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Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) Grant Evaluation Report

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Department of Early Care and Learning's Expanding Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) Grant Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

The Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) grant program, launched by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), was created to address a gap in child care access for families working nontraditional hours, defined as 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. on weekdays and any time on weekends. In Georgia, the need is significant: an estimated 475,000 children—43% of those under age 13—live in households that require nonparental care outside the standard workday. Yet licensed, dependable care during these hours has remained limited, leaving many families to rely on informal or unstable arrangements.

In response, DECAL invested approximately \$6.5 million in federal pandemic relief funds between 2023 and 2025 to pilot the EXPAND initiative. The program awarded 13 grants: seven to licensed child care providers and six to nonprofit or government collaboratives. Providers used the funds to extend hours, hire staff, and improve facilities, while collaboratives focused on building partnerships, conducting outreach, and helping families afford care. This structure allowed DECAL to test multiple approaches to expanding access during nontraditional hours.

The University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government evaluated the initiative using a mixed-methods approach. The evaluation drew on monthly grantee progress reports, expenditure data, focus groups and exit interviews, family intake forms, and a family needs survey to assess implementation, outcomes, and challenges.

Overall, the evaluation found that EXPAND was successful in increasing the availability of nontraditional-hour care in participating communities. All grantees offered evening care, most provided early morning care, and many included weekend options, though overnight care remained limited. Provider grantees collectively delivered more than 13,000 hours of nontraditional care, with enrollment highest during the summer months.

Key Takeaways and Policy Considerations

The evaluation suggests that both collaboratives and direct provider grants offer promising models for expanding nontraditional-hour care in Georgia. Collaboratives helped align services with local workforce needs and community resources, while providers made strategic investments to strengthen their capacity to serve families during nontraditional hours. The following insights and recommendations reflect lessons learned from the grant and highlight opportunities to strengthen program design and long-term sustainability.

Simply increasing the availability of care during nontraditional hours does not guarantee families will enroll, particularly in the short term. Both provider and collaborative

grantees had difficulty recruiting families for nontraditional-hour care, especially early in the grant period. Many families already had established care arrangements, often relying on unpaid care from relatives or friends. Others were hesitant to switch to new programs because the grants lasted only 12 to 18 months. The evaluation underscored that families make work and child care decisions by weighing complex tradeoffs related to wages, schedules, cost, availability, and child well-being. They often prioritize stability and affordability of care, selecting or avoiding jobs based on whether child care options align with hours, and costs they can sustain over time. Thus, introducing a new option in child care may not immediately generate demand. Instead, it needs to be on the table when families are making employment decisions.

Although families value formal nontraditional-hour child care, affordability is a barrier. Demand for care was concentrated among lower-income families, especially those working in service industries such as retail and hospitality, rather than the higher-wage sectors initially targeted by some collaboratives. Before EXPAND, many families relied on unpaid care, such as a grandparent or friend. Nontraditional-hour care typically involves a fee for services, which most families could not afford without financial assistance. Thus, many grantees used funds to provide tuition support, which complicates the long-term sustainability of such programs.

Grantees faced common challenges, which are likely to affect any program to increase the availability of nontraditional-hour care. Key issues in providing nontraditional-hour care included hiring and retaining staff, maintaining child-caregiver ratios during crossover times, and understanding regulations and CAPS reimbursement policies for nontraditional hours.

Longer funding cycles, paired with flexibility, a longer planning period, and phased implementation, would strengthen sustainability. A 12- to 18-month planning period would help collaboratives build partnerships, assess demand, conduct outreach, navigate licensing requirements, and prepare the infrastructure needed for implementation. Providers would need a shorter planning window to address staffing needs, outreach, and compliance. Extending the implementation period to at least two years would reduce uncertainty, support enrollment and provider participation, and make it easier for families to rely on nontraditional-hour care in their employment decisions. Future initiatives would also benefit from preserving the flexibility that was a key strength of EXPAND and from introducing phased funding that supports start-up costs early and tapers as enrollment and revenue grow.

A formal needs assessment could strengthen targeting and help future initiatives identify and reach families most likely to need and benefit from nontraditional-hour care.

Requiring that assessment before award or during the planning period would help grantees determine which families need nontraditional-hour care, when they need it, and how to align outreach and program design with those patterns, particularly among families currently relying on informal, unpaid care. DECAL could support that work by providing technical assistance during grant planning and helping grantees design effective assessment tools that improve

targeting and support clearer messaging about the value of licensed care, including safe and nurturing environments, enrichment activities, homework support, and nutritious meals.

EXPAND Summary Report and Policy Considerations

Background

Workers whose schedules fall outside the typical Monday-to-Friday, 7:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. workday keep Georgia’s communities and economy running at all hours, staffing hospitals, restaurants, warehouses, farms, and manufacturing facilities. Many of these workers are parents who need child care during early mornings, evenings, and weekends. Growth in the service, healthcare, and logistics sectors has increased demand for such care, particularly among lower-wage workers. Access to safe, reliable nontraditional-hour care is essential, as without it parents face difficult trade-offs and children miss the consistency and support of high-quality care. Despite sustained demand for nontraditional-hour care, availability remains limited, leaving families reliant on informal or unstable arrangements.

A recent study estimates that approximately 475,000 Georgians ages birth to 12 — nearly 43% of all children under age 13 — reside in households with parents/caregivers whose work or school schedules require nonparental child care during nontraditional hours.¹ These households are found in all 159 Georgia counties, spanning both urban and rural communities. Consistent with these results, an earlier study by the Urban Institute identified supports needed to strengthen Georgia’s early care and education system.² A central theme expressed by families was the need to help providers extend their hours of operation.

In response, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) developed the Expanding Parents’ Access to Nontraditional Delivery, or EXPAND, grant program to address child care needs during nontraditional hours: 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. on weekdays and any time on weekends. Between 2023 and 2025, DECAL invested approximately \$6.5 million in federal pandemic relief to pilot the EXPAND grants to support families with child care needs during nontraditional hours.

DECAL offered two types of grants during summer 2023: one for licensed child care providers to expand their operating hours and a second for government entities and nonprofit organizations to form collaboratives to address child care access challenges in their communities

¹ Teresa Derrick-Mills, Elly Miles, Cary Lou, Anna Farr, Michelle Casas, Catherine Kuhns, and Laura Wagner. 2024, February. *Understanding the Need for Nontraditional-Hour Child Care in Georgia*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from [Understanding the Need for Nontraditional-Hour Child Care in Georgia: Needs and Considerations](#)

² Teresa Derrick-Mills, Cary Lou, Grace Luetmer, Catherine Kuhns, Diane Schilder, and Peter Willenborg. 2022, June 30. *Supporting Georgia’s Early Care and Learning System with CRRSA and ARP Funding: Perspectives from Stakeholders and Families*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from www.urban.org/research/publication/supporting-georgias-early-care-and-learning-system-crrsa-and-arp-funding

during nontraditional hours. Thirteen grants were announced in August 2023: seven to providers and six to collaboratives.

Grantees were given flexibility to pilot a variety of approaches to provide care during nontraditional hours. This design allowed DECAL to learn about what works, challenges and barriers to implementing such care, resources providers require to extend hours, and families' concerns and preferences so that the state can develop a successful model in the future. To support this effort, DECAL contracted with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government to evaluate the EXPAND grant program. The Institute of Government team collected data from grantees and parents through multiple channels: monthly grantee progress reports, grantee focus groups and end-of-grant/exit interviews, family intake forms completed at enrollment, and a family needs survey.

This report presents key findings from the evaluation. The next section describes the methodology for the evaluation, followed by an overview of the grantees, the communities they served, and their use of grant funds. The report then outlines the primary findings from the evaluation and concludes with recommendations for future initiatives.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative data to explore how the EXPAND grant was implemented, challenges in providing nontraditional-hour care, and lessons learned that can be used in future initiatives to expand such care. The evaluation was designed to capture perspectives from both grantees and families that need nontraditional-hour child care. The analysis in this report draws on data from the following sources:

- **Monthly progress reports from grantees.** Grantees submitted monthly progress reports documenting how they were implementing their proposed plans and any needs or supports DECAL could provide. Provider grantees reported child enrollment, hours offered, and information about staffing and facility improvements. Collaborative grantees reported the number and type of child care providers they worked with, hours offered by those providers, and additional partnerships they developed through the grant.
- **Grantee expense reports and itemized receipts.** The Institute of Government collated and analyzed data from expense reports and itemized receipts that grantees submitted for reimbursement to DECAL between October 2023 and June 2025. Grantee expenditures were categorized into 18 spending areas to capture the direct costs of operating nontraditional-hour child care, including staffing, maintenance, and materials, as well as supporting costs, such as administration, training, and outreach.

- **Focus groups and end-of-grant/exit interviews with grantees.** To learn more about grantees’ experiences and to obtain their feedback and recommendations, the Institute of Government conducted focus groups in July 2024 and end-of-grant/exit interviews with grantees.
- **Family intake forms.** Information and feedback from families was collected through a family intake form, which asked caregivers to provide information on their children, their households, their child care needs, and how they had addressed those needs prior to enrolling in the EXPAND-supported program. Providers were asked to invite and encourage families to complete the form during enrollment, though they were not required to do so. Overall, 132 families, representing 209 children, from nine of the 13 grantees completed family intake forms.
- **Family needs survey.** To further learn about the needs and preferences of families/caregivers, the EXPAND grantees were asked to disseminate a family needs survey to the families they served. Although the survey was primarily intended for families receiving EXPAND-supported care, the recruitment approach allowed any family served by the grantee providers to respond. In total, 69 survey responses were received from family members who received child care during nontraditional hours, whether from a grantee provider or informal arrangements. Because the family intake form and family needs survey were both distributed through grantees to families they served, some caregivers likely completed both instruments; however, the extent of this overlap cannot be determined.

Detailed analyses of the data from these sources are presented in separate analytic reports, included as appendices to this summary report (see Table 1). This summary report synthesizes findings from these five sources and the four detailed analytic reports.

Table 1: Appendix Reports and Data Sources

Appendix	Report	Data Sources
Appendix A	Qualitative Report	Monthly progress reports, grantee focus groups, and grantee exit interviews
Appendix B	Quantitative Report	Monthly progress reports and family intake forms
Appendix C	Family Needs Survey Report	Family needs survey
Appendix D	Financial Report	Monthly financial expenditure reports

Section 1. Overview of Grantees

The EXPAND grant application opened in June 2023, and in August, DECAL awarded 13 grants totaling approximately \$6.5 million to providers, nonprofits, and government entities to increase access to early care and learning in Georgia during nontraditional hours, defined as any hours between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. on weekdays and any time on weekends. The initial grant period ended in December 2024, though grantees with remaining grant dollars were able to extend their grants until June 2025 to expend all funds.

Seven licensed child care providers received funds to expand their operating hours in the early morning, in the evenings, overnight, and/or during the weekends. Awards ranged from \$91,000 to \$500,000. They could use grant funding for a variety of needs, including to increase staffing, pay, and benefits; provide staff professional development; upgrade their facilities, particularly improvements relevant to nontraditional hours; and develop new curricula. Five of these grantees were child care learning centers, and two were family child care learning homes.

Table 2 shows the type of providers, their county, and their licensed capacity. Though the grant funding period officially ended in December 2024, providers could extend the program through June 2025 if they had unspent funds. Two providers ended EXPAND in December 2024, one in March 2025, and four in June 2025. Consequently, reported enrollment data reflect January to November 2024, when all seven provider grantees were active.

Table 2: EXPAND Provider Grantees

Grantee Location	Provider Type	Licensed Capacity	Grant End Date
Lowndes County/Valdosta	Child care learning center	147	March 2025
Ben Hill County/Fitzgerald	Child care learning center	48	December 2024
Forsyth County/Alpharetta	Child care learning center	124	June 2025
Gwinnett County/Suwanee	Family child care learning home	5	June 2025
Clayton County/Ellenwood	Family child care learning home	6	December 2024
Barrow County/Winder	Child care learning center	87	June 2025
Paulding County/Hiram	Child care learning center	144	June 2025

DECAL awarded EXPAND grants to three government entities and three nonprofit organizations to form or strengthen partnerships in their communities to address the need for nontraditional-hour child care, including within their organizations if needed. The grants for these collaboratives ranged in size from \$350,000 to \$750,000. Grantees first developed a project and then piloted its implementation. Funds could be used for a variety of purposes, including for tuition support for families to cover child care expenses during nontraditional hours, to create resources to help match families to providers that met their needs, or to work with DECAL and other local resources to increase licensed child care options in their communities.

Table 3 provides details on the collaborative grantees, including their industry focus, care model, and location of grant services.

Table 3: Collaborative Grantees

Grantee Description	Care Model	Industry Focus	Location
Nonprofit theater company	Direct care	Short-term contract theater artists	Atlanta area
Nonprofit health system	Subcontracted care	Regional 24-hour operated companies	Central and South Georgia
Nonprofit association for manufacturers	Subcontracted care	Manufacturing employees	Statewide, near member facilities
Technical college	Direct care	Student-parents enrolled in early childhood and education programs	West-central Georgia
State health agency	Subcontracted care	Psychiatric hospital employees	Statewide, near agency hospitals
Regional economic development agency	Subcontracted care	Rural workforce development	South Georgia

Most collaboratives partnered with early care and education providers to offer care during nontraditional hours to support workers in their focal industry, such as healthcare or manufacturing. During the grant period, collaborative grantees partnered with 18 child care providers (11 centers and seven family child care learning home providers) to provide care during nontraditional hours. Two of the collaboratives, one government entity and one nonprofit, chose to provide care directly. The technical college expanded existing early care and education offerings for student-parents, and the nonprofit theater company established a new early care and education program for its employees.

Each collaborative used the grants to pilot distinct projects designed to increase the availability of nontraditional-hour care in their community.

Nonprofit theater company. The nonprofit theater company employs temporary, project-based contract performing artists from across the country who often need immediate but short-term

child care solutions due to irregular rehearsal and performance schedules. Because the families served are temporarily living away from their permanent residence, it was often difficult for them to find consistent child care solutions. The nonprofit, which already had a summer camp program for children, partnered with an area YMCA to create a new on-site child care program for its artists, staffed by artists.

Nonprofit health system. The health system partnered with a regional chamber of commerce to survey workers in Central Georgia engaged in nonstandard work hours about their child care needs. Based on these results, the collaborative partnered with area early care and education providers to extend their operating hours and also provided stipends to families to cover the cost of nontraditional-hour care. The nonprofit offered mini-grants to centers to purchase necessary items, such as cots and learning materials, to incentivize them to join.

Nonprofit association for manufacturers. The nonprofit partnered with early care and education providers to hire staff for nontraditional hours in areas where its member organizations have workers and demonstrated need. It also conducted outreach to parents.

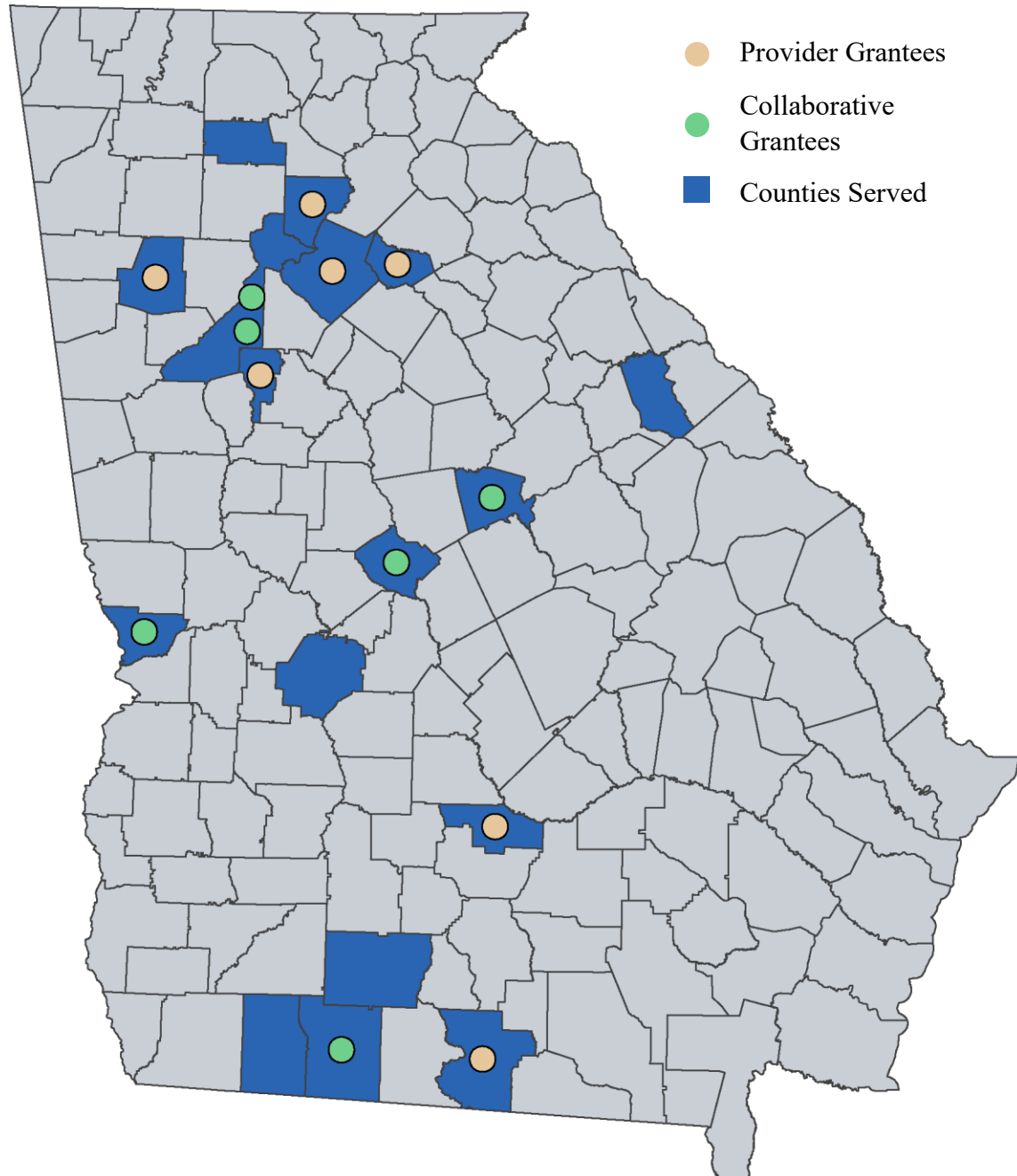
Technical college. The college's early childhood training program partnered with a community action agency that operates a Head Start program on campus to provide nontraditional-hour care during class time for student-parents enrolled in a one-semester technical training culminating in the Early Childhood Care and Basics certificate. Grant funds covered both the costs of the nontraditional-hour care and direct financial assistance to students for tuition, supplies, transportation, and other needs during the semester.

State health agency. The agency identified early care and education providers located near its hospitals across Georgia that were willing to offer nontraditional-hour care. It then conducted outreach to employees working the second or third shift and provided tuition support for that care.

Regional economic development agency. The agency partnered with licensed child care learning centers and family child care learning homes to extend their hours of operation. It also worked with the providers to establish a budget for nontraditional-hour care and provided coaching on basic business practices. The agency reimbursed providers for the costs associated with providing the care and tuition assistance for families. The agency also worked with the area chamber of commerce to match providers offering nontraditional-hour care with industry needs.

Across all 13 grantees, EXPAND supported nontraditional-hour child care in 17 counties in Georgia, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Map of EXPAND Grantee Locations



Nontraditional-Hour Care Supported by EXPAND

The primary goal of the EXPAND grant was to increase access to child care during nontraditional hours. During the grant period, all grantees were successful in offering nontraditional-hour care, predominantly through additional morning and evening hours.

Over the grant period, all grantees offered extended evening hours, with extended morning hours offered by 86% of providers and 33% of collaborative grantees (Table 4). All collaborative grantees and four provider grantees offered weekend hours, while only two providers and one collaborative grantee offered overnight hours.

Table 4: Nontraditional Care Hours Supported by EXPAND

	Number of Collaboratives	Number of Providers
Morning hours	2 (33%)	6 (86%)
Evening hours	6 (100%)	7 (100%)
Overnight	1 (17%)	2 (29%)
Weekend	6 (100%)	4 (57%)

Among the provider grantees, monthly enrollments averaged 52.7 children in evening hours and 36.6 children in early morning hours from January to November 2024, as shown in Table 5. Monthly enrollments were only reported by provider grantees, so this information is not available for the collaboratives. Across the seven providers, the number of children in early morning care ranged from 19 to 61 per month, with an average of 6.2 children attending in early mornings per month per provider. Across all seven providers from January 2024 to June 2025, there were 13,364 nontraditional hours offered.

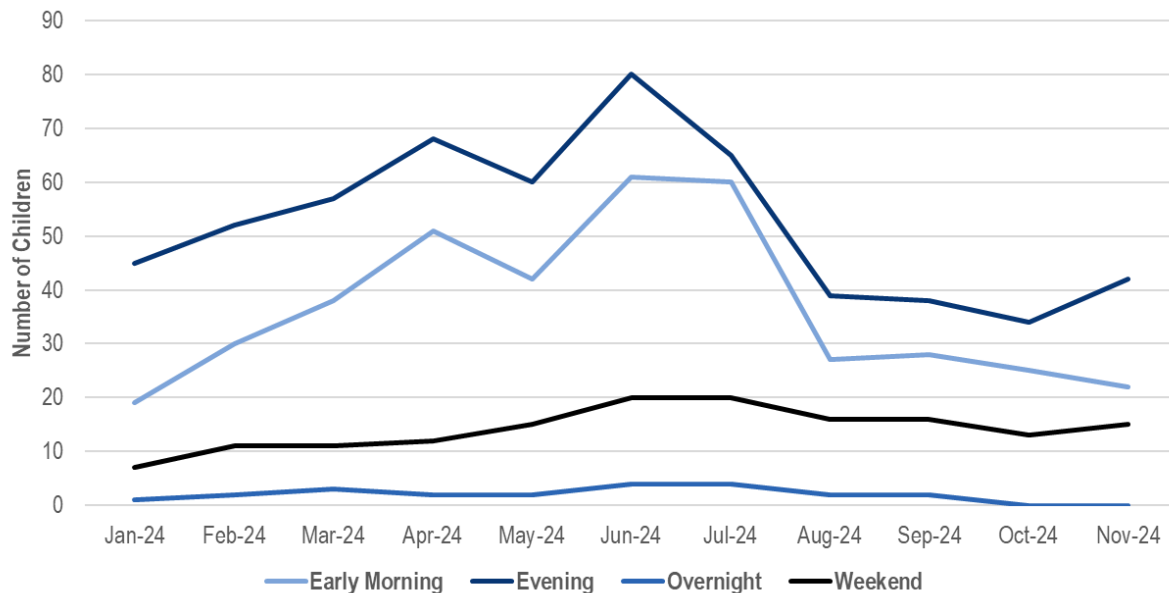
Table 5: Monthly Enrollment in Nontraditional-Hour Care at EXPAND Providers

	Number of Providers	Average Monthly Enrollment*	Range	Median	Average per Provider
Morning hours	6 (86%)	36.6 children	19–61	30	6.2 (Range: 0–25, Median: 5)
Evening hours	7 (100%)	52.7 children	34–81	52	7.8 (Range: 0–29, Median: 5)
Overnight	2 (29%)	—	—	—	—
Weekend	4 (57%)	14.2 children	7–20	15	3.1 (Range: 0–9, Median: 3)

Averages are based on January to November 2024 data (when all grantees were active). Average enrollment for overnight care was not calculated due to the low number of grantees offering these hours and low overall enrollment.

Figure 2 shows average nontraditional-hour care enrollments by month for provider grantees between January and November 2024, when all providers were active. Notably, enrollments surged during the summer months when public schools were not in session, suggesting possible increased demand for nontraditional-hour care in the summer.

Figure 2. Nontraditional-Hour Child Care Enrollment by Month for Provider Grantees



Note that children may have been enrolled in more than one nontraditional time period.

Uses of EXPAND Grant Funds

Grantees were given flexibility in how they could spend the EXPAND funding, including for worker pay, facility maintenance and improvements, tuition support for families, professional development, and supplies and materials. The three main categories of spending were wages and salaries, family financial support, and facility maintenance and renovations.

- **Wages and salaries.** By far, the largest spending category was wages and salaries, with some grantees spending more than half of their budget in this category. As the nonprofit theater company used EXPAND to develop and staff a new child care program, it is unsurprising that approximately 80% of its funding was used to cover salaries and administrative costs. In contrast, the technical college used only about 6% of its funding on wages and salaries. Among the other 11 grantees, wages and salaries represented a collective 58.7% of their reported expenses, accounting for approximately \$2.5 million in grant funding.

- **Family financial support.** Family financial support, which generally covered tuition assistance for families with demonstrated need enrolled in nontraditional-hour care, was the second-largest expenditure category, though fewer than half of grantees offered this benefit. Due to its unique pilot program, the technical college spent the majority of its grant funding supporting student-parents' tuition, fees, supplies, and other expenses. Among the other six grantees offering family financial support, spending ranged from 4% to 54% of individual grantee expenses.
- **Facility improvements.** Investments in facilities varied widely across grantees, ranging from less than 1% to over 50% of funding, depending on needs. These investments included furniture, kitchen upgrades, playground equipment, outdoor lighting for evening activities, and other facility upgrades critical for creating safe environments for children during nontraditional hours. Some of the most expensive purchases in this area included playground equipment, fences for security and safety, and generators.
- **Other spending categories.** Grantees used a relatively small portion of their budgets to purchase additional materials like sleeping cots, instructional support software, books, and basic school supplies (e.g., backpacks, writing instruments) specifically for children enrolled in care during nontraditional hours. Additionally, some grantees devoted funding to professional development geared toward challenges arising during nontraditional-hour care, including stress management, child behavioral management, and nutrition. Other categories of spending included insurance, technology, and marketing and outreach.
- **Notable one-time purchases.** Some one-time purchases highlight how unique needs shaped spending. One grantee spent over \$48,000 on marketing and outreach, and another invested \$30,000 in a van to support transportation needs during the weekend. Although these were specific instances of one-time expenditures, they underscore the importance of allowing for flexible spending approaches.

These findings suggest that no one-size-fits-all model can effectively support the expansion of child care hours. They also highlight the importance of flexible spending structures that allow providers and collaboratives to tailor investments to their specific community needs, staffing realities, and operational structures.

Section 2. Evaluation Findings

This section presents key findings from the EXPAND evaluation. These findings synthesize results from separate analytic reports, included as appendices to this summary report. (See Table 1 for a list of these reports and associated data sources.)

Simply increasing the availability of care during nontraditional hours does not guarantee families will enroll, particularly in the short term.

During focus groups and exit interviews, both provider and collaborative grantees discussed difficulty recruiting families for nontraditional-hour care, particularly early in the grant period. Four factors help explain this struggle to enroll families in nontraditional-hour care.

- **Already had stable care.** Many of the families the grantees were targeting already had a child care plan for nontraditional hours. Families navigate complex tradeoffs when making work and child care decisions, balancing wages, schedules, transportation, cost, availability, and child well-being. For parents with nonstandard work schedules, decisions often prioritize stability and affordability of care, leading families to select or avoid jobs based on whether child care options align with hours and costs they can sustain over time. Thus, the introduction of a new option in child care may not immediately translate into demand for that care. Instead, the option needs to be on the table when families are making employment decisions.

This finding is further supported by results from the family intake forms, which showed that many families enrolled in EXPAND-supported care due to changes in their work or school schedules or issues with their current child care arrangements. At intake, 34% cited changes to their work schedule, 7% a change in their partner's work schedule, 5% changes in their school schedule, and 1% changes in their partner's school schedule as reasons they required nontraditional-hour care. Families also cited their previous care being unavailable (18%) or needing a more reliable care option (17%).

- **Short duration of grant.** The grants supported nontraditional-hour care for a limited period of time (12 to 18 months), with no guarantee that the extended hours would continue after the grant ended. Grantees reported and responses to the family needs survey further indicate that families knew they would continue to require care after the grant ended and did not want to lose the arrangements they had in place. Short-term or temporary arrangements, even when more developmentally or financially advantageous, may disrupt established care, leading families to forgo potentially better care options in order to preserve continuity and reduce risk for children and families.

- **Unpredictable work schedules.** Nonstandard work hours are often unpredictable, marked by rotating shifts, last-minute changes, and uneven weekly hours, pushing families to rely on drop-in or flexible arrangements. For providers, this inconsistency creates staffing issues because they cannot reliably forecast how many teachers or caregivers are needed at any given time, making drop-in care a risky business model.

Families cited unpredictable work schedules as a barrier to accessing formal child care during nontraditional hours on both the family intake forms and the family survey.

- **Families primarily relied on unpaid care prior to EXPAND.** Before enrolling in care through an EXPAND grantee, many families were depending on unpaid care, such as a grandparent or friend. At intake, families reported relying on unpaid members of the household (24%) or unpaid family and friends (24%) to care for their children during nontraditional hours. Paid friends or family members (16%) or paid babysitters (16%) were other common prior child care arrangements. Similar patterns were seen in the survey results, with respondents relying on a grandparent outside of the household (39%), their spouse/partner (36%), a grandparent within the household (29%), other family members outside the household (22%), paid babysitters (22%), and neighbors or friends (16%) to care for their children.

Nontraditional-hour care typically involves a fee for services, which many families cannot afford. As one collaborative said, “Our program came with a cost, and the audience that we’re targeting doesn’t really have the income to add that cost to their plate.” Consequently, many grantees used some of the funding for tuition assistance to help families cover the cost of nontraditional-hour child care. Overall, 67% of those completing the family intake forms stated that they “probably cannot” or “definitely cannot” afford child care during nontraditional hours without financial support. Among families that completed an intake form, 59% of caregivers in single-earner households reported they “definitely cannot” afford child care during nontraditional hours, compared to 29% of caregivers in dual-earner households.

The high level of financial need among families also complicates long-term sustainability. When families are unable to pay the full cost of care, programs must rely on subsidies or grant funding to maintain enrollment and cover the added staffing and operating costs of nontraditional hours.

Two collaboratives that were successful in recruiting families as planned exemplify these dynamics. Both the nonprofit theater company and the technical college provided nontraditional-hour care to families in unique, time-limited situations when the option of using the care funded by EXPAND was part of the decision process. The theater company offered drop-in care to performing artists from across the country with short-term contracts who needed care during their irregular rehearsal and performance schedules. Many artists were able to perform in

Georgia due to the EXPAND-supported care. For the technical college, students were beginning a new semester-long program that met in the evenings and on weekends, and they were provided financial assistance to cover the cost of the nontraditional-hour care and other expenses. Even in this context, demand for the nontraditional-hour care was lower than expected, as some parents were reluctant to alter existing weekend arrangements that they would continue to need after the semester ended.

Demand for nontraditional-hour care supported by EXPAND was primarily among lower income families, many working in the service industry.

A 2024 Urban Institute study found that more than one-third of the estimated 475,000 children in Georgia who need nonparental care during nontraditional hours have parents who work in manufacturing or the healthcare and social assistance industry.³ Consequently, several of the collaboratives initially targeted healthcare and manufacturing employees, anticipating that parents in these shift-based industries would be the primary users of nontraditional-hour child care. However, intake forms and survey data revealed a notable share of caregivers employed in the service industry, such as retail, food service, and hospitality.

Family intake data also indicate that demand for EXPAND-supported nontraditional-hour care was concentrated among lower-income households. More than half (56%) of caregivers who completed the intake form reported that only one adult was supporting the household financially, and among these single-earner households, most (61%) earned between \$1,000 and \$2,499 per month. Another 42% of respondents reported two adults contributing to household income, and among these dual-earner households, most (51%) earned more than \$4,000 per month.

Demographic information from the intake forms further illustrates who relied on EXPAND-supported care. Children served were primarily between ages one and four (56%). Families were racially and ethnically diverse, with 57% of children identified as Black or African American, 24% as White, 14% as two or more races, 4% as Hispanic, and 1% as Asian, suggesting that nontraditional-hour child care needs span a broad range of Georgians.

In focus groups and exit interviews, collaboratives said they found that higher-paid healthcare workers, such as doctors and nurses, already had nannies or au pairs, while second- and third-shift manufacturing employees were generally men whose partners were home in the evenings and nights. Several collaboratives shifted focus to lower income families after finding a lack of demand for nontraditional-hour child care among their original target populations.

The short duration of the grant may have impacted who utilized the nontraditional-hour care supported by EXPAND. Providers and collaboratives noted that many service industry

³ Derrick-Mills et al., 2024.

workers were able to temporarily change their shifts when nontraditional-hour care was offered through EXPAND, such as restaurant staff working in the evenings when tips are more lucrative. Because they could return to daytime shifts after the funding ended, utilizing the EXPAND-supported care did not disrupt previous child care arrangements.

These patterns again underscore that families do not make employment or child care decisions in isolation but consider them jointly given the full set of options available.

Establishing trust with parents is essential for nontraditional-hour care.

During interviews and focus groups, provider grantees suggested that one reason for low enrollment during nontraditional hours at the start of the grant was that parents were unfamiliar with the idea and less comfortable leaving their children with a child care provider during the evening or overnight than during the day. To address this concern, grantees upgraded security features, such as lighting and door cameras, and shared videos with parents.

These upgrades align with findings from a 2024 Urban Institute study on the need for nontraditional-hour care in Georgia. Researchers found that parents universally prioritized child safety, emphasizing the need for trusted caregivers established through background checks or prior relationships, along with the ability to monitor their children via video or similar communication tools.⁴

Family survey results suggest that providers were successful in establishing trust with parents. The majority of respondents (83%) indicated that nontraditional-hour child care gave them peace of mind knowing their child was well cared for (83%), that it allowed them to be more focused at school or work (73%), and that it reduced stress about parenting (67%). Several parents from a partner provider submitted letters of appreciation, stating that the nontraditional-hour care supported by EXPAND allowed them to “work stress free from child care related issues” and “become a more dependable employee.” Another parent stated, “If it hadn’t been for all of you, I would have lost my job.”

Families value formal, nontraditional-hour child care but face hurdles of unavailability, inconsistent work hours, and lack of affordability.

Results from the survey and intake forms suggest that families see the benefits of formal nontraditional-hour care and would prefer that trained staff care for their children. As discussed earlier, many are unable to utilize such care due to inconsistent work hours and/or cost.

⁴ Derrick-Mills et al., 2024.

The intake form asked about the difficulties families had experienced accessing child care during nontraditional hours prior to EXPAND. Caregivers most often cited the inability to find providers that offered nontraditional hours (40%), the cost (28%), and unpredictable work schedules (23%).

When asked to select from a variety of formal and informal care options, 50% of survey respondents reported they would prefer nontraditional-hour child care to take place at a licensed child care learning center with professionally trained staff. An additional 6% reported a preference for a licensed family child care learning home.

Survey respondents most commonly cited flexibility around their schedule (70%), a safe environment for their child (66%), affordability (58%), and long-term availability as top factors when considering options for child care during nontraditional hours.

Grantees faced common challenges in providing nontraditional-hour care, including staffing and regulatory issues.

During focus groups and exit interviews, grantees discussed challenges they faced in providing nontraditional-hour care, including hiring and retaining staff, maintaining child-caregiver ratios during crossover times, and understanding CAPS reimbursement policies for nontraditional hours.

- **Finding and retaining qualified staff to work nontraditional hours.** A common challenge across the EXPAND provider grantees and the providers with which the collaboratives partnered was the struggle to find and retain qualified staff. To increase capacity to serve children during nontraditional hours, grantees reported hiring new workers or increasing the hours or pay of existing teaching and administrative staff to serve during expanded hours as well as nutrition staff to provide additional meals. More than 50% of grant funding was used for staff wages and salaries, underscoring the importance of staffing to the success of any initiative to encourage nontraditional-hour care.
- **Maintaining child-staff ratios.** Some grantees mentioned challenges maintaining child-staff ratios when children in regular daytime care overlapped with those requiring nontraditional-hour care. For example, one collaborative explained that the second shift at a large manufacturer begins at 3:00 but regular-hour children stay until 5:00. Although this challenge was not widespread among the EXPAND-supported providers, it could reemerge in future initiatives targeting healthcare and manufacturing shift workers.
- **Using CAPS for nontraditional hours.** Several grantees reported confusion and frustration when attempting to use Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) funding for

nontraditional-hour care.⁵ DECAL clarified that although CAPS does not offer a separate scholarship specifically for nontraditional hours, providers may use the regular full-time CAPS scholarship for reimbursement and may request a higher reimbursement rate if the nontraditional-hour rates exceed their published full-time rates. Grantees noted the process for submitting justification for these reimbursements was complex and burdensome, which resulted in some reimbursements being denied. Streamlining the reimbursement process for nontraditional hours could help reduce administrative challenges for providers and improve access to care for families.

Some grantees planned to continue offering nontraditional hours past the grant period with some changes in hours, but some collaboratives did not expect their pilots to continue.

Six provider grantees intended to continue offering nontraditional-hour child care after the grant ended, with the remaining provider unable to do so due to a change in ownership. Most anticipated reducing the hours offered, citing low demand for weekend hours and late nights as well as staffing challenges during those times. Providers mentioned donations, partnerships with parents and community organizations, and fundraising activities as possible funding sources, suggesting that parent fees and state and federal funding alone would be insufficient to sustain this care model over time.

Several collaboratives were committed to continuing the work begun during EXPAND through their provider partners or new funding opportunities. The technical college's early childhood training program noted that although the financial support for student-parents funded through EXPAND had ended, the grant had strengthened their partnership with the on-campus early care and education provider. They expected to work together through other initiatives in the future. The theater company successfully launched a new child care program for contract artists and planned to maintain it through ongoing fundraising. The economic development agency deepened its understanding of child care as both an economic development and workforce issue and will continue offering business supports to early care and education providers beyond the grant period. It also planned to continue working with the area chamber of commerce to identify child care providers and match them with industry needs.

Other collaboratives, however, indicated that their partner providers were unlikely to continue nontraditional-hour care due to associated costs. The contrast between the provider grantees and the providers who partnered with the collaboratives is notable. Providers that received direct grants devoted significant time to revising their business models, and many used EXPAND funding to make strategic, long-desired investments in their facilities and businesses

⁵ The federally funded and state-administered CAPS program provides scholarships to help low-income families afford child care.

to support nontraditional-hour care. For example, one provider purchased a van for transporting children during weekends. Another installed a security system that allowed parents to view their children late in the day and on the weekends. Others bought backup generators to ensure power in the evenings during poor weather or new lighting for their playgrounds in the evenings. These investments reflect a longer-term commitment to offering nontraditional-hour care.

In contrast, many providers partnering with collaboratives expanded hours primarily in response to grant-supported demand. When tuition assistance and other supplemental supports ended, the financial incentive to continue also diminished. Collaboratives largely focused their resources on partnership development, outreach, and tuition assistance during the grant period, which helped families access care but did not always create a sustainable business model for providers. As discussed below, a longer grant period and additional planning time may have allowed collaboratives to structure partnerships in ways that better supported long-term sustainability.

Grantees indicated that a longer grant period would likely have improved family enrollments.

According to both provider and collaborative grantees, the short duration of the grant (12 to 18 months) was a barrier to enrolling families and impeded some potential partnerships.

- **Families did not want to disrupt stable care arrangements.** As discussed earlier, grantees could not guarantee that the expanded hours would continue after the grant ended. Therefore, families with stable arrangements in place who knew they would continue to require care after the grant period were hesitant to enroll in the EXPAND-supported care.
- **Collaboratives had difficulty recruiting provider partners.** Many of the collaboratives reported difficulty recruiting early care and education providers to offer nontraditional-hour care because providers were reluctant to create expectations of care they could not sustain once grant funding ended. Even though some collaboratives offered tuition assistance to families, providers hesitated to participate because they did not want families to become dependent on care that might later be withdrawn. In the words of one collaborative, “They didn’t want to dangle that carrot for the short term.” Furthermore, some providers felt that investing time in understanding licensing requirements for nontraditional hours and implementing needed changes was not worth the effort for a single year.
- **The short grant period limited partnership development.** Several collaboratives reported that anticipated partnerships did not materialize once prospective partners learned the grant would last only one year. For example, the regional economic development agency collaborative was unable to pilot its original proposal: an employer-

provided child care benefit at an area hospital that would have been funded through EXPAND. The hospital dropped out of the partnership because leaders felt that a single year was insufficient to assess the effectiveness of the benefit. The collaborative had to pivot to partnering with area early care and education providers to offer nontraditional-hour care to families in the region. Similarly, for other collaboratives, partnerships with manufacturers interested in piloting extended-hour care for employees did not move forward, as employers were unwilling to launch a benefit they might not be able to sustain beyond the grant period.

Grantees suggested that more planning time and guidance from DECAL early on would have improved implementation.

The preplanning period for the grants began in October 2023, with the expectation that implementation would begin in January 2024. While some providers were able to expand hours immediately, many of the grantees discussed the need for a longer planning period and more guidance from DECAL prior to the start of the grant.

- **Provider perspective.** Provider grantees indicated that more planning time would have better supported establishing trust with families and onboarding staff. All providers agreed that EXPAND would have been more effective if they had sufficient planning time to gather detailed information on who needs nontraditional-hour care and the specific hours required, and then develop a plan guided by that data. In addition, the providers were unfamiliar with offering nontraditional-hour care and expressed difficulty with processes like staffing, outreach and advertising, obtaining appropriate insurance, and compliance with licensing regulations during nontraditional hours. More planning time would have allowed them to begin offering expanded hours earlier in the grant period.

During focus groups and exit interviews, providers also indicated the need for additional information and guidance from DECAL on how to add nontraditional hours to the services they already offered. Some providers suggested that the agency coordinate a peer network of providers offering nontraditional hours to answer questions and exchange ideas.

- **Collaborative perspective.** Many collaboratives experienced a slow start to service delivery, largely because they were unfamiliar with providing child care and the complexity it entailed. During focus groups and exit interviews, several collaboratives discussed underestimating the time, staffing, and coordination required to launch nontraditional-hour care services. For most, EXPAND responsibilities were added to existing workloads, and some noted that a longer planning period would have allowed them to hire or reassign staff to focus on the initiative full time.

Navigating state licensing requirements and local regulatory compliance proved more challenging than anticipated. Collaboratives also reported needing additional time to build partnerships, recruit providers, and clarify their target populations, making the planning stage both more demanding than anticipated and essential for ultimately connecting families to needed services.

In addition, when the large demand among their original target populations failed to materialize, collaboratives had to adjust their approach and expand outreach to lower-income workers, an unfamiliar audience for many of them. This pivot required forming new partnerships and, in some cases, developing new systems and infrastructure to support nontraditional-hour care, efforts that further underscored the need for a longer planning and implementation timeline.

While the collaboratives generally found the DECAL staff to be informed and supportive, some recommended that additional early-stage support be provided, such as resources explaining licensing requirements, an updated list of providers who currently offer nontraditional-hour care, and information on outreach to parents.

The flexibility of the grant was vital to success for the collaboratives.

Many collaboratives faced a stiff learning curve, as they were unfamiliar with the provision of child care and needed to form new partnerships and, in many cases, develop new infrastructure to offer nontraditional-hour care. Many partnerships and plans envisioned at the outset of the grant evolved as the collaboratives developed a clearer understanding of the need for nontraditional-hour care in their communities and as partners learned more about the funding model.

For some collaboratives, this learning process led to shifts in target populations for EXPAND-supported care as local demand became more apparent. Other grantees discovered that matching families with available nontraditional-hour providers required substantially more time and coordination than anticipated, prompting them to allocate a greater share of funds to administrative functions than originally planned. In another case, a collaborative that struggled to recruit providers introduced mini-grants to offset providers' start-up expenses related to offering nontraditional-hour care—an approach not envisioned at the outset of the grant.

During focus groups and end-of-grant interviews, collaborative grantees praised the DECAL team's flexibility and responsiveness, noting their willingness to offer new perspectives and practical suggestions that helped collaboratives adapt and move forward when challenges arose.

Section 3. Discussion and Considerations

The evaluation findings indicate that the collaborative approach to addressing the need for nontraditional-hour care is a strong model. By bringing together employers, providers, and community organizations, collaboratives aligned services with local workforce needs and leveraged community resources to support implementation. At the same time, direct grants to motivated providers who understood their communities allowed them to make strategic investments that strengthened their capacity to offer nontraditional-hour care.

The evaluation findings point to several policy considerations for DECAL as it designs future efforts to expand nontraditional-hour child care in Georgia. The recommendations below reflect lessons learned from both providers and collaboratives and highlight opportunities to strengthen program design and long-term sustainability.

- **Strengthen program sustainability through longer grant cycles.** To strengthen future initiatives, DECAL could incorporate a longer planning period—collaboratives suggested 12 to 18 months, with a shorter planning phase for providers—followed by a grant term of at least two years. A longer planning window would allow collaboratives to build partnerships, assess community demand, conduct outreach to parents, navigate licensing and regulatory requirements, and establish the infrastructure needed to support nontraditional-hour care. For providers, targeted early technical assistance and sufficient lead time would support staffing, outreach, and compliance efforts.

Extending the implementation period to a minimum of two years would help reduce uncertainty for families and partners, improve enrollment and provider participation, and increase the likelihood of sustainable impact. Because child care arrangements and employment decisions are interconnected, new nontraditional-hour options may not generate demand unless families can rely on their continued availability. Longer grant cycles would better position families to incorporate nontraditional-hour care into their employment planning.

- **Improve targeting with data-driven needs assessments.** For future initiatives, DECAL could consider requiring a formal needs assessment either prior to award or as a component of the planning period. Although several collaboratives conducted surveys indicating a strong need for nontraditional-hour care in their communities, enrollment among their original target populations did not materialize as expected, underscoring the importance of rigorous, data-informed analysis. DECAL’s knowledge of the child care landscape and its relationships with providers and families position the agency to guide grantees in designing effective assessments or to connect them with experts who can help identify and reach the appropriate target audiences. Providing structured tools and technical assistance for community-based needs assessments would help ensure stronger

alignment between program design and demonstrated demand, increasing the likelihood of sustainable impact.

- **Provide technical guidance at grant launch.** Grantees reported difficulty navigating processes like licensing and outreach to parents. While they emphasized that DECAL's guidance and responsiveness were critical to successfully implementing their programs, several noted that more structured support at the outset would have allowed them to offer services more quickly. Future initiatives could incorporate grant kickoff activities that include an overview of Quality Rated, the CAPS program, and licensing requirements, especially those relevant to nontraditional-hour care; highlight relevant existing business and operational supports, such as DECAL's Thriving Child Care Business Academy; and share best practices on reaching and recruiting families.
- **Promote the value of licensed early care and education.** The evaluation found that many families rely on informal, unpaid nonparental care during nontraditional hours. Providers reported that persuading families to pay for care they currently receive at little or no cost can be challenging. Future initiatives could address the need to communicate the benefits of licensed nontraditional-hour care to families who currently rely on unpaid informal arrangements. Licensed providers offer safe, structured, and nurturing environments that often include enrichment activities, homework support, and meals planned by a nutritionist. DECAL can support this effort through targeted outreach and clear, accessible resources that highlight the added value of licensed care, helping families make informed choices while strengthening providers' ability to expand access.
- **Support nontraditional-hour care through family tuition assistance.** Many families shared that they cannot afford formal nontraditional-hour child care without financial assistance, highlighting the need for consistent, easy-to-navigate tuition assistance options. Future efforts could focus on making financial supports for nontraditional-hour care easier to access. DECAL could explore ways to simplify processes such as CAPS reimbursements for nontraditional-hour care and help identify and coordinate other available funding sources.
- **Consider families' irregular work hours.** Future initiatives could explore models that better accommodate families with unpredictable or rotating work schedules, including structured drop-in or flexible nontraditional-hour care options. Evaluation findings indicate that many families utilizing EXPAND-supported care cited unpredictable work schedules as a barrier to accessing care, and 70% of surveyed families identified schedule flexibility as a top priority when selecting child care. Because inconsistent attendance creates financial and staffing challenges for providers, these models may require higher reimbursement rates, guaranteed minimum payments, or other financial supports to offset risk. Designing funding policies that account for fluctuating enrollment would make it

more feasible for providers to offer flexible care while meeting licensing and staffing requirements.

- **Build flexibility into future grant design.** A strength of the EXPAND grant program was its flexibility. Future initiatives would benefit from incorporating a high degree of flexibility in both program design and grant administration. As collaboratives gained experience coordinating child care services, many needed to adjust target populations, reallocate funds, or introduce new strategies such as provider mini-grants in response to emerging challenges and local demand. Allowing grantees this flexibility supported problem-solving and more effective implementation.
- **Consider a phased funding approach.** Future funding opportunities could adopt a phased approach to improve sustainability. Although most provider grantees planned to continue offering nontraditional-hour care, many expected to reduce hours due to low enrollment and staffing costs, and several collaboratives indicated that their provider partners could not continue without additional support. Because low enrollment limits revenue from parent fees and public funding, initial grants could focus on start-up costs such as infrastructure and staffing. Salary support could then decrease as enrollment grows and programs generate sufficient revenue to sustain operations.

Taken together, these policy considerations reflect the lessons learned from the EXPAND initiative that can inform future efforts. Both provider and collaborative grantees emphasized that the program benefited families by expanding access to licensed care during nontraditional hours, allowing parents to work or attend school while their children were in a safe environment. The initiative demonstrates that targeted investments can expand access to nontraditional-hour child care in Georgia when paired with strong implementation support. Overall, the evaluation findings underscore the potential of nontraditional-hour care initiatives to support working families while advancing broader community and workforce goals.

Appendix A.

Qualitative Report

About This Study

In 2021, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) contracted with the Urban Institute to conduct stakeholder engagement with Georgia families, child care providers, the early care and education (ECE) workforce, DECAL staff, and other stakeholder groups about supports Georgia's ECE system needed. Results of this stakeholder engagement were used to inform how federal COVID-19 relief funding should be used to support Georgia's ECE system.⁶ One of the Urban Institute's key recommendations based on families' feedback was to support child care providers in extending their hours of operation, which was further explored to understand the need for nontraditional hour child care in Georgia. DECAL designed the Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) grant to address child care needs during nontraditional hours, defined as 6:00 PM to 7:00 AM on weekdays and any time on weekends for the purpose of the grant.

EXPAND grant was awarded to two groups of grantees: 1) licensed child care providers and 2) six government entities and nonprofit organizations (collectively called collaboratives under the grant). Overall, seven licensed child care providers (including five child care learning centers and two family child care learning homes) and six collaboratives received EXPAND grants. EXPAND grant's monies supported licensed child care providers by allowing them to adjust their hours to stay open during nontraditional hours, increase staffing and/or staff pay, and upgrade their facility to ensure a safer and healthier environment for the children enrolled in the program. The EXPAND grant helped government entities and nonprofit organizations, including technical schools and universities, address the need for nontraditional hour child care in their local community, including within their organizations.

These findings provide participants' subjective views, opinions, and perceptions of the implementation and experience of the EXPAND grant and Georgia's early care and education system. These perceptions do not necessarily reflect the early care and education system's actual policies and practices, but instead represent participants' beliefs, opinions, and views of how the system operates.

Key Takeaways

This report presents findings from monthly grantee reports, focus groups, and exit interviews conducted as a part of the evaluation for the EXPAND grant. The interviews and focus groups were conducted with provider and collaborative grantees to assess the grant's effectiveness in connecting families to nontraditional hour child care. The following information presents key takeaways.

⁶ The report and related information can be found here: <https://www.decals.ga.gov/BftS/Research.aspx>.



Cross-Grantee Key Takeaways

- Grantees were successful in providing extended child care services during nontraditional hours which include weekends, early mornings, nights, and 24-hour care.
- Grantees were able to adapt the financial support they received to best serve families; they provided tuition assistance to families to help cover the cost of child care.
- Enrollment rates were lower than anticipated across grantees due to concerns from families about the cost of nontraditional hour care and the fact that families already had alternative systems of care in place.
- Grantees benefited from existing relationships with local organizations and developed new partnerships to implement nontraditional hours in their communities.
- Extending the duration of the grant cycle for future similar grants would give grantees more time to develop a plan prior to grant implementation.

Providers Key Takeaways

- The EXPAND grant provided resources to hire new staff, provide counseling, expand curriculums, and make facility and security upgrades to child care centers to accommodate nontraditional hour care.
- The grant provided the early care and education workforce with professional development opportunities to continue providing better care for children.
- DECAL responsiveness and attentiveness was integral to the successful implementation of the grant.
- CAPS reimbursement process for nontraditional hours was a barrier for providers trying to offer nontraditional hour care due to providers not understanding CAPS policies for scholarships covering nontraditional hour care.
- Staffing and employee retention, lack of affordability, and lack of preplanning guidelines all acted as barriers for providers in providing nontraditional hour care.
- Providers, with DECAL's assistance, should have a plan and a database of resources and guidelines in place prior to implementing nontraditional hour care services.
- Most providers are continuing to offer nontraditional hour child care after the grant.

Collaboratives Key Takeaways

- Collaboratives believe that the EXPAND grant positively impacted families, the ECE workforce, and the overall economic vitality of their communities.
- Throughout the grant period, collaboratives were able to develop new relationships and strengthen existing community partnerships.
- Collaboratives agreed the grant cycle was too short to both plan and implement sustainable nontraditional hours beyond the completion of the grant.
- Most collaboratives are unable to continue working with providers to offer nontraditional hour care due to both the higher cost of offering nontraditional hour child care and a lack of demand from families.

Methodology

DECAL contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (Institute of Government) to conduct an evaluation of the EXPAND grant. The evaluation report includes qualitative data from three sources: monthly grantee reports, focus groups, and exit interviews.

Throughout the duration of the EXPAND grant, grantees submitted online monthly reports detailing grantees' experience with renovations, accomplishments, challenges or changes, and any additional comments or requests for support. DECAL staff shared the monthly reports with Institute of Government staff who then coded and analyzed the grantee statements.

On July 19, 2024, the Institute of Government conducted two focus groups with child care provider and collaborative grantees. Eighteen representatives from the grantees participated in the focus groups: nine provider grantees and nine collaborative grantees. Between February and June 2025, the Institute of Government conducted exit interviews with seven provider and six collaborative grantees to determine their experience and assess the grant's effectiveness in connecting families to nontraditional hour child care.

These qualitative methods enabled the Institute of Government researchers to identify themes around grantees' experiences with implementing the grant; their accomplishments; recruitment, outreach and enrollment methods; challenges and barriers; and their sustainability plans.

Focus groups were conducted in-person and exit interviews were conducted virtually by two Institute of Government staff members with the informed consent of grantees. Two different focus group protocols were used for both the focus groups and the exit interviews: a provider grantee focus group protocol (Appendix A1), a collaborative grantee focus group protocol (Appendix A2), a provider grantee exit interview protocol (Appendix A3), and a collaborative grantee exit interview protocol (Appendix A4). Audio from both focus groups and exit interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy by the researchers.

Findings

In this section, the findings from provider grantees and the collaboratives grantees are discussed separately to adequately address the nuances of each set of grantees. Findings from the provider grantees are presented in four categories: 1) grant activities and accomplishments 2) challenges and barriers, 3) lessons learned, and 4) sustainability. Findings from collaborative grantees are presented in five categories: 1) grant activities and accomplishments, 2) outreach and relationships, 3) challenges and barriers, 4) lessons learned, and 5) sustainability.

Providers' Perspectives

Grant Activities and Accomplishments

Child care providers mentioned that the EXPAND grant allowed them to incorporate new activities and accomplishments in their various child care programs. Some of these activities and accomplishments include:

1. Expanded child care options during nontraditional hours.
2. Hired new staff and provided staff training.
3. Upgraded facilities and acquired new materials and equipment.
4. Increased enrollment capacity at child care centers.
5. Provided tuition assistance for families using nontraditional hour care.
6. Grew local community partnerships and connected families to community resources.
7. Introduced new activities to their curricula and boosted the Quality Rated star rating for one provider.

Expanded Child Care Hours. Providers confirmed they were able to expand their child care services to include nontraditional hours like weekends, early mornings, evening, overnight, and 24-hour care, following the onset of the grant. One provider reported that they extended their weekday opening hours to include two and a half hours of additional evening service. The EXPAND grant enabled providers to offer additional hours of care to accommodate families in need of child care during nontraditional hours.

Hired New Staff, Staff Training, and Material Resources. The extension to nontraditional hours created a need for more human support, and this need was met by providers hiring additional staff or extending the hours of existing staff using grant resources. One provider explained that the grant also allowed them to increase staff wages. Thus, the grant created more job opportunities for child care employees. New staff were employed, and the existing staff worked more hours with a salary increase.

Additionally, the new and existing staff members needed child care training on stress management, behavioral issues management, and child nutrition to help them deliver better services. Supporting the training needs of staff became possible through the utilization of grant resources. Both new and old staff had to undergo training in stress management, child behavioral management, and nutrition to accustom themselves to the changes brought by the provision of nontraditional hour care.

Facility and Equipment Upgrades. With the grant resources, providers were able to upgrade their facilities and procure new equipment and materials particularly instrumental to providing nontraditional hour care. Providers made the following improvements to accommodate children during nontraditional hours: upgraded their communication and security systems, improved outdoor playground lighting for evening activities, purchased a transportation van to pick up and drop off children during the weekend, upgraded their kitchen area, and improved



safety measures on their playgrounds. These upgrades positively impacted the children, staff, and parents' experiences during nontraditional hour care.

In addition to these facility upgrades, some providers were able to provide additional materials like sleeping cots, classroom and basic school supplies (e.g., backpacks, writing instruments), and reading materials specifically for children enrolled in care during nontraditional hours.

Increased Enrollment at Child Care Centers. According to providers, they were able to offer additional child care during nontraditional hours, increasing their capacity to welcome and enroll new families at their care centers. Providers discussed that they experienced low enrollment during nontraditional hours at the start of the grant period. They suggested that parents were unfamiliar with and uncomfortable leaving their children with a child care provider during the evening or overnight.

To address these concerns, providers were able to leverage the financial support provided by the EXPAND grant to implement improved security upgrades, hire new staff, and share videos with parents of their children during these later hours to help parents feel more comfortable enrolling their children during nontraditional hour care. Subsequently, providers saw an increase in enrollment rate.

With the availability of new employees and improved facility upgrades, providers were able to increase their centers' capacity to accommodate children during nontraditional hours. One provider who attributed an increase in enrollment to the EXPAND grant said their primary goal was to offer care to more families, and the grant allowed them to do so. Overall, the availability of the EXPAND grant made it possible to welcome families in need of this particular child care service increasing providers' capacity to enroll more children.

Tuition Assistance. Through the grant funds, providers were able to assist families who needed nontraditional hour care services but did not have the financial means to access them. Providers offered tuition assistance to support families in need. One provider explained that through the grant funds, they were able to assist families with tuition assistance. Another provider explained that the grant made it possible to offer tuition assistance to families who were already receiving CAPS but were finding it difficult to pay for additional hours of care not covered under their existing CAPS scholarship.

Grew Community Partnership Network. According to providers, local agencies and organizations welcomed and supported the introduction of nontraditional hour care for their staff and families in the community. They collaborated and partnered with providers by connecting parents and children receiving nontraditional hour care to local resources like counseling services, tutoring, and shelters in the community. Some of these local community partners include the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA), community domestic violence shelters,

and behavioral and mental health services. Providers attributed the growth in partnerships and collaborations to the organizations' interest in the grant, resulting in increased support and resources for parents and children receiving nontraditional hour child care services.

Providers also partnered with community organizations to advertise the availability of nontraditional hour care to their staff. Some distributed physical fliers throughout community gyms, manufacturing plants, warehouses, faith-based organizations, offices, and hospitals. One provider explained that their local gym allowed them to distribute fliers while parents were working out. Another mentioned going to manufacturing facilities and warehouses to distribute fliers to working families. These collaborations, which increased community awareness of nontraditional hour care, were facilitated by the EXPAND grant.

Introduction of New Curricula. According to providers, the grant's expectation was for children to engage in age and developmentally appropriate activities during nontraditional hour care; therefore, providers incorporated new curricula into their learning programs. The type of care and activities provided during traditional hours is different from nontraditional hour care because it is at a different time of day and children's needs differ during nontraditional hours. For example, one provider upgraded their curriculum to include Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) focused activities for children enrolled in nontraditional hours. This provider also started a sports and gardening program during weekend care hours. One provider partnered with a behavioral health therapist to provide counseling services to the enrolled children, another introduced soccer lessons, while another incorporated foreign language and sign language lessons into their curriculum.

Additionally, providers agreed that the grant provided resources to help parents and children who struggled with adjusting to a new routine or a change of schedule due to nontraditional hour care. With resources from the grant, some of the providers introduced coaching and counseling programs for both parents and children. According to one provider, their center acquired new coaching equipment and materials to assist children with general school and homework challenges.

Finally, another provider attributed the improvement of their center's Quality Rated star rating⁷ to the additional resources received through the grant. The additional staff and materials allowed them to provide better services for children. Generally, providers have been able to improve their program curricula overall as a result of the EXPAND grant.

⁷ Quality Rated is Georgia's system to assess, improve, and communicate the quality of programs that provide child care.

Challenges and Barriers

Providers reported experiencing various challenges and barriers throughout the grant cycle. The four overarching challenges highlighted include:

1. Hiring and retaining quality staff for nontraditional hours.
2. Lack of affordability after the end of the grant for families who had depended on financial assistance from the grant fund.
3. Unclear or complex CAPS reimbursement process for nontraditional hour care.
4. Lack of preplanning guidelines from DECAL before grant implementation.

Hiring and Retaining Quality Staff. One common challenge among providers was the struggle to find and retain qualified staff interested in nontraditional hour care. Providers shared that hiring qualified staff to work nontraditional hours is difficult and sometimes unaffordable. As a result, providers hire and train younger individuals who may not have the necessary child care qualifications and experience. Providers expressed that sometimes the younger staff are uncommitted and their employment is eventually terminated.

Additionally, most providers stated that they struggle to retain qualified employees for nontraditional hour care. This was either due to employee burnout from long hours or competitive compensation and benefits from other similar industries. For example, one provider stated that qualified applicants would rather accept similar child care positions with the local school systems, such teaching Pre-K, due to better benefits and compensation packages the providers cannot financially match and sustain due to limited finances.

Lack of Affordability after Grant Cycle. Providers who offered tuition assistance to families, highlighted that without the tuition assistance provided through the EXPAND grant, some parents would be unable to continue nontraditional hour child care. According to providers, some families depended on the tuition assistance offered by the grant. One provider explained that they had to prepare parents months before the grant ended because parents could not afford the care without grant funds. Further, lack of grant funds for tuition assistance caused some parents to disenroll their children.

Convincing parents to continue nontraditional hour care for their children after the end of the grant was a challenge for providers. One provider further explained that to help families keep their children in nontraditional hour child care, they had to partner with the community to raise funds and support families in need of nontraditional hour child care.

Unclear or complex CAPS Reimbursement Process for Nontraditional Hour Care. Another challenge providers highlighted throughout the grant period was the complex Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) reimbursement process for nontraditional hours care. CAPS assists in funding care during traditional hours but requires further justification for nontraditional hours, which leaves parents struggling to afford child care costs during nontraditional hours for the

same child. One provider emphasized that some families need nontraditional hour care services but are unable to afford it. With the perceived complex process of CAPS reimbursement for nontraditional hour care, both providers and families struggled with funding, and in some cases had to justify their needs to CAPS before they could be reimbursed. In agreement, another provider explained that they believed the complexity of CAPS reimbursement for nontraditional hour care affected the enrollment rate.

Lack of Preplanning Guidelines from DECAL before Grant Implementation. Providers mentioned struggling with the implementation process at the start of the grant. Prior to the EXPAND grant, providers offered only traditional hours care and were not acquainted with the process involved with providing nontraditional hour care. Some providers mentioned they had no proper guidance on processes like staffing, outreach and advertisement, and license procurement prior to grant implementation, and had to “figure it out themselves” at the beginning. Providers explained that they would have appreciated having additional information and guidance on how to add nontraditional hours and that lacking this information delayed implementation for some providers.

In conclusion, providers agreed that they needed resources and guidance from DECAL on processes involving license procurement, staff training, outreach and advertisement, and evaluating community need for nontraditional hour child care, months prior to grant implementation to avoid delays. For example, a provider who made changes to their initial intended nontraditional hours said they did so due to delays in procuring the needed information about the licensure process.

Lessons Learned

When asked about their experience and what they learned during the grant implementation process, providers described that they had a positive experience overall, particularly with DECAL’s staff support and responsiveness to issues. Providers also highlighted three main lessons learned during the grant implementation period:

1. Families may have an alternative care system already in place during nontraditional hours.
2. Providers should have a plan in place prior to implementing nontraditional hour care services.
3. Providers should collaborate with other providers already successfully providing nontraditional hour care.

Families Already had Systems in Place for Child Care During Nontraditional Hours. Some providers had the initial impression that there was a substantial need for nontraditional hour care in their community but discovered during recruitment that some families already had systems in place for child care during nontraditional hours. A parent either stayed home to care for the child, or the child was dropped off with a family relative. According to these providers, the families

they initially targeted to recruit prior to grant implementation did not see the need to enroll their children in formal nontraditional hour child care as they had already made alternative child care arrangements. One provider explained that child care providers should not assume to know the child care needs of families in the community. Before deciding to provide nontraditional hour care, providers should conduct research to consider the family structure of their target population, surrounding environmental culture, and child care needs of families in their community. Providers stated that most families they worked with already had affordable or free alternative care systems in place which made it difficult to enroll new families during nontraditional hours. To address this barrier, providers could prepare marketing materials explaining the benefits of formal nontraditional hour care.

Providers Need a Longer Preplanning Period Before Implementation. Providers mentioned that having a plan prior to implementation and adequate planning time in place before starting nontraditional hour child care services will make the grant process faster and smoother. Providers expressed that it is important to have a plan that considers whether there is a high demand for nontraditional hour child care services in that community in the first place, and what hours of care are in higher demand (e.g. weekend care versus 24-hour care). Providers should also make inquiries and plan for licensing requirements, effective and affordable outreach and marketing options, additional costs around staffing, training, payroll, food, new facilities, and security equipment before starting service provision.

Providers also mentioned making alternative plans in case there is a need to pivot or adjust nontraditional hours to accommodate individual family needs. For example, some providers had to make provisions in their staff schedule to accommodate parents in need of emergency short period or drop-in care. Generally, all providers agreed that having a plan in place prior to implementation is something they would do if given the same opportunity in the future.

Collaboration with other Nontraditional Hour Care Providers. Providers agreed that collaborating and learning from other providers who are already successfully providing nontraditional hour care around their community will be helpful. Providers looking to begin nontraditional hour care services should collaborate and receive mentorship and guidance on outreach, licensure, and required training to make implementation smoother.

Sustainability

Most Providers will Continue Offering Nontraditional Hours. Sustainability was not a concern for providers as they acknowledged that the provision of nontraditional hour care has benefited and served the child care needs of families in their communities. When asked if they would continue providing nontraditional hour child care after the grant, six out of seven providers answered in the affirmative. The one provider who would be unable to continue offering care, cited a change in child care center ownership as the reason for not continuing.

The six providers who are continuing nontraditional hour care will provide care at their own individually designated nontraditional hours during the weekdays between the hours of 4:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Two of those providers will also provide child care during the weekend, while one provider will continue providing nontraditional hour care 24-hours every day, year-round.

Some providers acknowledged that they would reduce the number of nontraditional hours currently offered from what they provided during the grant period, citing low demand for weekend hours and late nights and staffing challenges for those time slots as reasons for the adjustment. Some of the measures put in place by providers to continue the provision of nontraditional hours include receiving donations, partnering with parents and community organizations for sponsorships, and participating in fundraising activities. One provider mentioned organizing fundraising events to sustain some of their programs specific to nontraditional hour care. For example, this provider will be having a grand ribbon-cutting opening for their STEAM garden program where donations will be collected to maintain that program.

Providers also stated that to ensure the continuation of nontraditional hour care, they will:

- Upgrade and maintain center facilities and equipment specific to nontraditional hour care.
- Maintain changes in curriculum that specifically cater to children receiving child care services during nontraditional hours.
- Hire additional staff to assist during nontraditional hours.
- Maintain transportation to and from the child care centers during the weekends.

Collaboratives' Perspective

Grant Activities and Accomplishments

Collaboratives reported two major grant activities and accomplishments that occurred because of the EXPAND grant:

1. Expanded or new child care hours.
2. Strengthening the child care sector.

Expanded or New Child Care Hours. All collaborative grantees were ultimately successful in offering nontraditional hour care to families in Georgia as a result of the EXPAND grant. One collaborative stated that they were able to provide more than 46,000 hours of nontraditional hour child care through the EXPAND grant, and another stated that they also had more participation than expected. Other collaboratives stated that the EXPAND grant supported child care centers who struggled to maintain their business following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EXPAND grant served a need that was otherwise not addressed in many of the collaboratives' communities. Other collaboratives explained that they received feedback from their partner providers about the impact that nontraditional hours had on families in their communities. For example, one collaborative described that nontraditional hours care allowed a parent to have their children in formal care rather than watched by the oldest sibling in the home, who was also still a child.

The EXPAND grant addressed a critical gap in child care services, offering nontraditional hour care that were essential for families. By enabling more child care centers to participate and providing flexible hours for families, the grant not only supported the operational recovery of providers post-pandemic but also had a positive impact on the well-being of children and families in Georgia.

Strengthening the Child Care Sector. Collaboratives discussed the impact they were able to make in supporting local child care centers through the EXPAND grant. They did this in two ways: 1) providing financial support opportunities for the Early Childhood and Education (ECE) workforce, and 2) enhancing the business skills of child care center employees.

The EXPAND grant made a positive financial impact by growing the early childhood workforce through reimbursements that allowed partner providers to hire more early childhood and education employees. Additionally, the EXPAND grant addressed critical gaps in both training and employment opportunities. Collaboratives highlighted the impact that the EXPAND grant had on the early care and education workforce. One collaborative explained that the EXPAND grant's funding created opportunities for both individuals who were already part of the ECE workforce and those who were new to the field. Thus, the grant resulted in ongoing development and growth of the ECE workforce through education and training.

Another collaborative used the grant to subsidize child care payments to providers that were eligible to participate in the program as well as offering mini grants to offset any expenses they would incur to prepare for providing nontraditional hour care. One collaborative was unique in that they offered financial support to student parents through alternative means, such as tuition assistance, monthly stipends, and gas cards, to address any barriers that may affect student parents working towards their degree in early childhood education and needed nontraditional hour care for their children.

Beyond workforce development, the EXPAND grant helped build the capacity of child care centers. Collaboratives stated that the EXPAND grant gave them the opportunity to not only hire new child care employees but to enhance the business skills of child care providers. By offering guidance on business management, the grant helped strengthen the operational viability of child care centers, enabling them to better serve children and families. This dual focus on workforce development and business sustainability allowed collaboratives to contribute to creating a more resilient child care sector.

Outreach and Relationships

Collaboratives developed partnerships with new providers as well as strengthened relationships with existing community partners and organizations to achieve their goal of providing nontraditional hour child care to families.

Development of New Partnerships with Child Care Centers. Collaboratives used various methods to contact and build relationships with new child care centers to establish nontraditional hour care. Some collaboratives sourced local providers through DECAL's online website and resources as well as through social media platforms. Other collaboratives echoed the fact that DECAL aided their goal to find providers through the Quality Rated program. Collaboratives stated that they were able to use the comprehensive site visit reports to inform potential prospects of who to approach to establish a relationship with. For example, one collaborative partnered with a provider to serve children and families during nontraditional hours. This partnership allowed them to share facilities and staffing, ultimately expanding their capacity to offer flexible, accessible care.

Other collaboratives leveraged their business models and locations to establish partnerships and meet community needs. One collaborative, operating in a smaller city, targeted areas near hospitals to identify potential providers who could serve their high-need population. Additionally, collaboratives invested in targeted marketing to increase awareness for working families such as billboards along high-traffic routes, monthly stakeholder newsletters, and yard signs.

As new relationships were formed with providers, collaboratives worked to maintain these relationships in varying ways. One collaborative explained the importance ongoing contact and communication, with the collaborative offering administrative support so that providers could focus on care. This method of open, transparent communication emerged in several of the collaborative discussions as a way to maintain the relationships they developed with new providers.

Another collaborative emphasized that the process of building new partnerships with local child care centers was not only successful but mutually reinforcing. Their core mission with this grant was to prepare and train the next generation of early childhood educators. The relationship was reciprocal because students gained real-world employment opportunities and child care centers benefited from a reliable pipeline of qualified staff to address workforce shortages. Partnerships formed during this grant cycle illustrate how strategic alignment between grantees' goals and community needs can lead to sustainable outcomes for the early childhood sector.

Strengthening Existing Relationships with Community Partners and Organizations. Through the EXPAND grant, collaboratives were able to deepen existing relationships with local organizations and municipal partners. These relationships played a critical role in expanding providers' capacity to provide nontraditional hour care and improve program quality.

Some collaboratives stated that they leveraged existing relationships with a local community organization to share resources with one another. This collaborative shared how their relationship helped the grantee with professional and business acumen, curriculum development, and early learning expertise. This support was essential to their provision of nontraditional hour care. Other collaboratives discussed how they were able to leverage existing partnerships with community organizations to identify and build relationships with smaller child care centers.

Another collaborative discussed how the EXPAND grant gave them an opportunity to deepen their relationship with their local municipal partners, engaging with city government to research child care workforce needs. The EXPAND grant enabled collaboratives to move toward community-based solutions to improve service quality and better meet the diverse needs of families.

Challenges and Barriers

Collaborative grantees discussed two overarching challenges they experienced during the EXPAND grant cycle:

1. Securing providers for nontraditional hours.
2. A lack of participation from the expected target population of families.

Securing Providers for Nontraditional Hours. A recurring barrier across collaboratives was the difficulty of identifying and retaining providers willing to offer care during nontraditional hours. While many collaboratives entered the grant cycle with partnerships with providers, several reported that those arrangements ended due to the structure and constraints of the funding model. One collaborative stated that one of their original provider partners withdrew once they learned that there was only one year of funding.

The timeline of the grant cycle created uncertainty for providers, particularly those with already limited financial margins. Other collaboratives had similar concerns, noting that the reimbursement-based funding model posed additional challenges to providers who did not understand the time lag between submitting for reimbursement and receiving funds. The financial strain caused by delayed reimbursement discouraged participation and, in some cases, made it unfeasible for small centers to remain engaged.

Collaboratives highlighted how the broader economic instability of the early care and education sector, exacerbated by the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, further complicated their partnerships. One collaborative explained that a partner provider had to close due to ongoing financial challenges.

Additionally, collaboratives working in rural areas identified a structural limitation in the availability of providers, which made it difficult to identify partnerships to provide nontraditional hour care.

Lack of Participation from the Expected Target Population of Families. Several collaboratives discussed the unexpected challenges of finding families who were willing to use formal nontraditional hour care. Initially, collaboratives stated that they assumed families would have a strong demand for nontraditional hour care; however, they found that uptake was lower than they anticipated.

A key reason for this was that many families had already developed informal child care arrangements, relying on extended family members, neighbors, or trusted friends. Families were hesitant to risk losing their existing child care arrangements, especially for a service that included an additional cost. Affordability was a concern for some collaboratives for families they were targeting.

Lessons Learned

Overall, collaboratives described the EXPAND grant experience as a valuable opportunity for growth and adaptability in meeting family needs. A key takeaway shared by several grantees was the importance of flexibility throughout implementation. Other collaboratives echoed this appreciation and credited DECAL staff members for their consistent support throughout the grant. Collaboratives reported that the administrative side of the grant was successful and not difficult to navigate.

Collaboratives reflected on their experience with the EXPAND grant and identified two overarching areas for improvement to improve the impact of future initiatives: 1) strengthening the preparation and preplanning period and 2) extending the duration of the grant cycle.

Strengthening the Preparation and Preplanning Period. Collaboratives emphasized the need for a more robust planning period prior to implementation. Several collaboratives discussed how they underestimated the time, staffing, and coordination required to launch nontraditional hour care services. Other collaboratives agreed that identifying and onboarding child care providers was a barrier to implementation. Some recommended that additional early-stage support from DECAL, such as providing an updated list of providers who currently offer nontraditional hour care, could have eased implementation.

Many of the collaboratives stated that they had little experience with the logistics of setting up child care centers to provide nontraditional hour care. For these collaboratives, building partnerships with providers took considerable time and effort. They highlighted the need for a more comprehensive planning phase before launching nontraditional hour child care services. Collaboratives discussed that additional support from DECAL on how to set up nontraditional hour care would have been helpful during the initial grant phase.

Extending the Duration of the Grant Cycle. Most collaboratives emphasized that the year-long timeline posed a barrier to successful implementation. The short duration made it difficult to establish trust with families, onboard staff, and form long-term partnerships with

child care providers. Collaboratives also noted that many families were hesitant to enroll their children in a new care arrangement, especially when it meant pulling them from a trusted family member or informal caregiver, if the new option was temporary.

Additionally, the limited grant period made it difficult for collaboratives to invest in the staffing and systems needed to support and run the program. One collaborative shared that their company's lengthy hiring process made it impractical to hire or contract dedicated personnel to manage the grant, knowing that the position would only last one year. The one-year grant cycle presented challenges for collaboratives in establishing lasting relationships with families and partner providers, as well as in securing dedicated staffing. Collaboratives discussed that a longer timeline would have enabled more effective program implementation and greater continuity for families following the completion of the grant.

Sustainability

Sustainability was a central concern for collaboratives as they reflected on the challenges and opportunities of implementing nontraditional hour care through the EXPAND grant. Some stated that they would be engaging in ongoing efforts to continue their work, while others acknowledged that these services would end without continued financial support.

Several collaboratives stated that their child care provider partner(s) would be unable to continue offering nontraditional hour care once the grant ended, citing cost as the main barrier. During exit interviews, these collaboratives shared that they were unaware of any significant improvements or upgrades (e.g., facility modifications, curriculum changes, etc.) that their provider partners had made using grant funds.

Other collaboratives stated that they would continue offering nontraditional hour care either through their provider partners or through other funding opportunities. One collaborative explained that they would be using braided funding and leveraging community relationships to maintain funding. Another collaborative described plans to support nontraditional hour care by expanding to larger facilities and attracting more family care providers into the ecosystem. They shared that these efforts are still in the early stages but represent a long-term vision to address the ongoing needs of working families in their community.

Appendix A1.

Provider Focus Group Protocol

**Carl Vinson Institute of Government
Department of Early Care and Learning
EXPAND Grant
Providers Focus Group, July 2024**

Introduction

Good morning. Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion of the EXPAND grant implementation.

My name is [RESEARCHER 1] and this is [RESEARCHER 2] and we will be your moderators for the day.

As part of the evaluation for the EXPAND grant, the Department of Early Care and Learning is working with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to conduct focus groups with providers who have received grant funds and are implementing non-traditional child care hours. We are interested in collecting data to assess and evaluate the grant's effectiveness in connecting families to child care during non-traditional hours. As part of today's discussion, we will ask questions about your experience with implementing non-traditional hours, child recruitment and enrollment, accomplishments so far, challenges and barriers, and any support or resources you might need from DECAL.

Your opinions and insights are important to us. We want to hear from all of you. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. We're interested in positive and negative viewpoints, and common and uncommon experiences. I do ask that we respect everyone's opinion and provide everyone with an opportunity to speak. I may sometimes "direct traffic" by encouraging someone who has been quiet to talk, or by asking someone to hold off for a few minutes. However, you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. To encourage open and honest discussion, we ask that you only use first names or, if you prefer, a nickname or alias. We ask that you respect the confidentiality of everyone here. Please don't repeat who said what when you leave this room.

We will be recording to obtain an accurate record of this conversation. After our discussion, this recording will be transcribed, and names will be removed from the final transcript. The Department of Early Care and Learning will not have access to any interview recordings or transcripts from the recording. Your organization's name will not be used in our report beyond identifying your organization as one of our participants. No responses will be directly attributed to you. If we would like to attribute a quote to you, we will not do so without explicitly asking for and receiving permission from you.

During the discussion, I will ask you questions, and I will listen to what you say. I will not participate in the discussion. Please respond to each other and speak directly to others in the group.

We don't want to miss any of your comments. It is important that you speak up and that you only speak one at a time.

If it is OK with you, we will start now.

[BEGIN FOCUS GROUP] START TIME: _____

Introductions Question

1. To get us started, let's begin with introductions. Please tell us your name, and if you had a superpower, what would it be?
2. Your organizations have all been awarded an EXPAND grant. What new or expanded services is your organization offering because of the grant?
 - a. [PROMPT] What are some of the goals your organization aim to achieve with the grant?

Recruitment and Enrollment

We want to understand how you have recruited and enrolled children to non-traditional hours.

3. What approaches or strategies have you tried to recruit families to non-traditional hours?
[PROMPT] e.g., word of mouth, social media, etc.
 - a. [IF YES, THEN:] Which strategies have you found more successful? Less successful?

Relationships with Clients

We're interested in hearing how expanding your hours has changed your relationships and interactions with families and children.

4. What steps have you taken to make sure parents and caregivers feel comfortable with non-traditional hours care that is different from traditional hours care?
 - a. [PROMPT:] For example, have you changed how often you communicate with caregivers and parents?
5. In thinking about your relationships with families and children, do you find any differences in providing quality care during non traditional hours? Can you tell me about those differences?
 - a. [PROMPT] What kinds of challenges are you experiencing in providing quality care during non-traditional hours?
 - b. [PROMPT] How do these challenges differ from the challenges you experience during traditional care hours?
 - c. [PROMPT] Are there ways that providing quality care during non traditional hours is easier? Can you tell me about that?
6. What adjustments have you made in the relationships you have with families and children when they transition to nontraditional hours to ensure that they are receiving quality care?

- a. [PROMPT:] For example, have there been any changes in the frequency or type of behavior issues you experience?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN:] Are there certain times when you experience more or less behavior issues?
 - c. [PROMPT]: How are you ensuring that quality care is continuing once families transition to nontraditional hour care? What conversations are you having with families and children as they transition to nontraditional hour care?
7. What kind of feedback have you received from families about the impact of expanded hours?

Challenges and Barriers

We would like to learn more about the challenges and barriers you've faced while implementing the grant as well as any steps you've taken to overcome those barriers.

8. What kinds of challenges have you experienced while implementing non-traditional hours child care?
- a. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - c. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?

Supports

We want to understand what kinds of support have been helpful and what you still need to implement non-traditional hours.

9. What supports provided by DECAL have been helpful in implementing the grant?
10. Do you have any outstanding support needs?
- a. [PROMPT]: Can you think of any necessary equipment, materials, renovations, facility upgrades, or transportation needs that have not been met by the grant?

Accomplishments

We want to hear about your accomplishments and achievements during the grant period.

11. What accomplishment are you most proud of from the grant so far?
12. What would you still like to complete before the end of the grant?

Sustainability

DECAL hopes that the work providers have completed to connect families to non-traditional care will continue once the grant period has ended, so we'd like to ask a few questions about sustainability.

13. How does your organization plan to continue non-traditional hours after the grant period?

14. What challenges do you anticipate with continuing after the end of the grant period?
15. What supports could DECAL offer during the remainder of the grant period to make the project sustainable moving forward?

Closing

16. As we said at the beginning, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess the grant's effectiveness at connecting families to non-traditional child care. Is there anything we have not asked that you feel is important for us to know?

Those are all the questions we have for you today. Thank you again for taking the time to share your experiences with providing non-traditional child care through the EXPAND grant.

END TIME: _____

END RECORDING.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS IF TIME ALLOWS:

1. From your perspective, what has been your biggest achievement with the grant so far?

Recruitment and Enrollment

2. From your perspective, has it been easier to recruit children who are currently enrolled in traditional care or to recruit new families to non-traditional hours?
3. Tell me about the expanded hours timeslots. Do any time slots you offer have more interest or enrollment from families?
4. Which timeslots have been most popular for expanded hours?
 - a. [IF YES, THEN:] Why do you think that is?
 - b. Do any time slots you offer have less interest or enrollment from families?
 - c. [IF YES, THEN:] Why do you think that is?
 - d. Are caregivers/families requesting timeslots during non-traditional hours that cannot be offered? [PROMPT] Aside from the non-traditional hours being offered, are there other timeslots parents are requesting for that are not currently available?
 - i. [IF YES, THEN:] What are the most common requested, but not available, timeslots?

Resources

Staff

1. How have you recruited new staff to help meet the needs of non-traditional hours?
 - a. [IF YES, THEN:] Which strategies have you found most successful? Less successful?

2. What changes, if any, did you make for existing staff when expanding your hours?
 - a. [PROMPT]: Did the pay for existing employees change?
 - b. [PROMPT]: Did the schedules for existing employees change?
3. What challenges have your staff who work non-traditional hours encountered?
 - a. [PROMPT:] How does expanded hours impact staff scheduling flexibility?
 - b. [PROMPT:] What child care arrangements do staff use if they have children when working expanded hours?
4. What, if any, changes have occurred related to staff turnover or retention?

Facilities and Supplies

5. Many of you made facility updates and upgrades in advance of expanding your hours. Can you describe some of the changes you made at your facility?
 - a. [PROMPT]: Which of these facility upgrades were most helpful to you?
 - b. [PROMPT]: Which were least helpful?
 - c. [PROMPT]: Please describe any facility changes that you had to make that you did not anticipate.
6. Many of you used grant funds to purchase additional supplies in advance of expanding your hours. Can you describe some of the additional supplies you purchased?
 - a. [PROMPT]: Which supplies were most helpful to you?
 - b. [PROMPT]: Which supplies were least helpful?

Challenges and Barriers

7. Have you faced any challenges that were **unanticipated** in your original project planning?
 - a. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - c. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
8. Have you experienced any **legal** challenges?
 - a. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - c. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
9. Have you experienced any **licensing** challenges?
 - a. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?

- b. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - c. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
- 10. Have you experienced any **financial** challenges?
 - a. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - c. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
- 11. Have you experienced any **security** concerns?
 - a. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - c. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
- 12. Have you experienced any issues with **recruitment and enrollment**?
 - a. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - c. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
- 13. Have you addressed the challenges you experienced?
 - a. [IF YES, THEN:] How?
 - b. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
- 14. What kinds of policy changes, if any, have you made since implementing expanded hours?
 - a. [IF YES, THEN:] What prompted the policy changes?
- 15. If you are part of a larger network of child care providers, have you had to meet any requirements to offer expanded care?

Supports

- 16. Are there any additional supports that would have helped you at the beginning of the grant period to be more successful?

Appendix A2.

Collaboratives Focus Group

Protocol

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Department of Early Care and Learning
EXPAND Grant
Collaboratives Focus Group, July 2024**

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Introductions Question

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2. Your organizations have all been awarded an EXPAND grant. What new or expanded services is your organization offering because of the grant?
 - a. [PROMPT] What are some of the goals your organization aim to achieve with the grant?

Outreach and Developing Relationships

We'd like to understand how you've developed relationships with the various members of your collaborative.

17. What partnerships or relationships have you developed?
 - a. [PROMPTS] Have you developed partnerships with other businesses? Child care providers?
 - b. [IF YES, THEN] How do these partnerships support your grant related work?
18. Can you describe the new relationships you needed to form to support the work of the grant?
19. Which existing relationships did you leverage to create this collaborative?
20. What activities did you put in place with your partners to provide non-traditional hours care?
 - a. How have you received feedback from your partners?
 - b. How often do you receive feedback from your partners?
 - c. What did you learn from collecting feedback?
 - d. Have you made any changes based on what you learned?
21. How do partners report their grant activities to you?
 - a. What kinds of activities do you expect your partners to complete?
22. Who is your target audience for providing non-traditional hour child care?
 - a. How do your partnerships support reaching that target audience?
 - i. [PROMPT] How are you reaching out to your target audience? What measures are in place to support reaching out to the target audience (e.g., social media, press conferences, etc.)
 - b. Do you think you are reaching the target audience you hoped to?
 - i. If not, why not?
 - ii. If so, how do you know?

Challenges and Barriers

We would like to learn more about the challenges and barriers you have faced while implementing the grant as well as any steps you have taken to overcome those barriers.

23. What kinds of challenges have you faced while implementing the grant?
 - a. What challenges have you had with child care providers?
 - b. With employer partners?
 - c. With other community organizations?
24. How have you addressed the challenges you have experienced?
 - a. What was most helpful to you when you addressed that challenge?
25. Have you faced any challenges that were unanticipated in your original project planning?
 - a. How have you adapted to address those challenges?
26. What kinds of support do you need from DECAL to address any of the challenges you have experienced?

Accomplishments

In addition to barriers, we also want to hear about your accomplishments and achievements during the grant period.

27. What are some of the accomplishments you have had since you started implementing the grant?
 - a. [PROMPT] What accomplishment are you most proud of from the grant so far?
28. What would you still like to complete before the end of the grant?

Sustainability

DECAL hopes that the work collaboratives have completed to connect families to non-traditional care will continue once the grant period has ended, so we'd like to ask a few questions about sustainability.

29. How will the collaborative you have launched continue after the grant period?
[PROMPT] What has been put in place to ensure sustainability?
30. What challenges do you anticipate with continuing the collaborative after the end of the grant period?
31. What supports could DECAL offer during the remainder of the grant period to make the project sustainable moving forward?

Closing

32. As we said at the beginning, the purpose of this evaluation is to assess the grant's effectiveness at connecting families to non-traditional hours child care. Is there anything we have not asked that you feel is important for us to know?

Those are all the questions we have for you today. Thank you again for taking the time to share your experiences with providing non-traditional hours child care through the EXPAND grant.

END TIME: _____

END RECORDING.

Additional questions if time allows:

1. From your perspective, what has been your biggest achievement with the grant so far?
2. What partnerships do you feel are missing from your collaborative?
 - a. [PROMPT] What kind of partners do you still need to be successful for your grant?
 - b. How are you planning to develop those partnerships?
3. How will this grant help your community if you are successful in connecting caregivers to child care during non-traditional hours?
 - a. How will you know if you've been successful in achieving your grant goals?

Appendix A3.

Providers Exit Interview Protocol

Carl Vinson Institute of Government
Department of Early Care and Learning
EXPAND Grant
Collaborative Interview, February - June 2025

Introduction Questions:

1. Can you tell us about the services provided by your organization over the course of the EXPAND grant? Closing initially at 5/5:30 – extended hours to 8 pm. Tuition assistance through the grant. Over the last few months, we made a connection to occupational and speech therapist to come on-site.
 - a. [PROMPT] Early morning, afternoon, overnight, weekend care?
2. How did the EXPAND grant impact your organization’s ability to expand its childcare hours? Pay our staff – compensate teachers to stay more. Extra resources to stretch the timeframe – more materials, cots for kids. Biggest challenges in childcare – pay the staff what they were asking.
 - a. [PROMPT] What additional services were possible as a result of the grant?
3. What were some of the goals your organization aimed to achieve with the EXPAND grant? Goal to partner with community resources, partner with families that actually needed that, and stay open later.
 - a. [PROMPT] How were you able to achieve those goals?
4. What aspect of the grant was most essential in helping you achieve your goals? We couldn’t have done none of this without the money.
5. How did the EXPAND grant align with your organization’s priorities/values? Core values: academic excellence, teamwork – partnered with parents. Parents helped come up with different fundraisers – aligned with us and further that teamwork. With excellence, better materials and curriculum. Give the parents what they needed at that time.

Achievements and Challenges:

DECAL would like to know about some of your achievements and challenges you experienced during the EXPAND grant period.

6. What were some of your achievements and accomplishments during the grant period? We stayed opened until 8 pm and never had to tell parents that we had to close early. Never had a hiccup.
 - a. [PROMPT] How did the grant resources help you provide services?

7. What were some of your challenges during the grant period? Staffing – we were always able to pivot. Maintaining staff that would work that late.
 - a. [PROMPT] Did you experience any challenges and were you able to use grant funds to help remedy them? If not, what do you think could have been done differently?
 - b. [PROMPT] Did you experience any barriers with families, your community, or DECAL?
 - i. Fundraised to help some families.

Grantee Specific Question:

From previous reports and discussions with your organization, we have identified an area/a few areas that we would like to understand better.

Lessons Learned:

We'd like you to reflect on your overall experience as an EXPAND grantee for the next couple of questions. You may have some takeaways or lessons learned that would be helpful for DECAL and other grantees to know more about.

10. What lessons did you learn while implementing the EXPAND grant?
 - a. [PROMPT] In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently during the grant period?
 - b. [PROMPT] Is there anything you think DECAL could have done differently?
11. What recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the grant implementation process?
 - a. [PROMPT] For other grantees?
 - b. [PROMPT] For DECAL?
12. What advice do you have for other providers looking to expand to non-traditional care hours in the future?

Sustainability:

The next couple of questions we will ask you about will pertain to sustainability.

13. Is your organization going to continue providing non-traditional childcare hours?
[IF YES]:
14. What non-traditional hours will your organization continue providing? (e.g., early morning, evening, overnight, weekends, etc.)
15. What measures or support do you currently have, or plan to put in place, to continue non-traditional hours? (e.g., funding, staffing) sponsors – the contributions go directly to staffing/payroll – as a school, we agreed that our fundraisers would go to the teachers

until our next quarterly meeting. Tuition assistance no longer available. June was the last tuition assistance.

[IF NO]:

16. What plans do you have in place for families who are currently enrolled in non-traditional hour care?
17. What other sustainable changes were you able to make to your program during the grant period? (e.g., facilities, curriculum, staffing, etc.)
 - a. [PROMPT] What are other changes you made that will still be beneficial to your organization following the end of the grant period?

Closing:

18. As we said at the beginning, the purpose of this interview is to better understand your experience as an EXPAND grantee. Is there anything you would like us to know that we haven't talked about yet?

Appendix A4.

Collaboratives Exit Interview Protocol

Carl Vinson Institute of Government
Department of Early Care and Learning
EXPAND Grant
Collaborative Exit Interview, February - June 2025

Introduction Questions:

1. Can you tell us about any new or expanded services that your organization was able to provide as a result of the grant?
 - a. [PROMPT] How did your organization collaborate with providers during the grant period?
 - b. [PROMPT] Early morning, afternoon, overnight, weekend care?
 - c. [PROMPT] What were some of the goals your organization aimed to achieve with the EXPAND grant?
 - d. [PROMPT] How were you able to achieve those goals?
2. How did the EXPAND grant align with your organization's priorities/values?

Outreach and Developing Relationships

We'd like to understand how you developed relationships with the various members of your collaborative.

3. What new partnerships or relationships were you able to develop to support your grant related work?
 - a. [PROMPT] Other businesses, community resources, childcare providers.
4. What existing/established partnerships or relationships were you able to leverage to support your grant related work?
 - a. [PROMPT] Other businesses, community resources.

Achievements and Challenges:

DECAL would like to know about some of your achievements and challenges you experienced during the EXPAND grant period.

5. What were some of your achievements and accomplishments during the grant period?
 - a. [PROMPT] How did the grant resources help you support access to non-traditional hour care?
6. What were some of your challenges during the grant period?
 - a. [PROMPT] Did you experience any barriers during the implementation of the grant?
 - i. (anticipated and unanticipated challenges)
 - b. [PROMPT] Did you experience any barriers with the childcare providers you worked with, employer partners, your community, or DECAL?

Grantee Specific Question:

From previous reports and discussions with your organization, we have identified an area/a few areas that we would like to understand better.

Lessons Learned:

We'd like you to reflect on your overall experience as a collaborative grantee for the next couple of questions. You may have some takeaways or lessons learned that would be helpful for DECAL and other collaboratives to know more about.

7. What lessons did you learn during the implementation of the EXPAND grant?
 - a. [PROMPT] In hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently during this grant cycle?
 - b. [PROMPT] Is there anything you think DECAL could have done differently?
8. What recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the grant implementation process?
 - a. [PROMPT] For other grantees?
 - b. [PROMPT] For DECAL?
9. What advice do you have for other organizations looking to collaborate with childcare providers/external partners to provide non-traditional care hours in the future?

Sustainability:

The next couple of questions we will ask you about will pertain to sustainability.

10. Is your collaborative going to continue providing non-traditional hour care services?
[IF YES]:
 - a. What non-traditional hour care services will your collaborative continue providing? (e.g., early morning, evening, overnight, weekends, etc.)
 - b. What measures or support do you currently have, or plan to put in place, to continue these services? (e.g., funding, staffing)
[IF NO]:
 - a. What plans do you have in place for the families who have received non-traditional child care services from your collaborative during the grant?
 - b. What other sustainable changes resulted from the grant either in your organization or through the childcare providers you partnered with? (e.g., facilities, curriculum, staffing, etc.)
 - i. [PROMPT] What are other changes that you made that will still be beneficial to your organization or the childcare providers you partnered with following the end of the grant period?

Closing

11. As we said at the beginning, the purpose of this interview is to better understand your experience as an EXPAND grantee. Is there anything you would like us to know that we haven't talked about yet?

Appendix B.

Quantitative Report

Introduction

In 2021, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) contracted with the Urban Institute to find out more about what supports Georgia's early care and education system needs. Based on families' feedback, one of their key recommendations was to support child care providers in extending their hours of operation.

In response, DECAL designed the Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) grant to address child care needs during nontraditional hours, defined as 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. on weekdays and any time on weekends. EXPAND grant was awarded to two groups of grantees: licensed child care providers (Providers) and government entities and nonprofit organizations (Collaboratives).

Overall, seven licensed child care providers and six collaboratives received EXPAND grants. EXPAND grant's monies supported licensed child care providers by allowing them to adjust their hours to stay open during nontraditional hours, increase staffing and/or staff pay, and upgrade their facility to ensure a safer and healthier environment for the children enrolled in the program. The EXPAND grant helped government entities and nonprofit organizations, including technical schools and universities, address the need for nontraditional hour child care in their local community, including within their organizations.

In 2023, DECAL contracted with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government (Institute of Government) to conduct an evaluation for the EXPAND grant. The evaluation included collecting data from grantees using monthly grantee reports, surveys, and focus groups to inform DECAL's future decisions for programs supporting Georgia's early care and education system.

This portion of the evaluation report examines the findings from grantees' monthly reports and the family intake forms.

Methodology

During the grant period, both collaborative and provider grantees submitted monthly reports to the Department of Early Care and Learning. The monthly reports were created in collaboration between DECAL and the Institute of Government evaluation team to help understand the implementation of the grant at each site. Collaborative grantees and provider grantees completed separate forms aligned to their grant implementation. Collaboratives reported on the number and type of child care providers they worked with, hours offered by those providers, and additional partnerships they developed through the grant. Providers reported on

student enrollments, hours offered, and information about staffing. The data from the monthly reports were collated and analyzed in Microsoft Excel and PowerBI.

In addition to monthly reports, grantees were asked to ensure that families receiving nontraditional hour care completed a family intake form when enrolling their children for nontraditional hour care. While families were not required to complete the intake forms, grantees were encouraged to have as many families as possible participate. The Institute of Government team provided flyers and email reminders to grantees to facilitate intake form completion. Despite these efforts, not all families or grantees participated. As a result, the findings below underrepresent the children served by the EXPAND grant and may not be representative of all families who received nontraditional hour child care under the grant.

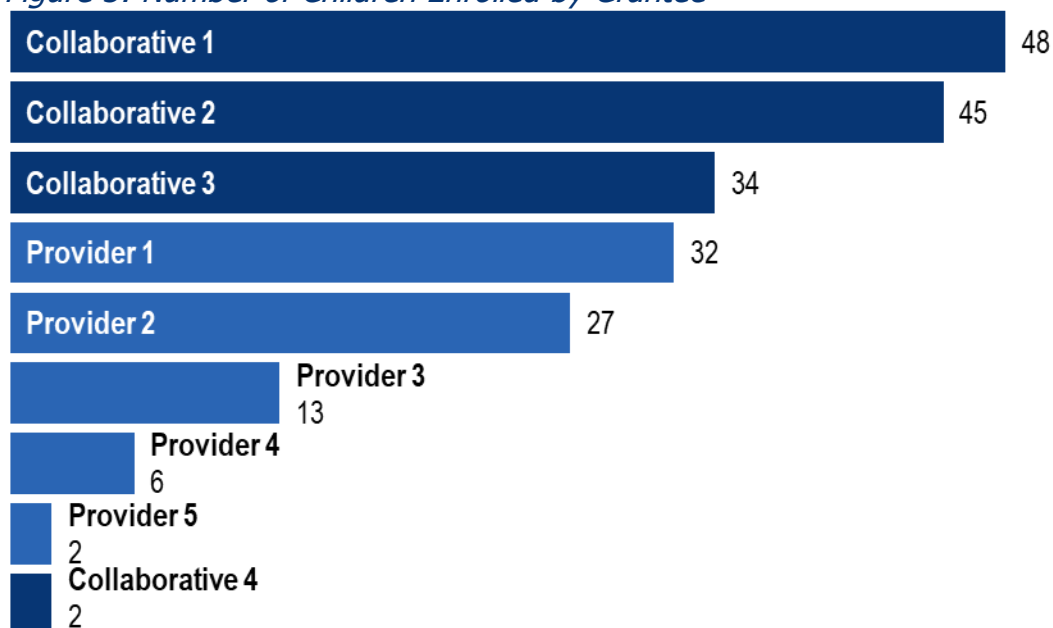
The family intake form asked for background information about the caregivers of the child(ren) to provide insight on why families might need care during nontraditional hours. Caregivers had the option to complete a paper form or to scan a QR code and complete an online version of the form. The evaluation team collected both the paper forms and the online responses and combined them into one response set. The responses were analyzed in Microsoft Excel and PowerBI.

Findings

Family Intake Forms

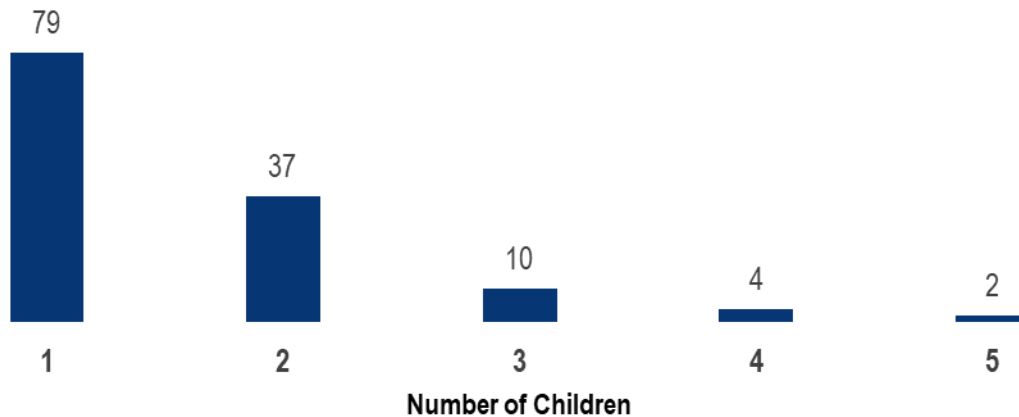
One hundred and thirty-two (132) families from nine of the 13 EXPAND grantees completed family intake forms. Families from four collaboratives and five provider grantees submitted forms. Among families who completed the forms, 209 children were served by the grant (Figure 3). Collaborative grantees served 129 children (61.7% of children served, indicated in dark blue in Figure 3). Provider grantees served 80 children (38.2% of children served, indicated in light blue in Figure 3).

Figure 3: Number of Children Enrolled by Grantee



Most families (60%) enrolled only one child in nontraditional hour care, and 40% enrolled more than one child (Figure 4).

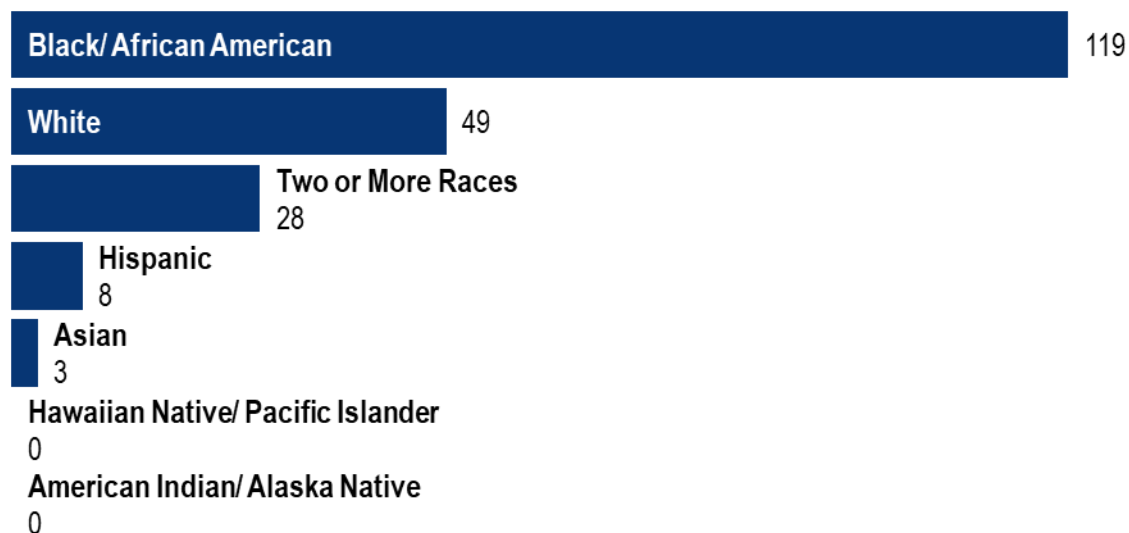
Figure 4: Number of Enrolled Children Per Family



Child Demographics

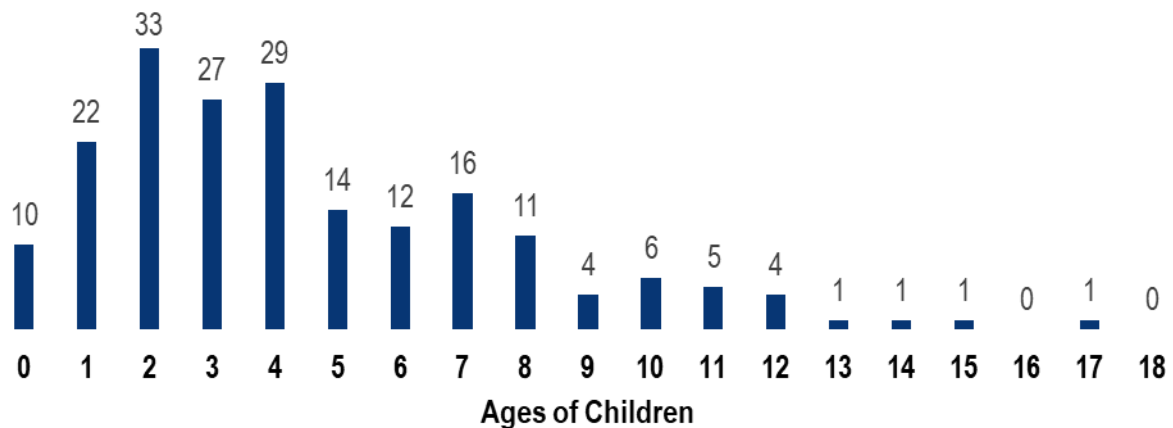
Families indicated race/ethnicity, age, gender, and disability status for each child enrolled in nontraditional hour care. Among families who completed intake forms, 57% of the children served were Black or African American, followed by 24% white, 14% two or more races, 4% Hispanic, and 1% Asian (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Race/Ethnicity of Enrolled Children



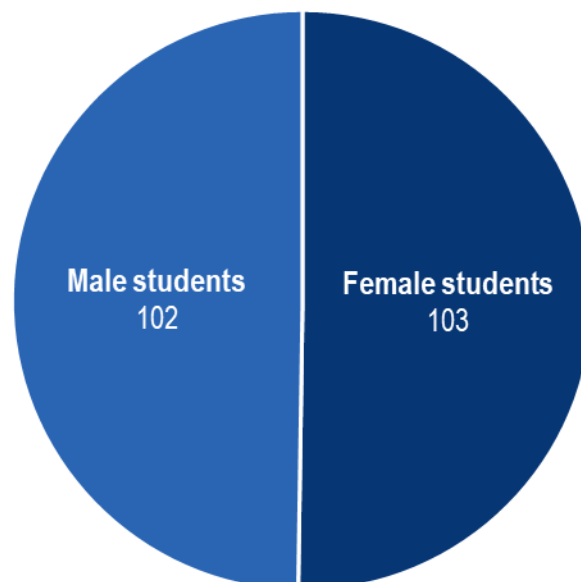
Most of the children in the intake data (56%) were between one-year-old and four-years-old (Figure 6). There was a drop in number of children enrolled after age eight, with only 12% of children aged nine or older. This may indicate that families primarily need nontraditional hour care for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children.

Figure 6: Ages of Enrolled Children



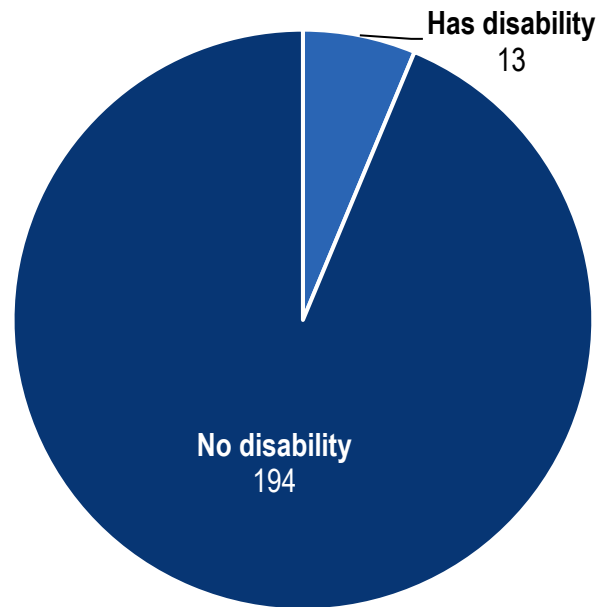
Data from completed intake forms showed that grantees served similar numbers of male and female students (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Gender of Enrolled Children



While a large majority of children in the intake data did not have a disability, 6% of children did have a disability (Figure 8). Of the nine grantees who submitted family intake forms, five did not serve any children with disabilities. Of the four who served children with disabilities, the percentage of children served who had a disability ranged from 6% to 33%.

Figure 8: Disability Status of Enrolled Children



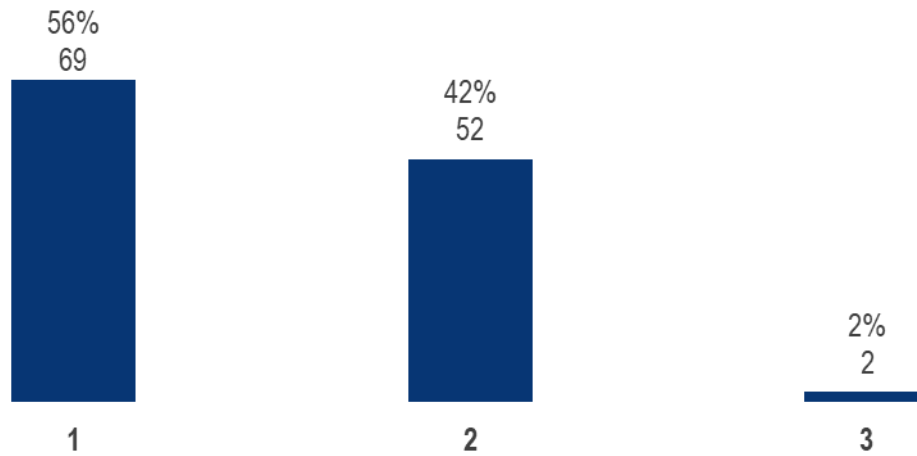
Household Characteristics

In addition to child demographics, families were asked to share information about their household to provide insight into the types of families using nontraditional hour care under the grant. These included the number of adults financially supporting the household, monthly household income, enrollment in work or a training program, job type, and typical methods of transportation.

Household Income and Financial Support

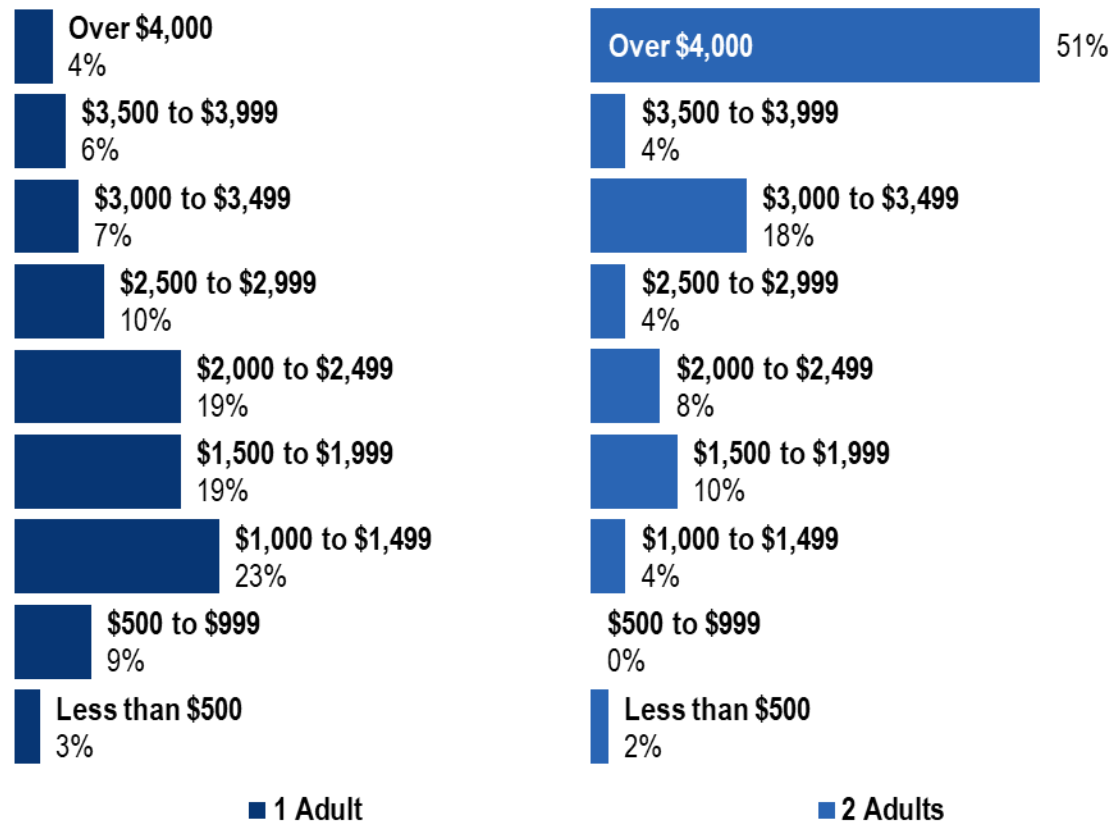
A slight majority (56%) of the families in the intake data had only one adult supporting the family financially (Figure 9).

Figure 9: How many adults living in your household support your household financially? (n=123)



In general, households with only one adult supporting the household financially had lower monthly incomes than households with two adults supporting the household financially (Figure 10). For households with only one adult supporting the household financially, most (61%) earned between \$1,000 and \$2,499 per month. For households with two adults supporting the household financially, most (51%) earned over \$4,000 per month.

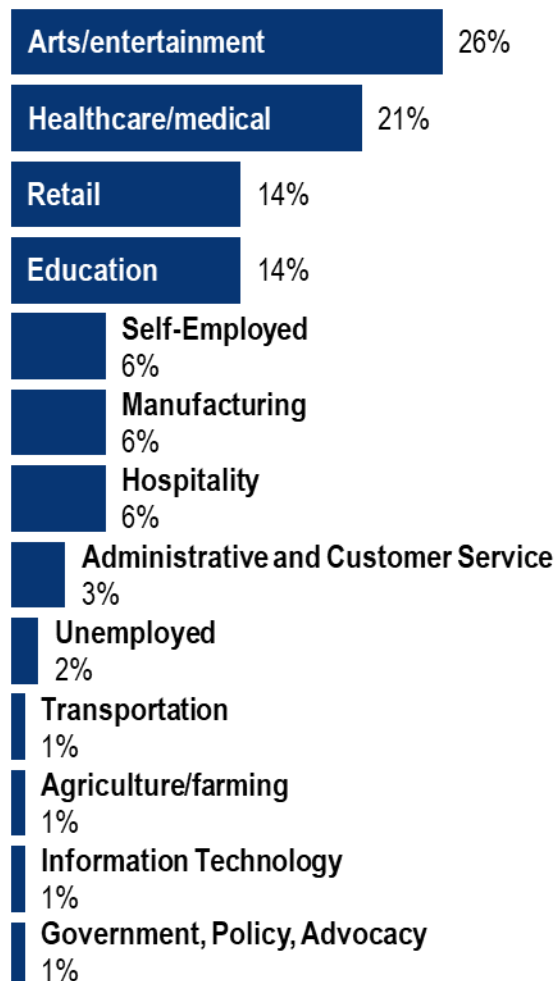
Figure 10: How much does your household make in a month? (n=120)



Employment and Training

Figure 11 below shows that most caregiver respondents had jobs in the arts and entertainment sector (26%) or the healthcare/medical sector (21%). Other common job types included retail (14%) and education (14%).

Figure 11: What type of job do you have? (n=123)



In addition, intake data showed that 21 caregivers (16% of respondents) were enrolled at least part-time in school or a training program. Further, the two respondents who indicated that they were not currently employed were enrolled in school or a training program.

Care Needs

Respondents were asked to share why they needed care during nontraditional hours and could select multiple reasons for their care needs (Figure 12). The most commonly cited reason (34%) was a change in work schedule. Other common responses included previous care arrangements that were no longer available when needed, or that the care offered under the EXPAND grant was more reliable. Most of the responses listed in the “other” category related to reliability of care and aligning child care hours with work schedules.

Figure 12: Why are you in need of child care during nontraditional hours? (n = 220)

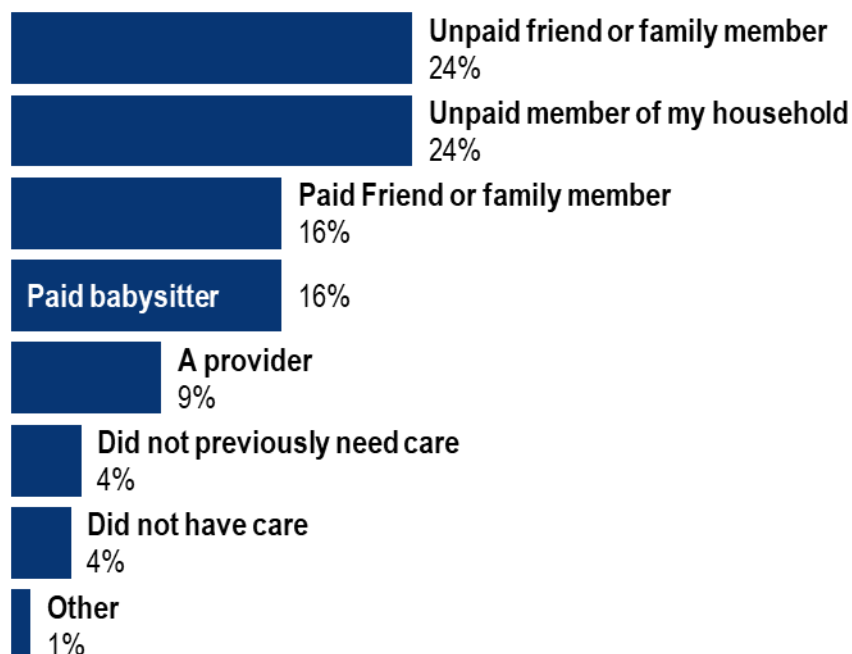


Respondents were also asked what kind of child care arrangements they utilized before enrolling in EXPAND-supported care and could select multiple responses (Figure 13). Most indicated they used unpaid care through a member of their household (24%) or through a friend or family member (25%). Other responses indicated paid arrangements, including through a paid friend or family member (16%), a paid babysitter (16%) or a provider (9%).

Six respondents indicated that they did not previously have care during nontraditional hours, including caregivers who indicated that they “called out” because they did not have care or watched their own child while working from home.

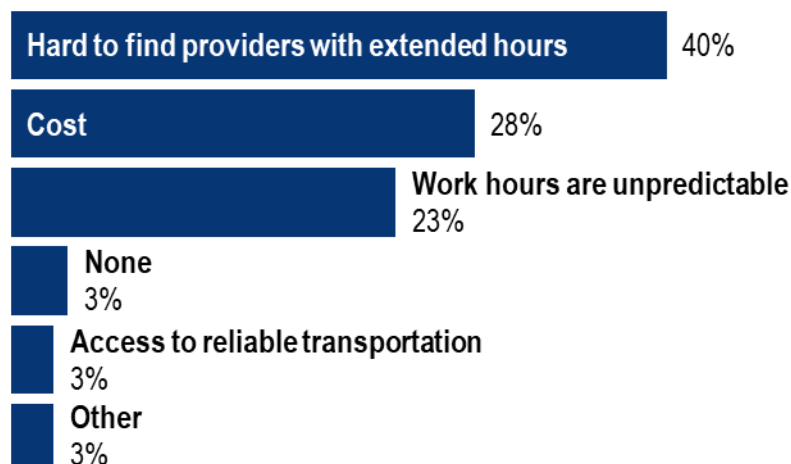
Seven respondents indicated that they previously did not need care during nontraditional hours, including reasons such as their child was a newborn or they changed jobs and therefore had new care needs.

Figure 13: Before starting this program, who cared for your child during nontraditional hours? (n=164)



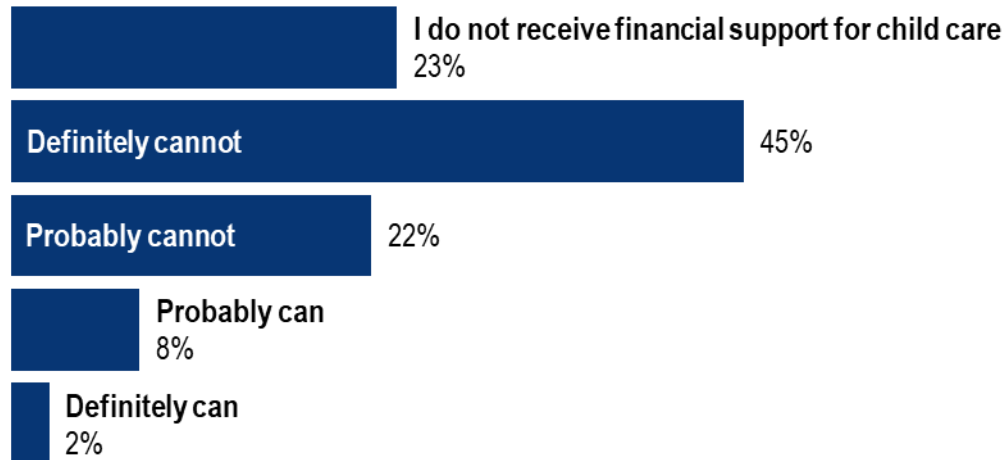
Respondents reported a variety of challenges to finding care during nontraditional hours (Figure 14). Respondents could select more than one challenge. The most common challenge caregiver respondents faced was finding providers that offered nontraditional hours, followed by the cost and having unpredictable work hours. For caregivers who reported unpredictable work hours (n=54), the most common job sectors were arts and entertainment (43%) and retail (19%).

Figure 14: What difficulties have you had in finding care during nontraditional hours? (n=231)



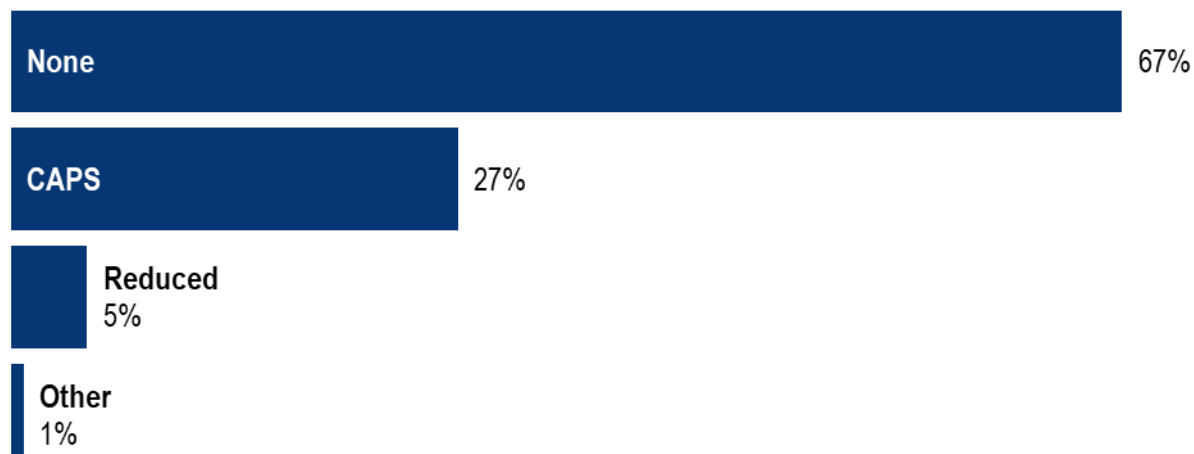
While cost was cited as a common challenge, it appears to affect single-earner families more than dual-earner families. Overall, 67% of respondents stated that they “probably cannot” or “definitely cannot” afford child care during nontraditional hours without financial support (Figure 15). Among single-earner households, 59% responded that they “definitely cannot” afford child care during nontraditional hours, compared to only 29% of dual-earner households.

Figure 15: Without financial support, would you be able to afford child care during nontraditional hours? (n=128)



In the intake data, 67% of respondents did not receive any financial support for their nontraditional hour child care (Figure 16). Twenty-seven percent (27%) received CAPS, and 6% received tuition assistance through the EXPAND grant. Single-earner families were more likely to receive financial support. While only 18% of dual earner families indicated that they received financial support for nontraditional hour child care, 45% of single-earner families indicated that they received financial support for nontraditional hour child care. Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) was the most common form of financial support.

Figure 16: Do you receive financial support for child care? (n=129)



Key Takeaways

- Overall, the family intake survey showed child demographics and household characteristics for 209 children and 132 families across nine grantees.
- The results indicate that there may be a higher need for nontraditional hour care among children aged one-year-old to four-years-old.
- Caregivers reported looking for care during nontraditional hours due to changes in their work schedule and a desire for reliable care.
- Nontraditional hour care under the EXPAND grant primarily replaced unpaid care previously provided by members of the household or friends and family outside the household.
- Finding providers who offered nontraditional hour care and having an unpredictable work schedule were barriers for many families.
- Cost was also a barrier, and nontraditional hour child care costs appears to affect single-earner households more than dual earner households. This may be due to single-earner households having fewer financial resources overall.

Provider Monthly Reports

There were seven providers who were awarded an EXPAND grant. Providers submitted monthly reports from January 2024 through the end of their grant cycle. Two providers ended their grants in December 2024, and one provider ended their grant in March 2025. All other grantees ended their grants in June 2025. In the analysis below, November 2024 is the last month that represents data from all grantees.

Hours Offered

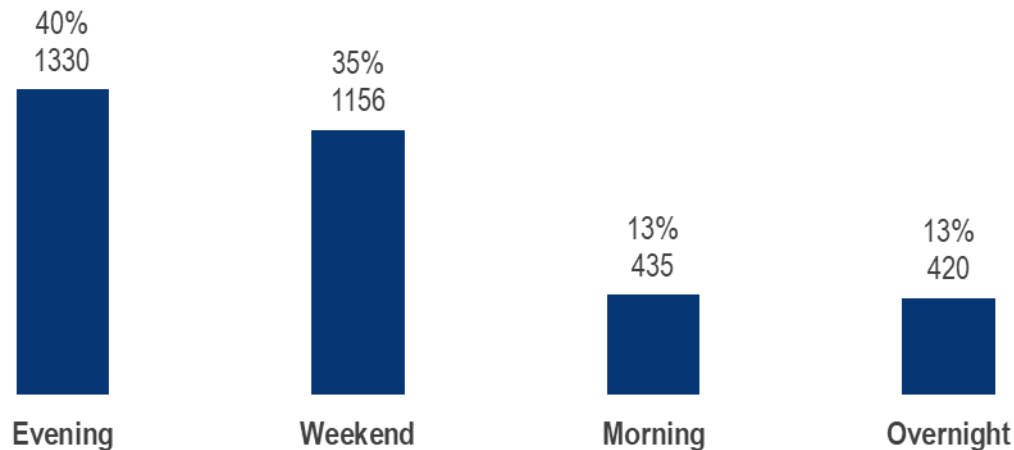
The EXPAND grant defined nontraditional hours as follows:

- Early morning – Weekdays from 6:00 a.m. to 6:59 a.m. (5 hours per week)
- Evening – Weekdays from 6:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. (30 hours per week)
- Overnight – Weekdays from 12:00 a.m. to 5:59 a.m. (30 hours per week)
- Weekend – From Saturday at 6:00 a.m. to Sunday at 11:59 p.m. (42 hours per week)

All seven provider grantees offered evening hours, six offered morning hours, two offered overnight hours, and four offered weekend hours.

Across all seven providers from January 2024 to June 2025, there were 13,364 nontraditional hours offered. Evening (40%) and weekend (35%) hours made up the majority of nontraditional hours offered (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Nontraditional hours offered by Providers



Enrollments

Each month, providers reported the number of children enrolled during each of the four nontraditional time periods. Figure 18 below shows the number of children enrolled in each of the provider sites. Data is shown from January 2024 through November 2024, the last month that data was available for all seven providers. Note that children may be enrolled in more than one nontraditional time period.

In every month, evening care had the highest enrollment (Figure 18). Grantees experienced a spike in enrollments in June and July 2024 with a drop in August 2024. Grantees suggested that this may be related to increased need for care during months when school is not in session.

Figure 18: Number of Children Enrolled by Nontraditional Time Period

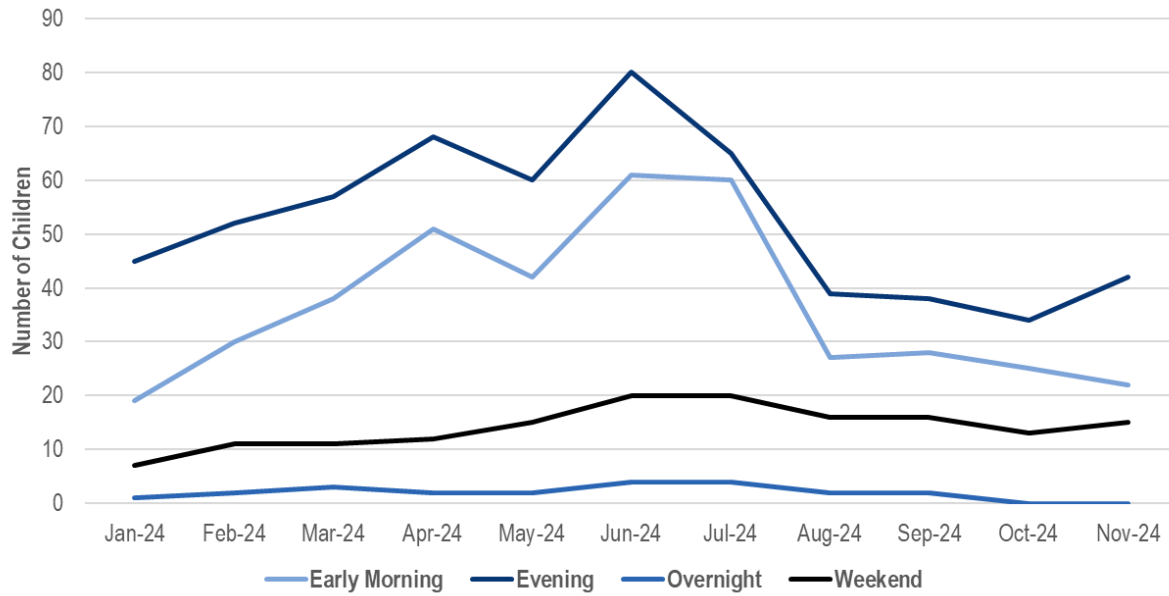


Table 6 shows the average monthly enrollments across all providers from January 2024 to November 2024 when all grantees were active. All providers offered evening hours, and enrollments were highest for evening hours, with an average of 52.7 children enrolled per month. Each provider averaged 7.8 enrollments in the evenings. Next, six providers offered early morning hours with an average of 36.6 children enrolled per month across all grantees. Providers averaged 6.2 children enrolled per month during the early morning period. Four providers offered weekend hours with an average of 14.2 children enrolled per month across all grantees. Providers averaged 3.1 children enrolled per month during the early morning period. Two grantees offered overnight hours. Despite offering overnight care throughout the grant, one grantee reported only one overnight enrollment in January 2024 and February 2024. The other grantee averaged 2.5 monthly overnight enrollments. Overall averages were not calculated due to the low number of grantees offering these hours and low overall enrollment.

Table 6: Monthly Enrollment in Nontraditional-Hour Care at EXPAND Providers

	Number of Providers	Average Monthly Enrollment*	Range	Median	Average per Provider
Morning hours	6 (86%)	36.6 children	19–61	30	6.2 (Range: 0–25, Median: 5)
Evening hours	7 (100%)	52.7 children	34–81	52	7.8 (Range: 0–29, Median: 5)
Overnight	2 (29%)	—	—	—	—
Weekend	4 (57%)	14.2 children	7–20	15	3.1 (Range: 0–9, Median: 3)

Averages are based on January to November 2024 data (when all grantees were active). Average enrollment for overnight care was not calculated due to the low number of grantees offering these hours and low overall enrollment.

Staffing

Each month, grantees reported the number and type of staff employed by the provider. All grantees reported employing administrators and lead teachers. On average each month, grantees employed 1.5 administrators and 2.5 lead teachers. Four grantees reported employing assistant teachers at some point during the grant period. Among the four grantees who employed assistant teachers, 2.3 assistant teachers were employed on average per month. Two grantees did not employ assistant teachers and had higher monthly lead teacher staff averages than other grantees. Three grantees reported employing nutrition staff, and no grantees reported employing transportation staff. One grantee reported hiring additional weekend staff throughout the grant.

Key Takeaways

- Evening and early morning hours were the most offered hours among provider grantees. Evening and early morning hours had the highest enrollments throughout the grant period.
- All grantees reported employing administrators and lead teachers. Grantees who did not employ assistant teachers employed a higher number of lead teachers than grantees who hired a mix of assistant teachers and lead teachers.

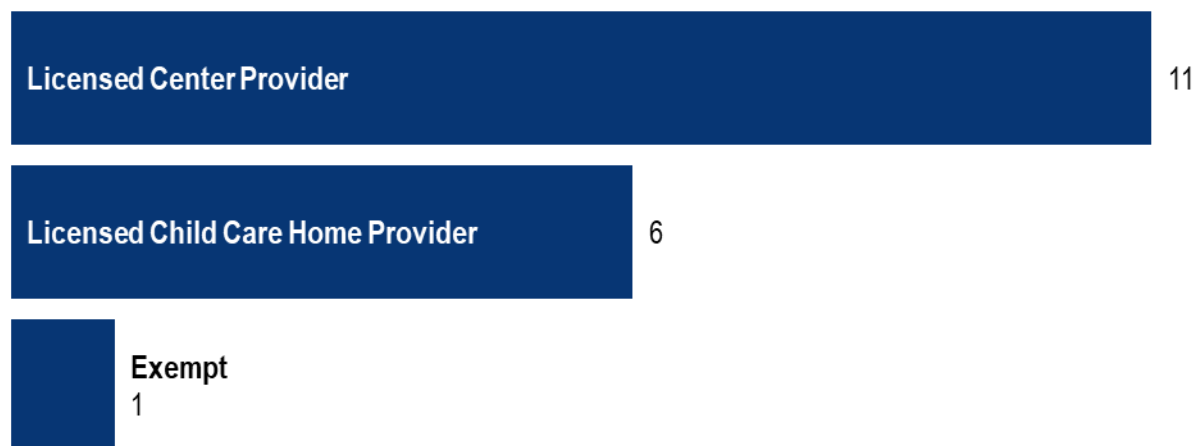
Collaborative Monthly Reports

There were six collaboratives who were awarded EXPAND grants. Many collaboratives worked with provider partners to offer nontraditional child care.

Provider Partners

Collaboratives reported working with 18 distinct child care providers to provide nontraditional hour care. The number of provider partners that collaboratives worked with ranged from 1 to 9. Two collaboratives worked with the same three providers. The provider partners varied by type (Figure 19). Most of the provider partners (61%) were licensed center providers. Only one collaborative worked with an exempt provider.

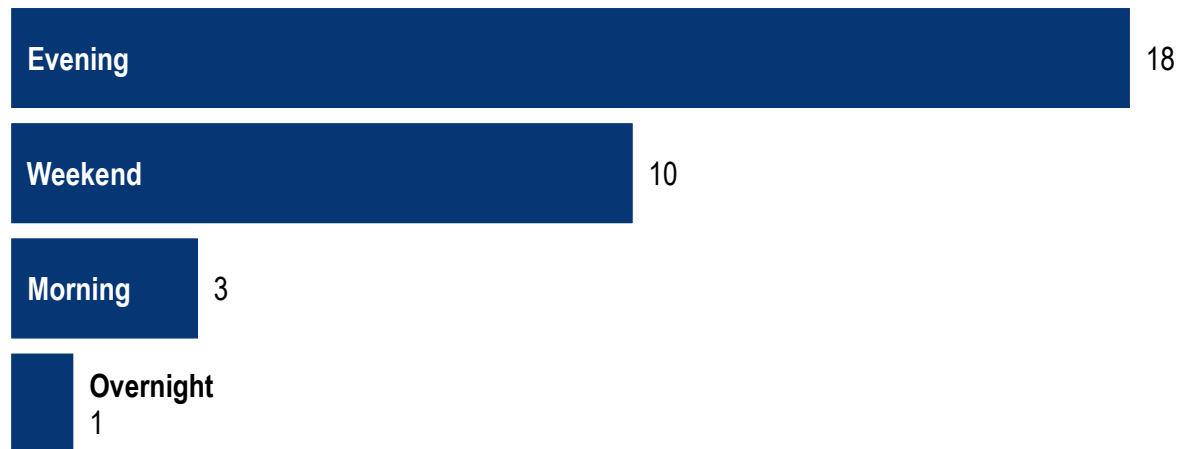
Figure 199: Number of Providers by Type



Hours Offered

Each month, collaborative grantees reported which nontraditional hour options their provider partners offered. All 18 providers offered evening hours (Figure 20). Only one provider offered overnight hours.

Figure 20: Number of Providers offering Nontraditional Hour Care by Time Period



Key Takeaways

- Collaborative grantees partnered with 18 unique providers to offer nontraditional hour care.
- While providers varied in type, most (61%) were licensed center providers.
- Similar to provider grantees, evening hours were the most offered period among collaborative grantees. However, fewer collaborative grantees offered morning hours. Weekend hours were more common among collaborative grantees.

Appendix B1.

Monthly Report Form

PROVIDER MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) Grant

Date	Click or tap to enter a date.
Grantee	Choose an item.

Executive Summary

Describe the goals and activities you accomplished this month as outlined in your timeline/Scope of Work.

Click or tap here to enter text.

What hours do you currently provide care?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Open	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Close	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
24 hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How much is the tuition for care during nontraditional hours? Please only include the tuition amount for nontraditional hours.

	Tuition amount	Daily or weekly
Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	\$ _____	Choose an item.
Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	\$ _____	Choose an item.
Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	\$ _____	Choose an item.
Weekend	\$ _____	Choose an item.

Do parents have the same specified drop-off and pick-up times for nontraditional care or can parents choose their own drop-off and pick-up schedule?

- ☐ Pick-up and/or drop-off times are the same for all families in nontraditional care
- ☐ Parents can choose their own pick-up and/or drop-off times for nontraditional care

Has there been a change in late pickup fees?

- ☐ Late pickup fees increased.
- ☐ Late pickup fees decreased.
- ☐ No, we have not changed our late pickup fees.
- ☐ Not applicable. We do not charge late pickup fees.

In total, how many children were enrolled in nontraditional care this month?

	Enrollments		Disenrollment	
	Total number of children enrolled in nontraditional hours this month.	How many of these were <u>also enrolled in regular care hours</u> ?	How many children <u>disenrolled from nontraditional hours care</u> this month?	Of those who disenrolled, how many <u>stayed enrolled in regular care hours</u> ?
Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Weekend	_____	_____	_____	_____

How many children were newly enrolled in nontraditional hours care this month?

	Total number <u>new enrollments</u> for nontraditional hours.	How many new enrollments <u>were already receiving care</u> from your center?	How many new enrollments <u>were not already receiving care</u> from your center?	How many <u>open spots</u> were available last month?
Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Weekend	_____	_____	_____	_____

How many children received financial assistance for nontraditional hours care this month?

	Number of children receiving <u>CAPS</u> .	Number of children receiving <u>EXPAND-funded</u> tuition assistance.	Number of children receiving <u>other</u> financial assistance (Not CAPS or EXPAND-funded).
Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	_____	_____	_____
Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	_____	_____	_____
Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	_____	_____	_____
Weekend	_____	_____	_____

How much EXPAND-funded tuition assistance does your site provide per child for nontraditional hours care?

\$ _____ per child

Per **Choose an item.** (select day or week)

In total, how much EXPAND-funded tuition assistance did your site provide this month?

\$ _____ this month

What method(s) have you used to advertise your site's nontraditional hours this month?

(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Billboards
- ☐ Community events
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Our website
- ☐ Posting signage or banners at our site
- ☐ Print advertising (flyers, posters, newspaper, magazine, etc.)
- ☐ Radio ads
- ☐ Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
- ☐ Television ads
- ☐ Word of mouth referrals
- ☐ Other (Please specify): **Click or tap here to enter text.**
- ☐ We did not advertise nontraditional hours this month

What staff position(s) are involved in providing nontraditional hours care this month?

Please include staff who work during or support nontraditional care hours.

	<u>Total</u> number of staff who worked during nontraditional hours.	Number of <u>new</u> staff positions hired this month for nontraditional hours.	Number of staff who <u>departed</u> this month.	Number of <u>open</u> positions currently.
Administrator(s)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assistant teacher(s)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Lead teacher(s)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Nutrition staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
Transportation staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other: Click or tap here to enter text.	_____	_____	_____	_____

How many training hours specific to nontraditional care have your staff completed this month?

_____ hours

Do you have any additional training needs as it relates to nontraditional hours?

(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Licensing requirements training
- ☐ Safety and security training
- ☐ Specialized child development training
- ☐ Sleep and rest schedule training
- ☐ Health and nutrition training
- ☐ Sleep challenges training
- ☐ Emergency preparedness training
- ☐ Behavior challenges training
- ☐ Other (Please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ We do not have any additional training needs

Partnerships

List any new organizations you partnered with this month along with their contributions.

Partner	Contribution
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Maintenance/Renovation:

Please describe any physical maintenance or renovation activities this month to prepare your site for implementation.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Challenges and/or Changes:

Briefly describe any unanticipated challenges or notable changes to your implementation plan that occurred this month.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Accomplishments:

Identify at least one thing that went particularly well this month. Think about what you would want to share with other grantees or providers who want to incorporate nontraditional hour care.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Additional Comments or Requests for Support:

Do you have any additional information you would like to share? Is there anything DECAL can do to better assist your agency?

Click or tap here to enter text.

COLLABORATIVE MONTHLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery

(EXPAND) Grant

Date	
Grantee	

Executive Summary

Describe the goals and activities you accomplished this month as outlined in your timeline/Scope of Work.

How much EXPAND-supported financial support did your collaboration provide for nontraditional hours care this month?

\$ in tuition assistance for families paid to child care providers

\$ in direct family stipends

How many families received financial support for nontraditional hours care this month?

families

Financial Support to Child Care Providers

List any child care providers you have provided EXPAND-supported financial support to this month. Please indicate the provider type and if the provider offers nontraditional care hours.

Child Care Provider:	Provider Type: (Licensed Center Provider, Licensed Child Care Home Provider, Exempt Provider, or Informal)	Nontraditional hours currently offered:			
		Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	Weekend (Sat or Sun)
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐	☐

Other Supports/Resources to Child Care Providers

List other types of EXPAND-supported resources you have provided to child care providers this month.

Child Care Provider:	Description of other resource/support:

Other Supports/Resources to Child Care Providers

List other types of EXPAND-supported resources you have provided to child care providers this month.

Child Care Provider:**Description of other resource/support:****What other types of EXPAND-funded support has your collaboration provided this month?**

Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Educational support for caregivers
- ☐ Helping caregivers locate providers who provide nontraditional hours care in their area
- ☐ Identify internships or technical trainings for students enrolled in early childhood education programs
- ☐ Job placement services for students enrolled in early childhood education programs
- ☐ Provide funding directly to providers to support nontraditional hours care
- ☐ Research support (e.g. needs assessment or surveys)
- ☐ Transportation support
- ☐ Other (Please specify):

What method(s) have you used to advertise your collaboration's EXPAND-funded opportunities?

(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Billboards
- ☐ Community events
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Our website
- ☐ Posting signage or banners at our partner site(s)
- ☐ Print advertising (flyers, posters, newspaper, magazine, etc.)
- ☐ Radio ads
- ☐ Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
- ☐ Television ads
- ☐ Word of mouth referrals
- ☐ Other (Please specify):
- ☐ We did not advertise this month

Please describe your outreach activities this month to advertise your EXPAND grant-funded opportunities.

Partnerships

List any other organizations you partnered with this month along with their contributions. Please specify the type of organization (employer, government agency, community organization, etc.).

Partner	Type	Contribution

How many EXPAND-funded new employees were hired for your collaboration this month?

Include all positions that will be funded at least partially with EXPAND grant funding. List what positions were hired this month along with their primary responsibilities related to the grant.

Title	Responsibilities

How many EXPAND-funded employee positions were unfilled this month?

unfilled positions

Challenges and/or Changes

Briefly describe any unanticipated challenges or notable changes to your implementation plan that occurred this month.

Accomplishments:

Identify at least one thing that went particularly well this month and write about it in the form of a story. Think about what you would want to share with other grantees or providers who want to incorporate nontraditional hour care.

Additional Comments or Requests for Support:

Do you have any additional information you would like to share? Is there anything DECAL can do to better assist your agency?

Please complete this section if your collaboration provides nontraditional hours care directly.

What hours do you currently provide care?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Open	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Close	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
24 hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How much is the tuition for care during nontraditional hours?

Please only include the tuition amount for nontraditional hours.

	Tuition amount	Daily or weekly
Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	\$ _____	
Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	\$ _____	
Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	\$ _____	
Weekend	\$ _____	

Do parents have the same specified drop-off and pick-up times for nontraditional care or can parents choose their own drop-off and pick-up schedule?

- ☐ Pick-up and/or drop-off times are the same for all families in nontraditional care
- ☐ Parents can choose their own pick-up and/or drop-off times for nontraditional care

In total, how many children were enrolled in nontraditional care this month?

	Enrollments		Disenrollment	
	Total number of children enrolled in nontraditional hours this month.	How many of these were <u>also enrolled in regular care hours</u> ?	How many children <u>disenrolled from nontraditional hours care</u> this month?	Of those who disenrolled, how many <u>stayed enrolled in regular care hours</u> ?
Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Weekend	_____	_____	_____	_____

How many children were **newly enrolled** in nontraditional hours care this month?

	Total number <u>new enrollments</u> for nontraditional hours.	How many new enrollments <u>were already receiving care</u> from your center?	How many new enrollments <u>were not already receiving care</u> from your center?	How many <u>open spots</u> were available last month?
Early Morning (6am to 6:59am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Evening (6pm to 11:59pm)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overnight (12am to 5:59 am)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Weekend	_____	_____	_____	_____

How many training hours specific to nontraditional care have your staff completed this month?

_____ hours

Do you have any additional training needs as it relates to nontraditional hours?
(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Licensing requirements training
- ☐ Safety and security training
- ☐ Specialized child development training
- ☐ Sleep and rest schedule training
- ☐ Health and nutrition training
- ☐ Sleep challenges training
- ☐ Emergency preparedness training
- ☐ Behavior challenges training
- ☐ Other (Please specify):
- ☐ We do not have any additional training needs

Please describe any challenges this month to providing nontraditional hours care.

Appendix B2.

Family Intake Form

PLEASE completely fill in the appropriate bubble, like this ☐ . If you make a mistake, mark through the incorrect bubble like this ☒.



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Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Family Intake Form

Finding care during nontraditional hours (before 7 am, after 6 pm, overnight, or weekends) can be difficult. To help support families, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has provided grants to expand the availability of child care during nontraditional hours in Georgia. DECAL is working with The Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to evaluate the grant program. As part of this evaluation, we ask you to please complete this form so we can better understand the needs of Georgia's families. The information you provide will be kept confidential, will only be used for research and evaluation purposes, and will not impact your eligibility to receive services or financial support.

Today's Date	
Child Care Provider (Organization or Business)	

Please tell us about the children in your household who will receive child care during nontraditional hours (before 7 am, after 6 pm, overnight, and/or weekend)?

	Age (in years)	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Has a learning disability?
Example	10 years	Female	White/Caucasian	Yes
Child 1				
Child 2				
Child 3				
Child 4				
Child 5				
Child 6				

How many adults living in your household support your household financially?

--	--

adults

On average, how much does your household make in a month? (Please include income for all adults in the household)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Less than \$500 | ☐ \$2,500 to \$2,999 |
| ☐ \$500 to \$999 | ☐ \$3,000 to \$3,499 |
| ☐ \$1,000 to \$1,499 | ☐ \$3,500 to \$3,999 |
| ☐ \$1,500 to \$1,999 | ☐ Over \$4,000 |
| ☐ \$2,000 to \$2,499 | |

Please continue on back

8084525002



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Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

PLEASE completely fill in the appropriate bubble, like this ☒ . If you make a mistake, mark through the incorrect bubble like this ☒.



Carl Vinson
Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Family Intake Form

Finding care during nontraditional hours (before 7 am, after 6 pm, overnight, or weekends) can be difficult. To help support families, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) has provided grants to expand the availability of child care during nontraditional hours in Georgia. DECAL is working with The Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to evaluate the grant program. As part of this evaluation, we ask you to please complete this form so we can better understand the needs of Georgia's families. The information you provide will be kept confidential, will only be used for research and evaluation purposes, and will not impact your eligibility to receive services or financial support.

Today's Date	
Child Care Provider (Organization or Business)	

Please tell us about the children in your household who will receive child care during nontraditional hours (before 7 am, after 6 pm, overnight, and/or weekend)?

	Age (in years)	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Has a learning disability?
Example	10 years	Female	White/Caucasian	Yes
Child 1				
Child 2				
Child 3				
Child 4				
Child 5				
Child 6				

How many adults living in your household support your household financially?

--	--

adults

On average, how much does your household make in a month? (Please include income for all adults in the household)

- ☐ Less than \$500 ☐ \$2,500 to \$2,999
☐ \$500 to \$999 ☐ \$3,000 to \$3,499
☐ \$1,000 to \$1,499 ☐ \$3,500 to \$3,999
☐ \$1,500 to \$1,999 ☐ Over \$4,000
☐ \$2,000 to \$2,499

Please continue on back

8084525003



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Appendix C.

Family Needs Survey Report

Executive Summary

In 2021, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) contracted with the Urban Institute to study stakeholders' perspectives on what Georgia's early care and learning system needs to strengthen its supports for children. One of the Urban Institute's key recommendations was to support child care providers in extending their hours of operation. Using federal financial relief funding, particularly from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, DECAL created the Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) Grants. These grants provide funds to child care providers to aid in expanding their services and to government and nonprofit organizations to create collaboratives focused on improving access to child care within their communities. DECAL contracted with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government (Institute of Government) to conduct an evaluation of the EXPAND Grant.

As a part of this evaluation, the Institute of Government conducted a survey of families receiving child care during nontraditional hours. Evaluation team members collaborated with EXPAND grantees to share the survey with the families they serve. Sixty-nine ($N=69$) family members who receive child care services during nontraditional hours completed the survey. Results show that most families are single-parent households, have lower incomes, and need child care during weekends and weekday evenings. Families reported difficulty finding information about nontraditional hour child care options in their community and identified the expenses of child care providers as a barrier to care. When supported with nontraditional hour child care families indicate a relief of stress, being able to focus more on work and/or school and having an overall peace of mind.

Summary of Major Findings

Respondent Demographics

- About forty percent (40.7%) of respondents have never been married.
- Respondents' average monthly household income varied, with 37.3% reporting between \$1000 and \$1900 per month.

Child Care Needs

- Family members commonly used nontraditional hour child care services during weekends (71.0%) and on weekdays after 6 p.m. (68.1%).

- Over quarter of family members (26.1%) do not have someone within their household who can provide child care services while they are away.

Financial Support

- 42.9% of respondents indicated that they receive no financial support for child care.
- Most family members (62.9%) say they “definitely cannot” afford nontraditional hour child care without financial support.

Barriers and Struggles

- The majority of respondents (85.3%) agree that it is hard to find child care providers open during the hours that they need.
- 82.3% of family members say the expense of child care providers stop them from using them.
- 82.1% of respondents who are employed or enrolled in school say they usually need to make last-minute child care arrangements.
 - Over three quarters of these respondents (77.6%) sometimes need to work or study longer with little to no prior notice.
 - Over half (56.7%) say their work or school schedule often changes last minute.

Benefits

- The majority of family members say nontraditional hour child care gives them peace of mind knowing their child is well cared for (83.3%) and it reduces the stress they feel about parenting (66.7%)
 - They can also be more focused at work or school because they are not worried about child care (73.3%)

Introduction and Methodology

In 2021, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) contracted with the Urban Institute to study stakeholders' perspectives on what Georgia's early care and learning system needs to strengthen its supports for children from birth through age 13. One of the Urban Institute's key recommendations based on families' feedback was to support child care providers in extending their hours of operation, which was further explored to understand the need for nontraditional hour child care in Georgia. Using federal financial relief funding, particularly from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, designed the Expanding Parents' Access to Nontraditional Delivery (EXPAND) grant to address child care needs during nontraditional hours, defined as 6:00 PM to 7:00 AM on weekdays and any time on weekends. In 2023, DECAL awarded EXPAND Grant funding to seven child care providers to extend their operating hours, and to six government and nonprofit organizations to establish collaboratives aimed at addressing child care access challenges in their communities. DECAL contracted with the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government (Institute of Government) to conduct an evaluation of the EXPAND Grant.

In May 2025, the Institute of Government conducted a survey of families served by EXPAND grantees to assess how the EXPAND Grant enhanced child care services. The Institute of Government developed a 26-question survey (see Appendix C1) to obtain input from families receiving child care during nontraditional hours. The areas of evaluation included topics such as 1) the demographics of the family members, 2) their child care needs and preferences, 3) information about their child care providers, 4) the respondents' financial situations, 5) the barriers to receiving child care, 6) and the benefits of having nontraditional hour child care. The survey also allowed respondents to share more about their nontraditional hour child care experiences through open-ended questions.

Survey Response

On May 19, 2025, EXPAND grantees received a prenotification email asking for their participation in distributing the evaluation survey to the families they serve. On May 20, 2025, grantees received the online survey link with instructions on how to distribute the survey, including pre-drafted email invitations, flyers, and social media images and captions. Grantees received four reminder emails over the following weeks, with the final reminder being sent on June 25, 2025. The survey closed on July 8, 2025. Overall, 141 family members responded to the survey. However, 72 respondents were removed from analysis as they indicated they did not receive child care services during nontraditional hours; thus, the final response count is 69.

Survey Findings

The following sections present the full results from the survey. This report groups survey findings into thematic groups. Numerical values are rounded to one decimal place, which may cause some percentages to slightly exceed or fall short of 100%. Because some respondents may have chosen not to answer specific questions, all tables and figures in this report are accompanied by the number of survey respondents answering that survey item.

Respondent Demographics

To better understand who was served by the EXPAND grantees, family members provided basic demographic information. Of those who responded, the majority (86.2%) indicated that they were female (Figure 21). Almost half (47.5%) of respondents were 25 to 34 years old, while a quarter (25.4%) were 35 to 44 years old (Figure 22). The majority (71.2%) of respondents self-identified as Black or African American, while almost a quarter (23.7%) identified as White (Figure 23).

Figure 21: Respondents' Gender Identity (N=58)

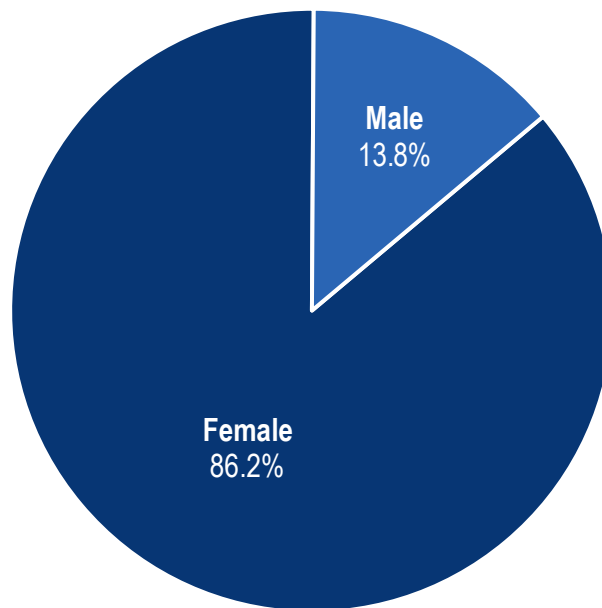


Figure 22: Respondents' Age Ranges (N=59)

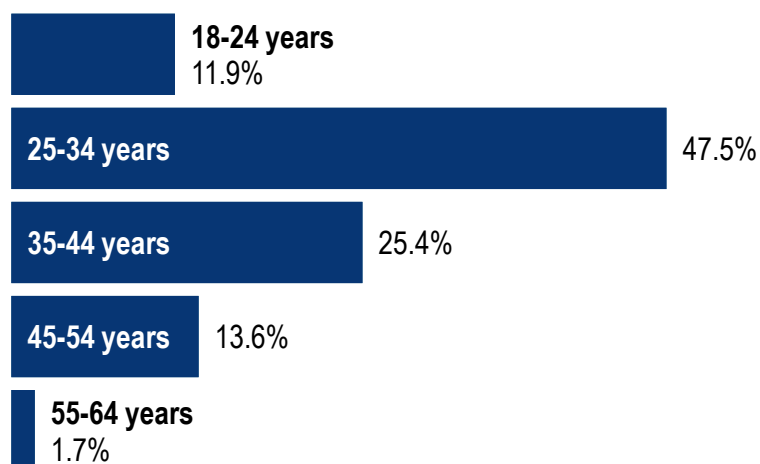
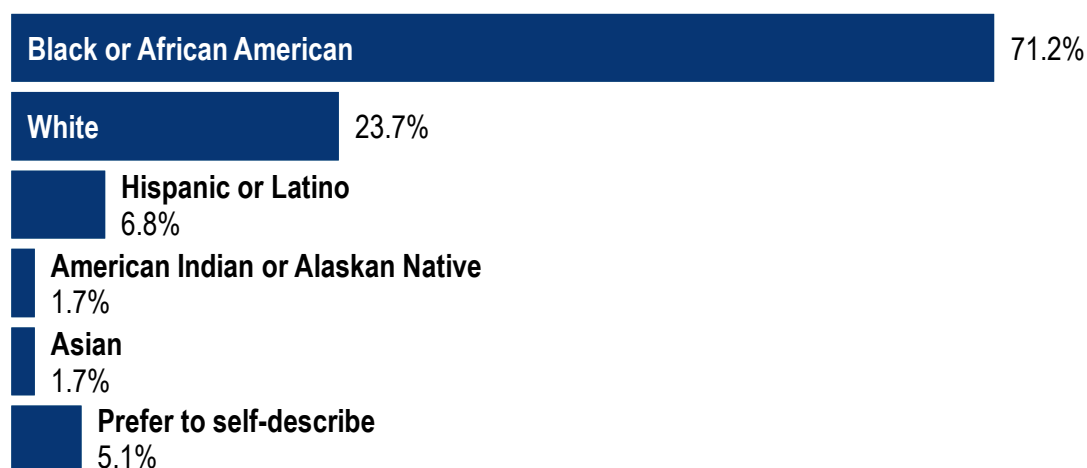


Figure 23: Respondents' Race or Ethnicity (N=59)*



**Respondents could select multiple answer choices*

About forty percent (40.7%) of respondents have never been married, while about thirty-five percent (35.6%) are currently married (Figure 24). About one-fifth (20.9%) of respondents work in the education field, with an additional 13.4% in foodservice/restaurant and 11.9% in healthcare (Figure 25).

Figure 20: Respondents' Marital Status (N=59)

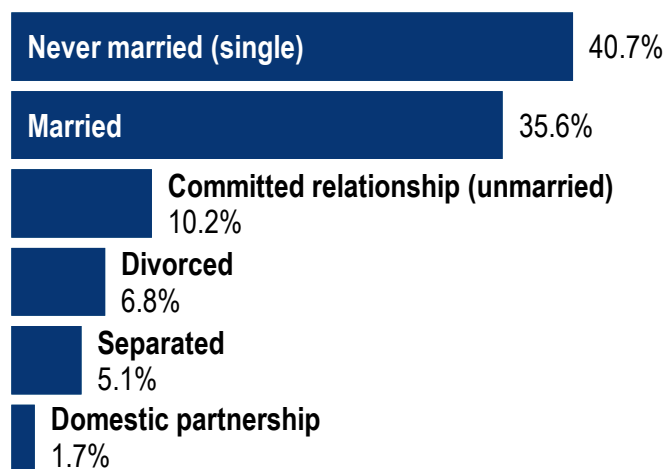


Figure 21: Respondents' Field of Employment (N=67)



The plurality of respondents reported an average monthly household income between \$1000 to \$1,499 (23.7%), followed by \$1,500 to \$1,999 (13.6%) (Figure 26). Only about one in 10 respondents (9.1%) indicated that they have a physical or mental condition that reduces their ability to carry out daily activities (Figure 27). These findings highlight that majority of these families include single-parent households and those that have lower incomes; this might shed light on which types of families are more likely to depend on nontraditional hour child care.

Figure 22: Respondents' Average Monthly Household Income (N=59)

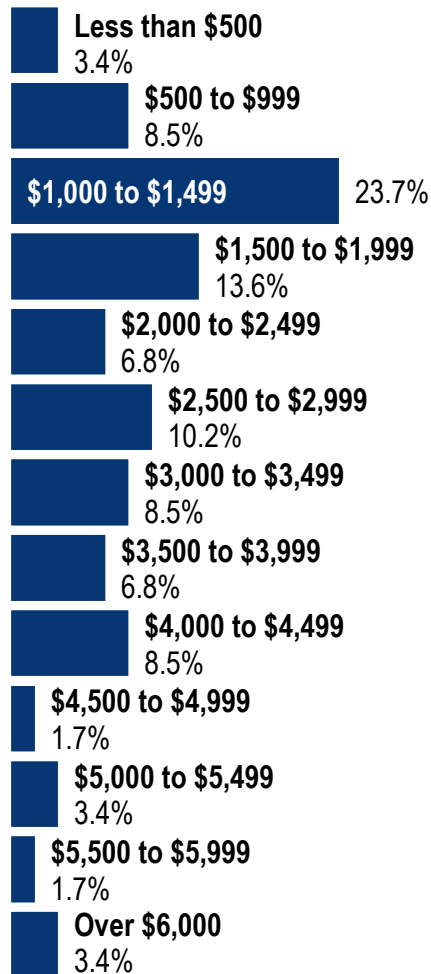
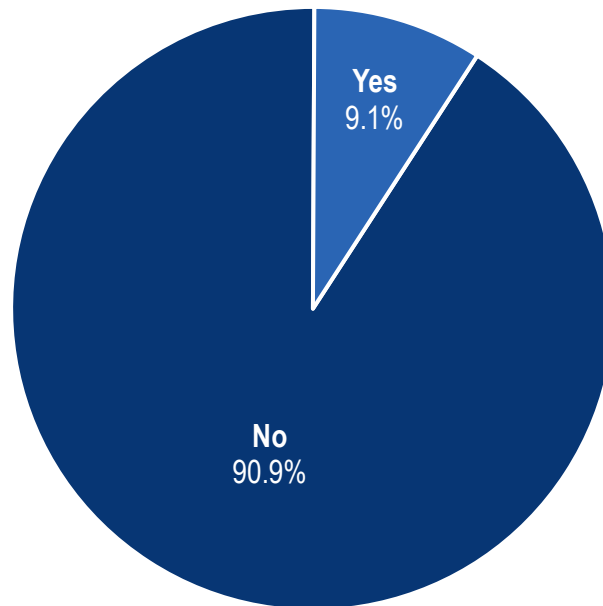


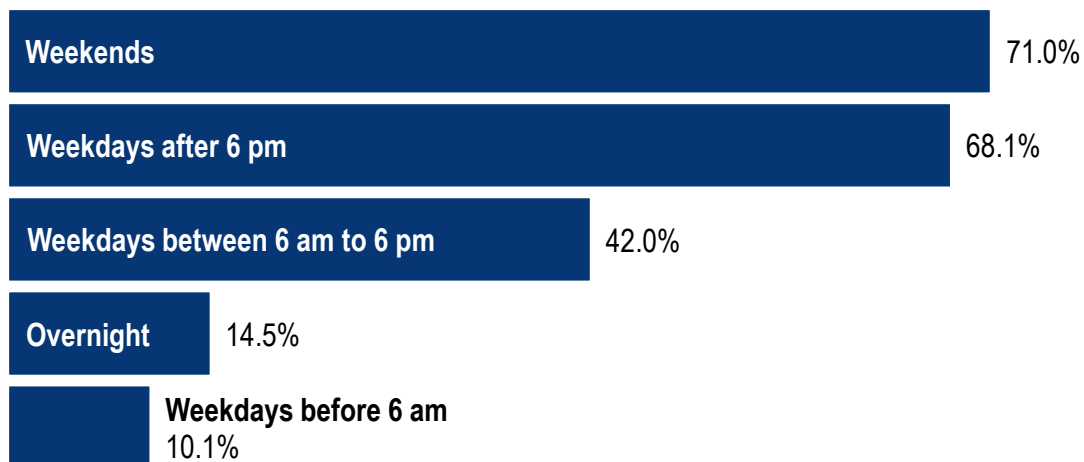
Figure 23: Percent of Respondents with Physical/Mental Conditions That Reduce Their Ability to Carry Out Day-to-Day Activities (N=55)



Child Care Needs

The target population for this survey includes families who receive nontraditional hour child care services from EXPAND grantees. Respondents most commonly used nontraditional hour child care on weekends (71.0%) and weekdays after 6 pm (68.1%) (Figure 28). Fewer respondents said they used child care for overnight hours (14.5%) or weekdays before 6 am (10.1%).

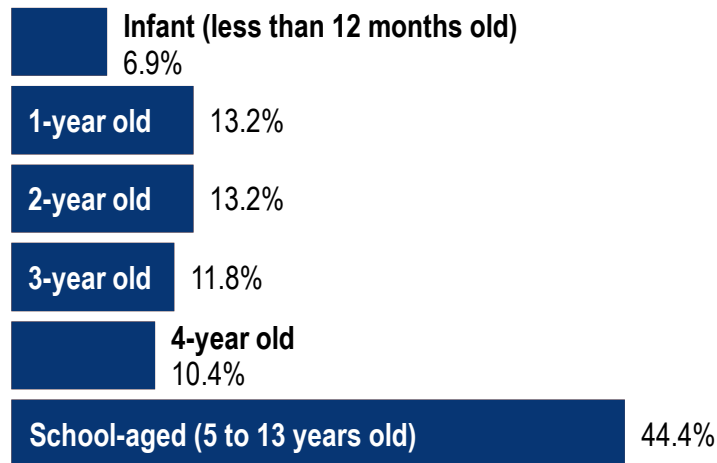
Figure 24: Most Frequently Used Nontraditional Child Care Hours (N=69)*



**Respondents could select multiple answer choices*

Family members also provided the ages of their children that received child care during nontraditional hours (Figure 29). Most children in child care services were between one to four years old (48.6%), followed by school-aged children (5 to 13 years old) (44.4%).

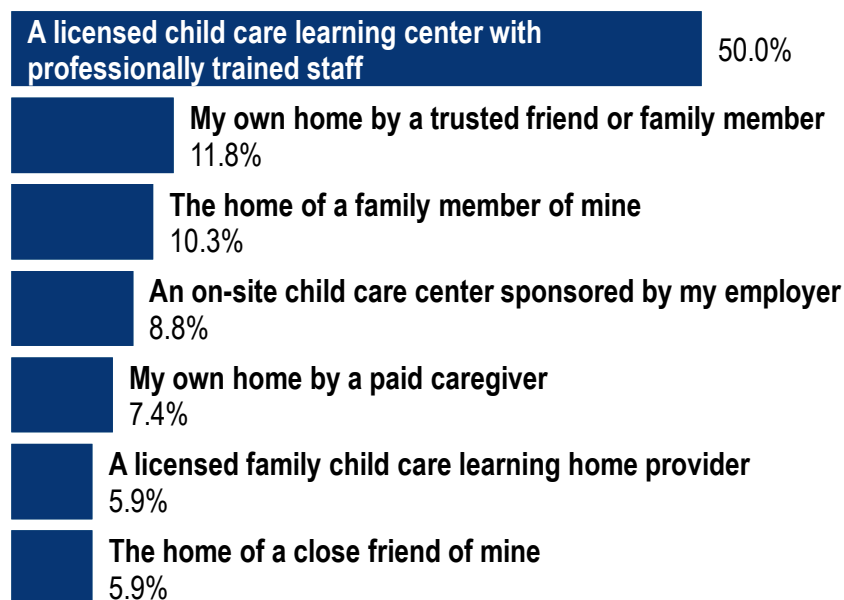
Figure 25: Ages of Children Receiving Child Care During Nontraditional Hours



Child Care Preferences

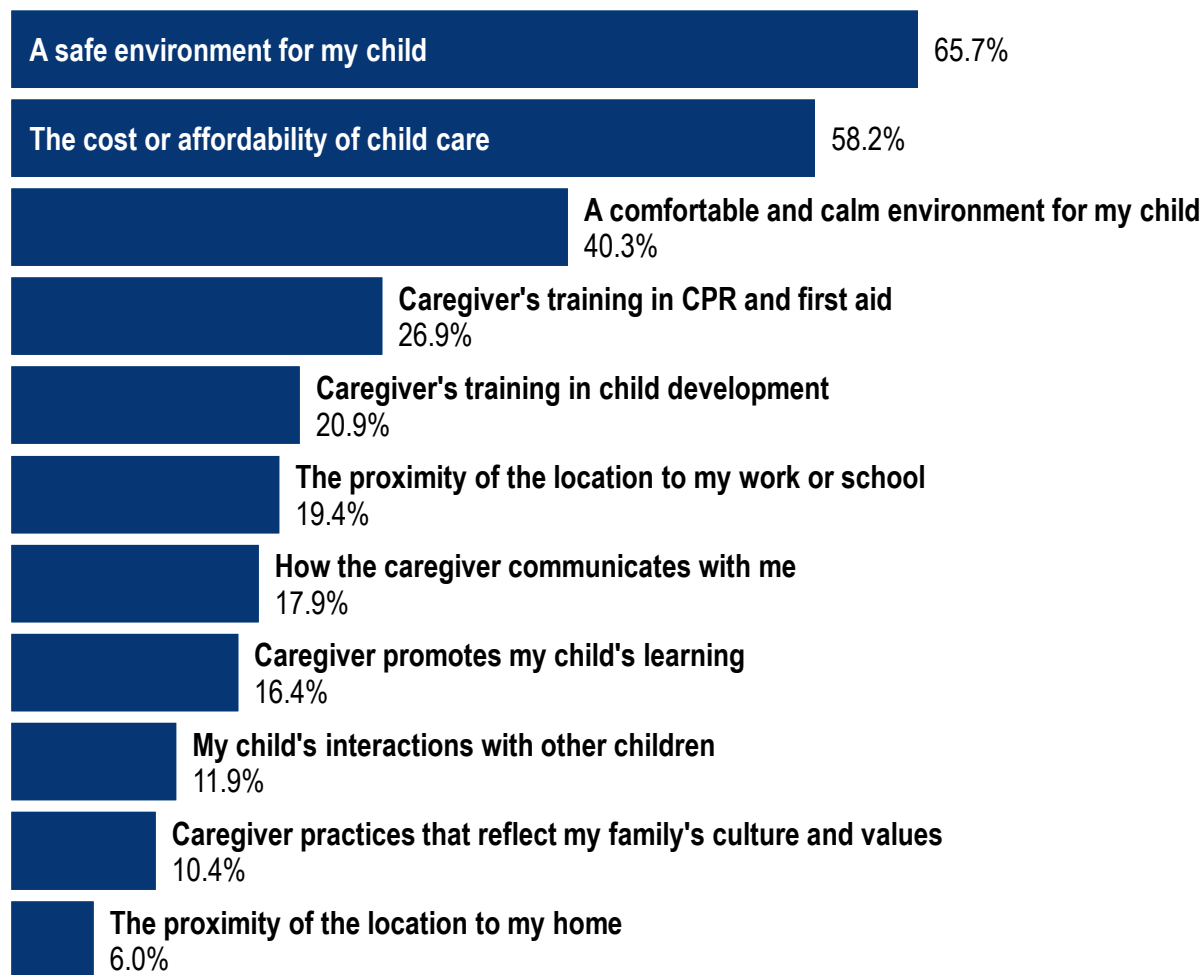
Family members reported their preferences for nontraditional hour child care, both the type of care setting and key priorities. Half (50.0%) of all respondents said they would prefer nontraditional hour child care to take place at a licensed child care learning center with professionally trained staff (Figure 30).

Figure 26: Respondents' Preferences for Nontraditional Hour Child Care Setting (N=68)



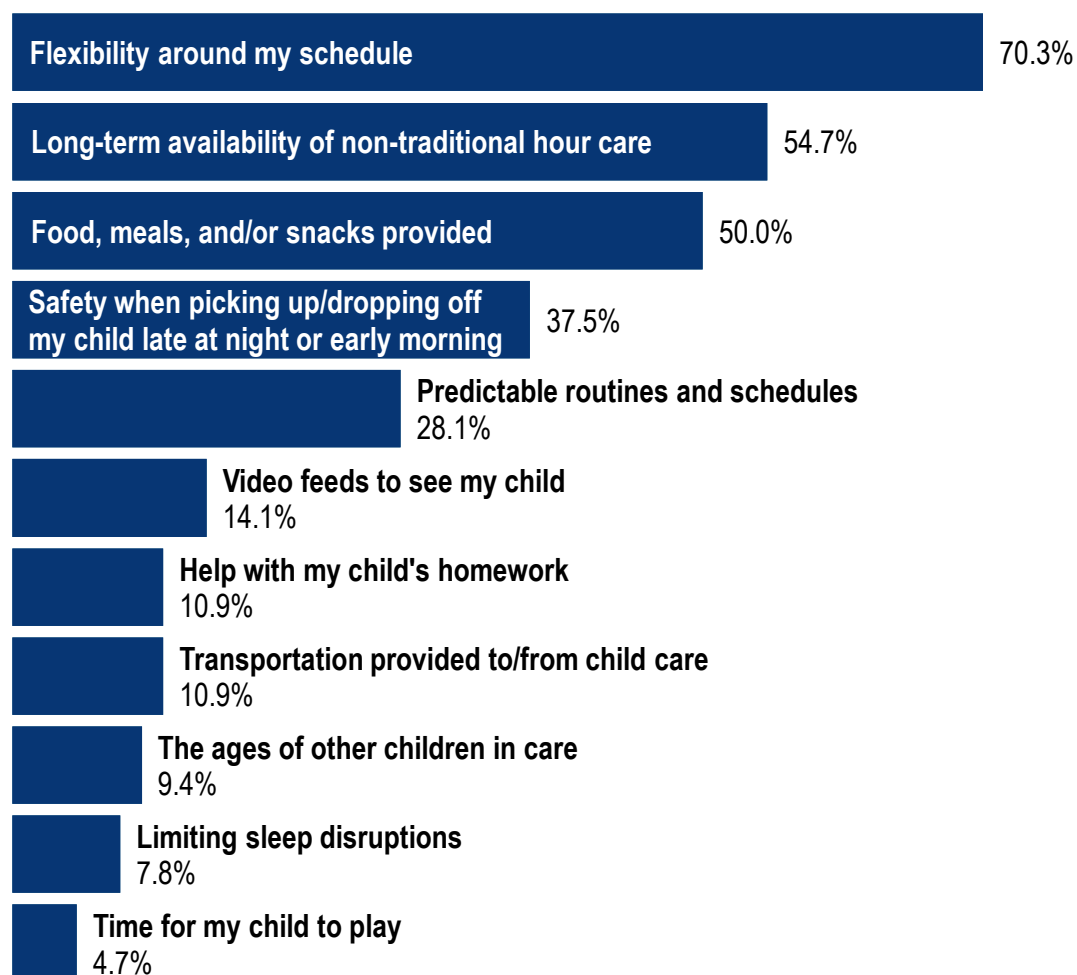
Family members identified the most important factors when considering child care during nontraditional hours. Thematically, the factors were categorized into those broadly applicable to child care (Figure 31) and those more specific to nontraditional hour care (Figure 32). The top priorities with at least half of respondents included flexibility around their schedule (70.3%), that their child(ren) is in a safe environment (65.7%), the cost or affordability of the child care (58.2%), the long-term availability of nontraditional hour care (54.7%), and that food, meals, and/or snacks are provided (50.0%).

Figure 27: Respondents' Priorities for Child Care During Nontraditional Hours Part 1 (N=67)*



**Respondents could select up to three answer choices*

Figure 28: Respondents' Priorities for Child Care During Nontraditional Hours Part 2 (N=64)*

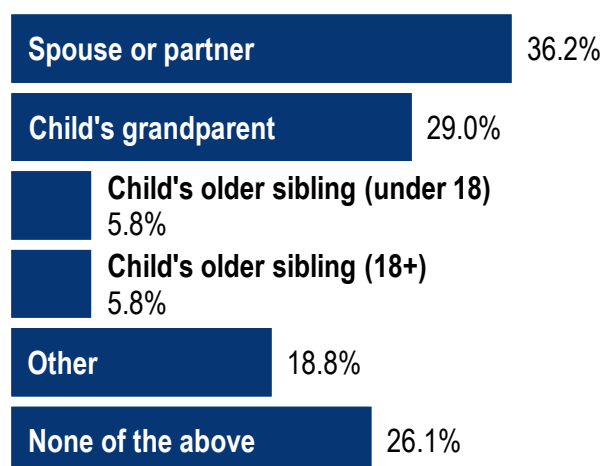


**Respondents could select up to three answer choices*

Child Care Providers

Family members answered a series of questions about their child(ren)'s caregivers when they are away. When asked specifically about those who live in their household, a plurality of respondents (36.2%) said that their spouse or partner is the one who routinely provides child care when they are unavailable, followed by the child(ren)'s grandparent (29.0%) (Figure 33). Some written responses (18.8%) indicated that an aunt, uncle, or friend living in the family member's household helps with child care when they are away. Over a quarter (26.1%) also stated that no one within their household routinely assists with child care in their absence; this indicates that a substantive portion of respondents rely solely on outside support for child care assistance.

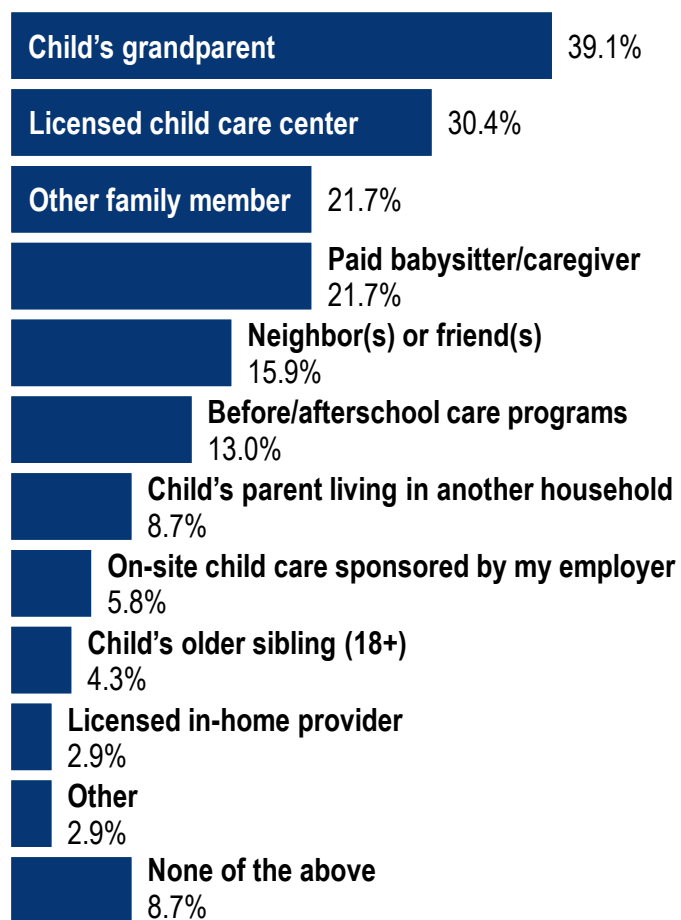
Figure 29: Child Care Provider Within the Household (N=69)*



**Respondents could select multiple answers*

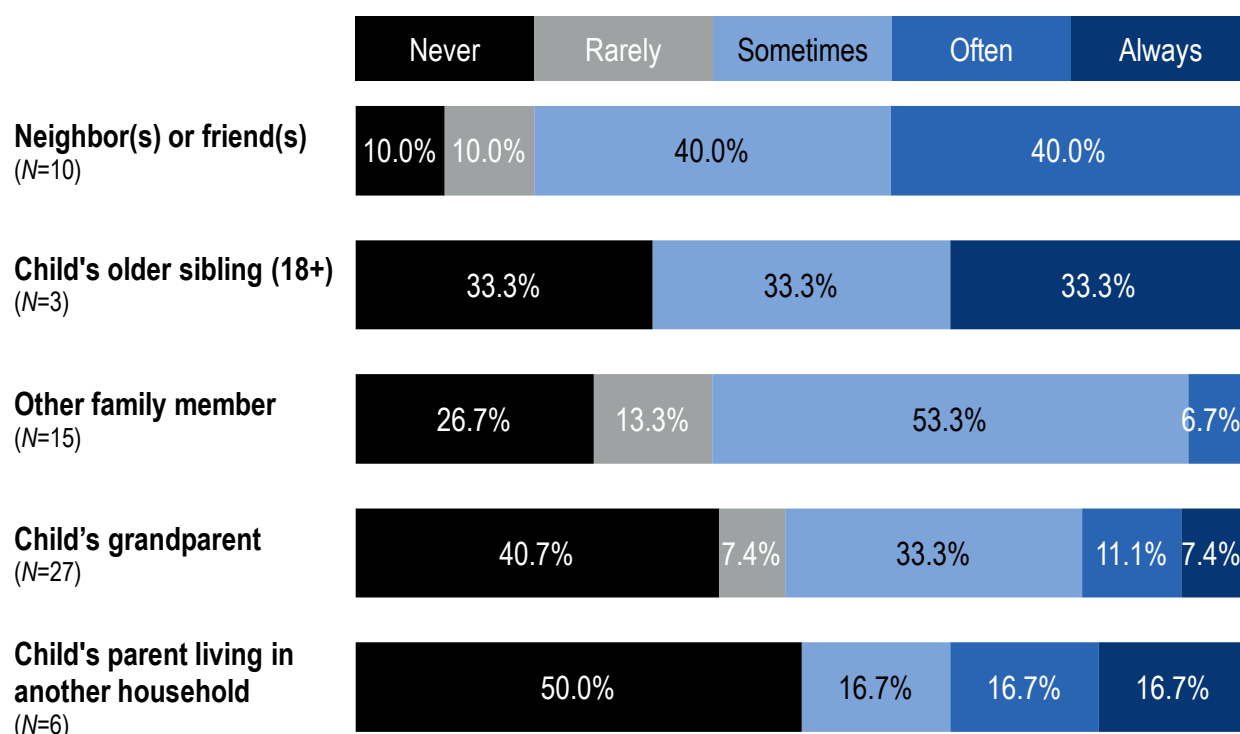
For child care support outside of their household, most respondents said their child(ren)'s grandparent (39.1%) or a licensed child care center (30.4%) provides child care when they are unavailable (Figure 34). Respondents who reported receiving child care from a licensed child care center, a licensed in-home provider, or an employer-sponsored on-site provider were asked to provide the name of this provider. Respondents also answered a follow-up question regarding how often they pay those who do not live within their household for their child care services (Figure 35). Though many family members indicated that the child(ren)'s grandparent is the primary source of child care outside of the household, only about a fifth (18.5%) of respondents said they "always" or "often" pay the grandparent, and about forty percent (40.7%) say they never pay. Respondents were most likely to pay neighbors or friends for providing child care "sometimes" or "often" (80.0%).

Figure 30: Child Care Provider Outside the Household (N=69*)



*Respondents could select multiple answer choices

*Figure 31: Frequency of Payment to External Child Care Providers (by Provider Type)**

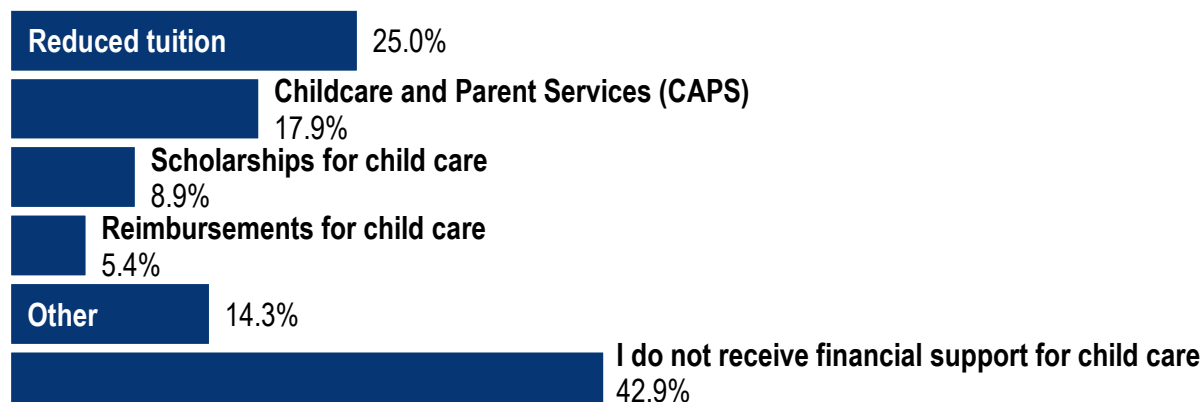


**Shown only to respondents that utilize child care providers outside of their household*

Financial Support

To better understand the scope of nontraditional hour child care, the survey includes questions about the types of financial support family members receive for these arrangements. When asked to select the types of financial support the families received over the previous 12 months, the plurality (42.9%) indicated that they do not receive any financial support for child care (Figure 36). Only a quarter (25.0%) of respondents said they received reduced tuition, and about eighteen percent (17.9%) received support from Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) Program.

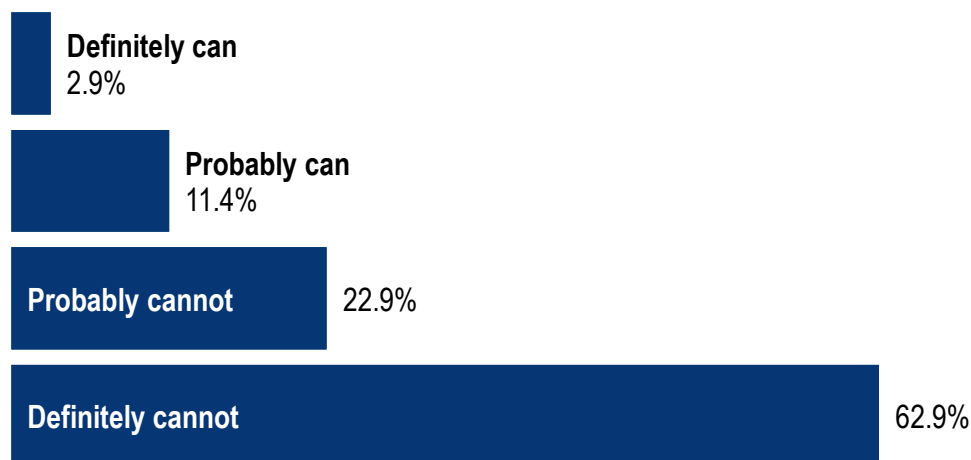
Figure 32: Types of Financial Support Families Receive for Child Care (N=56)*



**Respondents could select multiple answer choices*

Family members who reported receiving financial support for child care were also asked whether they could afford child care during nontraditional hours if that support were no longer available. The majority (62.9%) said they “definitely cannot” (Figure 37). These findings underscore the critical role financial assistance plays in enabling access to nontraditional hour child care, as many families would be unable to afford it without such support.

Figure 33: Respondents’ Ability to Afford Child Care During Nontraditional Hours Without Financial Support (N=35)*

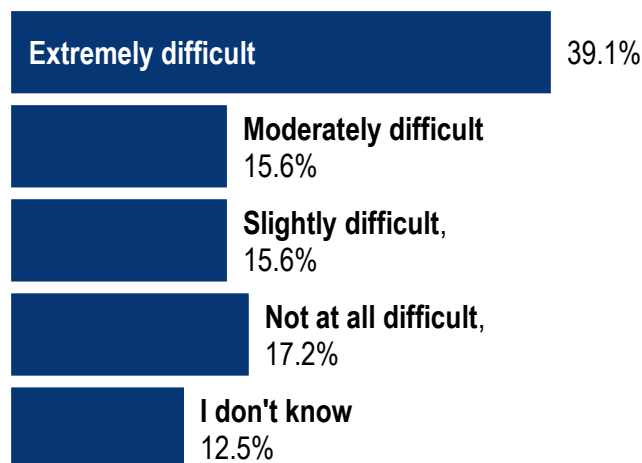


**Shown only to respondents who receive financial support for child care during nontraditional hours*

Barriers and Struggles

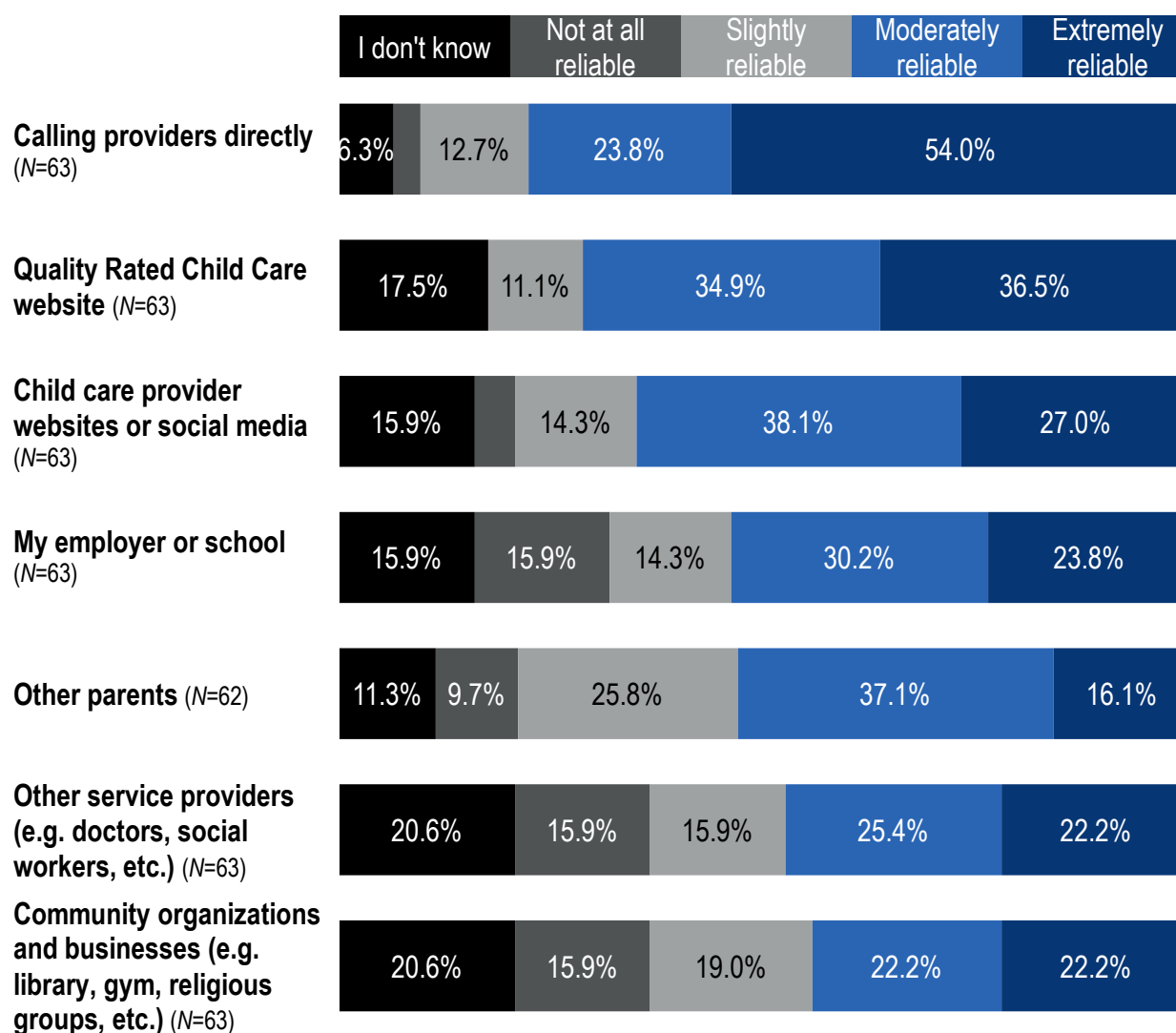
The survey also addressed the barriers and struggles families face while trying to obtain child care during nontraditional hours. Over half (54.7%) of respondents said it was either “extremely” or “moderately” difficult to find information about nontraditional hour child care options in their community (Figure 38).

Figure 38: Respondents’ Level of Difficulty Finding Information About Nontraditional Hour Child Care Options in Their Community (N=64)



To further investigate these sources of information, family members rated how reliable the sources were in giving up-to-date details on nontraditional hour child care. It appears the sources of information at least “moderately reliable” were directly calling child care providers (77.8%) and using DECAL’s Quality Rated child care website (71.4%) (Figure 39). Conversely, respondents rated information obtained from other service providers, like doctors or social workers (47.6%), and community organizations and businesses (44.4%) as being least reliable.

Figure 39: Reliability of the Sources of Information About Nontraditional Hour Child Care



When reporting some of the struggles they face, over eighty percent of respondents said it is hard to find child care providers that are open during the hours they need (85.3%), and the expenses of child care providers prevents them from using them (82.3%) (Figure 40). Respondents who were either currently employed or enrolled in school predominantly agreed that they need to be able to make last-minute child care arrangements (82.1%) (Figure 41). Additional scheduling challenges include sometimes needing to work or study longer with little to no prior notice (77.6%) and often having work or school schedules change last minute

(56.7%). These results show how important it is for families to have flexible child care options available, even in short notice.

Figure 34: Challenges in Finding Child Care Services

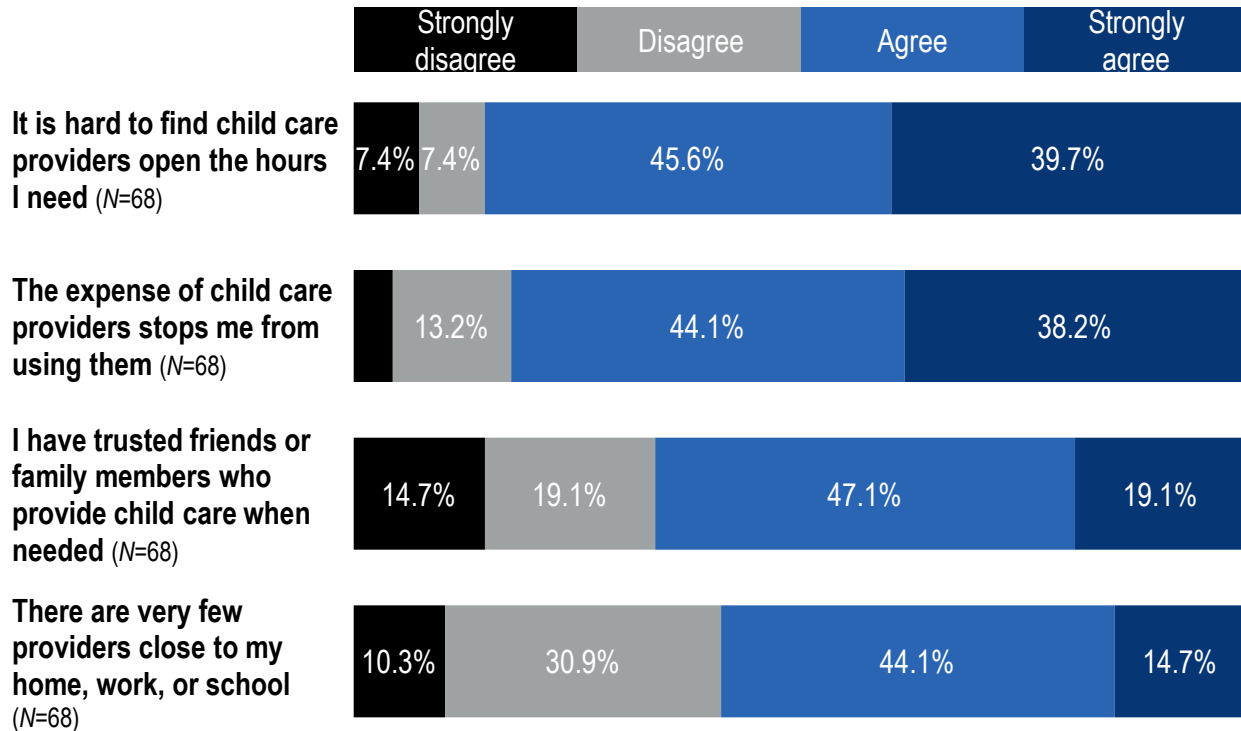
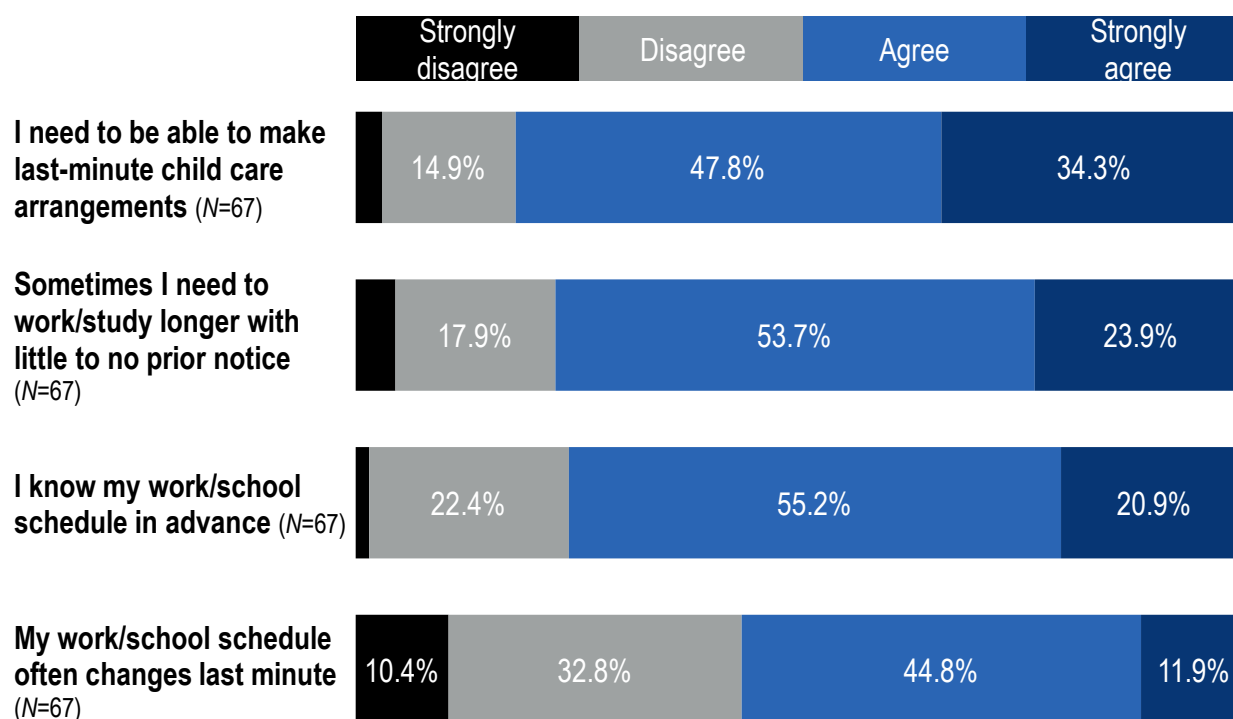


Figure 35: Scheduling Conflicts Related to Finding Child Care Services*

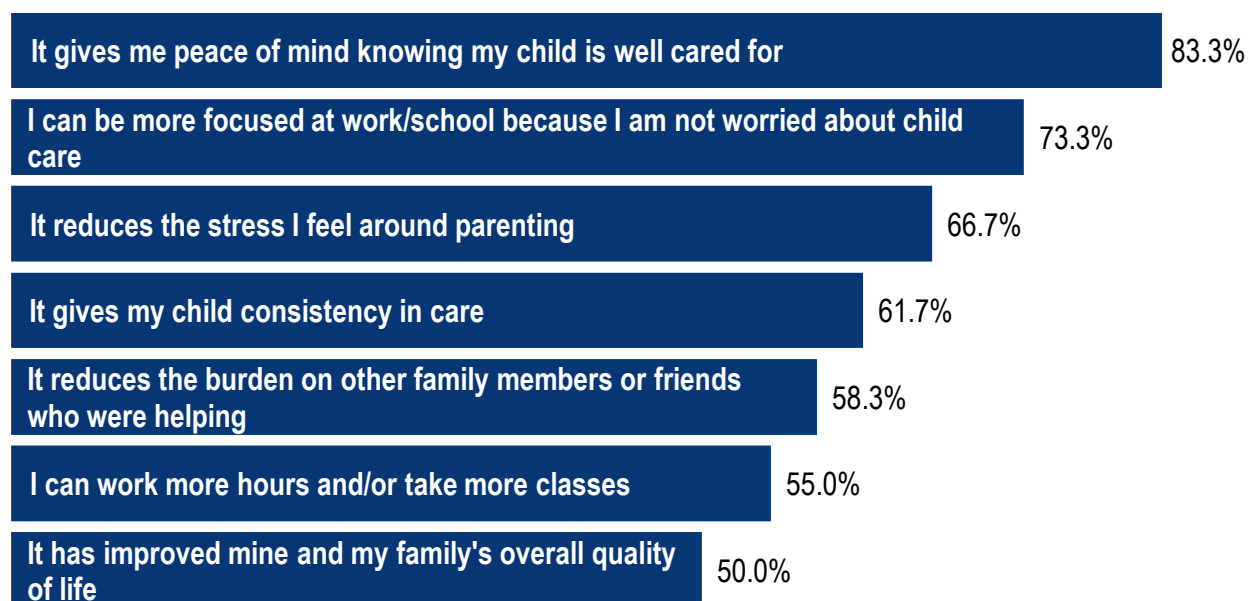


*Shown only to respondents who were currently employed or enrolled in school

Benefits

Whereas DECAL designed the EXPAND grant to address child care needs during nontraditional hours, the survey also included questions to evaluate the benefits of and satisfaction with nontraditional hour child care services. When asked how enrolling their child(ren) in nontraditional hour child care has benefited them, at least half of responding family members selected each of the listed benefits (Figure 42). The most reported benefits of nontraditional hour child care include family members having peace of mind knowing their child(ren) are well cared for (83.3%), being able to focus on work or school due to not worrying about their child(ren) (73.3%) and reducing stress around parenting (66.7%).

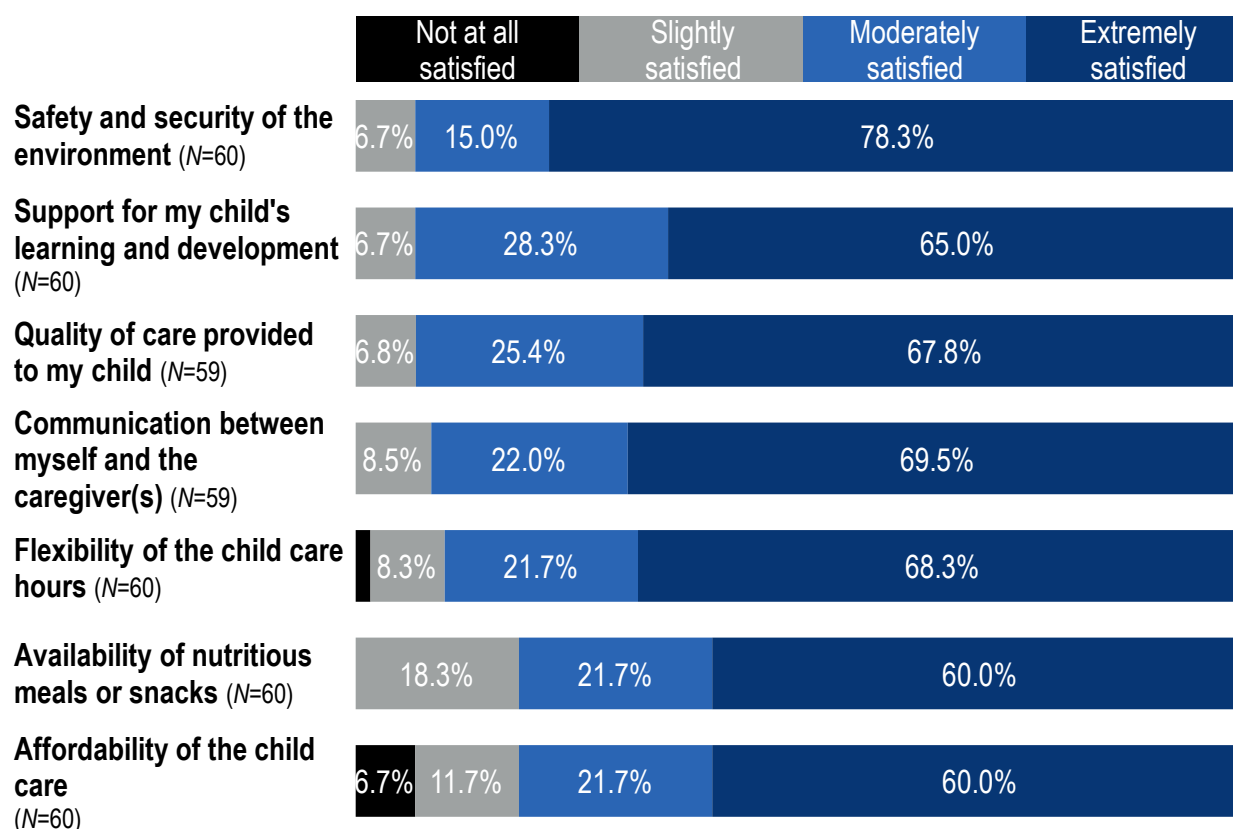
Figure 362: Benefits of Nontraditional Hour Child Care (N=60*)



**Respondents could select multiple answer choices*

Overall, family members were very pleased with the services they received with at least eight in 10 indicating they were “extremely” or “moderately” satisfied with all aspects of the nontraditional hour care their child(ren) received (Figure 43). Family members were most satisfied with the safety and security of the environment their child(ren) are in (93.3%), the support for their child(ren)’s learning and development (93.3%), the quality of care provided (93.2%), the communication with the caregiver(s) (91.5%), and the flexibility of the child care hours (90.0%). Affordability received the highest level of dissatisfaction, with 6.7% of respondents indicating they were “not at all satisfied.” This reinforces the presence of financial barriers to accessing nontraditional hour child care, highlighting the potential need for continued support and funding.

Figure 37: Satisfaction with Aspects of Nontraditional Hour Care



Additional Thoughts

The final survey item asked family members if they had any additional thoughts regarding nontraditional hour child care (Table 7). Thirty-one percent (31.0%) of the responses mentioned that since their child(ren) were enrolled in nontraditional hour child care, it allowed families opportunities that they otherwise would not have. Some of these opportunities include being able to pick up extra shifts at work, allowing household members to work simultaneously, and being able to go to school. Seven responses (24.1%) detailed a positive review about the child care program that their child(ren) were enrolled in; many of the family members praised how the centers provided their child(ren) with interactive learning opportunities. Six responses (20.7%) expressed appreciation that the child care they received helps alleviate their stress, providing peace of mind knowing their child(ren) were well cared for.

Table 7: Open-ended Thoughts About Nontraditional Hour Child Care

	N	%
Child Care Allows Parents Opportunities (i.e. School, Work, etc.)	9	31.0%
Positive Review of Child Care Program	7	24.1%
Child Care Reduced Stress	6	20.7%
Expand Child Care Hours	2	6.9%
Generic Positive Response	2	6.9%
Improve Communication	1	3.4%
Supports Nontraditional Hour Child Care	1	3.4%
Worked With Budget	1	3.4%
Total	29	100.0%*

**Due to rounding, percentage may not equal 100%*

Conclusion

The results of the EXPAND family survey demonstrate the vital importance of nontraditional hour child care for families navigating irregular work and school schedules. Family members emphasized the importance of flexible care options, safe environments, and financial support, noting that these resources help them manage their responsibilities, access new opportunities, and reduce stress. Despite the benefits of nontraditional hour child care, families continue to face significant barriers, including limited availability of providers during needed hours and the difficulty of locating reliable information. The findings confirm that the EXPAND grant has made a meaningful difference in the lives of participating families, offering peace of mind and enhanced quality of life. While the EXPAND Grant was a limited time program, continued investment in nontraditional hour child care should continue to be a high priority for DECAL to help support these families and ensure equitable access to care that meets their diverse needs.

Appendix C1.

Family Needs Survey Instrument

During the past 12 months, have you received child care during nontraditional hours – before 6 a.m., after 6 p.m., overnight, or on weekends?

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) is gathering input from families like yours to better understand and improve access to child care during nontraditional hours across the state.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. The information you provide will not affect your eligibility for any services you currently receive.

Thank you for sharing your experience – your voice matters!

Q1 During the past 12 months, when has someone else routinely cared for your child(ren) because you were unavailable (for example at work or school)? (Please select **all** that apply)

- ☐ Weekdays before 6 am
- ☐ Weekdays between 6 am to 6 pm
- ☐ Weekdays after 6 pm
- ☐ Overnight
- ☐ Weekends
- ☐ Not applicable, my child(ren) aren't routinely cared for by someone else

Skip To: End of Survey If Q1 = Not Applicable OR Q1 ≠ Weekdays before 6 am, Weekdays after 6 pm, Overnight, or Weekends

Q2 During the past 12 months, how many children in your household were routinely cared for by someone else when you were unavailable? (Enter “0” if there are no children in a specific age group.)

	Count
Infant (less than 12 months old)	
1-year old	
2-year old	
3-year old	
4-year old	
School-aged (5 to 13 years old)	

Q3 Which individual(s) **living in your household** routinely help with child care when you are unavailable (for example at work or school)? (Please select **all** that apply)

- ☐ Spouse or partner
- ☐ Child's grandparent
- ☐ Child's older sibling (under 18)
- ☐ Child's older sibling (18+)
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ None of the above

Q4 Which individual(s) **not living in your household** routinely help with child care when you are unavailable (for example at work or school)? (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Child's parent living in another household
- ☐ Child's grandparent
- ☐ Child's older sibling (18+)
- ☐ Other family member
- ☐ Neighbor(s) or friend(s)
- ☐ Paid babysitter/caregiver
- ☐ Licensed child care center
- ☐ Licensed in-home provider
- ☐ On-site child care sponsored by my employer
- ☐ Before/after school care programs
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ None of the above

Display this question if Q4 = Licensed child care center OR Licensed in-home provider OR On-site child care sponsored by my employer

Q5 What is the name of the provider where your child(ren) has received nontraditional hour child care during the past 12 months?

Display this question if Q4 = Child's parent living in another household OR Child's grandparent OR Child's older sibling (18+) OR Other family member OR Neighbor(s) or friend(s)

Carry Forward Selected Choices from Q4

Q6 How often do you pay individual(s) **not living in your household** to help with child care?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Child's parent living in another household	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child's grandparent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Child's older sibling (18+)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other family member	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Neighbor(s) or friend(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Paid babysitter/caregiver	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licensed child care center	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Licensed in-home provider	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On-site child care sponsored by my employer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Before/after school care programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify):	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
None of the above	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q7 Please select how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have trusted friends or family members who provide child care when needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is hard to find child care providers open the hours I need	☐	☐	☐	☐
The expense of child care providers stops me from using them	☐	☐	☐	☐
There are very few providers close to my home, work, or school	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q8 What type of job do you have? (If you have multiple jobs, please select your primary source of income)

- ☐ Agriculture/farming
- ☐ Arts/entertainment
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Foodservice/restaurant
- ☐ Healthcare/medical
- ☐ Hospitality
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Office/administrative
- ☐ Retail
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ I am a full-time student
- ☐ I am self-employed or do gig work
- ☐ I am not currently employed or enrolled in school

Display this question if Q8 ≠ I am not currently employed or enrolled in school

Q9 Please select how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I know my work/school schedule in advance	☐	☐	☐	☐
I need to be able to make last-minute child care arrangements	☐	☐	☐	☐
My work/school schedule often changes last minute	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sometimes I need to work/study longer with little to no prior notice	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q10 We would like to know more about your experiences related to child care during nontraditional hours (before 6 am, after 6 pm, overnight, or weekends). During nontraditional hours, I would prefer my child be cared in...

- ☐ a licensed child care learning center with professionally trained staff
- ☐ a licensed family child care learning home provider
- ☐ an on-site child care center sponsored by my employer
- ☐ the home of a family member of mine
- ☐ the home of a close friend of mine
- ☐ my own home by a trusted friend or family member
- ☐ my own home by a paid caregiver

Q11 Which of the following are **most important** when considering child care during nontraditional hours? (Please select your **TOP 3**)

- ☐ A comfortable and calm environment for my child
- ☐ A safe environment for my child
- ☐ Caregiver practices that reflect my family's culture and values
- ☐ Caregiver promotes my child's learning
- ☐ Caregiver's training in child development
- ☐ Caregiver's training in CPR and first aid
- ☐ How the caregiver communicates with me
- ☐ My child's interactions with other children
- ☐ The cost or affordability of child care
- ☐ The proximity of the location to my home
- ☐ The proximity of the location to my work or school

Q12 Which of the following are **most important** when considering child care during nontraditional hours? (Please select your **TOP 3**)

- ☐ Flexibility around my schedule
- ☐ Food, meals, and/or snacks provided
- ☐ Help with my child's homework
- ☐ Limiting sleep disruptions
- ☐ Long-term availability of nontraditional hour care
- ☐ Predictable routines and schedules
- ☐ Safety when picking up/dropping off my child late at night or early morning
- ☐ The ages of other children in care
- ☐ Time for my child to play
- ☐ Transportation provided to/from child care
- ☐ Video feeds to see my child

Q13 How difficult is it to find information about nontraditional child care options in your community?

- ☐ Not at all difficult
- ☐ Slightly difficult
- ☐ Moderately difficult
- ☐ Extremely difficult
- ☐ I don't know

Q14 Based on your experience, how reliable are these sources for up-to-date information on nontraditional child care?

	Not at all reliable	Slightly reliable	Moderately reliable	Extremely reliable	I don't know
Child care provider websites or social media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality Rated Child Care website	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Calling providers directly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My employer or school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other service providers (e.g. doctors, social workers, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community organizations and businesses (e.g. library, gym, religious groups, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q15 How has enrolling your child(ren) in nontraditional hour child care benefited you and/or your family? (Please select **all** that apply)

- ☐ I can be more focused at work/school because I am not worried about child care
- ☐ I can work more hours and/or take more classes
- ☐ It gives my child consistency in care
- ☐ It gives me peace of mind knowing my child is well cared for
- ☐ It reduces the burden on other family members or friends who were helping
- ☐ It reduces the stress I feel around parenting
- ☐ It has improved mine and my family's overall quality of life

Q16 How satisfied have you been with the nontraditional hour care your child(ren) received:

	Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Extremely satisfied
Affordability of the child care	☐	☐	☐	☐
Availability of nutritious meals or snacks	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication between myself and the caregiver(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Flexibility of the child care hours	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of care provided to my child	☐	☐	☐	☐
Safety and security of the environment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support for my child's learning and development	☐	☐	☐	☐

Display this question if Q16 = Not at all satisfied or Slightly satisfied

Q17 Why have you not been satisfied with the nontraditional hour care your child(ren) received?

Q18 During the past 12 months, have you received any financial support for child care during nontraditional hours? (Please select **all** that apply)

- ☐ Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)
- ☐ Reduced tuition
- ☐ Reimbursements for child care
- ☐ Scholarships for child care
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ I do not receive financial support for child care

Display this question if Q18 ≠ I do not receive financial support for child care

Q19 Without financial support, can you afford child care during nontraditional hours?

- ☐ Definitely cannot
- ☐ Probably cannot
- ☐ Probably can
- ☐ Definitely can

Q20 Please tell us a little about yourself. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe: _____

Q21 How old are you?

- ☐ 18-24 years
- ☐ 25-34 years
- ☐ 35-44 years
- ☐ 45-54 years
- ☐ 55-64 years
- ☐ 65 years and older

Q22 What is your race or ethnicity? (Please select **all** that apply)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe: _____

Q23 What is your current marital status?

- ☐ Never married (single)
- ☐ Committed relationship (unmarried)
- ☐ Domestic partnership
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

Q24 On average, how much does your household make **in a month**? Please include income for all adults in the household.

- ☐ Less than \$500
- ☐ \$500 to \$999
- ☐ \$1,000 to \$1,499
- ☐ \$1,500 to \$1,999
- ☐ \$2,000 to \$2,499
- ☐ \$2,500 to \$2,999
- ☐ \$3,000 to \$3,499
- ☐ \$3,500 to \$3,999
- ☐ \$4,000 to \$4,499

☐ \$4,500 to \$4,999

☐ \$5,000 to \$5,499

☐ \$5,500 to \$5,999

☐ Over \$6,000

Q25 Do you have any physical or mental health conditions that reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

☐ No

☐ Yes

☐ Prefer not to say

Q26 Please share any additional thoughts you have regarding nontraditional hour child care.

Appendix D.

Financial Report

Grantee Expenditures

The EXPAND grant was awarded to thirteen recipients. Across the thirteen grantees, reported expenses totaled \$5,239,901 by the end of the grant. Individual awards ranged from \$91,193 to \$750,000, reflecting important differences in organizational size, capacity, and program models. Below is a brief exploration of expense categories and expense distribution.

Expense Categories

Expenditure categories are outlined in Table 8 below. The categories demonstrate the range of operational expenses used by grantees in expanding their hours. These categories included wages, benefits, renovations, tuition assistance, outreach, and training.

Table 8: Expenditure Categories

Expense Category	Expense Examples
Administrative	Background checks
Contracted Services	Expenses paid to external contractors (e.g. consultants, evaluators, researchers, etc.)
Educational Expenses for Student Parents	Student tuition, fees, or supplies for parents enrolled in higher education
Family Financial Support	Tuition assistance provided to families enrolled in nontraditional care
Food	Meals and snacks
Fringe Benefits	Non-salary benefits for staff, such as health insurance premiums
Maintenance/Renovations	Expenses to improve facilities (e.g. construction costs, furniture, permanent playground equipment, etc.)
Marketing/Outreach	Expenses to promote your site's nontraditional care offerings and recruit new families
Materials/Supplies	Expenses for consumable, non-food items (e.g. bedding, cleaning supplies, craft supplies, linens, office supplies, toiletries, toys, uniforms, etc.)
Technology	Technology and software expenses (cell phones, computers, hardware, security cameras, security system, software, etc.)

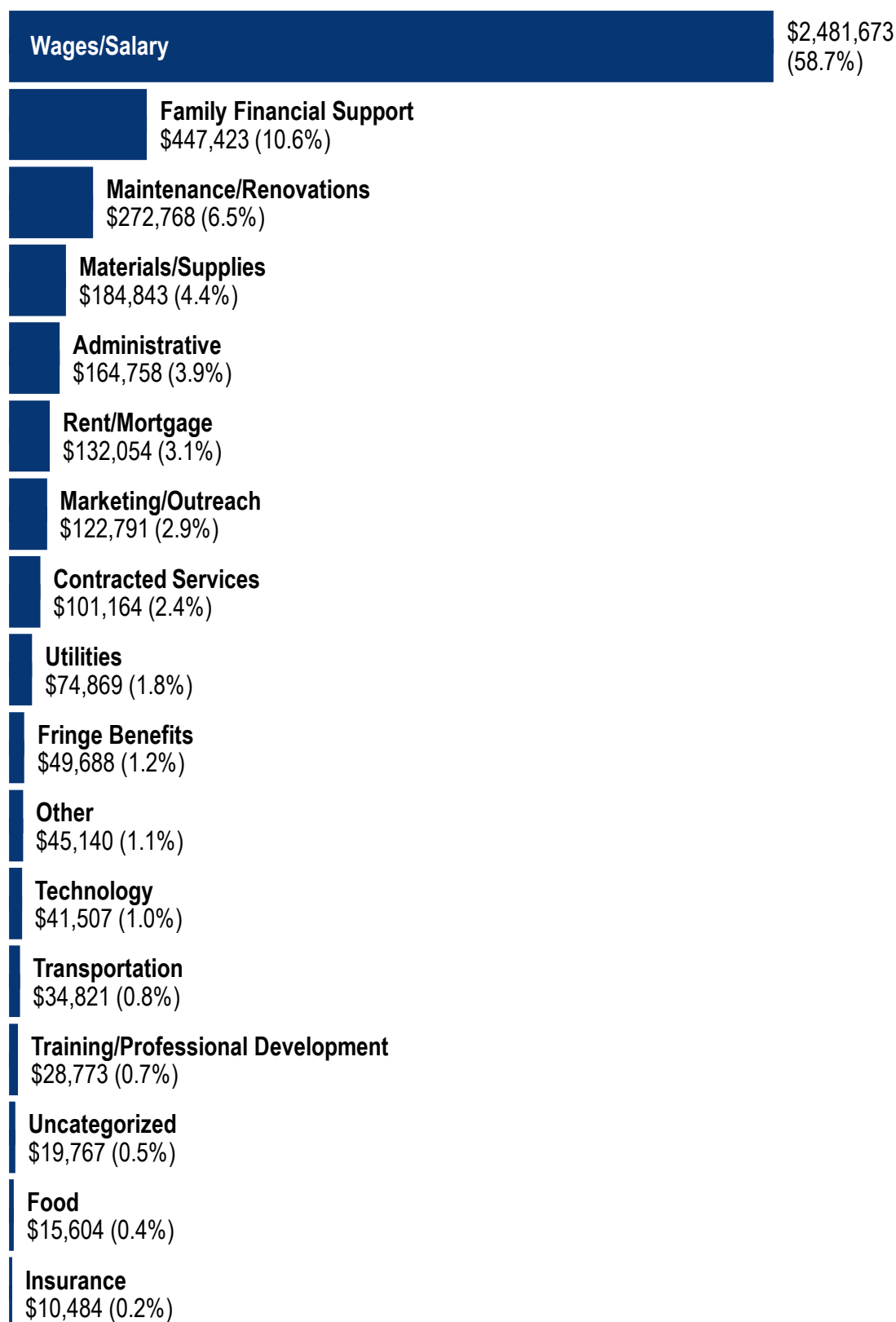
Expense Category	Expense Examples
Training/Professional Development	Expenses for staff trainings
Transportation	Vehicle purchase, maintenance, gasoline, or public transit fees
Utilities	Monthly recurring expenses (electricity, gas, internet, phone, security monitoring)
Wages/Salary	Employee salaries
Rent/Mortgage	Expenses for rent and mortgage payments
Insurance	Expenses for liability insurance required to provide child care
Other	Other expenses not listed above

Expenditure Trends

Thirteen grantees received EXPAND funding, representing both providers offering nontraditional care services directly to families in their communities and collaboratives partnering with local child care providers to contract child care services during nontraditional hours. Two of the thirteen were especially unique, resulting in different spending patterns as compared to the other eleven grantees. The expense distribution that follows focuses on the eleven grantees that provided services either directly or through contracted child care providers.

Figure 44 shows that grantees spent much of their budgets in three main areas, with wages and salaries making up the largest share of core grantee spending (58.7%), followed by family financial support (10.6%), and maintenance and renovations (6.5%).

Figure 38: Spending from Select Grantees



Key Takeaways

Together, wages and salary (58.7%), family financial support (10.6%), and maintenance and renovations (6.5%) represented more than three quarters of grantee spending. Eight of the grantees spent more than half of their funds on wages and salaries. This concentration underscores that extending child care hours may require substantial investment in labor, affordability for families, and facility updates. Family financial support represented around 11% of total spending, with core grantee allocations ranging from 4% to 54%. Maintenance and renovations accounted for just under 7% of spending; however, individual spending varied substantially, ranging from less than 1% to more than 50% of grant expenses. The concentration of spending in these three areas suggests that while staffing represented a shared priority for most, investments in family support and facility upgrades varied considerably across grantees depending on their implementation models and infrastructure needs. These findings suggest that there is no one-size-fits-all model to support expanding child care hours.