

Highlights of South Carolina Child Care Survey

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As a background for deliberations of the Financing Universal Early Care and Education Project, this paper highlights information collected on current utilization of early care and education in South Carolina. The following text and attached charts summarize data collected by a general population survey of South Carolina parents with children birth to 12 years old, conducted from February to July of 2002. The sample size consists of 1,211 parents. Responses are weighted to appropriately reflect the age distribution of children in South Carolina and to reflect child care utilization patterns annually. The survey was conducted 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. The survey is sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Percent of Children in Child Care

The percent of all children using *any amount* of each type of child care each week is presented in Chart 1 and summarized below:

- ✓ Center care, Head Start (HS), or Early HS is used by almost one third (32%) of 1- to 2-year-olds and almost one half (45%) of 3- to 5-year-olds. Less than 15% of infants, 10% of 6- to 8-year-olds, and 5% of 9- to 12-year-olds are in center care.
- ✓ Family child care (FCC) is used by between 8 and 17% of children in each age group.
- ✓ Family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) care is utilized by approximately half (51%) of all children, with usage in individual age categories ranging between 45% for 6- to 8-year-olds and 58% for 1- to 2-year-olds.
- ✓ Of 4-year-olds, 27% attend 4-year-old kindergarten (4-K).¹

Number of Children in Child Care

Chart 2 translates the percentages of children (ages 0 to 12 years old) in care from Chart 1 into the estimated number of South Carolina children in each type of non-parental care for any amount of time in each week:

- ✓ Of the 319,000 children age 0-5, 113,000 spend time in center care, HS, or Early HS; 48,000 in FCC; and 167,000 in FFN care.
- ✓ Of the 409,000 children age 6-12, 19,000 spend time in center care, 38,000 in FCC, and 201,000 in FFN care.

¹ South Carolina has a publicly financed 4-year-old kindergarten program for poor and at-risk preschoolers. Children participating in this program are typically 4-year-olds, but many children turn 5 while in the program. Therefore, we present results pertaining to 4-year-old kindergarten for all 4- and 5-year-olds.

Primary Care Arrangements

Information on children's primary non-parental care arrangements is presented in Charts 3a and 3b. 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 3a presents information on center care, FCC, and FFN care primary arrangements for 0- to 5-year-olds and 6- to 12-year-olds. Chart 3b shows the percent of 4- and 5-year-old children in center care, FCC, and FFN care primary arrangements as well as those enrolled in South Carolina's publicly financed 4-year-old kindergarten program for poor and at-risk preschoolers.²

- ✓ Center, Head Start, or Early HS is the primary care arrangement for just under one in three children between the ages of 0 and 5 years old, but is the primary care arrangement for only about 4% of children between 6 and 12 years old [Chart 3a].
- ✓ FCC is the primary care arrangement for only 9% of children age 0-5 and 5% of children age 6-12. [Chart 3a].
- ✓ FFN care is the primary arrangement for approximately one in five (21%) young children and one in three (29%) of school-age children [Chart 3a].
- ✓ Of 4- and 5-year-olds, 10% have 4-K as their primary care type, compared to 35% with center care, 8% with FCC and 15% with FFN care as their primary care type [Chart 3b].

Approximately 37% of 0- to 5-year-olds and 62% of 6- to 12-year-olds do not have a non-parental care primary care arrangement.

Hours per Week in Care

The median number of hours per week that children are in each type of care is summarized in Chart 4.³

- ✓ For young children (age 0-5) in center care, HS, or Early HS, the median number of care hours is between 24 and 30 hours per week, and the median for young children in FCC is between 20 and 30 hours per week. The median hours in care for young children in FFN care is between 8 and 10 hours per week, which is less than the median number of care hours for either center care or FCC.
- ✓ For school-age children (age 6-12) in center care, HS, or Early HS, the median number of care hours is between 13 and 20 hours per week, while the median for FCC is about 8 hours per week. The median hours in care for school-age children in FFN care is between 8 and 10 hours per week.
- ✓ Hours in care vary by specific age groups for center care and FCC. Infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children spend more time in center care and FCC than their older school-age counterparts. FFN care hours do not vary significantly by age group.

² Children participating in the 4-year-old kindergarten program are typically 4-year-olds, but many children turn 5 while in the program. Therefore, we present results pertaining to 4-year-old kindergarten for all 4- and 5-year-olds.

³ We report the median, rather than the mean (average) because most children (64%) in FFN care are in that care less than 25 hours a week. However, a small proportion of children (approximately 8%) are in FFN care more than 40 hours per week. These few cases increase the mean for all children in FFN care and mask the actual distribution of children toward fewer hours. The median represents 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. In this instance, the median is a better measure of central tendency. The median and mean hours of care are not significantly different from each other for center care and FCC.

Percent of All Care Hours in Each Type of Care

Taking into account how many children use each type of care and how much time they spend in that care, we compute the proportion of all non-parental care hours provided by each care type. These results are presented in Chart 5 and summarized below:

- ✓ Centers, HS, and Early HS provide more than a quarter (29%) of the care for all children birth to 12 years old and 26% of all care for infants, 36% for 1- to 2-year-olds, 56% for all 3-year-olds, and 38% for 4- and 5-year-olds. Center care comprises only 15% of all care hours for 6- to 8-year-olds and only 6% of all care hours for 9- to 12-year-olds.
- ✓ FCC provides 16% of all care for all children birth to 12 years old, with the proportion of FCC hours ranging between 11% (for 9- to 12-year-olds) and 22% (for 6- to 8-year-olds).
- ✓ FFN care accounts for 50% of all non-parental care for children birth to 12 years old and is highest for infants (58%) and school-age children (63% for 6- to 8-year-olds and 84% for 9- to 12-year-olds). FFN care accounts for 43% of care hours for 1- to 2-year-olds, 30% for 3-year-olds, and 28% for 4- to 5-year-olds.
- ✓ 4-K provides 22% of all care for 4- and 5-year-olds.

Use of Evening and Weekend Care

The percent of children participating in evening or weekend care is detailed in Chart 6 and summarized below:

- ✓ Only 7% of all children in Center, HS, or Early HS are in evening or weekend care. The percent of 1- to 2-year-olds, 3- to 5-year-olds, and 6- to 8-year-olds in center care who participate in evening or weekend care is between 4% and 9%, whereas 21% of children less than 1 year old and 33% of children 9 to 12 years old in center care are in some evening or weekend care.
- ✓ Approximately half (47%) of children in FCC are in some evening or weekend care, ranging from 27% for infants to 68% for 9- to 12-year-olds.
- ✓ Children in FFN care have the highest rates of evening and weekend care, with approximately two-thirds (64%) 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 the age groups.

The proportion of non-parental care that occurs during evenings and weekends is detailed in Chart 7 and summarized below:

- ✓ For children in centers, evening or weekend center care hours account for a very small percentage of all center hours: between 2% and 6% for children 1 to 2 years old, 3 to 5 years old, and 6 to 8 years old and 14% to 16% for infants and children 9 to 12 years old.
- ✓ Evening or weekend FCC hours account for about 27% of all FCC hours for all children. Evening or weekend FCC hours account for between 16% and 27% of all FCC hours for all children except 9- to 12-year-olds, whose evening or weekend care hours account for 54% of all FCC hours.
- ✓ 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 over half (57%) of all FFN care hours. Evening or weekend hours account for between 50% and 65% of total FFN care hours.

Based on the above results, a major consideration in choosing FFN care over center care or FCC 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 8 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 one in twenty children age 0-5 and one in thirteen children age 6-12 are children with special needs.
- ✓ There are no significant differences between the percent of children with special needs in each type of care, though the direction of the observed differences suggests that children age 6-12 with special needs may be slightly less likely to be in center care and FCC and slightly more likely to be in FFN care.

Parent Values and Reasons for Selecting Primary Care Arrangement

Information on parent's reported childcare values and main reasons for selecting their primary care arrangement is provided in Charts 9, 10, 11, and 12 and summarized below.⁴ Overall, the values that parents indicate are most important do not vary significantly by the age of the child; however, the main reason for selecting the primary care arrangement differs by the age of the child.

Parents consistently rank three characteristics of child care as "most important," regardless of the child's age [Chart 9]. These include:

- ✓ The way the child and caregiver relate to each other is identified by 40% of parents with children 0 to 5 years old and 37% of parents with children 6 to 12 years old as the most important characteristic of care.
- ✓ Training and education of the caregiver is identified by approximately 23% of parents as the most important characteristic of care, and the number of children per caregiver was identified by approximately 12% of parents as the most important characteristics of care.
- ✓ The type of activities or programs offered, flexible and convenient hours, affordable cost, and convenient location are all identified by less than 10% of parents as the most important characteristics 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 10].

- ✓ For children age 0-5:
 - Characteristics of the program (at approximately 21%) is the most frequently cited main reason for selecting center care, HS, or Early HS, followed by knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver at 14%; recommendation of a friend, neighbor, or relative at 13%; and religious or cultural preferences at 13%.
 - Less than 10% of parents report convenient hours or availability, training or education of staff, location, child to staff ratio, or cost as the main reason for selecting center care, HS, or Early HS.
- ✓ For children age 6-12:

⁴ 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.

- Convenient hours or availability (at 26%) and characteristics of the program (at 22%) are the most frequently cited reasons for selecting center care, followed by knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver and location, both at 14%.
- Less than 10% of parents report recommendation of a friend, neighbor, or relative; religious or cultural preferences; training or education of staff; child to staff ratio; or cost as the main reason for selecting center care.

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 significantly lower emphasis placed on characteristics of the program [Chart 11].

- ✓ For children age 0-5:
 - Knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver (at 43%) is the most frequently cited reason for selecting FCC, followed by recommendation of a friend, neighbor, or relative at 12%.
 - Less than 10% of parents report child to staff ratio, convenient hours or availability, cost, characteristics of the program, location, similar values, safety, and training or education of staff as the main reason for selecting FCC.
- ✓ For children age 6-12:
 - Knowing, trusting, or liking the caregiver (at 39%) is the most frequently cited reason for selecting FCC, followed by convenient hours or availability (17%), location (15%), and cost (14%).
 - Less than 10% of parents report recommendation of a friend, neighbor, or relative; child to staff ratio; characteristics of the program; similar values; safety; or training or education of staff as the main reason for selecting FCC.

As with parents selecting 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 12].

- ✓ For children age 0-5:
 - Knowing, trusting, or liking caregiver (at 48%) is the most frequently cited reason for selecting FFN care, followed by convenient hours or availability at 17%.
 - Less than 10% of parents report cost, characteristics of the program, child to staff ratio, safety, similar values, training or education of staff, location, or religious or cultural preferences as the main reason for selecting FFN care.
- ✓ For children age 6-12:
 - Knowing, trusting, or liking caregiver (at 50%) is also the most frequently cited reason for selecting FFN care, followed by convenient hours or availability (15%).
 - Less than 10% of parents report cost, characteristics of the program, child to staff ratio, safety, similar values, training or education of staff, location, or religious or cultural preferences as the main reason for selecting FFN care.

Child:Adult Ratios

Parent reported child:adult ratios for the different types of care are presented in Chart 13 and summarized below:

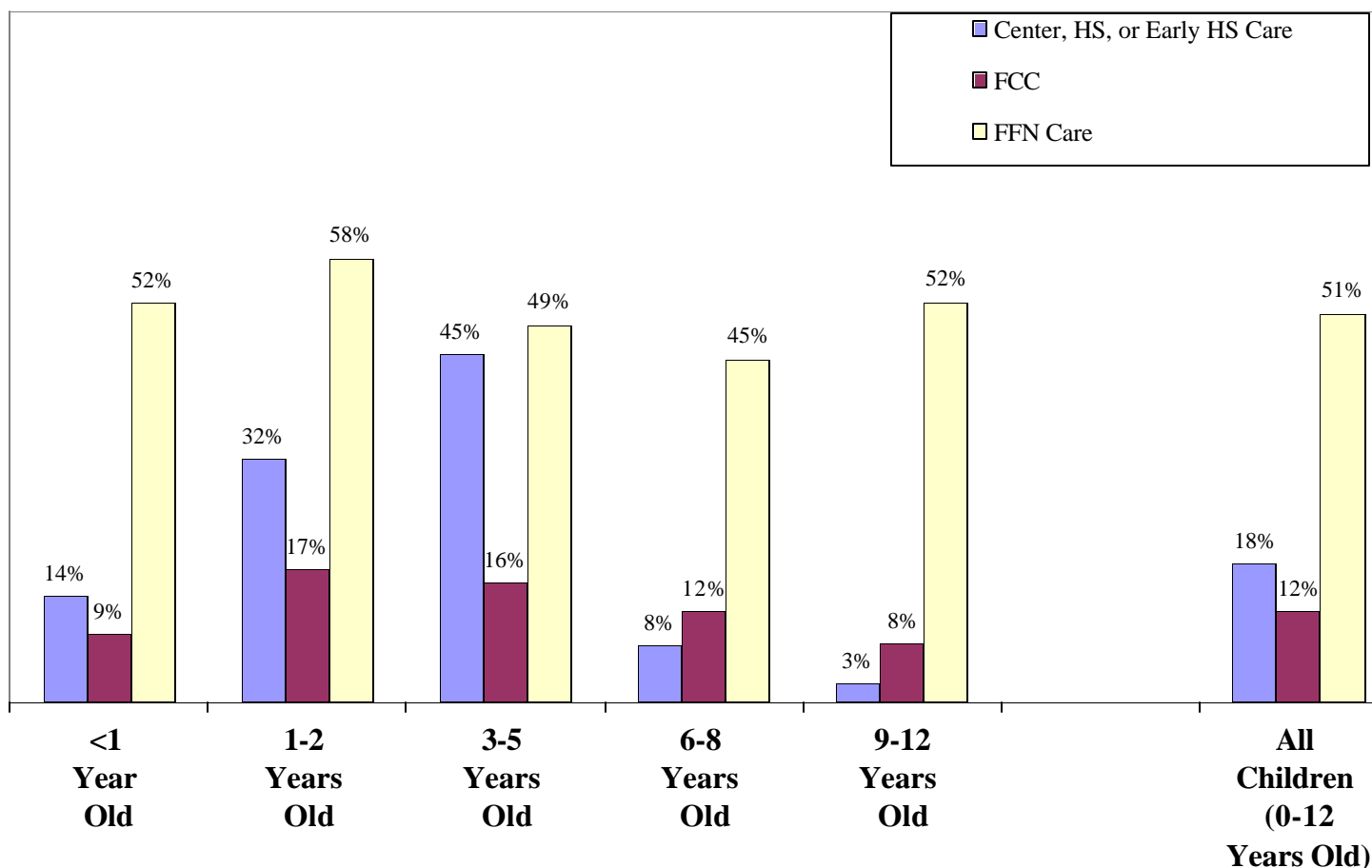
- ✓ Centers, HS and Early HS average 5.8 children per adult for children 0 to 5 years old and 7.0 children per adult for children 6 to 12 years old.
- ✓ Licensed FCC's average 3.2 children per adult for young children (age 0-5) and 4.2 children per adult for school-age children (6-12).
- ✓ FFN care averages 1.2 children per adult for young children and 1.1 children per adult for school-aged children.

Payment for Care

Information on payment for care is presented in Charts 14 and 15 and summarized below:

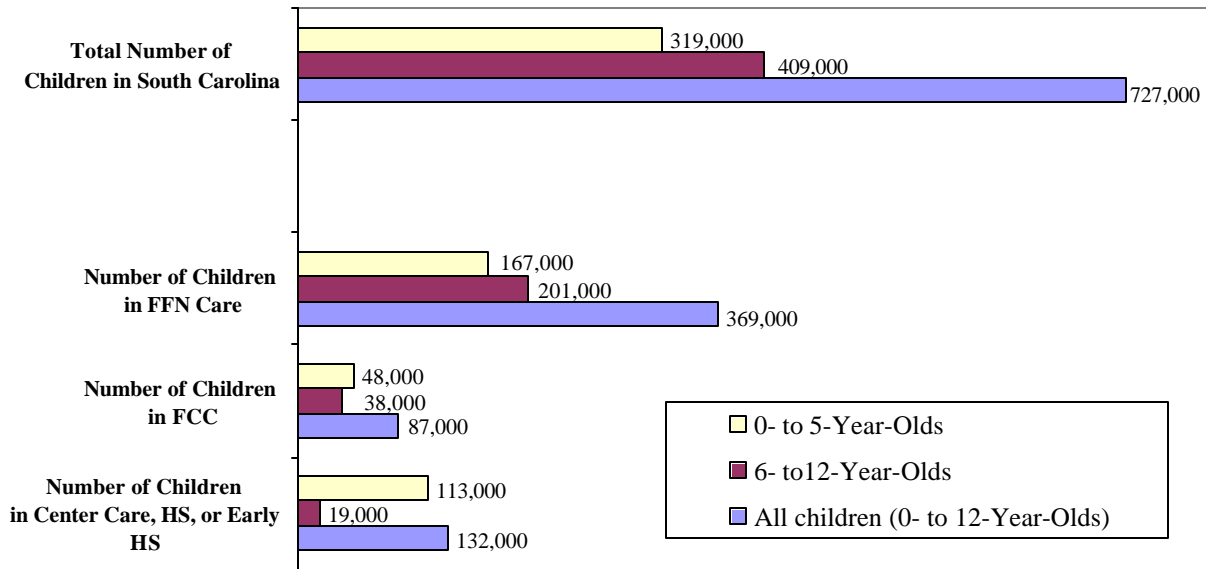
- ✓ Among mothers who are employed or in school or training, only 10% of eligible households report receiving a government subsidy for child care. Subsidy participation ranges between 5% and 7% for mothers who are employed or in school or training and whose incomes are 0-50% of the FPL, 101-150% of the FPL, and 150-175% of the FPL; however, for families with incomes between 51% and 100% of the FPL, subsidy receipt for mothers who are employed or in school or training is 17%.
- ✓ Less than 10% of parents using relative care pay for that care.

Chart 1: Percent of All Children Birth to 12 Years Old in Any Amount of Center Ca FCC, and FFN Care* by Detailed Age Groups



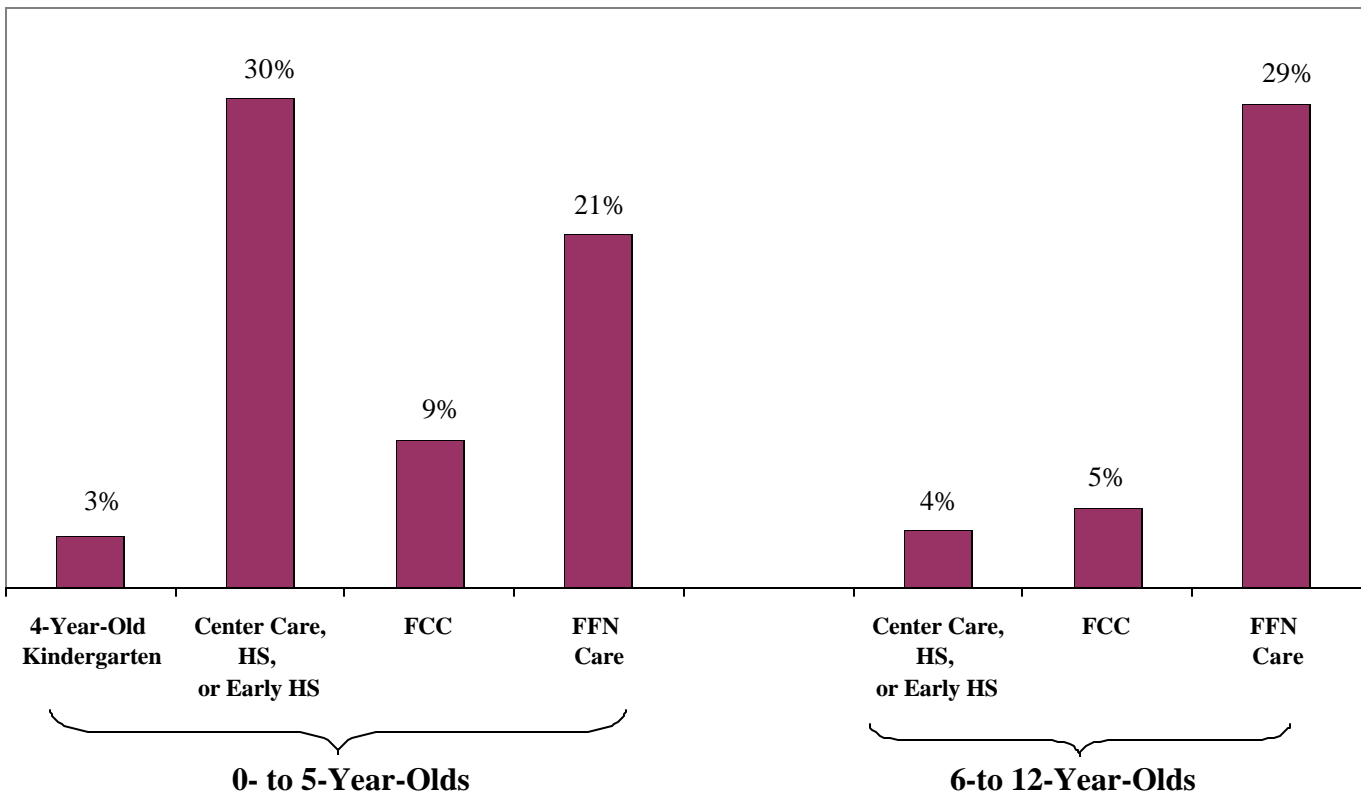
* Categories are not mutually exclusive. In addition to the care types shown here, 27% of 4-year-olds also participate in 4-year-old kindergarten.

Chart 2: Population Totals for Children Birth to 12 Years Old in Any Amount of Center Care, FCC, and FFN Care*



* Categories are not mutually exclusive.

Chart 3a: Percent of All Children for Whom Each Type of Care is the Primary Care Arrangement*



* 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

Chart 3b: Percent of All 4- and 5-Year-Old Children in Each Type of Primary Care

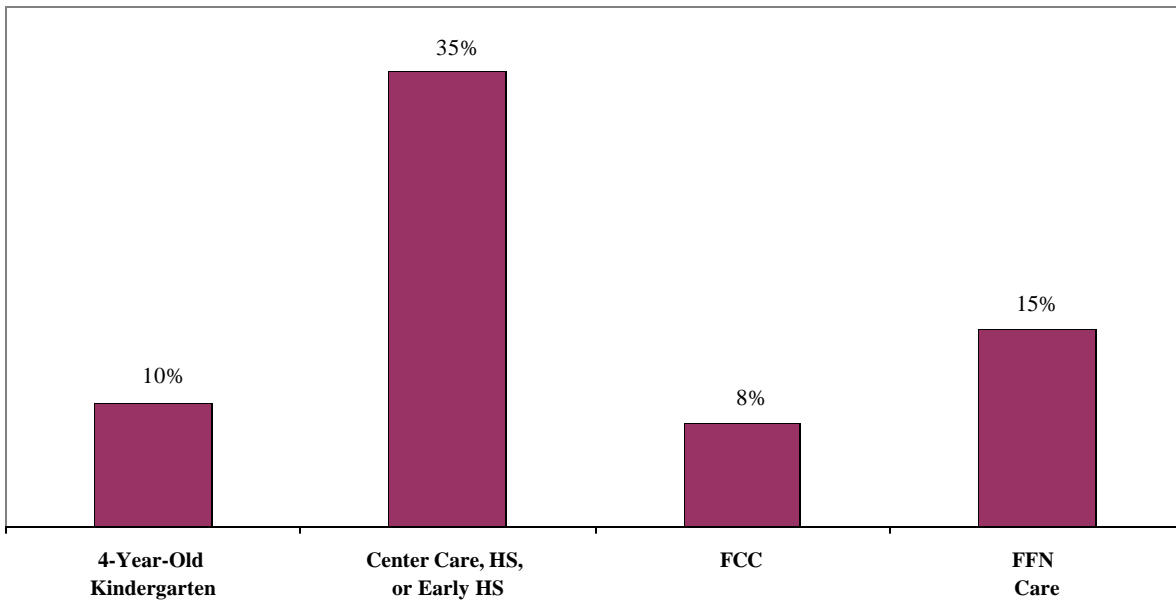


Chart 4: Median Hours per Week of Center Care, FCC, and FFN Care for Children in Each Type of Care by Detailed Age Groups

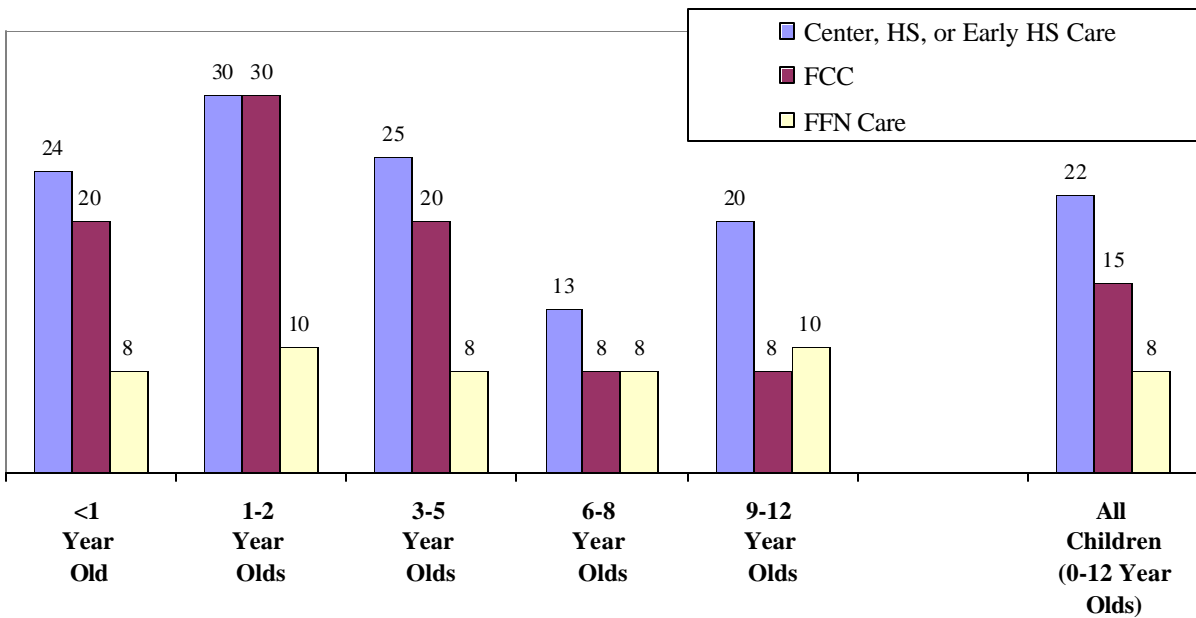
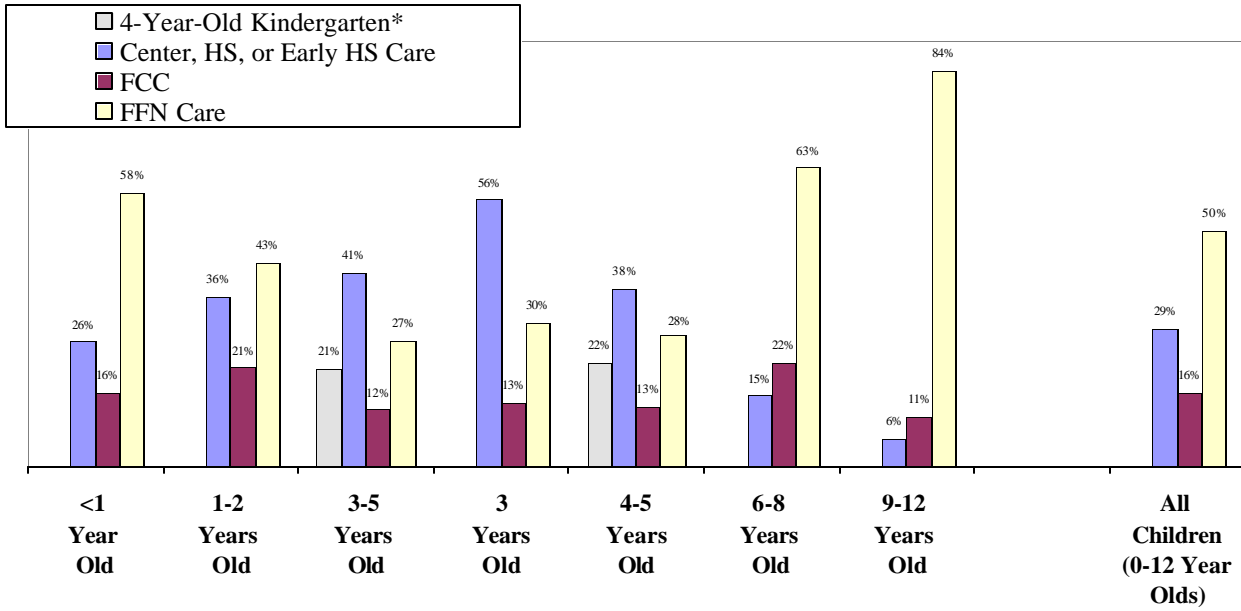


Chart 5: Percent of All Non-Parental Care Hours in Each Type of Care by Detailed Age Groups



* 4-Year-old kindergarten results presented only for 4- and 5-year-olds.

Chart 6: Percent of Children in Each Type of Care Who Participate in Evening or Weekend Care

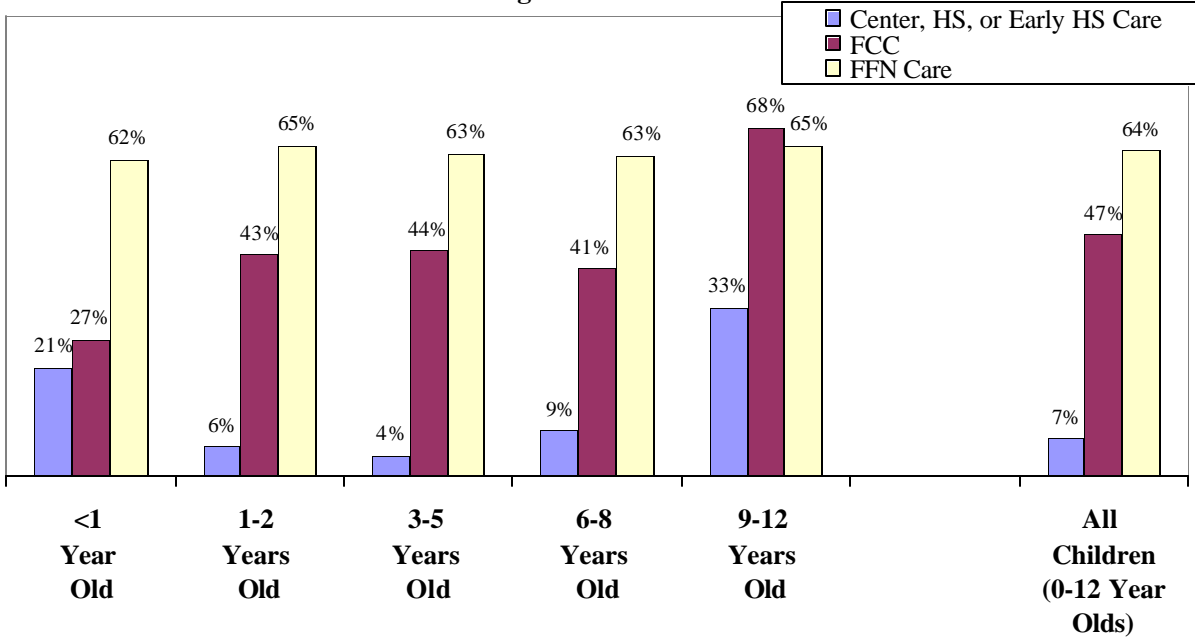


Chart 7: Percent of All Non-Parental Care Hours That Are Evening or Weekend Hours

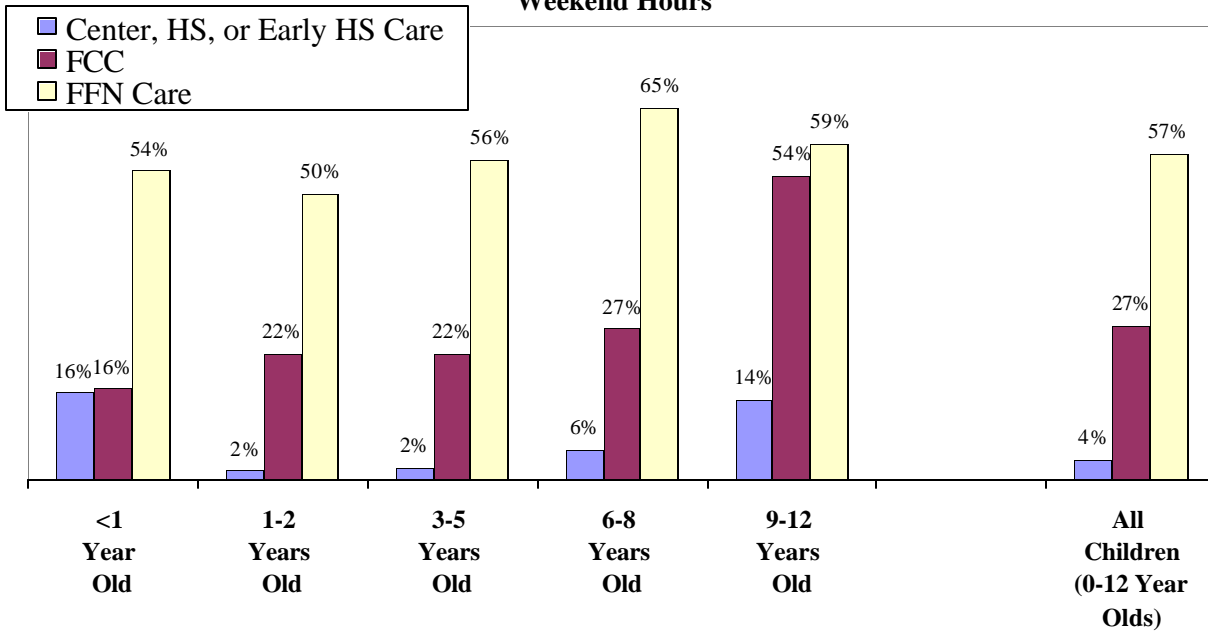
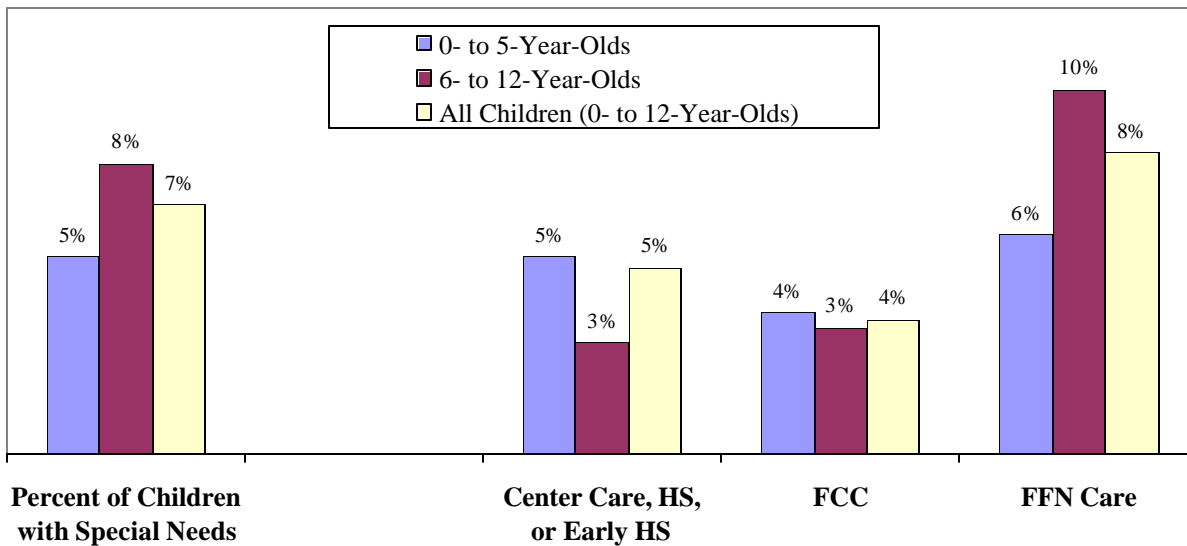


Chart 8: Percent of Children in Center Care, FCC, or FFN Care with Special Needs*



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

Note: No differences between children with special needs and those without special needs in the likelihood of using each type of care are

Chart 9: Percent of Parents Ranking Each Characteristic of Child Care as the Most Important

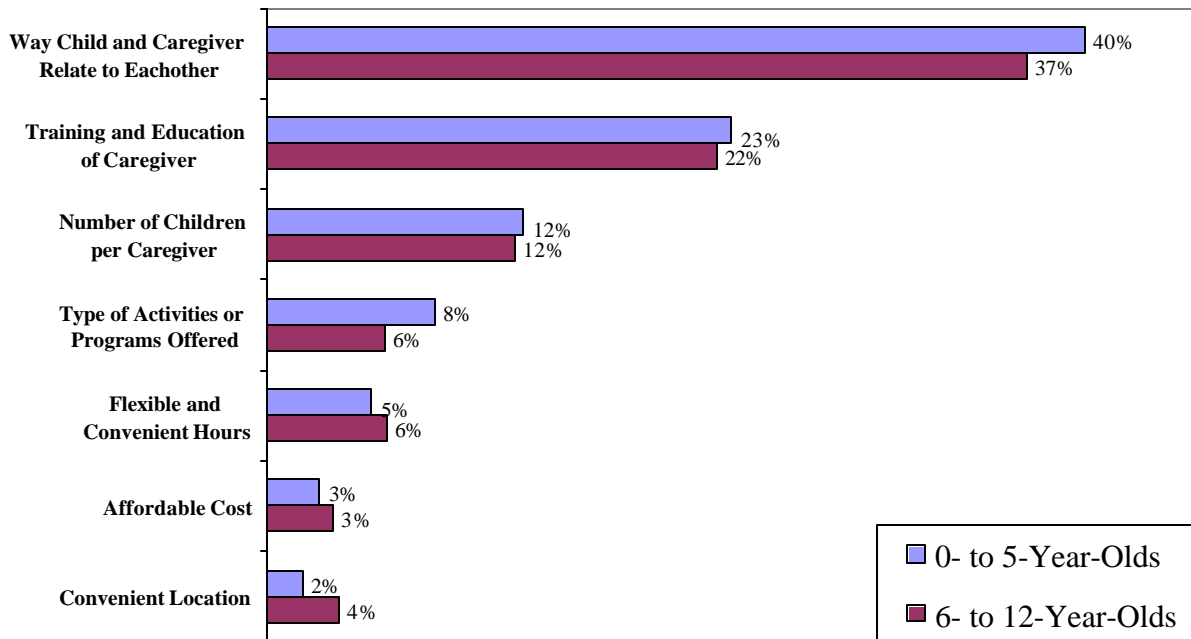


Chart 10: Percent of Parents Reporting Each as a Main Reason for Choosing Center Care, HS, or Early HS as the Primary Care Arrangement

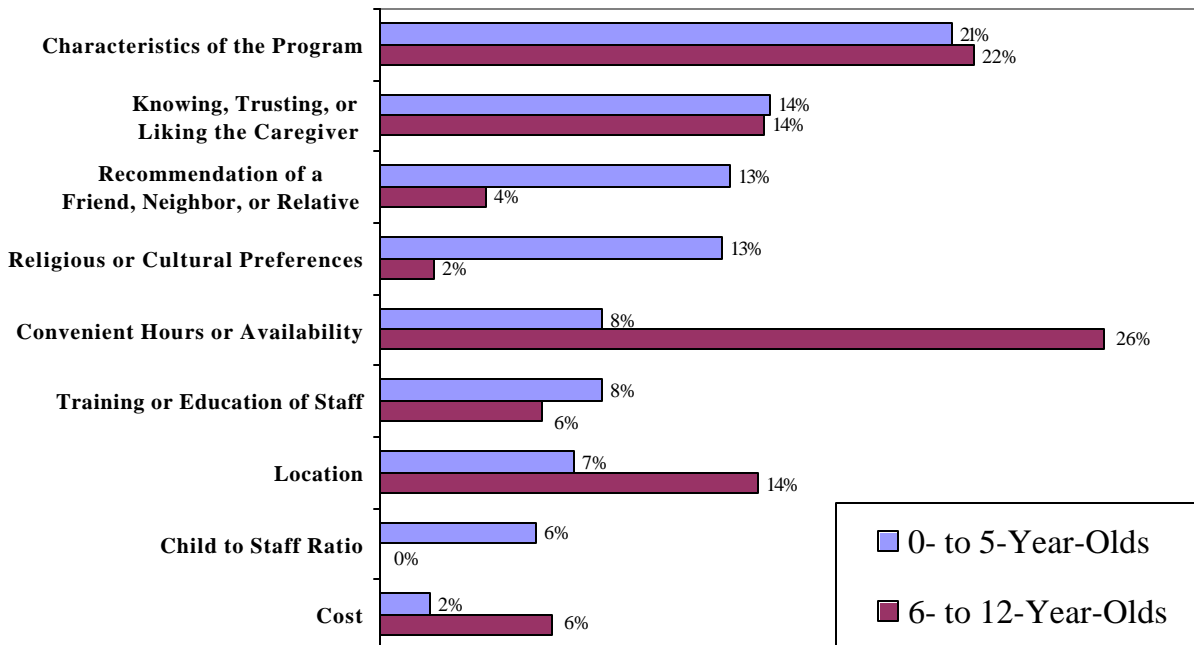


Chart 11: Percent of Parents Reporting Each as a Main Reason for Choosing FCC as the Primary Care Arrangement

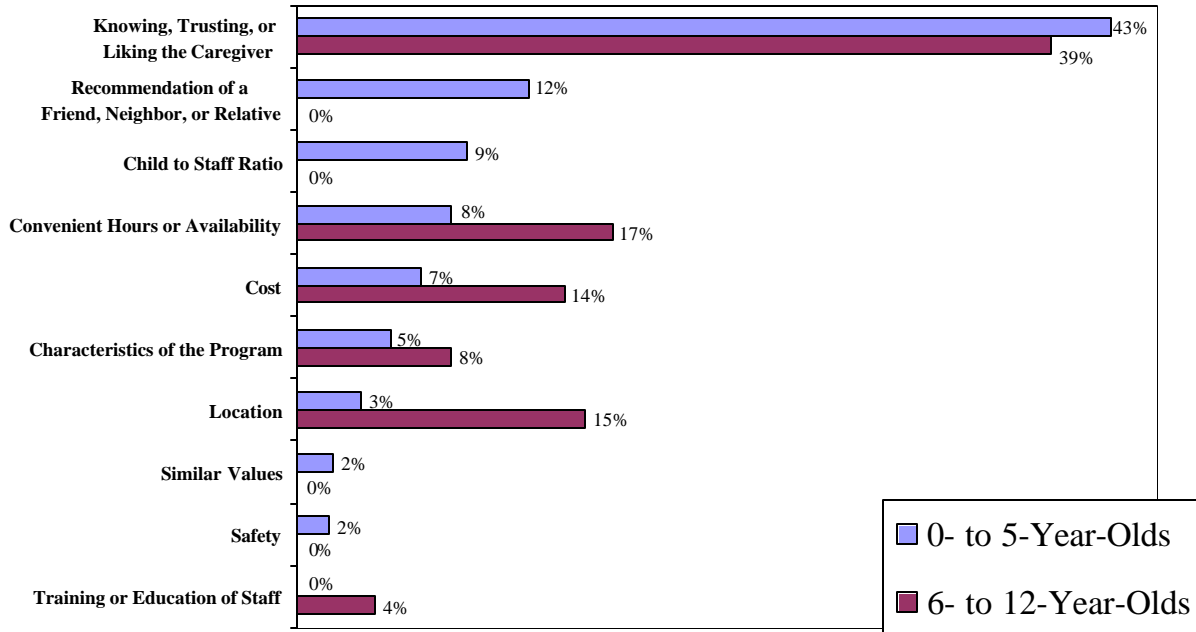


Chart 12: Percent of Parents Reporting Each as a Main Reason for Choosing FFN Care as the Primary Care Arrangement

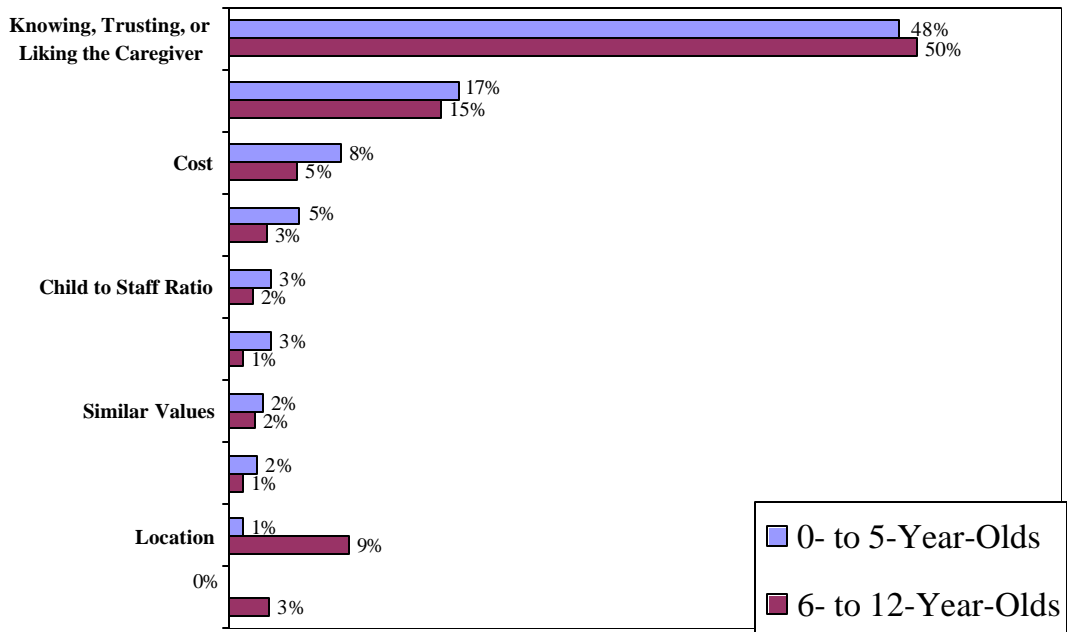


Chart 13: Average Parent-Reported Child:Adult Ratio for Each Type of Care by Age Group

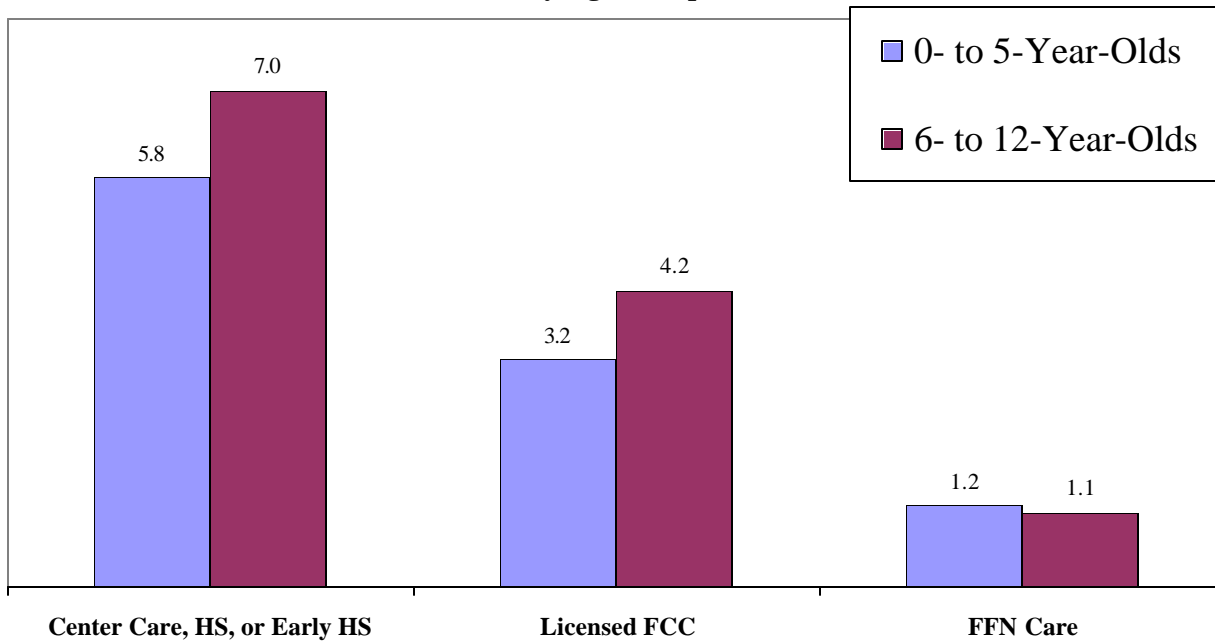
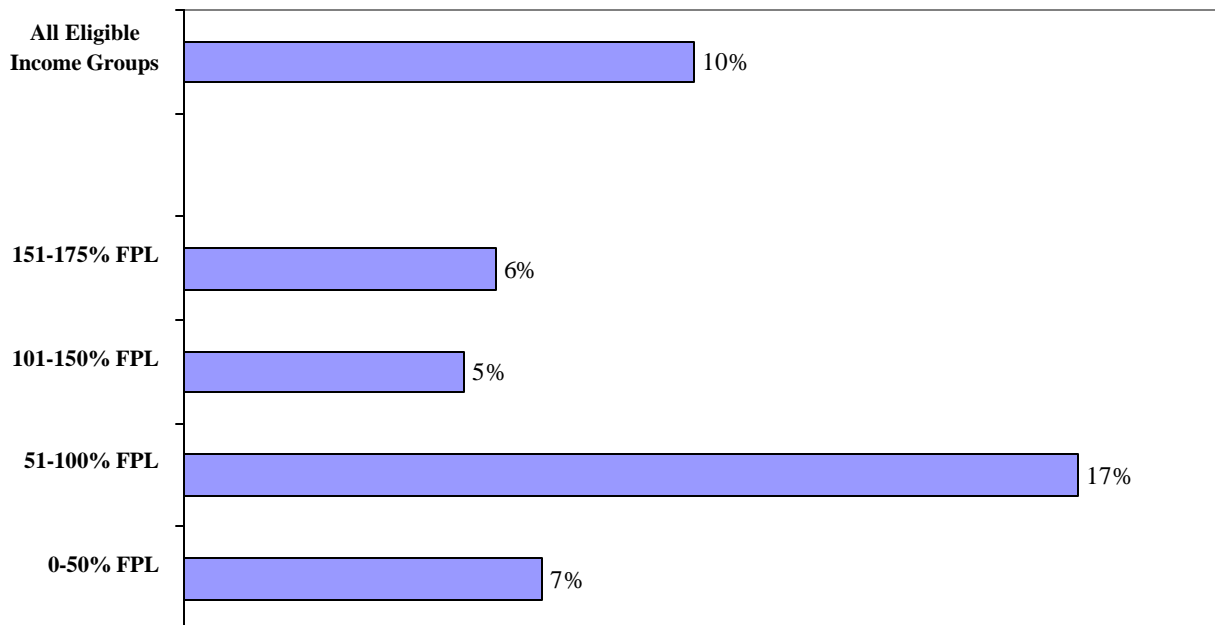


Chart 14: Child Care Subsidy Participation Among All Mothers Who are Employed or in School/Training by Detailed Income Group



**Chart 15: Percent of Parents Paying
for the Relative Care They Use by Detailed age Groups**

