

# Highlights of Child Care Survey for Select Low-Income Neighborhoods in Chicago

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As part of the work associated with the Financing Universal Early Care and Education Project, this paper highlights information collected on the current use of early care and education in select low-income neighborhoods in Chicago. The following text and charts summarize data collected by a general population survey of parents with children birth to 5 years old who live in select low-income census tracts in Chicago identified by the City of Chicago Department of Human Services. The survey was conducted from August to December 2002 by the Social and Economic Survey Research Center at Washington State University, under direction of the Human Services Policy Center (HSPC) at the University of Washington. This survey was sponsored by the City of Chicago's Department of Human Services. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided funding for Spanish interviews and translation.

The Chicago low-income neighborhood sample consists of responses from 403 parents. The sample's low-income neighborhoods contain high percentages of low-income families, but not all families in these neighborhoods are low-income. Table 1 on the following page illustrates basic demographic data for the Chicago low-income neighborhood sample. Table 1 also contains Census 2000 data for the State of Illinois, demonstrating some of the major differences between the Chicago low-income neighborhood sample and statewide demographics. The Chicago low-income neighborhood respondents include a higher proportion of racial/ethnic minorities, families with lower incomes, and families with incomes below the poverty line than are present in the general population of Illinois. Approximately 17% of the interviews for the Chicago low-income neighborhood sample were performed in Spanish. Responses are weighted to reflect the age distribution of children in the selected low-income neighborhoods and annual child care utilization patterns.

For the purposes of this report, we present information on three broad types of child care: 1) center care, Head Start (HS) or Early HS, 2) Family Child Care (FCC), and 3) Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care. Center care includes HS or Early HS<sup>1</sup> (when appropriate to a give age group) licensed child care centers, nursery schools, and pre-schools, but not Illinois' pre-kindergarten program.<sup>2</sup> Where applicable we also provide information specifically on Illinois'

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<sup>1</sup> Early HS supports a range of models including center- and home-based programs. For the purposes of this report, we have not made a distinction between HS and Early HS and, thus, have included Early HS participation within the category of center care. Removing Early HS from this category would not affect the results as it affects such a small proportion of children.

<sup>2</sup> Illinois has a publicly financed pre-kindergarten program for poor and at-risk preschoolers. Children participating in this program are typically 3- and 4-year-olds.

pre-kindergarten program. FCC consists of licensed and unlicensed family child care homes, day care homes, or family day care facilities where care is provided by a non-relative in the caregiver's home. We define FFN care as any regular, non-parental care other than a licensed center, program, or family child care home. FFN care includes relatives, friends, neighbors, and other non-parental caregivers such as sitters or nannies. The definitions of FCC and FFN care do not distinguish between whether or not the care is or should be licensed according to Illinois regulations and likely some overlap between the two categories exists. In this document, information is generally presented by detailed age groups (0- to 2-year-olds and 3- to 5-year-olds) and/or for all children birth to 5 years old.

**Table 1**  
**Comparison of Chicago Low-Income Neighborhood Sample**  
**Population Demographics**  
**with Census Data for the State of Illinois**

	<b>Chicago Low-Income Neighborhood Data</b>	<b>U.S. Census 2000 Data for the State of Illinois</b>
<b><i>Child's Race/Ethnic Group</i><sup>1,2</sup></b>		
White	8.3 %	59.2 %
Black	52.4 %	18.5 %
Latino	34.2 %	17.0 %
Asian	2.2 %	3.0 %
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.5 %	<0.1 %
Native American/Alaskan Native	0.8 %	0.1 %
Other	1.5 %	2.2 %
<b><i>Mother's/Adult Population's Race/Ethnic Group</i><sup>1</sup></b>		
White	12.8 %	67.8 %
Black	50.5 %	15.0 %
Latino	31.7 %	12.3 %
Asian	1.8 %	3.3 %
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0 %	<0.1 %
Native American/Alaskan Native	0.8 %	0.1 %
Other	2.5 %	1.3 %
<b><i>Median Family Income</i><sup>3</sup></b>	\$25,000	\$54,639
<b><i>Family Income Compared to Poverty</i><sup>4</sup></b>		
Percent with income < 1x FPL	42.2 %	15.3 %
Percent with income < 2x FPL	72.0 %	34.4 %

Notes:

1. We use the white alone, Black alone, etc. categories from the U.S. Census and place the two or more races and some other race Census 2000 populations in the other race/ethnic group category in this table.
2. U.S. Census 2000 race/ethnicity information is for children under 18.
3. U.S. Census 2000 information is for families with own children under 18.
4. U.S. Census 2000 information is for children 5 years old and younger.

### **Percent of Children in Child Care**

The percent of children 0 to 5 years old using *any amount* of each type of child care each week is presented in Chart 1 and summarized below:

- ✓ Center care, HS, or Early HS is used by 16% of 0- to 2-year-olds and just under half (42%) of 3- to 5-year-olds. Approximately 30% of all 0- to 5-year-olds are in center care.
- ✓ FCC is used by approximately 16% of children in both age groups.
- ✓ FFN care is used by approximately half of all children regardless of age.
- ✓ Of 3- and 4-year-olds, nearly half (45%) attend pre-kindergarten.

### **Primary Care Arrangements**

Information on children's primary non-parental care arrangements is presented in Charts 2a and 2b. The primary care arrangement is defined as the non-parental care arrangement used at least five hours a week and more than any other non-parental care arrangement. Chart 2a presents information on center care, FCC, and FFN care primary arrangements for 0- to 5-year-olds. Chart 2b shows the percent of 3- and 4-year-old children with center care, FCC, FFN care, and Illinois' publicly financed pre-kindergarten program as their primary care type. We present the primary care arrangement information for 3- and 4-year-olds separately because of their potential use of pre-kindergarten, which is a care option not applicable to older or younger children.

Approximately 46% of 0- to 2-year-olds and 37% of 3- to 5-year-olds do not have a non-parental primary care arrangement. In addition:

- ✓ Center care, HS, or Early HS is the primary care arrangement for only 15% of children between the ages of 0 and 2 years old, but is the primary care arrangement for approximately one in three (30%) children between 3 and 5 years old [Chart 2a].
- ✓ FCC is the primary care arrangement for only 10% of children age 0 to 2 and 5% of children age 3 to 5. [Chart 2a].
- ✓ FFN care is the primary arrangement for approximately 29% of children age 0 to 2 and one in five children (20%) age 3 to 5 [Chart 2a].
- ✓ Of 3- and 4-year-olds, approximately 12% have pre-kindergarten, 39% have center care, 5% have FCC, and 14% have FFN care as their primary care type [Chart 2b].

### **Hours per Week in Care**

The hours spent in child care is important because many experts believe that a child's participation in child care for 10 hours per week or more may affect their development. This potential impact may be either positive or negative based on the quality of care and associated home environment. The median number of hours per week that children are in each type of

care, broken down by age group, is presented in Chart 3a and summarized below:<sup>3</sup>

- ✓ For infants and toddlers (age 0-2) in center care, HS, or Early HS, the median number of care hours is 35 hours per week. The median number of care hours for infants in both FCC and FNN care is approximately 24 hours per week
- ✓ For pre-schoolers (age 3-5) in center care, HS, or Early HS, the median number of care hours is 24 hours per week. The median number of care hours for pre-schoolers in FCC is also 24 hours per week. The median number of FFN care hours for pre-school age children is 12 hours per week.
- ✓ These results indicate that hours in care vary by specific age group for center and FFN care. Older children (3- to 5-year-olds) spend less time in center and FFN care than their younger counterparts. FCC hours do not vary significantly by age group.
- ✓ The median number of care hours for 3- and 4-year-olds in pre-kindergarten is 24 hours per week.

Charts 3b, 3c, and 3d present the percent of children in each amount of care per week for children in center care, FCC, and FFN care. The care hour distributions indicate that many children spend less than 10 hours per week in each care type, especially for FCC and FFN care, as summarized below:

- ✓ For infants and toddlers in center care, HS, or Early HS (age 0-2), Chart 3b illustrates that nearly one-third (31%) spend between 31 and 40 hours per week in center care and one in four (25%) spend more than 40 hours per week in center care. For older children (age 3-5), the use of care ranges from 26% in care for less than 10 hours per week to 15% in care for 41 or more hours per week [Chart 3b].
- ✓ For infants and toddlers in FCC (age 0-2), Chart 3c illustrates that 28% spend less than 10 hours per week in FCC, another 30% spend between 31 and 40 hours per week in FCC, and 18% spend more than 40 hours per week in FCC. For older children (age 3-5), 41% spend less than 10 hours per week in FCC and another 44% spend between 21 and 40 hours per week in FCC. [Chart 3c].
- ✓ For infants and toddlers in FFN care (age 0-2), Chart 3d illustrates that 29% spend less than 10 hours per week in FFN care, but 21% spend more than 40 hours per week in FFN care. For older children (age 3-5), nearly half (48%) spend less than 10 hours per week in FFN care [Chart 3d]. In addition to any parental preferences for this type of care, consideration in choosing FFN care over center care or FCC may involve the availability of part-time care.

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<sup>3</sup> Most children (75%) in FFN care are in that care less than 35 hours a week. However, a small proportion of children (approximately 10%) are in FFN care for a significant amount of time each week - more than 48 hours. These cases increase the mean for all children in FFN care to approximately 22 hours per week, thereby masking the actual distribution of FFN care hours, which is centered around fewer hours. Under these circumstances, the median, which is the number of hours per week at which half the children are in care less than that amount and half the children are in care more than that amount, is a better measure of central tendency than the mean. For example, the median number of FFN care hours for children birth to 5 years old is 15 hours per week, compared to the mean of 22 hours per week. The median and mean weekly hours in center care and FCC are not significantly different from each other (i.e., the median weekly center care hours is 26 and the mean weekly center care hours is 27; the mean and median weekly hours in FCC are both 24 hours per week.).

### **Percent of All Care Hours in Each Type of Care**

Taking into account both the percent of children in each type of care and the average hours spent in that care, we calculate the percent of all care hours provided by each type of care. This measure demonstrates the relative prevalence of the different types of child care overall. The results of this analysis are presented in Chart 4 and summarized below. We report information on 3- and 4-year-olds separately because of their potential participation in pre-kindergarten, which is a care option not applicable to older or younger children.

- ✓ Centers, HS, and Early HS provide approximately one-quarter (26%) of the care for all children birth to 5 years old, including 34% of the care hours for all 3- and 4-year-olds.
- ✓ FCC provides 13% of all care for all children birth to 5 years old, with FCC accounting for 11% of all care hours for 3- to 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds and 21% of all care hours for 0- to 2-year-olds.
- ✓ FFN care accounts for 36% of all non-parental care for children birth to 5 years old. For infants and toddlers and 5-year-olds, FFN care accounts for 57% and 61%, respectively, of all non-parental care, and for 3- and 4-year-olds FFN care accounts for 21% of all non-parental care.
- ✓ Pre-kindergarten provides 34% of all care for 3- and 4-year-olds.

Although children are generally in FFN care for fewer hours per week than other types of care, because so many children use FFN care each week, the percent of all care hours provided by FFN care is relatively high.

### **Use of Evening and Weekend Care**

Among children who are involved in some type of non-parental care, approximately 56% are in some care on evenings and weekends. The percent of children participating in evening or weekend care is detailed in Chart 5 and summarized below:

- ✓ Approximately one in five children (21%) in center care, HS, or Early HS are in evening or weekend care, with the use of evening and weekend center care at 15% for 0- to 2-year-olds and 22% for 3- to 5-year-olds.
- ✓ Approximately one half (52%) of children in FCC are in some evening or weekend care. Use of evening and weekend care by children in FCC is relatively constant across age groups.
- ✓ Children in FFN care have the highest rates of evening and weekend care, with more than two-thirds (67%) of all children in FFN care in some evening or weekend care. Use of evening and weekend care by children in FFN care is relatively constant across age groups.

The proportion of non-parental care that occurs during evenings and weekends is detailed in Chart 6 and summarized below:

- ✓ For children in centers, evening or weekend center care hours account for a very small percentage (11% overall) of all center hours.

- ✓ Evening or weekend FCC hours account for about 35% of all FCC hours for children 0 to 5 years old, 29% of all FCC hours for infants and toddlers, and 42% of all FCC hours for 3- to 5-year-olds.
- ✓ Evening or weekend hours as a percent of care hours are highest for children in FFN care, for whom evening and weekend hours account for approximately 41% of all FFN care hours.

These data indicate that children in FCC and FFN care spend a significant amount of time in care during non-standard hours. Based on the above results, a major consideration in choosing FCC and FFN care over center care may involve the availability or desirability of that care during evening or weekend hours.

### **Children with Special Needs**

Information on child care for children with special needs is presented in Chart 7 and summarized below. For the purpose of this report, children with special needs are defined as children who are reported by their parents to have a physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that affects decisions about their care.

- ✓ Approximately 7% of children 0 to 2 years old and 14% of children age 3 to 5 years old are children with special needs.
- ✓ Approximately 16% of 3- to 5-year-olds in center care, HS, or Early HS have special needs. Children 3 to 5 years old with and without special needs show significant differences in the likelihood of being in center care.<sup>4</sup> Children age 3 to 5 with special needs are disproportionately more likely to be in center care than those without special needs.
- ✓ In addition, 34% of children in pre-kindergarten have special needs. The difference between 3- and 4-year-olds with special needs and those without special needs in the likelihood of using pre-kindergarten is significant. In other words, 3- to 4-year-olds with special needs are disproportionately more likely to be in pre-kindergarten than those without special needs.

### **Parent Values and Reasons for Selecting Primary Care Arrangement**

Information on parents' ranked values regarding child care is reported in Chart 8. The values questions were asked of all parents regardless of whether or not they used care or what type(s) of care they use. Charts 9 through 11 report the main reasons for choosing each type of primary care<sup>5</sup>

Parents consistently rank two characteristics of child care as "most important," regardless of the child's age [Chart 8]:

<sup>4</sup> Statistical significance is dependent on both the magnitude of the differences and the sample size.

<sup>5</sup> These charts illustrate parent-reported values and reasons for selecting the primary care arrangement. We will conduct a multivariate analysis later in this project to estimate the relative impact of parental values on choice of care while taking into account how these values might vary by parental characteristics such as education and income.

- ✓ The way the child and caregiver relate to each other is identified by 41% of parents with children 0 to 2 years old and 37% of parents with children 3 to 5 years old as the most important characteristic of care.
- ✓ Approximately one in five parents (21%) with children 0 to 2 years old and one in four parents (25%) with children 3 to 5 years old indicate that training and education of the caregiver is the most important characteristic of care.
- ✓ The number of children per caregiver and the types of activities or programs offered are identified by 13% and 12% of parents with children 0 to 2 years old as the most important characteristics of care. Flexible and convenient hours, affordable cost, and convenient location are each identified by 5% or fewer of parents with children 0 to 2 years old as the most important characteristic of care.
- ✓ The types of activities or programs offered is reported by 11% of parents with children 3 to 5 years old as the most important characteristic of care. The number of children per caregiver, flexible and convenient hours, affordable cost, and convenient location are each identified by less than 10% of parents with children 3 to 5 years old as the most important characteristic of care.

Parents report a diversity of reasons for choosing center care, HS, or Early HS as the primary care arrangement for their child [Chart 9].

- ✓ Characteristics of the program<sup>6</sup> is the most frequently cited main reason for selecting center care, HS, or Early HS (36%), followed by convenient hours or availability (12%); location (11%); and knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver (11%).
- ✓ Less than 10% of parents report the recommendation of a friend, relative, or neighbor; child to staff ratio; training or education of staff; cost; religious or cultural preferences; or safety as the main reason for selecting center care, HS, or Early HS.

The main reasons for selecting FCC as the primary care type are different than those for selecting center care, with a greater emphasis placed on knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver and a lower emphasis placed on characteristics of the program [Chart 10].

- ✓ Knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver is the most frequently cited reason for selecting FCC (50%), followed by convenient hours or availability (14%).
- ✓ No other main reason for selecting FCC is cited by more than 5% of parents.

As with FCC, parents selecting FFN care as the primary care type place greater importance on knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver than parents selecting center care [Chart 11].

- ✓ Knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver is the most frequently cited reason for selecting FFN care (52%), followed by convenient hours or availability (11%).
- ✓ Less than 7% of parents report location; cost; safety; characteristics of the program; recommendation of a friend, neighbor, or relative; child to staff ratio; religious or cultural preferences; or training or education of the staff as the main reason for selecting FFN care.

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<sup>6</sup> Parent responses categorized as 'characteristics of the program' include liking the activities, the curriculum, or the program itself.

### **Child:Adult Ratios**

Parent-reported child:adult ratios for the different types of care are presented in Chart 12a and summarized below:

- ✓ Centers, HS, and Early HS average 3.7 children per adult for children 0 to 2 years old and 6.3 children per adult for children 3 to 5 years old.
- ✓ Licensed FCC's average 2.6 children per adult for infants and toddlers (age 0-2) and 2.1 children per adult for pre-schoolers (age 3-5).
- ✓ FFN care averages 1.5 children per adult for infants and toddlers (age 0-2) and 1.9 children per adult for pre-schoolers (age 3-5).

The percent of children birth to 5 years old in center care and licensed FCC with various parent-reported child:adult ratios is provided in Chart 12b and summarized below:

- ✓ The majority of children in center care (74%) are in settings with parent-reported ratios of 8 or fewer children per adult.
- ✓ For licensed FCC, 69% of children are in settings with parent-reported ratios of 3 or fewer children per adult.

### **Payment for Care**

Information on payment for care is presented in Charts 13 and 14 and summarized below:

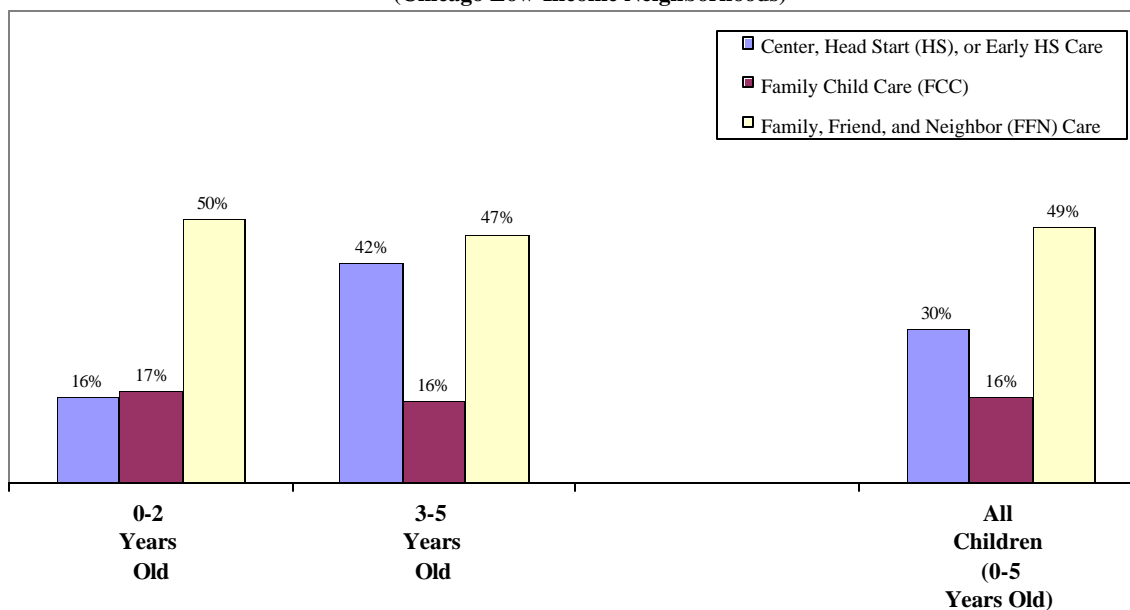
- ✓ Among mothers who are employed or in school or training and are income eligible, 29% report receiving a government subsidy for child care [Chart 13].<sup>7</sup> Subsidy participation ranges between 27% and 32%, depending on family income level.
- ✓ Approximately one in four (26%) parents using relative care pay for that care [Chart 14].

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<sup>7</sup> In Illinois, eligibility for child care subsidies is based on income and family size. The values shown on the table indicate the percent of families who obtain subsidies of the total number of eligible families (based on Illinois' family size and income eligibility criteria) in each income bracket.

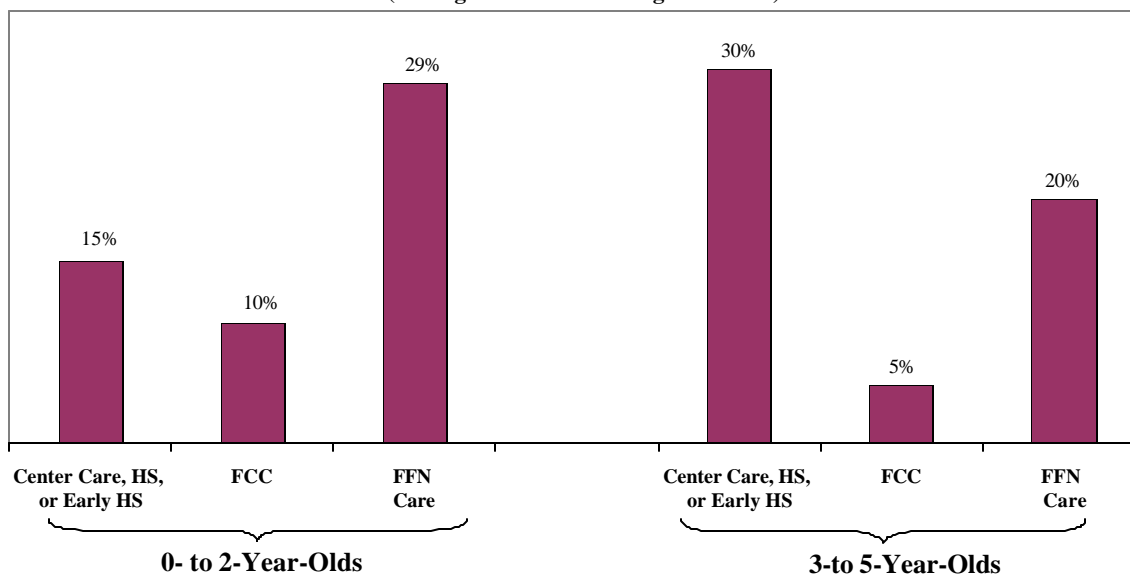


**Chart 1: Percent of Children in Any Amount of Center Care, FCC, and FFN Care\* by Age Group**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)



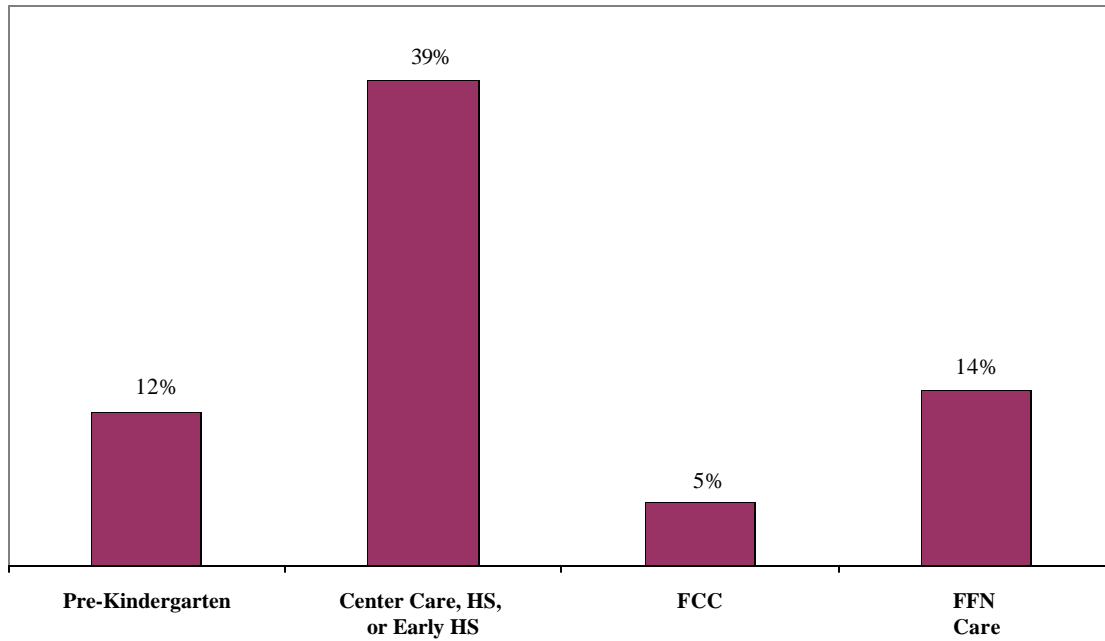
\* Categories are not mutually exclusive. In addition to the care types shown, 45% of 3- and 4-year-olds participate in pre-kindergarten.

**Chart 2a: Percent of Children with Each Type of Primary Non-Parental Care Arrangement\***  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)

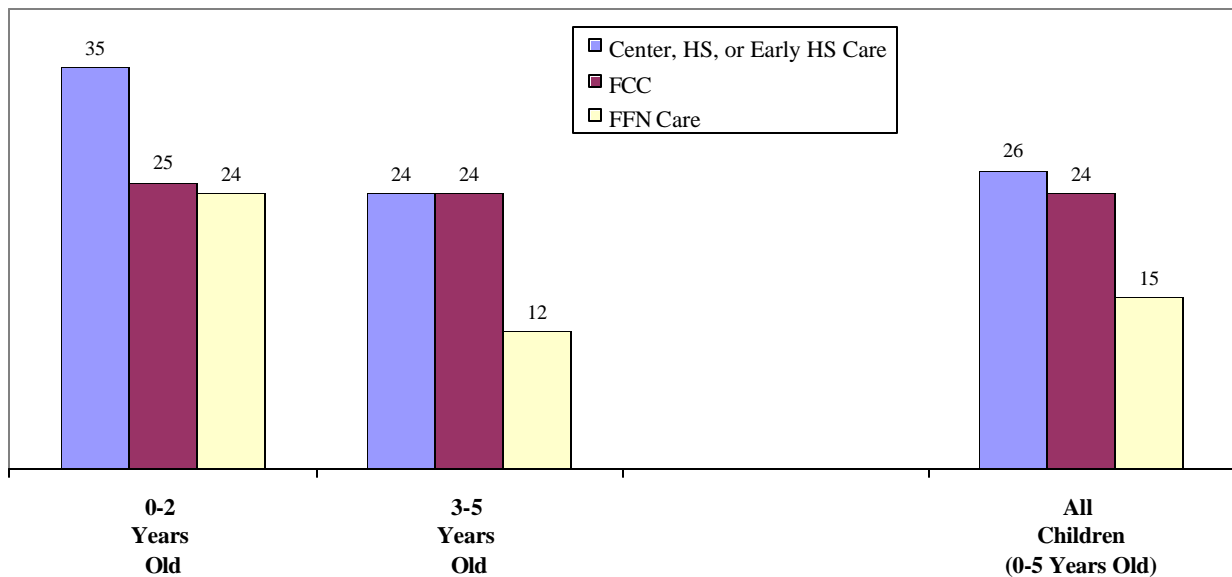


\* The primary care arrangement is defined as the non-parental care arrangement used at least five hours a week and more than any other non-parental care arrangement.

**Chart 2b: Percent of 3- and 4-Year-Old Children with Each Type of Primary Non-Parental Care Arrangement (Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)**

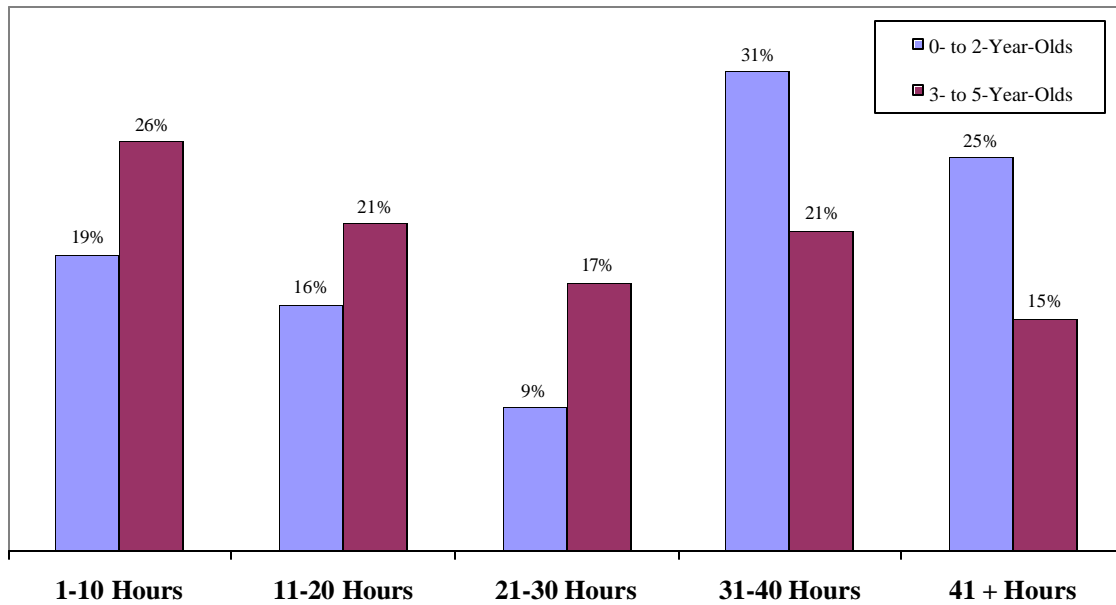


**Chart 3a: Median Hours Children Spend Per Week in Each Type of Care for Children in Center, FCC, and FFN Care by Age Group (Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)**

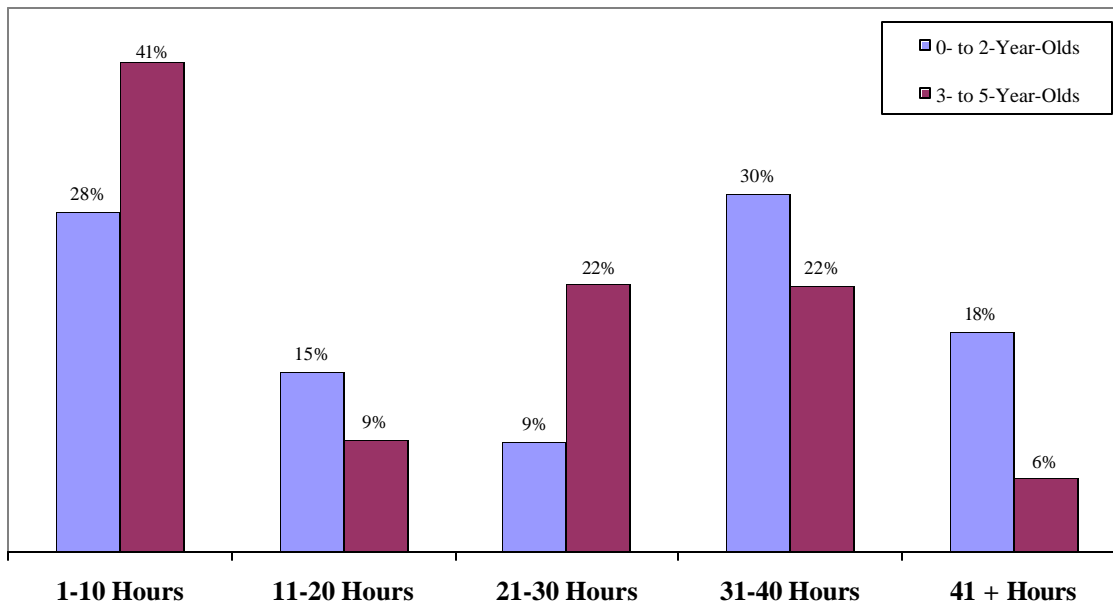


In addition to the median hours indicated in this chart, the median number of care hours for 3- and 4-year-olds in pre-k is 24 hours per week.

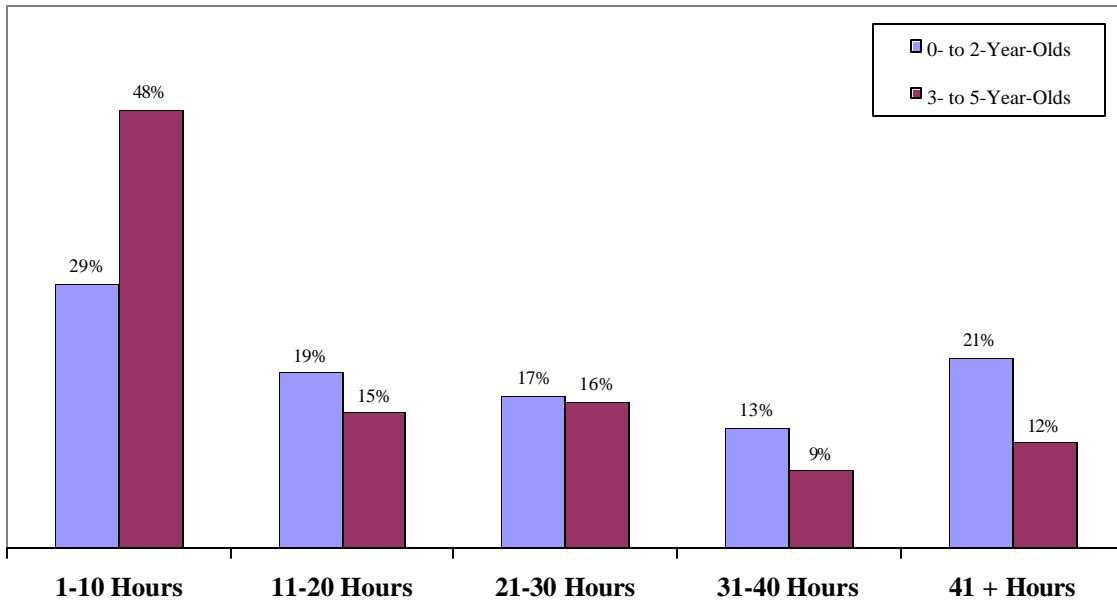
**Chart 3b: Percent of Children in Each Amount of Center, HS, or Early HS Care Per Week**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)



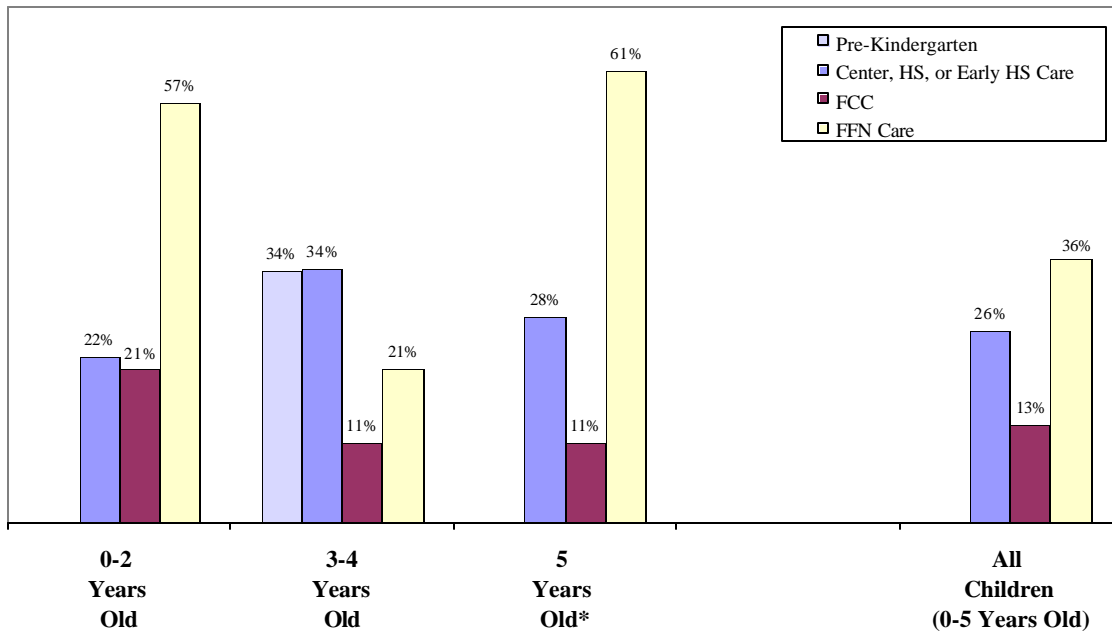
**Chart 3c: Percent of Children in Each Amount of FCC Per Week**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)



**Chart 3d: Percent of Children in Each Amount of FFN Care Per Week**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)

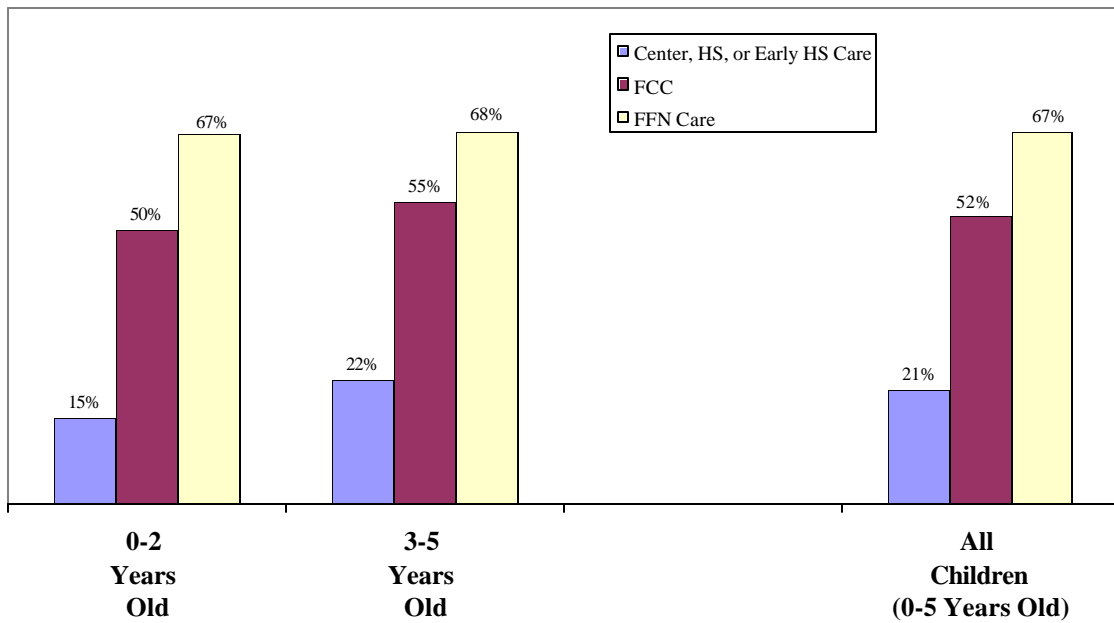


**Chart 4: Percent of All Non-Parental Care Hours in Each Type of Care by Age Group**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)

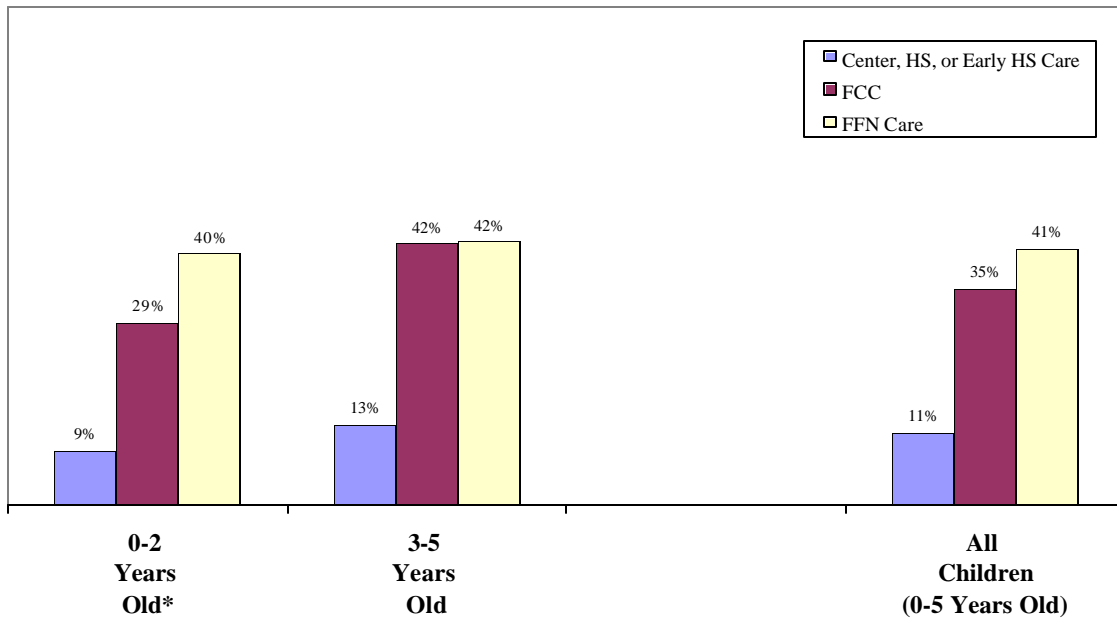


\* Value for FCC is based on less than 10 observations.

**Chart 5: Percent of Children in Each Type of Care in Some Evening or Weekend Care**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)

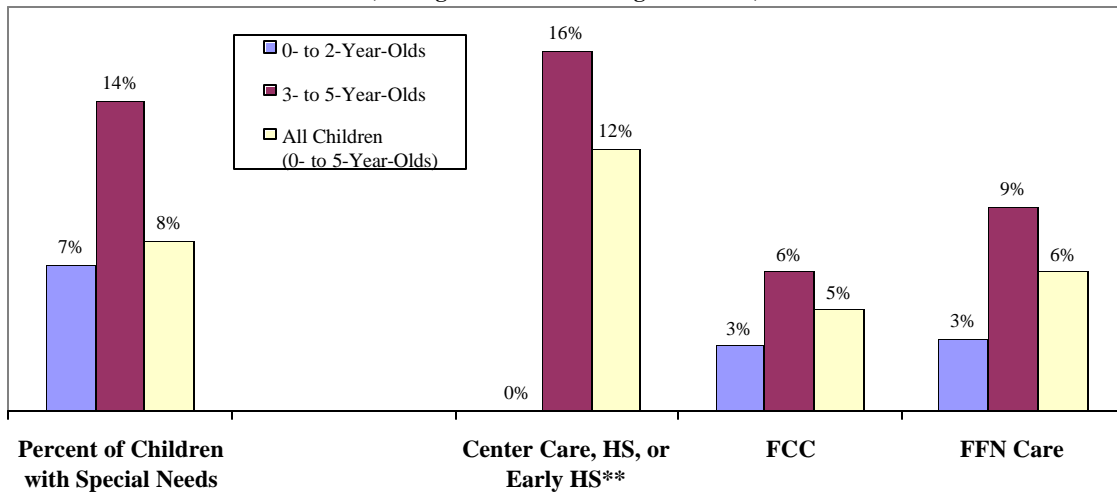


**Chart 6: Percent of All Non-Parental Care Hours That Are Evening or Weekend Hours**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)



\* Value for center, HS, or Early HS is based on less than 10 observations.

**Chart 7: Percent of Children in Center Care, FCC, or FFN Care with Special Needs\***  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)

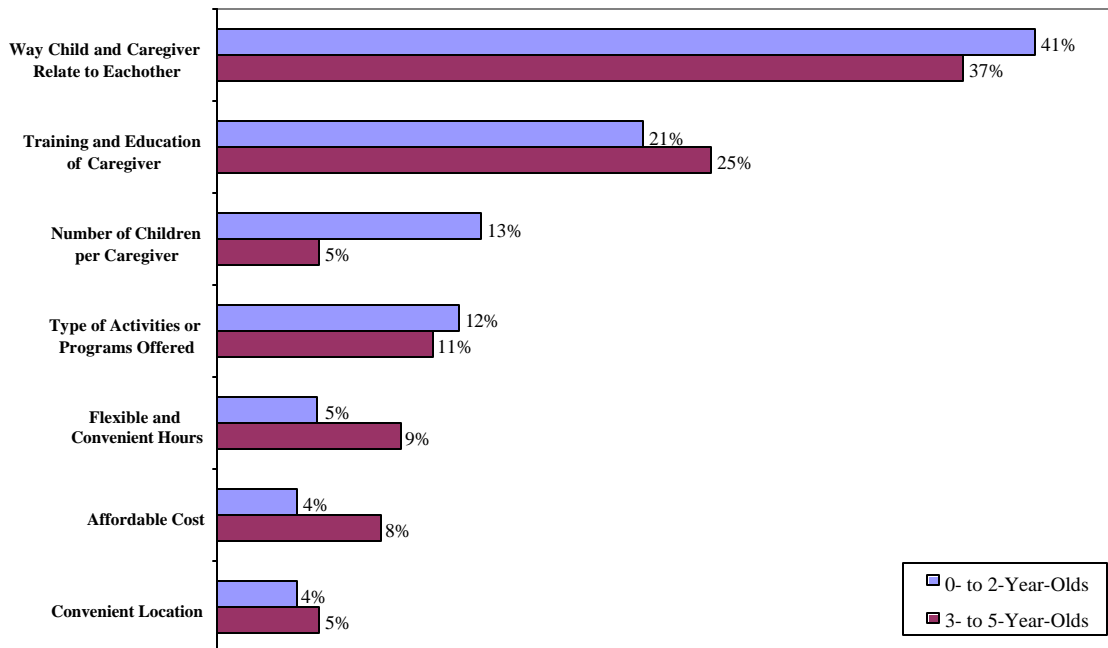


\* For the purpose of this report, children with special needs are defined as children who are reported by their parents to have a physical, emotional, developmental, or behavioral condition that affects decisions about their care.

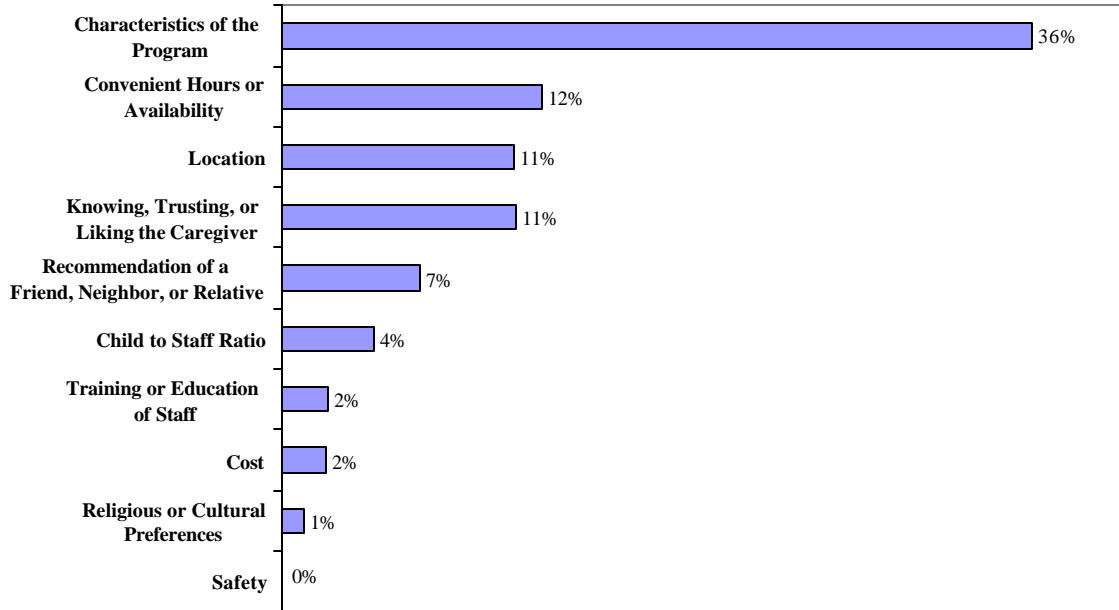
\*\*Differences between children with special needs and those without special needs in the likelihood of using each type of care are significant at  $p < 0.05$  for children 3-5 years old and for all children 0-5 years old for center care, Head Start or Early Head Start.

Note: In addition to the values shown, 34% of children in pre-kindergarten have special needs. The difference between children with special needs and those without special needs in the likelihood of using pre-kindergarten is significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

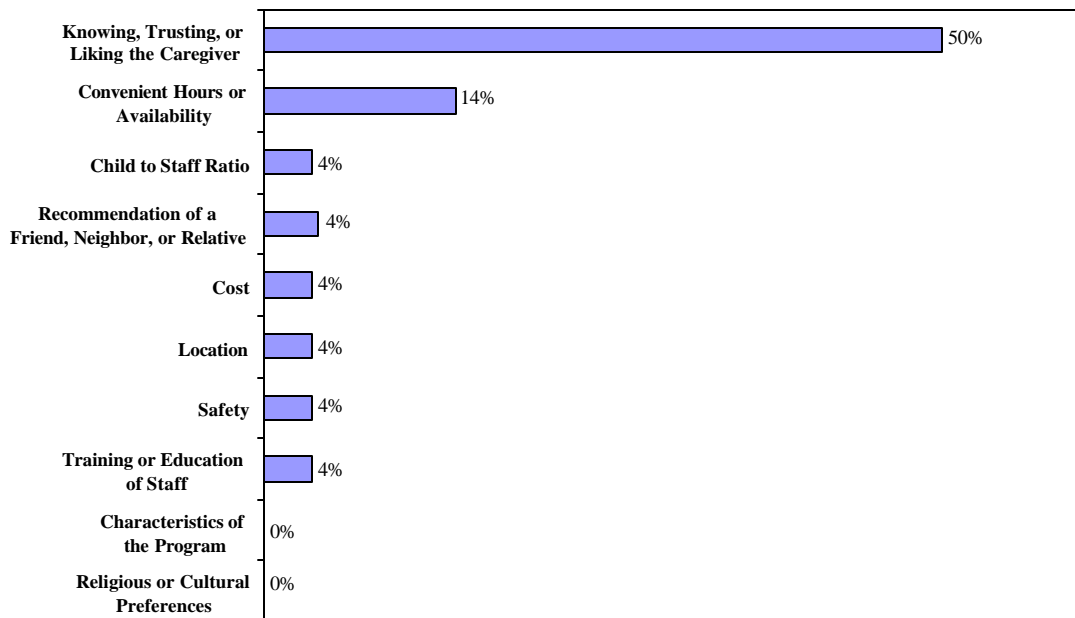
**Chart 8: Percent of Parents Ranking Each Characteristic of Child Care as the Most Important**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)



**Chart 9: Percent of Parents Reporting Each Main Reason for Choosing Center Care, HS, or Early HS as the Primary Care Arrangement (Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)**

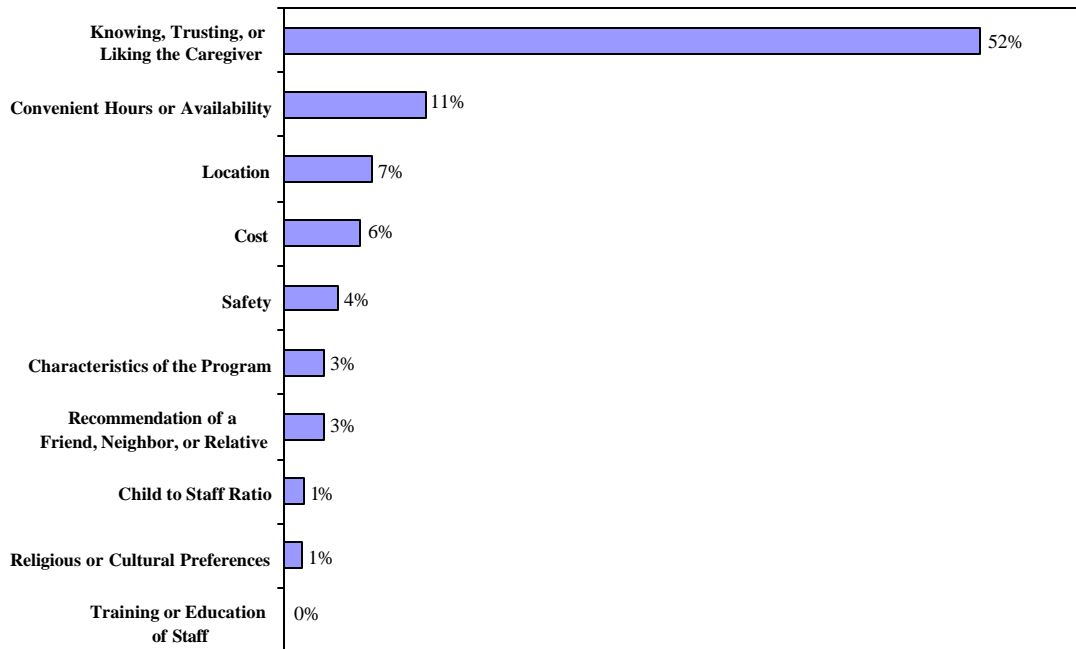


**Chart 10: Percent of Parents Reporting Each Main Reason for Choosing FCC as the Primary Care Arrangement\* (Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)**

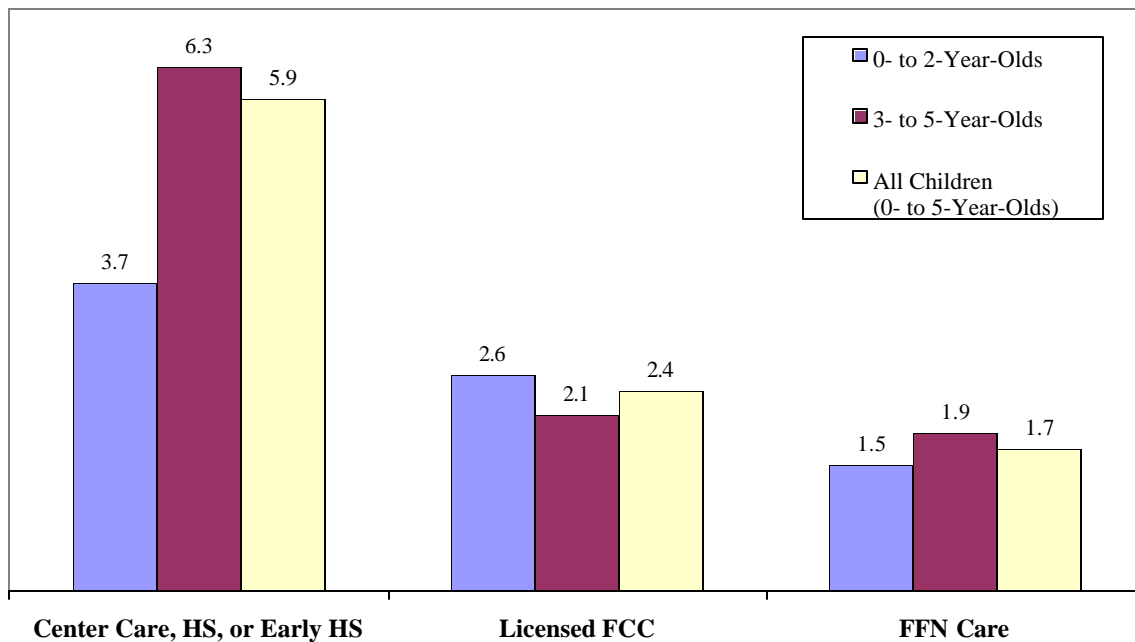


\*Based on a total of only 28 observations

**Chart 11: Percent of Parents Reporting Each Main Reason for Choosing FFN Care as the Primary Care Arrangement**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)

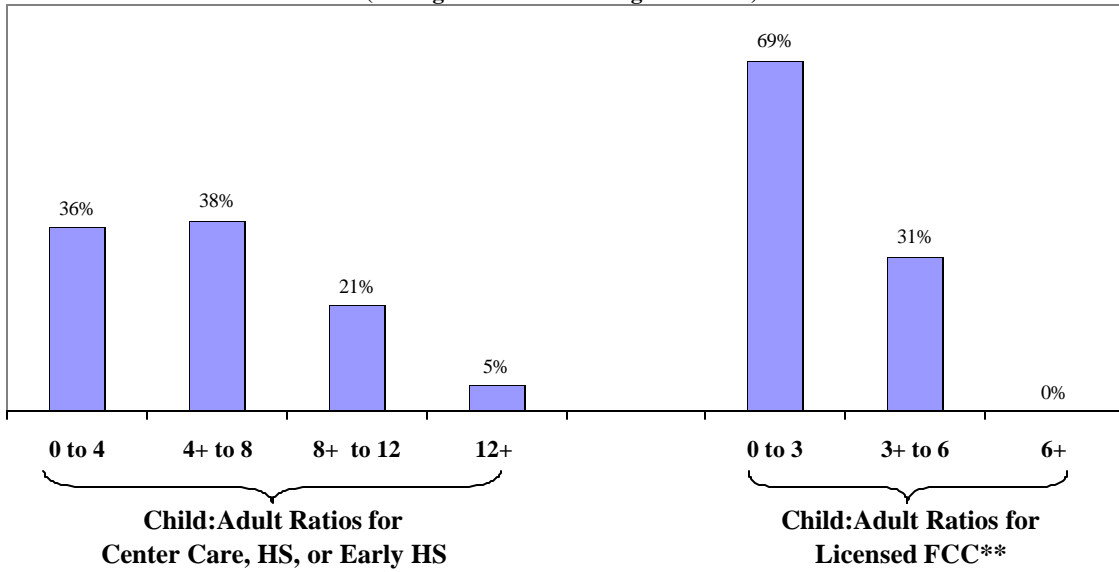


**Chart 12a: Average Parent-Reported Child:Adult Ratio for Each Type of Care by Age Group**  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)



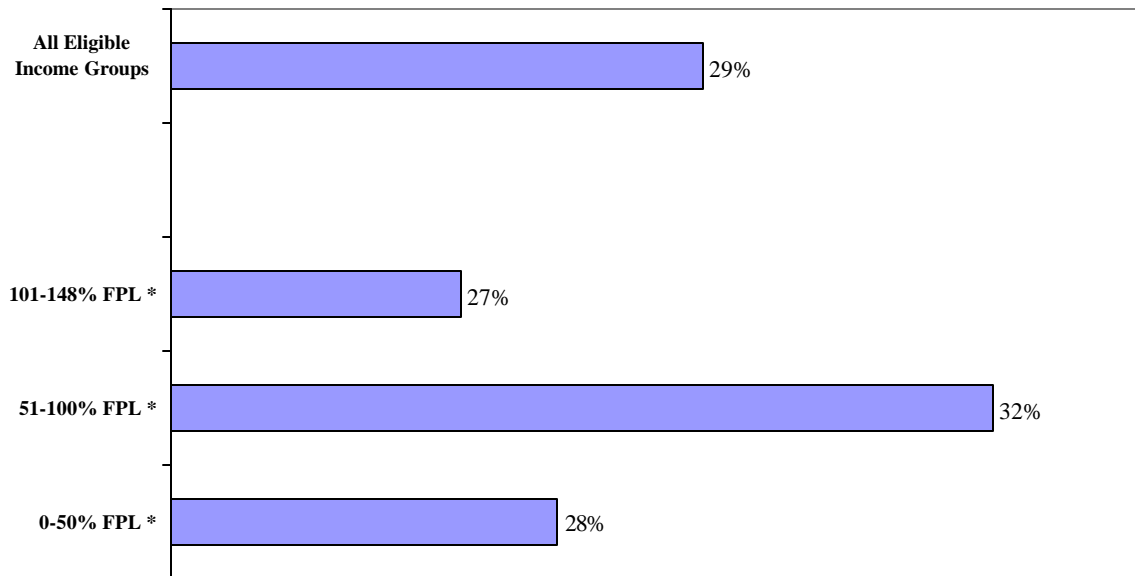


**Chart 12b: Percent of Children Birth to 5 Years Old in Center Care, HS, or Early HS and Licensed FCC with Each Parent-Reported Child:Adult Ratio\*  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)**



\*Presentation of ratios by detailed age groups is not possible because of limited sample sizes.  
\*\*Results based just 10 observations.

**Chart 13: Child Care Subsidy Participation among Income-Eligible Mothers Who are Employed or in School or Training by Income Group  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)**



\* Based on less than 10 observations.

**Chart 14: Percent of Parents Paying  
for the Relative Care They Use by Age Group  
(Chicago Low-Income Neighborhoods)**

