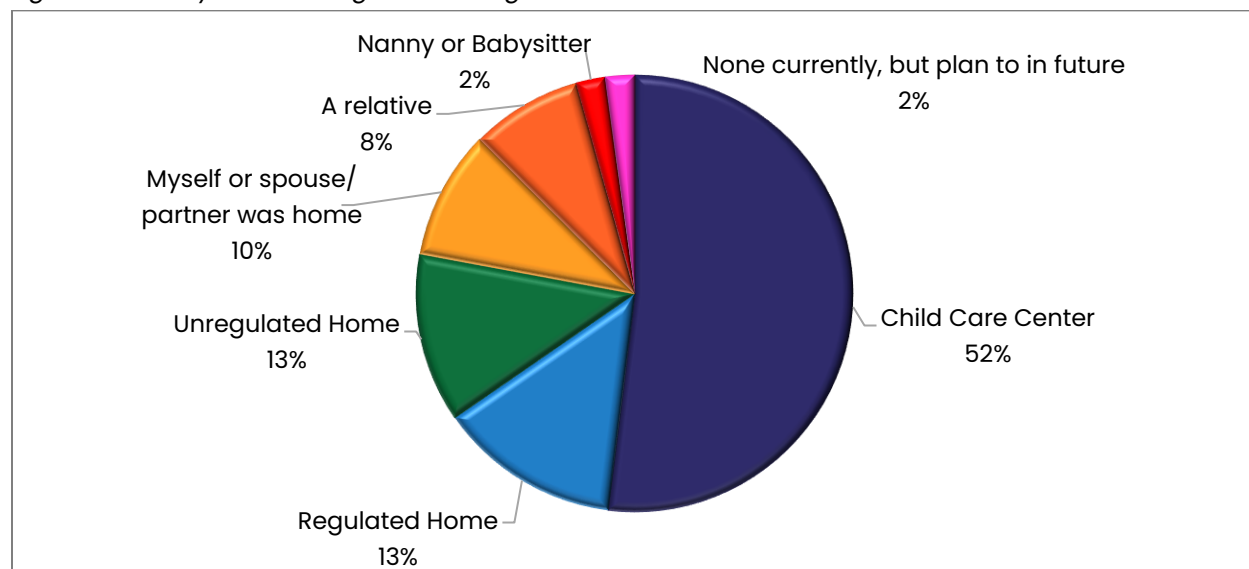
- *Not being able to be in a center.*
- *It has definitely caused us to limit the size of our family both due to the cost and availability. It is hard to want to commit the expense and deal with the challenges of child care when both parents are working. Expanding Kidsville and providing an after school program at Independence would go a long way in making us want to expand our family.*
- *Have postponed more children due to my inability to provide enough available time slots to clients to make enough money to support adding another child due to childcare unavailability.*
- *Price.*
- *Limited space.*
- *It seems in many places across Iowa daycare is hard to come by due to the lack of providers in each area.*
- *Price, availability, and how often daycare is closed.*
- *It's a nightmare having dependable daycare.*
- *It is always a potential issue when planning for children to make sure that our current childcare facility has an opening for when that child would need to start childcare.*
- *It is too hard to find care for an infant, it is expensive, and we still don't have consistent care for one of our kids. We don't want to add to that stress by finding care for another child.*
- *It is a factor we are currently discussing as we do hope to expand our family.*
- *Hard to find childcare and pay for it with today's income.*
- *There is no way you can expand your family and expect to get your child in a daycare as they are full.*
- *I am not willing to give up my employment to have more children.*
- *If we had another child, we would struggle to find care for them and neither of us can risk losing our jobs for that.*
- *Sick of dealing with it and financially don't qualify for assistance but childcare costs are becoming unmanageable.*
- *The cost of childcare has impacted our decision of having more children.*

- Proper hours and hourly rate has gotten out of hand. I can't afford to have two kids in daycare at this time.
- Since moving to independence, we are debating if adding to our family is a possibility with having to find a third childcare opening.
- There is no space, after school staff is poor and we don't have family in the area.
- If childcare is not available in Independence, I can't start a family with concerns of finding daycare. This will also factor the number of children I have; I need childcare if I have children, I don't plan to give up my job to stay home with children, this would not be the plan for my family.

When asked about their current child care situation, 80% of parents indicated they are using an "outside" child care arrangement such as a center or home provider, with a formal arrangement. Eight percent (8%) are using a relative with no formal arrangement and no money exchanged, 10% stay at home or a work from home parent cares for the children, 1% indicated children are old enough to be home alone, and 1% indicated they are not using any form of child care. Those that are not using outside child care were asked if they are likely to in the next 5 years, all parents indicated "yes".

When asked to provide more specific details about their primary child care setting during the last 12 months, 52% of parents indicated they are using child care center. Other top settings being used are regulated home (13%), unregulated home (13%), and a parent being home (10%).

Figure 6: Primary Care Setting Used During the Last 12 Months



A list of possible effects child care challenges may have had on parents' jobs was presented, and parents were asked to select all that apply to their own or their spouse's or partner's employment

in the last 12 months. The most common effects were “missed a day or work because provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (64%), followed by had to leave work early (48%), and had to supervise child while working from home (41%). Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents indicated they experienced no problems related to their job as a result of child care.

Table 43: Effects of Child Care Challenges on Job

	Current Parents
Missed a day of work because provider was closed, on vacation, or not available	49%
Missed a day of work because the provider did not have room or space for child	15%
Did not accept a desired job offer	16%
Arrived late to work	31%
Had to leave work early	48%
Unable to work overtime	28%
Unable to travel for work	14%
Lower productivity	11%
Unable to accept a different work schedule or shift	21%
Had to reduce the number of hours worked	20%
Received disciplinary action (not including firing)	2%
Quit a job	3%
Got fired	0%
Considered changing jobs to one that works with child care	17%
Had to change jobs to one that works with child care	7%
Took a job that does not fit my/their skills	2%
Had to leave child home alone to go to work	6%
Had to take child to work with me/them	15%
Had to supervise child while working from home	26%
Other (please specify)	5%
Experienced no problems related to job due to child care	28%

Comments received from parents selecting “other” were:

- *Had to choose a daycare that I’m not 100% happy about because it is the only option.*
- *Cost of childcare has gone up per kid with no increase in pay from our jobs. Daycare monthly cost ends up being more than our mortgage. Definitely hard to make work, but also still need a job so our hands are tied there.*
- *Traveling to Cedar Falls to pick up my child, getting home late in the afternoon to pick up other child from Kidsville in Independence.*
- *We have voluntarily kept our child(ren) home on days when daycare has asked for parents who could to do so because of staffing, etc.*
- *Changed to third shift to allow more time with child.*
- *Not having transportation to or from school.*

- *Had to rely on family to drop the child off as daycare isn't open when spouse goes to work.*
- *Leaving work, being disciplined for children being sick due to getting sick from illnesses circulating around the center that is out of our control.*
- *Had to adjust meeting times.*
- *Had to drive our kids to Cedar Rapids every day because of the lack of daycare in Independence.*
- *Had to depend on family in many instances,*

Thirty percent (30%) of parents indicated that there are changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow them to perform better at work. Comments received were:

- *I could perform better at work if daycare opened earlier than 6:00 am and stayed open past 6:00 pm.*
- *Having my baby at Kidsville.*
- *Independence bus route dropping Kindergarten/younger kids off to daycare providers close to the school or the school offering an after-school program. This would help tremendously as we are uncomfortable having our kindergartener walk to our provider. Many other schools such as Jesup have after school programs.*
- *Provide us with help finding back up care for her days off.*
- *If childcare was available after school gets out, would not need to leave work early to pick up child. Child could go to daycare after school and could pick up child later.*
- *Provider taking less time off or hiring help.*
- *If I had child care outside of family I could work more.*
- *Spending less time transporting if child care was in town.*
- *Getting my younger child in day care in Independence as opposed to Cedar Falls.*
- *Not so expensive. We work 45-hour weeks and our contract is for 45 hours and everything over is way up charged.*
- *Longer day options and weekend options.*
- *Having a later pick up time.*
- *More readily available options.*
- *Accommodating short notice schedule changes.*
- *Accountability.*
- *Pick-up past 5:00 and coverage when she is unable to work.*
- *More child care availability so there is room for drop in kids.*
- *A sick bay daycare (I feel this would help lots of parents who do not have family to help watch sick kids). Not sure if this is possible due to state regulations.*
- *Before/after school childcare at the school.*

Comments continued... Changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow parents to perform better at work.

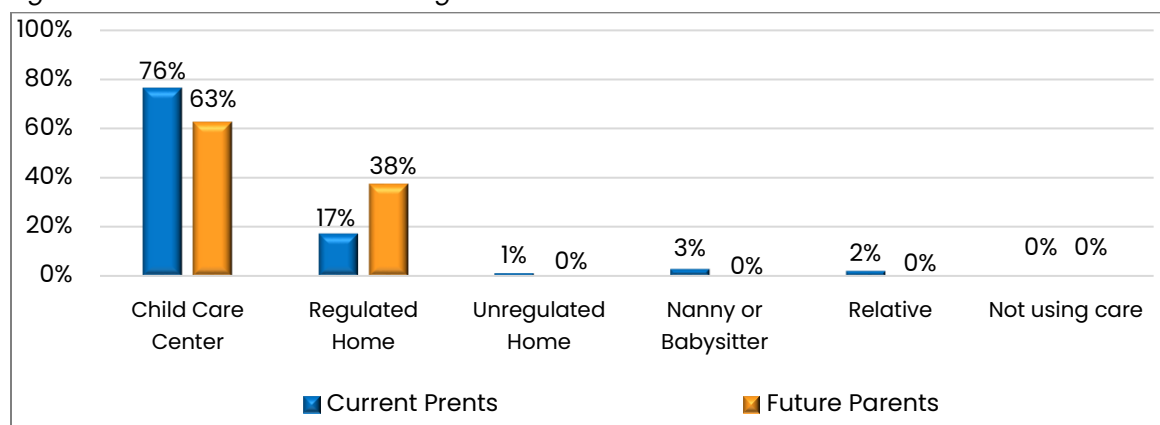
- *A latch key type program at the school would be great. It would cut my need for daycare greatly as I only need it after work unless they are sick.*
- *Potentially a flexible "if needed" schedule where we could pay a flat rate and use the care services if our work schedule requires it.*
- *Price.*
- *More reliable.*
- *Evening care.*
- *Hours/ more flexibility.*
- *Right now things are fine, but next year when my child goes to school I will have to select the school district based upon my ability to drop him off and get to work on time. I can't drop him at Independence schools and get to Fayette on time, so he'll go to West Central unless I can secure a spot for him at Kidsville for before/after school care. Whether or not I am actually on a wait list at Kidsville, I signed up for a waiting list twice--once in 2019 before he was born, and once again recently via their Facebook page. From what I understand, though, they don't have the capacity to take more children very often. I serve on the board of our childcare provider in Fayette, so I know that the real struggle in childcare availability is staff, and that staffing will remain difficult until childcare workers are paid more and receive benefits!*
- *If able to get into a child center it would create less challenges.*
- *More availability for hours, those that work earlier in the morning either have to have someone drop them off or go in late. Those that work later or up until 6:00 or 6:30 have to have someone pick them up or leave early - which is not always easy. We have a community that also has weekend shifts, and I feel that is a hold-up for people taking these shifts as it is difficult to find someone to cover childcare that early to that late on a weekend.*
- *Pay for child care based on hours present, instead of a contracted number of hours.*
- *If there was an after-school program for kids k-5, then I could work longer hours and not have to be home at 4:00 when the bus arrives. There is NO after-school child care available.*
- *Better access with flexible hours.*
- *Availability and flexibility.*
- *Consistent after school programs.*
- *Sick care for children.*
- *After-school care options - either expanding Kidsville or providing in-town transportation services to in-home providers.*

Comments continued... Changes that could be made to their current child care arrangements that would allow parents to perform better at work.

- *Brief after-school care for school-aged children that does not require transportation.*
- *Change the time of school to the time that most people work 9:00 to 5:00. Get more after school wraparound care.*
- *I am a single father that lives paycheck to paycheck barley getting by. With some child care I would be able to get a few hours of overtime that would be greatly beneficial.*
- *Having someplace to actually provide daycare near school, before and after.*
- *Later hours.*
- *Childcare that includes school transportation or openings for affordable childcare at the preschool. Or full days of preschool. Currently leaving work twice each day to take child to school and pick child up and take to daycare.*
- *Open earlier, close later, open weekends.*
- *We are currently using our last available option offered in Independence. If this location does not continue to accept our child, then we will be out of childcare options.*
- *More availability at Kidsville.*
- *Work more hours.*
- *More consistent daycare, using in-home so there more days uncovered due to only one person providing care.*
- *Less stress of missing work when [our] center is closed.*
- *Lesser adult to child ratio. Children are resistant to going to a child care center when there is little attention to them, especially if they are getting angry, sad, hurt, etc. The quality of attention is lower with so many kids, and not enough adults.*
- *On-site services provided through the district would be beneficial.*
- *If she had back up when she had to be closed.*
- *Closer to home.*

Parents were asked if all choices were available and you were selecting child care today, which setting would you most prefer. The top choices for current parents were a licensed center (76%), followed by regulated home provider (17%). Among future parents the top choices were a licensed center (63%), followed by regulated home provider (38%). Overall, 93% of current parents and 100% of future parents prefer a child care setting that is regulated by Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)-either a licensed center or a regulated home. See figure on next page.

Figure 7: Preferred Child Care Setting



Current parents were asked the primary reason why their children are not in their preferred type of care. The most common reason selected was not able to afford (16%), followed by provider not accepting enrollments (7%). Overall, 64% indicated their children are enrolled in their preferred type of care.

Table 44: Reason Children are Not in Preferred Type of Care

	Current Parents
Provider not accepting enrollments	15%
Location too far away	0%
Not able to afford	7%
Not conveniently located	1%
Not open for extended or nontraditional hours	4%
My children are not the right age for preferred arrangement	1%
Transportation to and from school/preschool not available	4%
Other (see comments below)	7%
My children are in my preferred type of care	60%

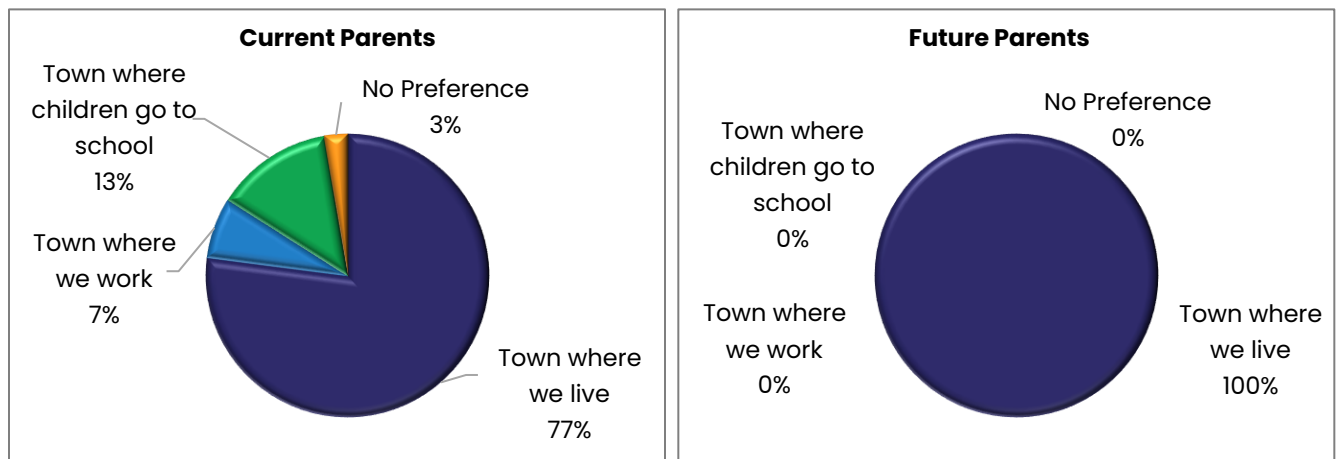
Those that selected other were asked to explain. Comments received were:

- Again, Kidsville having something like an 80-kid waitlist and never having a realistic shot at getting in. Expanding this service would be great as well as an after-school program for Independence.
- Looking into preschool with childcare.
- Wait list.
- All my kids at one care facility.
- Not available.
- Currently at a daycare center. Would be open to in home to create a smaller environment.

- They are enrolled.
- My child currently is in preferred care.
- Summer child care.
- Knit picky rules.
- Stil looking for after school care, currently piecing together between family and flexibility provided in my current job - not long term solution.
- Both of our kids are 20th on the list for the type of care we would like.
- Again, myself and others have never moved up the list at [center]. I think I've been on the "list" for 3 years and no call. When I've called to get an update no return calls
- No issues.

Respondents were asked their preference of proximity if they were selecting care today. The most preferred proximity among both current and future parents is the town where they live, which is preferred by 77% of current parents and 100% of future parents.

Figure 8: Preferred Proximity for Child Care



Parents were asked which community their current child care provider is located in. Because this study is being conducted to specifically address the child care supply in Independence, parent surveys were sorted only those that indicated Independence as their preferred location were included. Overall, 88% of current parents are using care in Independence today, but 100% would prefer to. See table on next page.

Table 45: Location of Child Care

	Current Parents		Future Parents
	Current Location	Preferred Location	Preferred Location
Independence	89%	100%	100%
Cedar Falls	<1%	---	---
Cedar Rapids	1%	---	---
Center Point	<1%	---	---
Evansdale	<1%	---	---
Fayette	<1%	---	---
Hazelton	<1%	---	---
Jesup	2%	---	---
La Porte City	<1%	---	---
Lamont	<1%	---	---
Manchester	1%	---	---
Oelwein	1%	---	---
Palo	<1%	---	---
Quasqueton	<1%	---	---
Walker	<1%	---	---
Waterloo	<1%	---	---
Independence & Cedar Falls	<1%	---	---

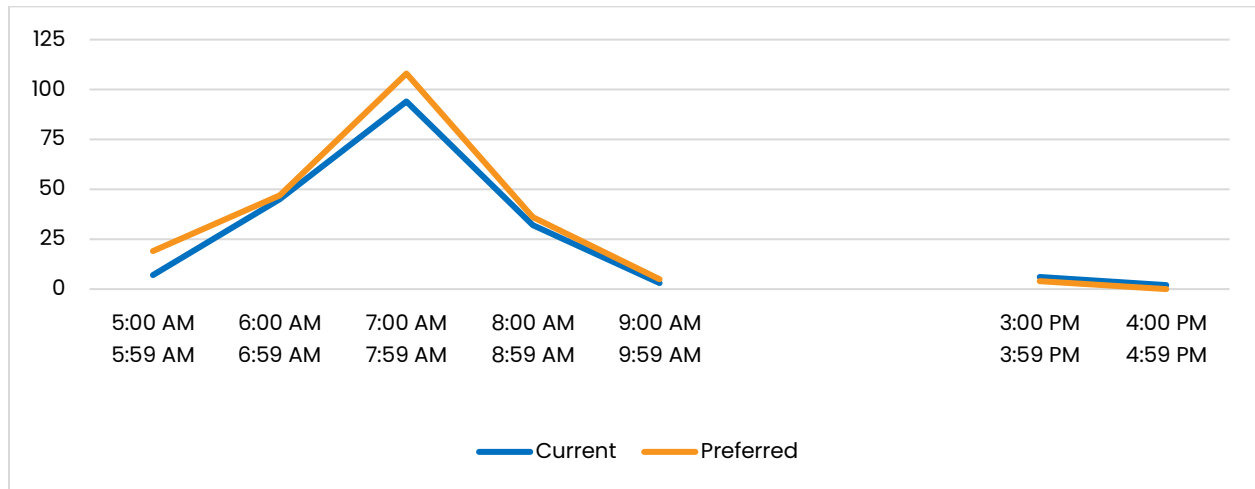
Parents were asked several questions about the average number of hours of child care used per week, preferred child care schedule, and current and preferred drop-off and pick-up times. When it comes to the number of hours parents are currently using child care, for ages 0 to 5, the most popular answer was between 40 and 49 hours a week (37%). Parents with school age children use less than 10 hours per week during the school year (51%), and 40 to 49 hours a week during the summer (34%).

Table 46: Average Hours per Week Child Care Currently Used

	Less than 10 Hours	10 to 19 Hours	20 to 29 hours	30 to 39 hours	40 to 49 hours	50 or more
Age 0 to 5 (not Kindergarten)	5%	5%	21%	24%	37%	8%
Age 5 to 12 during school year	51%	34%	6%	2%	5%	2%
Age 5 to 12 during summer	11%	10%	17%	22%	34%	7%

Currently, the most popular hour to drop-off children is from 7:00 am to 7:59 am (47%), followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am (23%) and 8:00 am to 8:59 am (16%). Parents were also asked their preferred drop-off times for children. The most preferred hour is still 7:00 am to 7:59 am (48%), followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am (21%) and 8:00 am to 8:59 am (16%). See figure on next page.

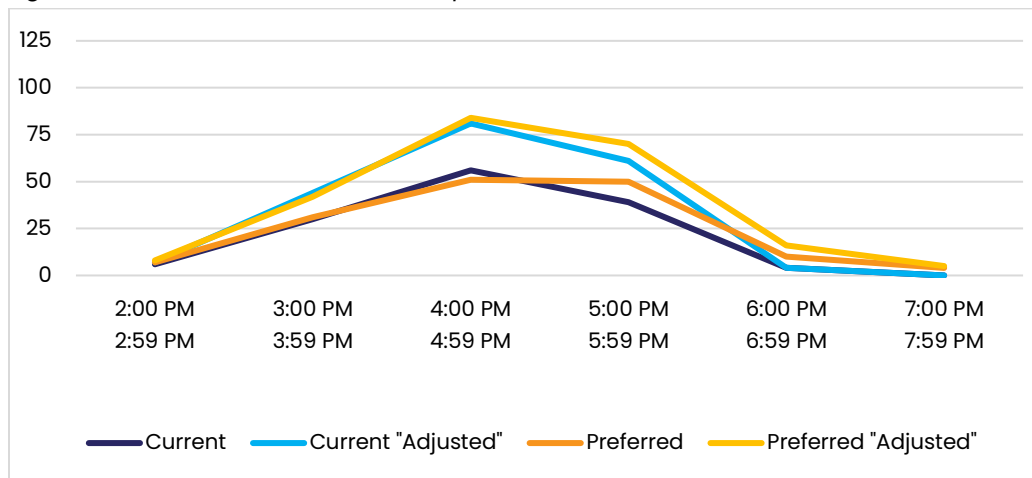
Figure 9: Current vs. Preferred Drop-off Times of Current Parents



Currently, the most popular hour to pick-up children is 4:00 pm to 4:59 pm (28%), followed by 5:00 pm to 5:59 pm (19%) and 3:00 pm to 3:59 pm (15%). Parents were also asked their preferred pick-up times for children. The hours of 4:00 pm to 4:59 pm (22%) and 5:00 pm to 5:59 pm (22%) are equally preferred, followed by 3:00 pm to 3:59 pm (14%). The number of parents that prefer to pick-up either 6:00 pm to 6:59 pm or 7:00 pm to 7:59 pm both increased, from 1% each currently, to 4% preferring the 6:00 pm hour and 2% preferring the 7:00 pm hour.

In addition, 30% of parents indicated their current pick-up time and 29% indicating their preferred pick-up time occurring between 3:00 am and 5:59 am. Because 81% reported their work schedule as first-shift and 83% reported their spouse's or partner's work schedule as first-shift, it is likely some of these parents actually prefer to pick up their children between in the PM (afternoon) not AM (morning). If this is true, the most popular pick-up times are currently 4:00 pm to 4:59 pm (40%), followed by 5:00 pm to 5:59 pm (30%) and 3:00 pm to 3:59 pm (22%), while the most preferred pick-up times are still 4:00 pm to 4:59 pm (37%), followed by 5:00 pm to 5:59 pm (31%) and 3:00 pm to 3:59 pm (19%). The following figure shows a comparison of parents' current versus preferred pick-up times, as well as the "adjusted" times assuming some parents unintentionally selected AM rather than PM. See figure on next page.

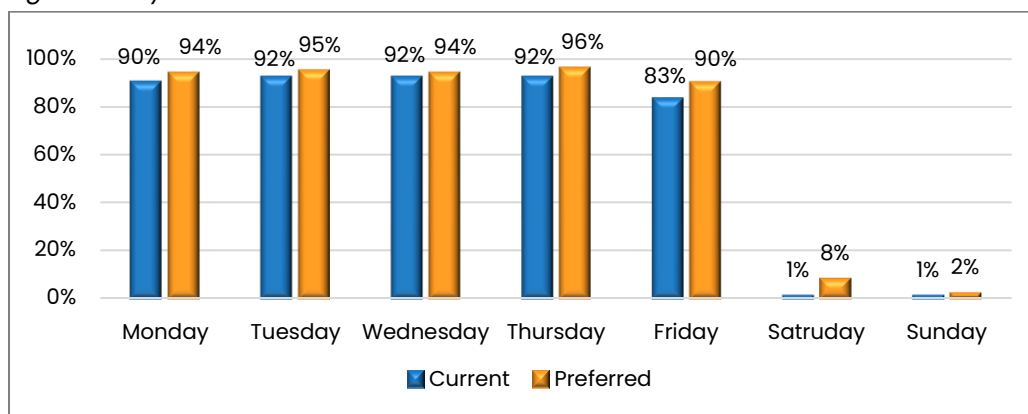
Figure 10: Current vs. Preferred Pick-Up Times of Current Parents



Among future parents the most preferred drop-off time is also 7:00 am to 7:59 am (38%), followed by 6:00 am to 6:59 am (25%). And when it comes to the most preferred pick-up times, future parents selected 5:00 pm to 5:59 pm (50%), followed by 4:00 pm to 4:59 pm (38%).

Most parents indicated they currently use care Monday through Friday (ranging from 83% to 92% per day). Currently 1% is using care on Saturday and 1% is using care on Sunday. When it comes to preferred days for care, Monday through Friday are still the most preferred, ranging from 90% to 96% per day. Meanwhile, 8% prefer Saturday care and 2% prefer Sunday care.

Figure 11: Days Current Parents Use Child Care vs. Prefer to Use Child Care

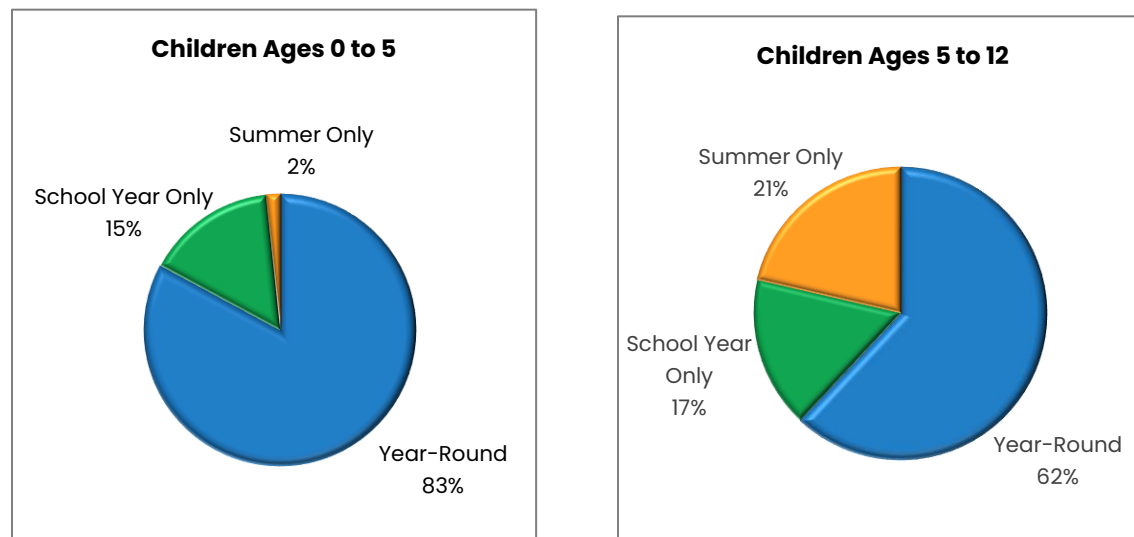


All future parents indicated they prefer to use care Monday through Friday (100% per day), while 13% (1 parent) indicated they prefer to use care on Saturday, and 13% (1 parent) indicated they prefer to care on Sunday.

When asked what their preferred time of the year would be if they were selecting child care today for ages 0 to 5, the majority of current parents prefer year-round care (83%). When asked what

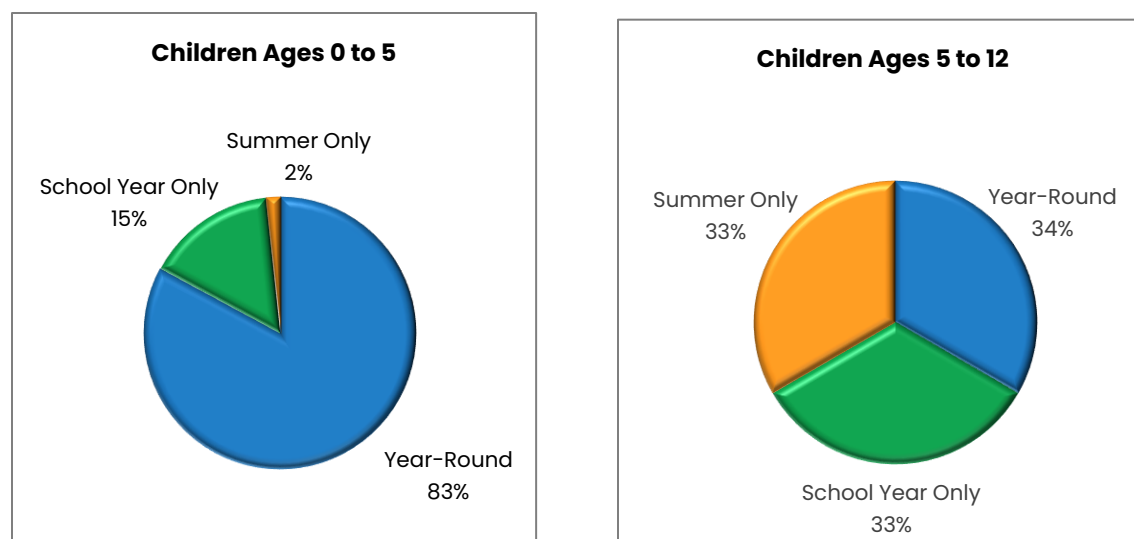
their preferred time of the year would be if they were selecting child care today for ages 5 to 12, the majority again prefer year-round care (62%).

Figure 12: Time of Year Current Parents Prefer to Use Child Care



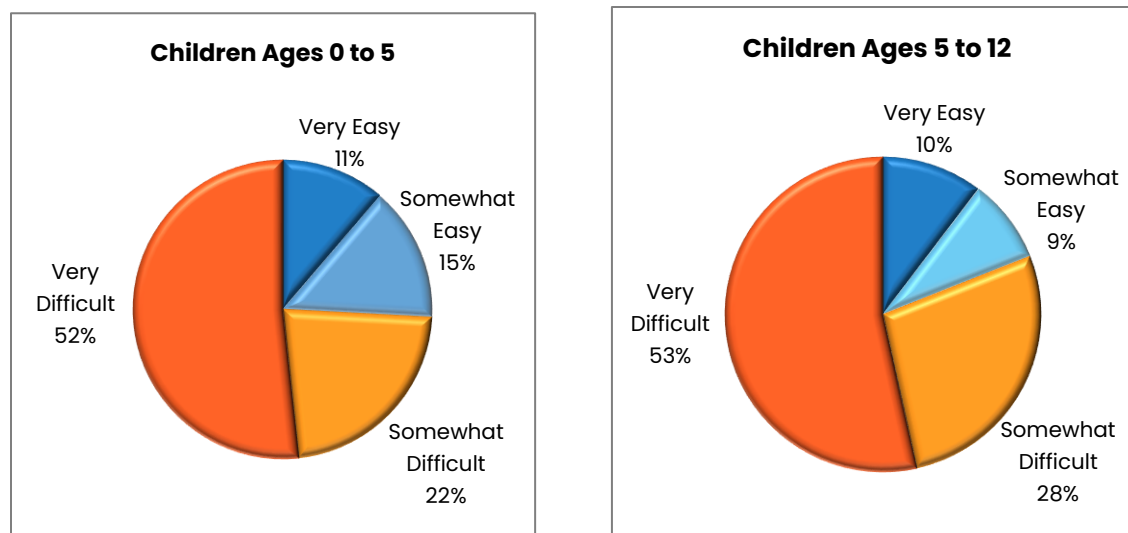
Future parents were also asked what time of year they prefer to use care. When asked what their preferred time of the year would be if they were selecting child care today for ages 0 to 5, all future parents prefer year-round care (100%). When asked what their preferred time of the year would be if they were selecting child care today for ages 5 to 12, the group was split equally among all three options.

Figure 13: Time of Year Future Parents Prefer to Use Child Care



Parents were asked if they had searched for care in the last 12 months, and if they had, how easy or difficult it was to find care. Among the 89 parents that looked for care for children ages 0 to 5, 74% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty- either somewhat difficult (22%) or very difficult (52%). And among the 58 parents that looked for care for children ages 5 to 12, 81% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty- either somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (53%).

Figure 14: Ability to Find Child Care During Last 12 Months



Those experiencing obstacles finding child care in the last 12 months were asked, what were they? Comments received were:

- *Lack of space, only 1 center near us.*
- *Unable to get into Kidsville which has much less risk to working parents than at-home providers due to having multiple care givers that can cover for potential illnesses, vacation, doctor appointments, etc. Very difficult to find a quality at-home provider.*
- *We have been on a waiting list for years. We need a center, not more in home daycares.*
- *Turned away due to no openings available.*
- *Everywhere had a waitlist. We chose an in-home provider (we were not completely excited about) because they were the only ones that did not have a waitlist. Our daughter was a foster child and then we adopted so she needed a DHS registered in-home provider.*
- *Lack of options.*
- *My children have been going to this center for a while now, but they aren't flexible with hours and not affordable. Make too much to get assistance.*
- *Openings.*
- *Limited space.*

Comments continued... Obstacles experienced when looking for child care in the last 12 months.

- *A grandparent or siblings.*
- *Waiting list.*
- *No openings for our three-year-old.*
- *No third shift child care.*
- *Few spots are available for infants.*
- *Not enough daycare providers in the area.*
- *We are blessed by Kidsville. We did not have difficulty getting our second child into this facility in the past twelve months because we already had one child at this facility; however, I know that the waiting list is very long for families who wish to get their first child into this facility.*
- *Wait list.*
- *No openings.*
- *Not enough spaces available at current child care center.*
- *Affordability. Flexibility. Schedule.*
- *Finding childcare with spots open yet affordable.*
- *No openings.*
- *Somewhat easy to get childcare for our newborn as we are already grandfathered into the center with our older daughter.*
- *Availability.*
- *Lack there of.*
- *Getting on waiting list.*
- *It was easy for me to find care because I already had an older child at the daycare center, but I have heard others are struggling to find care recently.*
- *No one has openings. Costs are extremely high (more than half a weekly paycheck).*
- *Not knowing if the child would have a spot at daycare when placed on the waitlist.*
- *My kids all go to separate daycares. Very inconvenient.*
- *Don't know where to look.*
- *None.*
- *Price!*
- *Availability of care.*
- *Finding someone I trust to keep my children safe. Finding someone who works with my work schedule. Not having a 5 to 10 child wait list.*
- *No openings.*
- *Finding one accepting under 2 years old. Waiting list.*

Comments continued... Obstacles experienced when looking for child care in the last 12 months.

- *The biggest obstacle my wife and I ran into was finding a place that had room for our child.*
- *The list for the Independence child center is so long.*
- *More availability for hours, those that work earlier in the morning either have to have someone drop them off or go in late. Those that work later or up until 6:00/6:30 have to have someone pick them up or leave early - which is not always easy. We have a community that also has weekend shifts, and I feel that is a hold-up for people taking these shifts as it is difficult to find someone to cover childcare that early to that late on a weekend.*
- *All of the daycare centers and in-home day care providers are full. There are no openings for my kids. Also, I cannot get the kids from school to daycare because of my work.*
- *Summer child care.*
- *No openings.*
- *[Center] is pretty well worthless when it comes to finding daycare - every time I have needed to find new daycare I have called and they never have openings and even after years on the waiting list, I have never been called with an opening. There is not an easy to find listing of child care providers, unless they are registered, but all of the registered daycares I called either didn't answer or return my call or they were full, so then it is up to a Facebook search to find non-registered daycares. Most of the non-registered daycares I found were not up to my standards to feel comfortable leaving my kids in their care. Daycare has become very expensive, especially when they are non-registered.*
- *No available babysitters and very limited hours.*
- *Lack of openings for infants.*
- *Baby on the way- finding daycare that will accept small children and have availability.*
- *Lack of openings in high quality setting.*
- *Finding a provider that transfers to and from school.*
- *Availability (having space for a school age student). We have been on the waitlist for 7 years for my almost 7-year-old at [center] - they seem to play favorites with who gets in. Transportation to/from school has also been a challenge (PK student attending private school because that is where daycare transports to).*
- *No openings! Been on 1 list for over 2 years!*
- *Had to resort to my child's great grandmother to watch her because there is a 6 month to 1 year waiting list for all child care providers in town.*

Comments continued... Obstacles experienced when looking for child care in the last 12 months.

- *If we had an important meeting or doctor's appointment, the children could not go during a weird time of day.*
- *No room, waited on a list for 2 years.*
- *After school care.*
- *Finding someone to watch them in the morning before school when my regular daycare is closed.*
- *Could not find a provider when we move to Independence. We had to continue taking our kids back and forth to Cedar Rapids.*
- *Lack of options or no room for my kids. The options that are available are too expensive.*
- *There is no availability, staff or hours.*
- *I've been on a waiting list for one daycare since March of 2022 and others can't handle my youngest due to him being a little high risk. So having trouble finding a place.*
- *No providers have openings.*
- *We have exhausted all options due to daycares being full, not offering transportation, or their age. We were very lucky to get into Mosers.*
- *Full or not on school campus. I don't want to drive all over town for drop offs.*
- *Everything full, especially for part time and summer schedules. Ended up hiring adolescent nanny for in-home during the summer.*
- *In home daycare having open spots.*
- *Trying to find childcare for my school-aged kids when there's no school (summer and holiday breaks).*
- *No availability.*
- *Lack of options that are open the hours we need. Just lack of options alone is hard.*
- *The waitlist for Kidsville is YEARS, if you get in at all. I was told that even if my child were enrolled in preschool, I would not be guaranteed a spot, and daycare doesn't currently offer transportation. It's also difficult to find an in-home daycare that you trust and is reliable. I'm satisfied with my current daycare situation, but I would prefer my child be in a licensed facility.*
- *We are not friends with [staff], so our name never moves up the list at [center].*
- *Room, space available, school pick up.*
- *Finding a quality provider that has openings and accepted CCA (child care assistance).*
- *We have our parents watch our kids most days due to limited places for child care.*
- *Prices and availability.*
- *Moved back to the area in June and had trouble finding care before school started in August. (I am a teacher).*

Comments continued... Obstacles experienced when looking for child care in the last 12 months.

- *Finding a spot for both my children.*
- *I did not experience challenges, but I did get on the center's list when I was 7 weeks pregnant which was helpful in enabling me to be able to get into that center.*
- *My ex-husband (child's father) also needs a schedule that fits his work schedule, no one opens up at 5:00 am in Buchanan County area. Our current provider opens at 6:30 and I have to be at work by 7:00 typically.*
- *None available or too expensive.*
- *Finding someone with openings and also finding someone who could get my child to and from school.*
- *Unable to find any openings in suitable childcare facilities anywhere near our home. We currently have to take our children to Cedar Rapids.*
- *We can't change job hours since there are only two options for child care centers in Independence. Both have waiting lists for years.*

Despite difficulty finding care, once families find care, they are satisfied with their provider.

Overall, 79% of parents indicated they are satisfied with their current provider, while 21% are not.

Those that are not satisfied were asked to explain. Comments received were:

- *It's a home daycare.*
- *There are a lot of children in this home for the size the home is. They do not provide a lot of outside activities.*
- *Too much time off.*
- *Does not offer transportation to and from school. Not a variety of similar aged children for my child to engage with. Does not offer late pick-up.*
- *Childcare costs more than our mortgage does.*
- *Calls off a lot.*
- *Grandma daycare.*
- *Needs to be more reliable.*
- *Mostly satisfied with actual care but the new payment quotas really mess with us as we have a village and our kids don't necessarily need 25 hours of care every week, but we are getting charged 25 hours of care regardless of how long they are there and that's putting a damper on things.*
- *Recent increase in price and limitation in options. Also, my child is not happy with the current provider as they "yell a lot" and it's "boring"*
- *I'm trying to find a permanent daycare.*
- *Scheduling.*

Comments continued... Explain why you are not satisfied with your current child care provider.

- *I like my daycare provider, but my kids were in a registered daycare from infancy on up until our provider moved out of state and I really miss having a registered provider - it makes me feel safer that they have to follow certain rules, certain trainings, etc.*
- *They lack child development knowledge and refuse free learning and consultation offered. They are not receptive to feedback or improvement.*
- *PK provider - yes. Our older child has behavioral difficulties and was kicked out when he was 3. We now rely on family (paid) and high school students (Friday and as needed) for him. I wish there was a better option, but we are still on the waitlist at our preferred center and do not want to return to a home-based provider for him.*
- *Yes, it's my mom watching my daughter, but would like her to have other interactions with other children.*
- *Great grandmother is too old and will eventually no longer be available.*
- *Very satisfied with my current at-home provider for our youngest child. Frustrated with our lack of options for after school care for my kindergartener - currently leaning on family, friends, and flexibility from our jobs to piece care together but unlikely to be able to do this long term.*
- *We would like our kids to be in a center. And wraparound care after preschool.*
- *No provider currently.*
- *Childcare is only available during the school year, so we have to find alternate arrangements in the summer. This was the best option available.*
- *I wish they were open earlier and close later to fit around work schedules.*
- *Very quick to send kids home/exclude from care. Cost has become outrageous. Takes more holidays than the federal government. Shortened hours with 1 week notice two months after increasing rates \$20/week.*
- *They are always needing to hire new staff because the current staff leaves. My child does not handle change very well. This makes some days/weeks very hard every time a new staff member comes in. We continue to have the price of care go up, but it doesn't seem to be going to the workers who leave for better pay.*
- *Too many kids, not enough staff. Attention paid to each kid is very low. Especially during the moments they need an adult.*
- *It's not an ideal situation, no fault of provider.*
- *It's expensive but does provide good care.*
- *[Center] have staff that are under trained, mostly high school students, and have high turnover as well as waiting lists for years. Each room under 3-year-olds are great with well trained and compassion, empathic staff. However, the after-school group is a major issue. Parents walking past day care providers who are yelling at other kids is a daily*

occurrence. Local DHS doesn't respond to reports made by multiple parents. AEA consultants have labeled after school program as, "a lack of staff knowledge how to address common behavioral issues with children", "staff was noted to persistently yell at child" and "an utterly chaotic environment after school". There are almost no staff that have any early childhood education. Director... seems indifferent to getting staff better trained despite parents finding free, professional training help from local child professionals. However, we have no other options, but feels horrible sending our children there. One of us would have to quit our job and it would affect our income to support our family.

Respondents were given a list of factors that are often important to parents when choosing child care and told to select all that apply to them. The top factors among current parents were dependability (87%), followed by positive interactions between staff and children (81%), and health and safety policies (81%). Current parents were then asked to select the single factor that is most important to them. The most important factor was positive interactions between staff and children (24%), followed by dependability (19%).

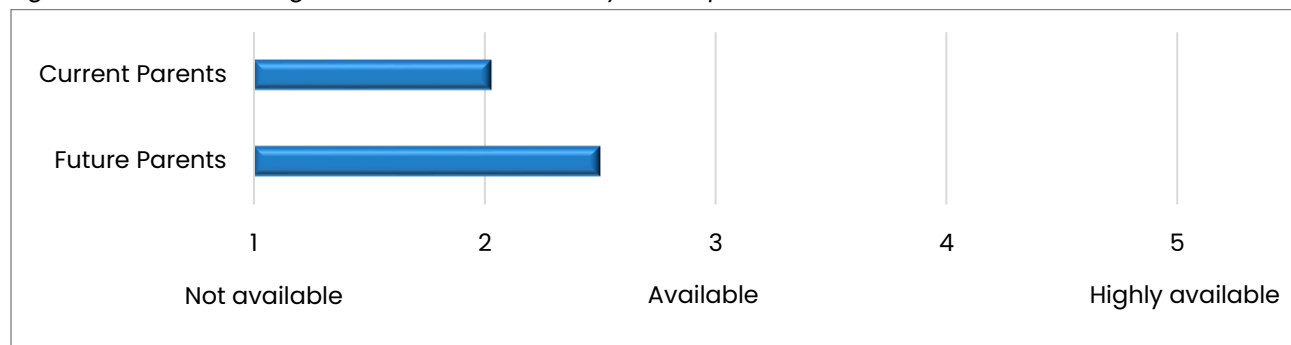
Among future parents the top factors selected were available space/timing of enrollment (88%) and positive interactions between staff and children (88%), followed by dependability (75%). Future parents were then asked to select the single factor that is most important to them. There was a tie for the most important factor with available space/timing of enrollment and positive interactions between staff and children each being selected by 25% of parents. *See table on next page*

Table 47: Important Factors When Selecting Child Care

	Current Parents		Future Parents	
	All Factors that are Important	Single Most Important	All Factors that are Important	Single Most Important
Available space/timing of enrollment	77%	10%	88%	25%
Care includes preschool	47%	3%	13%	0%
Dependability	87%	19%	75%	13%
Drop-in or occasional care	51%	4%	25%	0%
Educational curriculum used	63%	2%	50%	13%
Health and safety policies	81%	10%	63%	0%
Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating improvement system	29%	1%	0%	0%
Location	78%	4%	38%	13%
Part-time options	45%	5%	13%	0%
Positive interactions between staff and children	81%	24%	88%	25%
Second shift/evening care	18%	1%	0%	0%
Secured entrance	51%	1%	25%	0%
Special needs care	10%	1%	0%	0%
Third shift/overnight care	6%	0%	0%	0%
Transportation to and from school or preschool	56%	10%	38%	0%
Tuition assistance or scholarships	15%	0%	13%	0%
Tuition rates or price	41%	4%	38%	0%
Upkeep or appearance of the facility and playground	63%	0%	63%	0%
Weekend care	15%	0%	13%	0%

Parents were asked to rate the availability of child care in Independence on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not available, 3 adequate, and 5 highly available (the higher the score, the more available). The weighted average among current parents was 2.03, while the weighted average among future parents was 2.50.

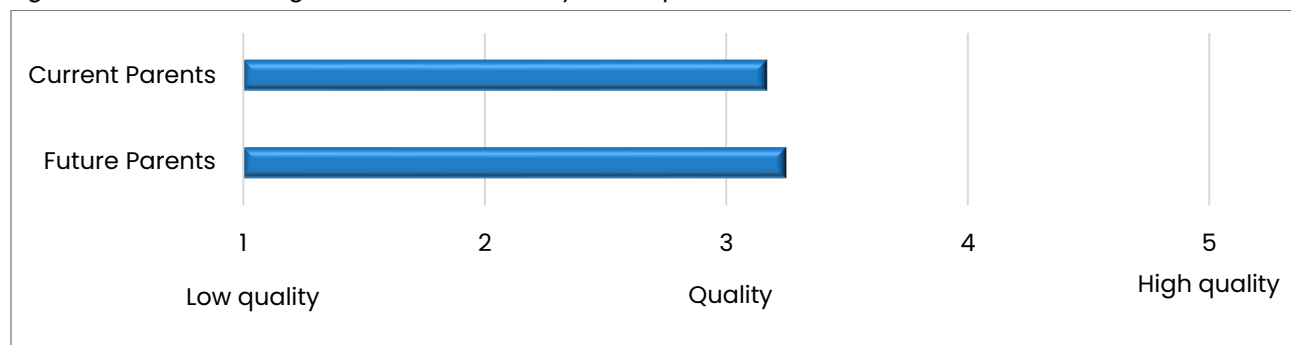
Figure 15: Parents' Ratings of Child Care Availability in Independence



Parents were then asked to rate the *quality* of child care in Independence on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low quality, 3 quality, and 5 high quality (the higher the score, the higher quality). The

weighted average among current parents was 3.17, while the weighted average among future parents was 3.25.

Figure 16: Parents' Ratings of Child Care Quality in Independence



At the conclusion of the survey parents were asked several open-ended questions about child care in Independence. Each question and the responses received are on the following pages.

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge? Comments received were:

- *Availability, cost.*
- *Cost of daycare and the non-traditional hours.*
- *Lack of care available. We need more childcare providers.*
- *Expanding the center in Independence.*
- *Daycare opening shortage, cost, flexibility of schedule/part time.*
- *Lack of availability for childcare centers such as Kidsville that have less risk for working parents. For example, there are more caregivers at a facility like this to cover employee sickness/vacation/doctor's appointments/etc. that take parents away from work. Lack of an after school program for younger students is also a major challenge. Schools seem to get out earlier, have more in-service days and scheduled early outs than they ever used to. This requires that my wife or I leave work early every day to be home for bus drop off which will most likely not be sustainable.*
- *More centers!*
- *Huge waitlists for local care centers, transportation timing with work schedules. We need more child care centers with a wider variety of educational systems. A Montessori school would be amazing. I would change my career to help support a better educational system for raising my child.*
- *Having availability to enroll - more providers.*
- *Availability of care centers and enrollment.*
- *There aren't quality options for safe, registered daycares in Independence.*
- *Cost.*

Comments continued... What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge?

- *Cost of daycare. Some sort of decreased rate for additional children. More facilities with transportation.*
- *Trust, trust with their child & earning the trust of the child. Have more providers who spend more 1 on 1 time with child(ren).*
- *Availability. New location on school site (not the movie theater or any other off-site location).*
- *Tuition rates have changed to make it "affordable". Rates went from hourly to weekly and it doesn't fit with our budget. Center isn't professional regarding staff and parent relationships. The communication I've encountered between staff and myself and director, have not shown any professionalism when talking about my children.*
- *Availability. The waitlist is so long.*
- *Small daycare with limited resources.*
- *Cost and availability! Opening up another facility would be very helpful!!*
- *No openings, waiting list is long.*
- *Adding additional licensed childcare center in Independence is BADLY needed. There are many stay at home moms who I know personally who would love to be working but are unable to due to not having dependable childcare.*
- *Financial burden and availability. We need more regulated centers in town with more options for financial assistance or scholarships.*
- *Child care availability. Adding more daycares and finding and hiring more staff would make more spots available.*
- *Safe and reliable employees with your child.*
- *Not enough daycares in town.*
- *More options low staff at current options.*
- *Financial cost, availability. More professional facilities and opportunities.*
- *No availability.*
- *Transportation to and from school, especially for parents that work out of town. Also, when there are early dismissals and late start.*
- *Availability and affordability.*
- *Availability and pricing.*
- *Not enough capacity, need a larger facility.*
- *Finding anyone with availability or ability to transport to school.*
- *Waiting lists for years.*
- *The cost. Multi child discount?*
- *The lack of childcare seems to be the biggest challenge.*

Comments continued... What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge?

- *The cost of it and the flexibility.*
- *Flexibility for scheduling.*
- *Child care prices. I would like to have another child, but the cost of childcare is holding me back.*
- *Availability and cost.*
- *Finding childcare- creating more childcare centers/in home daycare.*
- *Costs. Room.*
- *2nd and 3rd shift availability and price. The open shifts in the workforce don't have open space in childcare.*
- *Nothing available in a licensed setting, waitlist years long, and certain people bumped or approved because of social status.*
- *Cost.*
- *Need more staff and centers.*
- *Openings with a variety of hours. Need more options.*
- *When kids are sick and parents have to take off work. In our American society we are to work like we don't have kids and take care of our kids as if we don't have a job..*
- *No space for children of new residents and new siblings. More spots available, in turn, staffing.*
- *Availability.*
- *Cost of daycare is extremely high.*
- *Availability; more child care opportunities.*
- *Prices.*
- *Limited hours/availability.*
- *The cost of child care for sure. Grants could help I guess but I don't know what else can help.*
- *Finding care that works with their schedule and provides transportation to and from school. Having care that has more evening and weekend hours and that provides transportation would remedy this.*
- *Trusting the person I'm leaving my child with daily. Truly get to know the person/people taking care of my child/infant every day. Not just a hello/goodbye relationship.*
- *Find a center for both children.*
- *Availability of a center that focuses on mental and emotional wellbeing and growth of child. In home centers are great but sometimes don't have structured educational schedules.*

Comments continued... What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge?

- *Availability of childcare in HHS licensed facilities with transportation to school. I know there are people doing childcare in their homes, and I just wonder what it would take to entice a few of them to work at a center, as I know staffing is the primary struggle in childcare. Some incentives are within the power of the childcare provider (like free childcare for their own children) but I'm afraid that staffing will remain difficult as long as childcare remains a low-pay job with no benefits.*
- *Enrollment.*
- *Finding daycare accepting kids.*
- *Options for ages 8 weeks to 10 years old.*
- *Space being available at centers and lack of in-home providers. Adding more space to the current facility to allow more children to come to a daycare center.*
- *Space.*
- *More openings in the child center.*
- *No available spots.*
- *Child care is not available. Parents cannot get kids into programs, because they don't exist. Opening another center like Kidsville would help or starting an after school program that runs until 6:00 pm.*
- *More availability for hours. Those that work earlier in the morning either have to have someone drop them off or go in late. Those that work later or up until 6:00/6:30 have to have someone pick them up or leave early - which is not always easy. We have a community that also has weekend shifts, and I feel that is a hold up for people taking these shifts as it is difficult to find someone to cover childcare that early to that late on a weekend.*
- *Lack of opportunities.*
- *Space, when I moved to Independence I couldn't find any childcare in Independence for my preschool twins, we ended up having to enroll them at Little Huskies in Oelwein where we could get both preschool and childcare.*
- *Finding a suitable daycare with openings, transportation. Opening a daycare center with more openings than Kidsville currently offers. Independence schools be more open to picking kids up at daycares in Independence (we tried talking to [school administration] and they had no interest in helping kids in daycare get to school).*
- *There is not a choice.*
- *Lack of openings for infants.*
- *More options.*

Comments continued... What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge?

- *Reputable childcare with openings is the largest challenge families face. The community needs more slots for children at the only childcare center and/or more registered childcare providers.*
- *It seems the waiting lists are long and it's hard to find openings. More reliable daycares in the area.*
- *None.*
- *Daycare working against you.*
- *Availability and flexibility. If our child is sick, maybe a sick bay to be able to care for the ill child so that we are still able to go to work. Or flexibility with needing for the kids to not be there if they are sick. In healthcare we call it low census... so if the provider(s) are off I give the staff low census so they don't have to use up PTO, but in turn they don't get paid for the day. If we don't have patients, we don't produce revenue, if you don't have kids you don't produce revenue.*
- *Not enough openings and it's expensive More child care assistance options Open more daycare.*
- *Lack of options.*
- *Finding reliable care that transports to school and from.*
- *Our family has been incredibly fortunate in the ability to be able to send both of our children to Kidsville, however I had to secure a spot when I was newly pregnant with both of them (before 20 weeks!). I know there are so many families in the Independence area that are not able to find childcare due to the small number of options in the area. I'm so thankful for being able to utilize Kidsville, but so many people cannot say the same.*
- *Not having reliable in town care. That can do transportation.*
- *Waitlisted at the center in town. We need more center based options that follow the waitlist and don't let people skip the wait because they have connections.*
- *I've talked to a lot of parents and the problem is there isn't any available child care here. Independence needs to open a bigger child care facility.*
- *Openings bigger and or more facilities.*
- *Cost.*
- *Price.*
- *Cost number one and availability.*
- *There are not many options for childcare in Independence. I am watching my nephew after school because his parents have a hard time finding childcare. I think it would be helpful to have an available, reliable, secure, safe, and friendly center that I could bring kids to when needed.*

Comments continued... What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge?

- *The cost of childcare. More financial help for those who need it, discounts or cheaper for more than one child attending daycare. We have also had problems with daycare employees mistreating our children. Having a licensed daycare that follows strict policies and helps educate their employees on how to properly handle children.*
- *The cost of childcare is more than my mortgage. I have one child that only does before and after care and one full time child.*
- *After school care inclusive of transportation.*
- *Cost, availability.*
- *Open later in the evening to accommodate parents who commute.*
- *Opening for reliable child care. Also pay your child care employees A livable wage!*
- *Not reliable daycare.*
- *For a growing community there are not enough daycare providers.*
- *Price and availability with safe and proven care. It's scary choosing people to care for your young children who cannot advocate for themselves. Too many scary stories in the news of abuse.*
- *Not enough daycare providers, adding more providers.*
- *Finding a place to go.*
- *Lack of affordable options. More childcare center and in-home daycare options.*
- *Not enough space or trained staff.*
- *My biggest challenge is my children are almost able to be home by themselves but aren't quite to that age yet. It would be really nice to have some childcare available right after school so I could just pick them up from school instead of trying to find a daycare to take them right after school and Friday afternoons.*
- *Money spent on childcare. I'm unsure.*
- *Transportation. Larger or more facilities located near the school.*
- *Prices & schedules.*
- *Price.*
- *No room.*
- *Having openings for child care.*
- *Availability at good centers.*
- *Availability and transportation. The school provided/sponsored options, even a before and after school program would be very beneficial.*
- *Night weekend availability and cost.*
- *Affordable, transportation from school, availability/openings.*
- *It appears to be directly related to worker shortages.*

Comments continued... What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge?

- *Availability.*
- *Not having childcare available year round with long hours.*
- *Availability and cost is huge, but also just GOOD providers that aren't burnt out!*
- *We need more child care options and facilities.*
- *None.*
- *Availability. Not enough options and the ones we do have fill up.*
- *Too expensive.*
- *Not being able to find a caring daycare facility.*
- *Drop kids off at school then travel across town to drop off at daycare. All needs to be on the school campus.*
- *We just don't have enough day care centers / in homes in town. And the two main centers we do have do not have the space or availability to add more kids.*
- *More daycare settings or Kidsville having the ability to take on more children.*
- *Hours that fit work schedule.*
- *Reliability and safety. We need a large, regulated childcare facility that can accommodate the growing population of Independence.*
- *Cost is huge, but so is availability. Less paperwork required for them to fill out would be a start.*
- *Availability. There are not enough child care providers in the area.*
- *Cost and availability.*
- *Not enough spaces available.*
- *I did not have any issue finding childcare 8 years ago with our first child. My childcare will take siblings as first priority [over] outside families, if we were to have more children. This has been a benefit to my family during the childcare shortage. Cost of childcare is very stressful for my family, but I want the childcare workers to have a fair wage as they are taking care of my most prized possessions.*
- *There's not enough child care in Independence, and not a lot of the current ones take school aged kids, [they] are for preschool age and under. Maybe having some sort of summer program/childcare for school aged kids that don't have a daycare.*
- *Availability.*
- *Lack of child care options.*
- *Not available. Open another daycare center, pay well. Give incentives for in-home providers.*
- *The amount of space available for families in town. There needs to be more availability for young families.*

Comments continued... What do you think is the biggest challenge facing parents regarding child care, and what will resolve that challenge?

- *Finding providers that accept CCA (child care assistance) and are of good quality. Many providers are not QUALIFIED.*
- *Safety and being able to trust people.*
- *Availability.*
- *Cost of tuition, limited availability, relying on a care center that has improperly educated staff.*
- *There isn't enough. I would think a center would be best because their availability and dependability is a little better than in-home. There is no closing because the provider is sick or on vacation.*
- *Unsure.*
- *Availability.*
- *Availability. A bigger center that offers employees better pay and benefits.*
- *Price is the biggest factor.*
- *Finding any child care opening and finding them at good facilities.*
- *We need a 3rd and or 4th facility to open up. Pay and qualifications for staff need to go up and I think most would pay more. We need more early childhood degree leaders in after school programs as that is a huge weak point.*
- *Negative factors of childcare centers. Dependability, safety, and lower staff/child ratio.*
- *Needs to be more flexible & open earlier. Most childcare doesn't up until 6am earliest, which doesn't work when you need to be at work at 5:30am.*
- *Availability and safety. At-home daycare are not as safe and the babysitter will cancel short notice, leaving families in a bad situation.*
- *We do foster care and having an available child care would impact whether or not we could foster a younger child. We haven't explored this opportunity yet with this age group so I'm not sure what response we would get if we started calling around.*

The next question asked, what opportunities do you see for the future of child care in Independence? Comments received were:

- *A childcare center that offers 24/7 coverage.*
- *Allowing more families to be involved.*
- *Expand Kidsville so that it can realistically meet the needs of the community. Develop an after school program for younger students so that working parents do not have to leave work early to be home for bus pickup. Most jobs don't have schedules that accommodate the kids being done with school as early as they are.*

Comments continued... What opportunities do you see for the future of child care in Independence?

- *Before/After school programs, more centers.*
- *We have a growing population of families using Montessori and Waldorf approaches to raising their children. Acton academies are pioneers in the educational community and gaining massive support in other areas. We have some available public space we could utilize, and I think we have qualified people to work to create such an establishment. I have a social work background and would do anything, including switching my career, to support a local facility with one of these educational models.*
- *A center associated with the school that would allow transportation for school-aged kids. I also think that if the hospital in town offered a daycare to their employees it would be a HUGE draw of nurses to the area.*
- *There is a need. We need to expand existing facilities or have new ones open.*
- *Another daycare facility that provides transportation to school. The facility would be open and not follow the school calendar as far as closed on same days, out early/late start. Longer hours. Reasonable/affordable prices is a big problem too. Parents are quitting their jobs because they can't afford the weekly cost of care. It doesn't make sense for them to work.*
- *Expansion on the current campus. (Grass to the west of current Kidsville location)*
- *Hopefully finding a new center that is affordable for my children, and have the capability to communicate with parents in a professional way. I want my kids to be in a healthy environment to be able to grow and learn.*
- *Childcare with preschool, healthy clean environment with proper staffing.*
- *We really need more in Independence. Traveling to Cedar Falls to take my child is really inconvenient.*
- *Anything!*
- *I think the addition of more regulated daycare centers would solve a lot of problems. The waitlist at so many of our facilities are insanely long, and it creates a burden of families who need childcare in order to keep their jobs.*
- *More availability or options.*
- *There is a lot of room to add more room for day cares.*
- *Hoping to have a few options to choose from.*
- *We need more options!*
- *More availability and transportation to school.*
- *More child care options with similar aged children and an education aspect will give them social skills and knowledge preparing them for school.*
- *More childcare centers.*

Comments continued... What opportunities do you see for the future of child care in Independence?

- *The empty McDonalds would make a great daycare.*
- *Kidsville relocating to a larger facility such as the movie theater.*
- *Possible drop in/part time on weekend?*
- *I didn't know there were opportunities for more child care here. Expand!!*
- *I like that the child care is next to the school. It makes pick up and drop off easier with older kids and benefits the kids to be able to share staffing.*
- *Growing to a larger facility.*
- *A large center for child care.*
- *Another daycare center option.*
- *Need to expand.*
- *I think offering a grant or help of some kind may improve the possibility of offering more hours.*
- *A better daycare.*
- *Centers that can accommodate families that work early, late and weekends.*
- *A sick bay daycare for kiddos. This would help so many parents. We love being home with our babies when they are sick but we also have to provide for our families.*
- *Improvement needed for wages to keep workers in the field and thus allowing potential for more spots and space for growth.*
- *We need a child care facility.*
- *It would be great to see Kidsville expand to allow for more kids, especially if something could be done to make it more attractive for older kids to be there. That said, I think it would be difficult to move it away from school grounds.*
- *A latchkey program similar to Jesup's.*
- *I would love to see an additional licensed daycare enter in Independence. I know there is great need and so many families would benefit from quality care.*
- *More providers.*
- *New center with more staff? Higher paid staff to make people actually want to work there and be involved.*
- *There's a lot of families that daycare in the surrounding towns because there's no room at the daycares in town. Or they're very expensive and it wouldn't make sense to pay that price and work so the parent just stays home.*
- *Unknown.*
- *I see parents looking for childcare frequently in Independence (for example, posting in Facebook groups). I do think if there were more spots in HHS licensed facilities, they would fill!*

Comments continued... What opportunities do you see for the future of child care in Independence?

- *Childcare center that is able to accommodate more children that are in line to prepare kids for school. Also, time frame flexibility outside of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, along with weekend availability. Also, possible funding/grants for in-home providers to encourage more educational based structure learning.*
- *Having more options available.*
- *Expand existing daycare facilities but need staff to do so. It's difficult to retain staff in childcare industry.*
- *I think there are a couple of buildings that could be used as a center. The old Starlight building could be retro fitted to a daycare center or the old McDonalds building.*
- *Expanding the child center.*
- *More availability for hours, those that work earlier in the morning either have to have someone drop them off or go in late. Those that work later or up until 6:00/6:30 have to have someone pick them up or leave early - which is not always easy. We have a community that also has weekend shifts, and I feel that is a hold up for people taking these shifts as it is difficult to find someone to cover childcare that early to that late on a weekend.*
- *More locations/options/space for kids.*
- *More licensed in-home day care options. Supplement those licensed in home programs so it is affordable for them to open. Open another child care center. Start an after school program.*
- *After school childcare at East Elementary and Summer childcare programs.*
- *Larger childcare facility with more slots. Expanded hours. More childcare at-home centers. Businesses offering their own childcare.*
- *A daycare center with extended hours to accommodate work schedules, Independence schools provide bussing for daycares, city ordinance to require in-home daycares to be registered (not sure if that is possible?) to help ensure safe/suitable alternatives to centers, before and after school care in the elementary schools (St. John's has this and its amazing!)*
- *It would be nice if the hospital was able to assist in opening a childcare center.*
- *something close to the hospital- another center.*
- *I think independence could support at least one more major childcare center. Or double the size of the existing Kidsville center in a location close to the school as it currently is.*
- *Do NOT move it out to the old movie theater!!!!!! Raising prices at Kidsville will change the supply/demand. More in home daycare centers will enter as rates for care raise.*

Comments continued... What opportunities do you see for the future of child care in Independence?

- Upgrade buildings like [center]. Expand the building and make the environment better for the kids. [Center] is too expensive and they pick favorites so nobody is getting in there unless it's an employee and that's not right either.
- New center with trained professionals, before/after school care with school district, 3-year-old and 4-year-old preschool through school district
- There are plenty of empty buildings that would make perfect daycares.
- I would love to see a new state funded childcare facility open in the Independence area.
- More centers.
- I see more parents get to work any hours if child care was available anytime. We need a bigger facility for children. Separate spaces for different ages. I also see opportunity in employment for child care.
- Expand Kidsville into the other half of the building. Move preschool to east or west.
- Need many more options at affordable pricing.
- I think more childcare in Independence is definitely needed. I could see it filling up quite quickly. There aren't many options in Independence, especially for the size of the town.
- Hopefully we will see an increase in childcare available and affordability for everyone!
- Limited options and availability.
- After school programs.
- Another center.
- Need a couple more day care centers that provide care and wraparound care for younger age school children.
- I see a growing community that could use more childcare space.
- More in-home daycares should be used as I personally feel they are more personal and less chaotic so parents and kids are more comfortable putting kids in childcare.
- More options.
- More children and students.
- Build bigger place.
- More daycares.
- All, there simply isn't enough available today.
- Nights and weekends.
- Unknown.
- I would love to see an expansion of Kidsville.
- I Believe that more childcare providers would be available if there were group options for health and other insurance available more people would be interested in being providers
- There is a huge need for childcare.

Comments continued... What opportunities do you see for the future of child care in Independence?

- *Another large daycare facility.*
- *None.*
- *Having more options or expanding ones we currently have with grants so they can build and pay employees more to keep them.*
- *Getting another facility like Kidsville or expanding. We've been on the waitlist for almost 3 years now.*
- *When East Elementary builds new building, that building should be used for daycare/preschool. Don't build a building or use a property now and just find out in a couple years you messed up and wasted money.*
- *Having a before and after school program (like Jesup) and having a summer program for school aged kids.*
- *I think we need another center (would be cool if there was another (bigger) childcare center by the hospital or that side of town, or if Kidsville could somehow be expanded in its current location so that it remains close to the schools for easier drop off/pick up and transportation.*
- *Have partnerships with the high school to get more staff to be able to take on more kids. Having educators and medical staff get a higher priority at the centers. BCHC (Buchanan County Health Center) should have their own daycare. They could provide OT, speech, PT, play therapy in the daycare during the day by hospital staff, so that is one less thing parents need to worry about.*
- *It would be fantastic as a parent to see a large facility open that offers early and late hours, and I'm sure many others would like third shift and weekend shift availability as well. It would offer childcare for newborns through school age kids for the summer months. It would have age-appropriate rooms and outdoor play areas. It would have a secure entrance and a rigid pickup procedure. It would provide meals, a monthly menu, and lots of activities and field trips. The staff would be trained in CPR.*
- *A summer care option at the school would be awesome.*
- *They need to pay staff better to keep them. If they had more workers, they would be able to accept more kids. I don't think opening a new daycare center will help at all. The ones that are open just need to be able to keep a full staff so they can have more kids.*
- *The city never should have gotten rid of original East Elementary. What a waste of usable space.*
- *Expanding childcare we already have, which allows them to take on more children.*
- *Expand Kidsville where it's currently at. I have kids at East, West and Kidsville and it's most convenient to have all of those schools in one location.*

- *Another center could be opened and filled quickly. We need to pay well, provide opportunities for children to have positive relationships with other kids and adults.*
- *Adding another center or expanding Kidsville.*
- *Daycare Centers that take CCA (child care assistance). have a variety of hours available. Quality staff. Quality curriculum*
- *More available daycares.*
- *More spots for child care.*
- *If the school district could offer a child care service for staff, I think that would open up more availability at the centers for other families. We have a high interest of high schoolers that show interest in child care that we could collaborate and utilize them to get relevant work experiences.*
- *We need bigger facilities for our child care to grow. Right now, our provider is at max and needs more space to grow and provide more for incoming families.*
- *I'm not sure.*
- *Growth.*
- *Our daycare center needs to be in a larger building.*
- *I believe the first step is to just meet the needs of the community. After that, focus on improvement to facility and more conducive hours of care.*
- *We have plenty of city building space for 2 or more new centers. I am 99% sure they will fill up almost instantly once announced given our communities opinion on child facilities here. Anything 3rd or 4th party will be better than what we have. Two facilities is not even close for the needs.*
- *Expanding around the school district. The use of the old theater is out of the way for many and still causes traffic through town.*
- *Increase in openings, more flexibility for drop in hours, more flexible opening hours starting at least 5:00 am if not earlier.*
- *I believe it is limited and will result in families moving out of the community. Having another or more daycare centers will increase employment for the community.*

The final question asked parents to share any additional comments you have about child care in Independence. Comments received were:

- *Many of our friends have had children on waitlists for well over a year.*
- *Independence has so many families needing more childcare anything would help but I would love better educational models to choose from.*
- *Having the option to have part time status during the school year and being able to remain full time status during the summer.*
- *We hope we can get more in town.*

Comments continued... Share any additional comments you have about child care in Independence.

- *Doesn't matter a parent's income, daycare is still expensive, especially when they don't have any increase in hourly rate at their place of employment. Bills are hard, but our hands are tied, and we still have to work. I love that our daycare takes the kids to and from school, late starts/early outs. Truly a blessing to parents who both work out of town. I think all daycares should have secured, keypad entries. Parents punch the code in to get inside. If someone else is picking them up they can ring the doorbell to have their ID shown at the door. Might be inconvenient for staff but should be mandatory for safety.*
- *I think Kidsville needs to expand to encompass the growth and needs of the community and create availability, but I believe moving it off the current school campus would not be a smart choice and would cause far more issues for parents than it would solve the problem. There is plenty of space on the school campus to expand the footprint of Kidsville and keep it all in one convenient location with the school.*
- *There is none available. Everywhere is full. It's impossible to get in when the waiting list takes years.*
- *I would like to see more options for state accredited child care centers (like Kidsville) rather than more in-home daycares.*
- *We need to get a community child care system.*
- *I do appreciate, though I know some may find it unfair, that our daycare puts their existing families as priority when their family grows. It was a relief to know that we wouldn't need to put our infant in a different facility than our preschooler. But I recognize that doing that stalls the waitlist. The waitlists are YEARS out, and that is just crazy to me. We need more options.*
- *Kidsville is fantastic. We are so blessed to have the opportunity to send our Children to their facility. I would love for them to be able to expand or add additional facilities like theirs for other families!*
- *The child I have in Independence child care has had a great experience. I just wish we could get our other child in the same center. I take an hour out of my night driving to a different town and back for child care. I prefer a center due to hours and lack of closure.*
- *Kidsville needs more space, and the drop off/pick up area is way too small.*
- *There shouldn't be high schoolers working in child care, at least in the infant rooms! It's hard enough for a mom to go back to work after having a baby and it makes it 100 times harder knowing it's a 16-year-old watching our babies. We are trusting the providers with our infant's life! That's not something to be taking lightly!*

Comments continued... Share any additional comments you have about child care in Independence.

- *I know there has been talks of moving a daycare from the school area, and I feel this is a bad idea. Keeping the daycare close to the schools is nice to have everything on one campus. Helps with security, staffing, and pick up/drop off. If the daycare would move you are having people drive out of their way to get to daycare and not have the opportunity to pick up and drop off with older kids that don't require daycare but are on the school campus. My fear is a bigger campus isn't going to fix a staffing issue.*
- *A lot of the in-home providers have come together to create a basic contract. This will make daycare more expensive for families and include paid vacation for providers. Their goal is to unanimously raise prices for childcare to make it easier for the providers, but this will make it more difficult for parents. There are so few options for second and third shift that many of us can't even look at finding another job because the only decent paying jobs available are all 2nd and 3rd shift. As an employee in child care, I make very little and am offered no benefits or paid time off at all. The only benefit for me is being able to bring my children to work with me and not have to pay a tuition. I'm currently unable to afford healthcare for myself due to this situation.*
- *There is a severe lack of childcare in Independence. We need more safe and reputable places for children to be cared for.*
- *I think there is a bit of a stigma around sending kids to a daycare facility. Unfortunately, as kids get older, some of their peers may make fun of the fact that they are at daycare and not at home or in a smaller setting. I don't know what the solution is, but I think it does add a level of aversion for the child going to daycare.*
- *We need more options of quality care in Independence. Safe, certified, quality center daycare options.*
- *When I was looking for childcare would have really appreciated an up-to-date listing of providers in area instead of having to ask around.*
- *There is a huge need for more day care in Independence.*
- *We are on our fourth childcare provider, as the first was an incredibly poor and honestly concerning experience, and the next two left the businesses to pursue careers outside of the home. We love our current childcare provider, and although she does not provide care during the summer months, it is worth having an at-home nanny and additional expense at home in the summer to have her and her assistant during the school year!*
- *DONT MOVE KIDSVILLE TO THE MOVIE THEATER!!! Seriously. Splitting up the campus is a terrible idea and will make it harder for both families and the Kidsville staff to move children around. There is plenty of space to the west of the current Kidsville. Build there. Don't dump millions into the old theater.*

Comments continued... Share any additional comments you have about child care in Independence.

- *It is super hard to find someone to trust even the current one we use Im not fond of but my kids are safe and cared for and that's all that matters*
- *If I hadn't been proactive with my daughter 9 years ago I wouldn't have daycare for her and her sister (5 years old). I love the daycare we go to and the other daycare in town we looked at was not clean and didn't make us feel safe leaving our children there. And the in-home daycare we looked at was also not up to par. Kidsville is great, but I know staffing is ever changing, one with the work ethic of people, or the want for more money without working toward making more. Reward staff with the hard work they do. Don't reward the ones that do bare minimum. Think about bonuses after 1-2 years of employment, or ways to display that they are doing well so that parents know and know the staff more. Appreciation is a huge thing with keeping staff. And reward is huge.*
- *We are losing a lot of money because of the lack of adequate childcare. Children are also exposed to unsafe and unstimulating conditions because of this.*
- *The new flat rate pricing the centers are currently using are ridiculously price gouging! It only benefits the centers and cost the parents a lot more money! Hourly is a fair pricing for watching our kids! We shouldn't have to pay when our kids are not being cared for!*
- *I didn't know what to put for quality of childcare in Independence. My children haven't been in childcare for close to 4 years. Before that they did go to one of the child care centers in Independence and they did do a fabulous job.*
- *Daycares need to be monitored a lot better. We had 2 daycares we used. One was an in-home not licensed and the other was an in-home that was licensed. Both of these places mistreated our children to the point they absolutely refused to go because they were too scared and didn't want to face certain daycare employees. We have had a really hard time figuring out a new daycare because of our lack of trust for daycares around here or unavailability to the ones we are interested in.*
- *I have been very happy with the services from Moser.*
- *We are so lucky to have gotten into a great daycare center 9 years ago with our oldest and they have made room for our expanding family. It is just so expensive it is hard to justify as 75% of my paycheck goes to childcare and we receive lots of help with grandparents filling in when needed.*
- *There need to be more options for before and after school programs.*
- *Transportation is the biggest challenge. Current daycare does not offer transportation, or care for school aged kids (kindergarten +). Preschool ends early so finding transportation or providing transportation has affected my work.*

Comments continued... Share any additional comments you have about child care in Independence.

- *The theater is not what you or the families of Independence want! School district is not signing up to bus kids to and from and this will force parents to be later to work.*
- *Staffing is always going to be a problem because we do not have a college in this town so less college students looking for a job.*
- *I would never send my kids to a former movie theater building.*
- *I will say, I applied at [center] in the past just so see if I could secure a spot for my child and was shocked at the extremely low wage they offered. No wonder we can't get enough staff to support that building. If we cannot get adequate childcare, people will choose to live and work in areas that do have better resources.*
- *I heard they want to move Kidsville out to the old movie theater and to me this does not make sense. How will they transport kids to school? This is a big benefit of having my kids go there. If they have to bus kids then they will have to charge more money. We already struggle to pay with the recent changes. I don't think people have fully thought that idea through. I think they have plenty of space in the building they are in they just do not have enough staff to have more kids. They have an entire room up front that is used for storage and meetings. That room could be used for kids.*
- *Kidsville is amazing. Highly recommend it, but the wait list is horrible.*
- *Need more space for the growing of our community. If we are to have more families come in with little ones the state where we are right now, we will not be able to provide for them.*
- *I would open and manage another daycare center if I could.*
- *My family is in a very good space because of all of the support that we have. However, there are families that don't have the support that we have, and it is really hard to find day care in Independence. I am not sure what the correct answer is to this problem, but I do know that it is a problem. That is definitely not helping many families in Independence.*
- *We just moved to Independence and have two young (under 5) children. We are so disappointed in the availability and quality of the daycare options here. We are currently having to wake our children up before 6:00 am so they can continue to go to their daycare in Cedar Rapids. We had no idea until we moved just how horrible the options were here. It is very discouraging for young families. We want our children to live in a smaller community around family and friends, but the lack of childcare makes it extremely hard to justify moving here. We assumed there would at least be some quality options, but we have not found any with openings any time soon.*

Comments continued... Share any additional comments you have about child care in Independence.

- *We don't need to expand Kidsville to two locations please. Have a new company or separate entity start from scratch PLEASE!!!! We need 3 or 4 separate providers to create completion for a better child care environment.*

CHILD CARE GAP ANALYSIS

Calculating the gap in a child care market needs to take into consideration multiple factors, and as solutions to address this gap are considered, it must be kept in mind that not all families will utilize child care, and those that do will have a variety of needs with some children attending full-time while others attend only part-time and therefore may share a space. If there were exactly one space for each child, some spaces would not be utilized, or would be utilized in a manner that would not allow the child care provider to maintain a sustainable business model.

The following summary of the supply and demand provides an estimation of the gap between the number of children in the market area likely to use regulated child care and the number of spaces available in programs currently regulated by Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the Independence Community School District.

As of January 2024, there are 9 HHS regulated child care programs offering a total of 348 spaces. One of the programs, Immanuel Lutheran Wee Care Preschool has announced it will close after the 2023–2024 school year. This closure will result in a loss of 16 spaces. After that closure, there will be 3 HHS licensed centers and preschools with 268 licensed spaces, of which 220 will be available year-round. There are also 5 registered child development homes, with 64 spaces.

Among the child care centers that will be operating after May 2024, all 3 centers and 3 of the homes operate between 5:30 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Only 1 center will serve children younger than 18 months year-round, while 1 center will serve ages 18 months and older year-round, and the remaining center will serve children age 3 and older for preschool and wrap-around care during the school year only.

When it comes to registered home providers, 3 of the 5 operate between the hours of 5:30 am and 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. Another operates between 7:00 am and 4:30 pm, Monday through Sunday (7 days per week). And the remaining registered home operates 24-hours a day, 7 days per week, however it should be noted that this provider would likely not actually operate 24-hours per day, it means they are willing to provide care at any time within a 24-hour period and likely would limit the total number of hours they provide care within that day.

In the market area, there are 1,153 children ages 0 to 11. Of those, First Children's Finance (FCF) estimates 960 have all parents working. If it is assumed these families are represented by responses of current parents that participated in the child care needs survey, then 93% or approximately 893 are from families who prefer and would be likely to use an HHS regulated child care setting.

When broken down by age group, calculations show for ages 0 to 2 there is a gap of 106 spaces year-round, for ages 3 and 4 (preschool age) there is a surplus of 2 spaces during the school year and a deficit of 21 spaces during the summer, and for school age children there is a deficit of 441 spaces during the school year and 466 during the summer. That means the child care gap could be as high as 593 spaces for all ages, assuming most parents are looking for year-round care.

The following table shows the estimated child care gap in the market area, the Independence Community School District boundaries, based on the number of regulated spaces expected to be available after May 2024.

Table 48: Estimated Child Care Gap in the Independence Area

	Children w/All Parents Working	Likely to Use Regulated Care	School Year Spaces	School Year Child Care Gap	Summer Spaces	Summer Child Care Gap
Age 0 to 2	226	210	104	-106	104	-106
Age 3 to 4	146	136	138	+2	115	-21
Age 5 to 11	588	547	106	-441	81	-466
Total	960	893	348	-545	300	-593

While Independence has a shortage of child care for the families that live in the market area, that gap may be worsened by families that live in other communities. According to preferences among parents completing the child care needs survey, 21 families that live outside of the Independence CSD prefer regulated child care located in Independence. These families have a total of 45 children, 26 age 0 to 5 (not in Kindergarten) and 19 age 5 to 12. Including these children increases the child care gap to 666, with school age still having the larger gap.

KEY FINDINGS

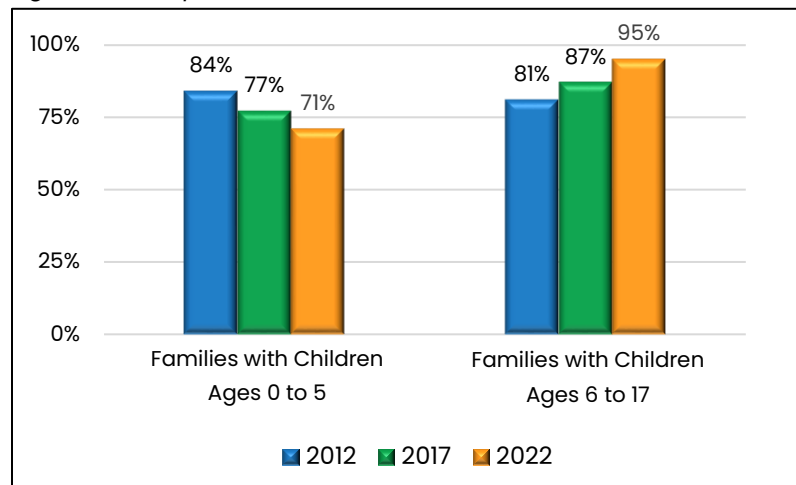
These key findings are based on research and conditions of the current child care market, which is the boundaries of the Independence Community School District as of January 2024. If the community or the child care environment changes significantly, current findings may be affected.

Finding 1: The Percentage of Families with Young Children and All Parents in the Labor Force is Declining

According to data from the US Census Bureau the percentage of families that have children ages 0 to 5 and that have all parents in the labor force has been decreasing over the last 10 years. During the same time period, the percentage of families that have children ages 6 to 17 and have all parents in the labor force has been increasing. All parents in the labor force means if a family is headed by a couple, both parents are working and if it is headed by a single parent that parent is working.

As of 2022, 71% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 95% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in the Independence Community School District (CSD) area have all parents in the labor force. Five years ago in 2017, those numbers were 77% and 87% respectively, and in 2012 they were 84% and 81%.

Figure 17: Comparison of Families with All Parents in Labor Force Over Past 10 Years



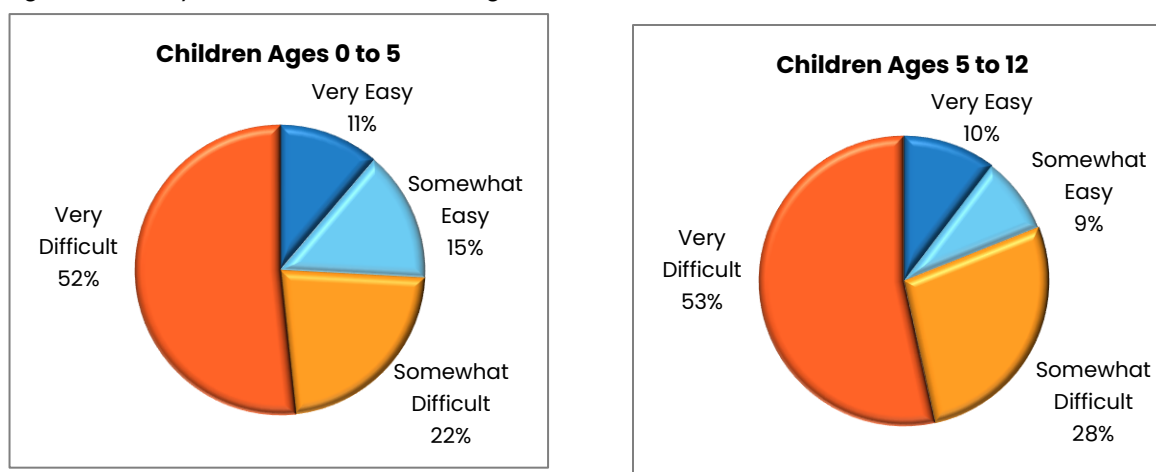
Finding 2: Parents are Having Difficulty Finding Child Care

Parents were asked if they had looked for child care in the last 12 months. Eighty-nine (89) parents indicated they had looked for care for children ages 0 to 5, and 58 parents indicated they had looked for care for children ages 5 to 12. Among those looking for care for ages 0 to 5, 74% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty—either somewhat difficult (22%) or very

difficult (52%). And among those that looked for care for ages 5 to 12, 81% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty—either somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (53%). See figure on next page.

As a follow up, parents were asked what obstacles they had experienced when looking for child care. Eighty-six (86) parents provided a response, with nearly all of those including something about providers they had contacted not having any open spaces. More specifically comments refer to no openings within centers, providers not accepting children under the age of 2, and a few mentioned the cost or tuition or that they cannot afford the setting they prefer.

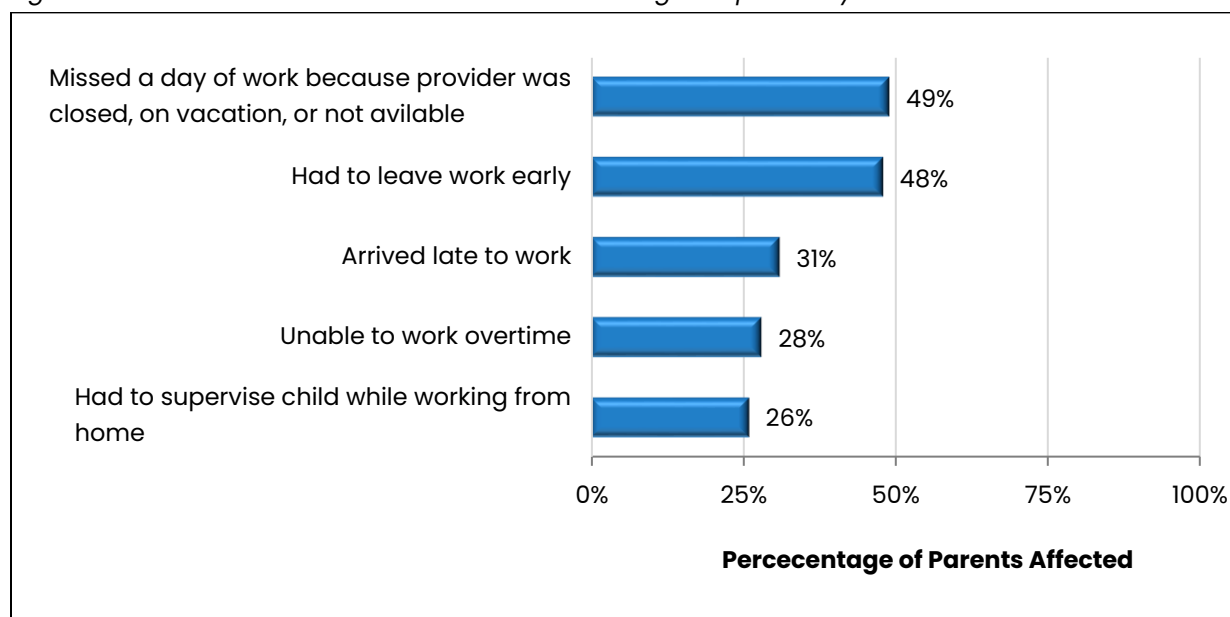
Figure 18: Ability to Find Child Care During Last 12 Months



Finding 3: Parents Indicate Child Care Challenges are Affecting their Job

Over the last 12 months, parents have experienced child care challenges that have in turn affected their job. The adverse effects experienced by at least 25% of parents that participated in the child care needs survey were: missed a day of work because the provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (49%), had to leave work early (48%), arrived late to work (31%), unable to work overtime (28%), and had to supervise child while working from home (26%). Overall, 57% of parents indicated they experienced no issues related to their job due to child care. See figure on next page.

Figure 19: Most Common Effects of Child Care Challenges Reported by Parents



Separately, 32% (75 parents) indicated child care challenges are currently limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment, such as working part-time when full-time is preferred, or not working within their preferred field. In addition, 17% (40 parents) indicated that they or their spouse or partner has declined employment or withdrawn from the workforce in the last 12 months due to child care and 6% (14 parents) indicated as of today they or their spouse or partners is not working (unemployed) because of child care challenges.

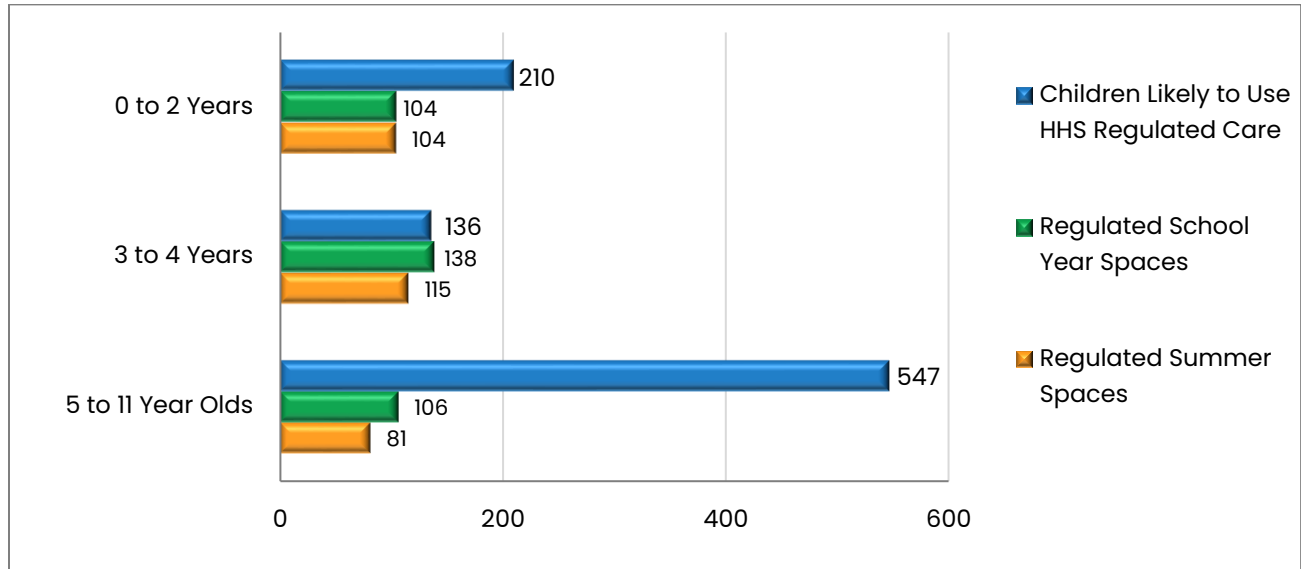
Finding 4: There is a Shortage of Spaces Among All Age Groups

There are 1,153 children ages 0 to 11 in the Independence Community School District (CSD) boundaries. Of those, First Children's Finance (FCF) estimates 960 have all parents working. Based on the percentage of families that have all parents working, and parents' preferences of child care settings, First Children's Finance estimates that approximately 893 of those children are from families who prefer and are likely use Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulated child care. According to Iowa HHS, there are currently 348 HHS regulated spaces, however one preschool program has announced they are closing in May 2024, which will mean 332 spaces, of which 332 are available during the school year and 300 are available during the summer. There are enough spaces to serve approximately 34% of the children whose parents need full-time, year-round care to work.

When broken down by age group, the *Child Care Gap Analysis* shows there is a shortage of 545 spaces during the school year, 106 spaces for ages 0 to 2 and 441 spaces for children 5 to 11 (there is a surplus of 2 for ages 3 and 4). During the summer, when some preschool and school age spaces are not available, that shortage jumps to 593 spaces, 106 for ages 0 to 2, 21 spaces

for ages 3 to 4, and 466 for ages 5 to 11. Based on input from the child care needs survey, FCF believes this gap may be worsened by families that live in other communities but prefer regulated child care in Independence.

Figure 20: Children Likely to Use Regulated Care vs. Regulated Spaces Available

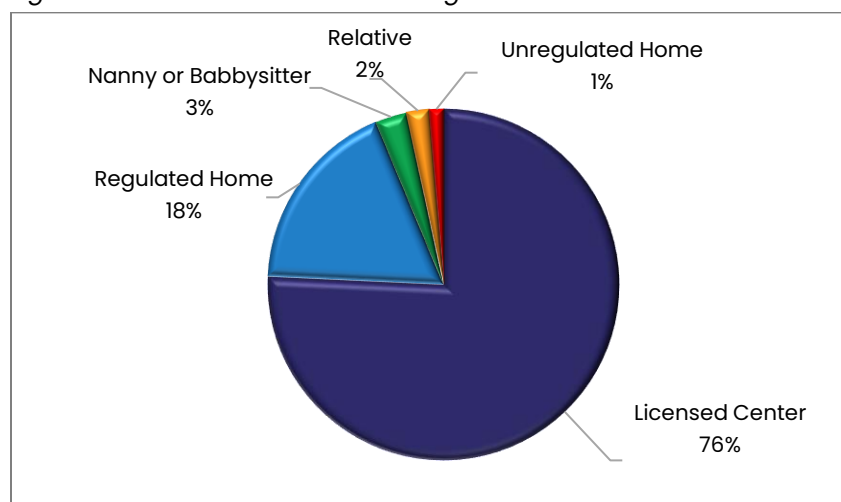


Finding 5: Parents Want Center-Based Child Care

Through the child care needs surveys completed by parents in 2023, both current and future parents were asked several questions about their child care needs and preferences. The most preferred child care arrangement chosen was a licensed child care center, which is preferred by 76% of all respondents, followed by a regulated child development home (18%).

There are currently 284 spaces within licensed centers (which also includes preschools) for children ages 18 months to 12 years. One of the preschool programs has announced they will close in May 2024, bringing the number of spaces in licensed centers down to 268, of which 220 will be available year-round. *See figure on next page.*

Figure 21: Preferred Child Care Setting



In addition to preferred child care setting, the child care needs survey also revealed that both current and future parents prefer to drop-off their children for care between 7:00 am and 7:59 am (47% overall) and pick them up between 4:00 pm and 4:59 pm (37% overall), and to use care Monday through Friday (90%-96% depending upon the day). Parents also prefer care that is available year-round for all ages, with 83% of those with children ages 0 to 5 choosing this option, and 61% of those with children ages 5 to 12.

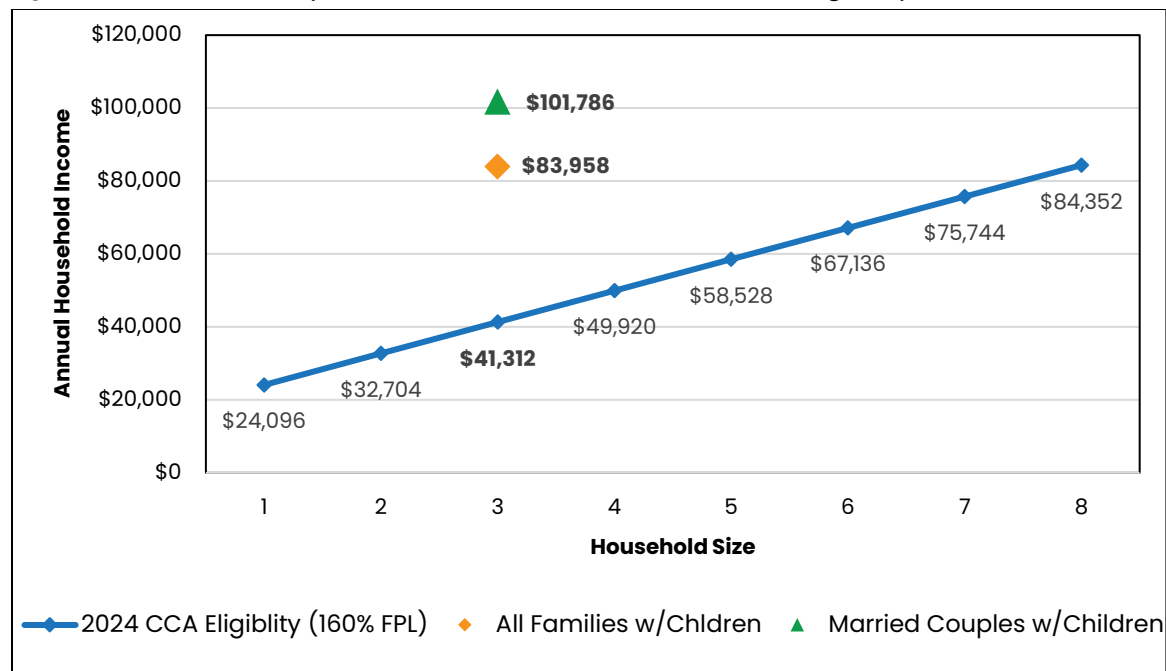
Finding 6: Median Income of Families with Children is Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold

The median income for families with children under the age of 18 in the Independence Community School District (CSD) is \$83,958, and that income jumps to \$101,786 for married couples with children under the age of 18. Among respondents of the child care needs survey, 87% of current parents (those that have children age 12 or younger) indicated they are married. To be eligible to initially qualify for tuition assistance under the Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) program a family's income must not exceed 160% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or 200% if they have a child with special needs. Once approved, a family's income is checked annually, and they continue to be eligible if their income does not exceed 225% FPL.

According to the federally determined poverty threshold that went into effect January 2024, 160% FPL is \$41,312 for a household of 3, and \$49,920 for a household of 4. These families would remain eligible for CCA until they would exceed the 225% FPL income limit if their household income is over \$58,095 for a household of 3, or \$70,200 for a household of 4. While many households with children in the area exceed these incomes, comments provided by parents through the child care needs survey indicate some families may be struggling to pay for child care expenses out of pocket.

The following figure plots the median income of households with children under 18 in the Independence CSD area using the family size of 3 (rounding the average family size of 2.94). The diagonal line shows 160% FPL by household size. The gap between 160% FPL for a family of 3 (\$41,312), and the median income for a family with children (\$83,958) or a married couple with children (\$101,786) can easily be seen by comparing the blue line which represent the 160% FPL by household size, and the orange diamond or green triangle which represent the annual median income incomes of each family type.

Figure 22: Median Family Incomes vs. Child Care Assistance Eligibility Threshold



Finding 7: Child Care Centers are Willing to Expand

Child care centers that completed the child care needs survey were asked, would you wish to expand your current child care program to serve more children? All 4 of the licensed centers in Independence participated, and at the time of the survey (October 2023) 3 of the 4 indicated, yes they would expand if they had the opportunity. Following the survey, one center announced they will close in May, which may change the number of centers willing to expand as of the date of this report.

Providers that said yes were then asked to explain how they could expand. Comments received were:

- *We would need to expand our building or find a new site to relocate to.*
- *We wish to offer full day preschool so parents wouldn't need to transport kids in the middle of the day. Or we wish we would have transportation. We wish we could have enough kids in morning and afternoon to have two sections of preschool.*

- *We could add on to our building.*

Providers were asked to be more specific as to the support they would need in order to be able to expand to serve more children. All responses were related to two types of support, needing help with staffing and financing.

Finding 8—Few Employers are Currently Impacted by Child Care

Through the child care needs survey employers were asked several questions related to how child care is affecting them and their employees. Those questions included:

- Does your business have any challenges related to productivity because of employees' child care challenges?
- Does your business have any challenges related to absenteeism because of employees' child care challenges?
- Has your business had difficulty hiring due to child care options or challenges in the area?

For each question, only 1 employer (the same employer) answered yes. Some of the comments received from all employers were:

- *None reported, however, we know the possibility exists.*
- *If they are we are not aware this is why they are calling as they do not say it is directly because of childcare.*
- *We list hours of operations and disclose in the interview process what hours are to be expected.*
- *Our most recent applicants do not have young children. I imagine that daycare hours would be a challenge with our 10-hour day schedule for prospective employees.*

Finding 9—Some Employers are Willing to Donate or Make a Contribution to Child Care

Employers that participated in the child care needs survey indicated their business is willing to assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or support child care businesses through various actions.

- 3 employers are willing to make a donation or financial contribution to build, remodel, or expand a child care center.
- 3 employers are willing to make a donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for their own employees.
- 2 employers are willing to make an annual donation or financial contribution for a portion (but not all) of the wages of a child care center director.
- 2 employers would pay a child care provider the tuition of a vacant slot in order to reserve or hold that slot for one of their employees (with the employee taking over payment upon enrolling).

- 2 employers would make a financial contribution for the operation of a child care program.
- 2 employers would make a donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for all children.



Child Care Market Analysis & Strategic Plan for Child Care Independence, Iowa

Key Findings from the Child Care Market Analysis

Finding 1: The Percentage of Families with Young Children and All Parents in the Labor Force is Declining

As of 2022, 71% of families with children ages 0 to 5, living within the boundaries of the Independence Community School District have all parents in the labor force. Five years ago in 2017, those numbers were 77% and 87% respectively, and in 2012 they were 84% and 81%.

Finding 2: Parents are Having Difficulty Finding Child Care

The child care needs survey completed as part of this project showed that 74% of parents with children ages 0 to 5 (not in kindergarten) and 81% of parents with children ages 5 to 12 found it difficult to find child care in the last 12 months.

Finding 3: Parents Indicate Child Care is Affecting their Job—Over the last 12 months, the top adverse effects parents experienced related to their job due to child care challenges were: missed a day of work because the provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (49%) and had to leave work early (48%).

Finding 4: There is a Shortage of Spaces Among All Age Groups—It is estimated there are 893 children ages 0 to 11 living in the Independence area that are likely to use regulated child care. Starting in May 2024 there will be regulated 332 spaces available, of which 332 will be available during the school year and 284 during the summer, leaving a shortage of 561 spaces during the school year and 609 spaces during the summer when some programs close temporarily.

Finding 5: Parents want Center-Based Child Care—The most preferred child care arrangement according to the child care needs survey is a licensed child care center, which is preferred by 76% of parents. In addition, parents prefer to drop-off their children for care between 7:00 am and 7:59 am and to pick them up between 4:00 pm and 4:59 pm, and to use care Monday through Friday year-round.

Finding 6: Median Income of Families with Children is Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold

The median income for families with children under the age of 18 in the Independence area is \$83,958. To qualify for child care tuition assistance through the state, a family's income cannot exceed \$41,312 and a family of 4 cannot exceed \$49,920.

Finding 7: Child Care Centers are Willing to Expand

Three (3) of the 4 licensed centers that participated in the child care needs survey indicated they would expand if they had the opportunity. As a follow-up those providers were asked what support they would need in order to be able to expand to serve more children. All responses were related to needing help with staffing and financing to expand their facility.

About this Project

For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they make. According to longitudinal research, the child care environment will have lasting effects on their child. When there are not enough spaces in a community, finding any care is a challenge; and options for quality child care that meets the needs and preferences of families can be even more challenging.

In 2023, City of Independence commissioned this study to better understand the supply and demand for child care and to gain insight to challenges experienced by parents in the Independence area. After that, a series of strategic planning sessions were held to develop goals and strategies to address the challenges identified through the child care market analysis. This document is a summary of two reports, *Child Care Market Analysis* and *Strategic Plan for Child Care*.



Finding 8— Few Employers are Currently Impacted by Child Care

Through the child care needs survey employers were asked if their business has any challenges in the last 12 months related to productivity, absenteeism, or had difficulty hiring due to child care options or challenges in the area. For each question, only 1 employer (the same employer) answered yes.

Finding 9—Some Employers are Willing to Donate or Make a Contribution to Child Care

Employers that participated in the child care needs survey indicated their business is willing to assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or support child care businesses through various actions. The top two ways employers are willing to help are a donation or financial contribution to build, remodel, or expand a child care center and to make a donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for their own employees.

Vision and Goals from the Strategic Plan for Child Care

The following vision for child care was developed by the Child Care Steering Committee during the strategic planning sessions. This vision will help guide the future of child care in Independence.

Independence will continue to be a thriving community with accessible, quality child care choices that allow employers to attract and retain workforce.

GOAL 1: Support the efforts of child care businesses to be sustainable by facilitating partnerships and providing access to business resources.

- Strategy 1- Facilitate partnerships between child care centers and local businesses.
- Strategy 2- Provide a local connection to regional and statewide business resources and supports for both existing and prospective child care providers.

GOAL 2: Maintain the existing supply of regulated child care and add a minimum of 50 new regulated spaces by 2029.

- Strategy 1- Identify viable locations for an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services licensed child care center.
- Strategy 2- Inform the community of the need for more regulated child care spaces, and the efforts made toward exploring options to expand the number of spaces.
- Strategy 3- Identify an entity to operate an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensed child care center in the former Starlight Cinema building.
- Strategy 4- Develop and implement a campaign to attract additional child care providers.

First Children's Finance, a national nonprofit organization, believes access to quality early care and education is essential for all communities, and that early care and education is the foundation of individual success and the engine of regional economic growth. First Children's Finance provides financing, training, and business-development assistance to child care businesses. First Children's Finance also provides consulting and planning assistance to communities, government agencies, intermediaries, and regional child care organizations. For more information on these and other topics, contact InfoIA@FirstChildrensFinance.org.

Strategic Plan for Child Care

Independence, Iowa

April 2024



First Children's Finance

Strategic Plan for Child Care Independence, Iowa

April 2024

Prepared for:

City of Independence

Prepared by:

First Children's Finance- Iowa Regional Office
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This project was made possible in part through a Rural Child Care Market Study grant received by City of Independence through the Empower Rural Iowa initiative, a program administered by Center for Rural Revitalization, a division of Iowa Economic Development Authority.

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2024, First Children's Finance (FCF) completed a *Child Care Market Analysis* for Independence, Iowa, which analyzed the supply and demand for child care in the Independence area. In addition to direct surveys for input from parents, employers, and child care providers, FCF collected data from the US Census Bureau, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Workforce Development, and Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral. FCF's analysis resulted in several key findings related to the local child care market, which are summarized in the "The Need and Demand for Quality Child Care" section of this report.

Addressing a child care shortage is a challenge that requires a community response. The challenge is how to increase the supply and availability of child care to meet the needs of the families and employers, while supporting child care businesses. As a result, a solution-based community planning process spearheaded by a child care steering committee was initiated.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To develop this *Strategic Plan for Child Care*, First Children's Finance (FCF) focused data collection and planning efforts on how business interventions and community support could address local challenges. During February and March 2024, a series of strategic planning meetings were held. To launch this process, FCF presented the key findings from the *Child Care Market Analysis*. FCF also shared *Emerging Models and Promising Practices, Successful Child Care Models*, which highlighted child care providers and communities FCF has worked with as replicable examples. At the remaining meetings, strategic planning participants engaged in exercises to develop a vision for child care in the community, and goals and strategies to address the child care challenges identified through the child care market analysis.

Child Care Steering Committee

A steering committee consisting of representatives from local government, employers, child care providers, and economic development will serve as the leader of this plan, including reviewing the goals, strategies, and action plans each year. To fully implement this plan, the committee may form subcommittees or task forces so that additional community members or organizations become engaged, and activities and workload are distributed. Members of the committee are:

- Brad Bleichner, Mayor of Independence
- Carrie Mattson, Geater Machine & Manufacturing
- Cynthia Phillips, Independence Community School District
- Kathryn Jensen, Independence City Council
- Kay Reidy, Independence Community School District
- Kelly Walton, Kidsville Early Learning Center
- Kevin Jimmerson, Independence Mental Health Institute
- Lisa Kremer, Buchanan County Economic Development
- Lisa Wood, Child Care Resource & Referral
- Maria Drilling, Independence Premium Foods
- Mary Janssen, Child Care Resource & Referral
- Matt Schmitz, City of Independence
- Melissa Trumbauer, Geater Machine & Manufacturing
- Michelle McBride, Buchanan County Health Center
- Molly Hocken, Community Volunteer
- Nikki Barth, Independence Chamber of Commerce
- Tyler Rassmussen, EPM Iowa Real Estate

Strategic Planning Sessions

During February and March 2024, a series of sessions focused on strategic planning were held. A total of 15 members of the Child Care Steering Committee participated. The sessions resulted in the creation of a vision for child care in Independence, child care goals, and strategies to achieve each goal.

Putting this Plan into Use

This *Strategic Plan for Child Care* represents a significant investment of community resources. To achieve the expected outcomes and impacts outlined in this plan, members of the Independence Child Care Steering Committee, in partnership with the City of Independence, will need to remain engaged and lead efforts, which may include forming subcommittees so that additional community members or organizations become engaged, and activities and workload are distributed.

The plan and progress will be fully reviewed annually by the steering committee and report to the City of Independence and the community. Each year the committee will create a workplan assigning specific activities with detailed timelines and identify individuals to serve on subcommittees as needed. A matrix with a summary of the planned activities for each of the five years is provided in the Appendix to assist with assigning and tracking which activities are complete.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every parent wants their child to be in a child care setting that not only meets their basic needs for safety and security, but also provides nurturance and prepares that child for school success. The late Jim Greenman, child care developer and advocate, stated: “A baby welcomed into a center today may spend up to twelve thousand hours in child care, more time than she will spend in all of elementary school and high school.” For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they can make as the child care environment has lasting effects on the child.

When the *Child Care Market Analysis* for the Independence area was completed in January 2024, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) data showed there were 348 regulated child care spaces, and shortly after the plan was complete, one program announced it would close after the 2023-2024 school year. After that closure there will be 332 regulated child care spaces, with 284 of those available on a year-round basis. With an estimated 893 children likely to use regulated child care, it is reasonable to conclude there is a shortage of regulated child care spaces in Independence.

To address the child care shortage, a process that gathered information and data from different perspectives was used, including the results of the surveys conducted with employers, child care providers, and parents as part of the *Child Care Market Analysis*. The results were presented to the Child Care Steering Committee, which then participated in a series of strategic planning sessions to develop a vision, goals, and strategies with action steps to achieve those goals.

The following vision, goals, and strategies were developed by the Child Care Steering Committee.

The vision for child care in Independence is:

Independence will continue to be a thriving community with accessible, quality child care choices that allow employers to attract and retain workforce.

The following goals and strategies were developed for addressing child care within Independence:

GOAL 1: Support the efforts of child care businesses to be sustainable by facilitating partnerships and providing access to business resources.

Strategy 1- Facilitate partnerships between child care centers and local businesses.

Strategy 2- Provide a local connection to regional and statewide business resources and supports for both existing and prospective child care providers.

GOAL 2: Maintain the existing supply of regulated child care and add a minimum of 50 new regulated spaces by 2029.

Strategy 1- Identify viable locations for an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services licensed child care center.

Strategy 2- Inform the community of the need for more regulated child care spaces, and the efforts made toward exploring options to expand the number of spaces.

Strategy 3- Identify an entity to operate an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensed child care center in the former Starlight Cinema building.

Strategy 4- Develop and implement a campaign to attract additional child care providers.

THE NEED AND DEMAND FOR QUALITY CHILD CARE

The City of Independence commissioned First Children's Finance (FCF) to conduct a *Child Care Market Analysis* to analyze the supply and demand for child care in the area. Through that process, FCF collected data from the US Census Bureau, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, and input from employers, child care providers, and parents. FCF's analysis resulted in several key findings related to the local child care market, including that there is a shortage of regulated child care spaces in the Independence area. According to FCF's calculations in that analysis, there is a child care gap of 545 spaces during the school year and that gap grows to 593 spaces during the summer months when some of the programs close. This gap may be worsened by families that live in other communities but prefer child care in Independence.

The following factors underlie the current and future need and demand for quality child care in the area. These factors were considered by the Child Care Steering Committee as they developed community strategies.

Market Area

The market area used for the market analysis study was the boundaries of the Independence Community School District, which includes the communities of Brandon, Independence, and Rowley, as well as the unincorporated areas adjacent to these cities.

Population

The US Census Bureau estimates that from 2012 to 2022, the total population of the market area increased, while the number of children ages 0 to 11 decreased. As of 2022, the total population is 9,148 and the number of children ages 0 to 11 is 1,153, which is 193 fewer children living in the market area than what were in 2012.

Working Families

As of 2022, there are 3,853 total households in the market area, of which 2,373 (62%) are family households, and 1,016 (26% overall) had children under the age of 18. The median income for families with children under the age of 18 is \$83,958.

According to the US Census Bureau as of 2022, 71% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 95% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in the Independence area have all parents in the labor force. All parents working means if there are two parents living in the home both work, or if the child lives with a single parent that parent is working.

Quality of Life for Residents

The child care sector serves two critical community functions. First, it is an economic driver allowing parents to work and earn income while at the same time creating jobs. Second, since the children that attend child care full-time typically spend between 35 and 50 hours per week with a caregiver who is not their parent, child care prepares children for school and life at a critical stage of their development.

In short, the child care industry is an essential component of the community infrastructure that keeps businesses growing and keeps parents working. In addition, quality child care contributes to a higher quality of life for residents as it assures that children are experiencing the kind of care that not only is safe and nurturing but prepares them for success and for growing into healthy and contributing future citizens.

Key to a positive future includes developing infrastructure and community assets that will attract families wishing to make the Independence area their home. Child care plays an essential role in a healthy community eco-system. The expansion of quality child care can be a catalyst for building a community that is vital, thriving, and prosperous.

Quality of Care

Although there is no simple definition of quality child care, the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has recently undergone a process to better align the state's quality rating system with nationally recognized quality standards. Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K™) is Iowa's new Quality Rating and Improvement System for HHS licensed child care centers and preschools, registered child development homes, and programs operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school. IQ4K provides five levels of quality (building blocks) that programs can achieve and continue to improve on. By implementing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), IQ4K allows programs to assess their current grade across all areas of programming and devise a structured plan to increase the overall level of program quality.¹

Furthermore, research shows that the early years (ages 0–5) are the most sensitive for brain development. Over 90% of brain growth occurs during this period. Once in school, students who receive quality early childhood education are more likely to graduate from high school, own a home, and have a job than their peers who did not attend preschool. Young children that spend time in safe and healthy environments that stimulate learning (i.e., quality early care and education programs) are more prepared when they start school and have long-term economic, academic and social benefits, and reduced costs to individuals and communities later on.

¹ Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral <https://iowaccrr.org/providers/iq4k/>

According to secondary research conducted by the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, the annual rate of return on each \$1 dollar spent on high quality early care and education is twelve to sixteen percent (12–16%), with the greatest returns realized among children in low-income families. Child care requires an investment. The delivery of quality child care is a *business issue and a business challenge for child care providers*. A commitment to delivering quality care that results in quality learning outcomes for children requires significant resources for child care businesses. Low classroom staff to child ratios, age-appropriate curriculum, teacher training and improved teacher qualifications, physical environment improvements, and more – all result in increased costs. An investment in the sustainability of existing child care providers that are committed to quality, is an investment in child care now and into the future.

Child Care as a Business Issue

As we look into the future through the lens of national, state, and local social and economic trends, the greatest hope for sustainable child care, particularly quality child care, rests in the community's ability to *develop strong child care businesses* and to *diversify the dollars going into supporting them* through both *public and private sector engagement and investment*.

The business community has a stake in child care. Businesses, communities, and regional economies all benefit from short-term and longer-term benefits of quality child care:

- Employee retention and decreased turnover;
- More productive employees, who know their children are receiving quality care;
- Ability to attract and keep the best employees and a younger workforce;
- Increased employment and career advancement opportunities at growing child care businesses;
- Spin-off jobs as a result of the multiplier effect of child care business development and retention;
- Less remedial expense as children are prepared to be successful in school;
- Sharp reductions in public expenditures on criminal justice, welfare and other remedial services; and
- A well-prepared future workforce: the essential bedrock of regional economic growth.

An immediate cost that impacts families and child care businesses is child care employee turnover. "Studies by American Management Association and others report a range between 25 percent and 250 percent of annual salary per exiting employee. Entry-level, unskilled positions are at the lower end of the cost range, while executive, managerial and sales positions are at the

higher end.”² A 2006 article by Saratoga, a service offering of PricewaterhouseCoopers, lists the following turnover costs and consequences:

- Lost productivity during a vacancy.
- Diminished productivity of the team and managers who are covering for a vacant position.
- Diminished productivity of the team and managers who are training the new hire.
- Increased labor costs due to overtime or contractor’s needs.
- Hiring and onboarding costs.
- More difficult to quantify impacts may include decreased customer satisfaction, increased future turnover, and loss of institutional knowledge.

Combined, these turnover-related costs represented more than 12% of pre-tax income for the average company.³

Business Investment in Child Care

There are multiple opportunities for businesses to invest in child care, meeting both the employee and employer needs, while also promoting a positive image of their business in the community. Employers can support their workers by investing in child care. Support of individual child care businesses can come in multiple forms. First Children’s Finance believes the following examples are all viable options:

- Sponsor spaces within a child care center(s) or home(s). These spaces are then reserved for that business’s employees.
- Fund a child care scholarship that is available to employees whose income exceeds the Iowa child care assistance income eligibility limit, but still struggle to afford child care. This could be in the form of a reimbursement and may provide different levels of support for families with different incomes.
- Business or corporate giving grants or community investment funds.
- Donate space for on-site child care that is available to both employees and the community.
- Invest in building a child care facility that bears the corporate or business name.

All contributions, at various levels of support are needed, recognized as significant, and promote a positive image of the business or corporation providing that gift or support.

² Spremulli, Michael. (2011, June 22). *Employee Turnover on the Rise*. Retrieved from <http://www.chrysaliscorporation.com/employee-turnover-on-the-rise/>

³ *Driving the Bottom Line: Improving Retention*. Copyright © PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2006. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/Documents/saratoga-improving-retention.pdf>

Child Care Market Analysis Key Findings

Most notably, the *Child Care Market Analysis* showed there is a need for more *regulated* child care in the Independence area. According to the US Census Bureau, there are an estimated 1,153 children ages 0 to 11 in the area. First Children's Finance estimates, 893 of those are from families that want to use Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) regulated child care, either a licensed center or a registered child development home. As of January 2024, there are 348 regulated child care spaces and it has been announced one program will be closing, reducing that number to 332, of which 284 are available year-round.

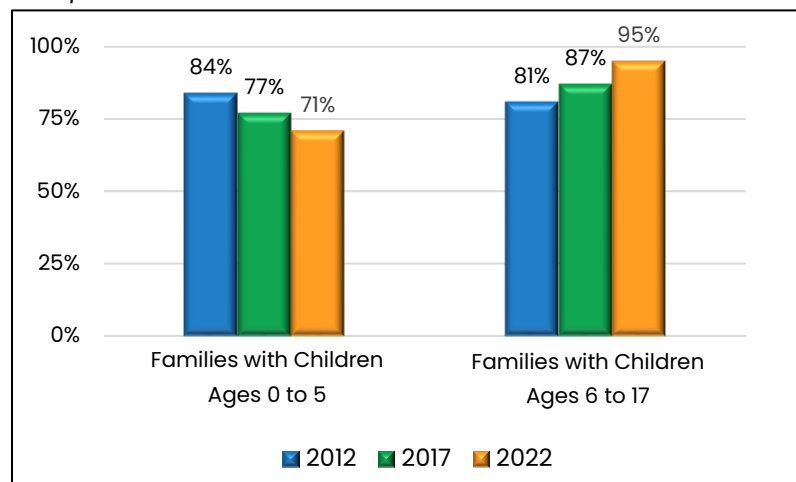
Based on the data and research from the *Child Care Market Analysis* that was completed for the Independence area in 2024, First Children's Finance identified the following key findings:

Finding 1: The Percentage of Families with Young Children and All Parents in the Labor Force is Declining

According to data from the US Census Bureau the percentage of families that have children ages 0 to 5 and that have all parents in the labor force has been decreasing over the last 10 years. During the same time period, the percentage of families that have children ages 6 to 17 and have all parents in the labor force has been increasing. All parents in the labor force means if a family is headed by a couple, both parents are working and if it is headed by a single parent that parent is working.

As of 2022, 71% of families with children ages 0 to 5, and 95% of families with children ages 6 to 17 living in the Independence Community School District (CSD) have all parents in the labor force. Five years ago in 2017, those numbers were 77% and 87% respectively, and in 2012 they were 84% and 81%.

Comparison of Families with All Parents in Labor Force Over the Past 10 Years

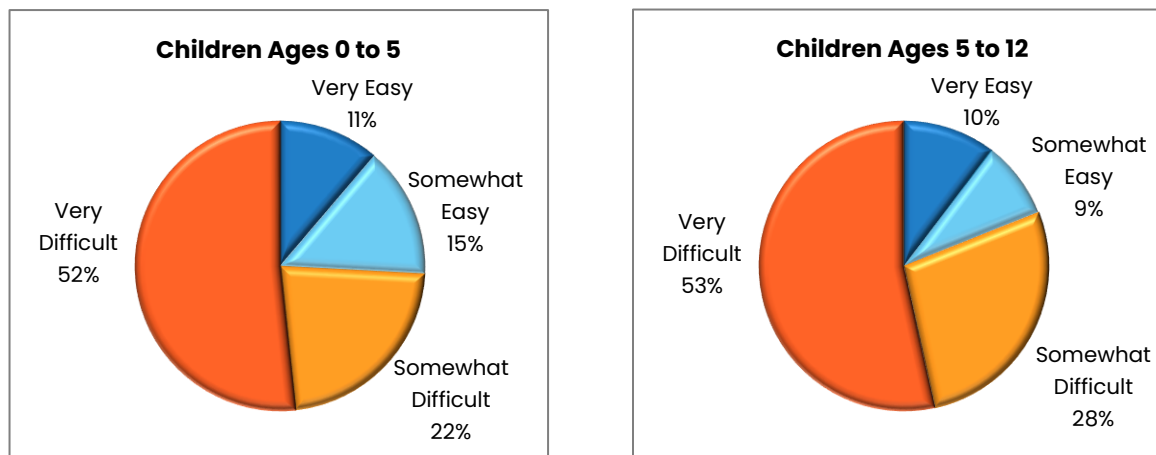


Finding 2: Parents are Having Difficulty Finding Child Care

Parents were asked if they had looked for child care in the last 12 months. Eighty-nine (89) parents indicated they had looked for care for children ages 0 to 5, and 58 parents indicated they had looked for care for children ages 5 to 12. Among those looking for care for ages 0 to 5, 74% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty—either somewhat difficult (22%) or very difficult (52%). And among those that looked for care for ages 5 to 12, 81% indicated they experienced some level of difficulty—either somewhat difficult (28%) or very difficult (53%).

As a follow up, parents were asked what obstacles they had experienced when looking for child care. Most comments refer to no openings within centers or child care programs not accepting children under the age of 2. There were also a few comments that included the cost of tuition, or stating that their family cannot afford the setting they prefer.

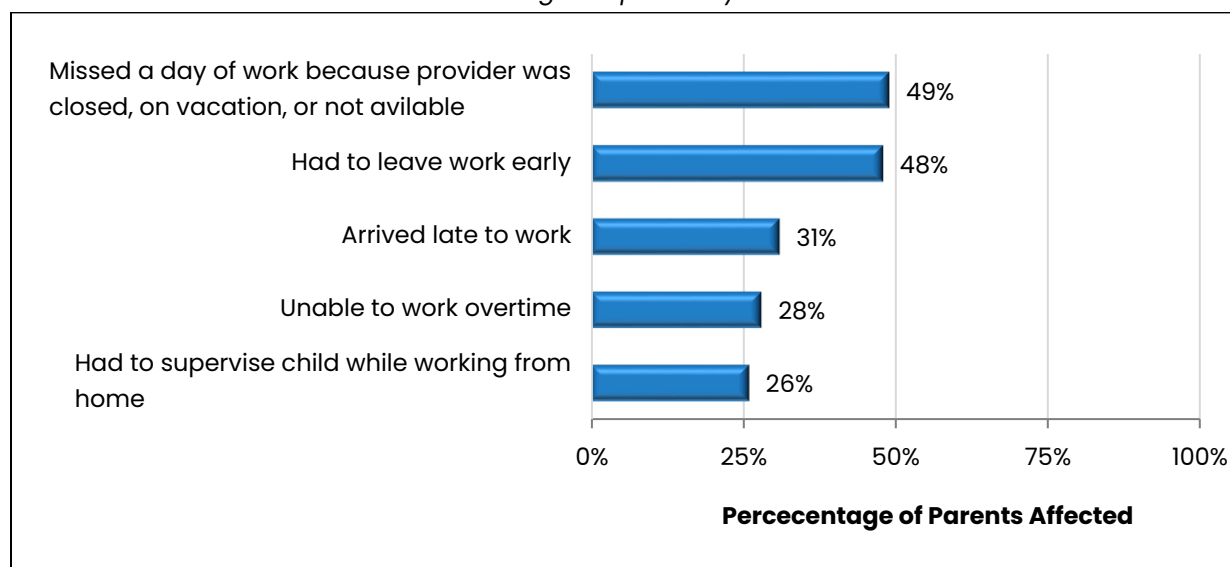
Ability to Find Child Care During Last 12 Months



Finding 3: Parents Indicate Child Care Challenges are Affecting their Job

Over the last 12 months, parents have experienced child care challenges that have in turn affected their job. The adverse effects experienced by at least 25% of parents that participated in the child care needs survey were: missed a day of work because the provider was closed, on vacation, or not available (49%), had to leave work early (48%), arrived late to work (31%), unable to work overtime (28%), and had to supervise child while working from home (26%). Overall, 57% of parents indicated they experienced no issues related to their job due to child care. *See figure on next page.*

Most Common Effects of Child Care Challenges Reported by Parents



Separately, 32% (75 parents) indicated child care challenges are currently limiting their or their spouse's or partner's employment, such as working part-time when full-time is preferred, or not working within their preferred field. In addition, 17% (40 parents) indicated that they or their spouse or partner have declined employment or withdrawn from the workforce in the last 12 months due to child care challenges, and 6% (14 parents) indicated as of today they or their spouse or partners is not working (unemployed) because of child care challenges.

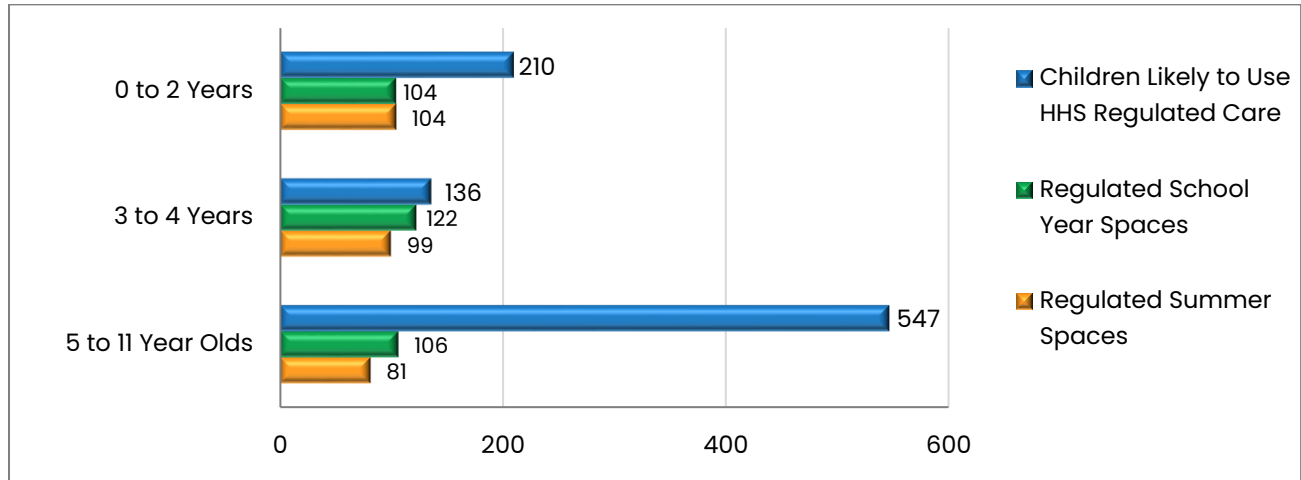
Finding 4: There is a Shortage of Spaces Among All Age Groups

There are 1,153 children ages 0 to 11 in the Independence Community School District (CSD) boundaries. Of those, First Children's Finance (FCF) estimates 960 have all parents working. Based on the percentage of families that have all parents working, and parents' preferences of child care settings, First Children's Finance estimates that 893 of those children are from families who prefer and are likely use Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulated child care. According to Iowa HHS, there are currently 348 HHS regulated spaces, however one preschool program has announced they are closing in May 2024, which will leave 332 spaces, of which 332 will be available during the school year and 284 during the summer.

The *Child Care Gap Analysis* shows that after June 2024, there will be a shortage of 561 spaces during the school year and 609 spaces during the summer when some programs close temporarily. When broken down by age group, for ages 0 to 2 there will be a shortage of 106 spaces during both the school year and summer, for ages 3 to 4 there will be a shortage of 14 spaces during the school year and 37 during the summer, and for ages 5 to 11 there will be a shortage of 441 spaces during the school year and 466 during the summer. Based on input from parents that completed the child care needs survey conducted as part of the *Child Care Market*

Analysis, FCF believes this gap may be worsened by families that live in other communities but prefer regulated child care in Independence.

Children Likely to Use Regulated Care vs. Regulated Spaces Available

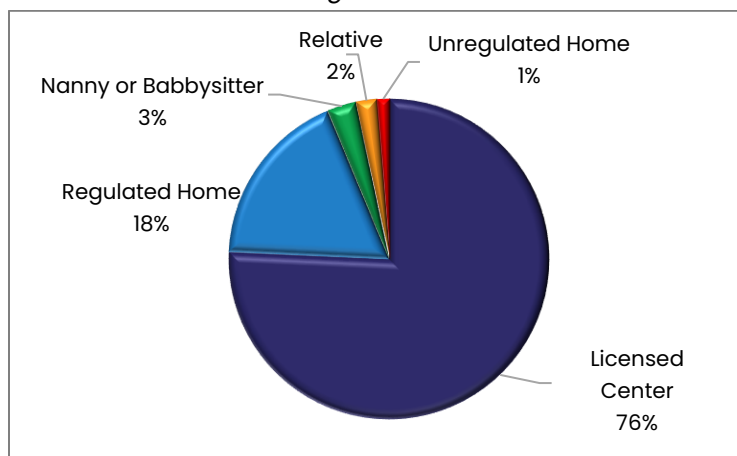


Finding 5: Parents Want Center-Based Child Care

Through the child care needs surveys completed by parents in 2023, both current and future parents were asked several questions about their child care needs and preferences. The most preferred child care arrangement chosen was a licensed child care center, which is preferred by 76% of all respondents, followed by a regulated child development home which is preferred by 18% of all respondents.

There are currently 284 spaces within licensed centers (which also includes preschools) for children ages 18 months to 12 years. One of the preschool programs has announced they will close in May 2024, which will bring the number of spaces down to 268 during the school year and 220 during the summer.

Preferred Child Care Setting



In addition to preferred child care setting, the child care needs survey also revealed that both current and future parents prefer to drop-off their children for care between 7:00 am and 7:59 am (47% overall) and pick them up between 4:00 pm and 4:59 pm (37% overall), and to use care Monday through Friday (90%-96% depending upon the day). Parents also prefer care that is available year-round for all ages, with 83% of those with children ages 0 to 5 choosing this option, and 61% of those with children ages 5 to 12.

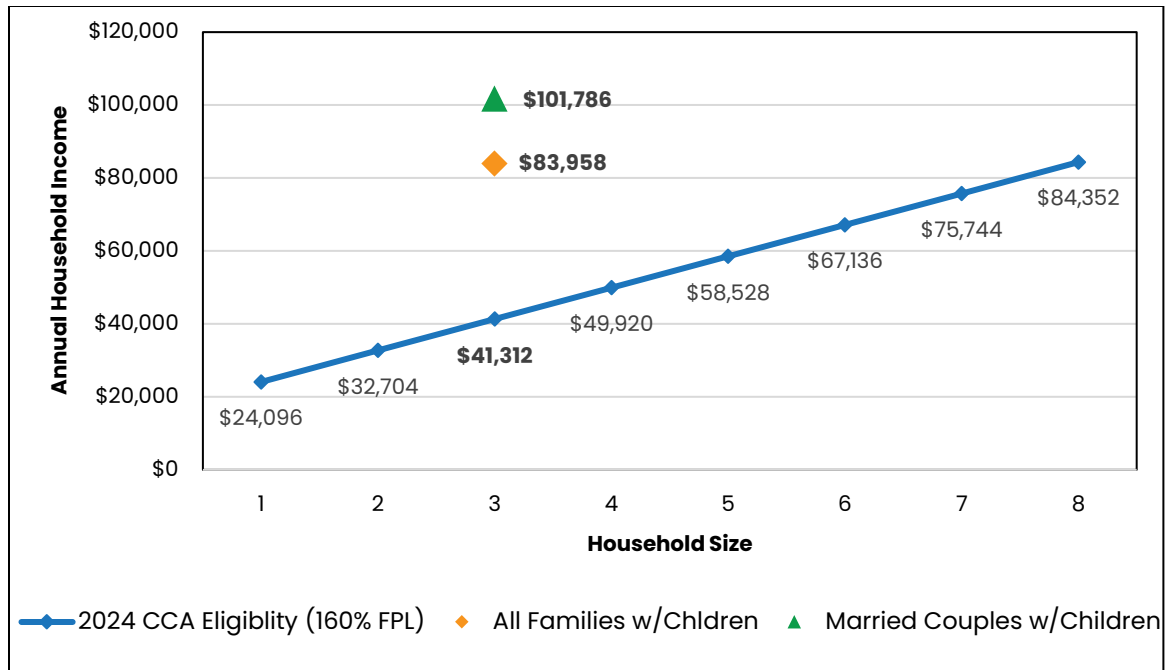
Finding 6: Median Income of Families with Children is Higher than the Child Care Assistance Threshold

The median income for families with children under the age of 18 in the Independence Community School District (CSD) is \$83,958, and that income jumps to \$101,786 for married couples with children under the age of 18. Among respondents of the child care needs survey, 87% of current parents (those that have children age 12 or younger) indicated they are married. To be eligible to initially qualify for tuition assistance under the Iowa Child Care Assistance (CCA) program a family's income must not exceed 160% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or 200% if they have a child with special needs. Once approved, a family's income is checked annually, and they continue to be eligible if their income does not exceed 225% FPL.

According to the federally determined poverty threshold that went into effect January 2024, for a household of 3, to initially qualify for CCA 160% FPL is \$41,312 while the point which a family already approved for CCA would exceed income eligibility, 225% FPL, is \$58,095. According to the same threshold, for a household of 4, to initially qualify for CCA 160% FPL is \$49,920 while the point which a family already approved for CCA would exceed income eligibility, 225% FPL is \$70,200. While many households with children in the area exceed these incomes, comments provided by parents through the child care needs survey indicate some families may be struggling to pay for child care expenses out of pocket.

The following figure plots the median income of households with children under 18 in the Independence CSD area using the family size of 3 (rounding the average family size of 2.94). The diagonal line shows 160% FPL by household size. The gap between 160% FPL for a family of 3, the median income for a family with children, and married couple with children can easily be seen by comparing the blue line to the orange diamond and green triangle. *See figure on next page.*

Median Family Incomes vs. Child Care Assistance Eligibility Threshold



Finding 7: Child Care Centers are Willing to Expand

Child care centers that completed the child care needs survey were asked, would you wish to expand their current child care program to serve more children? All 4 of the licensed centers in Independence participated, and at the time of the survey (October 2023) 3 of the 4 indicated, yes they would expand if they had the opportunity. Following the survey, one center announced they will close in May 2024, which may change the number of centers willing to expand as of the date of this report.

Providers that said yes were then asked to explain how they could expand. Comments received were:

- *We would need to expand our building or find a new site to relocate to.*
- *We wish to offer full day preschool so parents wouldn't need to transport kids in the middle of the day. Or we wish we would have transportation. We wish we could have enough kids in morning and afternoon to have two sections of preschool.*
- *We could add on to our building.*

Providers were asked to be more specific as to the support they would need in order to be able to expand to serve more children. All responses were related to two types of support, needing help with staffing and financing.

Finding 8—Few Employers are Currently Impacted by Child Care

Through the child care needs survey employers were asked several questions related to how child care is affecting them and their employees. Those questions included:

- Does your business have any challenges related to productivity because of employees' child care challenges?
- Does your business have any challenges related to absenteeism because of employees' child care challenges?
- Has your business had difficulty hiring due to child care options or challenges in the area?

A total of 9 employers participated in the survey. For each question, only 1 employer (the same employer) answered yes. Some of the comments received from all employers were:

- *None reported, however, we know the possibility exists.*
- *If they are we are not aware this is why they are calling as they do not say it is directly because of childcare.*
- *We list hours of operations and disclose in the interview process what hours are to be expected.*
- *Our most recent applicants do not have young children. I imagine that daycare hours would be a challenge with our 10-hour day schedule for prospective employees.*

Finding 9—Some Employers are Willing to Donate or Make a Contribution to Child Care

Employers that participated in the child care needs survey indicated their business is willing to assist in addressing the child care shortage and/or support child care businesses through various actions.

- 3 employers are willing to make a donation or financial contribution to build, remodel, or expand a child care center.
- 3 employers are willing to make a donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for their own employees.
- 2 employers are willing to make an annual donation or financial contribution for a portion (but not all) of the wages of a child care center director.
- 2 employers would pay a child care provider the tuition of a vacant slot in order to reserve or hold that slot for one of their employees (with the employee taking over payment upon enrolling).
- 2 employers would make a financial contribution for the operation of a child care program.
- 2 employers would make a donation or financial contribution for child care scholarships for all children.

THE FUTURE OF CHILD CARE IN INDEPENDENCE

Vision for Child Care

The following vision for child care was developed by the Child Care Steering Committee during the strategic planning sessions. This vision will help guide the future of child care in Independence.

Independence will continue to be a thriving community with accessible, quality child care choices that allow employers to attract and retain workforce.

To accomplish this vision means a focus on and resources committed to:

- Creating more spaces within regulated child care environments.
- Recruiting and developing child care professionals that provide a variety of child care options.
- Developing local resources to assist parents in finding and paying for child care.
- Informing employers and the community on the value and importance of quality child care.
- Partnerships between employers and child care programs.

Every parent wants their child to be in a child care setting that not only meets their basic needs for safety and security, but also provides nurturance and prepares that child for school success. The late Jim Greenman, child care developer and advocate, stated: “A baby welcomed into a center today may spend up to twelve thousand hours in child care, more time than she will spend in all of elementary school and high school.” For working parents, choosing child care may be one of the most critical decisions they can make as the child care environment has lasting effects on the child. Finding child care is a challenge; options for quality, regulated child care that meets the needs and preferences of families is even more challenging. Community and business leaders all want the same thing – quality, affordable child care that meets the needs of families, employers, and the community as a whole – not only today, but into the future. From the beginning, the intention of this project was to develop a community-wide solutions-based plan for the expansion of *quality* child care, not to just add more child care spaces.

Key Assumptions for Expanding Child Care

The expansion of quality child care carries with it some key planning assumptions. These assumptions will guide the implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Child Care* for existing and new quality child care.



Commitment to program quality- All child care programs that choose to participate in child care expansion efforts and receive incentives (should any be made available) and other resources, will commit to quality. This commitment includes training, curriculum enhancement, and other business and classroom standards, including being a licensed center or registered child development home with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.



Serve all ages- The current child care shortage includes a shortage of infant and toddler care (under age 2), which is more costly to provide than care for older children, due to lower staff to child ratios. Provider participation in the child care expansion effort means a commitment to provide care to infants and toddlers, as well as other ages of children.



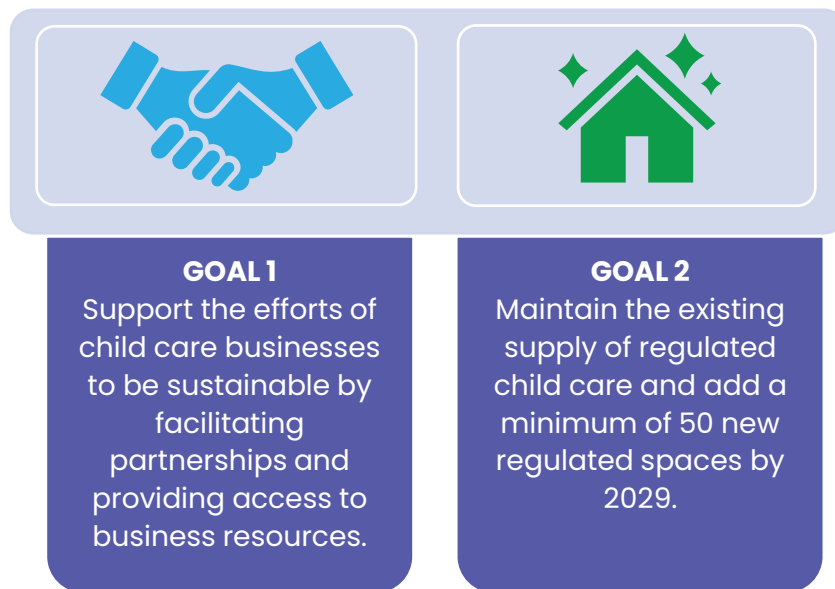
Meet quality requirements in physical environments- There exists a direct link between the quality of the physical environments and quality in the classroom practices. To the degree possible in existing child care and in new development of child care, attention will be given to quality child care physical environments – facilities and playgrounds, including meeting (or exceeding) standards as a licensed center or registered child development home as set by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.



New child care development needs to promote community-building- New child care development carries with it an opportunity to use development and design models that build a sense of community and become desirable community assets for the long term.

CHILD CARE GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The strategic planning process is an opportunity to leverage multiple view points and ideas related to addressing the child care challenges identified through the 2024 *Child Care Market Analysis* of the Independence area, including the child care needs surveys completed by employers, child care providers, and parents. Through a series of strategic planning meetings, the Child Care Steering Committee engaged in activities and conversations to develop these goals and strategies to address the child care challenges in Independence.



GOAL 1: Support the efforts of child care businesses to be sustainable by facilitating partnerships and providing access to business resources.

Child care is an essential component of the community's infrastructure that keeps businesses growing and parents working. In the child care market area, which is the boundaries of the Independence Community School District, 71% of families with children ages 0 to 5 and 95% of families with children ages 6 to 17 have all parents in the workforce. Involving local businesses and other community partners will result in solutions that meet the needs of parents, help employers recruit and retain the workforce they need, and set up the community for future growth.

Strategy 1- Facilitate partnerships between child care centers and local businesses.

Partnerships between child care centers and local businesses have the potential to benefit both the child care program and the business. The most ideal partnerships are those that would benefit a child care center by reducing costs or sharing expenses, allowing the center to have funds available to increase staff wages or offer employee benefits. The partnering businesses

may also benefit by making contributions or providing in-kind services which may be tax-deductible, or by reaching an agreement with the child care center that will benefit their employees, such as priority on the waitlist or for enrollment.

Partnerships could include (but are not limited to):

- Bulk purchasing for better pricing.
- Shared professional development.
- Shared services or back-office functions like bookkeeping or payroll services that are discounted or donated.
- In-kind donations to eliminate expenses such as snow removal, mowing, and cleaning and maintenance.
- Providing transportation for field trips and activities.
- An annual financial commitment equal to all or a portion of the child care center director's annual wage.
- On-going financial support for general operations.
- Child care employees have the ability to purchase insurance through a group plan under the partner business.
- Meals prepared by a partner entity and delivered to the child care center.

Action Plan

July 2024 through June 2025 (Year 1, repeat as needed)

- The Child Care Steering Committee will contact the child care centers in Independence to learn if the program is interested in pursuing partnerships with local businesses, the needs of the child care center, and preferred contact information to be shared with the businesses. Child care centers will be encouraged to prepare details about their needs including what they are requesting, how that will be used, and how the center, the employer, and parents will benefit.
- The Child Care Steering Committee will inform local businesses of the desired partnerships of each child care center and provide the businesses with the contact information for the center.
- Local businesses will identify which requests they are interested in pursuing and contact the child care centers directly to form a partnership.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

Partnerships with local businesses could provide child care center owners and operators additional support to strengthen the sustainability of their operations, increasing the likelihood of them being available for the current and future workforce. This strategy is intended to help child care centers reduce or off-set some operating costs, freeing-up funds to pay staff higher wages

or offer employee benefits, ultimately improving child care staff attraction and retention. Businesses that provide support to child care centers may also experience positive outcomes such as their employees having easier access to child care, which could lead to improved employee attraction and retention. This strategy is not intended to be a substitute for child care programs budgeting for or hiring qualified professionals, such as CPAs or attorneys, or to create expectations that local employers and other professionals should provide their services free of charge.

Strategy 2- Provide a local connection to regional and statewide business resources and supports for both existing and prospective child care providers.

The community needs to retain existing child care spaces in addition to adding new. Providing child care business resources and supports can provide existing child care providers access to resources that will assist their efforts to achieve quality programming and stable business operations. In addition, these same resources and supports may be useful to individuals that are interested in starting a new child care center or registered child development home.

Action Plan

July 2024 through June 2025 (Year 1)

- The Child Care Steering Committee will research and make a list of entities that provide child care specific business consulting and training. Already known entities are Child Care Resource & Referral, First Children's Finance, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.
- The Child Care Steering Committee will research and make a list of entities that provide general (not child care specific) business consulting and training. Already known entities are Small Business Development Center (SBDC), SCORE, and community colleges.
- The Child Care Steering Committee will work with community partners to create a page on a local website that will serve as a hub of links to resources for existing and prospective child care providers. Links that might be included are:
 - Child Care Resource & Referral
 - Child Care Collaborative of Iowa (Financial Management Consulting and access to state-funded Child Care Management Software)
 - Child Care Ready (training and assistance to become registered home)
 - Early Childhood Iowa (ECI)
 - Building Directions for Families (local system)
 - First Children's Finance
 - Business & Financial Fundamentals© for Child Care (business training and coaching for both homes and centers)
 - Child care business loans

- Online business resources and templates
- Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (Iowa AEYC)
 - Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™ assistance
 - TEACH (scholarship program for CDA, Associates Degree, and Bachelor's Degree)
 - WAGE\$ (salary supplement program)
- Iowa Department of Education
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) (reimbursement for meal and kitchen supply costs)
- Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - Child Care Center Licensing regulations
 - Registered Child Development Home regulations
 - Child Care Assistance Program (tuition assistance paid to providers)
 - Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) quality rating improvement system
 - I-PoWeR Professional Workforce Registry (training calendar and credit hour tracking system)
- Hawkeye Community College
 - Early Childhood Education program
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

July 2025 through June 2026 (Year 2, repeat annually)

- The Child Care Steering Committee will review the prior year's efforts. Information and links will be updated, and efforts repeated annually or as needed.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

This strategy is two-fold, sustainable child care businesses that continue operating and new child care businesses that contribute to increasing the number of child care spaces in Independence. Existing child care programs can access resources that will allow them to develop a sustainable business model and improve the quality of child care programming. Prospective child care providers can also utilize the resources to develop a sustainable business model. If more child care programs are started in Independence, the number of child care spaces will increase.

GOAL 2: Maintain the existing supply of regulated child care and add a minimum of 50 new regulated spaces by 2029.

In the child care market area, which is the boundaries of the Independence Community School District, there are 1,153 children ages 0 to 11. Of those, First Children's Finance (FCF) estimates 960 have all parents working and approximately 893 of those are from families that prefer and are likely to use an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulated child care setting. According to HHS, as of January 2024 there are 348 spaces within regulated child care programs in Independence. One program will be closing at the end of the 2023–2024 school year, reducing the numbers of regulated spaces to 332 during the school year and 284 during the summer when some programs close temporarily.

When broken down by age group, the *Child Care Gap Analysis* from the market analysis shows that for ages 0 to 2, there are 210 children likely to use regulated care and 104 regulated spaces, leaving a shortage of 106 spaces. For ages 3 to 4, there are 136 children likely to use regulated care and starting June 2024, there will be 122 regulated spaces available during the school year and 99 during the summer, leaving a shortage of up to 37 spaces. For ages 5 to 11, there are 547 children likely to use regulated child care and 106 regulated spaces available during the school year and 81 available during the summer, leaving a shortage of up to 466 spaces.

There are several forms of early care and education available in Iowa to meet each family's varying needs and preferences. In Iowa, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) oversees programs that fall into three categories—Licensed Centers, Registered Child Development Homes, and Child Care Homes. The level of regulation and requirements placed on the provider varies among the three categories.

Strategy 1—Identify viable locations for an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services licensed child care center.

Strategic planning participants determined efforts to increase the number of regulated child care spaces need to include more spaces within child care centers. To have more space within child care centers, it will be necessary to either have an additional child care center in Independence or for a center that is already operating to either build an addition at their current facility or move to have a larger building.

Action Plan

July 2024 through June 2025 (Year 1)

- The Child Care Steering Committee will identify possible locations for an HHS licensed child care center. The location options that will be compared are:
 - Vacant lots to build a new facility.

- Remodel and expand the former Starlight Cinema building.
- Add an addition to an already operating child care facility.
- Other existing buildings not currently used for child care.
- When determining which locations are the most viable, the Child Care Steering Committee will consider the following:
 - The size of the lot or existing building in relation to the number of new child care spaces that would be created.
 - The ability to make renovations of an existing building to meet licensing requirements.
 - Adequate outdoor space to have multiple playgrounds for different age groups at the required square footage to meet licensing requirements.
 - Overall cost and timeline of building new compared to remodeling existing.
 - Accessibility for parents.
 - Financial feasibility of construction or remodeling, start-up, and ongoing operations.
 - Proximity to Independence Community School District facilities.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

The expected outcome of this strategy will be a comprehensive look at all possible locations for a licensed child care center. Options that will be considered include remodeling existing buildings and building a new facility. The Child Care Steering Committee will identify possible locations and determine both advantages and disadvantages for each location. That information will be used for decision making for other strategies within this goal.

Strategy 2–Inform the community of the need for more regulated child care spaces, and the efforts made toward exploring options to increase the number of spaces available.

The *Child Care Market Analysis* included a child care gap analysis that showed Independence has a shortage of Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulated child care spaces. As the *Child Care Market Analysis* was being completed, child care providers answered questions about their current operations and their willingness to expand and serve more children. All 4 of the centers and preschools that were operating at the time answered, they would like to serve more children. Those willing to serve more children were asked to explain how they would expand. Two (2) of the centers indicated they would need to expand or build onto their existing building, or find a new site and relocate.

Action Plan

July 2024 through June 2025 (Year 1)

- The City of Independence will work with the Child Care Steering Committee to inform the community of efforts related to expanding child care within the community. The initial step will be to share information via social media, news articles, and press releases. Information to be shared includes:
 - The need for more regulated child care in Independence in the form of the data from the *Child Care Market Analysis*, including the number of children, the number of spaces needed, and the high percentage of parents that prefer a licensed center.
 - Locations that have been considered and details of each.
 - The next steps according to the *Strategic Plan for Child Care*.
- The City of Independence will host a public meeting to share information about the child care needs and plans. The target audience for this meeting is:
 - The Child Care Steering Committee
 - Local businesses
 - Elected Officials
 - Child care providers
 - Families

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

The expected outcome of this strategy is an increased awareness of the need for more regulated child care spaces in Independence, along with an understanding of why the City of Independence and the Child Care Steering Committee are considering specific options. Community support for both the City of Independence and the Child Care Steering Committee will in turn show support for achieving the goals and strategies of this strategic plan.

Strategy 3- Identify an entity to operate an Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) licensed child care center in the former Starlight Cinema building.

The City of Independence has acquired the former Starlight Cinema located at 2401 Swan Lake Boulevard. Preliminary plans to remodel the theater and to add an addition have been completed to demonstrate one possible option for a licensed child care center to operate in that building. The licensed capacity of the preliminary plan was 204 spaces. Increasing the child care supply is a priority in the community. The City Council, with assistance from the Child Care Steering Committee, will seek an occupant to operate a licensed child care center in that space.

Action Plan

July 2024 through June 2025 (Year 1)

- The City of Independence, with input from the Child Care Steering Committee, will develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking an entity to operate a licensed child care center in the former Starlight Cinema building.
- The City Council will select an operator for the child care center according to the RFP.
- The City of Independence will provide the selected RFP respondent with a Development Agreement defining the details of the arrangement.

July 2025 through June 2026 (Year 2)

- The selected respondent, with assistance from the Child Care Steering Committee, will develop a business plan, which will include financial projections that reflect a sustainable business model. Key components of the business plan may include (but will not be limited to):
 - Description of business ownership or governance (how decisions are made).
 - Quality initiatives, such as curriculum and child assessments to be used.
 - Staff education and qualification requirements, both HHS requirements and any additional requirements that go above and beyond HHS that meet voluntary quality initiatives.
 - Partnerships.
 - Annual budget projections for five years.
 - Start-up costs, including remodeling, furnishings and playground equipment.
 - Funding sources for start-up costs, including construction or remodeling and furnishings.
 - Timeline for construction or remodeling and opening.
- The selected respondent, with assistance from the City of Independence and the Child Care Steering Committee, will procure final site and building plans.
- The selected respondent, with assistance from the Child Care Steering Committee, will develop a capital campaign. Key components of the plan may include (but will not be limited to):
 - Start-up costs for construction or remodeling and furnishings, plus initial hiring and training costs, and cash reserves equal to 3 to 6 months of operating expenses.
 - Donor levels, sponsorship and naming opportunities, and recognitions including if donors receive priority for waitlists or enrollments.
 - Develop a system to track donations, provide tax receipts, and collect annual pledges.
 - Identify potential grant sources.

- Identify potential private donors, organizations, and businesses.
- Plan fundraising events.
- The selected respondent will launch the capital campaign, with support and assistance from committees and community volunteers.

July 2026 through June 2027 (Year 3)

- The capital campaign continues.
- The selected respondent will review and update the business plan, including the start-up costs and timeline.

July 2027 through June 2028 (Year 4)

- The capital campaign continues.
- The selected respondent will review and update the business plan, including the start-up costs and timeline.
- Construction/remodeling is underway.

July 2028 through June 2029 (Year 5)

- The capital campaign continues.
- Construction/remodeling is complete, and the new center is open.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

The expected outcome of this strategy will be a newly remodeled facility that can be licensed for 204 children, and is opened by the end of 2029. This new facility will increase the child care supply in Independence, making it easier for parents to find care in their preferred setting and location. The net gain will depend on the selected recipient of the RFP process. If one of the centers already operating in Independence is chosen and decides to relocate and expand their center, the result will be the creation of between 50 and 125 regulated child care spaces, depending on which program and assuming the existing location will close. If an out-of-town entity or a new child care center is chosen and both current centers continue to operate at their current locations and capacities, the result will be the creation of 204 new spaces.

Strategy 4– Develop and implement a campaign to attract additional child care providers.

There is a considerable need for more regulated child care spaces in Independence. The Child Care Gap Analysis conducted as part of the Child Care Market Analysis, determined there are approximately 1,153 children ages 0 to 11 living in the Independence Community School District, and 893 are from families that are likely to use regulated child care. Starting in June 2024, there will be 332 regulated child care spaces will be available during the school year and 284 regulated child care spaces will be available during the summer.

If a new center licensed for 204 children is opened (Strategy 3 of this goal), that alone will not meet the demand. Additional options to increase the number of regulated child care spaces in Independence include:

- Already operating registered child development home providers change their registration to a different category, assuming the provider has the experience and space.
- Already operating non-registered home providers become a registered child development home.
- Individuals not currently providing child care start a new child care business as a registered child development home.
- An already operating home-based provider (either registered or non-registered) moves to a larger space and opens a child care center.
- An individual, business, or other entity, not currently providing child care starts a new child care center.
- An already operating child care center from another community moves to or opens a location in Independence.

The Child Care Steering Committee will publicize the need for additional regulated child care spaces in Independence and promote opportunities for individuals to start a child care business or expand an existing child care program.

Action Plan

July 2024 through June 2025 (Year 1)

- The Child Care Steering Committee will compile a list of regional and statewide entities that provide business resources and supports for both existing and prospective child care providers and share that information on a local website. (Goal 1, Strategy 2 of this plan).
- The Child Care Steering Committee will compile a list of local economic development or small business incentives that are available within the community. Incentives may include, but not limited to:
 - Property tax abatement for improvements made to a home or building.
 - Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
 - Local Option Sales Tax (LOST).
 - Utility hook-ups or extension to an undeveloped lot.
 - In-kind donation of services, such as lawn maintenance or snow removal.
 - Local revolving loan funds.
 - Business Incentive Program (BIP) for child care (funded by ECI, administered by CCR&R).
- The Child Care Steering Committee shares the information collected through this strategy on a local website.

July 2025 through June 2026 (Year 2, repeat annually)

- The Child Care Steering Committee will review the prior year's efforts. Information and links will be updated, and efforts repeated.

Expected Outcomes and Impacts

The expected outcome of this strategy is an increased awareness of the need for more regulated child care and an understanding of the resources available to support an individual or other entity that wishes to start a new child care program. Over time this increased awareness will lead to the formation of more child care businesses which will increase the number of child care spaces.

PUTTING THIS PLAN INTO USE

This *Strategic Plan for Child Care* represents a significant investment of community resources. To achieve the expected outcomes and impacts outlined in this plan, members of the Independence Child Care Steering Committee, in partnership with the City of Independence, will need to remain engaged and lead efforts, which may include forming subcommittees so that additional community members or organizations become engaged, and activities and workload are distributed.

The plan and progress will be fully reviewed annually by the steering committee and report to the City of Independence and the community. Each year the committee will create a workplan assigning specific activities with detailed timelines and identify individuals to serve on subcommittees as needed. A matrix with a summary of the planned activities for each of the five years is provided in the Appendix to assist with assigning and tracking which activities are complete.

APPENDIX

Strategic Planning Activities Summarized by Date

The following pages summarize the activities of each strategy in the “Child Care Goals and Strategies” section of this plan. This alternative format is intended to provide a condensed list of the activities to be completed each year. This matrix can be convenient for reviewing activities to determine what has been accomplished, as well as to assign activities for the upcoming year. The activities listed in the following tables are a summary, the full details of each activity can be referenced in the description of the corresponding goal and strategies in this plan.

Year 1 July 2024 through June 2025		
Activity	Responsible Party	Date Completed
Contact child care centers to gauge interest and the need for partnerships with local businesses. (Goal 1, Strategy 1)		
Inform local businesses of the desired partnerships of each child care center. (Goal 1, Strategy 1)		
Local businesses contact the child care centers directly to form a partnership. (Goal 1, Strategy 1)		
Research entities that provide child care specific business consulting and training. (Goal 1, Strategy 2)		
Research entities that provide general (not child care specific) business consulting and training. (Goal 1, Strategy 2)		
Create a page on a local website that will serve as a hub of links to business resources for child care providers. (Goal 1, Strategy 2)		
Identify possible locations for an HHS licensed child care center. (Goal 2, Strategy 1)		
Inform the community of efforts related to expanding child care within the community. (Goal 2, Strategy 2)		
Host a public meeting to share information about the child care needs and plans. (Goal 2, Strategy 2)		
Develop and RFP seeking an entity to operate a licensed child care center in the former Starlight Cinema building. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Select an operator according to the RFP. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Provide the selected RFP respondent with a Development Agreement. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Compile and share entities that provide business resources and supports for child care providers. (Goal 2, Strategy 4)		
Compile and share economic development and small business incentives that are available within the community. (Goal 2, Strategy 4)		

Year 2 July 2025 through June 2026		
Activity	Responsible Party	Date Completed
Review information about entities that provide business consulting and training. (Goal 1, Strategy 2)		
Develop a business plan for the new center in the former Starlight Cinema building. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Procure final site and building plans for the new center. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Develop and launch a capital campaign for the new center. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Review and update the business resources and incentives information and continue sharing. (Goal 2, Strategy 4)		

Year 3 July 2026 through June 2027		
Activity	Responsible Party	Date Completed
Review information about entities that provide business consulting and training. (Goal 1, Strategy 2)		
Review and update the business plan for the new center. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
The capital campaign for the new center continues. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Review and update the business resources and incentives information and continue sharing. (Goal 2, Strategy 4)		

Year 4 July 2027 through June 2028		
Activity	Responsible Party	Date Completed
Review information about entities that provide business consulting and training. (Goal 1, Strategy 2)		
Review and update the business plan for the new center. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
The capital campaign for the new center continues. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Construction/remodeling for the new center is underway. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Review and update the business resources and incentives information and continue sharing. (Goal 2, Strategy 4)		

Year 5 July 2028 through June 2029		
Activity	Responsible Party	Date Completed
Review information about entities that provide business consulting and training. (Goal 1, Strategy 2)		
Review and update the business plan for the new center. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
The capital campaign for the new center continues. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Construction/remodeling is complete, and the new center is open. (Goal 2, Strategy 3)		
Review and update the business resources and incentives information and continue sharing. (Goal 2, Strategy 4)		



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Fire Department

Independence Fire has finished up our Firefighter 1 class for the year. We had 6 IFD members attend the class and 3 have finished testing and are nationally certified now. I believe the class started with 14 students and they lost a few during the class. I have been able to see firsthand how well this group works together and they all seem like a very good group of future leaders in their departments.

We have gotten to take advantage of the nicer weather and get out to do some outdoor public relations events. We attended the Career on Wheels event at the High School as well as a Health and Safety Day at East Buchanan Schools. Both of these events are a great opportunity for us to get out in the public, meet students and staff, as well as parents, and share what we do in the department which gives them a chance to engage and ask questions to our members.

We continue to work on training as this is a key component for our department and we strive to become better every time we train. We were fortunate to have training props brought in to allow our firefighters great hands-on training that we don't always get. In the last couple of months, we had a Forcible Entry Prop from the Quad County Fire Association as well as a Pump Operator Prop from the Iowa State Fire Service Training Bureau. The Forcible Entry Prop is designed to train firefighters on how to force an inward-swinging or outward-swinging door open. We trained on 1 person, 2 person operations as well as attempted new ideas and tactics that have come out. This prop allows different levels of difficulty and is one of our favorite props to bring in and train on. The Pump Operator Prop is the FSTB's newest prop and allows firefighters to simulate pumping or drafting in different scenarios and gives them the opportunity to learn what to do, without damaging a pumper or equipment. This was a great chance for some of our newer members to see what all takes place at the pump panel.

We have been asked to attend the Independence High School Career Day event again this year. We are excited to get out and meet with the students and show them some of the tools and equipment that we use during a call. Last year was our first time attending the event and we felt like it went really well. We had several students stop by and ask a lot of good questions and it gave us a chance to give them a look into public safety.

Please reach out if you have any questions,

Blake Hayward

Fire Chief



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Laura Blaker

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Library



Summer Reading Program

The library is planning for the Summer Reading Program, or SRP. This year the theme is Read, Renew, Repeat and we have lots of events planned for June and July! Online registration begins May 22, and in-person registration starts June 5. The SRP booklet with all the details will be out soon.

Hiring

One of our long-time permanent part-time staff members is retiring. Each of our staff members, full and part-time, has many responsibilities beyond checking materials in and out. We are looking to hire a team player who will be good with the public and the staff, who is good with technology, social media, graphics, and who values service and community. Some of this individual's responsibilities beyond checking out materials and shelving (those you already know about) are the following:

- help customers with their many technology questions
- create postings and reels for Instagram
- create signs for the library
- put together slide shows for the community kiosk
- marketing committee member
- process library card applications
- assist customers in finding the right resource/book
- cycle materials from the new displays out to the regular shelves to make room for newer items
- make homebound deliveries

Eagle Scout Project

The Eagle Scout Project by the library is almost complete. There are just a couple of steps to be done on the outdoor chessboard, plus the setup of the storage unit with the playing pieces. Later this summer, the scout will present a class on Chess Basics.

Notary Service

One of our staff members is now certified as a notary. This is something we are asked periodically and is a helpful service we can provide without a lot of time or cost.



Highlight on Programs – Legos @ the Library

Our Family Legos @ the Library program has been very popular! Parents, other relatives, and friends come with kids, and they come to build! Erin, the library's program coordinator, always has a challenge, like a maze, snowflakes, robot, ziplining, things in nature, etc. We usually have 20-30 people attend, though we have had as many as 49 attendees. The adults create things alongside the kids!

Fine Free Update

The new system of most items being fine free is working well. More materials are returned than previously because they can be returned without fines being an issue. The other side of that is, after a certain amount of time and many notices, the customer must pay to replace the unreturned item. Though we are not getting much revenue from fines, we are also not having to replace nearly as many materials. Between the time and money involved in replacing materials, we are coming out ahead and both the public and the staff seem happy with the changes.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Bob Beatty, Director

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Parks & Recreation

Parks & Forestry Department-

Parks staff have completed one round of mowing. We have both mowers on duty and one part-time maintenance worker. The last two have been hired and will be starting once college is out. Staff have been busy getting parks open and cleaned for the season. Park restrooms will be delivered on May 1. The inclusive playground will be installed the week of April 29. Once installed, a different company will come to pour the surfacing. We will then pour the accessible sidewalk and fill the dirt and seed. We will likely fence off the area until we get some grass in. Hopefully, we will have a grand opening before Memorial Day weekend. We will be adding a bathroom to the park's shed this spring. We want to get the excavation, water, and sewer run this fiscal year.

Recreation Department-

Angie has been busy getting all the Little League teams, schedules, and rules ready for their league. We will have to make some serious changes to the league as the coaches are becoming very thin. This season was a struggle, to say the least. This will mark the first time we have had to eliminate and combine many teams due to a lack of coaches. We will look at all options this offseason. Part of that may be eliminating requests, cutting down on the number of River'sEDGE teams, or limiting how many assistants we allow. We will be trying out in some of our leagues our version of Velo ball that will be a fast-paced version of Little League. Our goal is it could cut down on coaches, kids not playing infield/outfield, and get kids way more at bats. The faster pace should be more enjoyable to watch. We will test it this year, get feedback, and make adjustments as necessary. Between River'sEDGE and little league we are at a new record of 621 breaking the previous high of 588. First time we have ever been over 600.

River'sEDGE Facility-

River'sEDGE teams all will have their first tournament under their belt this month. Many started in April and some of our older groups began with indoor tournaments in February. River'sEDGE is packed on a nightly basis and Little League will be in soon to get some practices ready. We are looking at ways we can incorporate even more usage by our little league. We have been able to expand programming and travel teams every year, but we are getting close to our max if we do not remodel more dead areas. Hopefully, we will have some time to make a plan before 2025 tryouts.

Dog Park-

Dog Park remains busy. We will close the park every Wednesday 10-11 for mowing.

Falcon Civic Center-

The Falcon Civic Center remains busy. We typically sign up 10-15 new 24/7 access memberships a month. As we see our hours shrink for summer it continues to drive people to the 24/7 memberships. Our

weightroom is in dire need of additional space and we have some expansion ideas that hopefully we can do on our own in the future.

Aquatic Center Facility-

The pool has been drained and the first round of power washing is complete. We have several repairs lined up for this spring as well. We will also be painting (hired) the vessel this fall. We are still in need of guards. We will have a couple certification opportunities at our own facility this spring and hopefully we will run one later in the summer.

RV Park Facility-

RV park is filling up. We have hired a cleaning company to clean the bathhouse twice a week this year. In the past we had hired a person in the campground for lot rent. We felt we needed a different direction this year.

Complex Facility-

The complex is getting closer to ready. We continue to look for the last field sponsor. We are down to a couple of dugouts still available. We have placed nearly 20 new 4'x8' advertising signs with a lot more room. The cameras have been installed and we are getting closer to getting ready. A HUGE thank you to Light and Power for all their help! They are such an asset to our community and the City in general. We have hired someone to help input the data into the system and to help get awards and coaches packets ready for the season. We have hired a concession manager, and she has already started cleaning the concessions. We will need to build shelves, arrange food prep area, work on menus, work on z-outs, and the cleaning/chore checklist. Still a ton to do with a couple of weeks left, IPRD is planning on the "grand opening" and festivities to be May 24. More details to follow but we would love to see you all out there that night. This 2024 season will be under construction most of this season. We are still trying to pin down dates for the asphalt, fundraising for the chipseal in the parking lot, the batting cage installation, the sidewalk to T-Mobile field. We hope people are patient and understanding but for us there isn't a great time of year to complete projects.

Cemetery-

We hired a mower for the summer. He is working on the first round as the weather hasn't been cooperative. I will check in with the fundraiser once we get the complex up and ready. We would like to start scheduling some headstone repairs as money allows.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Chief David Niedert

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Department Report – Police

- We have two officers who have been appointed to organizations that will enhance our department's ability to deliver services to our citizens.
 - Officer Chris Cass has been deputized as a U.S. Marshall. This gives the police department immediate access to the resources that the U.S. Marshalls Office can provide, by being a member agency. Officer Cass and his K9 will be available to the U.S. Marshalls to provide assistance when needed in the surrounding counties. Any use of our officer will be reimbursed to the City.
 - Lieutenant Andy Isley has become a member of the Iowa Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. This appointment will allow Lieutenant Isley instant access to online investigative resources, and make his investigations into crimes against children easier when it involves internet use.
- This week is the Dogs for Law Enforcement yearly training seminar in Independence. We expect over 40 dogs and their handlers, as well as certified trainers from around the United States. The majority will be staying locally, which has a nice economic impact on our community.
- Officers Graves and Christiansen recently attended Tactical Warrant Service School. This class was put on by the Midwest Counter Drug Training Center at Camp Dodge in Des Moines. This training was free and included low-cost lodging. This is just one of many free or reduced-cost training opportunities that our officers attend.
- On May 17th, our department will participate in a train derailment tabletop exercise at the Buchanan County Emergency Management. This has been in the planning stages for a few months now and will allow our officers to understand what a disaster response like this will entail.
- On May 15th, we will be dedicating the plaques that commemorate the two Independence Officers who were killed in the line of duty. The retired badges and the copy of the proclamation will be hung in our lobby, and a family member of Officer Pearce will attend.
- Our department continues its co-teaching of a forensic science class at the high school. We participated in post-prom as representatives of the Buchanan County Substance Abuse Coalition. We have our annual Guns vs. Hosers bowling tournament coming up this month, all proceeds will be donated to wipe out the lunch debts of needy children at the school.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Travis Foley

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Purchase of Camera for Utilities Department

DISCUSSION:

After reviewing different options for sewer cameras, we have decided to go with the IBAK camera system. This is a CIP item that was approved in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. We would like to move forward with ordering the system with the intent to purchase after July 1, 2024. Attached is the quote for the IBAK camera system, supplied by Mid-Iowa Solid Waste Equipment. During the budgeting process, we included a cost of \$130,000 for this purchase, but we were not planning on purchasing a trailer at that point in time. Upon further thought about how this would work, and what would be needed as the televising process was completed, we believe that the inclusion of a trailer for housing and transport of the unit is the most economical use of funds and will provide the best service for the City.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.



Mid-Iowa Solid Waste
5105 NW Beaver Dr
Johnston, IA 50131
515-276-3352
Fax 515-276-2976
Toll Free 800-733-8731

QUOTE

Item #8.

Quote # CCGQ1650

Date 12/19/23

Sales Rep Cory Gustafson

Helping you clean your Planet since 1975

Quote To:

Ship To:

City of Independence
Travis Foley
2018 3 Elms Park Rd
Independence IA 50644

City of Independence
Travis Foley
2018 3 Elms Park Rd
Independence IA 50644

Quote Good for 30 Days

We are pleased to propose the following for your consideration

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price
1	901601040 Pressure Test Set	\$139,876.00	\$139,876.00
	V4019001 ORION Zoom PAN & TILT CAMERA * Pan, Tilt and Zoom (3x digital) camera for 4" and up pipelines * May be used on tractor or pushrod * Auto-focus, Auto-uprighting, LED Lighting and 33 kHz Transmitter for locate * New wide angle of view = 90° * Laser diameter, deformation, defect and object measurement (software required - not included)		
	V9044001 T76 TRACTOR * Mainline tractor for use in pipelines 5" and up * Zero turn radius, full steering with ATC (Automatic Tilt Compensation) * Includes lowering claw, toolset and 5"/6"/8"/10" wheelsets * T76 can be used as the chassis for the LISY 3 Extension * Requires the (904020021) Camera Base module for normal mainline operations * Add the Remote Elevator (904116031) to help in larger pipelines		
	V9040012 Camera Base CB 3.2S Module for T76/86 Tractor * Required for operation of T76/86 as mainline tractor * Includes integrated transmitter for location.		
	904116031 Remote Elevator for T76/86 * Raises the camera to allow centering in pipeline * Lifts camera above water line in pipes with flow		
	900406691 High-Traction Tungsten Carbide Wheels for 8" and up >>>Complete Set of 4 with bolts and washers<<< * For use with T76 / T86 / PANO2 Tractors * Large Grit * Uses Wheel Bolt 60000291 * Uses Flat Washer 6000082		
	V1974018 BS3.5-10 X Vehicle Mounted Control - For operation of all camera and the tractor functions - For permanent installation in a vehicle in 19" technology - Separate keyboard surround with 2 joysticks, emergency stop, microphone for intercom - Includes V0000189 on/off switch - Requires control monitor panel and monitor mount. - Requires PC for operation - Controller for use with KW305.		
	10TS7M 10 Inch Touch Screen		
	GV-N710D3-2GL Graphics Card With HDMI Output		
	V8026004 KW305.2 S Synchronized Power Cable Reel * For operation of BS3.5-10 X		

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price	Item #8.
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- * Synchronized cable payout and retraction
- * Automatic level wind
- * Requires vehicle installation
- * Includes remote control pendant and LED Boom Light
- * Distance counter and rear display
- * Holds up to 1000' of mainline cable
- * Includes integrated tractor lowering winch and control

80017040

CAMERA CABLE TYPE 524/11 - 1000 FEET

- * Terminated with connector for KW305 Reel Only
- * High strength, 2000lb. pull, Kevlar reinforced
- * Diameter of cable approx. 7.3 mm

904350020

Cable Deflection Pulley KUV 2.7 with rope and holder (50ft of rope)

800500841

KW Reel foot-operated winch switch (KW505, 310 and 305)

- * Control the lowering winch with foot to allow more control while lowering the tractor into the manhole

V0001017

19" Industrial PC

These specifications or greater:

- * Ruggedized Rack Mount Cabinet
- * Intel Quad Core Processor
- * 16 GB RAM
- * 256 GB Solid State Drive for Applications / OS
- * 2 TB Hard Drive for Data
- * DVD-R/CD-RW drive
- * Keyboard and Optical Mouse
- * Operating system Windows 10 Professional

V0001018

Video Capture Device

- * Only sold for use with IKAS Evolution. If using a 3rd party software, please contact your software vendor

Training - Equipment Training

Standard (2) day training at customer's location.

- * Includes review of operation and maintenance of supplied equipment.
- * Additional days of training can be added at \$1250.00 per day.
- * Training is no charge at RapidView's facility in Rochester, Indiana.

VSP00200

IBAK EVOLUTION - VEHICLE

Powerful database application for all types of inspections: including lateral launch, mainline, Panoramio, HD, laser scan and more. This software will allow you to capture video and images, and produce complete reports with defect identification and scoring. Data and videos can be exported for the customer to view the information. The software has an extensive list of expansion modules available to further its capabilities.

Basic sewer data projects – basic module type

Managed sewer objects: sections, manholes and laterals

Standard compliant sewer data acquisition

Operation with task related menus and dialogues

Assistant for condition data acquisition

Management of inspection projects with customer, project and job data

Management of sewer objects with master and condition data, photo and video data

Import and attribution of digital photos to condition data

Digital single image capture from linked videos

Data transfer assistant

License free sewer MPEG player for data transfer (without an MPEG decoder)

Digital MPEG recording with:

Internal MPEG mobile encoder (Sensoray)

Configurable video overlay of master and condition data

Condition data acquisition synchronized with video recording

Single monitor display with:

Live video display

Switchover between the video picture and the IKAS dialogs

Also for Panoramio systems, Panoramio scanner control included

High performance MPEG encoder driver (requires Vitec)

> MPEG format see encoder description

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price	Item #8.
	<p>Job rule management! Any desired number of profiles can be managed.</p> <p>IKAS Evolution Full HD</p> <p>Full HD performance MPEG encoder driver (requires Vitec HD)</p> <p>> Up to full HD video with MPEG4 AVC(H264)</p> <p>> Adjustable resolution</p> <p>> Software data overlay</p> <p>IKAS Evolution Laser Diameter Measurement</p> <p>For IBAK laser cameras</p> <p>During push rod operation for diameter estimation only with push cameras</p> <p>IKAS Evolution PACP & LACP Interface Extension</p> <p>IKAS Evolution Support</p> <p>IKAS Evolution Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing updates and support by phone or online via TeamViewer • First 6 months included with initial purchase • The service contract will automatically renew on January 1st of each subsequent calendar year. • Paid yearly upon renewal • Customer outside of contract will receive no updates and minimal support <p>* Upon initial purchase, customer will be charged a pro-rated amount to include support for the current year, and until December 31st of the following calendar year.</p>			
1	<p>VZ000763</p> <p>RAPIDVIEW ECOTRAILER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Dimensions – 6'(wide) X 12'(long) x 7'(tall) * GVRW – 2990 lbs * Single Leaf Spring Axle * Stone Guard * DOT Approved LED Clearance & Tail Lights * FRP sidewalls * Galvanized Roof * Side Door With Locking Latch * Rear Full Open Swing Doors <p>POWER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 3500w Digital Hybrid Generator Tongue Mounted * Shore Power Plug With Connection Cable & Adapter * Automatic Power Transfer Switch * 12v Deep Cycle Battery With Battery Box * 12v Fuse Panel * 12v Roof Mounted Safety Strobe Light <p>OFFICE AREA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Heavy Duty Coin Vinyl Flooring * Heavy Duty Carpeted Walls * Laminated Desk With PVC Edging * 19" Rack Mount Space 17U * 2 LED Ceiling Light Fixtures With Wall Switch * High Efficiency Roof A/C * Sliding Rear Viewing Window <p>WORK AREA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Heavy Duty Coin Vinyl Flooring * 3/8" FRP Side Walls & Ceiling * 2 LED Ceiling Light Fixtures With Wall Switch * 6 Drawer Tool Chest * 14 Gallon Fresh Water Wash Down Tank With Pump <p>VZM000100</p> <p>Monitor, 17" Quantity 3</p> <p>VZM000104</p> <p>Monitor Mount - Double</p> <p>VZ000306</p> <p>KW Reel cabinet, (W-22", L-39" & H-34"), with a slide out tray for the LISY Synchro drum and one locking drawer with a divider. All aluminum drawer construction.</p>	\$22,373.00	\$22,373.00	
1	<p>Complimentary Maintenance</p> <p>No Charge Maintenance Included at Factory Authorized Mid-Iowa Service Center in Johnston, IA (Listed Below)</p>	\$0.00	\$0.00	

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price	Item #8.
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-First Cable Retermination

- Annual Inspection and routine maintenance of tractor and camera head for first two years of ownership (Does not include transportation to and from service center)

1	Equipment Discount	-\$7,000.00	-\$7,000.00	
<hr/>				
		Sales Tax	\$0.00	
		Shipping	\$0.00	
<hr/>				
		Total	\$155,249.00	

SHIPPING NOT INCLUDED IN THE QUOTE

Note: Above prices do not include taxes.

"At Your Disposal",

Cory Gustafson



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: 1500 6th Ave. NE Drainage Easement

DISCUSSION:

I have been contacted in the past about a drainage ditch along the north side of the above property. As I researched this situation, I discovered that when this subdivision was installed, there was not much thought given to the drainage ditch that runs through the farm to the east of the subdivision and where that water was discharged. As a result, this property owner took it upon themselves to dig a ditch to try to keep the water from flooding her home. The neighborhood, as you can imagine, is not happy with the outcome of her efforts, and in talking with our Streets Department, we believe that for approximately \$3,000, we can remedy this situation. The funds for this would come from the Stormwater Utility Fund and it would include installing an underground drainage pipe into the back of an existing storm sewer and filling in this ditch but leaving an above-ground swale to carry any excess water that the pipe may not be able to handle. A picture of what the area looks like today:



I worked with the City Attorney to come up with a draft easement that can be used for this, which is attached for Council's review and comment as well.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

Preparer/Return to: Doug Herman, Lynch Dallas, P.C., P.O. Box 2457, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406 (319) 365-9101

DRAINAGE EASEMENT AGREEMENT

This DRAINAGE EASEMENT AGREEMENT ("Agreement") is made this ____ day of _____ 2024, by THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, IOWA ("City") and DENISE DEE GANDER, ("Gander").

WHEREAS, Gander is the legal titleholder of the following property:

Lot 11, North Ridge Addition to Independence, Buchanan County, Iowa

(Hereinafter referred to as "Property")

WHEREAS, City desires to be granted and Gander desires to grant City a Drainage Easement over the north 12.5' of the Property, ("Easement Area"); and

WHEREAS, City and Gander find that the installation of stormwater management improvements in the Easement Area by the City would be in the mutual best interest of both City and Gander.

NOW THEREFORE, for valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. Grant of Easement. Gander hereby grants City a Drainage Easement over and/or through the above-described Easement Area.

2. No Limitations. Nothing in this Agreement shall prohibit or restrict Gander's use of the Easement Area so long as such use does not interfere with, damage, or otherwise prevent use of the Easement Area for the intended purpose of this Drainage Easement.

3. Maintenance. Maintenance of the drainage/stormwater improvements within the Easement Area shall be provided by City while general maintenance, mowing, and the like, of the Easement Area shall be provided by Gander.

4. Improvements. City will be solely responsible for the installation of drainage/stormwater improvements in the Easement Area and for the maintenance associated therewith. City shall after installation, be obligated to repair and/or maintain stormwater improvements and to ensure, after said original installation and/or future repairs and/or maintenance, that the easement area is returned to the

condition that existed prior to said installation repair, and/or maintenance. (Filling ruts, seeding disturbed areas, etc.)

5. General Description of Drainage / Storm Water Improvements. City to install a 10" perforated tile pipe into the back, at floor height, of the existing street stormwater intake located on 6th Ave. NE in front of the Property and extend the tile through the Easement Area approximately 177.00' to a surface (honeycomb) intake. Backfill trench keeping a slight valley for water that gets by with a back side throat at the top of existing street stormwater intake and fix curb cut.

6. Indemnification and Hold Harmless. City and Gander agree to indemnify and hold one another harmless from any and all third-party claims for injuries, damages, expenses, and/or liabilities arising from said party's acts or omissions within the Easement Area. This indemnification and hold harmless shall include, but not be limited to, reasonable legal fees and costs of defense incurred by the indemnified party. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this indemnification and hold harmless shall only apply to third-party claims that are not otherwise covered by the indemnifying party's insurance coverage.

7. Covenant Running With Land. This Agreement shall be construed as a covenant running with the land and shall inure to the benefit of and be binding upon the parties hereto and their successors and assigns, shall not be separated from the land and shall be perpetual in duration unless terminated by mutual consent of both Parties or their respective successors and assigns.

8. Severability. If any provision of this Agreement is found invalid, the parties agree to sever the invalid portion of the Agreement while the remainder of the Agreement remains valid and enforceable

9. Amendment, Modification and Waiver. Changes, amendments, modifications, or waivers of any condition, provision, or term in this Agreement shall not be valid or of any effect unless made in writing, signed by Parties and/or their successors and assigns, and specifying with particularity the extent and nature of such amendment, modification, or waiver.

10. Entire Agreement. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes any prior agreements or discussions between the parties, which are merged herewith, with respect to the subject matter hereof.

11. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by Iowa law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Denise Gander and the City of Independence, Iowa, have executed this Drainage Easement Agreement as of the date first written above.

Grantor

Grantee

Denise Gander

Brad Bleichner, Mayor

Attest: Susi Lampe, City Clerk

STATE OF IOWA)
)§
 COUNTY OF BUCHANAN)

This instrument was acknowledged before me on this ____ day of _____, 2024, by Denise Gander, known to me to be the identical person named herein, who swore and affirmed that she executed same as an expression of her voluntary act and deed.

 Notary Public, State of Iowa

STATE OF IOWA)
)§
 COUNTY OF BUCHANAN)

This instrument was acknowledged before me on this ____ day of _____, 2024, by Brad Bleichner and Susi Lampe, Mayor and City Clerk, respectively, for the City of Independence, Iowa, known to me to be the identical persons named herein, who swore and affirmed that they executed same at the direction and with the authority of the City Council as an expression of their voluntary act and deed and the voluntary act and deed of the City Council.

 Notary Public, State of Iowa



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Susi Lampe, IaCMC, IaCFO – City Clerk/Treasurer

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Down Payment Assistance Application

DISCUSSION:

Staff received an email from Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity inquiring about using the City's Down Payment Assistance program for one of their clients at the beginning of April 2024. The client has already been through the income verification process with IA Heartland Habitat for Humanity. The potential closing date is scheduled for early June. All the necessary documents have been shared between the City of Independence and IA Heartland Habitat for Humanity. There is still spending authority in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget for this expenditure. There will be a resolution on the May 28, 2024, agenda for the approval of the down payment assistance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Susi Lampe, IaCMC, IaCFO – City Clerk/Treasurer

DATE OF MEETING: May 6, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Fiscal Year 2025 Home Rehab Program

DISCUSSION:

The TIF LMI Admin Plan has been updated to reflect changes in the process of taking applications and awarding projects. The revised plan will need to be approved by resolution at a future meeting.

Potential timeline:

Mid-May: Start advertising to residents there are grant monies available for home rehab projects.

Applications are due back by June 21st to the City Clerk's office. Packets will be reviewed to make sure they are complete. If not, applicants will be notified to submit the missing documents.

On June 27th, complete applications will be sent to INRCOG for income verification.

I would anticipate late August – early September to hear back from INRCOG about applications. City Staff would then follow the TIF LMI Admin Plan to proceed.

In the FY2025 budget, there is \$170,000 to do home rehab projects using the assumption of \$10,000 per project for 17 qualified applicants.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends discussion of this topic. No action is needed at this meeting, as any decision items needed would be brought forward to a City Council meeting for approval.

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, IOWA

**TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)
LOW-AND-MODERATE INCOME SET-ASIDE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN**

Adopted by the Independence City Council on: November 13th, 2017

Amended by the Independence City Council on: March 28th, 2022

Amended by the Independence City Council on: May 28th, 2024

Prepared by the
Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-70

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN, AND THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST TO, A TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) LOW-AND-MODERATE INCOME (LMI) SET-ASIDE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN TO BE UTILIZED WITHIN THE INDEPENDENCE CORPORATE LIMITS LOCATED IN BUCHANAN COUNTY; WITHIN THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, BUCHANAN COUNTY, IOWA.

WHEREAS, the City of Independence has accumulated TIF set-aside housing funds that must be proposed for expenditures and projects that benefit Low-and-Moderate income families, as required under Chapter 403 of the Iowa Code (2017); and

WHEREAS, A local government is authorized under Section 403.22(2)(c) of the Code of Iowa to provide grants, credits or other direct assistance to low-and-moderate income families living within or outside the urban renewal area, but within the area of operation of the municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence finds it advantageous to offer grant awards to individual homeowners for the purpose of improving and maintaining the availability of affordable housing stock within the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence developed a TIF Low-and-Moderate Income Set-Aside Administrative Plan to manage the program outlined in the Plan and govern distribution of said accumulated funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Independence hereby adopts the Independence TIF LMI Set-Aside Administrative Plan.

Resolution No. 2022-70 was passed and approved by a majority vote of the City Council of Independence, Iowa, on the 28th day of March 2022.

Record of Voting:

Ayes: Callahan, Huston, Hanna, Kurtz, Prusator, O'Loughlin, and Jensen.

Nays:

Absent:

Resolution No. 2022-70 declared passed and adopted by the Mayor on this 28th day of March 2022.

Robert Hill, Mayor of the City of Independence, Iowa

ATTEST:

Susi Lampe, IaCMC, IaCFO, City Clerk/Treasurer of the City of Independence, Iowa

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OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The City of Independence (hereinafter referred to as the City or Municipality) has adopted Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a municipal funding mechanism. Historically, the City has used TIF for commercial and industrial development, as well as for supporting the development of owner-occupied, single-family, units within the corporate limits of the Municipality. Within state statute, this Administrative Plan (also referred to as the Plan) is to serve as a policy and program for the proper expenditure of housing funds set aside for use on projects that benefit Low and Moderate Income (LMI) families and households. The program that is outlined in the Plan is intended to be used for grants authorized under Chapter 403 of the Iowa Code (2017). More specifically, this Plan seeks to implement Section 22 of Chapter 403 of the Code, as is provided in Appendix 1.

As noted above, the primary source of funding for this program is the monies set aside from completed housing TIF projects that have assisted market-rate housing. By law, the City must place funds equivalent to the County's current LMI percentage into a separate fund to be used on projects that assist LMI households. Accordingly, the fund may be used to support four (4) general purposes including:

1. Lots for LMI Housing within or outside the urban renewal area;
2. Construction of LMI housing within or outside the urban renewal area;
3. Grants, credits, or other direct assistance to LMI families living within or outside the urban renewal area, but within the area of operation of the Municipality; and/or
4. Payments to an LMI housing fund established by the Municipality to be expended for one or more of the above purposes, including matching funds for any state or federal monies used for such purposes.

For the immediate purposes of this program, the City will focus its efforts on implementing purpose #3 above through the creation of two grant application opportunities, one for homeowner repairs and one for down-payment assistance. The City may also elect to pursue the development of other allowable programs and initiatives.

In addition, the City may utilize the following sources of funding to support its LMI family housing assistance program:

1. Proceeds from loans, advances, bonds, or indebtedness incurred;
2. Annual distributions from the division of revenues related to the urban renewal area;
3. Lump sum or periodic direct payments from developers or other private parties under an agreement for development or redevelopment between the Municipality and a developer; and/or
4. Any other sources which are legally available for this purpose.

The goal of this Plan, and the program it outlines, is to make possible and maintain affordable housing throughout the entire community. This will be accomplished through the awarding of available Tax Increment Financing (TIF) set-aside funds to qualified single-family owner-occupied households for use in eligible projects.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Participation in the programs outlined in this Plan is limited, based upon funds available, and is voluntary. The amount available per person, family, or project is subject to any rules, regulations, or stipulations that are placed upon it from the source of funding and the rules established herein.

The City will approve individual homeowner and/or agency participation in this program provided the following requirements are achieved:

1. Low and Moderate Income (LMI) standards for households or families are met;
2. The owner or agency is current on all taxes for the property in question; and
3. The owner or agency is current on all city utility billings for the property in question.

Household income must be at, or below, the current, or most recent, eighty percent (80%) of the median family income figure for Buchanan County. The limits are set based on the size of the household in question and are established annually by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as provided in Appendix 2.

Prior to grant application review by the City, household income will be verified by the City. The City may elect to conduct the verification on its own or use an independent means to do so. All information obtained in the income verification process will be kept strictly confidential. Nevertheless, the City shall utilize the forms provided in Appendix 2 of this Plan during the application process. The anonymity of applicants will also be a priority of the City, and every attempt will be made by the City to maintain the privacy of applicants.

PROGRAMS

As noted above, the City is offering two distinct programs under this Plan, the Homeowner Repair Program and the Homebuyer Assistance Program. Each has its own requirements, guidelines, and application processes, the details of which follow.

A. Homeowner Repair Program (Single-Family Owner-Occupied Units and Housing Agencies Only)

Eligible projects under the repair program may include the following:

1. Roof repair or replacement
2. Furnace replacement
3. Water heater replacement
4. Plumbing
5. Electrical
6. Water line repairs
7. Ramp accessibility
8. Siding
9. Windows
10. Doors
11. Insulation

Approved projects shall have a minimum cost estimate of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), but no project shall receive more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for a single owner or for a housing agency, from the City.

Ineligible projects, under this program, shall include:

1. Cabinets
2. Shutters
3. Flooring
4. Appliances
5. Air Conditioning, unless it is medically necessary
6. Concrete work, unless it is necessary to provide accessibility
7. Repairs to accessory or ancillary structures
8. Multiple family or renter-occupied units

Project Scope of Work

Utilizing the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) for guidance, the homeowner will provide an accurate description of the work to be completed on each home or project with their program application and three cost estimates for said work. The application will be reviewed for completeness and income verification. If qualified and authorized by INRCOG, the cost estimates will be reviewed by City Staff. All work must adhere to state and city codes regarding building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical standards.

Contractor Selection

The sole determining criteria for selecting a contractor for a project or work shall be the lowest, responsible contractor. City Staff will make a formal recommendation to the City Council regarding each project. The City Council shall then consider the recommendation and proceed to review each project, and if approved, do so by resolution (Appendix 3). If approved, the City will enter into an agreement with both the selected contractor and homeowner for completion of the project.

Contractor Clearance

Upon identifying the selected or successful bid for work allowed under this program, the City shall vet each contractor chosen to perform work. Specifically, the City will check for proof of state licensure(s), adequate insurance, and other sources indicating the contractor is not barred from working in Iowa. Note the City reserves the right to decline to offer work to a contractor, provided there is/are substantive reasons or history to do so (i.e. poor workmanship, quality, timeliness, etc.).

Upon award from the City Council, the City staff will work with each homeowner or agency and selected contractor(s) to accomplish the repair work associated with each project, which will be defined as the work specified for completion at each individual address or location.

Notice to Proceed

After contract execution, the City shall notify the homeowner or agency of the bid award as well as issue a Notice to Proceed for the selected contractor. The Notice will allow the contractor to begin

construction and incur necessary expenses related to the project. No expenses incurred prior to the date on the Notice to Proceed will be allowed or reimbursed by the City. Further, any cost overruns or expenses above the City's award are the responsibility of the homeowner or agency and shall be paid by such before work acceptance is completed.

Change Orders

Additional project costs or change orders will not be allowed funding from the City. Any additional expenses shall be the responsibility of the homeowner or agency.

Work Acceptance

At the conclusion of the project, the work of the contractor must be formally accepted in writing by the property owner, City, and contractor. A form for this purpose is provided in Appendix 2 of this Plan.

Inspection

The City shall provide only a cursory inspection of the work provided at the conclusion of the project.

Payment

Payment to the contractor will only occur when the project is successfully completed and accepted by all the parties. The City will be responsible for making payment on reasonable, justified expenses related to the specified project up to, but not exceeding the grant award amount. Payments made by the homeowner toward their project must be made and documented at this time as well.

Guarantees, Warranties, and Rebates

There shall be no required warranty or guarantee for the work provided by the contractor. However, any product warranties associated with the project must be completed and provided by the contractor to the homeowner. Any rebates associated with the installation or use of products in a project will be given to the homeowner.

Disputes

Disputes regarding work or a product shall be addressed according to the signed contract or agreement between the City, homeowner, contractor, and/or agency. Specifically, any dispute must be brought to the attention of the City by any party to a dispute as quickly as possible. The City shall gather information, as possible, regarding the dispute and render a final written decision on the matter.

Awards

Any awards made to a homeowner or agency under the Homeowner Repair Program will be treated as a forgivable loan, which will be repaid to the City by the owner, should the owner sell or surrender ownership of the unit in question prior to exhausting a loan period. Any repayment to the

City prior to the five-year loan period being completed shall be repaid in the following schedule. Said repayment schedule shall begin upon the date the Final Work Acceptance form is signed. The repayment schedule shall be as follows.

Home Sold During Year:	Repayment Percentage:
1	100%
2	80%
3	60%
4	40%
5	20%

Each awarded loan associated with the Repair Program will be secured by the City in a means that is acceptable to the City and their attorney, including but not limited to property liens, promissory notes, and/or second mortgages.

B. Homebuyer Assistance Program (Single-Family Owner-Occupied Units Only)

The City will consider funding homebuyer assistance applications, up to a total amount of \$25,000 per household. Said homebuyer loan funds must be used for closing costs, down-payment assistance, or mortgage buydown. Homebuyer assistance funds will be awarded in the form of a five-year forgivable loan, which will be repaid to the City by the owner should the owner choose to sell or surrender ownership of the housing unit in question to any other party. Said repayment schedule shall begin upon the date the Final Work Acceptance form is signed. Any repayment to the City prior to the five-year loan period being completed shall be repaid in the following schedule:

Home Sold During Year:	Repayment Percentage:
1	100%
2	80%
3	60%
4	40%
5	20%

Each awarded loan associated with the Homebuyer Assistance Program award will be secured by the City in a means that is acceptable to the City and their attorney, including but not limited to property liens, promissory notes, and/or second mortgages.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

APPLICATION PROCESS

The City shall develop and utilize a written application for property owners to complete in order to request funding under this Plan. Applications will be accepted on an annual basis for the Homeowner Repair Program and on an ongoing basis for the Homebuyer Assistance Program, provided funds are available. An application deadline or due date and time will be established and advertised by the City. To raise awareness of the program, the City may utilize a number of media outlets for advertising the program, including the newspaper(s), newsletter(s), website(s), and municipal billing(s).

As noted above, the City will establish a deadline for applications to be received from prospective homeowners, housing agencies, and homebuyers. City staff will distribute and collect applications from the general public through the established deadline. Once received, applications will be reviewed by City Staff for completeness and then reviewed for income verification requirements. Upon verification, the cost estimates will be reviewed by City Staff. City Staff will make a recommendation to the City Council on which applications/projects to proceed with.

FUNDING LIMITATION GUIDELINE

In the event that the City receives multiple applications whose total funding requests exceed the amount that is available in the TIF Housing Fund, the City shall note the order of complete applications received and award on a first-come, first serve basis until the funds are exhausted. In doing so, the City may award a partial project, which may be accepted at the discretion of the homeowner, housing agency, or homebuyer. Any partial or unfunded applications may, at the request of the homeowner, agency, or homebuyer, be carried over to the next funding cycle.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

To avoid potential conflicts of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest, a project award will not be made to any City official (elected or appointed), City employee, or a member of their immediate family.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

CIVIL RIGHTS (TITLE VI COMPLIANCE)

No applicant or potential applicant will be discouraged from applying for, or denied funding on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability. Furthermore, the City shall adhere to all applicable statutes, executive orders, requirements, and regulations pertaining to non-discrimination established by the federal, state, or City government.

INSURANCE

Homeowners insurance shall be a requirement of the program established under this Plan, as shall floodplain insurance, as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

PROJECTS IN A FLOODPLAIN

The City will discourage funding projects under this program that are located in a floodplain, as identified in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodplain Study, Map, or Panel. If a project is approved in the floodplain, the City shall ensure compliance with its current floodplain ordinance.

INFEASIBLE PROJECTS

The City reserves the right to refuse to perform work on a project or property for reasons where the scope, scale, or estimated cost of the project is beyond the limits of the program outlined in this Plan. Furthermore, the City may refuse or cancel a project that is deemed infeasible because of safety reasons or for constraints, limitations, or concerns caused by the homeowner or agency, including financial reasons.

PLAN AMENDMENT

This Administrative Plan may be amended from time to time. To do so, the proposed amendment must be reviewed and recommended for approval by City Staff first, and then sent to the City Council for consideration. If approved by the City Council, the Plan amendment must be adopted by resolution. Any proposed amendments to the Plan must be presented in writing prior to the meeting where said amendment(s) may be considered by the City Council.

Appendix 1: Iowa Code, Section 403.22 (2017)

403.22 Public improvements related to housing and residential development — low-income assistance requirements.

1. With respect to any urban renewal area established upon the determination that the area is an economic development area, a division of revenue as provided in section 403.19 shall not be allowed for the purpose of providing or aiding in the provision of public improvements related to housing and residential development, unless the Municipality assures that the project will include assistance for low-and- moderate income family housing.

a. For a Municipality with a population over fifteen thousand, the amount to be provided for low and moderate income family housing for such projects shall be either equal to or greater than the percentage of the original project cost that is equal to the percentage of low and moderate income residents for the county in which the urban renewal area is located as determined by the United States department of housing and urban development using section 8 guidelines or by providing such other amount as set out in a plan adopted by the Municipality and approved by the economic development authority if the Municipality can show that it cannot undertake the project if it has to meet the low and moderate income assistance requirements. However, the amount provided for low-and-moderate income family housing for such projects shall not be less than an amount equal to ten percent of the original project cost.

b. For a Municipality with a population of fifteen thousand or less, the amount to be provided for low-and-moderate income family housing shall be the same as for a Municipality of over fifteen thousand in population, except that a Municipality of fifteen thousand or less in population is not subject to the requirement to provide not less than an amount equal to ten percent of the original project cost for low-and-moderate income family housing.

c. For a Municipality with a population of five thousand or less, the Municipality need not provide any low-and-moderate income family housing assistance if the Municipality has completed a housing needs assessment meeting the standards set out by the economic development authority, which shows no low-and-moderate income housing need, and the economic development authority agrees that no low-and-moderate income family housing assistance is needed.

2. The assistance to low-and-moderate income housing may be in, but is not limited to, any of the following forms:

a. Lots for low-and-moderate income housing within or outside the urban renewal area.

b. Construction of low-and-moderate income housing within or outside the urban renewal area.

c. Grants, credits or other direct assistance to low-and-moderate income families living within or outside the urban renewal area, but within the area of operation of the Municipality.

d. Payments to a low-and-moderate income housing fund established by the Municipality to be expended for one or more of the above purposes, including matching funds for any state or federal moneys used for such purposes.

3. Sources for low-and-moderate income family housing assistance may include the following:
 - a. Proceeds from loans, advances, bonds or indebtedness incurred.
 - b. Annual distributions from the division of revenues pursuant to section 403.19 related to the urban renewal area.
 - c. Lump sum or periodic direct payments from developers or other private parties under an agreement for development or redevelopment between the Municipality and a developer.
 - d. Any other sources which are legally available for this purpose.
4. The assistance to low-and-moderate income family housing may be expended outside the boundaries of the urban renewal area.
5. Except for a Municipality with a population under fifteen thousand, the division of the revenue under section 403.19 for each project under this section shall be limited to tax collections for ten fiscal years beginning with the second fiscal year after the year in which the Municipality first certifies to the county auditor the amount of any loans, advances, indebtedness, or bonds which qualify for payment from the division of the revenue in connection with the project. A Municipality with a population under fifteen thousand may, with the approval of the governing bodies of all other affected taxing districts, extend the division of revenue under section 403.19 for up to five years if necessary to adequately fund the project. The portion of the urban renewal area which is involved in a project under this section shall not be subject to any subsequent division of revenue under section 403.19.
6. A Municipality shall not prohibit or restrict the construction of manufactured homes in any project for which public improvements were finalized under this section. As used in this subsection, *"manufactured home"* means the same as under section 435.1, subsection 3.

Appendix 2: Program Administration Applications and Forms

Application
Homeowner Repair Project Contract
Homeowner Repair Project Notice to Proceed
Homeowner Repair Project Final Acceptance
Homebuyer Assistance Project Contract

City of Independence
Homeowner Repair & Homebuyer Assistance Program Application

Item #11.

Eligible Homeowner Repair Projects (Single-Family Owner-Occupied or Housing Agency Units Only)

Eligible repairs under the Repair program may include the following types of projects:

1. Roof repair or replacement
2. Furnace replacement
3. Water heater replacement
4. Plumbing
5. Electrical
6. Water line repairs
7. Ramp accessibility
8. Siding
9. Windows
10. Doors
11. Insulation

Approved repair projects shall have a minimum cost estimate of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), but no project shall receive more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for a single owner or for a housing agency, from the City. Approved projects will include only immediate safety and health concerns.

Ineligible Repair Projects

Ineligible projects, under this program, shall include:

1. Cabinets
2. Shutters
3. Flooring
4. Appliances
5. Air Conditioning, unless it is medically necessary
6. Concrete work, unless it is necessary to provide accessibility
7. Repairs to accessory or ancillary structures
8. Multiple family or renter occupied units

Property Requirements:

- Under either Program, the house must be located within the incorporated City limits of Independence.
- For the Homeowner Repair Program, the home must be reasonably clean and sanitary; free of garbage, debris, and refuse; uncluttered and in such a state that permits reasonable access by the contractor and program administrator, if necessary.

Income Requirements:

Homeowners or homebuyers applying for funding this Plan must have household gross income less than the amount listed as a Low-to-Moderate Income Household to be eligible.

Buchanan County (2024, or using the most recent income figures, as they are annually updated)

	1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7 persons	8 persons
80%	\$51,650	\$59,000	\$66,400	\$73,750	\$79,650	\$85,550	\$91,450	\$97,350

City of Independence
Homeowner Repair & Homebuyer Down-Payment Program Application

Item #11.

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name: _____ SS#: _____
Address: _____ Age: _____
Mailing Address: _____
City: _____ ZIP Code: _____
County: _____
Best phone #: _____

Names and ages of **ALL** other household members (use back of this form if more space is needed)

<u>Names</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Social Security Number</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

II. EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME INFORMATION

Gross Income on most recent Federal income tax return: _____ Tax year: _____

(You MUST enclose a copy of your latest Federal Income Tax return with W-2's and 1099's (owners who are self-employed must enclose a copy of their last two years of Federal Tax returns including Schedule C), a copy of any Social Security Benefits and/or child support payments received by ALL household members)

Applicant's Employer: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Monthly Income before Taxes: _____

Name of other adult household member: _____
☐ Check here if this person is also a full time student
Employer: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Monthly Income before Taxes: _____

Name of other adult household member: _____
☐ Check here if this person is also a full time student
Employer: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Monthly Income before Taxes: _____

All other sources of income, please fill in the information below for all that apply **AND** enclose proof of dollar amounts received (for example, include a copy of the Social Security Benefits card)

Item #11.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Monthly Amount Received</u> (you must include documentation)				
Social Security	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	
Social Security Disability	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	
Pension/Retirement	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	
Child Support	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	
Rental Property Income	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	
Interest/Annuity/IRA Income	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	
FIP/TANF	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	
Other: _____	_____	___ Applicant	___ Spouse	___ Other	

III. ASSET INFORMATION FOR ALL ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS (use back if more space is needed)

	<u>Account</u> <u>Holders Name</u>	<u>Bank or company</u> <u>Name and FULL mailing</u> <u>address</u>	<u>Approximate</u> <u>Balance or</u> <u>Monthly</u> <u>Income</u>
Checking	_____	_____	_____
Checking	_____	_____	_____
Savings	_____	_____	_____
Savings	_____	_____	_____
Annuity	_____	_____	_____
Pension/retirement	_____	_____	_____
Cash	_____	_____	_____
Investment/IRA's	_____	_____	_____
Cash Value-Life Insurance	_____	_____	_____
Real Estate, other than home	_____	_____	_____
Other (specify)	_____	_____	_____

IV. INCOME DOCUMENTATION

This program is reserved for low to moderate income homeowners; therefore, any documentation that you can include regarding household incomes will assist in qualifying your application. The City will contact employers and financial institutions to obtain this information, but certain agencies will not provide this information to the City and must be submitted to City directly from the applicant. At this time applicants must provide the City with incomes and or account balances from Social Security, Child Support, FIP/TANF, and any bank accounts.

V. USE OF REQUESTED FUNDS

Item #11.

For a HOMEOWNER REPAIR PROJECT: Please check the box before the repair(s) requested for your home.

- Check the most needed repairs: ☐ Plumbing Repair ☐ Furnace/Heat Source Replacement
☐ Water Heater Replacement ☐ Electrical work/upgrade ☐ Roof Repair or Replacement
☐ Water Line Repair or Replacement ☐ Access or Ramp Improvements ☐ Siding
☐ Window Repair or Replacement ☐ Door Repair or Replacement ☐ Insulation

If not listed above, please provide an itemized list of repairs requested/needed (use back page if more space is needed):

- ☐ Attach project description and three cost estimates.

For a HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE PROJECT: Please indicate the use of the requested funds.

- ☐ Closing Costs ☐ Down-payment Assistance ☐ Mortgage Buydown

If not listed above, please provide a description of the requested homebuyer funds, (use back page if more space is needed):

VI. DECLARATION OF APPLICANTS

I (We), agree to abide by all of the rules and regulations established for this program, including; I (We), hereby authorize the City to have access to all necessary information concerning my (our) financial condition, including but not limited to, matters such as income, employment, bank accounts, and other assets. I (We), also understand (1) that receipt of this application by the City in no way implies approval of the application or acceptance of the applicant for assistance; and (2) that approval of the application will depend upon eligibility requirements and the availability of program funds.

VII. SIGNATURES

I (We), hereby verify that the information submitted in the application is true and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge and that I (We), have truly and accurately declared all my (our) income and resources available to me (us). I (We), do also give the USDA, Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation, North Iowa Community Action Organization, Operation Threshold, Northeast Iowa Area on Aging, and financial institutions, as well as current and/or past employers permission to supply the City with any and all information necessary to verify whether I (We) have applied to any of their programs and am eligible for additional assistance from them.

In the event that any of the foregoing information is untrue or incomplete, this application shall be rendered null and void.

NOTE: All Applicants and ALL adult household members must sign this authorization page for the City to verify this application.

Applicants Authorization Signature

Date

Authorization Signature

Authorization Signature

Authorization Signature

**Return completed application to:
City of Independence
Attn: City Clerk
331 First Street, East
Independence, Iowa 50644**

ANY MISSING INFORMATION NOT INCLUDED WITH THIS APPLICATION COULD CAUSE SIGNIFICANT DELAYS IN PROCESSING YOUR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE AND/OR RESULT IN POSSIBLE DISQUALIFICATION OF THE PROGRAM.

**INDEPENDENCE HOMEOWNER/AGENCY REPAIR PROGRAM
CONTRACT**

Item #11.

Address of Project # _____: _____, Independence

Amount of Contract: _____

NOTICE TO PROCEED

The Contractor shall not proceed with or begin any work on this project until such time as a Notice to Proceed form has been signed by all parties.

WORK SPECIFICATION

The only work to be completed is what is outlined in the attached bid specification. Any additional work that is completed will be the sole responsibility of the Contractor and the Homeowner and will not be reimbursed by the City.

PAYMENT

The Contractor agrees that payment for work shall not be due until all the work is completed and the "Final Acceptance and Completion Form" has been signed by all parties to this contract. The City may need three additional weeks upon receipt of the form to process the check.

PERMITS & LICENSING

The Contractor shall obtain and pay for all permits and licenses necessary for the execution of the work to be performed and meet all State and local licensing requirements.

CLEAN PREMISES AND COOPERATION

The Contractor shall keep the premises clean and orderly during the course of the work and remove all debris at the completion of the work. Materials and equipment that are removed and replaced as part of the work shall belong to the Contractor, unless other arrangements are made at the time this Contract is signed. In addition, since the premises will be occupied during the course of the project, the Homeowner will cooperate with the Contractor by ensuring that the Contractor has adequate access to the work area.

MODIFICATIONS AND SUB-CONTRACTORS

The Contractor shall not assign or modify this Contract. If a Sub-Contractor is going to be utilized, the Sub-Contractor must also be a signing party to this Contract and it shall be the sole responsibility of the Primary Contractor to ensure that the Sub Contractor is paid. Change Orders to this Contract will not be allowed.

MANUFACTURER & SUPPLIER GUARANTEES

There is no guarantee on the work that is completed. Upon the signing of the "Final Acceptance and Completion Form" the work shall be considered to be accepted and completed "as is". The Contractor shall furnish the Homeowner all manufacturers' and suppliers' written guarantees and warranties covering materials and equipment furnished under this Contract.

SAFETY & UTILITIES

By executing this Contract, the Contractor is stating that he has or shall identify any hazards or special conditions that might arise during the course of the work. Water and electricity will be connected to the premises during the course of the project and the Homeowner shall permit the Contractor to use those services, within reason and without charge, to facilitate the performance of the work.

INSPECTIONS

The City reserves the right to inspect the work at any time during the course of the project, including entering the property. Generally, the only scheduled inspection will be at the end of the project to ensure that the work has been completed in accordance with the bid specification and to generate a signed "Final Acceptance and Completion Form".

DAMAGE CLAIMS

The Contractor will defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Homeowner and the City and its officers, commissioners and employees from liability and claims for damages because of bodily injury, death, property damage, sickness, disease or loss and expense arising from any of the Contractor's actions under this Contract. This includes any claims for unpaid work, labor or materials.

DISPUTES

A dispute arising between the Homeowner, Agency, and the Contractor will be brought to the attention of the City and the City shall gather the facts concerning the situation and make a written decision.

AWARD STIPULATIONS

The award made shall be in the form of a five-year forgivable loan, which will be repaid to the City by the homeowner should the buyer choose to sell or surrender ownership of the housing unit in question. Repayment to the City prior to the five-year loan period being completed shall be repaid in the following schedule:

Home Sold During Year:	Repayment Percentage:
1	100%
2	80%
3	60%
4	40%
5	20%

This loan will be secured by the City in a means that is acceptable to the City and their attorney, including but not limited to property liens, promissory notes, and/or second mortgages.

CONTRACT TERMINATION

If the Contractor defaults or neglects to carry out the work in accordance with this Contract, or fails to perform any provision of this Contract, the City may, after seven (7) days written notice to the Contractor and without prejudice to any other remedy it may have, make good such deficiencies by reassigning the work to a different Contractor and deduct the cost thereof from the payment due to the original Contractor.

In addition, the City reserves the right to terminate this Contract for reasonable cause. Reasonable cause shall be generally defined as any action that demonstrates an unwillingness on the part of the Contractor or the homeowner to carry out the provisions of this Contract in a timely and professional manner with a minimum of inconvenience to the other party.

The City shall be the interpreter of the conditions of termination of this Contract and the sole judge of its performance.

Contractor Signature

Date

Homeowner/Agency Signature

Date

City Signature

Date

**INDEPENDENCE HOMEOWNER/AGENCY REPAIR PROGRAM
NOTICE TO PROCEED**

This is notice that work may now proceed on the repair of property located at _____
Independence, Iowa. This work will commence immediately upon the contractor's receipt of this notice to
proceed. The work shall be satisfactorily completed within _____ calendar days thereafter, on or before
_____.

Homeowner/Agency

City Representative

Contractor

Date

Note: Any bids or cost overruns exceeding the amount of the award made by the City to a homeowner shall be the responsibility of the homeowner. Payment of which shall occur concurrently with the City's payment to the contractor upon Final Acceptance of the improvement(s).

**INDEPENDENCE HOMEOWNER/AGENCY REPAIR PROGRAM
FINAL ACCEPTANCE OF COMPLETED PROJECT**

HOMEOWNER NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

THE REPAIR WORK HAS BEEN SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED. ALL WORK AND MATERIALS USED TO COMPLETE THE REPAIR MEET MY APPROVAL AND ARE SATISFACTORY. I/WE AUTHORIZE PAYMENT TO BE MADE TO THE CONTRACTOR. I/WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS DATE, _____, IS THE DATE OF FINAL COMPLETION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE WORK PERFORMED UNDER THE REPAIR PROGRAM.

DATE

OWNER/AGENCY

DATE

CONTRACTOR

DATE

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE

**INDEPENDENCE HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
CONTRACT**

Item #11.

Address of Project # _____: _____, Independence

Amount of Contract: _____

OVERVIEW

The applicant is purchasing the above-noted single-unit owner-occupied dwelling noted above, and the City has awarded purchasing assistance to said homebuyer.

ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

Said homebuyer grant funds will be used for closing costs, down-payment assistance, or for mortgage buydown. In this case, the awarded funds will specifically be used for: _____.

AWARD STIPULATIONS

The award made shall be in the form of a five-year forgivable loan, which will be repaid to the City by the homebuyer should the buyer choose to sell or surrender ownership of the housing unit in question. Repayment to the City prior to the five-year loan period being completed shall be repaid in the following schedule:

Home Sold During Year:	Repayment Percentage:
1	100%
2	80%
3	60%
4	40%
5	20%

This loan will be secured by the City in a means that is acceptable to the City and their attorney, including but not limited to property liens, promissory notes, and/or second mortgages.

PAYMENT

The City will provide the funds to the homebuyer within three weeks of the City's approval of applicant's request.

INSPECTIONS

The City reserves the right to inspect the work at any time during the course of the project, including entering the property.

CONTRACT TERMINATION

If the Homebuyer does not close on purchase of the property purchase identified in this agreement, the City may, after seven (7) days written notice to the Homebuyer and without prejudice to any other remedy it may have, request repayment of any or all funds awarded under the homebuyer down-payment assistance program.

In addition, the City reserves the right to terminate this Contract for reasonable cause. Reasonable cause shall be generally defined as any action that demonstrates an unwillingness on the part of the homebuyer to carry out the provisions of this Contract in a timely and professional manner with a minimum of inconvenience to the other parties.

The City shall be the interpreter of the conditions of termination of this Contract and the sole judge of its performance.

Homebuyer Signature

Date

City Signature

Date

Appendix 3: Project Approval Resolution Examples

Homeowner/Agency Repair Project Approval Resolution
Homebuyer Assistance Project Approval Resolution

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, IOWA
RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN, AND THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST TO, A HOMEOWNER/AGENCY REPAIR PROGRAM PROJECT APPROVED ACCORDING TO THE INDEPENDENCE TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) LOW-AND-MODERATE INCOME (LMI) SET-ASIDE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN.

WHEREAS, the City of Independence has accumulated TIF set-aside housing funds that must be purposed for expenditures and projects that benefit Low-and-Moderate Income families, as required under Chapter 403 of the Iowa Code (2017); and

WHEREAS, A local government is authorized under Section 403.22 (2)(c) of the Code of Iowa to provide grants, credits or other direct assistance to low-and-moderate income families living within or outside the urban renewal area, but within the area of operation of the Municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence finds it advantageous to offer grant awards to individual homeowners for the purpose of improving and maintaining the affordable housing stock within the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence has developed a TIF Low-and-Moderate Income Set-Aside Administrative Plan to manage the program outlined in the Plan and govern distribution of said accumulated funds; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence finds that the project(s) identified below adhere to the City's TIF Low-and-Moderate Income Set-Aside Administrative Plan and the Iowa Code, as amended; and

WHEREAS, the following funds are proposed for a particular Homeowner Repair Program Project in the following amount; and

Project Description: _____

Project Award: \$_____

Vendor: _____

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Independence hereby approved the above identified project(s) under the authority of the Independence TIF LMI Set-Aside Administrative Plan and Iowa Code.

Passed and approved this ___ day of _____, 202__.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, IOWA
RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN, AND THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST TO, A HOME BUYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PROJECT APPROVED ACCORDING TO THE INDEPENDENCE TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) LOW-AND-MODERATE INCOME (LMI) SET-ASIDE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN.

WHEREAS, the City of Independence has accumulated TIF set-aside housing funds that must be purposed for expenditures and projects that benefit Low-and-Moderate Income families, as required under Chapter 403 of the Iowa Code (2017); and

WHEREAS, A local government is authorized under Section 403.22 (2)(c) of the Code of Iowa to provide grants, credits or other direct assistance to low-and-moderate income families living within or outside the urban renewal area, but within the area of operation of the Municipality; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence finds it advantageous to offer grant awards to individual homebuyers for the purpose of acquiring or constructing an affordable home in the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence has developed a TIF Low-and-Moderate Income Set-Aside Administrative Plan to manage the program outlined in the Plan and govern distribution of said accumulated funds; and

WHEREAS, the City of Independence finds that the project(s) identified below adhere to the City's TIF Low-and-Moderate Income Set-Aside Administrative Plan and the Iowa Code, as amended; and

WHEREAS, the following funds are proposed for a particular Homebuyer Assistance Program Project in the following amount; and

Project Description: _____

Project Award: \$_____

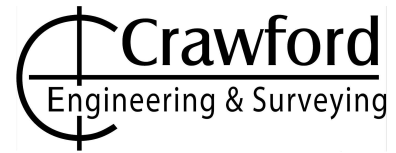
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Independence hereby approved the above identified project(s) under the authority of the Independence TIF LMI Set-Aside Administrative Plan and Iowa Code.

Passed and approved this __ day of _____, 202__.

 Mayor

ATTEST:

 City Clerk



City Council Worksession Meeting – May 6, 2024

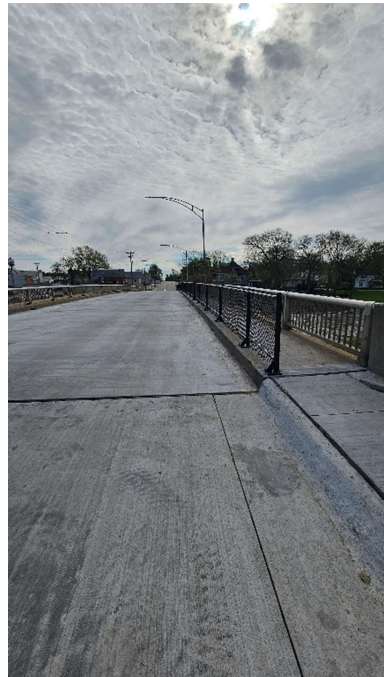
Engineer Update - City of Independence Projects

1. 2nd Street SE Bridge & 8th Avenue SW Pedestrian Bridge
 - a. Both bridges are substantially completed and were open to traffic on Tuesday (4/30).
 - b. Project walk through was performed on 4/26 and a project Punch List was developed.
 - c. City can expect a Final Pay Application at an upcoming meeting.

Before



After





2. 2024 Independence Street Rehabilitation
 - a. Sub-contractor on site 4/29 – 5/2 performing full depth saw cutting.
 - b. Rehabilitation work expected to begin the week of 5/20

3. Independence Baseball/Softball Complex Turf Project
 - a. Eastern Iowa Excavating & Concrete completed the sod installation related to Change Order #1 on 4/23 – 4/25
 - b. City can expect a Final Pay Application at an upcoming meeting
 - c. Engineer, Owner, & Contractor to schedule a project walk through later this month