

Greater Dubuque Child Care Analysis



Introduction

In January 2022, Levi Architecture was tasked with surveying businesses on behalf of the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation and Dubuque Initiatives to assess recruitment and retention barriers related to child care. The child care crisis continues to gain attention, especially during the pandemic. Businesses continue to see employment as the most significant barrier to growth and financial stability. Our team was able to interview 30 businesses in a wide variety of industries, scales and perspectives throughout the greater Dubuque area. Goals for the business surveys include gathering information and interest in specific child care services that may help alleviate employment barriers.

Complimenting the business survey, our team (in collaboration with Child Care Resource & Referral) also surveyed the existing provider industry in the greater Dubuque area. Over 40 child care centers and over 60 child development home were surveyed with 19 interviews conducted. Our goal with provider engagement was to open dialogue with the local providers, understand their barriers to expansion and gather interest in potential partnerships.

The next step is to prioritize the barriers for both businesses and providers. These prioritized barriers will be the targets for a series of collaborative discussions with all stakeholders to generate practical solutions that address broad initiatives and specific, targeted opportunities.



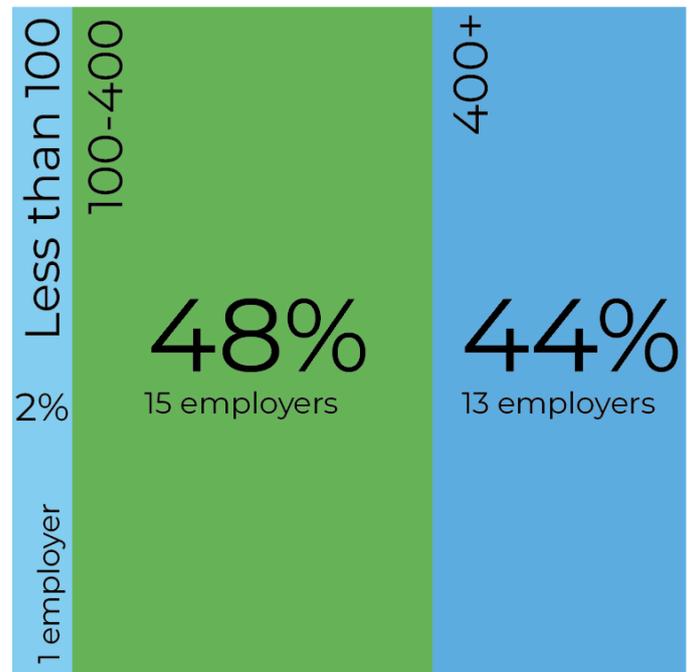
Business Report

In early 2022, the Levi Architecture team interviewed 30 businesses within Dubuque county. The interviews were intended to discuss employee child care barriers and gather feedback to determine needs and possible solutions.

Participating Employers

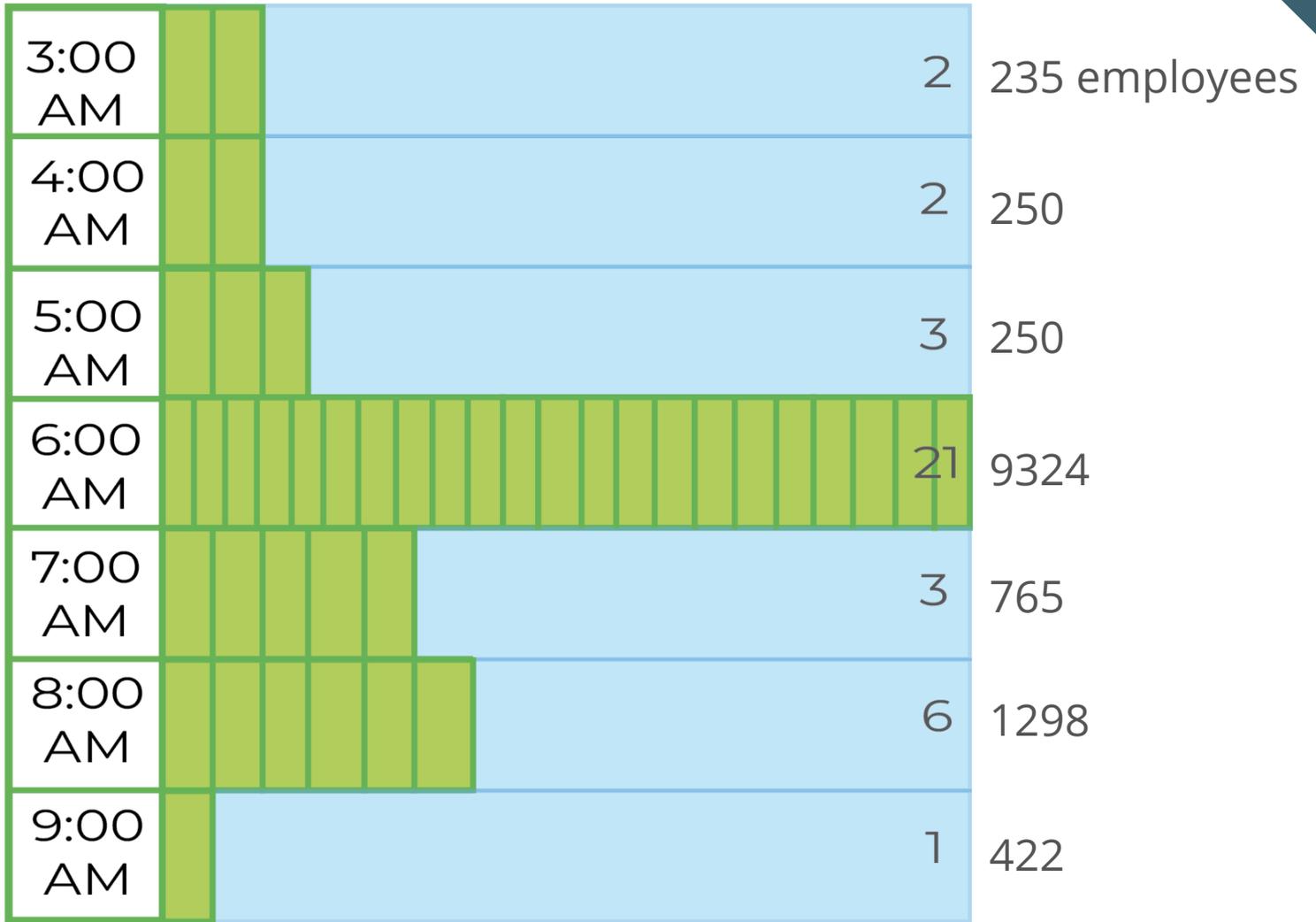


Average Number of Employees



Business 1st shift Start Times

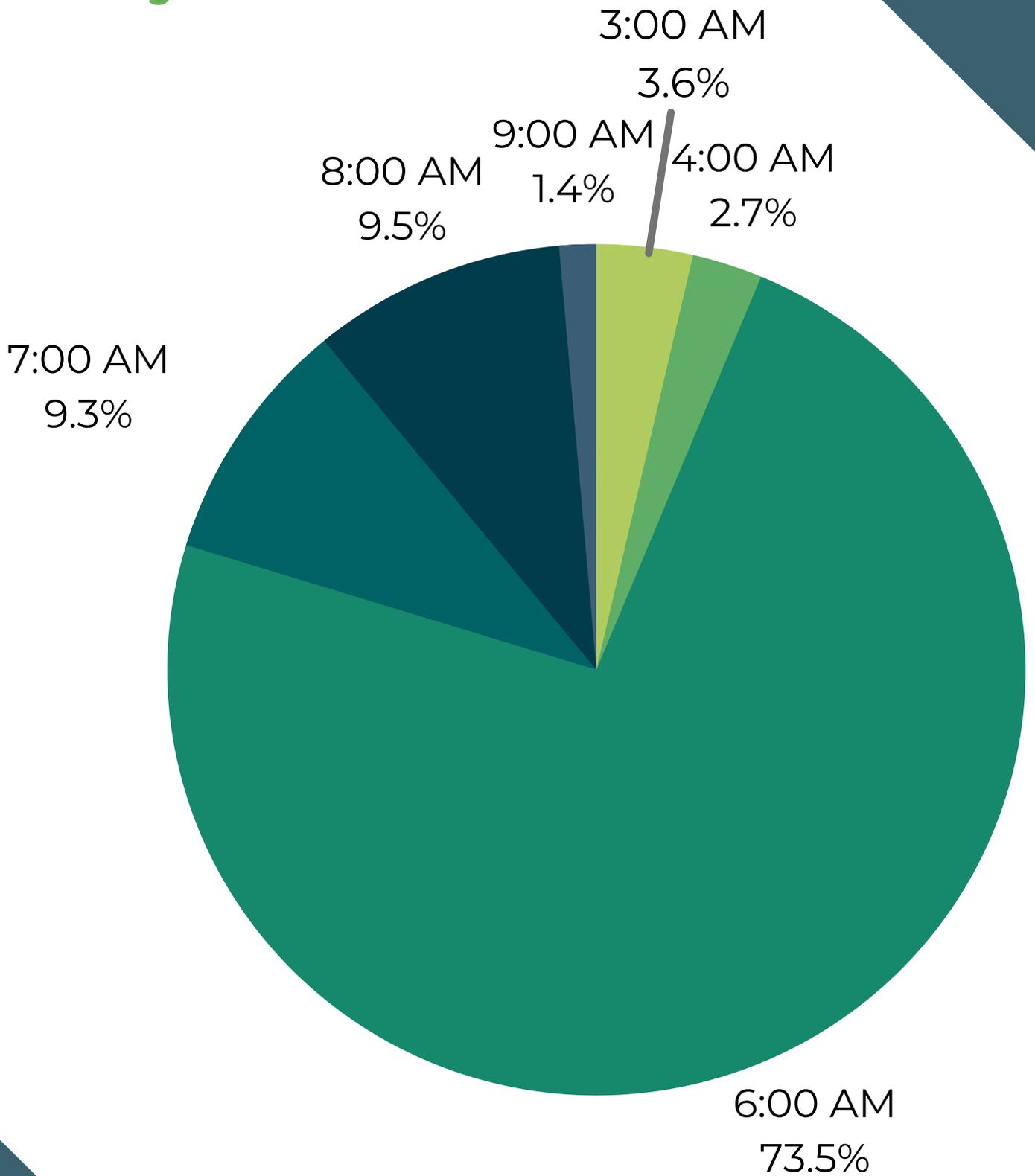
Number of business and employees by start time



Percentages of business by shifts

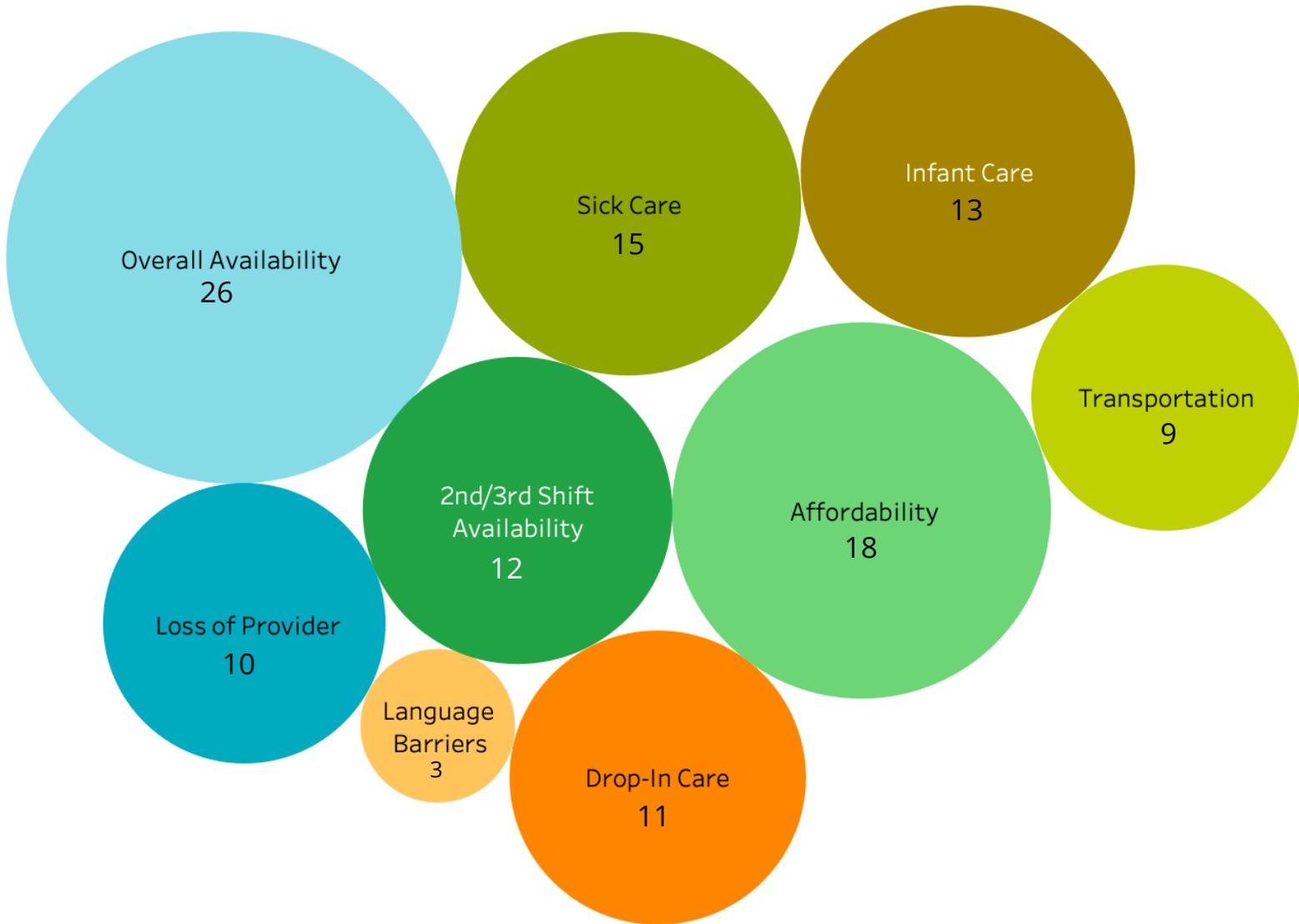


Number of Workers by Start Time

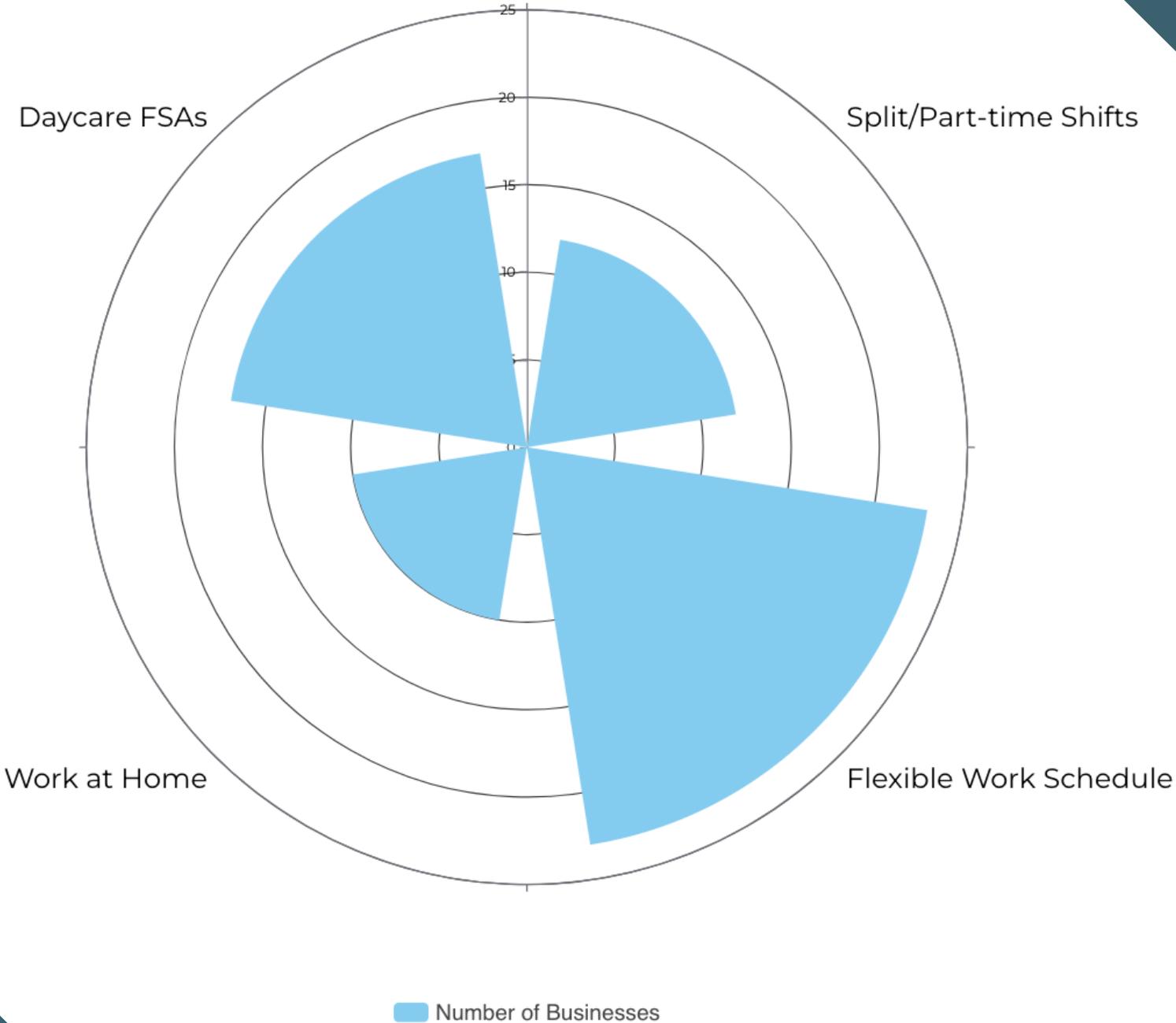


Common Barriers Relating to Child Care

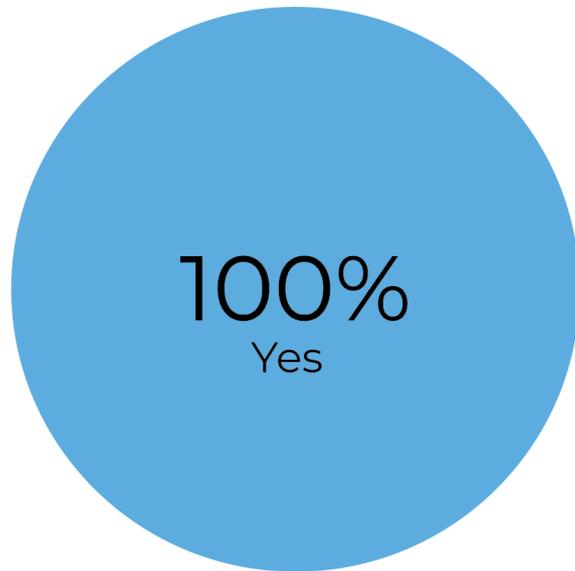
Numbers represent amount of respondents for each barrier.



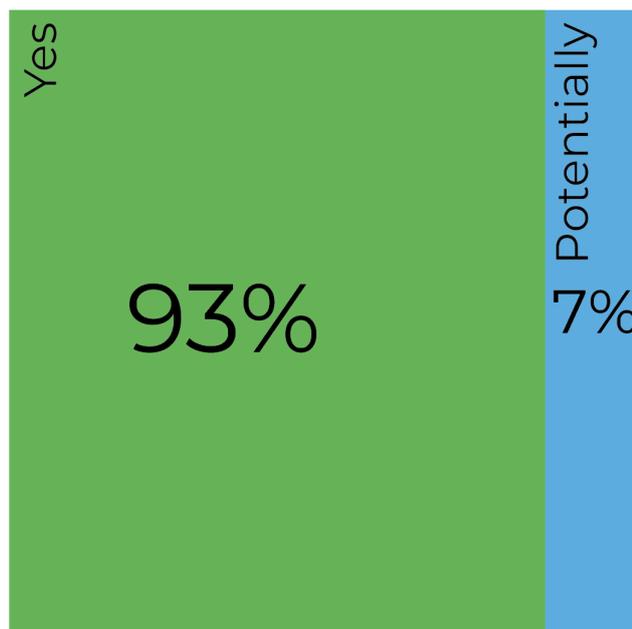
Company Initiatives in Place



Companies Interested in Learning More about Childcare Support



Companies Interested in Partnering with Childcare Services



Business Summary

We learned of a surprising breadth of strategies businesses are implementing to support employees and the recognition of the role family dynamics play in the employment market. Clearly, flexibility of the work environment is the number one strategy utilized by businesses to retain and attract employees. This flexibility includes altering first-shift start times, part-time shifts, split shifts and work from home option where possible. Businesses are being creative, unique and specific with initiatives to suit their particular challenges and available resources.

Three businesses shared their model of existing, on-site child care service for employees. All three businesses expressed the incredible value their child care services provide to employees and their company culture. Several others were exploring on-site care or a direct partnership with an existing local provider. The overall need of availability was expressed from employers. 26 employers (86%) reported a barrier of overall availability of child care, and 13 employers (43%) expressed the need for infant care.

All businesses see the need to support their employees and families, and thus are interested in hearing more about solutions or initiatives that will come from this study. Almost all those entities surveyed were excited to explore some form of solution with the Greater Dubuque Development and child care providers that increases the overall capacity and address the other areas of greatest need, ie "gap care" (sick care, drop-in care, infant capacity, earlier start times).

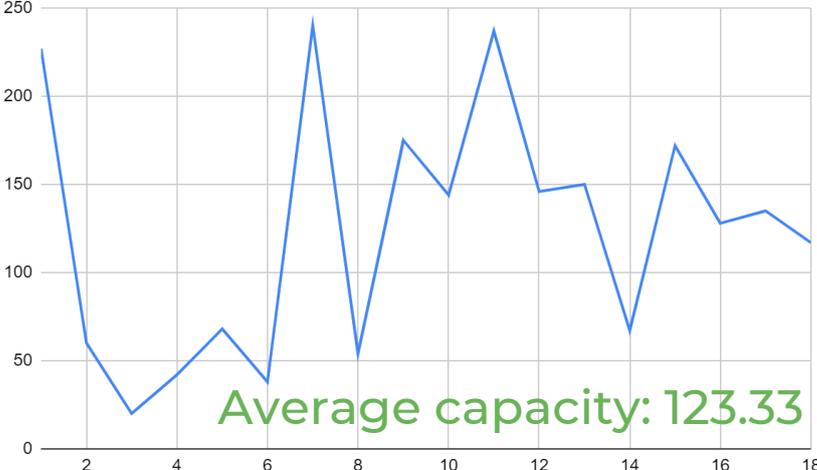


Child Care Feasibility

In the fall of 2021 the Levi Architecture team began interviews with child care centers. In phase 1, we interviewed five child care center directors. In early 2022 we followed up with a survey to all 42 child care centers with a survey and then additional interviews with 10 center directors.

Center Capacity

18 child care centers reporting

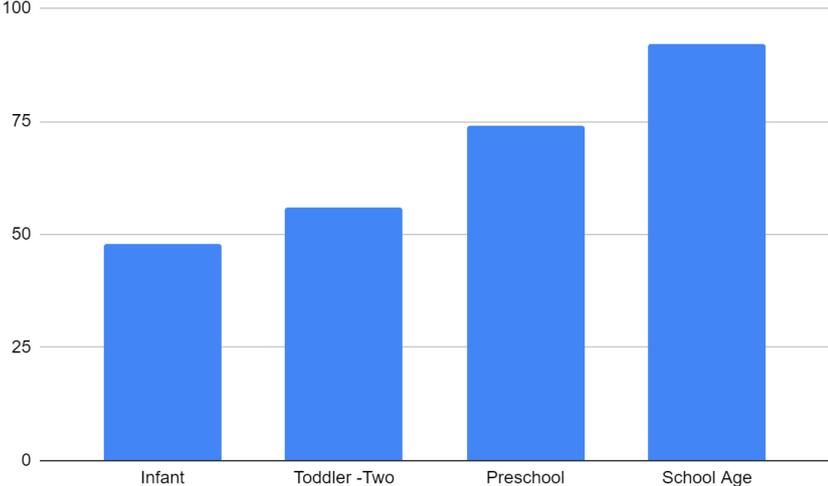


4,182: total children in the Dubuque area

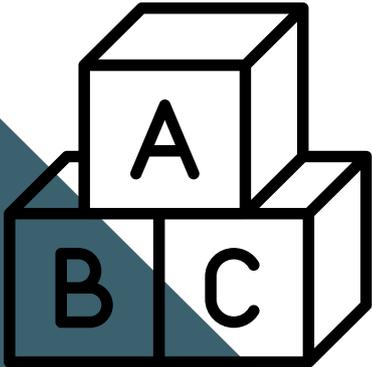
2,220: children reached through our surveys

Waitlist

Average waitlist is 25 children

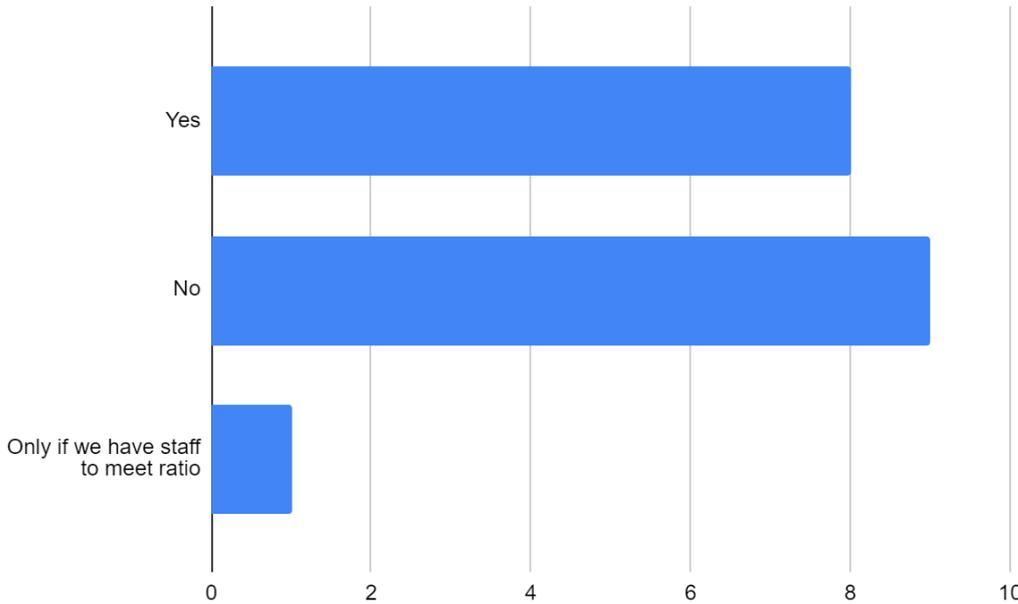


11 of 18 centers track wait list by age group. Infant and School Age were the areas of largest need per interviews.

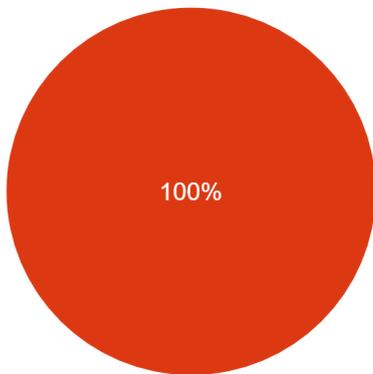


Child Care Feasibility

Do you offer drop in care?

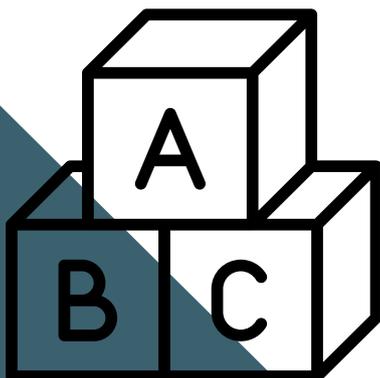
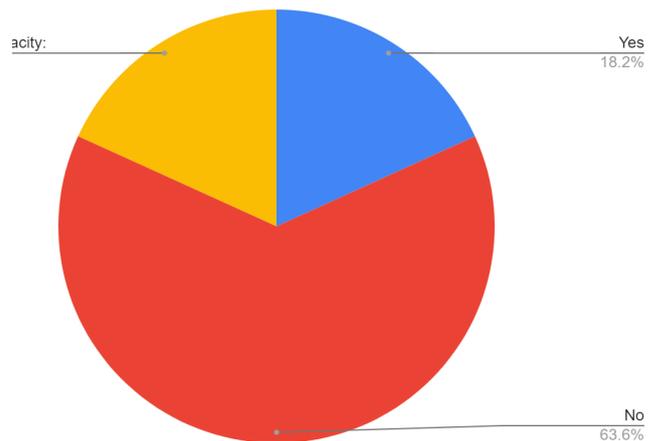


Do you offer sick care?



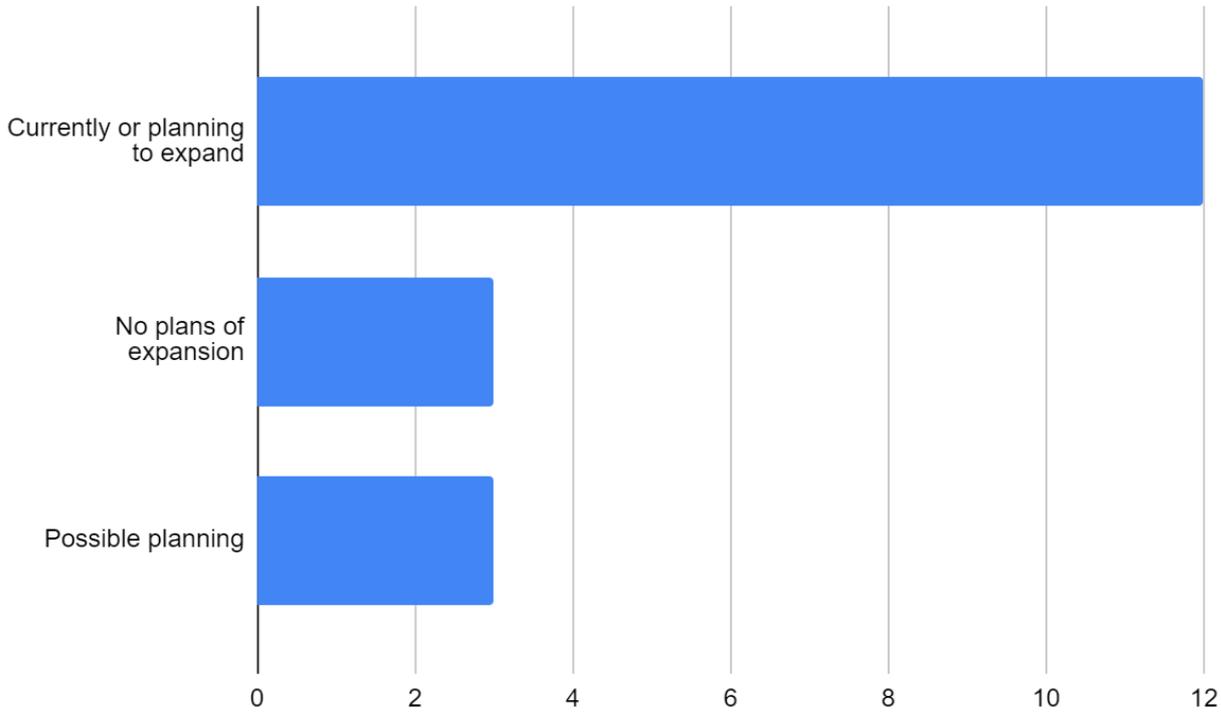
● Yes
● No

Extended hours



Child Care Feasibility

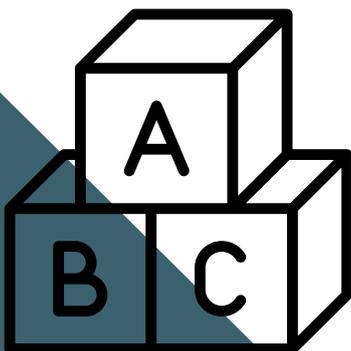
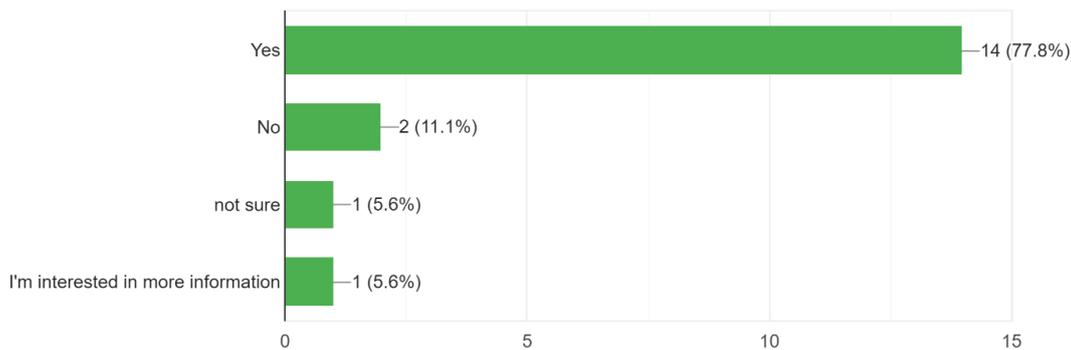
Are you planning to expand your child care center?



Partnership

Are you interested in potential partnerships within the Greater Dubuque area with businesses?

18 responses

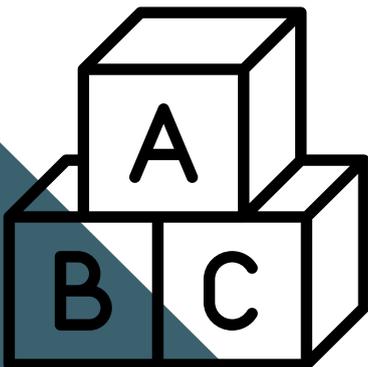
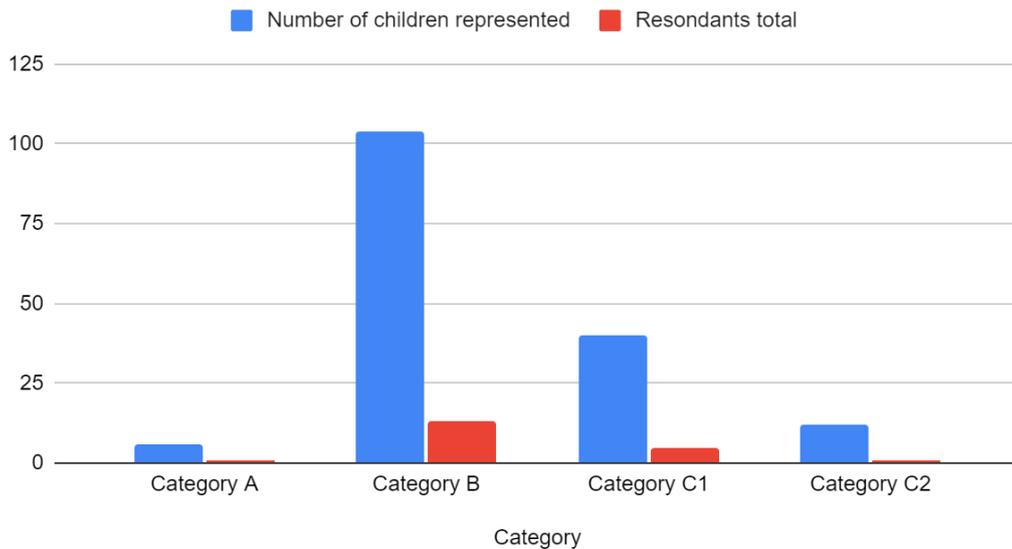


Child Development Home

In early 2022 the Levi Architecture team began interviews with Child Development Homes. We surveyed 62 Child Development homes, 20 responded. We followed up with two zoom interviews. We will continue to utilize our partnership with Child Care Resource & Referral to engage our Child Development Homes.

Who we heard from

Number of children represented and Resondants total

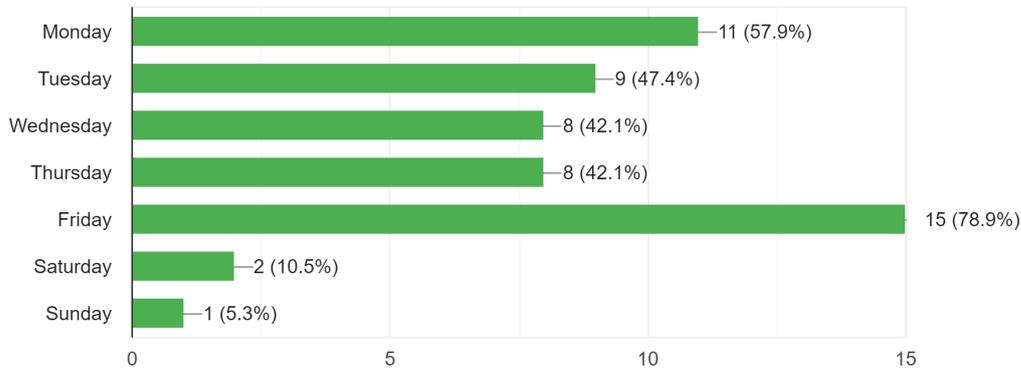


Child Development Home

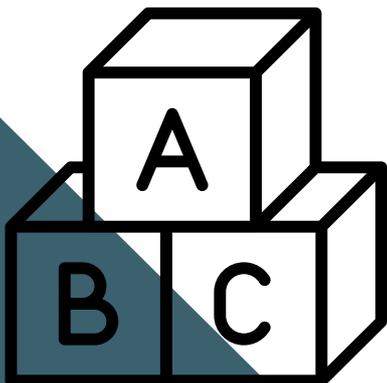
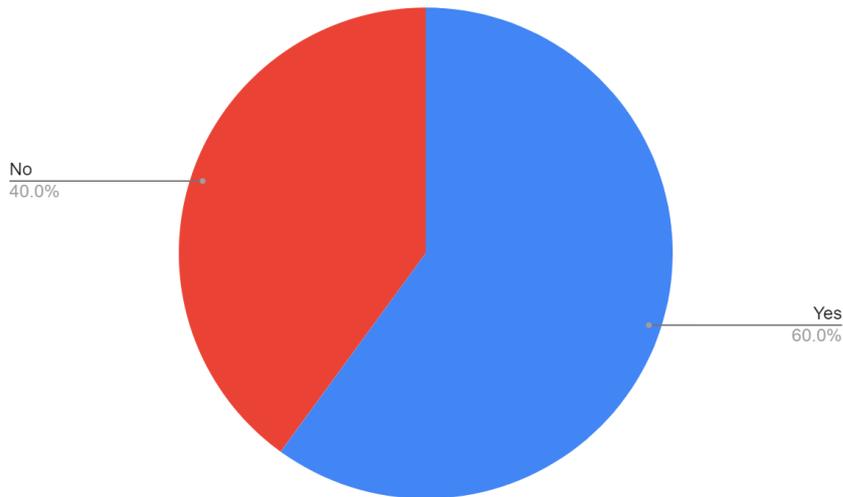
Days of the week care is provided

Which days of the week do you provide care?

19 responses



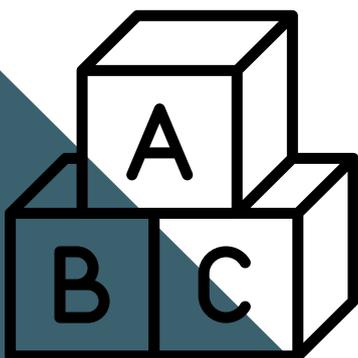
Do you provide drop in care?



Child Care Provider Summary

We were encouraged by the quality of care available in the greater Dubuque area. Providers are well-informed of the challenges of the families they service and have a willing attitude to support those families. The entire child care industry in the area is struggling with workforce. We feel this is the area of greatest need that the Greater Dubuque Development and Dubuque Initiatives is uniquely positioned to support.

Many providers have explored or were excited to explore expansion of their total capacity and/or service type. Specifically, we discussed the increase in capacity for infant care, earlier start times, drop-in care and sick care. Providers are open to expansion ideas but are lacking a financial model that allow for such expansions. Several providers expressed their immediate readiness to partner with the Greater Dubuque Development and/or individual businesses.



Report Summary

Our team is motivated by the elevated attention child care is getting through Greater Dubuque Development, Dubuque Initiatives and the Dubuque business community. Businesses are exploring ways to support their employees. Local providers being a strong group of collaborative professionals appear to be prime partners for the business community. There are clear opportunities for both groups to match resources and challenges with Greater Dubuque Development and Dubuque Initiative being the bridge.

Next steps should include a small group of interested business representatives and providers to lay out prioritized challenges and opportunities to be the basis of solutions exploration. Both broadly and narrowly focused solutions should be explored. An example solution shared with those interviewed included a new facility which multiple businesses could support specifically designed to address location, "gap care", cost and hours of operation. This idea was well received by businesses and providers.

Levi Architecture is grateful for the opportunity to provide the Greater Dubuque Development, Dubuque Initiatives, the Dubuque business community and the child care community with these survey results. We look forward to continuing our work by generating pro forma(s) for specific solution(s) to ensure their financial sustainability.

