



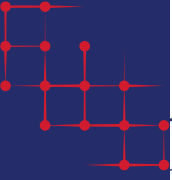
# Iowa Families with Young Children: 2022 Statewide Family Survey Report

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July 2022*



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*This report was produced with funds from the Iowa  
Department of Management (Contract #FY22 ISU I2D2 & SP)  
to support Early Childhood Iowa Strategic Planning efforts.*



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Suggested Citation:

Rouse, H.L., Betancur, L., Bruning, J., Dorius, C. (2022). Iowa Families with Young Children: 2022 Statewide Family Survey Report. Prepared for Early Childhood Iowa, Des Moines, IA.

We gratefully acknowledge the help and support of the following individuals:

**EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA:** Shanell Wagler and Amanda Winslow

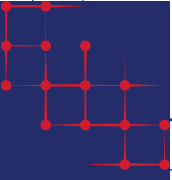
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Thank you to the ECI Local Area Directors for their substantial help in disseminating the survey.

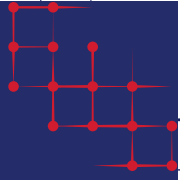
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
SUGGESTED CITATION:.....	1
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
IOWA CONTEXT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT.....	4
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM 2019 .....	4
<b>APPROACH TO THE 2022 ECI FAMILY SURVEY</b> .....	<b>5</b>
PROCESS .....	5
SURVEY CONTENT .....	5
SAMPLE .....	5
<b>FAMILY SURVEY FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
CURRENT STATE OF IOWA FAMILIES.....	7
<i>Household Computer Ownership</i> .....	7
<i>Family Supports in Times of Crisis</i> .....	8
<i>Families' Knowledge of Services</i> .....	9
<i>Family Use of Services</i> .....	10
<i>Access and Satisfaction</i> .....	11
AREAS OF NEED.....	14
ADEQUACY OF SERVICES.....	15
BARRIERS TO SERVICES.....	16
CHILDCARE .....	18
<i>Important Factors When Selecting Childcare</i> .....	18
<i>Adequacy of Childcare Options</i> .....	20
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>APPENDIX A. FAMILY SURVEY RESPONSE TABLES</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<i>Table A1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents</i> .....	24
<i>Table A2. Household Computer Ownership</i> .....	25
<i>Table A3. Family Supports in Time of Crisis –by Subgroup</i> .....	25
<i>Table A5. Family Unawareness of Services –by Subgroup</i> .....	26
<i>Table A6. Family Use of Services –by Year</i> .....	26
<i>Table A7. Family Use of Services –by Subgroup</i> .....	27
<i>Table A8. Family Use of Services –Combinations of Services</i> .....	27
<i>Table A9. Family Access and Satisfaction –by Income</i> .....	28
<i>Table A10. Most Important Areas of Support –by Subgroup</i> .....	28
<i>Table A11. Reported Low Adequacy of Services–by Subgroup</i> .....	29
<i>Table A13. Most Important Factors when Selecting Childcare–by Subgroup</i> .....	29
<b>APPENDIX B. 2022 IOWA FAMILY SURVEY QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>30</b>



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Iowa families with young children face unique challenges navigating state systems to find and use quality services that they need. Led by the only statewide alliance in Iowa whose purpose is to support program coordination and collaboration among early childhood systems, Early Childhood Iowa, the current report presents results from a statewide survey of Iowa families. It collected information from 2,185 families across 93 out of Iowa's 99 counties and sought to identify differences among family needs with the prior survey results collected in 2019. Survey participants in 2022 were similar to participants of the [2019 Needs Assessment family survey](#) regarding the proportion of females (94%), white individuals (94%), and parents with post-secondary education (64%). However, in comparison to the 2019 sample, the 2022 sample included fewer single parents (2019: 16% vs. 2022: 10%), more families with incomes of over \$50,000 (2019: 56% vs. 2022: 65%), and a much higher percent of rural families (2019: 34% vs. 2022: 83%).

There were three major groups of findings:

- 1) **Family knowledge of and access to information.** Medicaid (or Hawk-i) remained, since 2019, the most known service (95%), followed by Early Learning (93%; such as Head Start & preschool), center-based childcare (92%), and in-home childcare (90%). However, some groups of families reported less knowledge now compared to 2019. Specifically, urban parents reported less knowledge of Medicaid, housing, special needs, home visiting, and job skills in 2022 than in 2019. Low-income parents reported less knowledge of childcare (home and center), housing, and job skills. Finally, higher-income parents reported less knowledge in 2022 with regard to home childcare, housing, special needs, and home visiting.
- 2) **Family experiences with programs.** Perhaps unsurprisingly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health was a highly used and needed service. Mental health was the most used service and it came up as the third most important area of support for participants (41%), although access and use varied by subgroups:
  - a. Families from rural areas (31%) used mental health services less frequently than those from urban areas (36%).
  - b. While mental health use increased since 2019 for higher-income families (from 25% to 34%), it decreased for low-income families (from 47% to 39%).

Regarding adequacy and satisfaction with services, families reported that mental health related programs (i.e., substance abuse treatment, crisis intervention, domestic violence support, and mental health services) were among the services more highly rated as "low adequacy". This perceived low adequacy contrasts with the higher percent of families (95%) who reported that Medicaid/Hawk-i and Home Visiting met their needs when they used them. Furthermore, among those families who used any type of services, low-income families more often reported that services did not meet their needs in comparison to higher-income families.

- 3) **Barriers to service use.** Waiting lists were the most reported barrier to use services, as it was selected by 54% of participants. Importantly, since 2019, waiting lists have become a more common barrier for rural families (52% compared to 38% in 2019). Additionally, the cost of services was reported by 34% of families as a significant barrier, which is also an increase from 2019 (24%). Finally, in open ended questions from the survey, families reported some challenges specific to childcare, indicating that adequate schedules and coordinating transportation are especially problematic for working parents to maintain a stable childcare and job schedule.

# INTRODUCTION

## Iowa Context and Early Childhood Systems Development

Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) was created in recognition of the critical development occurring within the first five years of a child's life. This statewide initiative unites public and private entities, organizations, and stakeholders under the common vision that, "[Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful](#)". In 2019, ECI and Iowa State University, along with other state partners, received a Preschool Development Grant which allowed for the development of a comprehensive statewide strategic plan and needs assessment. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the following shut-down in 2020, and the creation of the Governor's Childcare Task Force in 2021, it was clear that things had changed for Iowa families. The subsequent statewide family survey (results herein) was designed to emphasize child care with particular attention on sub-groups of families by income, urbanicity, and ethnicity.

## Summary of Findings From 2019

The 2019 Family Survey had 546 respondents. These respondents were largely white (95%), female (95%), and worked full-time (62%). The average annual household income was over \$50,000 per year, though nearly half of respondents reported incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) which was approximately \$50,000 for a family of 4. The survey found that "access to care when families need it" was one of the top challenges for Iowa families. Families reported making less-than-ideal choices for childcare due to a lack of alternative options that met their needs when they needed it. Families also reported that the primary barriers to childcare services were waiting lists (54%) and cost of care (34%).

Despite these access challenges, families reported high levels of knowledge about early childhood services such as early learning, center- and home-based care (above 90%). In comparison, families were less aware of services for children with special needs (80%), home visiting (78%), dental services (78%), and job skills support (71%). 99% of families reported at least one smartphone in the household, demonstrating a relatively strong access to technology and the internet. In times of crisis, 95% of families reported relying on friends and family networks.

Reports from open-ended questions supported these reported barriers to childcare about access and wait lists. However, mental health, access to services for children with special needs, and transportation were also significant challenges for Iowa families. Specifically, families reported that providers have insufficient training to work with children with special needs. With respect to transportation, families discussed issues having to drive to where childcare is available, the lack of available buses at times they are needed, and challenges transitioning children from school to childcare.





## APPROACH TO THE 2022 ECI FAMILY SURVEY

### Process

The 2022 ECI Family Survey served as a follow-up from a [2019 survey of Iowa families](#). The 2022 version of this survey included the same questions used in 2019 with some additions. Discussions with ECI leadership groups, including the State Board and Stakeholders Alliance, the public engagement workgroups, and family support teams prompted the addition of questions to specifically address childcare challenges. The survey was also translated and made available in Spanish. The survey was then entered into Qualtrics and tested for functionality. The final survey was posted on the ECI website and emailed directly to ECI Area Directors with instructions to share with their local constituents. Email reminders and links in monthly newsletters sent from ECI leadership were repeated between November of 2021 and March of 2022. Updated response rates by county were shared with Area Directors during monthly meetings to gauge input and facilitate broader outreach.

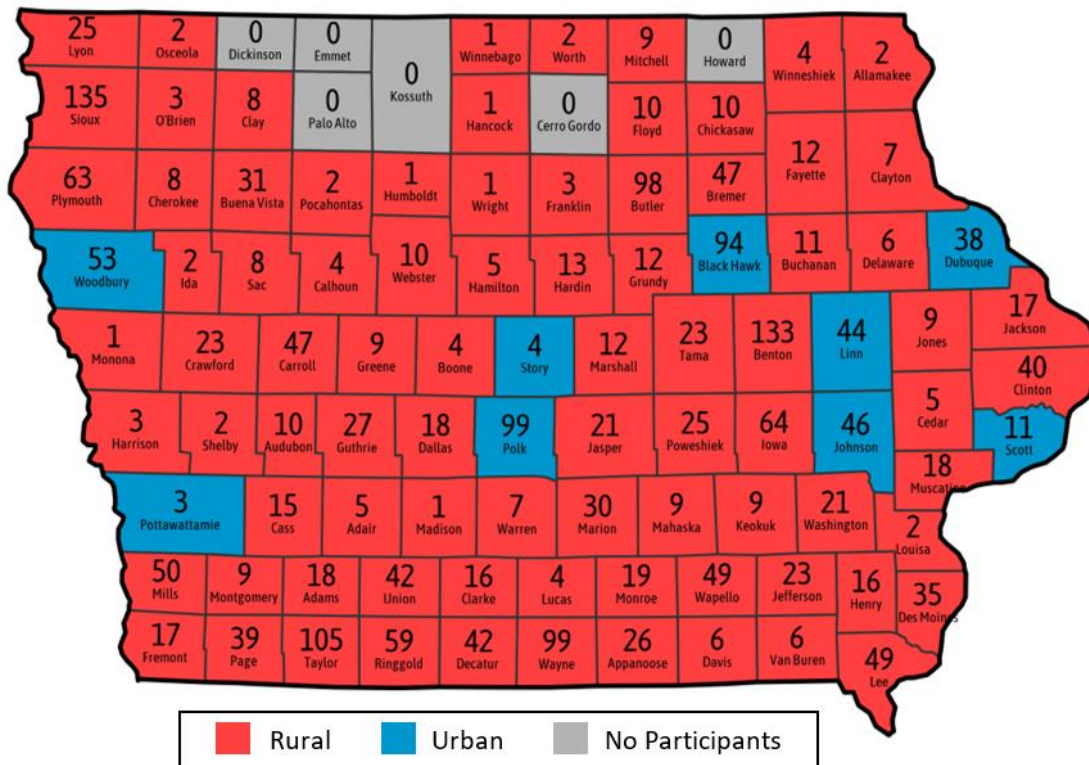
### Survey Content

Respondents were asked about their family characteristics, supports, and program and service use (see Appendix B for a full list of survey questions). It included questions about family knowledge of various state programs, use, and barriers to access to these birth-to-five services. The survey also provided rich qualitative data to shed further light on the unique experiences of families across the state.

### Sample

Surveys were collected from at least one respondent in 93 of Iowa's 99 counties (total of 2,185 families; see Figure 1). In comparison to the 2019 survey, the response rate was significantly higher as the survey collection period was extended to nearly five months in comparison to the two months in 2019. While there were some demographic differences among respondents, the 2022 sample is more representative of Iowa families. There were significantly fewer single parents (2019: 16%, 2022: 10%), fewer low-income households (2019: 45%, 2022: 35%), and fewer urban households (2019: 66%, 2022: 17%). However, there were more full-time working parents (2019: 62%, 2022: 73%). See Table A1 (Appendix A) for the full family demographic distribution.

**FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTY**





As shown in Table A1 (Appendix A), 94% of the respondents were female. Respondents tended to be married, non-Hispanic white mothers with young families who had at least some college education and worked full- or part-time. The majority of respondents were white (91%), 4% were Hispanic, and 2% were black. 10% of them were single parents and 3% attained education less than high school (HS). Around 45% of respondents reported incomes of less than 200% the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (which is approximately \$50,000 for a family of 4). The majority (73%) of respondents worked full-time, with 11% working part-time, 13% stay-at-home parents, and 3% students, retired, or unemployed. Most (90%) of the respondents were the biological parents of the children in their household, 19% were legal guardians, 6% were step parents, 3% were adoptive parents, and 5% were grandparents, other family members, or foster parents.



## FAMILY SURVEY FINDINGS

Families provided rich information about their knowledge of services, experiences with service quality, and barriers to service use. The large number of respondents in the survey allowed the team to analyze data by relevant subgroups, something that was not possible with the 2019 survey. Thus, this report provides information about overall responses across the survey respondents, as well as differences that were found among families relative to income, ethnicity, and urbanicity.

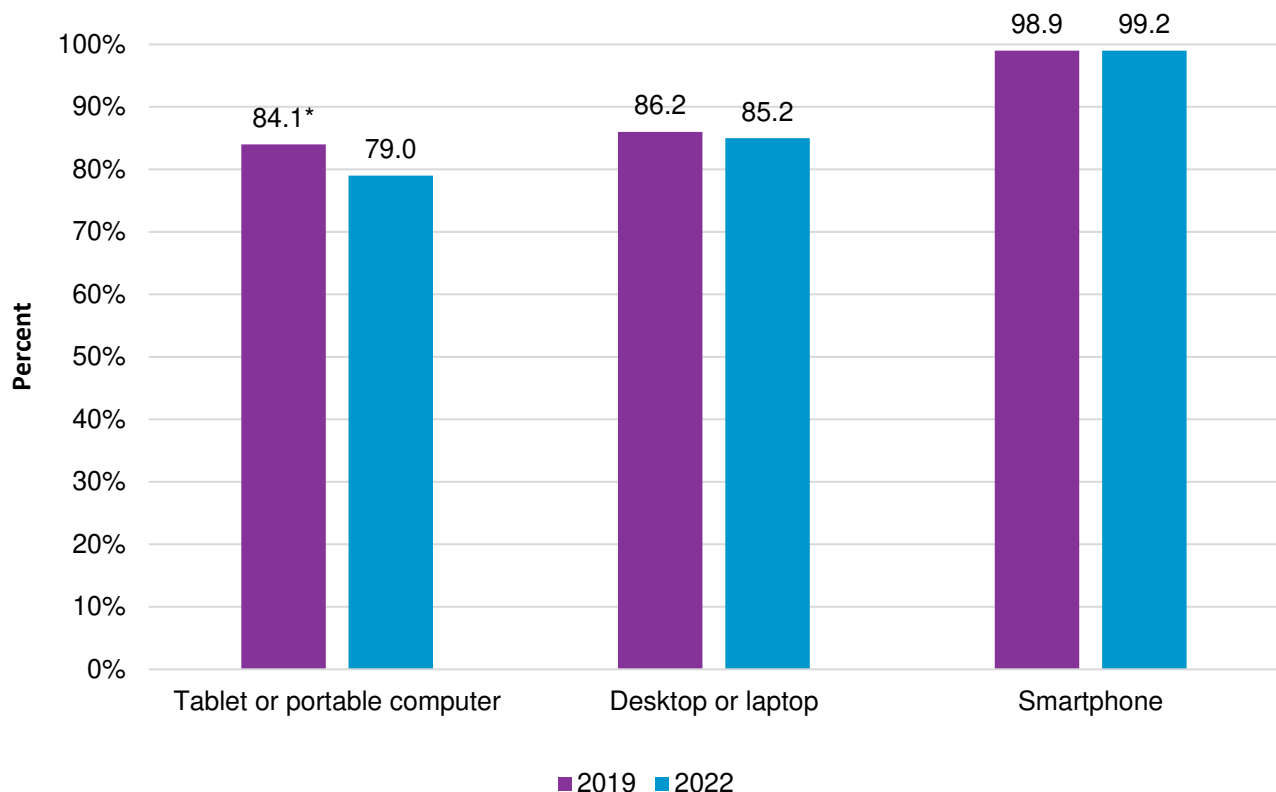
The results are divided into five sections. First, the report discusses the current state of Iowa families to provide information on the family resources, knowledge of services, and use and satisfaction with services. Second, the areas of needs reported by families are reported. Third, the adequacy of services as reported by families is presented. The fourth section includes results of the most important barriers to accessing services. Finally, the report presents a fifth section focused on specific issues related to childcare. In addition to the summary presented here, Appendix A presents the full tables of results while Appendix B includes a full copy of the survey.

### Current State of Iowa Families

#### Household Computer Ownership

Figure 2 shows that ownership of a desktop/laptop and smartphone has not changed since 2019, while ownership of tablets reduced. However, because the sample of 2022 is comprised of more rural families than the 2019 sample, it is important to analyze changes by urbanicity. Results showed that rural families increased their ownership of smartphones (2019: 97% vs. 2022: 99%) and desktop/laptops (2019: 86% vs. 2022: 76%) since 2019 (see Appendix A, Table A2).

**FIGURE 2. HOUSEHOLD COMPUTER OWNERSHIP (2019: N=437, 2022: N=1,660)**







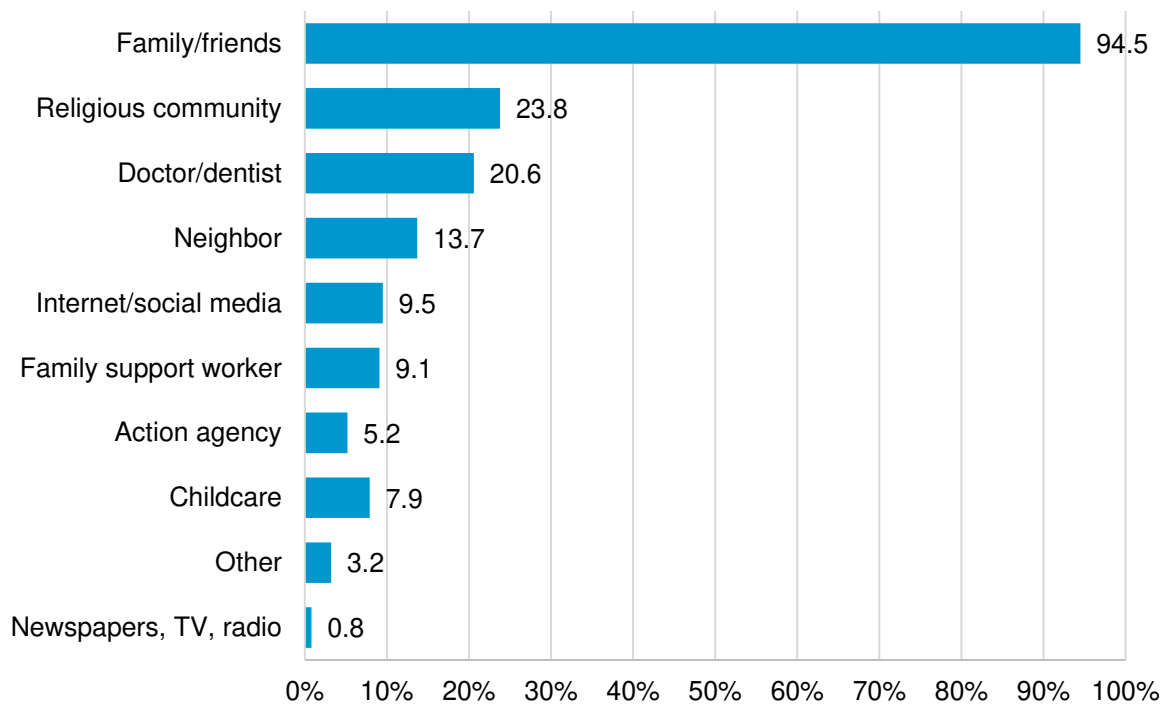
## Family Supports in Times of Crisis

Figure 3 presents the percentage of families who responded "yes" to each type of support in response to the question, "When you or your family experience a crisis, where do you turn for help?". Families were allowed to indicate as many responses as applied to their experience. Findings indicated that most families said they would turn to a family member or friend (95%), followed by a religious community (24%), and a doctor or dentist (21%). The least used resource in times of crisis was the newspaper, radio or TV. This trend is the same regardless of demographic factors (e.g., income, ethnicity). These results are similar to those of 2019 when the majority of families reported that their first support in times of crisis is their family or friends (95%), doctor, dentist or therapist (30%), and religious community (20%).

Analysis by relevant subgroups revealed differences in the types of informal compared to formal supports families relied on during times of crisis (see Appendix A, Table A3):

- **Urban families** had higher reliance than rural families on family support workers (14% vs. 8%) and community action agencies (7% vs. 5%).
- In contrast, **rural families** rely more on family/friends (95% vs. 91%) and religious community (26% vs. 14%) than urban families.
- **Low-income** families rely more on family support workers (19% vs. 5%) and action agencies (12% vs. 2%) than higher-income families. At the same time, they show lower reliance on family and friends (91% vs. 98%), the religious community (18% vs. 29%), doctors or dentists (17% vs. 26%), neighbors (11% vs. 18%), and childcare (7% vs. 10%) compared to higher-income families.
- **Hispanic families** report greater reliance on family support workers compared to non-Hispanic families (22% vs. 8%) and lower reliance on family and friends, neighbors, doctors/dentists, or a religious community.

**FIGURE 3. FAMILY RESOURCES IN TIMES OF CRISIS (N=1,632)**





## Families' Knowledge of Services

Families were presented with a list of services to gauge their knowledge and satisfaction of these services. They were asked to select one of five options for each service:

- "I don't know about this service"
- "I know about this service but have not used it"
- "I used this service - it did not meet my needs"
- "I used this service - it met my needs"
- "I wanted to use this service, but I could not access it"

Results showing the percent of families who reported they were unaware of services are shown in Figure 4. Awareness of some services is widespread, including Medicaid/Hawk-i (93%), center-based early learning (91%; such as Head Start and preschool), center-based childcare (89%), and in-home childcare (85%). The least known service was job skills, followed by home visiting and support for children with special needs.

These results were compared to responses from 2019 (Appendix A, Table A4). Families in 2022 reported being less aware than 2022 participants of Medicaid/Hawk-i (2019: 5%; 2022: 7%), center-based childcare (2019: 8%; 2022: 11%), home-based childcare (2019: 10%; 2022: 15%), housing services (2019: 12%; 2022: 19%), support for special needs (2019: 20%; 2022: 26%), home-visiting (2019: 22%; 2022: 29%), and job skills (2019: 28%; 2022: 39%). This reduction became particularly apparent once differences in urbanicity and income are accounted for, a reduction over time in awareness was more concentrated within certain groups of families:

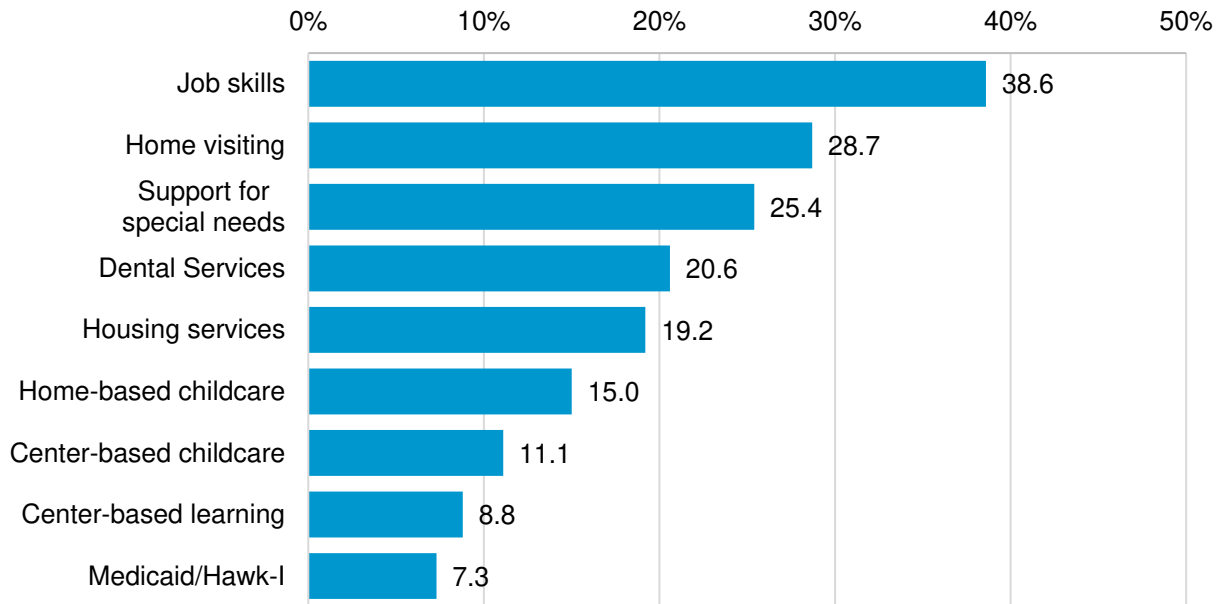
- **Urban families** reduced their awareness of Medicaid/Hawk-i (4% vs. 8%), housing (12% vs. 16%), support for special needs (18% vs. 28%), home visiting (20% vs. 15%), and job skills (24% vs. 35%).
- **Low-income families** reported reduced awareness of home-based childcare (98% vs. 95%), center-based care (89% vs. 84%), housing services (88% vs. 81%), and job skills (79% vs. 63%).
- **Higher-income families** reported less awareness of home-based childcare (94% vs. 91%), housing services (87% vs. 91%), support for special needs (86% vs. 78%), and home visiting (76% vs. 70%) in 2022 than in 2019.

Considering only the current (2022) sample, important differences among subgroups were found (see Appendix A, Table A5):

- **Low-income families** were more often unaware of services specific for children in comparison to higher-income families: center-based learning (12% vs. 6%), center-based childcare (16% vs. 7%), home-based childcare (22% vs. 9%), and services for children with special needs (29% vs. 22%).
- In contrast, **higher-income families** more often were unaware of job skills (40% vs. 37%), home visiting services (31% vs. 24%), Medicaid/Hawk-i (8% vs. 5%), and dental services (22% vs. 17%).



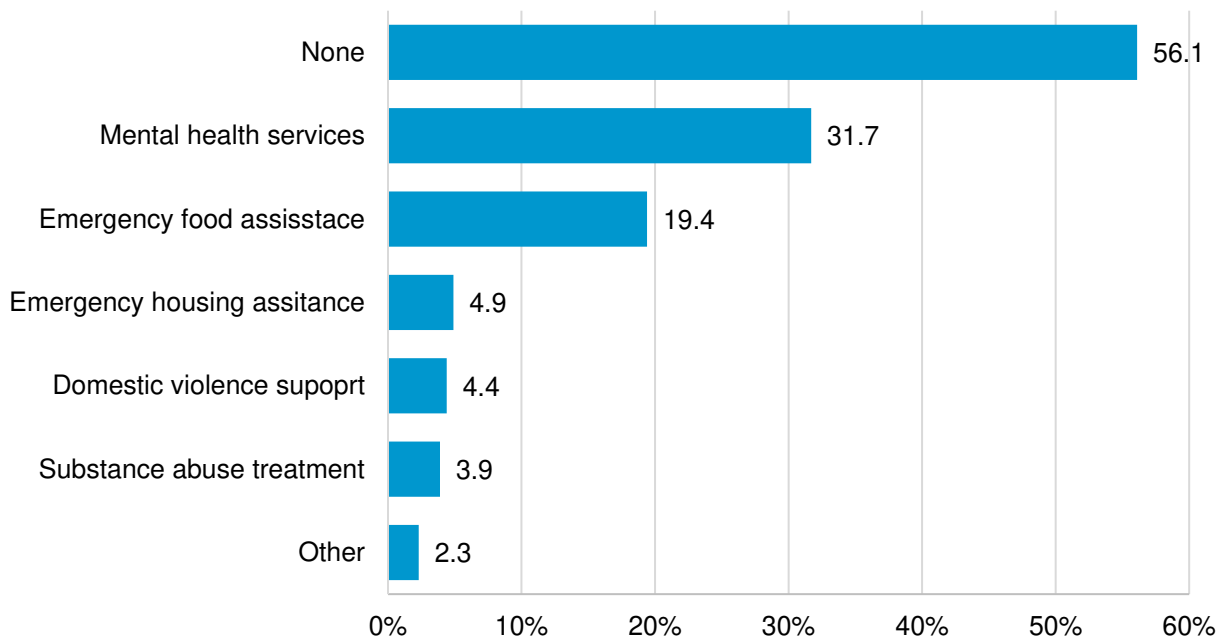
**FIGURE 4. SERVICES WHICH FAMILIES WERE UNAWARE OF**



### Family Use of Services

Families were asked to respond to the question, "Have you or your family ever used the following services?" Figure 5 includes the percentage of all families that reported using each service (please note, families could report any or all, so the percentages will not sum to 100). Although 56% of families in the sample did not use any service, 44% of families indicated they had used at least one service. Mental health services (32%) and emergency food assistance (19%) were the most commonly used services.

**FIGURE 5. FAMILIES' USE OF SERVICES (N=2,186)**





There were some changes in service use, when compared to 2019, by income groups (See Appendix A, Table A6):

- **Low-income** families reported using mental health services less in 2022 (39%) than in 2019 (47%).
- **Higher-income** families reported using mental health services more frequently between 2019 (25%) and 2022 (34%).

Findings by relevant subgroups revealed differences in family reports of knowledge of services (See Appendix A, Table A7):

- **Urban families** more often used at least one service (56% vs. 42%) compared to rural families. Specifically, they used more mental health services (36% vs. 31%), emergency food assistance (27% vs. 18%), and emergency housing assistance (7% vs. 4%).
- **Low-income families** used at least one service more often than higher-income families (65% vs. 38%). Low-income families used more mental health services (39% vs. 34%), domestic violence support (11% vs. 2%), substance abuse treatment (12% vs. 1%), and emergency housing assistance (6% vs. 3%).
- **Hispanic families** used more services than their non-Hispanic counterparts (56% vs. 43%). Hispanic families used emergency food assistance (42% vs. 18%), domestic violence support (13% vs. 4%), and emergency housing assistance (11% vs. 5%) more often than non-Hispanic families. In contrast, **Hispanic families** reported using mental health services less often than non-Hispanic families (20% vs. 32%).

Results showing all reported combinations of services used are presented in Appendix A, Table A8. The combinations of services most often used were the following:

- Emergency food assistance and mental health services were used by 6% of the sampled parents.
- A combination of emergency food assistance, emergency housing assistance, and mental health were used by 3% of participants.
- Emergency food assistance and domestic violence support were used together by 3% of families.
- Mental health services and substance abuse treatment were used by 3% of participants.

### Access and Satisfaction

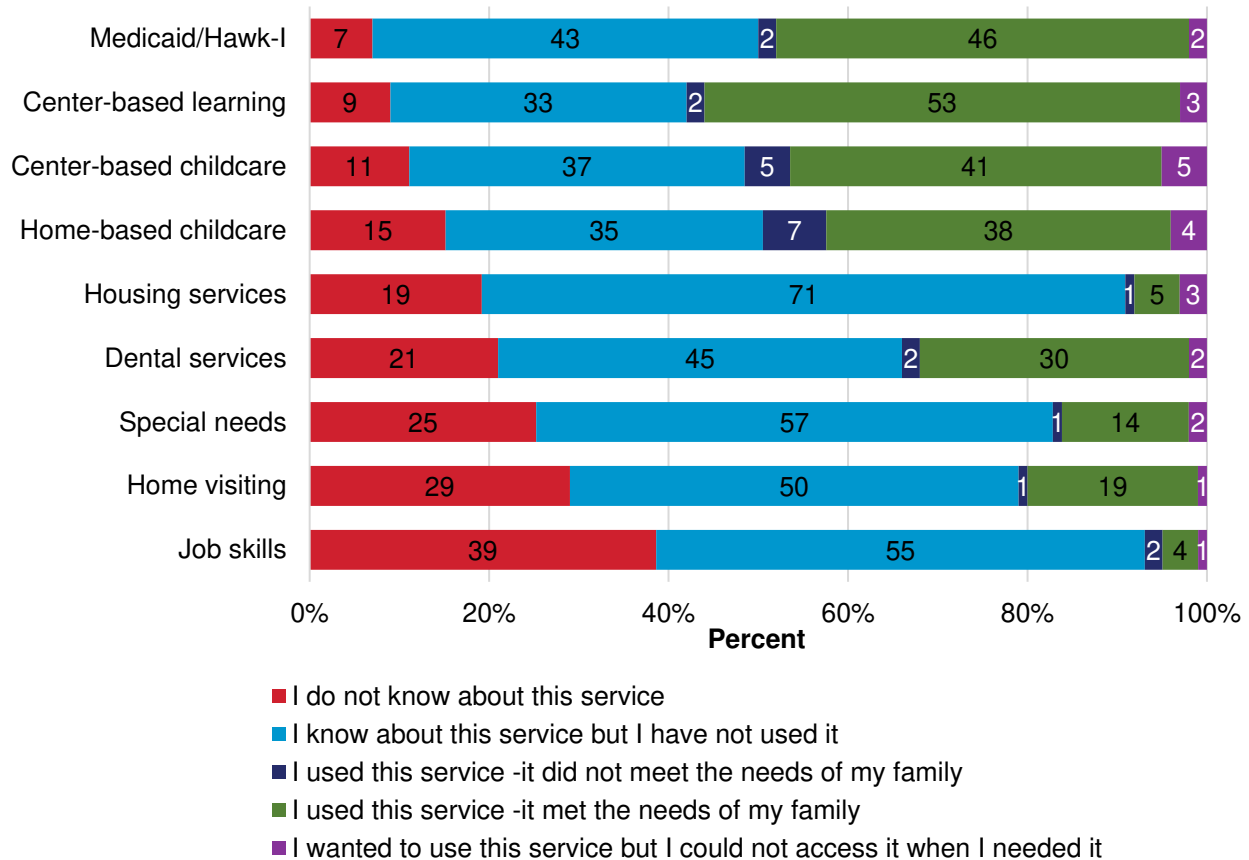
Further analysis of the questions addressing knowledge of services (see page 9) revealed trends in access and satisfaction. Findings presented in Figure 6 show that about 1/3 of families (33%-37%) reported not using the early childhood services, a similar number reported in 2019 (33%-39%).

Of those services families reported using, center-based and home-based childcare were the services that more often did not meet the needs of families (5% and 7%, respectively) or that they wanted to use the service but could not access it (5% and 4%, respectively). In 2019, these two services were also the services that more often did not meet the needs of families (9% for both), and more often, families could not access them (5% for both).

Families felt that the services that met their needs the most were Medicaid/Hawk-i (46%), center-based learning (53%), center-based childcare (41%), and home-based childcare (38%). In 2019, a higher number of families felt that Medicaid/Hawk-i (52%), center-based learning (48%), and home-based childcare (43%) met their needs. In contrast, parents in 2019 reported that center-based childcare less often meets their needs (44%).

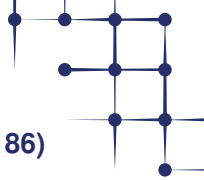


**FIGURE 6. FAMILIES' ACCESS TO AND SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES (N=2,186)**

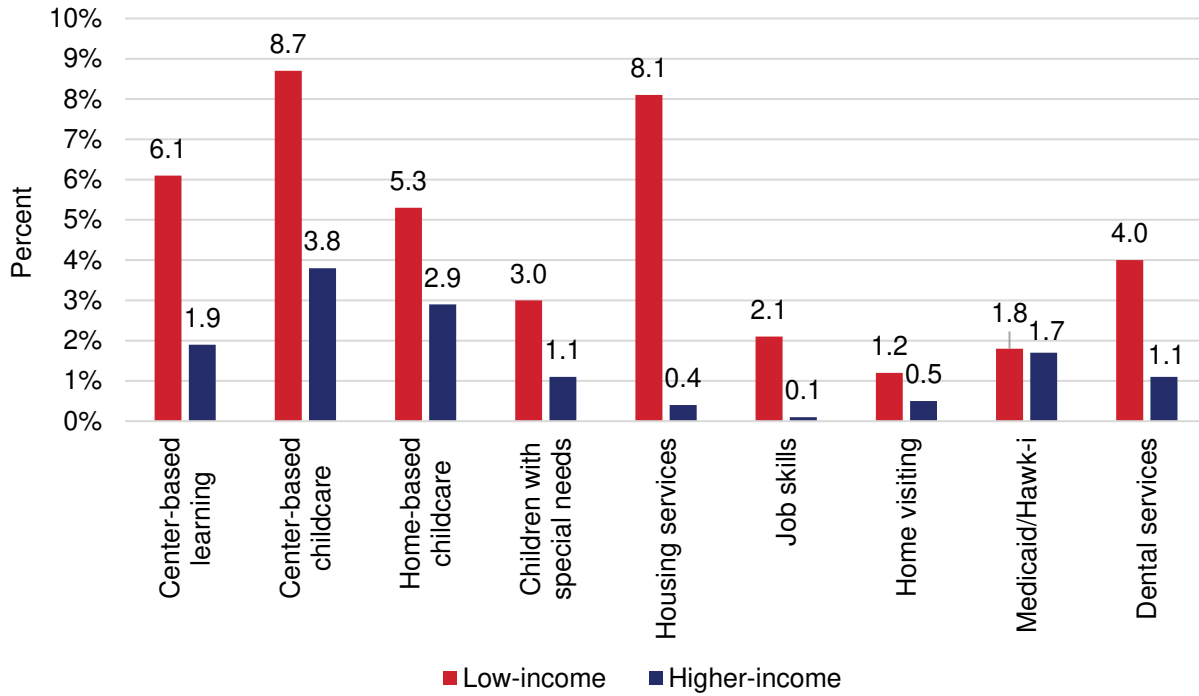


Findings by income revealed differences regarding access and satisfaction (see Appendix A, Table A9 for a complete table reported by subgroup).

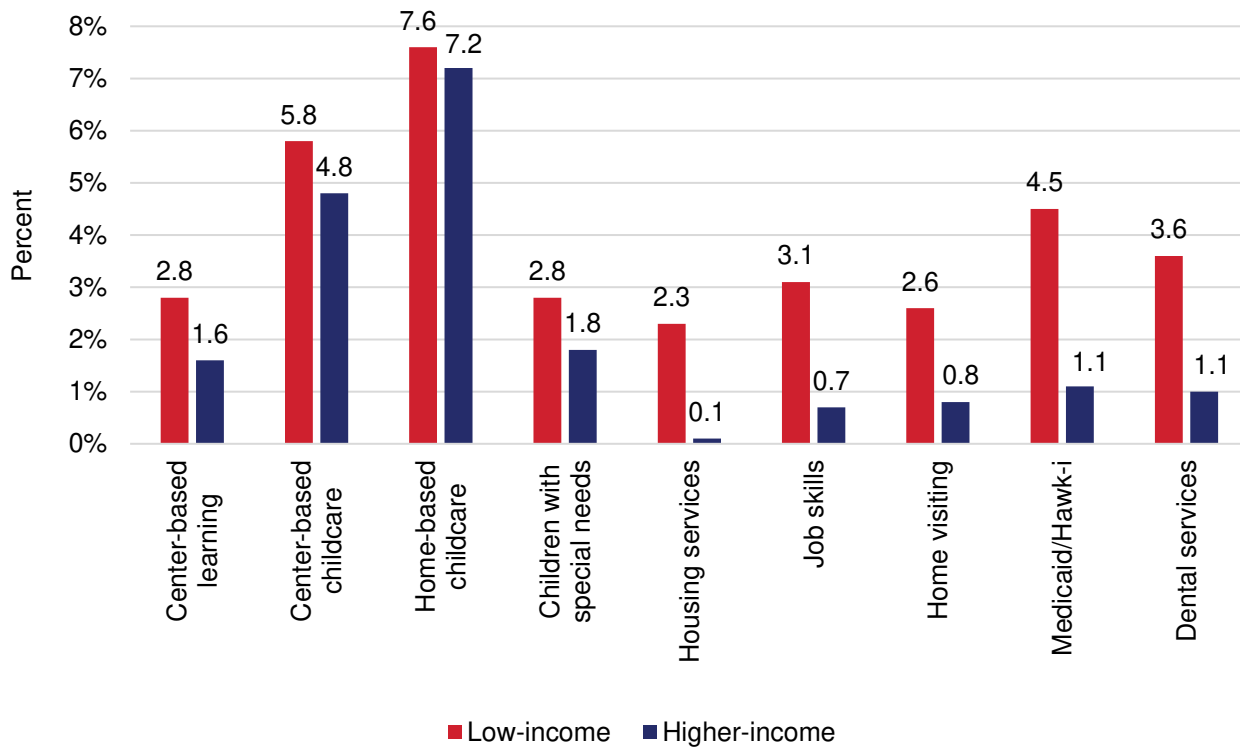
- As presented in Figure 7, **low-income families** reported more often that they could not access some services even if they wanted to use them. This was especially true for center-based learning (6% vs. 2%), center-based childcare (9% vs. 4%), and housing services (8% vs. 0%).
- Figure 8 shows that across all services, a higher proportion of **low-income families** reported that services did not meet their needs in comparison to higher-income families. Specifically, housing services (2% vs. 0%), job skills (3% vs. 1%), home visiting (3% vs 1%), Medicaid/Hawk-i (5% vs.1%), and dental services (4% vs. 1%).



**FIGURE 7. FAMILIES WHO WANTED TO USE SERVICES BUT WERE UNABLE TO ACCESS (N=2,186)**



**FIGURE 8. FAMILIES WHO USED SERVICES BUT SAID THEY DID NOT MEET THEIR NEEDS (N=2,186)**



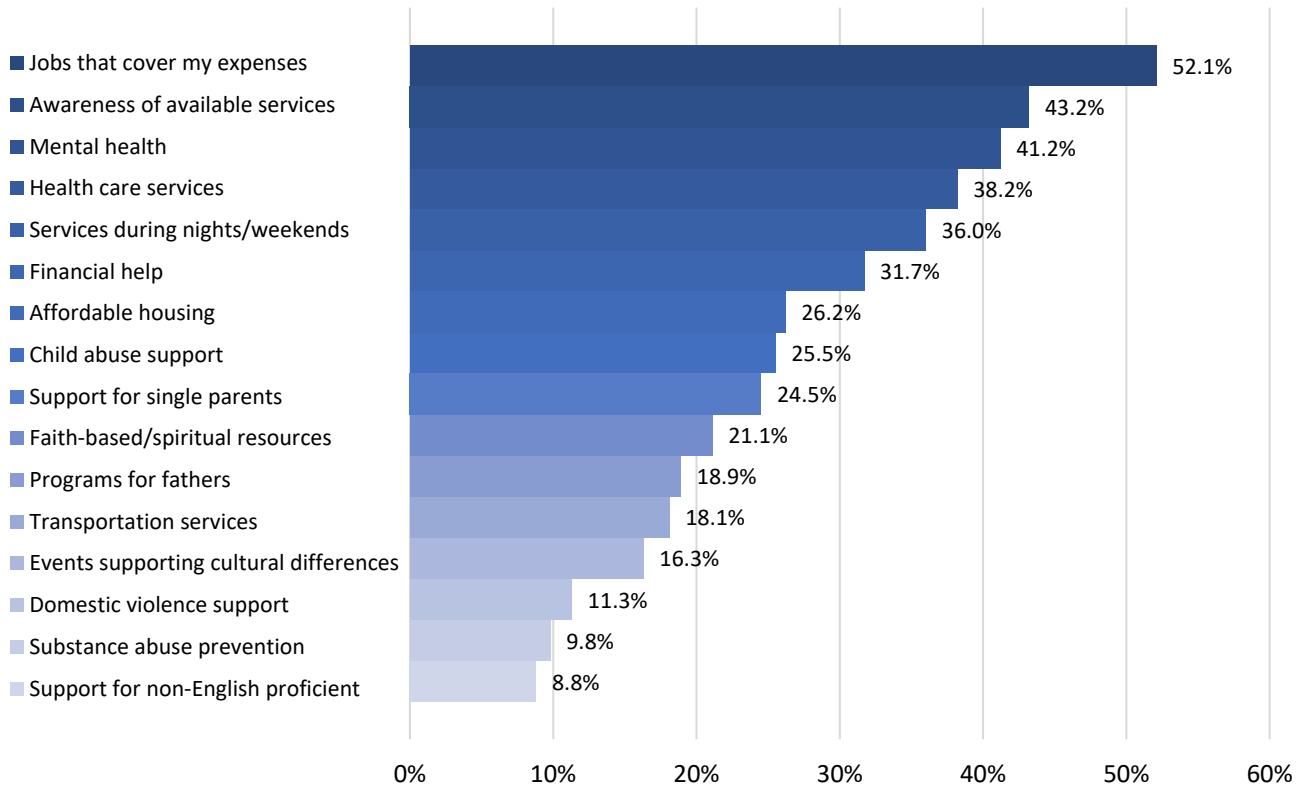




## Areas of Need

Families were given a list of support areas and were asked to indicate, "What are the most important areas of support needed for your family's well-being and success?" Participants could select as many areas as they wanted. Figure 9 presents the results of this question. The most important area of support for families was to have a job that covers their expenses (52%), followed by awareness of available services (43%), mental health services (41%), and health care services (38%).

**FIGURE 9. FAMILIES REPORT OF THEIR MOST IMPORTANT AREAS OF SUPPORT NEEDED (N=1,402)**



There were some differences by subgroups (see Appendix A, Table A10):

- **Low-income** families reported higher needed support than higher-income families when it comes to financial help (51% vs. 20%), affordable housing (35% vs. 20%), support for single parents (40% vs. 15%), programs for fathers (25% vs. 14%), transportation services (22% vs. 16%), domestic violence support (15% vs. 9%), and support for non-English proficient (14% vs. 6%).
- **Urban families** report higher needed support across all services, except faith-based supports, which was higher among rural (23%) compared to urban families (14%).
- **Hispanic families** report higher needed support in most areas, except mental health services, which was ranked as a lower need by Hispanic families (42%) compared to non-Hispanic ones (32%).

Notably, "Jobs that cover the families expenses" was the most reported family need (52%) across all subgroups, while family reported awareness of job support services is the lowest among all services (39%, Figure 4). Furthermore, the awareness of these services has decreased since 2019 (from 28%; see Table A4 in Appendix A).

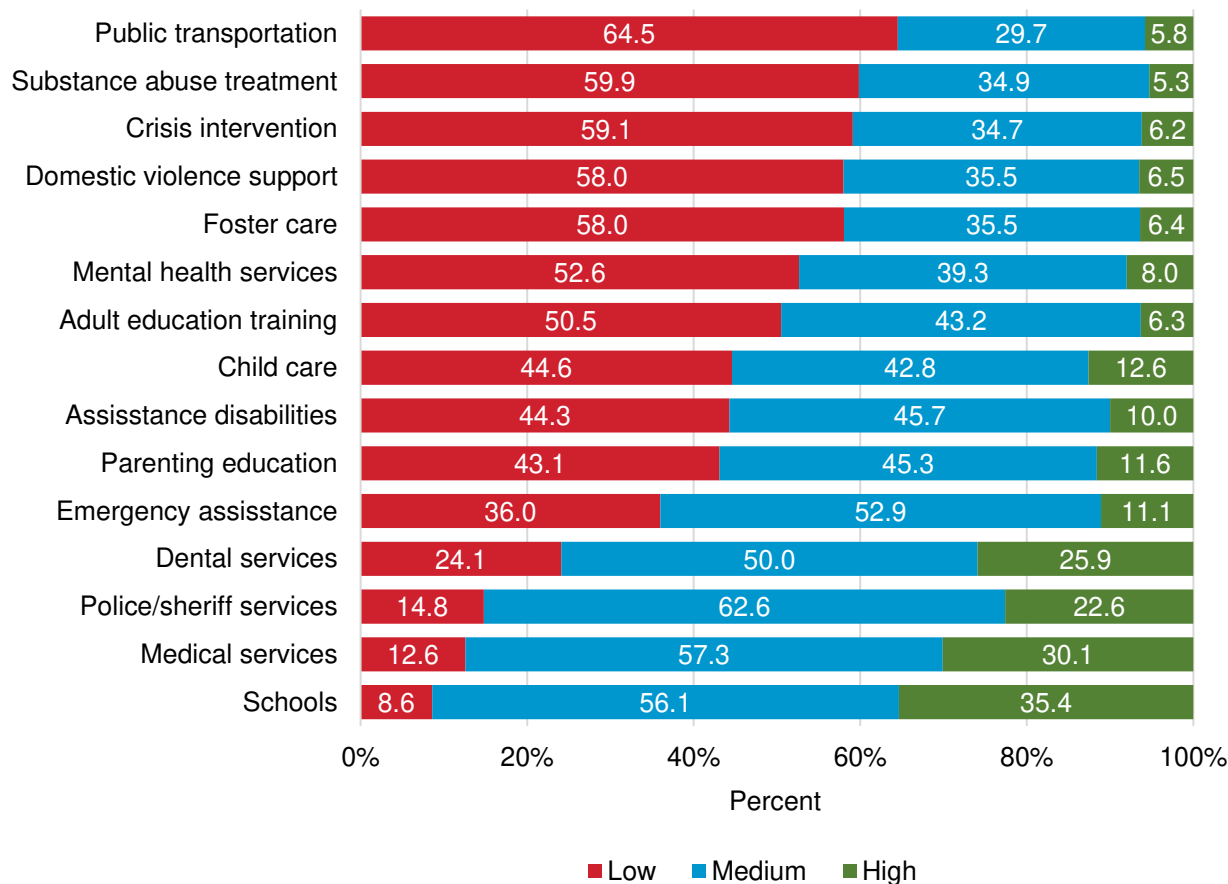


## Adequacy of Services

Families who used services were asked to rate service adequacy. Figure 10 shows that Iowa families generally report that service adequacy is medium-to-low. Half of the services were rated low adequacy by over 50% of the participants. However, there were four services with very few reports of low adequacy: Dental services, police/sheriff services, medical services, and schools. These ratings cannot be compared to results from 2019 because this question was only asked in 2022.

**FIGURE 10. REPORTED ADEQUACY OF SERVICES**

(N=1,158, included only participants who used services)



Findings by relevant subgroups revealed differences in families' rating of adequacy (see Appendix A, Table A11):

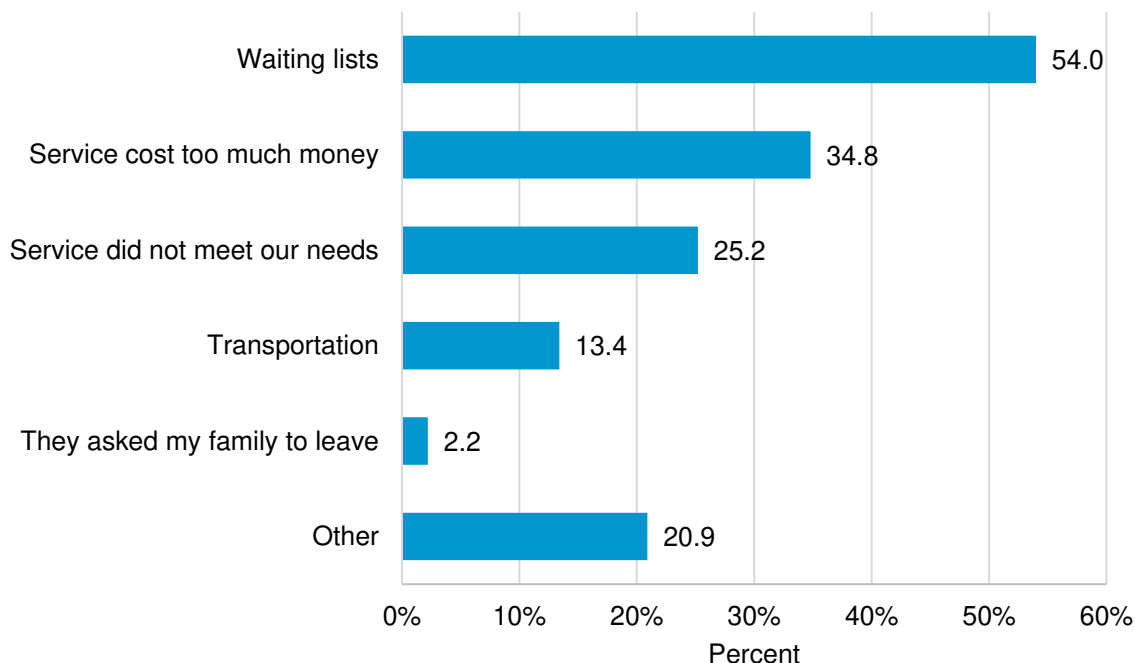
- **Rural families** rated all services, except schools and parenting education, as more inadequate than urban families.
- There were no differences between **low- and higher-income families** regarding the adequacy of the services for domestic violence, mental health, childcare, and assistance for disabilities.
- **Mental health and related services** were consistently reported with the lowest adequacy ratings [substance abuse treatment (60% report low), crisis intervention (59%), domestic violence support (58%), and mental health services (53%)]. This is relevant when related also to prior questions that identified the need for support in mental health areas as the third most needed area of support among families (41%, see Figure 8 in the above section of areas of need).



## Barriers to Services

Families were asked to respond to "What has made it difficult for you to use services designed for families like yours?" (see Figure 11). Families were allowed to select all answers that apply to this question, and many families selected more than one. Among the respondents, 54% reported that waiting lists were a barrier, and 35% reported that the cost of services was a barrier.

**FIGURE 11. REPORTED BARRIERS TO ACCESS SERVICES (N= 1,122)**



These **results aligned with findings on barriers reported in 2019**. However, important differences were apparent once the changes since 2019 were analyzed by subgroups. Figure 12 highlights rural families' significant changes between 2019 and 2022. Findings show that:

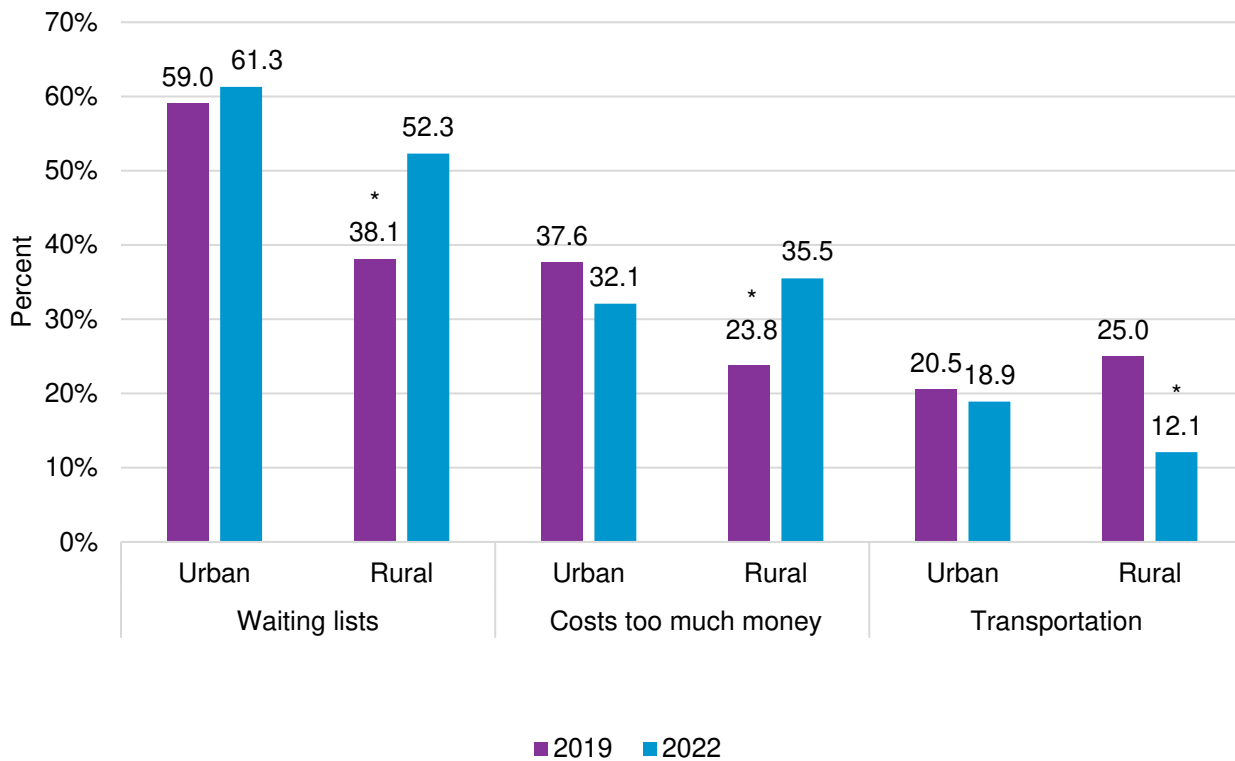
- **Waiting lists** were highlighted as the most important barrier for all families (Figure 10), and it has gotten worse for **rural families** since 2019.
- **Cost of services** continues to be the second most significant barrier for all families (Figure 10), and it has gotten worse for **rural families** since 2019.
- Notably, **transportation** became less of a problem for rural families since 2019 (from 25% to 12%), but it continued to be an important barrier in **urban areas** (around 20%).

Sub-group analysis of the presented barriers also demonstrated significant differences for low income, rural, and Hispanic families.

- **Low-income** respondents reported more often than higher-income participants barriers related to waiting lists (61% vs. 49%), transportation (16% vs. 10%), and with being asked to leave (4% vs. 1%).
- **Rural** respondents reported waiting list barriers (53% vs. 31%) but fewer transportation barriers (12% vs. 19%) than higher-income participants.
- **Hispanic** participants more often reported barriers related to transportation (26% vs. 12%) and being asked to leave (5% vs. 2%) but reported fewer barriers related to waiting lists (45% vs. 55%) and the cost of services (18% vs. 36%).



**FIGURE 12. PERCENT OF FAMILIES REPORTING BARRIERS TO ACCESS SERVICES BY YEAR AND URBANICITY (2019: N=318, 2022: N=1,122)**



**Participants' qualitative comments indicated that transportation problems might be specifically related to transportation to and from preschool/school/childcare/daycare.** The following quotes show that most complaints about transportation highlight parent's difficulties related to scheduling and location of children's services relative to their work needs:

*"What about working parents? Lots of these services don't work well for parents with full time jobs. And transportation from preschool to daycare is an absolute nightmare. I have to either enlist family or pay someone or take time off of work to transport my kid to and from in the middle of the day."*

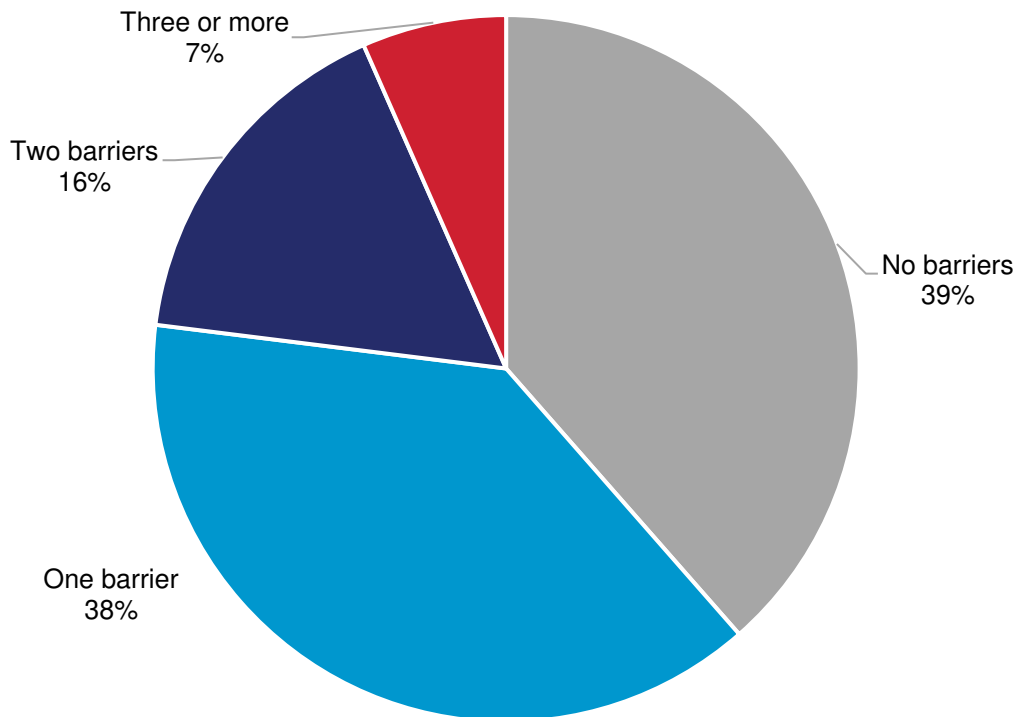
*"Transportation for preschool programs and after school programs. Working a 8-5 job does not allow me the opportunity to pick my children up and get them to a grandparent/babysitter or after school program. It was even harder when they were in preschool programs that only ran for a couple hours a day."*

*"Our town needs a daycare facility for before and after school. Many people work in distant towns, so a childcare facility in or near school would be very beneficial."*



Additional analysis of the **number of barriers** that families reported is presented in Figure 13. Results showed that 40% of families did not report any barrier, which aligns with the 56% of families that reported not using any service (Figure 5), and that almost a fourth of the families (23%) used more than one service.

**FIGURE 13. NUMBER OF BARRIERS REPORTED BY FAMILIES (N= 1,122)**



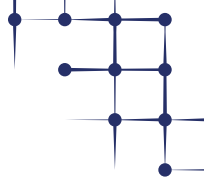
Analysis by relevant subgroups (see Appendix A, Table A12) showed important differences in the number and type of barriers reported:

- **Low-income** (73%), **Hispanic** (79%), and **urban** (70%) participants were more likely to report at least one barrier compared to their counterparts (49%, 60%, and 60%, respectively).
- **Low-income** participants reported 2 or more barriers (32%) more often than higher-income families (17%).

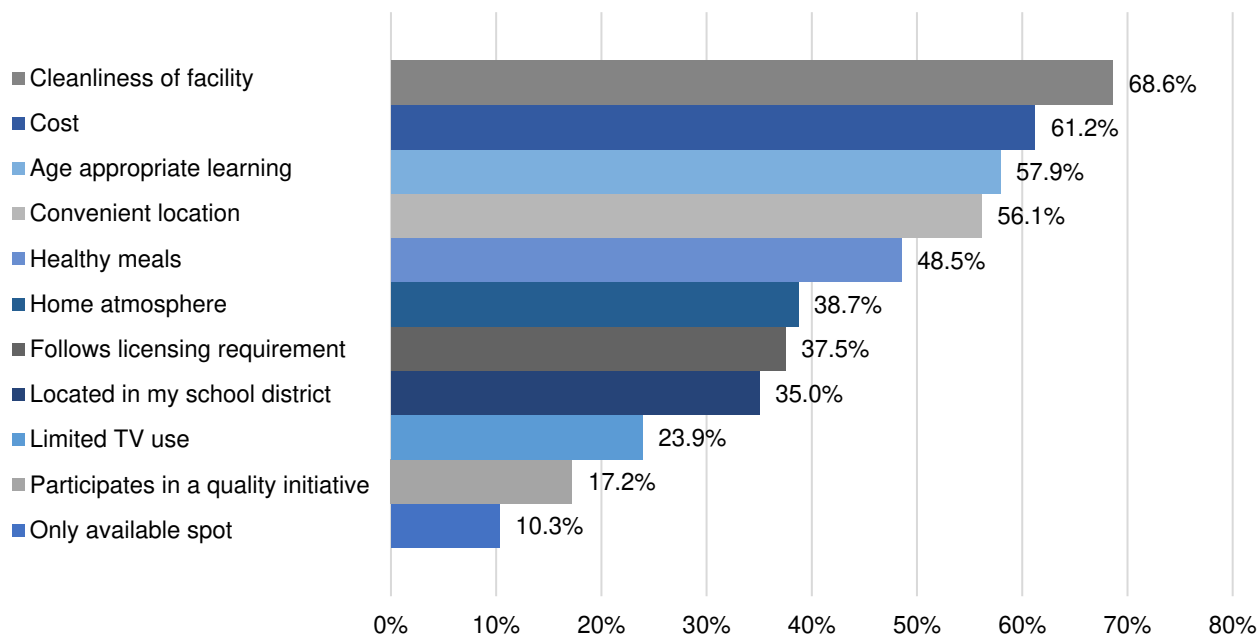
## Childcare

### Important Factors When Selecting Childcare

Families were asked to respond to the question, "*What were the most important factors in selecting childcare?*" and findings are presented in Figure 14. Families were allowed to select all answers that applied to this question. The most endorsed factors were the cleanliness of the facility (69%), cost (61%), age-appropriate learning (58%), and convenience of location (56%). These ratings cannot be compared to results from 2019 because this question was only asked in 2022.



**FIGURE 14. MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WHEN SELECTING CHILDCARE (N=1,622)**



The **cost of childcare** was an important factor for families (see Appendix A, Table A13). This was true regardless of area of residency and ethnicity. However, it was a more important consideration among low-income families than higher-income ones. Furthermore, the **qualitative responses** provided by parents indicated that cost is a common struggle, particularly for parents with income above the income requirements to qualify for public services:

*“We have greatly appreciated the support from the preschool scholarship through community action. Our daughter’s monthly tuition is nearly the same as our rent. The scholarship has made it more affordable. I hope to see in the future - assistance expanded to those who live above the poverty line but still need help (...).”*

*“When I finally got a raise that would make it so I wouldn’t have to hold my breath between every paycheck, that’s when I made too much money to get assistance, and I had to go back to holding my breath between every paycheck. There’s no room to breath[e] at the bottom end of the financial totem pole.”*

*“The income guidelines are a huge issue with many families!! It would be nice if programs could go off of how much money you have after all monthly bills are paid. As of right now- we are negative \$197 in our bank account, only 1/2 gallon of milk left and limited food available. Yet- we DON’T qualify for any help!”*

*“The rising cost of childcare can cause a struggle. While we do not qualify for any assistance based off of our income, trying to pay for childcare each week has put a strain on our financial situation due to the cost and it continues to rise.”*





Results also show that there are **unique challenges to urban and rural** parents when selecting childcare:

- **Rural families** reported putting more importance on the cleanliness of the facility (70% vs. 60%), on having a home atmosphere (42% vs. 21%), on whether it is located in their school district (37% vs. 26%), and on whether it was the only available spot (11% vs. 6%) than urban families.
- **Urban participants** reported placing more importance than rural families on age-appropriate learning (68% vs. 56%), convenience of location (63% vs. 55%), following the licensing requirement (51% vs. 35%), and whether they participate in a quality initiative (26% vs. 16%).

Before parents could consider the other factors of importance for selecting childcare, **qualitative responses** made evident that long **waiting lists** were a significant obstacle that parents face when looking for childcare options. In their comments, parents highlighted that lack of childcare spots in specific areas is a problem:

*“My son was almost a month old before I was able to find childcare in [Iowa county]. Every in-home was full or not taking any children. At that time there was not a center in town. I believe there is a very high need for childcare in Iowa!”*

*“In [Iowa county] specifically, we have only one public child daycare center. Which has been full and not accepting new children since end of 2019. They have been short staffed and recently lost so many staff that children were not able to join the program that already have siblings. We also have many in-home options but find that they are not consistent or available all 5 business days of the week. It is extremely hard to find childcare here and it has kept way too many opportunities and growth of our community away.”*

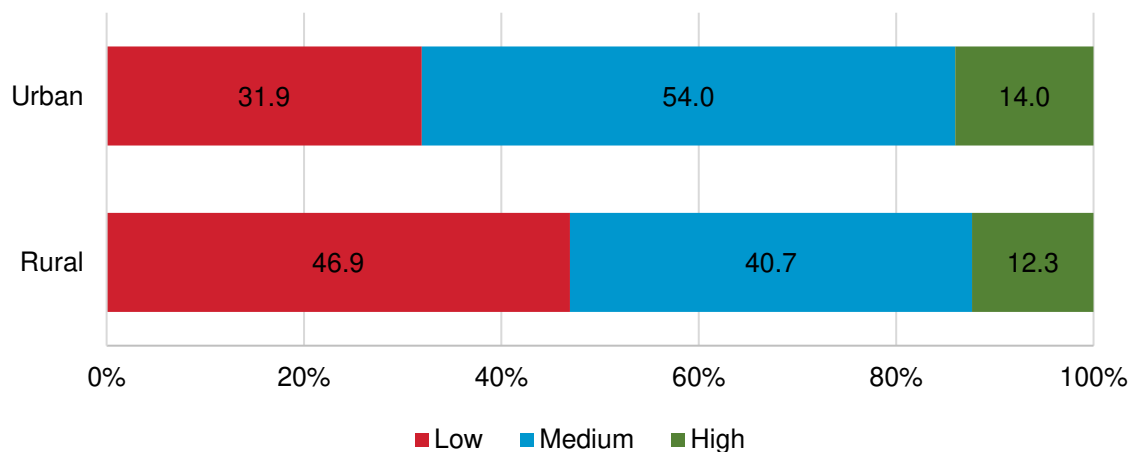
*“Center-based childcare in [Iowa county] is very limited. There is only one option and you have to get on the waitlist very early on.”*

*“It is very difficult to find childcare in rural areas. All of the centers and in-home daycares in my area are full and have long waiting lists. I feel very lucky to have found an in-home daycare that had a spot available.”*

### Adequacy of Childcare Options

Previous findings reported above showed that almost half of families (45%) reported that the adequacy of childcare is low. Notably, these results varied by area of residency. Figure 15 shows that **rural residents** more often rate childcare as having low adequacy (47%) than urban residents (32%).

**FIGURE 15. RATING OF ADEQUACY OF CHILDCARE SERVICES (N=154)**

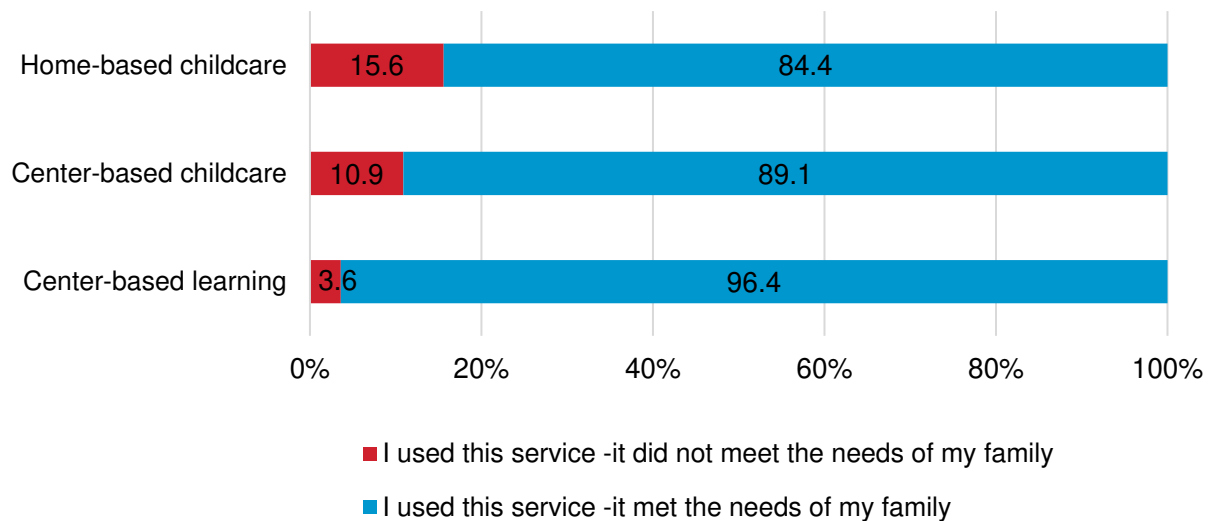




Alternatively, responses of the families that used childcare services and reported whether those met their needs provide information on differences by type of childcare (see Figure 16). Specifically, parents' responses showed that there are **differences in the type of service that met families' needs**, with home-based childcare being the service that met the least the families' needs:

- 96% of early learning centers met families' needs.
- 89% of center-based childcare met families' needs.
- 84% of home-based childcare met families' needs.

**FIGURE 16. RATING OF SATISFACTION WITH CHILDCARE SERVICES (N=1,202)**

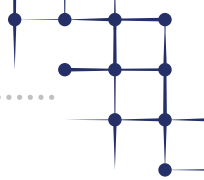


An examination of the qualitative responses from parents showed that parents often pointed out that **staff turnover and low pay to staff** are salient problems in their childcare:

*“There is so much turnover in staffing within centers and that worries me enough that I didn't feel comfortable choosing a center for my children. For preschool, many don't seem to have teaching staff with degrees, and highly educated teachers could improve the quality they offer.”*

*“Quality childcare is expensive and hard to find. Often feel that I am forced into maintaining the center I am at. Staff are paid too low and turnover is a problem. Learning is not taking place due to the challenges of staff.”*

*“It is currently very difficult to find quality, experienced childcare in our area. Most in-home childcare providers have waitlists and if one wanted to make a change to different provider for whatever reason, that is next to impossible. This is especially true if one wants a state-certified childcare provider.”*



## CONCLUSIONS

Findings from the 2022 ECI Needs Assessment identified priorities for Iowa families. The high response rate and large number of respondents allowed for analysis by relevant subgroups (i.e., by income, ethnicity, and urbanicity), shedding some light on the needs and resources of families who may have differing access to early childhood services.

1. Results show that, similarly to 2019, **Medicaid/Hawk-i was the most known and used service, followed by Early Learning, center-based childcare, and in-home childcare.** Iowa families continue to have barriers to accessing health care and childcare. Continuing to support these services remains necessary.
2. **There are gaps in service utilization for some children, including those in rural counties and low-income families.** Compared to 2019, these families continue to face significant challenges, as long waiting lists and out-of-reach costs remain the most significant barriers preventing them from receiving the care they need when they need it. Furthermore, these barriers became even more salient for rural families.
3. Survey results reflect important changes in mental health since 2019, possibly due to families' experiences influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. **Results suggest that more access to mental health is necessary for low-income families and those living in rural areas.** Notably, while mental health usage increased since 2019 for higher-income families (from 25% to 34%), it decreased for low-income families (from 47% to 39%). Also, it was evident that families in rural areas had less use of mental health services (31% vs. 36%, urban).
4. Furthermore, it was found **that mental health-related services are perceived to be low adequacy by most participants,** indicating families' lack of satisfaction with substance abuse treatment, crisis intervention, domestic violence support, and mental health services. This result suggests that increasing access and quality of mental health services for families with barriers to access is imperative.
5. Finally, results show that access to **jobs that cover families' expenses was the most important area of support, but families report low and reduced knowledge (since 2019) of job skills services.** Considering these two findings together, these results suggest that improving knowledge and access to work training services may be an opportunity to help the quality of life of families in Iowa.



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## REFERENCES

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Early Childhood Iowa. (2022). *Creating Healthy, Secure, and Supported Children in Iowa*. Retrieved from <https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/>

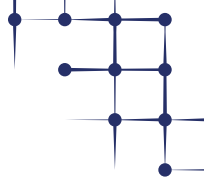
Early Childhood Iowa. (2019). *2019 Statewide Needs Assessment*. Retrieved from <https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/2019-statewide-needs-assessment>



## Appendix A. Family Survey Response Tables

*Table A1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Characteristic		2019	2022
		N=536	N=2,185
		% or M (SD)	% or M (SD)
<b>Race</b>			
	Asian	0.7%	0.8%
	Black	1.7%	1.5%
	Latino/Hispanic	1.1%	4.2%
	Multiracial	3.0%	2.3%
	White	93.0%	90.6%
	Other	0.6%	0.6%
<b>Gender</b>			
	Female	95.2%	93.9%
	Male	4.6%	6.1%
	Other	0.2%	0.1%
<b>Age of respondent</b>			
	17 or younger	1.1%	0.9%
	18-24	5.6%	5.6%
	25-34	46.8%	44.7%
	35-44	31.3%	34.4%
	45-54	8.9%	8.1%
	55+	6.3%	6.3%
<b>Relationship status</b>			
	Married and living with partner	71.0%	76.7%
	Married but separated from my partner	2.5%	1.7%
	Single	16.0%	9.7%
	Not married, but living with partner	10.5%	11.9%
<b>Education</b>			
	Less than high school	2.5%	2.9%
	High school or GED	13.3%	12.8%
	Certification in a specialized area	3.2%	4.5%
	Some college	16.5%	14.0%
	Technical, associate, or bachelor	64.5%	65.9%
<b>Income</b>			
	Less than \$9,999	7.7%	4.6%
	\$10,000-\$19,999	8.1%	4.8%
	\$20,000-\$29,999	11.6%	9.1%
	\$30,000-\$49,999	17.2%	16.3%
	\$50,000+	55.5%	65.2%
<b>Household composition</b>			
	Number of children	2.1 (1.2)	2.2 (1.2)
	Age of youngest child	4.3 (3.9)	3.5 (3.8)
	Age of oldest child	8.6 (5.0)	8.0 (5.0)
	Family has children age 0-6	88.3%	87.3%
<b>Language spoken at home</b>			
	English only	96.5%	91.3%
	Other	3.5%	8.7%
<b>All children are from the same biological mother and father</b>			
	Yes	77.3	79.1%
	No	22.7	20.7%
	Unsure	-	0.3%
<b>Job status</b>			
	Work full-time	71%	72.9%
	Work part-time	2.5%	10.9%
	Stay at home-parent	10.5%	13.2%
	Other	16.0%	3%



*Table A2. Household Computer Ownership*

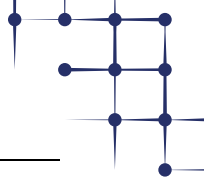
Type of computer	Rural		Urban	
	2019 N=143	2022 N=1,392	2019 N=294	2022 N=269
Desktop or laptop	86.6%	86.4%	86.0%	79.0% *
Smartphone	97.9% *	99.2%	99.3%	99.3%
Table or other mobile computers	85.8%	80.1%	83.2% *	73.8%

*Table A3. Family Supports in Time of Crisis –by Subgroup*

Supports	Urbanicity		Income		Ethnicity	
	Rural N=1,811	Urban N=374	Low-income N=605	Higher-income N=1,027	Hispanic N=118	Not-Hispanic N=2,067
Family/friends	95.3*	90.9	90.6	98.3*	85.6*	95.0
Religious community	25.8*	14.4	18.0	29.2*	16.1*	24.3
Doctor/dentist	20.4*	21.4	17.4	26.2*	13.6*	21.0
Neighbor	13.6	14.2	10.7	17.6*	1.7*	14.4
Internet/social media	9.3	10.4	11.6	9.5	6.8	9.7
Family support worker	8.0*	14.4	19.2	5.1*	22.0*	8.4
Childcare	7.1*	12.0	7.3	10.3*	7.6	7.9
Action agency	4.8*	7.0	11.6	2.2*	5.1	5.2
Newspapers, TV, radio	0.7	1.1	1.2	0.8	0.0*	0.8
Other	2.7*	5.6	5.1	1.7*	9.3*	2.9

\* Differences between groups are statistically significant





**Table A4. Family Unawareness of Services -by Year**

Services	Whole sample		Urbanicity				Income			
			Rural		Urban		Low-income		High income	
	2019 N=443	2022 N=1,804	2019 N=147	2022 N=1,505	2019 N=300	2022 N=299	2019 N=177	2022 N=606	2019 N=233	2022 N=1,033
Medicaid/Hawk-i	4.6*	7.3	5.1	7.2	4.4*	7.7	97.9	95.4	94.1	91.7
Center-based learning	7.0	8.8	5.5	8.6	7.7	9.4	91.8	88.1	95.6	94.5
Center-based childcare	8.1*	11.1	8.2	11.2	8.1	10.7	89.3*	83.7	94.4	92.7
Home-based childcare	10.3*	15.0	10.4	15.5	10.2	14.2	84.5*	77.9	94.4*	90.6
Housing services	12.0*	19.2	14.4	19.9	10.9*	16.1	88.3*	80.7	86.9*	81.4
Dental Services	21.3	20.6	20.9	20.5	21.5	21.1	82.5	82.7	76.3	7.8
Special needs	20.2*	25.4	24.1	24.8	18.3*	28.2	74.9	71.5	86.1*	78.0
Home visiting	21.6*	28.7	25.4	29.3	19.9*	25.4	81.4	75.9	75.5*	69.5
Job skills	28.4*	38.6	34.9	39.3	23.9*	35.5	79.3*	62.9	64.8	60.3

\* Differences between groups are statistically significant

**Table A5. Family Unawareness of Services –by Subgroup**

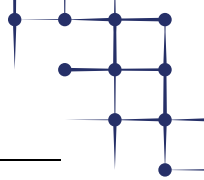
Services	Urbanicity		Income		Ethnicity	
	Rural N=1,505	Urban N=299	Low-income N=606	Higher-income N=1,033	Hispanic N=94	Not-Hispanic N=1,710
Medicaid/Hawk-i	7.2	7.7	4.6*	8.3	6.4	7.4
Center-based learning	8.6	9.4	11.9*	5.5	17.2*	8.3
Center-based childcare	11.2	10.7	16.3*	7.3	26.3*	10.3
Home-based childcare	15.2	14.2	22.1*	9.4	34.3*	13.9
Housing services	19.9	16.1	19.3	18.6	31.9*	18.5
Dental Services	20.5	21.1	17.3*	22.2	22.3	20.5
Support for special needs	24.8	28.2	28.5*	22.0	43.3*	24.4
Home visiting	29.3	25.4	24.1*	30.5	23.4	28.9
Job skills	39.3	35.5	37.1	39.7	57.4*	37.6

\* Differences between groups are statistically significant

**Table A6. Family Use of Services –by Year**

Services	Whole sample		Income			
			Low-income		High income	
	2019 N=443	2022 N=1,804	2019 N=177	2022 N=606	2019 N=233	2022 N=1,033
None	54.6	56.1	29.3	35.0	70.7*	61.6
Mental health services	32.2	31.7	46.6*	38.7	24.7*	33.6
Emergency food assistance	21.8	19.4	47.1	45.0	5.9	8.0
Domestic violence support	5.2	4.4	13.1	11.7	0.8	1.0
Substance abuse treatment	4.7	3.9	7.9	5.8	2.5	3.2
Emergency housing assistance	4.1	4.9	9.9	11.4	1.3	1.7
Other	5.2*	2.3	7.3*	4.0	2.5	1.6

\* Differences between groups are statistically significant



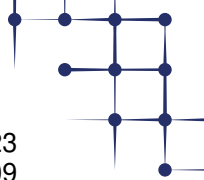
**Table A7. Family Use of Services –by Subgroup**

Services	Urbanicity		Income		Ethnicity	
	Rural N=1,812	Urban N=374	Low- income N=605	Higher- income N=1,028	Hispanic N=118	Not- Hispanic N=2,068
None	58.3*	45.5	35.0*	61.6	44.1*	56.8
Mental health services	31.0*	35.6	38.7*	33.6	20.3*	32.4
Emergency food assistance	17.9*	26.5	45.0*	8.0	41.5*	18.1
Domestic violence support	4.3	5.1	11.4*	1.7	12.7*	4.0
Substance abuse treatment	3.8	4.5	11.7*	1.0	5.9	3.8
Emergency housing assistance	4.4*	7.2	5.8*	3.2	11.0*	4.5
Utilities assistance	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2
Other	1.8*	5.1	4.0*	1.6	7.6*	2.0

\* Differences between groups are statistically significant

**Table A8. Family Use of Services –Combinations of Services**

Service	Freq.	Percent
Domestic violence support	8	0.37
Emergency food assistance	178	8.14
Emergency food assistance, Domestic violence support	4	0.18
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance	19	0.87
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Domestic violence support	3	0.14
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services	26	1.19
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Domestic violence support	21	0.96
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Domestic violence support, Other	1	0.05
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Other	2	0.09
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment	7	0.32
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment, Domestic violence support	12	0.55
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment, Other	1	0.05
Emergency food assistance, Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment	1	0.05
Emergency food assistance, Mental health services	98	4.48
Emergency food assistance, Mental health services, Domestic violence support	15	0.69
Emergency food assistance, Mental health services, Domestic violence support, Other	1	0.05
Emergency food assistance, Mental health services, Other	2	0.09
Emergency food assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment	11	0.50
Emergency food assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment, Domestic violence support	8	0.37
Emergency food assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment, Other	1	0.05
Emergency food assistance, Other	7	0.32
Emergency food assistance, Substance abuse treatment	4	0.18
Emergency housing assistance	3	0.14
Emergency housing assistance, Domestic violence support	2	0.09
Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services	4	0.18
Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Domestic violence support	3	0.14
Emergency housing assistance, Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment	1	0.05
Emergency housing assistance, Other	1	0.05
Mental health services	432	19.76
Mental health services, Domestic violence support	10	0.46
Mental health services, Other	4	0.18
Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment	27	1.24



Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment, Domestic violence support	5	0.23
Mental health services, Substance abuse treatment, Other	2	0.09
None	1,227	56.13
Other	29	1.33
Substance abuse treatment	6	0.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,186</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table A9. Family Access and Satisfaction –by Income**

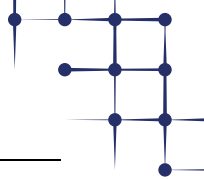
Services	I used this service, it did not meet the needs of my family		I used this service, it met the needs of my family		I wanted to use this service, but I could not access it	
	Low-income N=605	Higher-income N=1,028	Low-income N=605	Higher-income N=1,028	Low-income N=605	Higher-income N=1,028
Center-based learning	2.8*	1.6	48.7*	57.4	6.1*	1.9
Center-based childcare	5.8*	4.8	33.0*	46.2	8.7*	3.8
Home-based childcare	7.6	7.2	28.4	44.8	5.3*	2.9
Special needs	2.8	1.8	17.0*	12.1	3.0*	1.1
Housing services	2.3	0.1	9.9*	2.4	8.1*	0.4
Job skills	3.1	0.7	7.8*	1.7	2.1*	0.1
Home visiting	2.6	0.8	35.5*	2.4	1.2*	0.5
Medicaid or Hawk-i	4.5	1.1	75.6*	29.4	1.8	1.7
Dental services	3.6	1.0	49.7*	19.5	4.0*	1.1

\* Differences between groups are statistically significant

**Table A10. Most Important Areas of Support –by Subgroup**

Services	Urbanicity		Income		Ethnicity	
	Rural N=1,157	Urban N=245	Low-income N=535	Higher-income N=808	Hispanic N=82	Not-Hispanic N=1,320
Jobs that cover my expenses	51.1	56.7	54.2	50.7	53.7	52.0
Awareness of available services	44.0	39.2	45.4	42.6	42.7	43.2
Mental health	41.0	42.4	41.3	41.2	31.7*	41.8
Health care services	37.6	40.8	37.9	37.6	39.0	38.1
Services during nights or weekends	35.8	37.1	37.2	35.1	37.8	35.9
Financial help	30.9	35.1	50.5*	19.8	39.0	31.2
Affordable housing	25.0*	31.8	35.1*	20.2	31.7	25.8
Child abuse support	25.6	25.3	30.1*	22.9	34.1*	25.0
Support for single parents	23.6*	29.0	39.6*	14.7	36.6*	23.8
Faith-based or spiritual resources	22.6*	14.3	17.9*	23.5	15.9	21.4
Programs for fathers	17.5*	25.3	25.0*	14.9	32.9*	18.0
Transportation services	16.2*	27.3	21.9*	16.0	31.7*	17.3
Events supporting cultural differences	14.3*	25.3	14.2	17.5	34.1*	15.2
Domestic violence support	11.1	11.8	15.3*	8.8	18.3*	10.8
Substance abuse prevention	10.3	7.8	11.2	8.9	11.0	9.8
Support for non-English proficient	4.9*	27.3	13.8*	5.7	36.6*	7.1

\* Differences between groups are statistically significant



**Table A11. Reported Low Adequacy of Services—by Subgroup**

Services	Urbanicity		Income		Ethnicity	
	Rural N=1,323	Urban N=374	Low-income N=575	Higher-income N=989	Hispanic N=73	Not-Hispanic N=1,493
Public transportation	69.6*	38.3	57.6*	68.5	47.1*	65.3
Substance abuse treatment	62.2*	47.9	52.6*	64.5	45.7*	60.5
Crisis intervention	63.0*	40.6	54.9*	62.3	50.0	59.5
Domestic violence support	62.2*	37.1	55.1	60.1	55.0	58.1
Foster care	60.7*	42.7	53.3*	61.2	37.1*	59.0
Mental health services	54.5*	42.3	51.2	53.5	46.0	52.9
Adult education training	55.5*	25.2	46.7*	53.2	46.1	50.3
Childcare	46.9*	31.9	46.4	43.5	33.3*	45.1
Assistance for disabilities	45.9*	35.2	42.3	45.8	36.4	44.6
Parenting education	43.4	41.7	37.1*	47.2	31.6*	43.7
Emergency assistance	37.4*	29.2	33.4*	37.9	38.7	35.8
Dental services	25.8*	14.9	33.9*	18.3	29.4	23.8
Police/sheriff services	13.9*	20.6	17.0*	13.4	17.5	14.7
Medical services	14.3*	3.9	14.9*	11.2	16.9	12.4
Schools	8.4	9.5	11.1*	7.2	8.2	8.6

\* Differences between groups (i.e., between column pairs) are statistically significant

**Table A12. Reported Barriers to Access Services—by Subgroup**

Services	Urbanicity		Income		Ethnicity	
	Rural N=910	Urban N=212	Low-income N=429	Higher-income N=492	Hispanic N=82	Not-Hispanic N=1,040
Waiting lists	52.3*	61.3	61.1*	48.6	45.1*	54.7
Service cost too much money	35.5	32.1	35.4	37.0	18.3*	36.2
Service did not meet our needs	26.2	21.2	24.2	26.8	19.5	25.7
Transportation	12.1*	18.9	16.3*	10.2	25.6*	12.4
They asked my family to leave	2.3	1.9	3.5*	1.4	4.9	2.0
Other	21.0	20.3	20.0	21.3	18.3	21.1

\* Differences between groups (i.e., between column pairs) are statistically significant

**Table A13. Most Important Factors when Selecting Childcare—by Subgroup**

Services	Urbanicity		Income		Ethnicity	
	Rural N=1,367	Urban N=255	Low-income N=570	Higher-income N=1,004	Hispanic N=85	Not-Hispanic N=1,537
Cleanliness of facility	70.2*	60.4	67.9	69.5	61.2	69.0
Cost	61.2	61.2	69.3*	57.2	62.4	61.2
Age appropriate learning	56.0*	68.2	57.2	58.6	54.1	58.1
Convenient location	54.8*	63.1	55.6	56.5	54.1	56.2
Healthy meals	48.9	46.3	50.4	47.4	45.9	48.6
Home atmosphere	41.9*	21.2	38.8	38.2	40.0	38.6
Follows licensing requirement	35.0*	51.0	42.1*	35.5	37.6	37.5
Located in my school district	36.6*	26.3	36.7	33.9	48.2*	34.3
Limited TV use	23.6	25.5	19.6*	26.9	14.1*	24.5
Participates in a quality initiative	15.7*	25.5	18.9	16.4	24.79	16.8
Only available spot	11.0*	6.3	8.8*	11.5	10.6	10.3

\* Differences between groups (i.e., between column pairs) are statistically significant



## Appendix B. 2022 Iowa Family Survey Questions

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The vision of Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) is for every child, beginning at birth, to be healthy and successful. We want to hear from you about ways we can strengthen our communities, better provide services for your family, and promote the health and success of your children.

Your opinions are very important to us and we will keep all of the personal information you share confidential. Whether you choose to participate or not, your services will not be impacted in any way. The survey takes an average of seven to ten minutes of your time. Please be as honest and open as possible.

Thank you for your help to build Iowa's early childhood system!

### Please tell us a little about yourself

#### 1. What county do you live in?

▼ (drop down of Iowa counties)

#### 2. What is your current age?

17 or younger

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55+

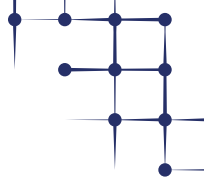
#### 3. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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**4. Are you Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?**

- No, I am not Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, I am Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

**5. What is your race?**

- American Indian
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Do you speak a language other than English at home?**

- No, English only
- Yes (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_





**7. When you or your family experience a crisis, where do you turn for help?** *Select all that apply*

- Family member or friend
  - Neighbor
  - Religious community (such as people or resources within a church, mosque, temple, etc.)
  - Family support worker, parent educator, or other service provider
  - Local Community Action Agency
  - Childcare center or school
  - Doctor or dentist
  - Therapist (Mental Health)
  - Internet or social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
  - Newspaper, radio, or TV
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
-



**8. Have you or your family ever used the following services? *Select all that apply***

- Emergency food assistance (such as a food pantry)
  - Emergency housing assistance (such as homelessness or Section 8)
  - Mental health services
  - Substance abuse treatment
  - Domestic violence support
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**9. What has made it difficult for you to use services designed for families like yours? *Select all that apply***

- Waiting lists (such as the program is full)
  - Transportation (such as getting to the service or program)
  - The service or program cost too much money
  - The service or program did not meet my family/child's needs
  - The service or program asked my family/child to leave
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**Please tell us a little about your family's experiences with the early childhood system.**

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**10. Have you ever been called by a childcare, preschool, or Head Start program to pick up your child because they were having a bad day or trouble managing their behavior?**

Yes

No

**11. Have any of your children ever been removed permanently from a childcare, preschool, or Head Start program because of challenging behaviors?**

Yes

No

**12. For each of the early childhood education services or programs listed in the table below, please indicate which column best describes your experience.**

	I do not know about this service	I know about this service but have not used it	I wanted to use this service but I couldn't access it when I needed it	I used this service—it did not meet the needs of my child or family	I used this service—it met the needs of my child or family
Center-based early learning (such as Head Start & preschool)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare ( <b>center-based</b> care for ages 0-5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare ( <b>in-home</b> provider for ages 0-5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support for children with special needs (such as Early ACCESS or special education in school)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**13. Please identify the family services and programs that you have participated in and indicate whether you found these helpful. *Check all that apply***

	I do not know about this service	I know about this service but have not used it	I wanted to use this service but I couldn't access it when I needed it	I used this service—it did not meet the needs of my child or family	I used this service—it met the needs of my child or family
Housing assistance (such as Section 8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job skills support (such as Promise Jobs)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home Visiting Services (such as a parent educator or family support worker who comes to your home to provide services or supports)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medicaid or Hawk-i	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dental Health Services (such as iSmile)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**14. Please provide any further details you want to share about finding information on services or programs, your barriers, and/or changes you would like to make to the service or program?**

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The following questions are to gather your opinion/insight into the needs of families like yours.

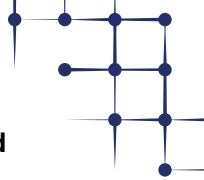
15. What do you believe are the most important areas of support needed for your family's well-being and success? (Choose all that apply)

- Available jobs that pay my family's expenses
- Available services that are available nights (after 5 pm) and weekends
- Translation services to assist families with limited English proficiency
- Financial supports for families experiencing poverty or low-income
- Available and accessible mental health services for household members
- Available and accessible health care for household members
- Available substance abuse support
- Available and stable affordable housing
- Community events that support cultural differences
- Supports for single parents
- Faith-based or spiritual resources
- Available and accessible domestic violence support
- Parenting tips and education to prevent child abuse or family stress
- Transportation to services
- Awareness of available services to support families
- Programs for fathers



**16. When selecting childcare, which of the following factors are most important in making that selection (please choose your top three)?**

- Convenient location
- Located in the same school district as home
- Age appropriate learning experiences available
- Family or home atmosphere
- Limited video/TV use
- Healthy meals and snacks
- Cleanliness of the facility/home
- Cost
- Only available childcare you could find
- Program follows licensing requirement from the Department of Human Services
- Provider participates in a quality initiative (Quality Rating System (QRS) or NAEYC accreditation or Head Start)



The following questions are to help us understand the wide range of families who use early childhood programs and services in Iowa.

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17. How many children age 18 or younger currently live in your household?

▼ (0-15)

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18. What are the ages of youngest and oldest child in your household?

	Age
Age of the <b>youngest</b> child	▼ (0 - 18+)
Age of the <b>oldest</b> child	▼ (0 - 18+)

---

19. Do all of the children in your home share the same biological mother and father?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure





**20. What is your relationship to the children in your home? *Select all that apply***

- Legal guardian
- Biological parent
- Step Parent
- Adoptive parent
- Grandparent
- Foster parent
- Other family member
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**21. How would you describe your current relationship status?**

- Married and living with my partner
- Married but separated from my partner
- Not married but living with my partner
- Single (between partners, never partnered, divorced, or widowed)





Finally, please tell us a little about your experiences with school and work.

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**22. Do you or anyone who lives in your house own the following types of computer?**

	Yes	No
Desktop or laptop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Smartphone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**23. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?**

- Less than high school
- High school or GED
- Certification in a specialized area
- Some college
- Technical, associate, or bachelor degree or more



**24. What is your current occupation or work status? Check all that apply**

- Work full-time
  - Work part-time
  - Temporarily not working
  - Unemployed or laid off
  - Retired
  - Student
  - Stay-at-home parent
- 

**25. If you checked working full time or part time please select the shift you typically work**

- First Shift
- Second Shift
- Third Shift
- Floating Schedule

**26. What is your annual household income from all sources?**

- Less than \$9,999
- \$10,000-\$19,999
- \$20,000-\$29,999
- \$30,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000+



**27. Please rate how adequate you feel the services are in your area**



	No opinion/Not applicable	Low	Average	High
Dental Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental/Emotional Health Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance Abuse Treatment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Crisis Intervention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domestic Abuse Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emergency Assistance (food, clothing, shelter, energy)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foster Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police/Sheriff Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parenting Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistance for individuals with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**28. Any additional thoughts or comments pertaining to meeting the needs of you and/or your family that you feel have not been addressed in this survey, please share them below:**

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**Thank you very much for your participation!**